



Inaugural statement of the President of ECOSOC

H.E. Ms. Lachezara Stoeva

Economic and Social Council Organizational Session

Monday, 25 July 2022 - 10 a.m

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

I am honored and humbled to be elected President of the Economic and Social Council.

I would like to begin by congratulating His Excellency Collen Vixen Kelapile, Permanent Representative of Botswana to the United Nations, and by thanking him for his excellent stewardship of the 2022 Session of ECOSOC. As a member of his outgoing Bureau as Vice-President, I was privileged to work with him and to benefit from his vision and advice.

I would also like to thank my fellow Bureau members, the Vice-Presidents of the outgoing Bureau for the 2022 Session – The Permanent Representative of Bolivia, His Excellency Diego Pary Rodríguez, the Permanent Representative of Thailand, His Excellency Suriya Chindawongse, His Excellency Jukka Salovaara and subsequently, Her Excellency Miia Rainne, Deputy Permanent Representative of Finland, for their work in support of the Council but also for being wonderful colleagues. Under the Presidency of Ambassador Kelapile a lot was achieved. There were a lot of “firsts - the Transition Meeting, Coordination Segment and the Review of the Subsidiary Bodies. We also had vibrant ECOSOC segments. It is my objective to build on this solid foundation to further advance the important mandates of this Council.

The coming year will be especially challenging for the world. We will continue to pursue our recovery from COVID-19. We will hopefully be able to reverse the pandemic’s devastating impacts on some SDGs. But the pandemic is clearly not over. It is still heavily impacting many countries and overwhelming their health and social protection systems, regressing years of development progress. At the same time, the war in Ukraine has triggered massive food insecurity, energy shortages and financial crises.



Against this backdrop, my first priority, as ECOSOC President, will be to ensure that ECOSOC and the HLPF provide solid, evidence-based, innovative and actionable policy guidance to curb and address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the SDGs.

At the moment, only half of the countries have a plan to recover from the devastating impacts of COVID-19 on education. We need much more ambitious efforts to reform and strengthen our social protection and health systems, if we are to leave no one behind. Many investments from stimulus packages are not effectively directed at supporting the SDGs. Coherent recovery policies must cater to all dimensions and interlinkages of the SDGs, relaunching inclusive growth, building productive capacities and helping us face the triple planetary crises of climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss.

Moving forward in an SDG-guided recovery will be the focus of the HLPF in July. It should also be addressed by ECOSOC segments and forums.

My second priority will be to help bridge the “great finance divide” identified in the 2022 Financing for Sustainable Development Report. This divide has sharply curtailed the ability of many developing countries to recover from the pandemic and invest in recovery and social development.

These countries are in no position to finance the necessary investments. Debt in some of the poorest countries has now reached critical levels. The war in Ukraine and sharply tightening global financial conditions are further compounding debt challenges.

Solutions to facilitate effective and fair debt crisis resolution must be considered without further delay.

Unless we take immediate action, including by increasing long-term affordable financing and updating the international financial architecture to reflect the changing global landscape, the fight against poverty and inequality could be set back for an entire generation, posing a grave threat to the SDGs.

We will build on the ambitious outcome of the seventh ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development (FfD) follow-up to make further gains to address these issues.

We will also use the Development Cooperation Forum (DCF) in March to advance risk-informed development cooperation policies and practices to navigate immediate term recovery and long-term risks.



I also intend to work with the Co-Chairs of ECOSOC STI Forum so that the Forum and the HLPF help the poorer countries to better mobilize science and technology to overcome the crises and embark on the road to the SDGs.

My third priority will be to ensure that the HLPF and ECOSOC contribute effectively to the preparations of the September 2023 SDG Summit. I will work closely with the President of the 77th session of the General Assembly to ensure that the July 2023 HLPF pave the way for a Summit that is focused on implementation of the 2030 Agenda, owned by all Member States and inclusive of all stakeholders. We should use every opportunity to build momentum for the Summit and revive the passion that characterized the elaboration and implementation of the SDGs. The Summit should mobilize countries and all actors to adopt frontier new strategies, policies and actions to return to a trajectory that leads us towards the SDGs. The Ministerial Declaration of the 2022 HLPF and ECOSOC which we adopted a few days ago, calls for ambitious preparations for the Summit. We should also ensure its complementarity with the Summit of the Future.

