



ECOSOC

United Nations Economic and Social Council

TAKING ACTION TO IMPROVE LIVES

**Statement by
Her Excellency Inga Rhonda King
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of St. Vincent and the Grenadines to the
United Nations in New York and
President of the Economic and Social Council during its 2018-2019 cycle
Introduction of the Report of ECOSOC to the General Assembly
United Nations Headquarters, New York
31 October 2019**

Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Colleagues,
Distinguished Delegates,

I have the honour to introduce the Report of the Economic and Social Council from its 2019 session (A/74/3) to the General Assembly.

The Report offers an overview of the results from the 2019 ECOSOC, which supported the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

I hope that we can draw upon this work in our deliberations in the General Assembly as we enter the fifth year of implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Excellencies,

The vision and commitment to action that was evident in this august Assembly hall in September 2015 is still with us today.

The ability of the Sustainable Development Goals to cross the traditional boundaries of international development cooperation has been inspiring. The SDGs are now included in the agendas and action programmes of leaders of nations, cities and communities, the research community, and business, from banking, to retail and beyond.

The high degree to which Member States have taken ownership of this Agenda, as witnessed by their broad engagement throughout the ECOSOC cycle, is encouraging. Drawing upon the previous four ECOSOC cycles and sessions of the HLPF under the auspices of ECOSOC, at the recent SDG Summit this past September – the HLPF under the auspices of the General Assembly – Member States launched a Decade of Action for accelerated action.



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Excellencies,

The Report of the Economic and Social Council before you offers messages underpinned by the 2019 ECOSOC theme of *“Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality”*.

As shown throughout the Report, the 2019 ECOSOC cycle highlighted that we are not on track to achieve the SDGs by 2030.

However, the cycle also made clear that there is still time to make a course correction. This sense reverberated from ECOSOC and the 2019 HLPF under its auspices into the SDG Summit in September.

We saw, for example, through many of the 49 Voluntary National Reviews, how Governments are working to strengthen the capabilities of their institutions in order to maximize the synergies demanded by this transformative Agenda. These VNRs showed that effective institutions that live by the principles of the 2030 Agenda form the bedrock for SDG implementation.

At the HLPF, we also heard that we are yet to fully understand how to achieve progress on some of the SDGs under review such as SDG10 on inequality. We were reminded of the impact of growth and employment on all other SDGs. We discussed responses to the existential challenge of climate change and the importance of education, institutions and STI for transformation. We built on the proposals of the FFD Forum.

The ECOSOC Operational Activities Segment provided strategic direction in the repositioning of UN development system so that their support for the implementation of the sustainable development goals is impactful.

We can now steer the development system reforms through their final phase. The critical planks on the review of the regional architecture of the United Nations and multi-country offices are moving forward. ECOSOC’s contribution has been useful in preparing for the next quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities in 2020.

Against a backdrop of record levels of forced displacement and increasingly complex protracted crises and destructive natural disasters, and in view of the seventieth anniversary of the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and the 2019 Climate Action Summit, the Humanitarian Affairs Segment underscored the importance of humanitarian work and promoted action to save lives, reach those in need and reduce humanitarian risk, vulnerability



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The joint informal event of the Operational Activities Segment and the Humanitarian Affairs Segment on the transition from relief to development took stock of recent advancements, challenges and best practices of the collaboration between the humanitarian, development and peacebuilding actors in Africa.

In April, ECOSOC convened a special meeting to mobilize international support for the response to Cyclone Idai in Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe. This highlighted the importance of humanitarian action to meet immediate humanitarian needs, early warning and rapid response as well as longer-term recovery and reconstruction.

At the special meeting of the Council on “Pathways to resilience in climate-affected SIDS—A Forward-Looking Resilience Building Agenda: Promises, results and next steps”, which took place in November 2018, we saw how climate change can bring devastating consequences to Small Island Developing States, such as my own country.

Excellencies,

Effective collaboration enabled ECOSOC to deliver results. For example, the collaboration between the President of this Assembly and the President of the ECOSOC has grown. I trust that this collaboration will continue to grow.

The implementation over the past ECOSOC cycle of General Assembly resolution 72/305 on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council contributed to the effectiveness of ECOSOC in providing strategic direction and guidance at the global level to better respond to the 2030 Agenda and to improve the effectiveness of ECOSOC outcomes.

With its redefined mandate following GA resolution 72/305, the Integration Segment brought together key messages from ECOSOC subsidiary bodies and the UN system on the ECOSOC and HLPF theme. ECOSOC also engaged with the Second Committee. At the joint meeting of ECOSOC and the Second Committee in October 2018, entitled “Circular Economy for the SDGs: From Concept to Practice”, we discussed how the transition towards a circular economy – where waste and pollution do not exist, products and materials are kept in use, and natural systems are regenerated – can accelerate SDG achievement.

Distinguished Delegates,

The previous Bureau of the Council and I undertook many efforts to make ECOSOC open and innovative. Throughout the 2019 ECOSOC cycle, seeds were planted to inform our upcoming reviews of ECOSOC and the HLPF during this 74th session of the General



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In my view, ECOSOC and the HLPF serve as the “destination of choice” for solid analysis and policy recommendations to support accelerated action for the Sustainable Development Goals.

It is an open, shared place where policy makers and stakeholders from every sector come together to address this integrated Agenda, accelerate its implementation, and find transformative pathways to respond to our common global development challenges. During the General Assembly’s High-level Week, we heard that the world needs a United Nations that is stronger in promoting sustainable development and fair globalization. In this endeavour, the United Nations needs a stronger ECOSOC and HLPF, where both are strategic, forward-looking and produce effective results.

You will be reviewing again the functioning of ECOSOC in tandem with the HLPF under its auspices in the coming months. We have ample experience to draw upon. I trust that we will proceed with a shared sense of optimism as we reflect on how to further strengthen ECOSOC and the HLPF.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Economic and Social Council ecosystem and the HLPF under its auspices, has a bright future. I look forward to our collective reflection and collaboration as we identify the specific transformations that can enable them, to optimize its potential, for the betterment of people and planet.

Thank you.



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