



OPENING REMARKS

BY

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

AT THE

**STOCKHOLM +50: A HEALTHY PLANET FOR THE
PROSPERITY OF ALL – OUR RESPONSIBILITY, OUR
OPPORTUNITY**

**2 – 3 JUNE 2022
STOCKHOLM**

Please check against delivery.

- **Co-Presidents of Stockholm+50, Excellency Uhuru Kenyatta, President of Kenya, and Excellency, Magdalena Andersson, Prime Minister of Sweden;**
- **Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. António Guterres;**
- **President of the 76th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, Excellency Abdulla Shahid;**
- **Secretary-General of the Stockholm+50 and Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP);**
- **Excellencies, Heads of State and Government here present, including my own State President of the Republic of Botswana H.E Dr. Mokgweetsi Masisi;**
- **Under Secretary General for General Assembly and Conference Management, Mr. Movses Abelian;**
- **Honourable Ministers and Distinguished Guests;**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen;**

1. It is with great honour that I join you at this important International Meeting: ***“Stockholm +50: A healthy planet for the prosperity of all – our responsibility, our opportunity”***.

2. I express my sincere appreciation to the Governments of Sweden and Kenya for the invitation.
3. I would also like to recognise the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and other members of the UN family, for their tireless work in the organization of this important meeting.

Excellencies,

4. Fifty years ago, our countries and other key stakeholders convened in this very City of Stockholm to focus-- for the very first time -- on the implications of human interactions with the environment.
5. The conference and its main outcomes reflected interlinkages between poverty alleviation and environmental protection.
6. It laid the firm foundation for global environmental governance, which has continued to guide our collective actions to protect our environment.

7. The origins of this conference go back to the Economic and Social Council -- and thanks to a proposal of the Government of Sweden -- formalized in a letter to the UN Secretary-General dated 20 May, 1968.
8. Today, we meet here again to further reflect on urgent actions needed to change course, amidst a worsening climate crisis.
9. Stockholm +50 marks half a century of global cooperation on environment and development.
10. In these fifty years, we have seen major achievements in environmental protection, but also changes.
11. We have seen considerable development in international law, including several Multilateral environmental agreements.
12. We have seen the strengthening of science and the science-policy interface through the IPCC, IPBES and

other scientific advisory bodies focused on environment matters.

13. Nevertheless, environmental degradation has continued, and often intensified.
14. There have been multiple factors, including the doubling of the world's population, the growth in world trade, urbanization, agricultural activities intensification and unsustainable consumption and production patterns.

Excellencies;

15. This conference also takes place against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has reversed decades of development gains and further derailed of efforts to achieve sustainable development.
16. The pandemic has reminded us that we all have agreed that a sustainable world is one in which human needs are met equitably and without sacrificing the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

17. We are clearly on a dangerous path to harming future generations, if we do not act now. But it is within our power to turn the tide.
18. Stockholm +50 must therefore, galvanize support for decisive global environmental action.
19. We must commit to take transformative actions, and embed the environmental dimension of sustainable development in all our policies and plans.
20. The triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution require us to work together across borders and sectors at all levels, in a balanced approach to also achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.
21. Regrettably, COVID-19 has halted or reversed progress towards many Sustainable Development Goals.

22. An additional 75 million to 95 million people will live in extreme poverty in 2022, compared to pre-pandemic levels.
23. The world economy slowed down again at the end of 2021. We are facing continued vaccine inequity, rising inflation, major supply-chain disruptions, and crippling geopolitical uncertainties.

Excellencies,

24. While our economies and societies are exposed to multiple shocks, these shocks do not impact all countries and people in the same way.
25. A financing divide has sharply curtailed the ability of many developing countries to invest in recovery and in the SDGs.
26. In this regard, unless we take action to bridge this gap, the SDGs and our climate goals will be out of reach.

27. I therefore, wish to emphasise that stronger multilateralism and international cooperation is the key to achieve prosperity for all, in particular for the poorest and most vulnerable.
28. But multilateralism delivers only when it is based on solidarity, political will, joint vision and common understanding.
29. In this connection, ECOSOC will continue to serve as an inclusive multilateral platform to build a more equitable and sustainable future, in harmony with the environment, in the context of the Decade of Action and Delivery for Sustainable Development.
30. ECOSOC will convene in July, 2022 the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) to review the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in its environmental, social and economic dimension.

31. In relation to this High-level Meeting, the Forum will review **SDG 14** on oceans and **SDG 15** on life on land; and their interrelations with other goals.
32. I therefore, looking forward to the recommendations emanating from this meeting to contribute to the HLPF.
33. I hope to see you all, at highest possible representation, in July in New York.

I thank you for your kind attention.