



ECOSOC High-Level Political Forum General Debate 20 July 2023

Malta Statement delivered by Her Excellency Ambassador Vanessa Frazier
Permanent Representative of Malta to the United Nations, New York

Excellencies

It is my honour to represent Malta at this year's HLPF. While aligning ourselves with the Statement delivered by the European Union on behalf of the EU and its Member States, we would like to add our national observations at this General Debate.

In 2015, we had agreed to transform the world with a commitment for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with 17 SDGs. But 2030 is merely seven years away. Progress towards the SDGs at the global level has not been achieved to the degree that we would have hoped for, as also confirmed by the latest Secretary General Report on the SDGs. The achievement of these goals has been further compromised by the impact of cascading crises, such as the pandemic, growing inequalities, the climate and biodiversity crisis and unabated environmental degradation.

There can also be no development without peace and security, and no peace and security without development, with conflicts around the globe, and Russia's aggression against Ukraine further jeopardizing global peace, security and development.



Malta is fully committed to the 2030 Agenda, with our Sustainable Development Act enshrining this commitment and mainstreaming the principles of sustainability across all government. Our new Sustainable Development Strategy for 2050 will also help fulfil our ambition of working towards achieving a healthy and resilient environment, economy, and society for all, while bestowing upon future generations a country which is in better shape than the one that we inherited.

This year marks the mid-point of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Partnerships and cooperation are key if we are to achieve the SDGs at the regional, national and global level. We must ensure that our collective engagement at this year's HLPF and the upcoming SDG Summit is translated into a transformational force that drives sustainable solutions for all and leaves no one behind, while ensuring the full respect to the promotion, protection and enjoyment of human rights.

I would also like to acknowledge each of the SDGs in special focus for 2023. Ensuring clean water and sanitation, working to achieve clean and affordable energy, ensuring equitable access to the benefits of industry, innovation and infrastructure, working to achieve sustainable cities and communities and facilitating partnerships for the Goals are each important elements of the 2030 Agenda.



We must recognise that not all countries were affected equally by COVID-19, and that a number of them are facing specific challenges, in part attributable to their socio-economic characteristics and geopolitical circumstances.

Developing countries continue to deal with soaring debt levels, exacerbated by the need to respond to COVID-19. We welcome the outcome of the Summit on a New Global Financing Pact, particularly the vision statement on Multilateral Development Banks, which we see as having delivered momentum towards reform of the MDBs system. Export marginalization is another issue, with least developed countries still only accounting for slightly more than 1% of global merchandise exports. The economic recovery, specifically addressing debt remains a key issue for us to confront.

I also highlight the challenges that small island states and small island developing states face, namely those connected to climate change and other multi-dimensional vulnerabilities. As the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has acknowledged, small islands are increasingly affected by increases in temperature, tropical cyclones, storm surges, droughts, changing precipitation patterns, sea level rise, coral bleaching and invasive species – all of which are already detectable across both natural and human systems.



As an island nation, Malta remains a strong supporter to SIDS, with a series of national projects being designed for and with SIDS. As part of our holistic response to COVID-19, we must ensure that the vulnerabilities of these countries are acknowledged, and that sufficient international funding is available to help them enact protective measures.

We believe that accelerating recovery requires us to listen above all else, and in this regard, I would like to pay tribute to the European Union and the other 38 countries who presented their VNRs this year – representing a wide range of geographic situations and development challenges. I believe that there is much we can learn from listening to each other’s respective experiences.

Excellencies

To conclude, I would like to reiterate that Malta – bilaterally, as an EU Member State and a country currently serving on the UN Security Council – stands ready to cooperate with other countries and organisations to join forces to achieve SDG progress. We must act and we must act fast to address global challenges and to accelerate progress for current and future generations.

I thank you.