

2021 ECOSOC Integration Segment

July 2, 2021

Opening Remarks by

Ambassador Juan Sandoval Mendiola, Deputy Permanent Representative of Mexico to the United Nations

Vice-President of the Economic and Social Council

Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates and participants,

I have the honour to welcome you to the 2021 ECOSOC Integration Segment. As many of you know, the Integration Segment will evolve into the new ECOSOC Coordination Segment in 2022, based on this year's discussions and the mandate of the Member States to lead the Council towards a more efficient and integrated way of working.

We hope that this evolution will be nurtured by the organization of the Segment this year in which we convened three "Integration Dialogues" in preparation for this meeting. The Dialogues had an active participation of Member States, subsidiary bodies and functional commissions of ECOSOC. We had very productive discussions and I would like to give a brief account of the conclusions of the Dialogues to nurture our discussion today.

A four-hour integration segment cannot do justice to the extraordinary and specialized work of the entire ECOSOC system. Therefore, I organized the three informal "Integration Dialogues" conversations, which were invaluable in exploring integrated policy options for better recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. I sincerely hope that today we will seize the moment to use our discussions during the dialogues to focus on the priorities for inclusive, resilient and sustainable recovery.

During the Dialogues, participants agreed that we cannot work as we used to, we cannot face the post-pandemic "business as usual" recovery. To recover we require an inclusive vision that emphasizes the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the fulfilment of the SDGs.

We need integrated strategies and policies, today more than ever, as countries must look forward to innovative solutions to address the economic, social and environmental dimensions of the impact of COVID-19. The era of working in silos has been overtaken by reality. In fact, the lack of integration or coordination demonstrates the unsuccessful impact of some of our policies.

A recurring message of the Integration Dialogues is that the response to the pandemic is an opportunity to take transformative, course-changing action to build a truly sustainable and resilient future. And this requires a transformative approach across government and society as a whole that builds trust in institutions and breaks down silos.

It was also concluded that recovery packages should focus on the principle of leaving no one behind and be of temporary duration. They should be gender-sensitive and guided by the principle of equality for all and respect for human rights. They must also be sustainable and greener, taking into account the pressures of biodiversity and the climate crisis. We have also heard about the potential of science and its behaviour as a tool to analyse and promote integrated policies.

We discussed how we should sustain the emergency measures we took to respond to the pandemic and build on them to restructure our economic and social systems, whose economic and social weaknesses were exacerbated by the crisis. For example, social protection measures should go beyond short-term cash payments and focus on the expansion of health care systems, financial inclusion, access to digital technologies, and universal access to health systems and vaccines. Intersectoral work for equitable access to vaccines is vital. Without vaccines, no recovery is possible.

In addition, high quality data is necessary for informed, evidence-based policy making for effective outcomes.

ECOSOC must respond to the need for effective and integrated multilateralism to put in place an inclusive process to identify changes that will ensure that the UN system supports equitable, sustainable and resilient recovery and solid progress towards the accomplishment of the SDGs. The Council should encourage closer coordination among its subsidiary bodies to avoid duplication and promote synergies, as well as explore new norms and standards based on lessons learned from the pandemic, and promote global solidarity and multilateral cooperative efforts towards sustainable recovery and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

In addition, the High-Level Political Forum offers a unique opportunity to advance informed decision making at a time of unprecedented informed decision-making at a time of unprecedented challenges, building on the thematic and national reviews of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, offering key insights on priority areas for accelerated action.

Excellencies,

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown us how interconnected we are as countries and as people. This interconnectedness also gives us the power to come together and move forward with a strong multilateral response for a sustainable and resilient recovery.

What began as a health emergency has become an unprecedented socioeconomic crisis. The pandemic exposed and exacerbated existing inequalities, such as the digital divide and discrimination on the basis of gender, race, age, disability, economic, minority and migrant status. How we emerge from these difficulties depends on the actions we take now and in the immediate future.

Our top priority is to stop the pandemic. This requires concerted efforts with global solidarity to achieve equitable access to vaccines for all. At the same time, we must urgently address the devastating impact of the pandemic on individuals, communities and economies.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs must continue to guide our efforts to ensure that no one is left behind. We must innovatively transform our institutions and our integrated responses to the challenges we face.

That is why we have come together today in this Integration Segment. The Segment offers the opportunity to hear the full range of voices from the functional commissions and expert bodies of ECOSOC and UN system entities, bringing to the forefront their valuable contributions to the main theme of ECOSOC and the High-Level Political Forum.

Our discussions today and at the Integration Dialogues will set the stage for the thematic review of the High-Level Political Forum, which will begin on Tuesday. I will present the key messages from the integration segment at the opening of the HLPF.

Today we have three interesting panels that will address various dimensions of recovery in the face of the pandemic. We will have many distinguished speakers from the ECOSOC family, the UN system and from Member States, as well as from civil society. I look forward to an active debate on integrated public policy options and innovative approaches for the recovery.

As established by the mandate of this Segment, our program also includes a presentation of the report of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), which will be followed by a dialogue with member states on its work.

I urge all participants in the room and online to join our discussions during and after the meeting using the hashtags #RecoverBetter #COVID19 #2030Agenda #IntegrationSegment and #GlobalGoals on social media.

Thank you very much.