

REMARKS

BY

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PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC
AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (ECOSOC) AT ITS 2022 SESSION**

**INTRODUCTION OF THE REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL
COUNCIL TO THE 19TH PLENARY MEETING OF THE GENERAL
ASSEMBLY**

**20 OCTOBER 2022
10:00 HOURS**

GENERAL ASSEMBLY HALL

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- **President of the General Assembly**
- **Excellencies,**
- **Distinguished Delegates,**

1. I have the honour to introduce the report of the Economic and Social Council from its 2022 session (A/77/3). The report provides a broad overview of our work, including actions taken by the Council on a range of development issues. During this period, the Council continued to provide a unique platform for policy solutions as Member States continued their efforts to recover from the pandemic, while addressing the other intersecting crises around the world.
2. At ECOSOC, we focused on promoting international solidarity and an SDG-guided recovery from the pandemic. The message at the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), which met this year under the auspices of ECOSOC, was clear: the impacts of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the conflict in Ukraine, and

climate change are reversing our progress towards many SDGs. The HLPF puts a spotlight on the challenges brought by COVID-19, highlighting vaccine disparity and growing socio-economic divides in education, gender equality, health, as well as persistent poverty.

3. Despite all this though, there was unwavering hope in the corridors of the United Nations. With these crises as our wake-up call and the 2030 Agenda as our guiding light, we can still embark on the transitions needed to meet the SDGs, on social protection and education, food systems, energy and digital connectivity.
4. This year's HLPF was fully in-person after two years, and it was a huge success, attracting two Heads of State, one being my own, more than 140 at Ministerial and higher levels, two Nobel prize winners, along with many other government officials, Heads of UN system organizations and multiple participants from different sectors and walks of life.

5. Turning this hope into action, however, requires transformative policies, international solidarity, and genuine attention to financing issues, as well as redirecting science and technology towards the SDGs.
6. Strong calls were made to mobilize financial resources and solve the debt crisis in many developing countries, using vulnerability as a criterion to access concessional resources.
7. At the same time, we need urgent reforms in the international finance, debt and taxation architecture.
8. I would like to commend the **44 countries** that presented their Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) this year. The Permanent Representatives of the Philippines and Morocco, as Co-Chairs of the Group of Friends, contributed by finding friends of VNR countries who engaged in meaningful exchange with them, along with other countries and major groups and other stakeholders.

9. The discussions were instrumental in highlighting different aspects emanating from the VNRs and their preparations on ways to implement the 2030 Agenda.
10. The Forum also launched preparations for the **SDG Summit** to be held in September 2023 to review and guide the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, emphasizing that that the Summit can mark a turning point in the implementation of the SDGs.
11. We must ensure that the Summit is a pivotal event that shifts the work onto a track to achieve the SDGs.
12. It is a great achievement that the Ministerial Declaration was adopted by consensus at the closing of HLPF and at the High-Level Segment of ECOSOC. I believe that the Declaration provides a strong recommitment to the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs as the guideposts out of the crises.

13. The Declaration also called for the implementation of the outcomes of the SG's Summit on Integrated Food Systems; for strengthening the global health architecture and WHO, and a recommitment to vaccine equity recognizing the need for international solidarity.
14. We have strong text on each SDG under review and on climate change; references to the elaboration of international agreements on plastic pollution and pandemic prevention, preparedness and response and a commitment to an ambitious post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.
15. Also critical is the commitment to address surging global debt. The Declaration calls on the Secretary-General to mobilize Governments, the United Nations system and stakeholders in preparing for the Summit.
16. Our deliberations at the ECOSOC High-Level Segment demonstrated your commitment to strengthening inclusive multilateralism and

international solidarity as a key driver for sustainable recovery and resilience to respond to future crises.

17. We must ensure more effective and inclusive coordination mechanisms among the multilateral systems to devise more coordinated strategies and responses to support countries' efforts to address the global crises.
18. At the ECOSOC High-level Segment, we also looked at future trends and scenarios to improve our policies now. Both the scientists who participated in the meeting and Government practitioners, including Ministers, confirmed that what we do now will have a big impact for the future.

Excellencies,

19. During my Presidency, we also made progress in advancing General Assembly reforms to strengthen the Economic and Social Council (A/RES/75/290 A).

20. The Council launched its new Coordination Segment last February. This new Segment helped identify key areas where the ECOSOC system could deepen the policy reflection, identify solution or work more closely together to advance the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.
21. With Member States' active engagement, the Council took stock of the impacts of the pandemic on the SDGs and built on its subsidiary bodies' conclusions to propose policies and actions for an inclusive and resilient recovery aimed at the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.
22. The Segment put the Council's integral coordination role in evidence and showed how it is key to fulfil our collective vision embodied in the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs.
23. We identified key areas where ECOSOC, its subsidiary bodies and the UN system could deepen the policy reflection, identify innovative solutions or work more closely together.

