

Wrap-Up Remarks, 2017 HLPF Week One
by
H.E. Frederick Musiiwa Makamure Shava,
President of ECOSOC

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Mr. Under-Secretary-General MrWu Hongbo,

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen:

As we conclude the expert week of the HLPF, I would like to congratulate all of you for your hard work and thought provoking contributions.

Many of you emphasised the critical role of the HLPF, and particularly this one, which is the first to be held after the adoption of resolution 70/299, which gave further guidance on follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. The Forum's importance as a space for considering challenges and structural barriers that require coordinated action at the global level was also highlighted.

Although this year, our task was to focus on assessing progress on a limited number of specific goals, throughout the entire

week, the indivisible, integrated and interlinked nature of all 17 SDGs has become more clearly articulated than ever.

We cannot speak about only one goal or target without recognizing the many connections it has to others, not only within the subset of SDGs under review, but also to all the SDGs. This is one of the reasons why the comprehensive implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the national level requires inter-ministerial collaboration and a clear connection to the means of implementation. It also requires multi-stakeholder engagement.

The review has also brought the interconnectedness of the economic, environmental and social dimensions of sustainable development to the forefront in new and innovative ways: it is clear that without progress in all three areas, we have no progress at all.

Many of you are hard at work to reorganize your thinking, your institutions, and your ways of working together to align with this concept. It is a very positive development that heralds the transformation envisioned by the 2030 Agenda.

We are all well aware of the challenges and risks involved if we do not make the effort toward more coordinated and collective action.

So, where do we stand at the two-year mark of implementation of the 2030 Agenda? Are we doing our best to leave no one behind?

There are positive signs of progress.

Many of you are working to ensure coherence between the 2030 Agenda and binding internationally agreed instruments, such as those related to trade, human rights and climate change.

Many of you have made commitments to forge new partnerships and increase your cooperation with each other, knowing that these actions are a critical means to ensure progress.

You have recognized the importance of the regional dimension in supporting effective implementation and review of the 2030 Agenda, through South-South cooperation, peer learning, and the sharing of experience among countries.

Although progress differs between regions, common trends are evolving around the improved alignment of regional and sub-

regional agendas, policy frameworks and visions with the 2030 Agenda as well as with programmes of actions for SIDS, LDCs and LLDCs.

Countries are improving inter-institutional and inter-sectoral coordination, many have adopted sustainable development strategies, and parliaments are mainstreaming the SDGs while provinces are localizing them for implementation.

Yet, while progress has been made in a number of key areas, there are still populations and regions that are at risk of being left behind, including adolescents, indigenous people, older people, people in conflict and post-conflict situations, migrants, rural workers, people with disabilities, and others.

Empowering all vulnerable groups must become a priority in order to end poverty and promote prosperity for everyone, everywhere.

Growing migratory flows and the capacity to address the specific needs of migrants and other people on the move is an important emerging issue that needs urgent and increased attention.

Environmental stressors are already affecting health in myriad ways, with impacts expected to grow in strength and severity, unless corrective action is taken.

Climate change affects the nutritional quality of food, exacerbates natural disasters, and intensifies the prevalence vector-borne disease. Clearly steps to address climate also can have collateral benefits for health.

While progress was noted in addressing poverty, hunger and malnutrition, current trends for some regions were moving in the wrong direction, with implementation insufficient and inequality increasing.

Poverty measurements and statistics need to be socially relevant. So far, many poor countries have relied mainly on economic growth for their poverty reduction efforts, but in order to tackle relative poverty, this must change, as growth alone will not suffice.

Social inclusion is a key concept for determining whether we are ensuring that no one is left behind. Access to universal health coverage, free primary and secondary education, enhanced water supply systems, stable and reliable energy,

resilient and safe infrastructure that supports national development are noted enablers for poverty eradication.

Increasing ocean acidification levels continue to endanger marine ecosystems, with impacts felt disproportionately by the poor, many of whose livelihoods depend on the health of the ocean. Many highlighted the link between ocean health and human wellbeing, particularly in the context of SIDS.

It was noted that women and girls are disproportionately impacted by climate change, disasters and conflict, especially when living in poverty. It was also highlighted that they are still deprived of their basic rights and opportunities in many parts of the world. Yet women and girls are the primary drivers of development and social progress, and must be empowered as agents of change. Clearly, more still needs to be done if we are to live up to our commitments in this area.

The lack of official statistics, data and effective monitoring systems remain a significant challenge to measuring progress toward reaching the SDGs, both domestically and at the global level. Many of you noted the need for improved data governance, as well as a demand for capacity strengthening to enable many national statistical agencies and networks to collect and analyse disaggregated data. This will make

information transparent and accessible to all, and is a necessary intervention if we are to advance in the implementation of SDGs.

The importance of peace, democratic institutions, evidence-based policy making, innovation, science and technology, and taking a “whole society” approach were also the focus of many sessions.

As I conclude my wrap up of our discussions this week, let me also highlight that we have seen an unprecedented engagement of all stakeholders, who have provided valuable experience on what they are doing to assist in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. They also had an opportunity to exchange views with Governments and thus contribute to peer learning and sharing of lessons learned. The Children and Youth have reminded us that we need to make our panels not only gender and regionally balanced, but also age balanced in order to engage more youth and children that need special attention. We have also heard a stronger voice from business sector through which I have learnt a new acronym, the BDGs (business development goals) as we were told that SDGs make business sense.

Excellencies:

During the Ministerial Segment next week, 44 countries will present their Voluntary National Reviews.

Undoubtedly, these national preparations will be extensive and impactful, due to strong commitment from the highest levels of Government and engagement of all actors in society.

This strong show of political leadership sends out a key message on the importance attached to the High-Level Political Forum as the key global venue for follow up and review. The platform provided by the HLPF for shared learning is something that we should all endeavour to utilize to the fullest, as we forge ahead.

I am looking forward to interacting with your Ministers and other high officials as we head into the high level segment and the Ministerial week on Monday.

With these words I give the floor to the Mr. Wu Hongbo, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, to deliver his concluding remarks for the week.

Mr. Wu, you have the floor.