

**Dr. Marianne Beisheim<sup>1</sup> on “Lessons learned from the first cycle of HLPF”**  
(New York, July 18, 2019)

### ***1) Challenges and opportunities for the HLPF to deliver on its functions?***

Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen!

- The full room once again proves that the HLPF is definitely a success in terms of attendance and attention.  
Many people come and they have high expectations.
- But what do they - what do *you* take home?
  
- In 2013, *Member States* decided that all the work that you and we put in this HLPF, all the reports, the reviews, the hours we spent in this basement room shall serve one central function, that is to be found in the resolutions that define the mandate of the HLPF: It “shall provide political leadership, guidance and recommendations” (Res. 67/290) for “*Transforming Our World*” towards sustainable development.
  
- As for the *Challenges*:
  - o During the HLPF many inputs deal with Transformation, but only few analyze and demonstrate convincingly *how to* achieve it;
  - o And as we have just learned 85% of the respondents to the survey want to see more political guidance and recommendations in the *Ministerial Declaration*.
  
- While the 1<sup>st</sup> phase of HLPF’s Follow-up and Review was much about localizing & setting up new or adjusted frameworks for the SDGs, in the upcoming 2<sup>nd</sup> phase we must identify *measures* that have *proven effective* for achieving transformation, we must *tackle* obstacles & barriers.  
Based on this, the HLPF should provide for forward-looking *recommendations* on *how to* achieve that transformative change *faster and better*, for example, through changing political frameworks, legal initiatives, or fiscal incentives, at the national, regional and global level.
  
- *Opportunities*: This year Panelists and Side Events presented more concrete *policy ideas* of how to achieve transformative change, for example:
  - o One country presented how overcoming a discriminatory law on land and property ended decades of violent conflicts.
  - o Several countries explained how they initiated just and fair transition processes for phasing out coal.
  
- We need to find ways to better evaluate and work with these good practices.
  
- So, Madam President, I think – in these difficult times for Multilateralism – it was indeed the “best HLPF ever”.  
Given the pressing problems we face, however, I fear it is still not good enough.  
So, I look forward to the second round where we hear suggestions how to get even more out of the HLPF.

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## **2) Which aspects of the Forum could be strengthened to ensure effective and inclusive follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda?**

As I indicated, we need to improve the HLPF process so as to develop “political leadership and guidance” on *how* to transform our world.

Not only during, but already before each HLPF, there is so much input to digest - have you, for example, found time to read

- the Secretary General’s SDG Progress Report and UN Stat’s SDG Report,
- the excellent background notes that DESA prepares for each session of the HLPF,
- the synthesis of the many reports from the UN System,
- the compilation of the main messages of the 2019 VNRs?
- There are in fact many more inputs.

And before you started negotiating the 2019 Political Declaration, did you get clear feedback from capitals what action-oriented recommendations your government would like to see in that document?

My *one concrete measure* to strengthen the HLPF is to improve the *workflow* - for more evidence-based and action-oriented outcomes:

In the 2018 resolution on the ECOSOC Review, Member States already called on the Secretariat to adjust the ECOSOC Calendar (incl. the reporting arrangements of subsidiary bodies). In that context, you could think about splitting the HLPF in *two* one-week meetings:<sup>2</sup>

1. End of May, we could combine the 1-day ECOSOC Integration Segment and 4-days of HLPF. That gives us one week to evaluate all the reports from the UN system, the insights from regional fora, to do the Thematic and SDG Reviews, draw on the main messages from the VNRs, and to consolidate the findings in terms of what action is needed. The sessions in this week should focus on identifying good practices and integrated policy recommendations, including action plans on challenges.

The results of this first week should inform the negotiations of the Ministerial Declaration in June – now with a new focus on actionable recommendations

2. In July, we would have the other four days of HLPF, including the three Ministerial Days, with the official presentations of the VNRs, plus the 1-day ECOSOC HLS. In this week, Member States could outline what they are willing to do with regard to the identified action points and challenges. We might also need an assessment of whether these pledges add up to what is necessary in aggregate to achieve the SDGs. We could forge coalitions of the willing that are committed to go ahead, including those from the sub-national and city level. We could “match-make” and broker partnerships around the identified demands and challenges.

*All in all I suggest to improve the workflow:* receive reports, analyze them, consult with capitals, negotiate, decide, build political will, and act – and follow-up on the action points at the next HLPF. Thank you!

<sup>2</sup> See also [Marianne Beisheim, UN Reforms for the 2030 Agenda. Are the HLPF's Working Methods and Practices "Fit for Purpose"?](#) SWP Research Paper 2018/RP 09, October 2018, Berlin: SWP.