24. At the same time, and through the process of the review of the work of the subsidiary bodies, ably led by my successor, Ambassador Stoeva, we have learned more about the work of these bodies and how they can further support us in this quest.
25. The Council invited, through its Decision 2022/334, the President and Bureau of the Council, the Chairs and Bureaux of the functional commissions and expert bodies all Member States and the Secretariat to implement the final recommendations of the review.
26. This will be an important step to strengthen the work of the “ECOSOC family” to unlock transformative action towards the accelerated implementation of the SDGs.

Excellencies,

27. The importance of international cooperation and global solidarity to address today’s global challenges and rescue the Sustainable Development Goals was

also underscored at this year's ECOSOC Operational Activities for Development Segment.

28. Member States acknowledged the major achievements of the UN development system reforms in equipping the system to support countries' efforts to recover from the COVID-19 crisis and achieve sustainable development, showing the value-added of enhanced coordination and a whole-of-system approach.
29. The Segment demonstrated when a further deepening of reforms efforts would be needed to maximize the impact of the UN development system work in helping countries address the compounding pandemic, conflict, food, energy, and climate crises.
30. This led to the Council's adoption of Resolution 2022/25 on progress in the implementation of General Assembly Resolution 75/233 on the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review of Operational Activities for Development of the United Nations system in July 2022.

31. The important work being done by the humanitarian community at this highly challenging time was recognized at the 2022 ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment.
32. This year's Segment was inclusive, innovative, and successful. It included the voices of affected people and local humanitarian partners, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee members and a range of partners with whom we work, including International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and climate actors.
33. The HAS recognized the urgency of drawing lessons and actions from the pandemic recovery. It stressed the criticality of reinforcing compliance with international humanitarian law, as well as understanding and preparing for the humanitarian impacts of the climate crisis.
34. It is urgent to promote meaningful partnerships with local actors in humanitarian action, planning and

decision-making, especially women-led organizations.

35. ECOSOC called for doing more to promote compliance with international humanitarian law and facilitate humanitarian access. The humanitarian sector should be made as anticipatory as possible, focusing on preparedness and increasing flexible funding to enable early action.
36. In-depth attention was given to ways to close the humanitarian funding gap, especially through support for the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and the Country-based Pooled Funds (CBPFs).
37. Discussions underscored that development and peace partners must work together and not let institutional distinctions get in the way of a coordinated and effective humanitarian response.
38. The inaugural Meeting on the Transition from Relief to Development, created by General Assembly

Resolution 75/290A, included a focus on Haiti, South Sudan, and the Sahel region.

39. In-depth discussions among stakeholders helped inform and guide country-level coordination and deliver better results in countries facing humanitarian emergencies and in situations of conflict and post-conflict.
40. Discussions underscored the need to urgently address the immediate impacts of food insecurity and displacement, to promote long-term solutions to protracted crises, and to predict and prevent new crises with early warning approaches.
41. Also critical are resilience-building and sustainable solutions.
42. The interlinkages between food insecurity and displacement were recognized, with conflict and violence considered primary drivers of acute hunger, reducing the availability of and access to food and

driving displacement by forcing people to abandon their homes, land, and livelihoods.

43. The discussion also highlighted that women and girls are the most impacted in situations of food insecurity and displacement. The message throughout was that humanitarian access is vital to deliver life-saving assistance to those in need.

Excellencies,

44. Throughout its session, the Council continued to engage stakeholders through its various fora. In February, we brought together Governments and a wide range of stakeholders to exchange new ideas, expectations and priorities for the work ahead for the Council cycle and the HLPF at the revitalized ECOSOC Partnership Forum.
45. Participants shared forward-looking actions and innovative partnerships that are supporting the implementation of the SDGs.

46. The Partnership Forum was organized in consultation with Member States and stakeholders. It allowed for interactive discussions lead by partners from different sectors. To this end, I established an informal Multistakeholder Advisory Group to advise on both substantive and organizational aspects of the Forum.
47. I am grateful for their substantive inputs and support. The hybrid format of the Forum allowed for the direct engagement of more than **4,000 participants**.
48. Our ECOSOC Youth Forum has become the main knowledge- and idea-sharing platform for youth on the achievement of the SDGs and a hub for best practices on youth engagement.
49. This year's Forum, which was held in a virtual format, attracted over **22,000 participants**. Youth representatives discussed best practices, lessons learned, and potential innovative solutions for steering a better and greener recovery from the

pandemic and setting the world back on track to achieve the SDGs by 2030.

