



ECOSOC

United Nations Economic and Social Council

TAKING ACTION TO IMPROVE LIVES

**Keynote Address by H.E. Ambassador Inga Rhonda King,
President of the Economic and Social Council**

**HLPF side event on “Human Rights and the 2030 Agenda: Leaving no one
behind while accelerating SDG implementation”**

Friday, 12 July 2019, 1:15-2:30 pm, Conference Room 1, UN Headquarters

Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to thank the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Group of Friends on human rights and the 2030 Agenda co-chaired by Chile and Denmark, and the other organizers of this event for inviting me to join you today.

I would like to begin by welcoming the initiative by the Human Rights Council to organize two intersessional meetings on human rights and the 2030 Agenda. These meetings have and will serve to provide a space for Member States, the United Nations and regional human rights mechanisms, United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, national human rights institutions and civil society organizations to share good practices, achievements, challenges and lessons learned in the promotion and protection of human rights and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda¹. They also provide important inputs into the High-level political forum on sustainable development (HLPF). The next meeting of this kind will take place at the end of this year in Geneva and we look forward to hearing about its outcome at the 2020 HLPF.

¹ The meetings are mandated by the HRC resolution A/HRC/RES/37/24 available at <https://undocs.org/A/HRC/RES/37/24>

Today's event offers a good opportunity to also discuss here in New York the conclusions of the first intersessional meeting held at the beginning of this year in Geneva.

Dear Friends,

The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) has a strong interest in human rights which is part of its Charter mandate. It receives reports from the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and from the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

I am honoured to have been the first ECOSOC President who was invited to formally address the Human Rights Council last year.

Human Rights Council Resolution 37/25, which invited the ECOSOC President to brief the Human Rights Council on the outcome of the UN High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, was an important milestone in the effort to promote an integrated approach to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. It was also a concrete step towards bridging the divide between Geneva and New York. Building linkages and synergies between the Human Rights Council and the HLPF will be crucial if we are to ensure a more integrated and transformative approach to achieving the SDGs and realizing human rights. My successor, Ambassador Mona Juul of Norway, will also have the opportunity to brief the Human Rights Council in November on the outcome of this HLPF.

The theme of this year's HLPF - "Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality" - is a human rights theme. Empowering people to claim their rights, ensuring their full inclusion and participation in the decisions that affect their lives, and treating everyone as equal regardless of their race, ethnicity, religion, age, disability or gender identity – is at the heart of human rights. It is also at the core of this year's review of progress in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. And it speaks directly to the overarching pledge of the 2030 Agenda, to leave no one behind and to reach those furthest behind first.

In a world where some people are not only being 'left' behind but are also being 'pushed' even further behind - as we were reminded last year by research

published by the Committee on Development Policy - such discussions are of great importance. We should never forget that behind every piece of data and behind the SDG goals, targets, and indicators are human beings, with all their aspirations and hopes, with all their human rights, including economic, social and cultural rights.

Now, four years since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, the HLPF is providing us with a platform to take stock of where we are in terms of progress as well as identify challenges and gaps in SDG achievement. While advances have been made in a number of goals and targets, regrettably progress has been slow in many Goals and the global response has not been ambitious enough. This comes out clearly in the special edition of the Secretary-General's SDGs progress report.

It is cause of great concern, for instance, that extreme poverty is projected to be 6 per cent by 2030, hunger is on the rise for the third consecutive year, greenhouse emissions continue to increase, and institutions are not strong enough to respond adequately to these inter-linked and cross-border challenges. It is also concerning that population with documented disadvantages remain excluded. Globally, youth are three times more likely to be unemployed than adults. Women represent less than 40 per cent of those employed, occupy only about a quarter of managerial positions in the world and continue to be disproportionately impacted by violence. People with disabilities and those living with HIV/AIDS continue to face multiple disadvantages, denying them both life opportunities and fundamental human rights. Rising intolerance in many parts of the world threatens fundamental human rights and human progress.

Equally worrying is that the global landscape for SDG implementation has generally deteriorated since 2015 hindering the efforts of many governments. Multilateralism – which is key to implementing global agreements – is currently under serious threat.

This is a timely discussion for the ongoing reform of the UN development system as it generates opportunities for UN country teams to provide integrated quality support to Member States in their aspiration to achieve the 2030 Agenda. Operationalizing the synergies between sustainable development and human rights in early stages of the new generation of Resident Coordinators and UNDAFs can increase the potential for coordinated approaches within the UN system as well as in the countries they operate.

Overall, at this HLPF as well as the HLPF which will be held under the auspices of the General Assembly (SDG Summit) in September, world leaders will have the unique opportunity to review the status of implementation of the 2030 Agenda as a whole as well as renew their commitment to the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

The energy and enthusiasm that we have seen in this UN complex this week, with participants from various professional backgrounds coming together to discuss how to create a more sustainable future, give us hope that change is possible. This is the time to be bold and remain committed to the spirit and ambition we set for ourselves in 2015.

Thank you.