



Remarks by H.E. Ms Lachezara Stoeva, President of the ECOSOC and Social Council

Annual Ministerial Meeting of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs)

Thursday 22 September 2022

3:30-6:00pm - Trusteeship Council Chamber

Theme: "Accelerated implementation of the Doha Programme of Action to overcome the impacts of the ongoing crises and regain momentum in achieving the SDGs in LDCs"

Honorable Ministers,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen

I am honored to speak at this year's Annual Ministerial Meeting of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs).

The world is in turmoil.

All countries are working towards recovering from COVID-19.

We all aim to reverse the pandemic's devastating impacts on many SDGs.

But the pandemic is clearly not over.

It is still heavily impacting many countries and overwhelming their health and social protection systems, regressing years of development progress.

We are facing a food crisis, an energy crisis and a financial crisis driven by the war in Ukraine.

Economic stagnation accompanied by running inflation is looming.

The combined crises are shattering our hopes for economic and social recovery and more ambitious climate action.



LDCs have been particularly affected.

Fiscal space constraints, high external debt, macroeconomic imbalances, widespread poverty and underdeveloped or no social protection systems have been endemic challenges for your countries. They have been further perpetuated with the added layer of external shocks such as the pandemic and their negative impacts.

At the same time, the war in Ukraine has triggered massive food insecurity, energy shortages, fuel and fertilizers price increases and financial crises. Almost all LDCs have been negatively impacted.

As President of the Economic and Social Council, I am committed to ensure that the ECOSOC and the High-Level Political Forum provide solid, evidence-based, innovative and actionable policy guidance to curb and address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the SDGs.

One of my priorities is to ensure that the Council makes a positive difference on the lives of people at the country level, including the poorest and most vulnerable.

If we are truly serious about leaving no one behind when achieving the 2030 Agenda, more ambitious efforts and special attention to the LDCs in an SDG-guided recovery should be our priority. 12 of the 17 SDGs directly and specifically focus on the LDCs. This further underscores the special attention that is warranted for this important group of countries.

Our success in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will depend on the progress made in your countries. If the persistent vulnerabilities of LDCs remain unchecked and unsupported, they will indeed be the battleground for the success or failure of the 2030 Agenda.

We should also offer dedicated support for those countries graduating out of the LDC category as this major development milestone is occurring in the midst of ongoing crises, worsening global economic outlook and increasing climate and natural disaster risks.

Excellencies,

I am pleased of the unwavering commitment of the international community reflected in the Doha Programme of Action.



This was an important opportunity to reaffirm the centrality of the Least Developed Countries in the United Nations.

Accelerators in each of the six priority areas of the Doha Programme of Action are required to overcome the impacts of the ongoing crises and regain momentum in achieving the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs in LDCs.

The Doha Programme of Action asks the Economic and Social Council to conduct periodic reviews of the progress in its implementation.

I am optimistic that the Council can make a valuable contribution towards this task through its forums, segments and special meetings as well as its oversight of the UN development system's support to the 2030 Agenda and its coordination of specialized agencies and functional commissions.

The active participation of the LDCs in the High-Level Political Forum has been very valuable and appreciated.

During the Ministerial Segment of the Forum this year, 44 countries — including 15 LDCs — presented their Voluntary National Reviews. Dedicated sessions were organized to bring to the forefront the unique challenges and special needs of the LDCs.

The theme for the ECOSOC and the High-Level Political Forum in 2023 will be *“Accelerating the recovery from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at all levels”*.

This theme was developed with the view to channel our efforts towards a swifter recovery from COVID-19, build the necessary resilience to further shocks and strengthen our resolve to get back on track to achieve the 2030 Agenda.

The SDGs on water and sanitation, energy, innovation, cities and human settlements as well as partnerships will help us focus our deliberations without forgetting the interlinked and indivisible nature of the SDGs.

I urge Ministers from a range of sectors and portfolios from your countries to participate actively in the July HLPF.

Excellencies,

We have already begun to look ahead and strategize in anticipation of the SDG Summit in September 2023.



The SDG Summit constitutes the mid-term point in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

It will need to acknowledge the setbacks resulting from COVID-19 and the impact of the war in Ukraine.

It should recommit to the 2030 Agenda as the global guidepost to recover from current crises and help our countries build the necessary resilience to future challenges.

It should recreate the enthusiasm and hope of the SDGs and find the transformative solutions to expedite their implementation.

The Summit should adopt a political declaration by consensus. LDCs should be prominently featured in the Summit's outcome.

I call on you to ensure that your Head of State or Government comes to the September Summit next year.

Excellencies,

We should also strive to find responsive ways to advance more inclusive and impactful multilateralism and solidarity.

It is only through unprecedented global cooperation and global solidarity that we can recover sustainably from the pandemic and get back on track to achieve the SDGs in only 8 years more.

Commitment to multilateralism should also include our commitment to strengthening the institutions better suited to advance the kind of multilateralism needed to jointly tackle increasing global challenges.

Trust in the continued relevance of the UN is our only hope during uncertain times of perplexed international crises.

The ECOSOC is ready to play its part in strengthening multilateral cooperation, mobilizing international solidarity and finding solutions to urgent challenges including climate change, health, financial instability, as well as food and energy insecurity.

The Council, as a unique deliberative body and the only Charter body entirely dedicated to development, has the ability to provide ambitious and innovative policy guidance and look at the long-term trends and scenarios.

The Council is your home. I invite you to join me in ensuring that the ECOSOC and the HLPF generate positive momentum and enable progress toward the



implementation of the Doha Programme of Action. Weakening the risk of the LDCs being left further behind in the development process should be our promise to you.

I wish you a very successful meeting.