

DRAFT

Closing statement

Vice-President of the Economic and Social Council

High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development under the auspices of ECOSOC

8 July 2015 at 15:45

Excellencies, Colleagues, Ladies and gentlemen,

We have reached the end of this second high-level political forum under the auspices of ECOSOC. We had intense discussions during the past days. We heard many Ministers and government officials. We heard Members of Parliaments and local authorities. We interacted with representatives of Major Groups and other stakeholders including CEOs and other representatives of the business sector. We exchanged experiences and ideas.

Our meeting was convened under a heightened mindfulness of the forthcoming post-2015 development agenda. The on-going negotiations are reaching their final stage, as you have heard just now from Ambassador Kamau, who is a co-facilitator of the negotiations.

In September we will have a new development agenda, the most ambitious ever at the UN. We covered a lot of ground in this HLPF. We gained a better knowledge of what is at stake to make the post-2015 development agenda a success. We exchanged views on how to make the HLPF fit for supporting the implementation of this agenda. I am especially happy that our discussions were substantive and practical, much more than political. I am convinced that many of the concrete ideas expressed in the past eight days will contribute to making the implementation of the new agenda more robust, in particular through strengthening the HLPF.

The thread in all our discussions has been our commitment to finalize and implement the new universal and transformative agenda that we will adopt in September. All of you mentioned the integrated nature of this new agenda; we will not succeed on any of the goals if we do not succeed on all of them. This has tremendous implications for the way we look at trends on the SDGs; for how we design and implement policies; and for how we set up institutions. We all realize the difficulty of the task ahead. At the same time, I felt a strong sense of optimism in the room. We can end extreme poverty by 2030. We can reduce inequalities among and within countries. We can shift to sustainable consumption and production patterns. We hope that several countries are already putting in place innovative approaches to integrate the SDGs into their national policy frameworks. Civil society, the business sector and other stakeholders are committed and ready to play their part.

I was impressed by the richness of the discussions. We have taken careful note of the points you made and of the many initiatives and concrete proposals you shared. We will prepare a President's summary which will help support the continuing negotiations on the new development agenda. Let me now just share a few messages I take from our discussions:

Starting with implementation, a point that was thoroughly stressed last week is about the central idea of the new agenda of "leaving no one behind". This principle should guide our implementation. Governments must respond to this commitment with policies that support individuals throughout

their life course, with non-discrimination and inclusivity serving as a guideline during implementation. Marginalized and disadvantaged groups need to be given adequate attention. This means reviewing all policies for their impacts on various sub-groups of the population in an effort to go beyond averages, even within groups, so as to better take account of the heterogeneity within our populations.

In our implementation efforts, we should learn from the lessons of the MDGs experience - both its successes and shortcomings. And I look forward to further discussions on this specific theme during the next days when the annual ministerial review of the high level segment of ECOSOC is taking place. There needs to be strong national ownership. There also needs to be transparency and accountability, which is an area in which the HLPF can play an important role. The HLPF can also provide policy guidance to help forge links between the different elements of the agenda.

Communication will be a critical component of successful implementation. When the SDGs are adopted in September, we want everyone to feel like a stakeholder. In order to do that, our message must be understandable. Communication will have to happen in all countries and at all levels, down to the local grass roots level where implementation takes place. It needs to reach all groups, including women and youth. The voice of civil society and major groups should be heard: this should be a two-way street, where everyone can contribute to implementation.

We should provide space for feedback and engagement of all stakeholders. Because implementing this transformative agenda will in effect be impossible without engaging multiple actors of development, such a dynamic two-way interaction should apply to the various dimensions of implementation. Innovative partnerships with business, public enterprise, civil society organizations and academia at local, national, regional and global levels will be vital to reach the goals. Various partnership approaches and pathways will necessarily reflect differences between country circumstances and cultures. ECOSOC's Partnerships Forum and subsequently the HLPF can provide guidelines for these partnerships to better align policies and organizational strategies.

We noted the important role that local governments, which operate on the front line of development, will play in localizing the implementation of the agenda. We also noted that parliaments have a critical role in national leadership and implementation.

We also discussed engaging the business and the private sector. They host much of the creativity and human capital needed for the implementation of the new agenda. There is a need to communicate the agenda to them in language they are familiar with. This will help them make the case for sustainability through the creation of long-term investments that will yield investment returns as well as ensure broad-based socio-economic benefits and engender positive societal changes.

On the matter of the institutional framework, it will be necessary to create a multi-level architecture that can support implementation. There needs to be system-wide coherence and complementarity between the forum and other existing bodies and institutions, first and foremost the two Charter bodies under which auspices it was placed: the General Assembly and the ECOSOC. Latter will enable the Forum to benefit from the work and deliberations done in the whole ECOSOC system. A multi-level perspective must be reflected within the sub-regional, cross-regional and trans-boundary approaches. Regional meetings on sustainable development organized by the regional commissions

of the ECOSOC could be a powerful way to identify regional specificities and transmit recommendations to the high level segment of the ECOSOC and HLPF. Equitable and transparent governance will play a key role at local, national, regional and global levels.

