

UNITED NATIONS



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**MR. LIU ZHENMIN
UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS**

**Opening remarks
High-Level Political Forum**

“Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality”

Conference Room 4, UNHQ, Tuesday, 9 July 2019

Your Excellency, Madame President of ECOSOC

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

Colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my distinct pleasure to welcome you to the opening of the 2019 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development – the HLPF.

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals enshrined in the 2030 Agenda, are our blueprint for an inclusive and sustainable development that leaves no one behind. Their powerful message is that we will join forces to carry everyone along on our journey to create an equitable, prosperous and sustainable future for all.

The 2030 Agenda is of unprecedented scope and significance. It lays out a concrete plan for policies that can improve the lives of hundreds of millions

of people around the world. Since 2016, the HLPF has been making a vital contribution to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda by assisting countries in maximizing and tracking their progress.

But we continue to face critical challenges to the implementation, and the clock is ticking. The most vulnerable people and countries continue to suffer the most – including countries in special situations and in conflict and post-conflict settings. The global response thus far has not been ambitious enough.

In a few moments, I will have the opportunity to elaborate on the findings of the 2019 special edition of the Secretary-General’s report on Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. It will show progress in a number of Goals and targets, and a wealth of action by Governments and other stakeholders to respond to the 2030 Agenda more broadly.

Yet, despite our efforts, progress is slow on many Goals. Our collective ambition for realizing the 2030 Agenda hinges on how we manage the evolving risks and challenges, and whether we seize the social, economic and environmental opportunities before us. Otherwise, we will not be able to fulfil our duty to deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals in time.

It is imperative to act now with renewed commitment and accelerated action.

In this context, we encourage you to come to New York in September and announce new SDG acceleration actions. I am happy to inform you that

an online registry has been created on the SDG summit webpage for recording such action and reporting on their implementation.

Distinguished Delegates,

As we have heard from the President of ECOSOC, the programme is very rich and highly relevant for implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Indeed, 2019 is a defining year.

The HLPF is finishing its first four-year cycle under the auspices of ECOSOC. The thematic review of all SDGs will have been completed. You will determine whether and how the HLPF has lived up to the role envisioned for it. In this regard, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs is conducting a survey to gather member states' views on how the HLPF and VNRs have worked in the past four years. The results will provide useful inputs to the review of the HLPF, which Member States will conduct during the 74th session of the General Assembly.

It is heartening to see the high level of enthusiasm among Member States, the UN system and other international organizations as well as major groups and other stakeholders. The significance that you attach to the Forum is a true testament of the recognition that we share an interconnected destiny. Only by working together can we achieve a world where every single person is empowered, with equal rights in an inclusive society.

The official sessions will also be complemented by more than 130 side events, 36 exhibitions and 8 Special Events. I encourage you to participate in as many as you can. No doubt you will contribute to and benefit from the in-depth discussions that will take place.

Distinguished Delegates,

As you know, in 2019, for the first time since the inception of the 2030 Agenda, we will have two High-level Political Fora – the current one being held under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council, and the second one in September under the auspices of the General Assembly – the SDG Summit. This will be the moment when world leaders will come together again to affirm their commitment to deliver on the transformative and universal 2030 Agenda. In the current landscape of deepening inequalities and human suffering, it is critical to demonstrate to the world how truly committed we all remain to the spirit and ambition of the 2030 Agenda.

I wish to commend the Permanent Representatives of the Bahamas and Sweden on the successful finalization of negotiations resulting in a consensual, action-oriented, evidence-based and communicable political declaration that will be adopted at the SDG Summit.

Excellencies,

I take this opportunity to thank the ECOSOC President for her leadership and all the work in preparing for this year's High-level Political Forum.

Over the coming days, the Forum will present you with opportunities to draw upon the knowledge and expertise of participants – all with varied professional backgrounds – but with a common goal to build on important gains and create a sustainable future.

The level and depth of discussion will no doubt give us ample food for thought and action.

Let us share experiences and lessons learned, strengthen partnerships and help guide policy that will lead us towards a world of dignity for all.

Thank you.
