



Asian Buddhist Conference for Peace

21 June 2019

Remarks by

H.E. Ambassador Inga Rhonda King

President of the Economic and Social Council

His Excellency, Mr Battulga, President of Mongolia

His Eminence, Kamba Lama Gab-ju, President of Asian Buddhist Conference for Peace (ABCP), Abbot of Ganda Teg-chen-ling Monastery, Most Venerable Byam-ba-Jav, Head of the National Preparatory Committee of the 11th General Assembly of ABCP and Da Lama of Gandan Teg-chen-ling Monastery

Honorable Minister for Education, Culture, Science and Sports

Honourable Members of Parliament

Distinguished Delegates,

Excellencies, Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honoured to join you today, at the 11th General Assembly and 50th Anniversary of the Asian Buddhist Conference for Peace, in my capacity as the President of the United Nations Economic and Social Council.

The Council over which I preside—the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)—was created by the United Nations Charter in 1945 as one of the six principal organs of the United Nations. It has 54 elected member states from around the world. While our work is less well-known compared to that of the Security Council, it is indeed critical for the smooth functioning of the international system. The ECOSOC brings people and issues together to promote collective actions for a sustainable world.

The adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was a tremendous achievement of multilateralism. Through a universal, integrated and inclusive process, which included governments and non-governmental stakeholders, Member States worked together in a cohesive, transparent, open and trustful manner to overcome their differences and create the conditions for a people-centred and planet-sensitive future. The 2030 Agenda emphasizes “the responsibilities of all States, in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations, to

respect, protect and promote human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction of any kind as to race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, disability or other status”.

This year is a critical year for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals. With the end of the first cycle of the High-level Political Forum for Sustainable Development (HLPF), we will complete the review of all the SDGs. And we will review our overall progress in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the SDG Summit in September.

In July, we will review several SDGs which are relevant for the promotion of sustainable development and peace, such as SDG 4 on equitable quality education, SDG 8 on jobs and economic growth, SDG 10 on reducing inequality, SDG 13 on climate change, SDG 16 on peace, justice and robust institutions, and SDG 17 on global partnerships.

As the recent Special Edition of the SDGs Progress Report highlights, we have witnessed progress made in a number of SDGs and targets. Governments and non-governmental actors have embraced the SDGs and have taken bold and transformative action towards their

achievement. Despite this, however, for many SDGs, progress has been slow.

With less than 11 years remaining to reach our ambitious goals, it is time to step up our action to shift the world towards a sustainable and resilient path. Challenges facing the world today—from climate change to population movements, to global economic risks, pandemics and technological advances—can only be achieved when we work together to unleash innovative ways of working and mobilizing expertise and resources to address our challenges.

Faith-based organizations have an important role to play in promoting durable peace and sustainable development. The General Assembly has acknowledged the active engagement of the United Nations system with faith-based and cultural organizations in the promotion of inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue and in bringing together people of different cultures, religions, faiths or beliefs to discuss common issues and objectives. The Assembly, in resolution 73/129, also invited “Member States to further promote reconciliation to help to ensure durable peace and sustained development, including by working with faith leaders and communities and through reconciliatory measures and acts of service and by encouraging forgiveness and compassion among individuals”.

This is because the values of faith-based organizations are closely aligned with those that are embedded in the sustainable development goals of ending extreme poverty and hunger, promoting gender equality and peaceful societies and protecting the environment. Many of your organizations have already been in the trenches working with Governments, other Non-Governmental Organizations, foundations and community-based organizations in providing access to health, education and other social services, particularly in rural areas.

As we approach 2020, it must be a decade of delivery for the poorest and the most vulnerable. I count you to continue to support the efforts of the United Nations to reach the furthest behind first.

The 2030 Agenda is an “agenda of the people, by the people and for the people”. We need everyone’s engagement in the way forward, to ensure no one is left behind.

I wish the Asian Buddhist Conference for Peace a successful conference and and I wish you all peace profound!

Thank you.

