

OPENING REMARKS

H.E. Mr. Oh Joon
President of ECOSOC

2016 High-level Political Forum
Opening of the High level segment

New York, UN HQ (TCC)
18 July 2016, 9:00 am

H.E Mr. Morgens Lykketoft, President of the General Assembly,

H.E **Ms. Erna Solberg**, Prime Minister of Norway

H.E **Ms. Dang Thi Ngoc Thinh**, Vice-President of Viet Nam

H.E Mr. Jan Eliasson, Deputy Secretary-General of the UN

Distinguished Ministers,

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my honour to open the High-level Segment of the Economic and Social Council and the Ministerial segment of the 2016 high-level political forum on sustainable development under the auspices of Economic and Social Council.

The Council's High-level Segment marks the culmination of a year of intensive work by the ECOSOC system under its 2016 theme of "Implementing the post-2015 development agenda: moving from commitments to results."

The role of the UN ECOSOC is essential for successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This year's work, in particular, represents a threshold, a new beginning, and a higher level of expectation for how the multilateral system will function at the global level in keeping with the Agenda's vision.

And this is also a highly important year for the HLPF, which is meeting for the first time after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda. We have set the bar high by assigning the Forum the central role in the follow up and review of progress towards the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda. The world is watching to see how we use this precious opportunity.

This Forum can only be as effective and meaningful as the action we take when we leave this room. It is our task to take the lessons we learn here back to our countries and implement the SDGs with further reinforced vigor.

Our concerted effort is needed to ensure that the HLPF reaches the potential it has been vested with. Our discussions here, in this Forum, need to ensure that we “walk the walk” and not just “talk the talk.”

Distinguished Ministers,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are off to a strong start. We have behind us a productive week of intense and frank discussions. We will shortly hear from the two rapporteurs from Switzerland and Honduras on what transpired last week.

The guiding thread has been how we ensure that no one is left behind in any facet of the 2030 Agenda. We have tackled all 17 SDGs through this theme, as well as issues related to starting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

We have had a wealth of exchanges on policies, actions and practices, among governments and other stakeholders.

The theme of this year’s forum “Ensuring that no one is left behind” represents the solemn promise we made to the world when we agreed on the 2030 Agenda.

In order to deliver on that promise, we need to first answer some critical questions:

- How will we identify the ones that are furthest behind?
Without knowing who and where they are, we cannot help them.
- How will we reach the furthest behind? We should reach them, wherever they are and despite the reasons that they have been excluded.
- How do we ensure that our efforts make progress on all goals? Leaving no goal behind is as important as leaving no one behind.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

During the next three days we will hear from 22 Member States that have come forward for the first National Voluntary Reviews of the 2030 Agenda.

I appreciate these countries for their initiative and willingness to prepare their reviews within the short timeframe.

We have a remarkable opportunity to learn from these peer reviews. We will participate in these discussions with an open mind and with a view to building a solid framework for future national reviews.

When we hear a valuable lesson learnt, or are given an idea or a policy that has worked for other colleagues, let us take that nugget of innovation back home and mold it to suit our needs for national implementation. Likewise, when we hear challenges in implementation, we can think and work together on how to overcome them.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Agreeing on the 2030 Agenda and SDGs as a shared blueprint for our global development was a remarkable achievement for humanity.

While implementing the Agenda, it will be critical that we keep adjusting our work as we go and keep our eyes on the horizon.

The HLPF is mandated to keep abreast of new and emerging issues as well as global challenges that we must tackle together.

We need to ensure that we hear the voices of all states, all regions and all sectors. The HLPF needs to be the global early warning system to ensure that we act together in time and adjust our actions when needed.

And for the HLPF to be successful, we need the engagement of all stakeholders. All of them will continue their strong voice throughout the sessions of the HLPF, bringing their perspectives and experiences.

As President of ECOSOC, I have given priority during the last one year to the increased engagement of non-state actors and consulted them on all aspects of the HLPF. Their views and experiences are enriching our discussions at this Forum.

Ladies and gentlemen,

This year's HLPF sets the bar for future HLPFs. Let us make sure that the Forum lives up to its mandate and promise, and that we inspire each other in working together to advance the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda.

We have three days of important work ahead of us. I am extremely grateful for your participation and wish to request that you put the HLPF in your agendas for next year and all future

years, and to fully use the HLPF for the successful achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Thank you. /END/