



OPENING STATEMENT

BY

**H.E. MR. COLLEN V. KELAPILE
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC
AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (ECOSOC)**

AT THE

**JOINT MEETING OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
SECOND COMMITTEE AND THE ECONOMIC AND
SOCIAL COUNCIL**

***"Building productive capacities in LDCs, LLDCs,
SIDS as well as MICs for more
resilient recovery and sustainable development in
the post-COVID-19 era"***

**Conference rooms 1-2-3 - 20 October 2021 - 10:00
am - 1:00 pm (EDT)**

Honorable Ministers and Excellencies;

Distinguished Delegates;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

1. It is my distinct pleasure to join my dear colleague, Vanessa Frazier, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Malta to the United Nations and the Chair of the Second Committee, in welcoming you to this Joint Meeting of the Economic and Social Council and the Second Committee.
2. Our theme for today, ***"Building productive capacities in LDCs, LLDCs, SIDS as well as MICs for more resilient recovery and sustainable development in the post-COVID-19 era"***, is timely and it carries the very essence of the kind of ambitious and innovative measures we require if we are to achieve the recovery of particularly these groups of countries in special situations.
3. In the last few years we have seen, around the world, people's abilities to cope with adversity being pushed to the limits. We have also seen the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, together with the climate crisis and other challenges, resulting in a decline in global human development for the first time in 30 years.
4. As the COVID-19 pandemic continues around the world, it is the LDCs, LLDCs, SIDS, and MICs that feel its full brunt and devastating impact. The resultant impact includes among others rising hunger, poverty and significant exacerbation of pre-existing inequalities.
5. Many of these countries' economies are struggling, and it will likely take several years for most to return to 2019 levels of GDP per capita.

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

6. The LDCs, LLDCs, SIDS, and MICs have limited productive capacities, which constrain their ability to sustain economic growth, diversify their economies, boost resilience to shocks, achieve effective integration into the global economy and ensure the well-being of their people.
7. Building productive capacities is therefore a critically needed step for recovering better and getting on track towards achieving the SDGs during this Decade of Action and Delivery for Sustainable Development.
8. Expanding productive capacities will effectively have a direct positive impact on the SDGs, growth, employment and infrastructure development. Well directed efforts and accompanying measures will also maximize impacts on combatting poverty, inequality, hunger as well as on achieving gender equality.
9. Furthermore, expanding productive capacities will have positive effects on health, especially at the time when we critically need to boost developing countries' capacities to produce vaccines. Actions to build productive capacities must therefore be designed with all SDGs in mind, and help address climate change, pollution and biodiversity crises.
10. Building productive capacities thus requires:
 - **First** - An integrated approach to development at the national and international levels;
 - **Second** - For countries to foster structural economic transformation, which will in turn help reduce poverty and accelerate progress towards the SDGs; and
 - **Third** - Adequate financial resources as well as directed and risk-informed investments.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

11. It is my sincere hope that we will use the available platforms such as our Joint Meeting today, the 76th Session of the General Assembly and the forthcoming LDC 5 Conference, among others, to provide needed insights in these issues as well as make new commitments.
12. I therefore, invite all of us to focus on the opportunities, challenges, key policies and investments needed to build productive capacities in LDCs, LLDCs, SIDS, as well as MICs.
13. I look forward to hearing the views of our distinguished speakers and the engagement of Member States.

I thank you.