



2020 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development

Launching the decade of action at a time of crisis:

Keeping the focus on the SDGs while combatting COVID-19

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Vice-President of ECOSOC, H.E. Ambassador Mher Margaryan

REMARKS

[5 minutes]

Madam President of the Economic and Social Council,

Under-Secretary-General (Liu Zhenmin, USG for DESA),

Excellencies,

It is my pleasure to join you today to share the key messages from the ECOSOC Integration Segment. Yesterday, we focused on the ECOSOC system's analysis and policy proposals on the 2020 theme of ECOSOC and HLPF "Accelerated action and transformative pathways: realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development ". In view of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Segment explored the theme through special focus of overcoming the human crisis and recovering better.

Excellencies,

Silo thinking and approaches continue to hinder our progress not only in the implementation of the SDGs, but also in our COVID-19 response. The pandemic impacted all the SDGs, and revealed and exacerbated existing vulnerabilities and inequalities. We have a shared responsibility to safeguard our development gains and ensure that COVID-19 response is guided by the principle of leaving no one behind and respect for human rights. Our multilateral response for health, socio-economic and humanitarian crises must be coordinated, guided by a spirit of solidarity and put countries back on track for achieving the SDGs.

The pandemic put a spotlight on the poor and most vulnerable, including women, older people, young people, children, low-wage earners, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, refugees and migrants. We must acknowledge past policy failures and need to ensure that recovery leads to more equal, inclusive and sustainable economies and societies that are more resilient. Integrated policy responses will be key to addressing governance, social protection, informality, unpaid care work, labor rights protection, access to justice, access to affordable housing and risks related to new technologies. Building the resilience of social sectors, including health systems, water and sanitation and education, must be a priority. Collective action needs to address the negative impact of the pandemic on all spheres of life. Women's and girls' needs, voices and leadership must be at the heart of the investment for recovery.

As the Secretary-General said in his message yesterday “Returning to the frameworks and systems that gave rise to this crisis is unthinkable.” Integrated policies and incentives will be key to accelerating our transition to economies that protect biodiversity and that are low-carbon, resource efficient and socially inclusive. We must restore our forests, stop deforestation and invest in how we manage our land and protected areas. We need to invest in resilient, sustainable and inclusive food systems that go beyond production and address the entire food supply chain, along with promotion of sustainable practices and diets. We must recognize and address the specific needs and challenges of least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing states and middle-income countries, as well as African countries. The international community needs to ensure sufficient liquidity and fiscal space to all developing countries as an immediate policy imperative.

Recovering better for the decade of action and delivery requires a coherent whole-of-government approach and meaningful engagement of all relevant stakeholders. Financing in all its forms remains critical for transformations to get back on track for the SDGs. We must address the gaps in data, information and analysis for informed and evidence-based policy-making.

We must also use the COVID-19 pandemic as a historic opportunity to launch transformative pathways with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as our guiding framework. We can achieve transformational change through a systemic approach, in particular focusing on food systems or energy systems. We

must continue to build on the many interlinkages among the SDGs to end poverty in all its forms and dimensions and to rebuild inclusive societies that are resilient in the face of future pandemics, climate-related events and other challenges.

In conclusion, I would like to thank all panelists and delegations who took part in the Virtual meeting of the Integration Segment yesterday for sharing their visions and ideas on how we can build a better post-COVID world, reflecting the ideals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Economic and Social Council will continue to provide an inclusive platform to explore integrated policies that can respond to the world's most urgent challenges, amplifying the rich and relevant work of the ECOSOC subsidiary bodies and the UN system for the 2030 Agenda and for recovering better.

Thank you.