My fourth priority will be to build on the success of the Humanitarian Affairs Segment this year, to support and reinforce the work of the UN and its humanitarian partners in addressing the profound humanitarian s faced by the international community. The international community needs to urgently respond to growing food insecurity and to prevent famine, and it is my intention to build on this year's Transition Meeting and Humanitarian Affairs Segment to continue to address the ongoing challenges. I also intend to reinforce the importance of respect for international humanitarian law in armed conflicts, as failure to comply results in suffering of civilians and loss of life of those who indeed need the international community's assistance and protection. I will continue to focus on the important role of humanitarian responders, especially supporting and reinforcing local organizations, including women's organizations and fully recognizing the disproportionate impact of humanitarian crisis on women and children. I will continue to support the humanitarian community in its efforts to put people at the center of humanitarian response and to ensure that humanitarian assistance reaches all those in need, wherever they may be, and in accordance with the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence.

I will also continue to operationalize stronger collaboration across humanitarian, development, and peace efforts, in order to maximize the impact for affected people, to build resilience, and to address the root causes that are driving humanitarian need. I will continue to contribute to action and ambition in responding to the crisis of climate change.



This year, I will also place particular emphasis on improving ECOSOC's work on peace building and its interaction with the Peace Building Commission. I also aim to reinforce ECOSOC's linkages with its Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti and its follow-up to the resolution on the situation in the Sahel region.

My fifth priority will be to follow-up on the Secretary-General's recommendations addressed to ECOSOC in his report on Our Common Agenda. The President of the 76th General Assembly session, in his summary of the General Assembly thematic dialogues on the follow-up to Our Common Agenda, asked ECOSOC to further advance the recommendations on convening a biannual summit between ECOSOC, the Group of 20, International Financial Institutions and the Secretary-General for a sustainable, inclusive and resilient economy. We will reflect on all aspects of the Summit including ways to make it fully inclusive. ECOSOC will also review whether there is a continued need for a reassessment of the role of the Commission on the Status of Women vis-à-vis other intergovernmental mandates. The Council also needs to reflect on how to ensure more meaningful, diverse and effective youth engagement in its work, building on its Youth Forum. I would welcome your views and ideas on how to best move forward on these issues. I will announce the process to follow-up on those recommendations in the fall. On this and all other issues, I will work closely with the President of the General Assembly 77th session.

My sixth priority will be to open further the door of ECOSOC to not only youth, but also civil society and all stakeholders. I aim to do so in all meetings. I will also strengthen the engagement of the HLPF with major groups and other stakeholders. At the same time, I will increase the time dedicated to Member States and stakeholders for intervening during the HLPF by limiting the number of panelists.

Lastly, my seventh priority is to implement the recommendations adopted by the General Assembly in June 2021 for reforming the work of ECOSOC and the HLPF. We made progress in January 2022 with the convening of a very successful coordination segment and partnership forum which kicked off the work of ECOSOC and its subsidiary bodies in 2022. The operational activities segment provided clear guidance to the UN development system in delivering more integrated and impactful support to developing countries in implementing the 2030 Agenda. We also had a successful first transition meeting to advance the coherence of UN system action for development, humanitarian aid and building peaceful and inclusive societies. With the ECOSOC Bureau I will continue to implement these and other reforms called for by the General Assembly. I will also push for the implementation of the recommendations that resulted from the review of the work of subsidiary bodies I led this year. Those measures can truly improve the work and impact of ECOSOC and its



subsidiary bodies. ECOSOC and the HLPF should deliver their work in a way that illustrates what inclusive, impactful and networked multilateralism looks like.

My objective is to ensure that the policy debates and outcomes of the HLPF and ECOSOC make a positive difference on the lives of people, including the poorest and most vulnerable, at country level.

ECOSOC is uniquely placed to do this through its oversight of the UN development system's support to the 2030 Agenda, through its guidance to humanitarian action and through its coordination of specialized agencies.

The review of SDG progress at the HLPF, the discussions on ECOSOC's and HLPF annual theme--along with the outcomes of ECOSOC's Forums, segments and subsidiary bodies--should all assist countries in their efforts to overcome the crises that have engulfed our societies and to transform the world into a better place for the people of today and tomorrow.

Thank you.