

UNITED NATIONS



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**High-level Policy Dialogue with the  
International Financial and Trade Institutions**  
*Challenges and opportunities in global economic and trade policies for the  
achievement of sustainable development*

**Thursday, 20 July 2017, 10:00 am – 1:00 pm**  
**ECOSOC Chamber, United Nations Headquarters, New York**

Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Dear Colleagues,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure to be with you today.

I thank my colleagues from UNCTAD, the World Bank, IMF and WTO for joining us.  
And, a special warm welcome to colleagues from the OECD and the Brookings Institution.

We very much look forward to engaging with you.

Excellencies,

We cannot fulfil the transformative potential of the 2030 Agenda with the old approach to cooperation. The Agenda demands new ways of working from all actors, and from all of our respective global institutions.

It compels us:

- to look closely at the inter-linkages between sectors.
- to develop integrated approaches that allow us to work together.
- to better understand specific national situations, and tailor our actions accordingly.

And, it emboldens us to work in an inclusive manner, embracing all stakeholders.

We therefore must continue on a solid collaborative foundation if we are to deliver on the promise to leave no one behind.

Excellencies,

Allow me to offer an update on the world economy. There are some encouraging signs of revival, after the sharp slowdown in world trade and global economic growth last year.

Industrial production has picked up. World trade is reviving, driven by stronger demand in East Asia. And economic sentiment has generally improved, especially in developed economies.

According to the latest United Nations report on the World Economic Situation and Prospects – or “WESP”: As of mid-2017, world gross product is expected to expand by 2.7 per cent in 2017, and 2.9 per cent in 2018.

Despite this, I am concerned that stronger economic activity is not evenly spread across countries and regions.

We have seen a general uptick in growth in many of the large developed economies, improved prospects in many economies in transition, and continued robust growth in East and South Asia.

However, the strength of recovery remains insufficient in many regions for rapid progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals.

For example, average incomes in several parts of Africa and in South America actually declined last year. They are projected to increase only marginally in 2017 and 2018.

Our latest WESP report has downgraded forecasts for some of the world’s poorest countries.

GDP in the group of least developed countries is expected to rise by just 4.7 per cent in 2017, and 5.3 per cent in 2018. This is significantly below the SDG target of at least 7 per cent growth.

Our estimates suggest that, without stronger growth, nearly 35 per cent of the population in the least developed countries may remain in extreme poverty by 2030.

This means that the world is not yet delivering on its promise to leave no one behind.

High food prices in many countries also raise short-term concerns for the more vulnerable members of society.

Distinguished Delegates,

A high degree of uncertainty in the international policy environment continues to cloud the outlook. This is particularly true for world trade, immigration, development aid and climate targets.

These global challenges call for a response that is equally global in nature.

But what we have observed recently seems to point in the opposite direction. Global commitments to deepen international policy coordination appear to be waning.

Challenges to the prevailing global economic, financial and trade system have stemmed largely from the belief, that the economic benefits are not shared evenly across countries and population groups.

They are perceived to be accompanied by inequality, financial instability, as well as labour market and trade adjustments.

This rising discontent with the uneven distribution of gains of globalization, has fuelled more protectionist and inward-looking views in some economies.

This is increasingly undermining multilateral engagements and international cooperation in several domains.

Indeed, the shifting stance of international policy can impact the growth trajectory of the global economy, as well as progress on various aspects of the SDGs.

International coordination and cooperation are essential, for:

- better aligning the multilateral trading system with our social and environmental targets;
- expanding international public finance and official development aid;
- supporting climate finance and clean technology transfer;
- and for addressing the challenges posed by large movements of refugees and migrants.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our ability to find answers to today's questions and challenges will have far-reaching effects on the future of the global economy and globalization, as well as the institutions supporting them.

*Please check against delivery*

It will also have far-reaching consequences for the realization of the 2030 Agenda and the future of sustainable development.

I wish you a productive and fruitful Dialogue.

Thank you.

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