



ECOSOC

United Nations Economic and Social Council

TAKING ACTION TO IMPROVE LIVES

**TPs for President of ECOSOC
Video Message to Civil Society Meeting of Financing for Development in
the Era of COVID-19 and Beyond – 2 November 2020**

02:00 PM (Geneva Time)

09:00 AM (NY Time)

Ladies and Gentlemen,

- This Civil Society Meeting will form an important part of the efforts to develop “Financing for Development in the Era of COVID-19 and Beyond”.
- The UN is the only inclusive and universal forum to advance discussions that represent the voices of all actors, including civil society. The UN also has a role to mobilize actions by all.
- In my remarks as ECOSOC President at the September High-level Event, I underscored the need for urgent concrete measures by all stakeholders to address the current challenges facing developing countries.
- We are all aware that the current crisis has transcended all borders, but at the same time it is painfully clear that developing countries have suffered disproportionately from the unprecedented economic, social and health emergency triggered by the pandemic.
- To support developing countries in tackling their specific challenges in the COVID-19 response and recovery, we need comprehensive measures to ensure that their economies recover and revive on the path of growth and development.
- Let me highlight a few concrete actions that we need to take to enable the developing countries to achieve a resilient, sustainable and inclusive recovery.
- First, it is absolutely essential that we address the debt vulnerabilities and liquidity requirements of developing countries. PM Imran Khan of Pakistan called for a global debt initiative back in April.

- Since last May, we have worked on a number of concrete policy proposals in the Discussion Group IV. These include extension and expansion of debt service suspension initiative; debt cancellation for LDCs; debt swaps; and debt buybacks.
- In order to ensure liquidity for the developing countries in this time of crisis and make available new money for restored growth, it is imperative that new SDRs are created and existing unutilized SDRs are repurposed to support developing countries.
- The private sector must participate in restoring economic revival including in the developing countries. Apart from contributing to debt moratoria, private creditors can also devise mechanisms to lower the interest rates paid by developing countries on loans from the market, such as the proposal developed by ECA for creation of liquidity and sustainability facility.
- Second, investment flows, including those from stimulus packages, should prioritize investment in sectors aligned with the SDGs, such as sustainable infrastructure: investment in renewable energy, water and sanitation, transportation, information and communication technologies, health, and education.
- There is a need for an integrated facility under the UN umbrella which can harmonize investment policies and help developing countries in preparation of project and feasibility studies, and in accessing financing from both public and private sources.
- I believe UN using its country offices could take lead in establishing such facility and use its convening power to ensure that it works in line with the SDGs and that poorer countries (such as LDCs and SIDS) also receive adequate financing for infrastructure.
- Third, Fiscal policies are a crucial component of COVID-19 response and recovery. The pandemic is an opportunity to put in place an equitable international tax regime to enable developing countries to generate adequate domestic revenues to finance the SDGs.
- Fourth, to allow illicit flows to continue from developing countries, at this time, is nothing short of criminal. The FACTI Panel interim report highlights that lack of financial integrity is a global problem, which requires global and inclusive solutions. I invite civil society to support the work of the FACTI Panel.
- Finally, international development cooperation must be intensified to support the short-term response to the pandemic, while building long-term growth and sustainability.

- The COVID-19 pandemic should be the impetus to accelerate implementation of long-overdue measures to set the world on a more sustainable and equitable development path and to make the global economy more resilient to future shocks.
- The voices of civil society - your voices- will play a vital role not only by contributing your expertise but also by amplifying the call for a sustainable, resilient and inclusive recovery from COVID-19.
- I look forward in the coming months to your contribution to ECOSOC forums such as the FFD Forum, Development Cooperation Forum, and the HLPF which would advance some of the objectives which I mentioned and contribute to the promotion of the SDGs

I thank you.
