



WELCOME REMARKS

BY

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

**AT THE COCKTAIL RECEPTION CO-HOSTED BY THE REGIONAL
COMMISSIONS NEW YORK OFFICE AND THE OFFICE OF THE
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC AND
SOCIAL COUNCIL (ECOSOC)**

**WEDNESDAY, 13 JULY 2022
18:00 -20:00 HOURS**

**DELEGATES DINING ROOM AND TERRACE
UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS
NEW YORK**

Please check against delivery.

- **Ms. Rosa Malango, Master of Ceremony, and Director, Regional Commissions New York Office;**
- **Excellency, Dr Mokgweetsi Eric Keabetswe Masisi, President of the Republic of Botswana, and our Guest of Honour;**
- **Madame Deputy-Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ms. Amina J. Mohammed, and our Special Guest;**
- **Ms. Olga Algayerova, Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of the UN Economic Commission for Europe, and Coordinator of Regional Commissions;**
- **Excellencies, Honourable Ministers and Heads of Delegations to the HLPF;**
- **Colleagues, Permanent Representatives;**
- **Executive Secretaries of the Regional Commissions, Resident Coordinators and other Heads of UN system organizations;**
- **Representatives of Major Groups and Other Stakeholders, including the youth;**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen;**

1. What a delight in joining **Rosa Malango, Master of Ceremony, and Director, Regional Commissions New York Office** as well as **Olga Algayerova, Executive Secretary of the UN Economic Commission for Europe** -- in her capacity as Coordinator of Regional Commissions -- to warmly welcome you all to this reception co-hosted by the five Regional Commissions and the Office of the President of ECOSOC.
2. I also wish to thank our colleagues at **UNDP** and the **UN Global Compact** -- who are not just friends of my own country Botswana, and strong partners of the ECOSOC Presidency -- but also contributed to make this first-of-a-kind event materialize.
3. We are particularly so blessed that -- as we prepare to officially relinquish the Presidency by end of this month -- our **President, His Excellency Dr Mokgweetsi Eric Keabetswe Masisi** was able to find space in his busy schedule and travel all the way from home to join us as our Guest of Honour.

Excellencies,

4. Under a bronze statue representing the figure of a man holding a hammer in one hand and, in the other, a sword -- standing where we are gathered this evening -- is an inscription, carved in stone, taken from the Book of Isaiah:

"... and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation; neither shall they learn war anymore."

5. We are living in trying times when the sense of moral justice as epitomized by the Prophet's words inscribed in this statue, and the spirit of global solidarity and cooperation enshrined in the UN Charter are being tested more than ever before.
6. During my tenure as President of ECOSOC, the world has seen unprecedented challenges -- with COVID-19 in particular reversing decades of progress on development and adding to rising inequalities, while

the climate emergency intensifies, and the war in Ukraine compounding the situation.

7. Never has the fulfilment of ECOSOC's core mandate of ***"promoting higher standards of living, full employment, and economic and social progress"*** been more urgent as it is today.
8. The **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Goals** offers a solid framework for the Council to focus precisely on advancing the three dimensions of sustainable development (social, economic and environmental). We must do all that is in our power to accelerate implementation of this blueprint, and this HLPF offers a great opportunity.
9. As a contribution, in my inaugural statement as President of ECOSOC last July, I declared that the Council must rise to the occasion and wage a ***"... spirited war against disease, poverty and inequality, impacts of climate change..."*** as well as mobilize global action and resources to accelerate implementation of the SDGs.

10. I also outlined eight broad priorities to underpin the Presidency, which also mirrored Botswana's own values and mission.
11. Looking back and now counting days to the finishing line on **25 July**, I am proud to say that the Council has made its humble contribution in moving the needle in the right direction, while I am acutely aware of the scale of the current challenges and those lying ahead.
12. In the Council's endeavour, I have come to appreciate the value strong collaboration and forging productive partnerships with a diverse network of stakeholders including the Regional Commissions -- as ECOSOC subsidiary organs -- with whom I am excited to be co-hosting this event with their strong support.
13. Alongside many other UN system organizations, and building on the work being done by the reinvigorated UN development system at country level, my participation at the Africa Regional Forum for Sustainable Development in Kigali -- organised jointly with UNECA -- and my recent visit to the Economic

and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific (ESCAP) in Bangkok, I have witnessed first-hand the value add and contribution of the Regional Commissions not only to the work of the Council but importantly to the development agenda of regions and Member States they serve.

14. As subsidiary organs of the Council, their thought leadership, advocacy work and innovation in advancing implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the SDGs remains crucial.
15. I therefore would like to take a moment on this occasion to recognize Rosa Malango, Director, Regional Commissions New York Office and the leadership of the Executive Secretaries of Regional Commissions, and thank them for the work they are doing.
16. I hope many more who have contributed to the effective discharge of our Presidency do not feel left behind in my short remarks, as I will certainly

acknowledge you better at the appropriate time very soon as we prepare to relinquish the Presidency.

17. It is my wish to make this event, a moment for celebration of the ECOSOC's role and the Presidency of Botswana and showcasing partnerships for the SDGs.
18. I hope the Regional Commissions together with other stakeholders can continue this tradition so that this get-together forms an informal part of the annual calendar of HLPF -- if my successors would also agree.
19. Once again, welcome to this reception, and please accept my best wishes for an enjoyable evening.

I thank you all for your kind attention.