

OPENING REMARKS

BY

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PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC
AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (ECOSOC)**

AT THE

OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT SEGMENT

**17 MAY 2022
10:00 – 12:00 HOURS EDT**

**LIVE STREAMING
UNITED NATIONS OFFICE
GABORONE**

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- **Madam Vice-President of ECOSOC,**
- **President of the General Assembly,**
- **Secretary-General of the United Nations,**
- **Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

1. I am honoured to be able to join you virtually from Gaborone, Botswana, at this **2022 ECOSOC Operational Activities for Development Segment.**
2. While I am not myself physically present in New York, it is nonetheless a great pleasure -- after two years of virtual and hybrid meetings as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic -- that this year we could convene this Segment in-person in the hallowed ECOSOC Chamber.
3. This is a true positive signal that we are slowly -- but surely -- building back better towards long-term recovery from the pandemic.
4. But, as we gradually return to the in-person mode of our engagements, we must recall that we still have a

lot of unfinished business and use this as the occasion to recommit to multilateralism, international cooperation and global solidarity -- if we are to overcome the pressing challenges we continue to face.

5. We are -- in no doubt -- still reeling from the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated inequities that continue to characterize how the global community has responded in the ongoing recovery efforts.
6. It is particularly disheartening to note that the life-saving vaccines have remained largely unavailable in many parts of the world, and that the socio-economic impact of the crisis on the most vulnerable countries and peoples is far from being fully ameliorated.
7. We are all aware that scientific progress and cooperation had delivered the vaccines -- in an unprecedented timely manner -- thus offering us hope and a tool that should have aided inclusive recovery for all.

8. While I commend those Member States that demonstrated remarkable goodwill in providing support to fellow members of the global family, our collective efforts are found still wanting and falling short in achieving the mid-year target set by WHO.
9. On many occasions we instead have seen vaccines hoarding tendencies, leading to wasteful disposal of expired but yet critically needed doses of the vaccines.
10. As a result, many lives and livelihoods have been disrupted by the virus and subsequent outbreaks of its new variants.
11. In addition, inequalities within and between countries -- including gender inequality -- remain extensive, while poverty and hunger have also been exacerbated and are on the rise.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

12. As an accountability platform on UN Development System and results at the country level, this Segment

offers us the opportunity to reflect on how the System is delivering on its work -- in line with the mandates of the 2020 QCPR and General Assembly Resolution 72/279 on the repositioning of the UN Development System.

13. The COVID-19 pandemic -- coupled with other pre-existing challenges such as the climate crisis, as well as protracted conflicts -- are generating all-time high humanitarian needs, and setting back decades of development progress as well as undermining efforts towards implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
14. Moreover, the ongoing conflict in Ukraine has unleashed a major crisis in food security, energy access and instability in the global financial system -- triggering far-reaching negative effects across the globe, particularly for the poorest countries.

15. This conflict -- and the associated geopolitical tensions it has generated -- is also posing an additional stress test on the multilateral system.
16. We -- as the international community -- have a collective responsibility on how we can effectively confront all these challenges.
17. I believe that-- irrespective of our differences -- we have no other choice than working together to realize the ideals and principles set out in the United Nations Charter and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which embodies the aspirations of our peoples.
18. We need to forge ahead and accelerate action to achieve a transformative post-COVID-19 recovery, as well as redouble our efforts to deliver the SDGs for a better future for all.
19. As I have previously stated, multilateralism, international cooperation and global solidarity are the

only effective ways of dealing with current and emerging global challenges.

20. In doing so, we also need to seriously address the critical funding gap of the UN Development Agencies, and close the often spoken about imbalance between core and non-core resources.
21. I am aware that this issue continues to be a matter of great concern to many of the programme countries.
22. Amidst the overarching challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, not only is there worrying premature withdrawal of the important social protection measures introduced during the pandemic.
23. We have also recently witnessed an overall trend in the scaling down of core allocation of resources to development activities, and the reallocations towards some immediate humanitarian needs.
24. As President of ECOSOC, I worry that such measures will have long lasting adverse impact on sustaining the decades-long development achievements, which will

affect the well-being and security of especially those most vulnerable.

25. We must, therefore, acknowledge the high-level of importance the programme countries accord to the core development mandate of the UN Development Agencies and work to effectively support these countries towards achieving the SDGs during the remainder of the Decade of Action.

Excellencies,

26. I welcome the fact that the United Nations Development System -- guided by the 2020 Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) -- has been assessed as demonstrating its added value in coming together to support countries in their efforts to successfully recover from the pandemic, and achieve sustainable development.
27. This is also necessary to lay the firm foundation for peace and security across all continents, given the nexus between peace and development.

28. I also note with satisfaction from the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the QCPR - - which is informing this Segment -- that the repositioned UN Development System is providing more integrated, efficient and better-quality support to country needs and priorities on sustainable development.
29. I further welcome indication that empowered Resident Coordinators and a new generation of United Nations Country Teams are now better positioned to provide tailored support -- leveraging assets from across the system, benefiting from improved Cooperation Frameworks and other planning instruments.
30. The findings in the Secretary-General's report are indeed encouraging, as they demonstrate the commitment of the UN Development System to put the reforms to work and better support the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

31. While there is notable progress, we should also discuss during this Segment the challenges lying ahead, as identified in the Secretary-General's report and come up with evidence-based recommendations on what is required to further strengthen the system to ensure that it can deliver even stronger actions on poverty eradication, social protection, quality education, universal healthcare coverage, climate action, energy transition and digital transformation -- based on the **leaving no one behind** pledge we made in 2015.
32. Moving forward, you may also recall that ECOSOC often adopts a resolution further to the Segment to review and accelerate implementation of the mandates in the QCPR.
33. As I discussed with the ECOSOC Bureau, we believe that the Member States may wish to consider adoption of an ECOSOC resolution at this time too to give further commitment and guidance to the development

system, especially given the current challenges we face.

34. In conclusion, I invite all participants to take advantage of this opportunity to engage in a candid dialogue and frank interactive discussions with the Secretary-General.

35. I look forward to the recommendations emanating from your deliberations during this Segment, which I assure you will also feed into the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) to be convened in July this year.

I thank you for your kind attention.