

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Economic and Social Council  
Management Segment

**Presentation of the 2023 Report  
of the Committee for Development Policy (CDP)  
by  
Professor Sakiko Fukuda-Parr  
Chair of the CDP  
New York, 7 June 2023**

Your Excellency,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Colleagues,

I am pleased to introduce the Report of the Committee for Development Policy on its 25<sup>th</sup> Session from 20-24 February. After two years of virtual plenary meetings, we were finally able to work together in person this year.

In the context of the annual theme of the Economic and Social Council for 2023 on recovery from COVID-19 and the full implementation of the SDGs, our analysis focused on three urgent issues: just transition to environmentally sustainable economies, the debt crisis, and the effectiveness of the Voluntary National Review mechanism for SDG implementation. The highlights of our conclusions and recommendations are as follows.

First, just transition, or ensuring the transition to low carbon and environmentally sustainable economies and societies is just and inclusive: The concept of just transition is gaining momentum and broadening scope beyond labor to other affected communities and stakeholders, different concepts of justice and inclusive of procedural justice. Just transition is an important integrated strategy for implementation of the SDGs as unified agenda – for example in harnessing the opportunities for increasing participation of women in labor markets, protection of ecosystems and biodiversity, invest in renewable energies in more equitable urban mobility – to name just a few.

The Committee recommends ECOSOC encourages member states to pursue strategies that will secure climate action, environmental sustainability and resilience-building in a way that reinforces implementation of *all* the SDGs. In our report and recommendations, we draw particular attention to the global dimensions of just transition strategies, and the historical context of global responsibilities. Strategies need to consider consequences of national policy strategies on people and countries beyond national borders, or transfer the burden of transition to other, especially developing countries. Developing countries need policy space to strengthen their productive capacities, new intellectual property frameworks, and scaled-up international cooperation. In line with these considerations, we make 9 specific recommendations related to the participation of developing countries in emerging value chains in

the clean tech economy, promotion of technology co-development, international agreements and industrial policy, financing of sustainable infrastructure, funding priorities of multilateral development banks, and regulation markets, the capitalization of loss and damage finance facility, financing for investment in resilience building, and establishment of effective international mechanisms of payments for ecosystem services.

Second, external debt: The Committee addressed the escalating external global debt crisis that has emerged from the confluence of the economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine, high food and energy prices, rising international interest rates and currency depreciation. Some 36 out of 69 low-income countries and a large number of middle income countries are currently either in debt distress or at high risk of debt distress. These conditions pose a singular threat to the implementation of the SDGs and highlight the inadequacy of existing arrangements. There is an urgent need for short term solutions including multilateral financing and debt renegotiations, but a comprehensive financing and debt resolution mechanisms (in addition to a mechanism for payment of historical carbon debt).

The Committee recommends ECOSOC to call on Member States and the international community to urgently improve the method, process and speed of debt relief to developing countries. We also propose that the Council calls for an efficient allocation of different financing sources, including compensation for losses and damages and provision of concessional financing for both climate adaptation and mitigation.

Third, voluntary national reviews (VNRs) are a central mechanism for peer learning to accelerate SDG implementation. This is a critical challenge in view of the disturbing reversals in SDG implementation and the call by the Secretary General to ‘rescue the SDGs’ with deeper and bolder policy strategies. This year we synthesized lessons learned from our annual analyses of the VNRs presented from 2017 to 2021, and developed a consolidated set of findings and recommendations. While we welcome the considerable improvements made in the reports over the several years, the potential of the VNRs as a tool for reflection on effective approaches is far from being reached. The Committee therefore recommends launching a new generation of reviews to help “rescue the SDGs” as called for by the Secretary General. The “VNRs – version 2” should refocus the reports away from descriptive narratives towards more in-depth analysis of successes and failures, policy insights and identification of structural obstacles.

Finally, during its 25<sup>th</sup> plenary meeting, the Committee also reviewed its criteria for the identification of least developed countries and introduced refinements to the composition of the criteria and their application procedure, while confirming their structure and principles for the upcoming 2024 LDC triennial review.

In its enhanced monitoring of countries that are graduating or have graduated from the least developed country category, the Committee reviewed the development progress of one recently graduated country and seven graduating countries. The Committee expressed its concern at the limited national capacity of those countries to address diverse challenges, originating from multiple crises, including the socioeconomic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, global crises in food, fuel and finance, disasters and the war in Ukraine. Sustainable graduation from the LDC category during these challenging times requires stepped-up support from development and trading partners. The Committee also urged countries to continue reporting to the Committee on their progress on preparing and implementing smooth transition strategies.

The Committee noted that the least developed country category had been useful in attracting political support for least developed countries, but had, to a much lesser extent, led to explicit assistance from the United Nations development system. In line with its past reviews, the Committee urged the United

Nations development system organizations to expand the use of the LDC category in their programming and budgeting.

Not least, the Committee considered the findings of the review by the Economic and Social Council of subsidiary bodies and evaluated its thematic analyses and working methods against the Council's recommendations. The Committee found that its programme of work is well aligned with the recommendations. The Committee proposed to continue holding its current interaction with the Council during its plenary session, as well as separate Council briefings which have been welcomed and well received by Member States.

Your Excellency,

We as a Committee continue to feel privileged to contribute to the ECOSOC process, and we look forward to continuing working with you in the coming years.

I thank you for your kind attention.