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United Nations Economic and Social Council

TAKING ACTION TO IMPROVE LIVES

Statement by H.E. Ms. Inga Rhonda King, President of ECOSOC

**Joint Meeting of the Economic and Social Council and the Second
Committee of the General Assembly**

10 October 2018

Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to welcome you all to this joint meeting of the Economic and Social Council and the Second Committee of the General Assembly in its seventy-third session.

Today we are joined by a number of prominent experts from different sectors and parts of the globe to discuss the shift away from a linear economy of, ‘take-make-consume-and throw away’ towards a circular economy. At the heart of the circular economy is the idea of waste is redefined, and new business models and product designs enable us to give another life to what we once believed was “waste”.

The focus of this event is particularly relevant and builds upon discussions which took place during this past July’s High-Level Political Forum, especially on the in-depth review of SDG 12 on sustainable consumption and production.

We will hear from private sector representatives, innovators, and scientists. We need to bear in mind that a growing population is committed to making this shift in their pattern of production and consumption, which is precisely the kind of structural change necessary to accelerate implementation of the 2030 Agenda and move towards a more sustainable and just world.

And this global movement could not have come at a better time. The world will add an additional one billion inhabitants by the year 2030, and with it will come a drastic increase in the demand for natural resources and raw materials.



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Domestic material consumption is steadily growing worldwide, both in developing and developed countries.

These trends mean that humanity is currently using nature 1.7 times faster than the planet's ecosystems can regenerate, painting a stark picture for our future.

However, we jointly have the ability to transition away from an economic model which puts our planet and future at risk.

The circular economy model reaches far beyond our achievement of SDG 12. It holds much promise in the implementation of a number of SDGs, including SDG 6 on energy, 8 on economic growth, 11 on sustainable cities, 13 on climate change, 14 on oceans, and 15 on life on land.

It also promises vast economic opportunities, such as creating additional revenue from existing products and processes, spurring innovation, and reducing operating costs, to name a few.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today we will discuss the policies, platforms, and partnerships necessary to enable our shift towards a circular economy.

And the discussions do not end here. As this global movement gains momentum, we have important opportunities ahead to highlight tangible solutions in support of the transition away from unsustainable economic models.

In September 2019, heads of state will come together once again to discuss innovative solutions and reaffirm their commitment to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda during the High-Level Political Forum under the auspices of the General Assembly – the “SDG Summit”. Let us ensure that the circular economy is an integral part of these discussions and that we continue sharing experiences and best practices to accelerate the change we so urgently need.

I want to thank you once again for your participation today, and I look forward to a fruitful and engaging discussion.



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