

Opening Statement

Amb. Lachezera Stoeva, President of the Economic and Social Council

**Ministerial Segment of High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and
High-Level Segment of ECOSOC**

17 July 2023

Excellencies,

Mr President of the General Assembly,

Mr Secretary-General,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Welcome to the ministerial segment of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and the High-Level Segment of the Economic and Social Council.

Today, we find ourselves at a critical juncture, seven years into the 2030 Agenda.

While we have witnessed progress in some areas, it is essential to acknowledge the challenges we face. The lingering effects of the Covid-19 global pandemic, coupled with the ongoing war in Ukraine, have taken a toll on the well-being of people across our planet. Just two weeks ago, on 3 and 4 July, the world saw the hottest days on Earth ever recorded globally and chances are this dooming record will soon be broken again and again. We are past the point of urgency for action, we are at the point of alarm. And yet this is not the time to panic, it is the time to act.

Excellencies,

As we move forward, it is imperative that the 2030 Agenda continue to be our roadmap for the way ahead. Governments, organizations, and individuals around the world must persevere in efforts to achieve the SDGs by 2030, fostering sustainable development and enhancing the well-being of people and planet.

To accelerate progress towards the SDGs, we must emphasize innovation, technology, and forge high-impact partnerships. The first week of the HLPF saw rich exchanges of good practices and lessons learned among a range of stakeholders. It also heard ideas for bold transformative changes. Collaboration between governments, civil society, the private sector, and academia will play an increasingly crucial role in driving meaningful change.

Countries must integrate the SDGs into their national development plans, policies, and strategies. A strong push must be made to accelerate progress, and aligning national priorities with the SDGs is paramount to ensure a coherent and comprehensive approach to sustainable development.

We are halfway to 2030 and yet nowhere near to achieving the SDGs. The bad news is we've lost 7 years. The good news is- we still have 7 years and victories is within our reach.

This HLPF is the last stop before the SDG Summit. The Forum serves to build momentum, identify political priorities, and mobilize a broader set of stakeholders for an ambitious Summit.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The voluntary national reviews have provided invaluable lessons. Robust institutional frameworks and governance mechanisms are essential for effective follow-up and review of SDG-related initiatives at national and local levels. The 39 reviews to be presented at this Forum are a testament to our actions in this regard.

To those countries and the European Union that are presenting voluntary reviews this year, I congratulate you and applaud your efforts. Your hard work is bearing fruit. While some actions may require scaling up, additional resources, or increased buy-in from all sectors of society, they represent steps in the right direction.

One illustration is that, tailoring SDG implementation to local contexts and priorities is vital for success. Encouraging local governments and communities to take ownership of the SDGs is an essential lesson from the first half of our journey towards 2030.

Mobilizing financial resources, both domestic and international, is also crucial to support SDG implementation. We must explore innovative financing mechanisms, foster public-private partnerships, and attract domestic investments.

Inclusion and participation are keys to successful SDG implementation. We must engage a diverse range of stakeholders, including young people. Countries must actively foster dialogue with all sectors of society to ensure that decision-making is inclusive and that no one is left behind.

In convening the 2023 HLPF, I have built on the forum's embrace of stakeholders. I have also aimed to provide space for the voices of youth in the HLPF.

Youth have a pivotal role of youth in striving for the SDGs. Young minds are often at the forefront of innovation, unencumbered by conventional thinking and ready to explore new frontiers. Whether at the United Nations, in government, or in other institutions, there is a need for meaningful mechanisms for youth participation. Only then can they fully contribute their creativity, technological acumen, and commitment to social progress.

Today, I urge that we stay focused and determined. We simply have no other choice but to succeed.

Thank you.
