Statement by USG Mr. Liu
HLPF closing session
19 July 2023

Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

As this meeting of the HLPF comes to a close today, I am delighted to offer a few highlights and reflections.

We have come to the end of the 2023 HLPF, and we have learned much throughout these 8 days.

We have heard many examples of progress, lessons learned and stories of successful initiatives.

We have listened to the voices of Governments, civil society, and the United Nations system, as well as the many high-level experts, scientists, academic leaders and inspiring speakers who have participated.

But I think the most important voices have been the voices of our young people, who have engaged in record numbers this year.

For the first time at the HLPF, every session included at least one youth speaker, and many more youth contributed to the discussions from the floor.

So first, I am very pleased to say that the voices of the young generation were heard loud and clear. And I thank the President and Bureau of ECOSOC for taking this initiative.

It makes me very hopeful for the future.

Second, I will say that this year’s forum has also heard many shared calls for action, not only around the SDGs under review, but also throughout the thematic review sessions. These have focused on the need for systemic changes in finance, climate action, gender equality, human rights, and other important areas.

The thematic review discussions and assessment of progress toward the SDGs all commonly highlighted the importance of enhancing international collaboration. They also spoke to unleashing adequate financing, fighting for true inclusivity, and reaching for pathways to more effective multilateralism.

There were also dynamic discussions on the follow-up to the LDC 5 Conference, the UN Water Conference, the Food Systems Summit, the mid-point review of the Sendai Framework, and the forthcoming SIDS conference.
Delegations and stakeholders spoke of prioritizing clean water and sanitation means utilizing available data and scientific evidence to improve our water and waste management systems.

We heard calls for accelerating access to affordable and clean electricity means ensuring just energy transitions.

Speakers shared examples of fostering green and inclusive industrial growth and innovation means promoting partnerships, strengthening knowledge-sharing, and supporting small- and medium-sized enterprises.

We heard how water, energy, and industry Goals all converge in the planning and management of sustainable cities and communities. We learned how many communities are striving to meet urbanization challenges, prioritize affordable housing and sustainable transportation, and leverage technology for urban development.

Much more investment is needed in data gathering, data governance, and analytical capacity to ensure sharable, reusable, flexible and responsive data are available and to drive transformational change.

Women and girls need to be empowered and engaged in the achievement of all the SDGs.

Vulnerable populations must be seen as key stakeholders and be included at the center of the decisions and actions for SDG implementation.

The term “polycrisis” was used to signify how urgent the global situation is, and how interlinked our responses must be if we are to create real and lasting change.

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Finally, I would like to emphasize that the United Nations remains an inclusive multilateral space, dedicated to discussing how we can collectively agree on mechanisms to respond effectively to this rapidly evolving world.

With seven years to achieve the SDGs, we know we are off track, and in some areas we have moved backwards.

But if we can take action on the innovative policies that we have talked about for the past 10 days, then we can counter these trends by 2030.

It is possible to reform the international financial architecture, promote multi-stakeholder collaboration, and leave no one behind.
The Voluntary National Reviews this year have provided many great examples of actions being taken at the national level to accelerate progress. I wish to thank all countries and the EU for their outstanding presentations and reports.

Now, as we head toward the SDG Summit in September, I invite all of us to reflect and take away at least two inspiring ideas from this year’s HLPF.

I ask everyone listening to this closing statement to reflect on the ideas you have been inspired by, and then decide to take at least two actions that can help to change the world for the better, to implement the SDGs.

The youth are counting on us to act, and we all must act.

I thank you all for your participation, engagement, and commitment.