

**Pre-recorded Statement by H.E. Collen Vixen Kelapile, President of the
United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)**

**On the Occasion of the Commemoration of the
International Day of Women Judges**

10 March 2022

Excellencies,

Honourable Judges,

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. I am honoured to join you at this milestone event of the first commemoration of the International Day of Women Judges.

2. I wish to thank Qatar, the International Association of Women Judges (IAWJ) and the UNODC for their efforts in making this day a reality. I have been informed that the idea of an International Day recognizing the contribution of women judges was championed by the IAWJ and the Chief Justice of the State of Qatar during the 2020 High-Level Meeting of UNODC's Global Judicial Integrity Network and was later adopted by the UN General Assembly through resolution 75/274.

3. This is an important commemoration that will, on an annual basis, celebrate the role of women judges in promoting the rule of law within countries and at the international level, and also highlight the significance of equitable gender representation in the judiciary. It will also provide countries and international courts with an opportunity to reflect on their progress on women's representation in their judicial benches.

4. For UN Member States, this day will also be a reminder of their commitment to develop and implement appropriate and effective national strategies and plans for the advancement of women in judicial systems and institutions at the leadership, managerial and other levels, as indicated in General Assembly Resolution 75/274.

5. In this context, I should also note that this occasion and the principles it represents and advocates for are relevant to our work at the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) as the Principal Organ that monitors and supervises the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

6. We therefore welcome the link between the promotion of women representation in the judiciary and SDG-5, which focuses on gender equality. Similarly, gender-balance in the judiciary also strengthens judicial integrity, trust, and legitimacy therefore advancing SDG-16, which relates to Peace, Justice and Strong institutions.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

7. As we highlight women's representation in judicial systems, we do so with a sense of solidarity with individuals, groups and entities who are also promoting gender equality in institutions such as national legislatures, executives, corporate boardrooms, non-governmental organisations as well as in international organisations.
8. For my part as the incumbent President of ECOSOC, I will continue to provide the necessary leadership to members and subsidiary bodies of the Council in ensuring that women and girls are not left furthest behind in all levels of decision making as well as in other spheres of socio-economic development.
9. In this connection, let me indicate that addressing inequality in all its forms and manifestations is one of the eight (8) priorities that I put forth upon assuming the Presidency in July 2021. I am committed to ensuring that ECOSOC devotes adequate time to dialogue on the root causes of and solutions to inequality.

10. This includes all kinds of inequality within countries such as inequality in accessing quality services such as health and education, income inequality, racial inequality, and inequality among countries such as the digital divide, COVID-19 vaccine inequity, and economic inequality.

11. Addressing these inequalities as well as gender inequality should form part of our efforts in **Building Back Better** and pursuing an SDG-driven and resilient recovery from the pandemic.

12. I am also glad to note that during the course of the 2022 ECOSOC session, Member States and development partners have expressed a strong desire to decisively deal with inequality and have emphasized the need to empower women and girls.

13. These views have been expressed during various ECOSOC engagements including the recent Partnership Forum and Coordination Segment. In this regard, I look forward to more guidance and commitment to action on inequality at future ECOSOC activities particularly the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development, which will be held in July 2022.

14. In conclusion, let me reiterate my congratulations to all stakeholders for securing a special day in the calendar dedicated to the celebration of women judges and also note that your achievement should be an inspiration to everyone who is in the frontline of the fight against inequality. I am confident that more victories are on the way.

I thank you for your kind attention and wish you a happy “International Day of Women Judges”