

Closing remarks at the 2018 HLPF by H.E. Ms. Marie Chatardová, President of ECOSOC

Wednesday, 18 July 2017

Under-Secretary-General Mr. Liu Zhenmin,

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

With this inspirational speech of the Secretary-General, we have now come to the end of the 2018 High-Level Political Forum on sustainable development.

Over the past eight days, much has happened.

We have discussed how far we have come and how far we have left to go.

We have heard from a record 46 countries present their Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs).

They have reported significant progress towards adapting their institutions or creating enabling environments for strengthening coordination to achieve the SDGs. They have reported great strides in including the goals and targets into national development plans and strategies.

They told us how they have engaged their civil society in preparing their VNR and, more generally, in implementing the SDGs. Some have also mobilized their parliament or local governments or interacted with their Supreme Audit Institutions. Some said that the preparations for the VNRs have given impetus to new national institutional or legislative processes that will have lasting impacts.

We also heard about the many partnerships that are unfolding between different sectors and levels of government to achieve the 2030 Agenda.

Some countries are also empowering women and youth to play their full part in realizing the SDGs and fulfill their potential. Many also recognized that we need ambitious communication strategies to engage the whole society around the 2030 Agenda.

It is clear that we are only at the beginning of the journey.

Many people continue to confront major obstacles that prevent them from realizing their basic rights. It is encouraging that national plans and policies increasingly include a concern to “leave no one behind”.

But data still elude us to understand who are the poorest and most vulnerable and what is holding them back. We discussed ways to build statistical capacity for the production of high quality, timely, reliable and disaggregated data. Significant work and resources must clearly be employed in this area.

During these eight days, we also heard from regions -the world over -how they are progressing towards the goals and the lessons they have learned in the three years since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda.

We spoke about the need to build resilience and address vulnerabilities. Many countries are facing substantial challenges with the increased incidence of climate-related natural disasters. These risks are especially present for developing countries and their most vulnerable populations.

Last week, we also held extensive discussions on the SDG 6 on water, 7 on energy, 11 on cities, 12 on sustainable consumption and production, 15 on life on land, and 17 on partnerships.

We came up with many recommendations, which I will reflect in my summary of this meeting. Those include establishing a “blue fund” to support design and implementation of transboundary water management for SDG 6; tripling investments in clean and renewable energies to achieve SDG7; strengthening coordination and partnerships between the local and regional levels and national level to achieve SDG 11; scaling up pilot projects and initiatives in sustainable consumption and production to achieve SDG 12; capturing and communicating the true value of ecosystems and biodiversity to achieve SDG 15; and leveraging new technologies while making concerted efforts to protect the most vulnerable so to achieve SDG 17.

We have been reminded about the significant contributions of Major Groups and other Stakeholders to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

But the HLPF has been much more than the hours we spent in this conference room. The HLPF has also been about the vibrant special events, including the first Local and Regional Governments’ Forum, the SDG Business Forum, and the Partnership Exchange. It has been about the record number of side events, the exhibit in the corridors and the film festival. It has also been in the multiple bilateral meetings that would have never happened otherwise and in the multitude of links that were forged between all of you, and which will help us to continue to learn and help each other.

We also had a very interesting first ever VNR Lab where countries came to talk about what they have accomplished, what is holding them back and how the VNRs can help.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our meeting culminated months of preparations, consultations, planning, and in-depth discussions, including the Regional Forums on Sustainable Development. This is what made the discussions rich and action-oriented.

We cannot afford to lose this momentum we have worked so hard to build. Let us move on to implement the recommendations we made, make stronger commitments, and try and scale up best practices.

I hope that we will all return to our countries more determined and better equipped to tackle the challenges that lie ahead in order to reach the SDGs.

We should take decisive steps between now and September 2019, when the HLPF meets under the auspices of the General Assembly to review the whole of the 2030 Agenda.

Tomorrow, at the High-level segment of ECOSOC we will have the opportunity to discuss what our future holds. Experts in financing and trade will discuss current and future economic trends, and how they can be leveraged to implement the SDGs. We will also discuss ways to responsibly use new technologies to help support our work ahead.

I would like to once again commend the 46 countries who have presented their VNRs this year, and reiterated their strong commitment to turning the 2030 Agenda into concrete action.

I would also like to thank the Secretariat for supporting this meeting Zhenmin Liu, Marion Juwang, Emer and their team -- and everyone who worked so hard to make the 2018 High-Level Political Forum a great success.

We need your tireless efforts and commitments if we are to reach our collective goals for a better world.
