

CLOSING REMARKS

BY

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

**AT THE 2022 HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT (HLPF)**

**FRIDAY, 15 JULY 2022
16:00-18:00 HOURS**

**CONFERENCE ROOM 4
UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS
NEW YORK**

Please check against delivery.

- **Madame Deputy-Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ms. Amina J. Mohammed;**
- **Mr. Liu Zhenmin, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs;**
- **Excellencies, Honourable Ministers and Heads of Delegations to the HLPF;**
- **Representatives of Major Groups and Other Stakeholders, including the youth;**
- **Distinguished Delegates;**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen;**

1. I am extremely delighted to deliver some remarks at the conclusion of the **2022 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF)**, which I am sure you will agree with me it has been a huge success.

2. I warmly congratulate you all for the high turn-out, in-person, and your active participation at this year's HLPF.

3. I am proud to say that all my expectations have been met and exceeded.

4. With the strong commitment by my colleagues the Bureau members and dedicated support by the Secretariat, we have advanced the substantive programme of the Council and initiated concrete foundational action to implement the decisions of the General Assembly in Resolution 75/290 A and B of June last year on Strengthening of ECOSOC and the HLPF.

5. Two Heads of State and Government delivered keynote addresses at the **Opening of the Ministerial Segment of HLPF** and the **High-Level Segment of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)**.

6. I am equally pleased that **44 countries** successfully presented their Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) at the highest level of representation, thus signaling that we are mindful of the importance of buy-in and political leadership if we are to deliver on the 2030 Agenda.

7. Similarly, I am satisfied that a high number of Honorable Ministers participated in the **ECOSOC Ministerial Roundtable on "Accelerating**

Achievement of the SDGs by 2030: Addressing Ongoing Crises and Overcoming Challenges.”

8. After two years of virtual meetings, it was very pleasing to have so many Ministers and senior officials from capitals and representatives of Major Groups and Other Stakeholders -- including youth -- come to our United Nations building for this HLPF.

9. The enthusiasm, passion and high-energy demonstrated by all of you on the urgent need to implement the SDGs were palpable everywhere.

Excellencies,

10. The COVID-19 pandemic may not be over yet, but we are moving on in the road to recovery and building

back better. And we are looking far ahead, beyond today's daunting challenges and crises.

11. A key message I take from this HLPF is one of urgency and ambition.

12. Reversing the negative impacts of COVID-19 on the SDGs; fundamentally transforming our socio-economic and financial systems; addressing the ripple effects of the war in Ukraine on food security, energy, financing and the economy; and halting climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss are a calling we must work much harder to achieve.

13. Yes, this is a tall order. But it cannot wait any longer. As I said, we already know the challenges and solutions. We also have the tools and means, only if

we shared them equitably. What we need is action, working together in solidarity as the global family.

14. I am gratified that the Ministerial Declaration you just adopted by consensus leaves no doubt about our unwavering commitment to realize the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

15. In this respect, I would like to express my profound gratitude to H.E. Maurizio Massari, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Italy to the United Nations, and H.E. Margo Deiye, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Nauru to the United Nations, for their sterling leadership in facilitating the negotiation of the Ministerial Declaration and for reaching consensus on such an ambitious and action-oriented Declaration.

16. Thank you Ambassadors as well as to your dedicated Teams.
17. Having heard the **44** presentations of VNR countries, I am fully convinced that we can do it, if we take immediate transformative action and put in place risk-informed policies and plans.
18. The VNRs provided a vivid picture of the impacts of the global shocks felt around the world on the SDGs. But every single VNR presenting country explained how they are continuing to work towards the 2030 Agenda and its 17 Goals.
19. The same determination was felt throughout the HLPF.

Excellencies,

20. Beyond the overarching call for urgency and ambition as I already mentioned, allow me to seize this opportunity to share some of the main messages I derived from the HLPF.

21. **First**, today's complex and multiple challenges are a threat for the SDGs. But they offer an opportunity for renewed multilateral action and search for new innovative solutions that change the *status quo* and old ways of doing things.

22. These challenges can be successfully addressed through the full implementation of our blueprint and roadmap-- the 2030 Agenda -- and using its **5Ps**,

namely, **People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace and Partnerships.**

23. **Secondly,** the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed inequalities between and within countries. It reminded the world that without adequate and universal healthcare coverage supported by proper healthcare systems, there can be no sustainable development.

