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United Nations Economic and Social Council

TAKING ACTION TO IMPROVE LIVES

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Statement by

**Her Excellency MARIE CHATARDOVA
President of the Economic and Social Council**

**Opening of the High-level Segment of the Third Session of the United Nations
Environment Assembly**

5 December 2017

H. E. Uhuru Kenyatta, President of the Republic of Kenya,
H. E. Edgar Gutierrez-Espeleta, President of the United Nations Environment Assembly,
Distinguished Erik Solheim, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment
Programme,
Distinguished ministers,
Distinguished delegates,
Distinguished representatives of major groups and stakeholders,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I am honoured to address you this morning in my capacity as the President of the UN Economic and Social Council. I wish to thank the United Nations Environment Assembly for the invitation to participate in this high-level segment, where you have gathered to promote concrete action to tackle a major threat for sustainable development: pollution.

The implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change provides an opportunity to tackle pollution. The inclusion of pollution-related targets and indicators in the 2030 Agenda is also a testament to the importance of tackling pollution in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



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For example, action on pollution is essential for human health as it substantially reduces the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and air, water and soil pollution and contamination (SDG3). Likewise, better managed freshwater ecosystems and cleaner water significantly reduce the number of deaths from diarrheal diseases (SDG 6). Moreover, we often overlook the fact that human-induced climate change is inherently a pollution issue, as carbon dioxide (CO₂) and other greenhouse gases are released into the atmosphere and oceans of Earth.

We are inspired by the innovative approaches Governments and the private sector have adopted to tackle pollution. It is now time to scale-up these efforts. Your voluntary commitments will send a powerful message on your determination to act urgently on pollution.

The Economic and Social Council provides a global platform for inclusive and integrated policy dialogue, follow-up and review, coordination and stakeholder engagement in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and related United Nations agendas. In this cycle, the Economic and Social Council will be focusing on the theme “From global to local: supporting sustainable and resilient societies in urban and rural communities”. This is aligned with the 2018 HLPF theme, “Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies”.

We see inclusion as a key element for societies’ resilience in economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. The 2030 Agenda acknowledges this link with its commitment to leave no one behind. Therefore, a priority of my Presidency is to develop initiatives towards fostering sustainable, resilient and inclusive societies through the participation of all.

I will be convening a Special Meeting of the Council in May 2018, to explore and advance these questions, preceded by a range of preparatory dialogues with Member States, local governments, civil society, academia and the private sector.

Given its coordination and oversight role, the Economic and Social Council can link the normative and operational work of the UN development system and provide guidance for accelerated implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The recent



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Special Meeting of the Economic and Social Council on the aftermath of hurricanes last October illustrated the more profound and disproportionate impact of disasters in countries with high-level of exposure and vulnerability of climate change. I issued a Presidential Statement emphasizing the urgency to combat climate change and call for intensified efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions as well as to enhance support for adaptation. We must address the economic and social impacts of climate change if we want to achieve the SDGs.

We count on the contribution of the United Nations Environment Assembly and the UN Environment Programme in the effective implementation of the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in an integrated manner at all levels. The outcome of your deliberations will also contribute to the effective follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda.

I am committed to strengthening the cooperation between ECOSOC and the UN Environment Assembly. I look forward to working with the President of UNEA, with the support of the UN Environment Programme, to redouble our efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in a coherent and coordinate way at all levels.

Thank you.



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