50. They also addressed the importance of gender equality, transforming education, fighting climate change, protecting our oceans and biodiversity, while increasing partnerships across the globe.
51. Young people are challenging us to re-examine our assumptions, re-imagine the future and work on solutions. They are demanding a seat at the table, as equal partners.
52. The Multi-Stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the SDGs (“STI Forum”) brought together a variety of stakeholders beyond Member States – including the private sector, the scientific community, and civil society - all of whom play a key role in utilizing STI to advance the SDGs.
53. Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) asserted their vital relevance to well-being during the multiple crises. This STI Forum was timely as it provided an

opportunity to help find solutions to a number of overlapping challenges the world is facing today, ranging from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic to the ever more present impact of climate change, as well as the global economic consequences of the war in Ukraine.

Excellencies,

54. The COVID-19 pandemic has constrained fiscal space of many developing countries, while hampering economic growth. The war in Ukraine has exacerbated these challenges, further raising food and energy prices.

55. As major economies increase interest rates to fight inflation, significant currency outflows and higher borrowing costs are putting additional pressure on developing countries. In this environment, it is the world's most vulnerable countries that are suffering the most.

56. These shocks do not impact all countries and people in the same way. The 2022 Financing for Sustainable Development Report identified a “great finance divide,” which has sharply curtailed the ability of many developing countries to recover from the pandemic and invest in recovery.
57. Many of the poorest countries have been forced to cut spending in areas critical to the SDGs, including education and infrastructure, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. These countries are in no position to finance the necessary investment.
58. Debt in some of the poorest countries has now reached critical levels. Risks of a systemic debt crisis have risen further. Without additional measures, protracted debt crises will put the SDGs out of reach.
59. Solutions to facilitate effective and fair debt crisis resolution must be considered now, without further delay.

60. Unless we take immediate action, including by increasing long-term affordable financing and updating the international financial architecture to reflect the changing global landscape, the fight against poverty and inequality could be set back for an entire generation, posing a grave threat to the SDGs.
61. The international community must accelerate support to developing countries in weathering these challenges.
62. The seventh Economic and Social Council Forum on Financing for Development (FfD) follow-up, held in April 2022, made key gains to address these issues. The Forum featured high level political engagement, including the participation of **8** Heads of State and Government and more than **50** Ministers and Vice-Ministers.
63. The outcome document of the Forum, adopted by consensus, points the way forward on issues that require political momentum at the highest level.

64. These include Member States' consideration of the potential uses of the Multidimensional Vulnerability Index for Small Island Developing States for both concessional finance eligibility and debt relief.
65. The importance of grant finance and highly concessional finance for vulnerable countries was also highlighted.
66. On debt, calls to improve the G20 Common Framework go beyond contemporaneous G20 agreements.
67. Furthermore, commitments to expand investment in social protection floors as a percentage of national budgets and greater investments in social infrastructure and the care economy reflect the importance of such actions in shielding vulnerable populations from the worst socioeconomic consequences of the pandemic.
68. The General Assembly is currently considering Member States' invitation to consider the need to

convene a Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development.

69. The Forum's outcomes fed into the HLPF Ministerial Declaration. They will contribute to ongoing policy discussions, potentially including the proposed Biennial Summit at the Heads of State and Government level between the members of the G20, ECOSOC, the Secretary-General and the heads of the International Financial Institutions.

Excellencies,

70. During this period, we also continued to forge stronger relationship with the General Assembly and the Peacebuilding Commission.
71. With your predecessor, Mr. President, we convened a joint briefing on the work of the General Assembly and ECOSOC. We also held a Special High-Level Dialogue on Africa to reconfirm the development of Africa as a priority for the UN system.

72. We issued a call to action to mobilize greater support and partnerships for accelerated implementation of Agenda 2063 and the SDGs while recovering from the pandemic.
73. ***“Promoting Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in the context of recovery from the COVID-19 Pandemic”*** was the focus of ECOSOC’s joint meeting with the Peacebuilding Commission last November.
74. I convened several special meetings to bring attention to issues pertinent to sustainable development and engage key stakeholders in our deliberations.
75. These included meetings on natural resources, peaceful societies and sustainable development in March 2022; the implementation of the New Urban Agenda in April 2022, as well as a briefing on the outcomes of COP26 in December 2021.

Excellencies,

76. An important responsibility of the Council is providing oversight and guidance to its subsidiary bodies.
77. During the Management Segment, the Council considered the reports of its subsidiary and related bodies, including their recommendations, as well as reports by UN entities on economic, social, environmental, health and related matters on its agenda.
78. It undertook outstanding elections, and adopted a number of resolutions and decisions. This too is the heart of the work of the Council.

Excellencies,

79. Our Council, together with its eco-system, is indispensable for policy dialogue and forging consensus on development issues. Its Charter mandates are more important than ever in the face

of pressing economic, social and environmental challenges.

80. It has been an honor for me to preside over this unique Council during its 2022 session, and I thank my fellow Bureau members and the Member States for all your support in this endeavour. I look forward to a productive session with the Economic and Social Council, under the Presidency of Ambassador Lachezara Stoeva, as we continue to strive for transformative actions to recover from the pandemic, guided by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

I thank you for your kind attention.
