



STATEMENT

BY

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

AT

SECURITY COUNCIL SIGNATURE EVENT

***"PEACE AND SECURITY THROUGH PREVENTIVE
DIPLOMACY: A COMMON OBJECTIVE TO ALL UN
PRINCIPAL ORGANS"***

16 NOVEMBER 2021 - 10:00 A.M.

**Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

1. It is a great pleasure for me to address the Security Council, in my capacity as President of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), at this timely open debate. I wish to thank the Mexican Presidency of the Council for convening this debate, and for inviting me.

2. The event is, in fact, a very welcome step in the improvement of cooperation and collaboration among UN Charter-based Principal Organs.

3. The UN Charter recognized development as the indispensable foundation of collective security. While the Security Council has the primary responsibility for maintenance of international peace and security, conflict prevention is also at the core of the work of the UN and must therefore actively involve all Principal Organs.

4. At its founding, ECOSOC was charged with the responsibility to promote economic and social advancement of all peoples and the promotion and protection of Human Rights. Protecting our citizens from want, disease and environmental degradation is protecting their security and preventing conflict.

5. ECOSOC's oversight and coordination of the UN Development System, including in conflict settings, and its work on humanitarian action and coordination are also highly relevant to the maintenance of peace and security.

Mr. President,

6. To date, interactions between the Security Council and ECOSOC have remained sporadic and *ad hoc*. Today's complex challenges require more institutionalized collaboration, and we already have the legal basis for inter-Council coordination. Article 65 of the Charter clearly provides that "***the Economic and Social Council may furnish information to the Security Council and shall assist the Security Council upon its request***".

7. ECOSOC's rules of procedure also provide that special sessions can be requested by the Security Council, or alternatively an item can be proposed on ECOSOC's agenda. Despite this, we can only find two examples of explicit requests to ECOSOC for assistance by the Security Council referencing Article 65; the first in 1950 regarding the situation in Korea and the second in 1973 with respect to Zambia.¹

8. The most recent request by the Security Council to ECOSOC, in 1998, inviting its contribution to the elaboration of a long-term programme of support for Haiti did not reference Article 65.

Mr. President,

9. With over 75 years of development experience and a vast body of knowledge that are increasingly pertinent to the work of the Security Council, ECOSOC -- together with its subsidiary bodies -- has much to offer. It was the seminal work of the **Commission on the Status of Women** on gender mainstreaming that created the momentum for the consideration of the women, peace and security agenda in the Security Council.

¹ Repertory of Practice of United Nations Organs, 1945-1954 (Vol.3); Supplement No.5 (1970-1978) Vol.3

The **Commissions on Narcotic Drugs and on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice** and the **UN Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute** have also done work at the intersection of conflict and the rule of law.

10. Moreover, ECOSOC's **Commission on Social Development** addresses social exclusion and inequality and focuses on those communities often left behind. Its **Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues** and its **Youth Forum** also provide a platform for engaging communities that have traditionally been voiceless. Information from the **Committee for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights** which monitors implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights could constitute an early warning system.

11. The Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) of the **High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF)**, convened under the auspices of ECOSOC, also offer valuable insights and lessons learned for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in conflict-affected countries. At the HLPF in July 2022, of the 46 countries that will present their VNRs on implementation of the 2030 Agenda, approximately 12 have been affected by conflict within the past two decades.

Mr. President,

12. I am from a region of the world where surmounting the challenges to peace and development has been most elusive. In the **Sahel** we continue to witness untold suffering because of the failure to appreciate the complex interplay of human survival, in a very fragile and culturally diverse environment.

13. Extreme poverty in **South Sudan** is rooted in over 50 years of conflict. **Haiti's** vast humanitarian needs, structural inequality, governance deficits and vulnerability to climate change require that we work ever more closely together as the UN Principal Organs to address the longer-term development needs of this country. Currently, these three cases are on the agendas of both Councils, and could benefit from joint and complementary approaches

Mr. President,

14. Having said all that, allow me to share some practical options for strengthening inter-Council coordination that will be visible, transparent, complementary and effective. These could constitute elements for an institutional framework that could promote comprehensive, integrated solutions which span actions across the peace, security, humanitarian and development pillars of the organization.

- **First**, the Security Council and ECOSOC could build on their previous collaboration in the early 2000s. The Chair of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Security Council regularly participated in the work of the ECOSOC Ad Hoc Advisory Groups on African Countries Emerging from Conflict. There was even a joint mission to Guinea-Bissau in 2004.
 - The work of the Security Council's Ad Hoc Working Group in Africa, which includes in its terms of reference strengthening of cooperation with ECOSOC, could benefit from the participation of a member of the ECOSOC Bureau. While the Ad Hoc Advisory Groups on African countries no longer exist, the Council's

consideration of South Sudan and the Sahel remain relevant for joint discussion.

- **Second**, we can also draw on the experience of the existing regular interactions among the General Assembly, ECOSOC and the Peacebuilding Commission that have been in place for a number of years. There are monthly meetings between the Presidents of the General Assembly and ECOSOC, and the two Presidents also convene joint briefings at the beginning of the calendar year. There are also annual joint meetings of ECOSOC with the Peacebuilding Commission.
 - Given this rich and valuable experience, I would also like to propose regular meetings among the heads of the Principal Organs and the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission. Work programmes could be shared, which could help plan a more systematic approach to engaging the heads of Principal Organs where relevant.
 - Another option could be regular joint meetings of a composite committee of the “bureaux” of ECOSOC, the PBC and a “troika” of Security Council Presidents of the current, prior and next month. These meetings could serve to mobilize political will, international solidarity and could be the medium through which to discuss integrated strategies and targeted policy interventions that support conflict prevention.
 - These meetings could be prepared by existing Informal Coordinators, that have been put in place by the Peacebuilding Commission and the Security Council and the General Assembly.

The Informal Coordinator for the PBC and ECOSOC will be selected soon. These Informal Coordinators can identify areas where collaboration would be most useful and mainstream a more holistic and coherent approach to our work.

- **Third**, we could envision that joint meetings on common themes could also extend to the entire membership of the Security Council, ECOSOC and the Peacebuilding Commission. Joining forces on crises of a global nature, such as pandemics and climate crisis, will demonstrate to the global public that Member States can put aside their differences for the greater good. It would also mobilize a more coherent, coordinated, and accountable UN system-wide response.

Mr. President,

15. Let me close by emphasizing that we need innovative solutions to the multidimensional crises across the pillars of the organization. As we move forward and onward to the 100th Anniversary of the United Nations, let us work together more closely and engender the ambition to give life to a larger vision of collective security -- one rooted in sustainable development and conflict prevention.

16. The COVID-19 pandemic continues to threaten our world, and has already reversed many gains made towards attainment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The pandemic has hit hardest the poorest and most vulnerable in our societies. With its multifaceted impacts on health, the economy, food

security and education, it has exposed and further exacerbated pre-existing inequalities within and between countries. These, if not dealt with in a collaborative way, are palpable sources of future tensions and conflict.

17. In this regard, I commend you **Mr. President** for also convening a High-Level Open Debate on exclusion, inequality and conflict on 9 November. We in ECOSOC agree that it is imperative to address the root causes of conflict, that often lie in poverty and unequal access to opportunities for a better life.

18. ECOSOC is fully mobilized to ensure a swift recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, including through promoting equitable access to affordable vaccines for everyone. This issue has been at the center of our work since March 2020, and will continue until the crisis dissipates. It is one, among several other areas, where the Security Council and ECOSOC can work together in coordination also with the General Assembly -- in a complementary manner -- in accordance the respective mandates.

I thank you for your kind attention.