

ECOSOC High-Level Segment 18 July 2022

Closing statement

by

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Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good afternoon.

I am honored to be speaking to you at the closing of the 2022 High-Level Segment of the Economic and Social Council.

I am proud that after two years of virtual or hybrid meetings, so many of us have managed to come together here at the UN Headquarters to discuss our challenges and expectations for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Your discussions throughout those eight days were brimming with ideas and anticipation. It is clear that the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs have kept their power to inspire, unite and mobilize. The same commitment was visible among policy makers, UN system Heads, experts, practitioners, advocates, other major groups and other stakeholders and participants from all walks of life.

The President of ECOSOC opened the meeting on a high note, full of optimism and hope. I cannot agree more that this HLPF gave us the sense that we can turn the tide, catch up on SDG progress and make a leap forward towards the

realization of the 2030 Agenda. We should use the one-year preparations for the SDG Summit in September 2023 and the Summit itself as a milestone to mark a new phase of acceleration and transformation in the story of our shared Sustainable Development Goals. I encourage you to support the President of the General Assembly 77<sup>th</sup> session in the preparations for the SDG Summit. On our part, we are ready to dedicate our full support to this endeavour.

Today was a special day. This morning, we looked at ideas on how to improve multilateralism and make it more inclusive, networked and effective. We looked in detail at the public health response to the pandemic; at finance and debt relief; and at climate change and social protection, including labor rights and education. This afternoon, we studied future scenarios to ensure sustainable development and what we can do now to make our future better. You shared experiences on your sustainable development paths, long-term vision and scenarios and how these are being impacted by ongoing crises.

The Secretary-General's SDG progress report I presented last week revealed the devastating impact of the pandemic on many SDGs.

As you have heard from the Secretary-General, the SDGs indeed need a rescue plan.

But it is not too late. Even during the pandemic, progress has continued to be made on some targets. The SDGs have continued to gain ground. They have mobilized ever more governments, local authorities, organizations of all kinds and at all levels, the private sector and civil society. All have continued to implement course corrections and adopt and implement policies to reach the goals and leave

no one behind, amidst the multiple crises we have been facing. We heard it from the 44 Voluntary National Reviews, the ministerial roundtable yesterday, and all panels and dialogues. Combined with socio-economic plans to respond to the pandemic and other urgent actions to address the impacts of the crises, I trust they will bear fruit. The scenario presented in the Secretary-General's report on future trends and scenarios proves that this is possible. We need however to focus on transforming our system and behaviors whose weaknesses were made glaring by the crises and supporting an inclusive, sustained and green transition.

Today we have demonstrated that if we are well informed of demographic, social and environmental changes that are coming our way in the years ahead, we can anticipate them and make the needed policy changes *now*.

Therefore, I am proud to see that the Ministerial Declaration was adopted by consensus. This document gives us clear guidance on how to address these future challenges.

Of course, we have differences in insights, experiences and approaches. But our unity is laid out in great detail in the Ministerial Declaration, and I congratulate you on this achievement.

I am pleased that the strong commitment to the fulfillment of the goals that we set in 2015 is still vibrant. This will accelerate our travel on our common road to recovery and resilience.

It is the last time I address this Council. I will be leaving the United Nations at the end of the month, to take another position in my home country, China. These five years at the United Nations have been exhilarating. I have deeply enjoyed supporting all of you, the Member and Observer States. I hope that I served you well to keep the focus on the 2030 Agenda and on our SDGs. It has also been inspirational to work with the Secretary-General and Deputy Secretary-General as well as with my UN system Colleagues and our enthusiastic major groups and other stakeholders

I have learned a lot from all delegations and from our common fight for a better world at international conferences and in our established UN bodies and platforms such as the HLPF, the General Assembly and ECOSOC. It has been highly motivating and rewarding to serve this noble organization and support the advancement of its high values and ambitions. I also thank Ambassador Kelapile for his great stewardship of ECOSOC this year.

I also thank my great team in DESA. You saw their professionalism, expertise and dedication to support Member States and all stakeholders most recently in the last few days. They deserve our respect and gratitude. I would like to name them all, but I will just thank Irena Zubcevic, who is also leaving the UN at the end of this month. You know her well, and I know you are joining me in thanking her for what she did for the United Nations throughout her career.

It is now time for me to say good-bye. I wish you courage and harmony in continuing to pursue the SDGs. I will do the same at home.

I wish you all safe travels home and hope that we all have enough courage and enthusiasm to persevere in these trying times and turn crises into opportunities to make the transformation we need to achieve the SDGs.

Thank you.

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