

**CLOSING REMARKS**

**BY**

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**DELIVERED DURING**

**THE SECOND GLOBAL WEBINAR  
FOR 2022 VNR COUNTRIES**

**13 APRIL 2022**

**13:00 HOURS**

**GABORONE, BOTSWANA**

*Please check against delivery.*

**Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

1. As we come to the conclusion of this VNR Workshop, allow me this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to all participants for making it through despite challenges of travel and other obstacles. I especially thank our dedicated Colleagues who have been joining us on the zoom platform the entire time.
2. We had over the past 2 days and this morning, very enriching deliberations that addressed a wide range of issues. I hope the presentations and discussions have been useful for everyone.
3. We heard many great examples of good practices in the preparation of the VNRs, including how you are aligning the SDGs with your national development plans and how you are organizing your institutional arrangements and engaging stakeholders in the process of developing and drafting the reports. We have also heard advice from our colleagues on the

means of financing and data collection, including innovative solutions to build inclusion and bridge existing gaps.

4. I appreciate the participation of the UN regional Economic Commissions and for providing valuable tools and guidance to complement the work done at the regional level that supports the national reviews.
5. We have also explored how important it is to engage local communities and localize the SDGs through awareness campaigns and actions at the grassroots level. Through this, we appreciated the rich discussions on guidelines and examples of how voluntary local reviews can help support an approach that works from the bottom-up to inform national processes, and in turn also works to help national Governments understand local priorities and take appropriate actions for local implementation.
6. With the VNR clinics, we were able to delve deeper into some of the challenges of writing the VNR report, as well as inclusion of institutions and stakeholders, financing and data. We heard excellent presentations

from many countries in these clinics, and I want to thank all who shared their experiences, as well as those who raised important questions during the discussions. Here I want to emphasize that we appreciate the participants who have spoken up about their obstacles and identified their needs, for it is our utmost aim to reach everyone, especially those who are furthest behind. We have heard you, and we pledge to support you.

### **Excellencies, Dear Colleagues,**

7. In the process of following up on the VNRs beyond the HLPF, I would like to thank the Permanent Representatives of Morocco and the Philippines for their participation and their leadership as the co-chairs of the Group of Friends of VNRs. As they mentioned, there will be another meeting of the Group in May, and all VNR countries will be matched with “friends” if they do not already have one, to provide peer review and support for each VNR both in advance of the HLPF, and after its conclusion. I encourage you

all again to reach out through your missions to find a 'friend'.

8. Finally, I hope that today's discussion on the HLPF theme has enriched your VNR preparations. As you know, we are still in the grip of the pandemic, and many countries will be bringing their policy solutions for a sustainable recovery to the table, in July. The VNRs will provide the foundation for discussions around where we stand in our efforts to ensure that vaccination campaigns are equitable. In my role as ECOSOC President, I have pledged to prioritize efforts to help countries reach the goal of the World Health Organization (WHO) to achieve global COVID-19 vaccination by mid-2022.

**Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,**

9. In closing, let me reiterate as President of ECOSOC, and on behalf of the Government of Botswana, that it has been a great honor to host this workshop in Gaborone. We are grateful to everyone who have

been involved, especially the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN-DESA), the European Union and the Government of Italy, the Resident Coordinator and his Office, the UN-Botswana team, my colleagues at the Ministry of International Affairs and Cooperation, and the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development; for supporting and organizing this event.

10. I also wish to thank the technical team and the interpreters for their efforts to ensure that this hybrid meeting was successful in making the discussions as inclusive as possible, both for those in the room and those online.
11. We are excited to take the next steps forward. We therefore, hope to welcome you all to the High-Level Political Forum in New York, this July.
12. I wish everyone safe travels back home.

**I thank you for kind attention**