We concurred that an effective follow-up and review mechanism is necessary to the success of the new agenda. The Post-2015 Summit in September is expected to give broad guidance on follow-up and review which will need to be further detailed in various fora. Guidance on the reviews should not be overly prescriptive, yet should be clear on what is expected.

There was a convergence of views on the main principles for the reviews: they should be voluntary and state-led; address progress on all SDGs and means of implementation; support countries in making informed policy-choices; be rigorous and evidence-based; be open and inclusive of all stakeholders; build on existing platforms, bodies and fora; developing countries should be given support through capacity building in this respect.

The review mechanism should refrain from shaming, but build incentives to induce change, share experiences, lessons learned and discuss solutions. It should aim to create a culture of openness and be evidence based. Follow-up and review should happen at multiple levels, all the way from local to global. Coherence and complementarity across these levels needs to be ensured. The starting point must be the country level. It was also mentioned that peer reviews could contribute to collective learning and could be integrated into the follow-up and review processes.

You agreed that the HLPF should play a decisive role in following up progress on the implementation of the new agenda. The post-2015 zero draft, which refers to the HLPF as the apex of the review process, resonated in the discussions. The HLPF should become a place for dialogue between all countries and all stakeholders, including parliaments and local governments. Thematic reviews at HLPF should build on thematic reviews taking place in ECOSOC and its subsidiary bodies as well as other international agencies and organizations. They should look at topics in an integrated manner. They should have a cross-cutting approach to avoid working in silos.

We had several sessions dedicated to strengthening the science-policy interface, one of the new innovative mandates of the HLPF.

To strengthen the science-policy interface, the HLPF should provide a platform for science-policy dialogue, highlight trends, provide policy-relevant analysis and translate outcomes of science-policy debates into action. It should allow communication among policy makers, science communities and civil society. Not only “western science” but also traditional knowledge and various perspectives are important for this dialogue. Not only natural sciences but also social and economic analysis must be brought to bear. The HLPF could help ensure that the post-2015 agenda topics are on the research agendas of scientists around the world.

In this context, we discussed the 2015 edition of the Global Sustainable Development Report, GSDR, produced by UN-DESA with inputs from hundreds of scientists and institutions. The inclusive approach of the 2015 edition of the GSDR was welcomed and should continue to be produced in collaboration with all relevant UN agencies, draw on peer reviewed sources and avoid duplication of other reports. Member states also underlined that the GSDR should inform intergovernmental discussions, be clearly linked to the implementation, follow-up and review of the SDGs, focusing in

particular on the interlinkages of the SDGs and identify emerging issues. Thematic chapters could be linked to the agenda of the HLPF and inform its discussions.

Data collection and analysis would be critical for implementation, follow-up and review of the post-2015 agenda and it would be crucial to use disaggregated data such as by income, age, migratory status, disability, gender and other. All stakeholders should have access to this information and data. Country capacity for data collection, statistics and analyses will need to be strengthened, in particular in LDCs and SIDS.

An ambitious agenda calls for ambitious means of implementation. A strengthened and renewed global partnership is needed to ensure the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda and related global commitments. Capacity development, technology and financing are all critical. The HLPF can contribute to assess their situation and how they support implementation in all countries for example as part of the country reviews.

We thus also had sessions on means of implementation investing in the future we want. We also discussed the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway and dedicated time to sustainable consumption and production. All of these are critical elements of the way forward.

I believe that our debates have shown that we can make the HLPF what our Heads of States and Governments wanted it to be in Rio+20: a strong forum that can provide leadership and political guidance, bring enhanced coherence to the institutional framework for sustainable development, serve as the apex of follow-up and review of the new agenda, and strengthen the science-policy interface. We will need to continue these discussions so that we can hit the ground running and support the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda in the best possible way. To guide us on that path, several delegations have suggested to elaborate a roadmap with critical milestones in preparing the HLPF to deliver on its role as soon as the agenda is adopted.

I wish to thank all the panellists, speakers and all participants from governments and major groups and other stakeholders for the constructive mindset that has accompanied the discussions during the whole duration of the forum.

I trust that this positive engagement will continue throughout the remaining days of the high level segment and the ECOSOC 2015 Annual Ministerial Review, which will open shortly, in just a few minutes. I invite and encourage all of you to contribute as effectively to the AMR as you have with the forum.

And for those of you travelling, I wish you a safe trip home.

These are indeed exciting times, and it is with a sense of achievement that I now close this high-level political forum and look forward to the next one in 2016.

Thank you.