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ECOSOC High-Level Meeting on Multilateralism after COVID-19: What Kind of UN do we Need at the 75th Anniversary?

Remarks by Angel Gurría

OECD Secretary-General

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(As prepared for delivery)

Secretary-General, Excellencies,

Let me begin by acknowledging Ambassador Mona Juul and Norway as they approach the end of their ECOSOC Presidency. You have presided over the most profound global health and economic emergency in the history of the UN. Rest assured that we will continue

collaborating closely and constructively with your successor as we transition to the 2021 ECOSOC cycle.

We are here to discuss multilateralism in the post-COVID world. Too often, when we think about multilateralism, we jump straight into conversations about international organisations, but let me add another element which I consider crucial: the need to restore **trust**. Trust among nations. Trust among peoples. Trust in the governments and institutions that people look to defend their rights, and to protect them in the face of the pandemic and its dire economic and social consequences.

We were suffering a trust deficit long before the arrival of COVID-19. Heightened political and trade tensions were already hurting economies and people. Countries were lagging in the implementation of their Paris climate commitments – and in some cases, stepping back from them altogether. And very few advanced economies were delivering on their foreign aid commitments.

But not all is lost. We have made considerable progress working together and now is the time to build on these efforts. We have the Sustainable Development Goals. And the fact that 47 countries have presented their Voluntary National Reviews in the last few days – despite the challenges of moving to an entirely virtual format – is a testament to the importance of the SDGs as a framework for getting us through this crisis.

Looking ahead, we need a UN that brings governments together around hard facts, equipped with the right tools and expertise, and with a shared resolve to move forward and keep the 2030 Agenda alive and within reach.

This means renewed efforts on peace, jobs, environment, gender and security. This means an end to tit-for-tat trade measures. This means serious efforts to get the price of carbon right before it is too late. And of course, this means investing together in multilateral solutions to end today's global health and economic crisis, and to prevent tomorrow's crises.

Dear friends,

As the UN turns 75, the Organisation which I lead, the OECD, turns 60. And you can count

on us to use this very special year to redouble our efforts to work with – and in support of – the United Nations. Thank you.

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