



Check against delivery

**Advancing the 2030 Agenda: Lessons learnt from the first cycle of  
the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF)  
– how far can we go?**

An expert meeting for reviewing how to improve the HLPF

**12 December 2018**

**UNHQ, New York, Conference Room E**

*Opening remarks by H.E. Ms. Inga Rhonda King, President of ECOSOC*

Director of OISC,  
Mr. Dodds,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Dear Friends of Governance,

It is my pleasure to address you today.

At the outset, I would like to commend you for your longstanding commitment to the cause of sustainable development.

Creating space for dialogue and creative thinking on ways to strengthen governance for sustainable development is critical to truly shift the world onto a sustainable and resilient path. 2019 will be an important year to accelerate progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals.

In 2019, the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development will convene twice – in July, under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council and in September, as a Summit. We will have completed the first cycle of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and the first review of all 17 SDGs. This provides a tremendous opportunity but also comes with the responsibility to deliver on expectations.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me share a few thoughts on the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

First, the HLPF in 2019 will review a delicate set of SDGs this summer. Those address quality education (SDG 4); sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth and decent work (SDG 8); inequalities (SDG 10); climate action (SDG 13); peaceful and inclusive societies, access to justice and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions (SDG 16); and means of implementation and partnerships for the Goals (SDG 17).

SDG 16 in particular reflects a delicate political balance. It includes addressing institutional gaps, which is not an easy task; it requires a shift in mindsets and moving away from traditional ways of working in silos.

Back in 1987, the Brundtland report<sup>1</sup> rightly acknowledged that - I quote - *“the objective of sustainable development and the integrated nature of the global environment/development challenges pose problems for institutions, national and international, that were established on the basis of narrow preoccupations and compartmentalized concerns. Governments' general response to the speed and scale of global changes has been a reluctance to recognize sufficiently the need to change themselves. The challenges are both interdependent and integrated, requiring comprehensive approaches and popular participation.”*

While institutions and governance for sustainable development cannot be strengthened overnight, it is reassuring to see that we finally seem to make progress on this issue. Many countries have adapted or are in the process of adapting their institutional arrangements to the level of integration and policy coherence that the 2030 Agenda requires by creating various coordination mechanisms led at the highest level. They are even moving towards a whole-of-government and a whole-of-society approach as many voluntary national reviews have shown us.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the global level, our efforts should be commensurate with the efforts taken at the national level.

The theme of the HLPF in 2019 is “Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality.” We thus should strive to demonstrate the value of the HLPF for the 2030 Agenda, the international community and, above all, for our fellow citizens.

I am pleased that the thematic reviews of the SDGs are well received and mobilize a wide range of actors. The VNR presentations are also becoming more and more substantive. Yet, I also see scope for improvement.

The July HLPF will be the last HLPF under the auspices of ECOSOC before the overall review of the 2030 Agenda at the SDG Summit and the upcoming review of General Assembly resolutions 67/290 and 70/299 on the organizational aspects of the HLPF, at the 74<sup>th</sup> session of

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<sup>1</sup> Para. 31, Brundtland Report, <http://www.un-documents.net/our-common-future.pdf>

the General Assembly. The July HLPF will thus provide the opportunity to take stock of lessons learned and advance ideas for strengthening the forum.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This leads me to my third point: We need to gradually build the momentum for the September Summit in the first half of 2019.

As you know, the segments and fora of ECOSOC will take place in a rearranged order, as mandated by General Assembly resolution 72/305 on the strengthening of the Council. Throughout these meetings, I encourage you to reflect on first, how far we have come; second, where and how we could accelerate progress and strengthen governance for the SDGs, and third, strategies to translate our common vision that is the 2030 Agenda into tangible results for all people, everywhere.

The outcome of both the July and the September HLPFs needs to convey a strong political message that the international community is deeply committed to deliver on the 2030 Agenda. I count on all of you to mobilize your capitals and engage your peers in working towards a political declaration that is adopted by consensus.

The Summit also needs to celebrate and encourage the multiple efforts to advance implementation.

Moreover, the success of the SDG Summit is intrinsically linked to the success of the Secretary-General's Climate Summit and the High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development, which will also be held in September 2019. The preparations of all three high-level events should be mutually reinforcing and mobilize the widest range of stakeholders possible.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

2019 will indeed be a critical year for ECOSOC, for the 2030 Agenda, for our vision for sustainable development. Let us seize this opportunity.

I wish you fruitful deliberations and happy holidays.

Thank you.