

THE DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERAL

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**REMARKS AT CLOSING OF THE 2020 HIGH-LEVEL
POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

16 July 2020

**Madam President of ECOSOC,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

We have come to the end of eight days of deliberation on delivering the Sustainable Development Goals during this Decade of Action in the new context of COVID-19.

The message from this central platform for reviewing SDG progress is loud and clear:

We were not on track to deliver the Goals before COVID-19 hit, and given the impacts of the crisis, the road ahead is now even steeper.

But, as the Secretary-General said in his remarks on Tuesday, we can turn this around, if we stay true to the 2030 Agenda.

That means showing solidarity and foresight on financing.

It means increasing investment in public services, including social protection, health systems, education, water, sanitation, and digital connectivity.

And it means pursuing a recovery that builds an inclusive, green and gender-responsive economy.

Staying true to the 2030 Agenda means reimagining and reshaping the way we work, learn, live and consume.

It means listening to the world's young people, who are demanding justice, equality and sustainability.

And it means investing in an inclusive and networked multilateralism, with the United Nations at the centre.

If we do all of this -- consciously, concertedely, cooperatively -- we can build a better world -- our shared destination.

Excellencies,

I commend all Member States and stakeholders for their support to ECOSOC and the HLPF, particularly the 47 countries that presented their voluntary national reviews this year.

[And I encourage all delegations to find common ground over the coming days so that this Forum can adopt a Ministerial Declaration at this critical time.]

I congratulate the President of ECOSOC, Ambassador Juul, together with the ECOSOC bureau, for their outstanding work.

And I thank our colleagues in DESA, DGACM and the Office of ICT, who worked night and day to make this virtual HLPF a success.

We leave this Forum reassured by the commitment to step up implementation of the 2030 Agenda during this Decade of Action.

We do so because we have seen what is possible over these past six months when we unite in common cause.

I have been particularly encouraged by the response of the new Resident Coordinator system and our UN Country Teams and I can assure you of the UN development system's full support to accompany your ongoing response, recovery and SDG acceleration efforts.

We must continue to build momentum through the major meetings this September – including the commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the United Nations, the high-level gatherings on biodiversity and gender equality, and the Secretary-General's convening of the first SDG Moment and meetings of on Financing COVID-19 and beyond.

As an international community, we must rise to the test of this pivotal moment.

Through higher ambition, greater urgency, and heightened solidarity, we must keep our promises to people and planet.

Thank you.

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