

Mr. Liu Zhemin, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs

**Introduction of
Report of the Secretary-General on the 2018 ECOSOC main theme
Report of the Secretary-General in support of the 2018 ECOSOC thematic discussion
2018 United Nations World Economic and Social Survey**

ECOSOC high-level segment, including ministerial meetings of the HLPF (16-19 July 2018)

Monday, 16 July 2018, 3:35 p.m.

Trusteeship Council Chamber, United Nations Headquarters, New York

Your Excellency, Ms. Marie Chatardová, President of the Economic and Social Council,
Honourable Ministers,
Excellencies,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

[\[Introduction\]](#)

Let me start by joining the President of the Economic and Social Council in welcoming you to the ministerial segment of the High-level Political Forum and the 2018 ECOSOC High-level Segment.

I have the honour to introduce the Report of the Secretary-General on this ECOSOC main theme, as well as the Report of the Secretary-General in support of the 2018 ECOSOC thematic dialogue and the 2018 United Nations flagship publication World Economic and Social Survey. These Reports inform the discussions of the 2018 HLPF and ECOSOC High-level Segment.

[\[Report of the Secretary-General on the ECOSOC main theme\]](#)

The Report of the Secretary-General on the ECOSOC main theme presents an overview of global commitments and approaches to building resilience and reducing risk. It identifies drivers of risk in urban and rural communities.

It proposes actions and tools for building sustainable and resilient societies at the local level. It also highlights the role of international cooperation and partnerships in support of sustainable and resilient societies.

The Report elaborates on two key findings:

- Supporting sustainable and resilience societies is an integral part of efforts towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and
- Significant elements to ensure resilience and sustainability are: local ownership and capacities; foresight and risk planning; policy integration; and inclusivity.

The Report also presents several common, cross-cutting elements that stakeholders are recommended to prioritize in contributing to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development:

First, national and local ownership of strategies for building resilience plays a key role in advancing progress on the Sustainable Development Goals.

Second, all countries should ensure that local capacities and systems are strengthened to guarantee sustainable results and build resilient communities.

Third, foresight and risk planning are also necessary. Strategic foresight prioritizes resilience and also focuses on what resources could be used to prevent or resist development setbacks.

Fourth, foresight can also be a useful driver of innovation. Having the foresight to anticipate future needs and challenges can inspire innovative projects to address concerns before they become too disruptive.

Fifth, economic, social and environmental sustainability and resilience are mutually dependent, and require an integrated approach for policy and planning.

Finally, measures taken to build resilience should emphasize inclusive participation.

[\[World Economic and Social Survey 2018 “Frontier Technologies for Sustainable Development”\]](#)

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is also my pleasure to introduce the Overview of the United Nations flagship report, *World Economic and Social Survey 2018*, entitled, “Frontier Technologies for Sustainable Development”. The full report will be launched in October 2018.

The world is excited about the immense possibilities of many frontier technologies – artificial intelligence, genomics, renewable energy technologies, to name a few – and their potential impact on sustainable development.

The Overview of the Survey reminds us that new technologies create winners and losers. This is true for many frontier technologies, which may exacerbate the problems of under-employment, unemployment, income distribution and inequality.

Many frontier technologies also raise moral and ethical concerns.

We need a better understanding of how the United Nations and international community can shepherd technological progress that supports sustainable development.

We need policies that maximize benefits and mitigate the risks and negative externalities of frontier technologies.

The Overview underscores the need for a balanced approach for managing innovation, diffusion and adoption of frontier technologies, striking a balance among efficiency, equity and ethical considerations.

The Overview also highlights the imperative of robust international cooperation for managing frontier technologies.

Finally, the Overview underscores the role of the United Nations in steering frontier technologies towards sustainable development outcomes.

[[Report of the Secretary-General in support of the thematic discussion “Harnessing new technologies to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.”](#)]

The Report of the Secretary-General in support of the thematic discussion focuses on *“Harnessing new technologies to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals”*. It elaborates on the policy implications of the dazzling-speed progress in frontier technologies and the huge promises and the deep concerns associated with those technologies.

In the report, the Secretary-General stresses that it is urgent to anticipate and prepare for the huge impacts technologies are already having on jobs and societies. Major actions are also needed to mobilize technologies for the common good and the achievement of the 2030

Agenda. The report aims to launch a dialogue among Member States and all relevant actors on how to do just this. It is a call for action.

The report thus discusses the role and responsibilities of governments and the steps they can take to harness opportunities and address potential risks by working in a multi-stakeholder context, bringing together Governments, innovators, investors, the private sector, civil society, scientists and all other actors. Governments cannot work as they used to. They need to hear different perspectives, engage people, share knowledge, discuss ways forward and engage in alliances and partnerships in order to accelerate the response to and keep up with the pace of change.

The United Nations platforms must also adapt in order to provide a space in which Member States can come together with all actors to discuss frameworks, exchange good practices and reflect on where protocols, principles or other mechanisms or incentives may be needed.

A number of such multistakeholder mechanisms already exist such as the Technology Facilitation Mechanism that includes both the multistakeholder Science-Technology-Innovation Forum and an online platform that serves as a gateway for information relating to science, technology and innovation. There is also the Internet Governance Forum which focuses on how to adapt the Internet to support an information society centred on human beings and their rights. The Technology Bank for the Least Developed Countries has been established and to promote use of technology for achieving the SDGs.

The United Nations system itself is committed to supporting multi-stakeholder dialogue and consensus-building on those choices and decisions as well as to help countries mobilize the promises of technologies. But in order to play a meaningful role as an inclusive and effective platform for collaboration, the Organization must strengthen its own capacity to engage with new technologies and new technology actors. For that reason, the Secretary-General has conducted broad consultations internally and externally to define a United Nations strategy on new technology. The strategy was designed as an internal call to action for increasing awareness and knowledge of new technologies and their impact, and related skills.

In particular, the United Nations needs to upgrade its own understanding of how new technologies affect respective mandates, learn whether and how the Organization can use new technologies to improve mandate delivery and internal management efforts. It needs to determine what can be learned from experiences to inform support to Member States and other actors.

[Conclusion]

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would also like to inform you that the findings of these reports will be discussed more in-depth during the high-level segment of ECOSOC on 19 July where we are going to look at future trends and forecasts as well as how technologies can assist in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

I am looking forward to these discussions and wish us all a very productive week.

Thank you.