

STATEMENT

BY

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

**AT THE ORGANIZATIONAL SESSION OF THE 2023 SESSION
OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL**

HANDOVER CEREMONY

**MONDAY, 25 JULY 2022
10:00 – 11:30 HOURS**

**ECOSOC CHAMBER
UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS
NEW YORK**

Please check against delivery.

- **Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Liu Zhenmin;**
- **Excellencies, Vice-Presidents of ECOSOC;**
- **Members of the Council;**
- **Dear Colleagues;**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen;**

1. I am deeply honoured and elated to have served as the President of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) at its 2022 session, for the one year term that commenced from **23 July 2021** to **25 July 2022**.
2. This was a momentous occasion for both my country and I personally, because it was the first time in our history that we assumed the Presidency of this Principal Organ of the United Nations charged with responsibility to advance sustainable development.
3. As I handover the Presidency, I would like to thank profoundly my fellow Vice-Presidents for their excellent collaboration and their unwavering

commitment to advance the work of this important Council.

4. I also appreciate the full support that I received from members and non-members of the Council, Major Groups and Other Stakeholders -- which assisted me immensely to deliver on the mandate of the Council and my eight broad priorities.
5. A year ago, when I took over the Presidency of the Council, I shared with you my view that ECOSOC's role has become even more critical in our concerted efforts to deal with the challenges we face.
6. While we expected to be on the path to recovery from the pandemic this year, we are still faced with ever-growing global challenges that require us to work even harder together and coordinate better.
7. With less than eight years to 2030, it is clear that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals must remain our guiding framework.

8. We heard this loud and clear throughout the various Segments, Forums and meetings of the Economic and Social Council, as well as the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF).
9. Throughout my Presidency, the work of the Council focused on the main theme of both ECOSOC and HLPF for 2022: ***"Building Back Better from the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) While Advancing the Full Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development."***
10. I also convened meetings of the Council that addressed my eight broad priorities -- namely, swift recovery from the pandemic; vaccine equity; fiscal space; inequalities; post-conflict recovery; science, technology and innovation; climate crisis and biodiversity loss; inclusivity and partnerships; and youth engagement.
11. I am very pleased that during my Presidency, the Council implemented several decisions contained in

resolutions of the General Assembly to strengthen ECOSOC and the HLPF.

12. I am encouraged by the major outcomes of the ECOSOC review, that have ensured that the Council can more effectively carry out its Charter mandates, while strengthening its support to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, COVID-19 response and recovery and addressing major global challenges.
13. Through this review, the Council has a new **Coordination Segment** -- which renewed focus on the Council's Charter mandate on coordination.
14. The Coordination Segment and a revitalized **Partnership Forum** have generated fresh ideas and policy suggestions, to guide and inspire the work of ECOSOC subsidiary bodies.
15. The Coordination Segment put the Council's integral coordination role in evidence, and demonstrated how coordination is key in leveraging our efforts to achieve

the Sustainable Development Goals by the target deadline of 2030.

16. In this respect, I would like to commend the Vice-President of the Council and incoming President, H.E. Ambassador Lachezara Stoeva, for ably leading the review of the work of ECOSOC subsidiary bodies.
17. Through this review process, we have learned more about the work of ECOSOC subsidiary bodies and how they can further support the Council to deliver on its important Charter mandate.
18. As you would recall, the Council through its Decision 2022/334, invited 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.
19. This will be an important step towards providing the Council and Member States with tools to unlock

transformative action towards the accelerated implementation of the SDGs.

Excellencies,

20. The revitalized Partnership Forum in February this year brought together Governments and a wide range of stakeholders, including the United Nations system, International Financial Institutions, international organizations, Parliamentarians, local Governments, Non-Governmental Organizations, the private sector, civil society, scientists, academia, women, youth as well as other stakeholders, to exchange new ideas, expectations and priorities for the work ahead for the Council cycle and the HLPF.

