

2022 ECOSOC High-level Segment

**Introduction of Secretary-General's two Reports
E/2022/57 and E/2022/58
at the High-level Segment of ECOSOC**

by

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Monday 18 July, 9:00 am, ECOSOC Chamber

Mr. President of ECOSOC,

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Today the ECOSOC High-level Segment has two forward-looking sessions.

The first, this morning, is “*Future proofing multilateralism for a resilient and inclusive recovery*”.

**The second is entitled “*Looking ahead: Acting today to secure a better future*”.
*It will be convened here this afternoon.***

These two sessions are informed by two complementary reports of the Secretary-General.

I would like to briefly introduce these to you and highlight their key messages.

Excellencies,

The first report focuses on this year’s ECOSOC and HLPF theme: “*Building back better from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*”. It is report (E/2022/57).

The report stresses that the COVID-19 pandemic has been a human tragedy, having caused more than 6 million deaths globally. It has also been a major step back for progress in sustainable development and the realization of the 2030 Agenda.

Building back better will require countries’ determination to adopt and invest in policies that strengthen human, social, economic and planetary resilience, as well as pursue a strong focus on resource allocations for achieving the SDGs.

The report gives an overarching and systematic analysis of what will be needed to build back better.

A key message is that the COVID-19 outbreak has shown that the global system is only as strong as its weakest link. This means that further strengthening of multilateral cooperation and partnership is critical to achieving a sustainable and resilient recovery for countries, both individually and collectively.

The COVID-19 experience must be used to renew the spirit and substance of multilateral cooperation and international solidarity, including revitalizing the international institutions that sustain those.

In this context, the report stresses that vaccine equity for all countries is essential. It is important to ensure rapid universal access of all developing countries to vaccines, treatments and diagnostics. Production capacities must also be boosted in developing countries.

For the building back better from COVID-19 to be sustainable, countries must avoid returning to the “business as usual” investment patterns and activities of the past and opt to make their economies more socially equitable and environmentally sustainable. Transformative changes are needed, led by governments.

A strong focus on reducing income inequality in society will be key to eradicating extreme poverty and hunger by 2030, while also contributing to the achievement of multiple other Goals.

Addressing long-term gender inequality, such as closing the gender gap in the labour force participation rate, can be a potent driver of higher economic growth.

Building back better will also require countries to implement and extend social protection mechanisms and strengthen health care systems. Some 53 per cent of the global population still has no access to any type of social protection. High priority should be accorded to achieving SDG target 1.3 on nationally appropriate social protection systems for all.

Countries also need to adopt and implement policies that limit global warming and make better use of natural resources. The global economy is consuming annually more than 100 billion tons of the Earth's resources. We should collectively make a shift towards less resource-intensive technologies and an economic model that involves sharing, repairing and recycling materials and products as long as possible.

It is imperative to ensure that countries build back better by pursuing a strategy of a greener, more inclusive and sustainable recovery.

Finally, the response to COVID-19 has shown the immense potential of digital technologies for health, education and other public services. The recovery will also require countries to invest in digital transition and bridge the digital gaps among and within countries.

Excellencies,

The second report of the Secretary-General, (E/2022/58), is entitled “*Long-term future trends and scenarios - impacts on the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals*”.

The report is aimed at supporting policymakers in looking beyond today's crises and emergencies and reflecting on scenarios on how the world can reach the Sustainable Development Goals and its climate change objectives.

It builds on the call of the Secretary-General that we must make full use of our unprecedented capacity to predict and model the impact of policy decisions over time

The report examines what it may take to achieve the SDGs through a low energy demand better futures scenario to achieve the SDGs and decent living standards for all.

It notes, however, that the world's actions in the past year have not been in line with such a global "best-case scenario" of low energy demand, which was presented in the Secretary-General's report last year.

The report therefore discusses an alternative sustainable development pathway scenario developed by leading scientists in 2021.

Their resulting findings provide a pragmatic portfolio of actions to embark on a path towards achieving most of the Goals despite the unsustainable existing infrastructure and recent trends.

In particular, the key elements of the alternative sustainable development pathway scenario include:

- **Preserving planetary integrity through reducing greenhouse gas emissions,**
- **Optimizing the provision of material needs and sustainable resources, including through reducing food waste and agricultural water use,**
- **Focusing on people to reduce extreme poverty,**
- **Achieving economic prosperity and ensuring decent living standards for all, and**
- **Strengthening institutions and partnerships.**

These measures would require large globally coordinated investments and increased political will. Investing in a range of emerging carbon dioxide removal technologies, as well as nature-based solutions, would also be needed.

The report notes that the sustainable development pathway show that the SDGs and the world's climate targets are still within reach.

For this to happen, the world must adopt the right policies and step-up investments, research and the sharing of technology, with sustainable development as the ultimate objective.

The report also shows that supporting the energy transition is a powerful enabler for realizing the advances and the SDGs. Considerable advances are being made. Notably, digital consumer technologies could greatly reduce primary energy demand.

Yet, in all areas, there is a need for political will, focus, continuing research and development, and international cooperation and solidarity.

There is no time to lose.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Economic and Social Council has an important role to play in mobilizing Governments, the UN system, civil society and young people to achieve the 2030 Agenda. But there is also room for us to do better.

Both reports highlight that international cooperation and solidarity are essential conditions for building back better and realizing the sustainable development pathway.

Let us think critically and creatively about the actions we can take to get back on track of the SDGs and secure a better long-term future for all.

I thank you.
