

Opening Statement by
H.E. Mr. Collen Vixen Kelapile
President of the Economic and Social Council,

During the 2022 ECOSOC Partnership Forum

“Building back better from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19)
while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda on
Sustainable Development”

2 February 2022

Deputy Secretary-General, Ms. Amina Mohammed,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

- 1.** I am pleased to open the 2022 Partnership Forum of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), which marks the start of the annual cycle of the work of the Council.
- 2.** It is my hope that today’s discussions will serve as inspiration for the many subsequent forums, segments and other events of ECOSOC and its subsidiary bodies that will take place in the coming months, culminating in the annual High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) in July.
- 3.** I extend my warm greetings and welcome to all, including those who are joining us virtually from across the world.
- 4.** We are meeting at a time of unprecedented uncertainties.
- 5.** Two years into the pandemic, the COVID-19 virus continues to ravage all corners of our world and has reversed decades of development progress. It has laid bare the structural imbalances of our global financial system, and their dire impacts on the developing countries -- especially those already in special situations.

6. The ones bearing the full brunt of the pandemic are the most vulnerable in our societies -- those who are living in extreme poverty; those in the informal sector; persons with disabilities; indigenous people; the elderly; migrants and refugees; people with caring responsibilities -- and there are many more.

7. Furthermore, while we have the tools and means to combat this devastating pandemic, unequal access to the vaccines will continue to slow our recovery -- which will remain fragile, until the vaccines are equitably made available to all people in all countries.

8. At the same time, our world is facing three planetary crises of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution, along with a growing number of conflicts -- which also require similar urgent action by the global community.

9. To ensure that our societies recover in a fairer and more sustainable manner, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 SDGs need to guide the recovery efforts by all governments and actors -- including international organizations, the United Nations system, international financial institutions, parliamentarians, local governments, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, civil society, scientists, academia, women, youth and other stakeholders alike.

**Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

10. Against this backdrop, I am pleased that the ECOSOC Partnership Forum -- whose mandate was reoriented in General Assembly resolution 75/290A on the Strengthening of the Council -- has been prepared in close consultation with diverse stakeholders.

11. As a result, it is my hope that today's event will allow governments and the many stakeholders a unique opportunity to exchange new transformative ideas, and make policy recommendations on concrete actions required to relaunch momentum for SDGs implementation during the remainder of the Decade of Action.

12. I take this opportunity to express my deep appreciation to the members of the informal Multi-Stakeholder Advisory Group -- which I established to assist me with preparations for the 2022 ECOSOC

Partnership Forum -- for their invaluable inputs and reflections, and for also taking the lead in organizing many of today's informal sessions.

13. I also want to thank the many other stakeholders who shared their views, through the online global consultation process that was organized late last year. Over 250 inputs were received from stakeholders in 56 countries.

14. The key recommendations that emerged from these consultations have been taken into account when designing the programme and content of materials for today's event. Importantly, the inputs will ensure that this year's ECOSOC Partnership Forum is indeed a shared space to address important issues such as:

- the interconnectivity and cross-cutting nature of the SDGs;
- how to bolster capacity-building for partnership and mutual learning;
- how can we better support vulnerable groups, especially those that are not reachable by modern communications means; and,
- how can we ensure gender equality, quality education and vaccine equity for all.

**Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

15. Let me close by underscoring that the pandemic has shown us that we no longer can continue our work in a business-as-usual manner. We need to change the way we live, produce, consume, interact with each other and with nature.

16. We need to mobilize science and technology for the shared benefit, and harness our best and boldest ideas to develop innovative solutions to advance the SDGs and bridge inequalities between and within countries.

17. We must build on our varied experiences, and also explore new unchartered territories. Foremost, we need to rekindle a true spirit of multilateralism and international cooperation, anchored on solidarity between countries and among all peoples.

18. I, therefore, hope that today's discussions will chart a better way forward for engaging in genuine partnerships among all stakeholders -- for

a bigger impact where actions are most urgently needed to effectively address the common challenges we face.

I thank you.