21. The reinvigorated meeting on **Transition from Relief to Development** has enabled the Council to deal with situations of conflict, post-conflict and humanitarian emergencies, with particular focus on Haiti, South Sudan, and the Sahel region, thereby permitting in-depth discussions, informing and guiding country-

level coordination and delivering better results to affected countries.

22. Furthermore, the Transition from Relief to Development meeting has allowed the Council to deal with challenges straddling development, humanitarian and peacebuilding, involving key stakeholders such as the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti, and the Peacebuilding Commission.
23. The Council addressed current challenges of food insecurity, risk of famine, and displacement.
24. To strengthen collaboration and cooperation, I held joint meetings with the President of the General Assembly, Secretary-General and Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission.
25. I have maintained an excellent working relationship with the President of the General Assembly and the Secretary-General in implementing General Assembly Resolutions relating to the strengthening of the Council and recommendations pertaining to the work

of Council contained in the SG's report on ***Our Common Agenda***.

26. I have also participated in the United Nations Security Council meetings dealing with issues pertinent to the work of ECOSOC.
27. The Council continues to actively engage other UN organs and bodies in dealing with current challenges confronting us.
28. I convened meetings to draw attention of Member States to the outcomes of COP26 and their implications for the 2030 Agenda in December 2021; management of natural resources, peaceful societies and sustainable development in March 2022; and the implementation of the **New Urban Agenda** in April 2022.
29. It is my ardent hope that the Council and its subsidiary bodies, and the HLPF will continue to feature the synergies between the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable

Development, and mainstream climate change in their meetings, supporting the larger efforts to end the climate crisis.

30. This year's ECOSOC **Operational Activities for Development Segment** underscored the importance of international cooperation and global solidarity to address today's global challenges and rescue the Sustainable Development Goals.
31. It demonstrated the value-added of enhanced coordination and a whole-of system approach of the UN development system under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator. It served its important role as the accountability platform for the UN development system.
32. I am pleased that the Council adopted a Resolution last Friday to ensure implementation of the outcomes of the Operational Activities for Development Segment.

33. The **Humanitarian Affairs Segment**, with its inclusive and innovative approach, highlighted the important work being done by the humanitarian community at this highly challenging time.
34. It underscored the urgency of drawing lessons and actions from the pandemic recovery, reinforcing compliance with international humanitarian law, and understanding and preparing for the humanitarian impacts of the climate crisis.
35. The outcome document of the **Forum on Financing for Development Follow-up**, co-facilitated by the Permanent Representatives of Grenada and Iceland and adopted by consensus, points the way forward on issues that require political momentum at the highest level.
36. These included Member States' consideration of the potential uses of the Multidimensional Vulnerability Index for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) for both concessional finance eligibility and debt relief.

37. The **Multi-Stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the SDGs (“STI Forum”)** provided a platform for a variety of stakeholders to promote the role of STI in advancing the SDGs.

Excellencies,

38. I am gratified that during my Presidency, the Council continued to be a champion for issues of interest to countries in special situations, namely Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS), as well as African countries, providing them a platform to share their experiences and development challenges.

39. I have also supported the special needs of LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS, in my dual role as the Chair of the Group of LLDCs.

40. The Council has been actively involved in policy discussions pertaining to countries in special

situations, review of the Programmes of Actions for these groups of countries and launch of successor programmes, including preparations for the **Fifth United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries in 2023**, the **Third Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries in 2024** and the **Fourth Conference on Small Island Developing States in 2024**.

41. Given the immense challenges faced by LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS, as well as African countries, I have fully supported all initiatives aimed at addressing the special needs of these groups of countries and called for strengthened international cooperation, global solidarity and partnerships to overcome their development challenges and support inclusive and sustainable recovery in these countries.
42. In furtherance of this, I jointly organized a meeting with the Chair of the UN General Assembly's Second Committee in October last year, focusing on ***"Building Productive Capacities in LDCs, LLDCs, SIDS as well as MICs, for more Resilient***

Recovery and Sustainable Development in the Post-COVID Era.”

