



**Introduction of the Secretary-General's Report on
"Regional cooperation in the economic, social and related fields (E/2021/15)"**

Statement by Ms. Rosa Malango, Director

Regional Commissions New York Office (RCNYO) 21/7/2021

Mr. Chair, His Excellency, Mr. Collen Kelapile

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen.

I am especially honored to be addressing the Council for the first time in my capacity as the new Director of the Regional Commissions New York Office. My name is Rosa Malango and I am humbled to have been appointed last month, by the Secretary-General to lead the Regional Commissions New York Office. My almost 30 years of experience working across the peace-humanitarian-development nexus at the United Nations include my past assignment as the UN Resident Coordinator and Designated Official in Uganda for five years where, supported by a diverse group of partners, I led the implementation of the reforms and increased the UN Country Team (UNCT) from 18 to 29 agencies while collaborating with Ugandans to make the SDGs a reality, I also worked to enhance efficiencies amongst the UNCT, the 10 UN entities in Entebbe, civil society and the private sector; in addition my Office provided critical support to political and peacekeeping missions. I have also had the privilege of serving in Guatemala, Cote d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Geneva, Mozambique and Angola in addition to having been responsible for operations and partnerships around the world. My trajectory has honed my perspective to the point where I stand equipped and ready to reinforce the Regional Commissions' partnerships with all Member States and ready to reinvigorate our contribution to the work of ECOSOC. These I will do, guided



by the UN Charter and the 2030 Agenda with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Under my leadership, the Regional Commissions New York Office will work meticulously with Regional Commissions and all of you, our esteemed partners, to make the valuable knowledge they generate more readily accessible by all.

Today I have the honour of introducing the Secretary-General's report on regional cooperation contained in document E/2020/15 and its addendum which provide Member States with an update on regional perspectives on critical global issues as well as an overview of the work done by the Regional Commissions during this challenging period for all nations. The report is laid out in two parts, the first part illustrates how regional action is effectively supporting the COVID-19 response and recovery efforts, while reigniting implementation of the 2030 Agenda. COVID-19 has significantly hampered progress in achieving the SDGs in all regions, and has even reversed gains in many nations. This report also introduces key levers of change that have emerged across regions and which hold the transformative potential to put countries on the path to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) including: (a) financing for development, (b) the green recovery, (c) bridging the digital divide and (d) regional cooperation. All Regional Commissions are promoting innovative approaches and I would like to highlight two: the first example is the joint work on illicit financial flows in support of the SG initiative on Financing for Development in the COVID-19 era and beyond; the second is the recent interregional cooperation to analyze the role of extractive industries as an engine for sustainable development. That being said, given the unprecedented scale of the challenges that beset the COVID-19 recovery efforts and sustainable development, it is clear that we must do better together as we can't afford otherwise. During the recently concluded High-Level Political Forum, many developing countries recognized this reality and called for more concerted efforts.



Mr. Chair, as we wrap up this ECOSOC cycle I wish to reiterate that we have an opportunity to work together on the basis of our shared humanity. This is known in Africa as the spirit of Ubuntu which captures our shared commitment to leave no one behind as we aspire to achieve sustainable prosperity for all. We can only achieve the SDGs during this last Decade of Action, if we work together. We look forward to your suggestions on how we can better leverage the rich expertise of the Regional Commissions to strengthen partnerships in support of the SDGs.

The second part of the report provides updates on the repositioning of the UN development system in the regions as well as on cooperation among the Regional Commissions. This includes: (a) updates on the establishment of the Regional Collaborative Platforms and the Regional knowledge management hubs, which allow Member States, UN Resident Coordinators and Country Teams to easily access available expertise; as well as, (b) updates on the first system-wide results reports of the UN Development System, presented to Member States at the 2021 Regional Forums on Sustainable Development.

Finally, as per established procedure, the addendum contains information on the resolutions and decisions adopted by the Commissions' sessions, in this case, by ECLAC, ECA, ECE and ESCAP (of which, two UNECE decisions call for action by ECOSOC namely: a draft decision on Best Practice Guidance for Effective Methane Recovery and Use from Abandoned Coal Mines, and a draft decision on the Updated UN Framework Classification for Resources). In addition to the SG's report on regional cooperation, I encourage Member States to kindly refer to the Summaries on the Work of the Regional Commissions submitted as part of the official documentation today and to visit the Regional Commissions' websites and social media pages. Before I conclude, I understand that ECOSOC will be considering the pending UNECE draft resolution on the revised terms of reference of the Inland Transport Committee, following last year's deferral. It is my hope that delegations will look at this as a forward-looking offer from a



region in the spirit of interregional cooperation and will not hesitate to engage me towards this end.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, as I conclude, allow me to take a moment to reassure you that we, at the Regional Commissions, are listening to your requests, including your calls for improved coordination, coherent and impactful delivery of our work; for value-added partnerships with the private sector, international financial institutions and regional development banks; for us to further strengthen our collaboration with the regional UN development system to lend the much needed support to country level UN action, as well as your calls for us to ensure that the Regional Commissions' knowledge-products are widely disseminated in the most accessible form.

In this regard, I am honored to recognize several significant achievements that the Regional Commissions have registered as evidenced in the report before you. I also acknowledge the need for us to sustain our commitment to innovation and to continuous improvements on all fronts if we are to rise to the challenges affecting sustainable development in this last decade of action. Going forward, I will be humbly guided by the work and deliberations of this august body and I plan to engage with you to seek your guidance and support as we embark on yet another ambitious journey to deliver the promise of the 2030 Agenda to seek prosperity, sustain peace, promote people-centered partnerships and protect the only planet we call home. I will work assiduously to ensure that the Regional Commissions initiatives and products are well known and used by the broader UN development system, and that the UN system can benefit from the extraordinary convening power of the Regional Commissions, as we mobilize partnerships and resources that Member States urgently need in these COVID19 times. In the words of Nelson Mandela, "Action without vision is only passing time, vision without action is merely day dreaming, but vision with action can change the world." Thank you for your attention. End