



# ECOSOC

## **Video Statement by H.E. Ms. Lachezara Stoeva, President of ECOSOC *Briefing to the 51<sup>st</sup> regular session of the UN Human Rights Council***

**September 2022**

### **[Introduction]**

Mr. President,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am honoured to address the Human Rights Council this year in my capacity as President of the Economic and Social Council in accordance with Resolution 37/25, which called for a more integrated approach to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development for the full realization of human rights, focusing holistically on the means of implementation.

I am grateful for this opportunity to brief the Council on the discussions and key messages from the 2022 high-level political forum on sustainable development (HLPF) that took place in July this year.

### **[Briefing on the HLPF 2022]**

The 2022 HLPF was convened at United Nations Headquarters from July 5<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> under the auspices of ECOSOC, in an in-person format for the first time since 2019.

The forum attracted engagement at the highest level, with more than 140 Heads of State and Government, Deputy Prime Ministers, Ministers, Vice Ministers and Ministerial level officials. Over 200 high-level speakers participated in various official roles in the discussions including experts, mayors and local authorities, representatives of the business sector, women, youth, and other stakeholders.

The forum addressed the theme *“Building back better from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”*. It conducted in-depth reviews of Sustainable Development



Goals 4 on quality education, 5 on gender equality, 14 on life below water, 15 on life on land, and 17 on partnerships for the Goals. The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic across all Sustainable Development Goals, and the integrated, indivisible and interlinked nature of the Goals were also taken into account.

As the world continues to recover from COVID-19 amidst a variety of both new and persistent crises, the HLPF reflected on how recovery policies can reverse the negative impacts of the pandemic on the SDGs, and move countries on to a path to realize the vision of the 2030 Agenda.

The Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) presented by 44 countries informed the discussions around the theme and the Goals under review. They reflected on national experiences and actions undertaken to address the pandemic and its impacts, build resilience against future shocks and ensure that no one is left behind. It was clear that the 2030 Agenda remains a guiding framework. The discussions also focused on localizing the SDGs through bolstering actions at local levels, as well as leveraging regional frameworks to support countries on the road to recovery.

African countries, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, and small island developing States were at the center of dialogues on ensuring equal access to vaccines and resources, meeting the need for sustainable and accessible financial resources and support, and new ways of measuring vulnerability.

#### **[HLPF 2022 messages on human rights]**

Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen:

The COVID-19 pandemic has had severe socio-economic consequences, deepening poverty and compounding inequalities, causing significant setbacks in gender equality, exacerbating gender-based violence and discrimination, and reversing progress on gender equality achieved over recent decades.

Inequitable access to vaccines between countries creates a two-track recovery from the pandemic, while growing debt distress negatively affects low-and middle-income countries, limiting the fiscal space for investments in social protection and essential services. In difficult economic and financial contexts, it is even more critical to redouble the efforts in mobilizing domestic resources.



Many important key messages focused on human rights emerged from this year's HLPF in the context of the theme of recovery and building back better from the pandemic.

The HLPF Ministerial Declaration provides a strong outcome that reaffirms commitment to the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs, recognizing it as the blueprint for an inclusive, sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and accelerating the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development, leaving no one behind.

It also reaffirms that the 2030 Agenda is guided by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, including full respect for international law, and that it is grounded in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in international human rights treaties, the Millennium Declaration and the 2005 World Summit Outcome. It is informed by other instruments such as the Declaration on the Right to Development.

The Ministerial Declaration calls for strengthening of international solidarity and cooperation for combating and recovering from the pandemic, including through ensuring that no one will be left behind. It recognizes the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health and the full and equal enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms by all.

It recognized that while women have played a key role in the response to the COVID-19 pandemic as front-line health workers, care providers and as managers and leaders of recovery efforts, they remain underrepresented in leadership positions and their rights and priorities are often not explicitly addressed in response and recovery measures.

The forum recognized that the disruption of in-person learning resulting from quarantines and lockdowns have had a disproportionately negative impact on women and girls, children and youth in vulnerable situations, persons with disabilities, and those who already faced numerous hardships in the fields of formal and non-formal education, well-being and health, including mental health, in addition to economic dislocations.

The HLPF recognized that the right to education is a human right, and promotes the realization of other human rights and the achievement of sustainable development. It is an investment in social inclusion and economic development.



The Declaration states that national and international efforts for a sustainable, inclusive and resilient recovery from COVID-19 must be gender-responsive and promote and ensure women's full, equal, meaningful participation and leadership at all levels.

Member States pledged to ensure full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all women and girls, throughout their life course, without discrimination of any kind, and stressed that the systemic mainstreaming of a gender perspective in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda remains crucial.

They further emphasized that violence against women and girls is a major impediment to the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, and that it violates their full enjoyment of their human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The urgent need to create conditions for decent work for all, protect labour rights of all workers and achieve universal social protection was recognized, including by strengthening social protection systems and protecting and promoting the right to work and rights at work of all women.

In the context of SDG 15 on terrestrial ecosystems, the HLPF reaffirmed the importance of protecting the rights of indigenous peoples under the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and international human rights law.

The HLPF outcome includes additional references and calls for action in relation to numerous other rights, such as the right to development, the right to safe drinking water and sanitation, and the rights of children and youth.

### **[Conclusion]**

I would like to conclude by thanking the Human Rights Council for its involvement in the review of progress in implementing the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs at the HLPF. Next year marks the mid-point of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, with the HLPF meeting in July to review a set of SDGs in depth, and also in September under the General Assembly, in the form of the SDG Summit.

On behalf of ECOSOC, I am eager to welcome your continued collaboration in the coming year, as we begin our mid-point assessment of the 2030 Agenda and envision how the SDG Summit will elevate the work we are doing to ensure human rights and



sustainable development for all. I look forward to working closely with you, to ensure that we continue to build on the progress we have made in integrating our work and enhancing our shared objectives.