43. Together with the President of the General Assembly, we co-organized last week a ***Special High-Level Dialogue on “The Africa We Want: Reconfirming the Development of Africa as a Priority of the United Nations System.”***

Excellencies,

44. In accordance with my priorities of inclusivity and partnerships, I engaged young people around the world, through our signature annual **ECOSOC Youth Forum**, on the achievement of the SDGs.
45. Through this engagement, our youth challenged us to re-examine our assumptions, re-imagine the future and work on solutions as well as provide them a seat at the decision-making table.
46. To promote participation of the civil society in the work of the Council, particularly the **High-Level**

Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), I have held extensive consultations with the

Co-Chairs of the Coordination Mechanism of the Major Groups and Other Stakeholders, Ms. Mabel Bianco and Mr. Ajay Jha.

47. The Council also secured funding from the Governments of Estonia, Germany and Switzerland to facilitate in-person participation of Major Groups and Other Stakeholders at this year's HLPF.
48. To promote inclusion of people with disabilities, the Government of New Zealand provided International Sign Language interpretation for most sessions of the HLPF.

Excellencies,

49. When I took over the Presidency, I also pledged that I would further improve the visibility, impact and inclusiveness of the HLPF this year and focus it on support to international solidarity and an SDG-guided recovery from the pandemic.

50. I also pledged to take a critical look to determine whether our response and recovery efforts are moving us on to the path towards realizing the SDGs.
51. Furthermore, I promised to maximize the value of the VNR process by allowing reasonable interactive discussions with the presenting countries.
52. I also expressed my hope that we will adopt a strong and consensus-based Declaration, with recommendations for transformative policy actions.
53. I firmly believe that we have succeed in delivering on all these fronts. It was a great achievement that the Ministerial Declaration was adopted by consensus at the closing of HLPF and at the High-Level Segment of ECOSOC.
54. I would like to once again congratulate the Permanent Representatives of Italy and Nauru and their experts for the unrelentless work to bring us all to consensus;

and congratulate all delegations on their hard work, flexibility and cooperation.

55. This important Declaration provides a strong recommitment to the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, as the guideposts out of the crises.
56. It recognizes the outcomes of the SG's Summit on Integrated Food Systems and a call to implement them.
57. It calls for strengthening the global health architecture and the World Health Organization (WHO), and a recommitment to vaccine equity recognizing the need for international solidarity.
58. Above all, it contains strong text on each SDG under in-depth review this year 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; a commitment to address the surging global debt.

59. Finally, it provides guidance for the 2023 SDG Summit.

Excellencies,

60. The 2023 session of the Council will be a critical one, as the HLPF will meet both under the auspices of the Council and under the auspices of the General Assembly.

61. As I handover the Presidency today to H.E. Ambassador Stoeva, Permanent Representative of Bulgaria to the United Nations, I wish to assure the Council that I am fully confident about her able leadership and commitment.

62. Ambassador Stoeva demonstrated her true mettle as the Vice-President responsible for the Management Segment and successfully led the review of the Functional Commissions and Expert Bodies of the

Council, thus placing her in a better position to take charge of the Council.

63. I wish her all the best as she takes over the reins of the Council, and further intensify the work of the Council on recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda during the Decade of Action.

Excellencies,

64. As I conclude, I would like to express my profound gratitude to all key stakeholders who extended their full support and cooperation during my Presidency.
65. I sincerely hope that you will extend the same support and cooperation to the incoming ECOSOC President Ambassador Stoeva.
66. I thank the Secretariat for its outstanding support throughout my tenure. Thank you, Marion, Irena, Leslie and DESA team. Thank you also to Emer, the ECOSOC Secretary, and her team.

67. I also extend my special thanks to all other colleagues in the UN Secretariat who made our work possible.
68. Thank you Paul and your colleagues at the Department of Global Communications (DGC) for ensuring effective communications strategy and media coverage to make the Council's important work known to the wide ranging global audience.
69. As a Member of the Council, and having recently been re-elected for another 3-year term from 2023-2025, Botswana stands ready to continue playing her part to help carry forward the vital work of this important Charter body in the coming cycle of ECOSOC and beyond.

I thank you all for your kind attention.