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United Nations Economic and Social Council

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Closing Statement

**H.E. Ms. Marie Chatardová
President of the Economic and Social Council**

Special Meeting of the Economic and Social Council on

“Towards sustainable, resilient and inclusive societies through participation of all”

23 May 2018, ECOSOC Chamber

Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have now reached the end of the 2018 Special Meeting of ECOSOC on “Towards sustainable, resilient and inclusive societies through participation of all.”

First, I would like to thank our distinguished moderators for so ably guiding the discussion, and our distinguished panellists for your interesting and enlightening contributions.

I would also like to thank the United Nations system for their support to the Special Meeting.

Let me also say thank you to the civil society and their participation.

Excellencies,

I will not try to summarize all the essential points from today’s discussion. A President’s Summary will be soon made available, and will be used as an input for the 2018 ECOSOC high level segment and the 2018 High-level Political Forum, held under the auspices of the Council as well as for next year’s High-level Political Forum participation and inclusiveness.



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Let me, however, highlight some key messages that emerged from our deliberations during today's Meeting. I believe they should be taken forward in order to advance achievement of sustainable, resilient and inclusive societies through participation of all.

There is consensus that new technologies hold significant opportunity to improve the participation of all. However, there must be proper resources made available at the local level to ensure the engagement of all, including the most vulnerable and those without access to the internet. The private sector can play a role in improving internet access and connectivity.

To this end, there were many calls for governments to lead in creating more space for the participation of all in governance by promoting the use of online platforms, including existing social media platforms.

During discussions, the role of local governments was also emphasised. This can be achieved through participatory budgeting, crowd-sourcing, consensus-building, and communication with the community to build momentum. A prerequisite to accomplish this is, however, the provision of resources.

We also shared the sense that partnerships and participation at the local level can build momentum the so-called "snowballing" - on key issues, leading to institutional changes such as legislative reform and new planning processes at higher levels.

While governments are primarily responsible for the Agenda's implementation, the importance of bringing multiple actors together in support of our common goals was highlighted.

Academia, for example, is increasingly partnering with the public sector and policy makers, providing significant support in collecting disaggregated data, and making it user-friendly to help influence better public policy decisions. However, we have also heard that more needs to be done to have better collection of data and make it more accessible.

A vibrant and actively engaged civil society is also crucial in achieving the participation of all as well as in promoting and monitoring progress on the 2030 Agenda's implementation. We need to think further how to enhance their engagement.



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In addition, parliaments, which are supposed to be the epitome of partnership between various segments of society, have an important part in bringing together all sectors of society. To further enhance their role, it is critical to overcome obstacles such as lack of resources, skills, and knowledge.

Finally, in furthering the strengthening of sustainable, resilient and inclusive communities, it was underlined that sustainability must be based on human rights and the respect of everyone's inalienable right to development to combat exclusion and discrimination and realize the 2030 Agenda.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our deliberations today, gave me further confidence that we are on the right path to identify concrete solutions to the absence of or limited participation in decision-making processes as well as in all social and economic aspects of life.

Today's Special Meeting was an important step towards addressing exclusion of all kinds.

I hope I can count on you to keep the momentum alive by carrying forward the messages that came out and considering venues to implement the recommendations.

Thank you for your participation.



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