24. The fight against the pandemic requires a global comprehensive response. Many called for a strengthened global health architecture, built around a stronger World Health Organization (WHO).

25. **Third,** increased flows of public and private finance are needed to bridge the financing gap and deliver on the promise of the SDGs. Reforms must be urgently

pursued in international finance, debt and taxation architecture, with all countries and stakeholders taking an active role.

26. **Fourth**, education is a human right and a common public good, not a privilege. Education is a crucial investment in social inclusion and economic development. The upcoming **Transforming Education Summit** in September will address several obstacles that hinder the achievement of SDG 4.

27. **Fifth**, no country has achieved gender equality. Women and girls continue to face multiple forms of discrimination world-wide, which have been exacerbated by the pandemic.

28. **Sixth**, to Build Back Better, the needs of women and girls must be addressed more comprehensively. This includes eradicating violence against women; implementing national gender budgeting as well as ensuring access to technology and decent jobs.
29. **Seventh**, engaging local authorities is essential for an inclusive implementation and review of the 2030 Agenda. National and local Government should work together.
30. **Eighth**, ensuring vaccine equity and producing vaccines in developing countries is critical to economic recovery. Currently, a very low number of the African population has been fully vaccinated -- representing only **19%** -- which is far below the recommended

WHO target of **70%** which was to be achieved by mid this year.

31. **Ninth**, the Doha Programme of Action provides new avenues to lift LDCs out of poverty and truly transform their economies -- and we need full technology transfer and creation of decent jobs especially for youth. Food security, digital transformation and building productive capacities need to be pursued in these countries in special situations.

32. **Tenth**, due to their geographic location, during the pandemic the LLDCs were also hard hit by the disruptions in trade and transport on which their economies depend.

33. **Eleventh**, Small Island Developing States (SIDS) are encouraged by the good progress made by the High-Level Panel established to elaborate the **Multidimensional Vulnerability Index**.

34. I am optimistic that this Index will contribute to a fairer and more efficient allocation of financial resources.

35. **Twelfth**, we must better understand the specific challenges faced by Middle-Income Countries and their structural causes. And we need to map and improve the support they receive.

36. **Thirteenth**, there was concern that many SDG 14 targets have not been met. The UN Ocean Conference gave us new insights.

37. There are still opportunities to do better, if ocean actions are informed and guided by ocean science and better investment in ocean research. Comprehensive ocean action also requires deep engagement of local communities -- from policy elaboration to action and data collection, and leveraging multilateral partnerships.

38. **Fourteenth**, a synergetic agenda is needed to effectively address global deforestation, land degradation, biodiversity loss, poverty eradication, food insecurity and climate change through a “whole-of-society” approach.

39. **Fifteenth and finally**, the Regional Forums on Sustainable Development highlighted the varied

solutions that are being explored, including through digital technologies and innovative financial flows.

Excellencies,

40. I am particularly heartened that during this HLPF we launched preparations for the **2023 SDG Summit** to be held in September 2023, at the mid-term point of implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

41. I reinforce the message echoed by many Panelists that it should be a **Summit of action and implementation.**

42. We must therefore dedicate our full attention and energy to ensure its success, so that it marks an inflexion point towards SDG progress.

43. The last eight days of debates and peer learning, together with the Ministerial Declaration that you just adopted, gives us strong ground for optimism.

44. The performances by **Aespa group** and the **Children's Sing for Hope choir** reminded us of the importance of hope, joy and courage.

45. Let us all go back to our countries encouraged and re-invigorated, to continue efforts to recover from this pandemic and build back better through the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its 17 SDGs.

46. Once again, I would like to thank all countries and participants, and our many speakers and panelists, for their active participation and engagement.

47. Let me also thank the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, Mr. Liu Zhenmin.

48. Sadly, I am informed he will be leaving the UN at the end of the month. He has been a strong pillar to my ECOSOC Presidency and has extended full support to myself and all Member States throughout his tenure.

49. As President of ECOSOC, I have greatly benefitted from his wise advice and commitment to the values espoused in the United Nations Charter.

50. Thank you, USG Zhenmin, for what you did for the United Nations over the past years.

51. I also thank the USG's team, well led by Ms. Marion Barthelemy, as well as Ms. Emer Herity, the Secretary of ECOSOC and her team in DGACM.

52. Thank you also to the Broadcast and Conference Support Section, interpreters, conference officers and all those who have worked tirelessly to make this Forum the resounding success it has been.

53. I wish you all a safe return home.

I thank you all for your kind attention.