

2019 High-level Political Forum, under the auspices of ECOSOC

Wrap-up session of the first five day

Monday, 15 July 2019

5:00 pm, Conference Room 4

Statement by

H.E. Ms. Inga Rhonda King, President of ECOSOC

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to begin by thanking you all for your active participation during these first five days of the 2019 High-level Political Forum.

Our sessions have underscored just how important this year's theme – *Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality* – is for achieving the vision of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

We also took stock of progress on six critical SDGs and learned from each other on how to achieve them. There was a palpable commitment and enthusiasm in our discussions on the promotion of quality education for all; decent work and economic growth; reducing inequalities; climate action; peace, justice and strong institutions; and means of implementation and partnerships.

We also reflected on the progress, gaps and obstacles in overall SDG implementation, the perspectives of countries in special situations, and the on-going efforts to promote the science-policy interface to ensure evidence-based policy making.

We heard seven Voluntary National Reviews of countries presenting for the second time. We look forward to the 40 VNR presentations that will take place in the next three days.

In addition, seven VNR Labs were convened, with another nine to come. The VNR Labs are proving to be successful in providing an informal platform to discuss themes emanating from the VNRs and piloting new approaches to the reviews.

Five special events and about seventy side-events have taken place thus far. They have provided opportunities to deepen our discussions on various issues and identify emerging trends.

We have also had the opportunity to visit approximately 36 on-going exhibits, addressing the theme of this year's HLPF through various perspectives.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

These five days have shown that the 2030 Agenda has inspired an impressive response from governments, the private sector, local authorities, civil society, the scientific community and many more.

Yet it is also clear that we must move much further and faster if we are to achieve our goals by 2030.

Allow me to highlight some of the key messages captured during our first five days:

- 1) We are making progress on the SDGs, yet the global response thus far has not been ambitious enough, and there are worrying trends in a number of important areas.
- 2) Investment in data and capacity is needed for adequate measurement to inform policies that ensure no one is left behind.
- 3) Ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education for all is critical for achieving the other SDGs and the 2030 Agenda. Platforms for cooperation, new partnerships, more support for teachers and increased investment in universal quality education and lifelong learning are imperative to secure sustainable development.
- 4) Partnerships and international cooperation are fundamental in supporting SIDS to achieve their sustainable development goals, including notably on health and education. Partnerships facilitate invaluable peer learning, capacity development and sharing of experiences.
- 5) Development strategies in LDCs and LLDCs must target goals beyond pure economic growth and encompass aspects related to inclusiveness, reducing inequality, delivery of universal social services, building resilience towards climate change and adequate financing.
- 6) Decent work and economic growth are dynamically interlinked with the other SDGs. They are a means for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. New technologies, such as artificial intelligence, automation and robotics offer new challenges and opportunities in this area that need to be addressed. Special efforts are needed to integrate youth, women and vulnerable groups in the labour market.
- 7) Strengthening the role of non-state actors is vital to the achievement of the SDGs. Meaningful stakeholder engagement should include broad, inclusive consultations and the establishment of formal mechanisms for sustained engagement in SDG implementation and VNR preparations and discussions at the HLPF.
- 8) Science can guide governments in shaping policies that address the interactions among the SDGs—the co-benefits but also the difficult trade-offs—in a way that will spur the systemic transformations the world needs. The GSDR was seen as an important tool to inform policy makers.

9) Inequality between and within countries remains a major obstacle to the achievement of the SDGs and inaction in this area risks derailing progress on the 2030 Agenda. Effective policies to reduce inequality require partnerships and common commitments.

10) Progress on combatting climate change and its impacts is falling far short of what is needed. Yet achieving SDG 13 is still within reach -- implementation of existing commitments needs to be accelerated and ambition levels raised substantially to limit global warming to 1.5°C.

11) Peace, justice, and transparent, effective, inclusive and accountable institutions, as well as safe civic space, are critical to advance all SDGs. This demands responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels. Efforts are also needed to improve data in this area.

12) Substantial financing gaps remain for financing the SDGs. Domestic resource mobilization needs to be further addressed, including through an enabling environment for private investment, strengthening tax administrations and addressing illicit financial flows. Integrated National Financing Frameworks can support countries to address financing challenges. Significant resources can also be mobilized at the regional level.

These messages remind us that to accelerate SDG implementation, more ambitious action is needed on cross-cutting issues and levers of change – all of which should be supported by effective cooperation and commitment.

Excellencies,

This week completes the first four-year cycle of the SDG review by the HLPF and ECOSOC, which have given us a good foundation on which to build.

We are also less than 100 days from the United Nations' 2019 High-level week and the SDG Summit – the High-level Political Forum under the auspices of General Assembly – where sustainable development will take center stage.

It is essential that we launch an ambitious decade of action that puts the world on a new trajectory for SDG achievement. I encourage your Heads of State and Government and all stakeholders to come with accelerated actions to the Summit to show how they will speed up their implementation.

In doing so, we can kick-start a new phase of SDG implementation, with concerted, transformative action to end human suffering and protect our planet.

Expectations are high. Many challenges are universal.

Solutions can be found, including those that prioritize the most vulnerable people and countries.

We can achieve the SDGs by 2030.

We must make the decisions that will get us on track.

This is a tall order. Yet I trust that this past week and the coming three days of the HLPF Ministerial Segment will lead to further recommendations for transformative action on sustainable development that will assist Governments and stakeholders on the road towards the SDGs.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I thank all of you for your invaluable contributions in the past five days and encourage you to continue to share your key messages and feedback with us.

I look forward to seeing you tomorrow at the opening of the High-level segment of ECOSOC and Ministerial Segment of the 2019 HLPF and remind you again that you kindly be seated in the General Assembly Hall at 8:30, so we can start on time at 8:40.