



## **President of ECOSOC**

### **Remarks for the Joint Briefing with the President of the General Assembly**

31 January 2019  
UNHQ, New York

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Your Excellency President of the General Assembly,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

#### **[Introduction]**

As the President of the General Assembly said, the idea for this joint briefing emerged from last session's alignment consultations, which I co-facilitated along with the Permanent Representative of Belgium during the 72<sup>nd</sup> Session. I am happy to be the first ECOSOC President implementing this idea. It speaks to the dedication I share

with the President of the General Assembly to making our Charter bodies deliver together on the 2030 Agenda.

We see this briefing as a moment to take a look at the combined work of the General Assembly and ECOSOC, its broader context, and ways to make it most impactful and coherent. We hope that, by ensuring that the GA and ECOSOC work in a harmonious and effective way, they can generate better policies, which will create change and improve the lives of the people we serve.

My remarks will focus on the following four areas, from ECOSOC's perspective:

1. preparations for the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development under the auspices of ECOSOC;
2. the alignment of the work of ECOSOC and the General Assembly from the ECOSOC perspective;
3. the ECOSOC Youth Forum;
4. ECOSOC forum on Financing for Development;

#### **[HLPF]**

The President of the General Assembly reminded us of the milestone Summit we will hold in September to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda,

The July 2019 HLPF under the auspices of ECOSOC is a landmark on our journey to the SDGs, and on the road towards the Summit. ECOSOC has been reviewing and following up on progress and challenges every summer since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda. And, as a result, we have a wealth of knowledge and information to contribute.

This July, the HLPF will review six SDGs that are critical to the future of humanity. It will look at education-- which holds the key to all SDGs. It will dive into the closely related goals on growth and jobs and on inequality. It will address climate change, peaceful and inclusive societies and effective institutions, which all impact on the future of people and our planet. And it will work on solutions through financing, technologies and partnerships. We will also learn a lot from the 51 countries that will present their Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs). 41 of these will be first-time presenters and 10 will be presenting for the second time. This year the second-time presenters will present in groups jointly—it is an innovation we are anxious to see if and how well it works to have joint discussions across countries.

I hope that the Summit will be able to build on a wealth of solid findings and ideas from ECOSOC's work. To make it easier, I will prepare a substantive summary capturing the key messages and lessons from our discussions. I will ask for the help of a few rapporteurs so that Member States truly own this account of our discussions.

Success very often lies in thoughtful preparation. DESA is hard at work helping the countries presenting their VNRs. I will have the privilege of joining one such workshop in mid-February. There will also be events on all SDGs under review in the spring, while the Regional Commissions convene their annual regional forums on sustainable development.

I am also working closely with the PGA's Co Facilitators of the Political Declaration of the SDG Summit in September. We need to ensure that ECOSOC coordinates its work in such a manner that creates the right environment and lends support for that Declaration.

The July 2019 HLPF provides a tremendous opportunity but also comes with the responsibility to deliver on expectations. Our goal is to convene the best HLPF ever (yet) and I am confident that we will achieve it.

Excellencies, this point brings me to the ongoing alignment process:

### **[Alignment of ECOSOC with the Committees of the GA]**

The two HLPFs this year will be an example of how the General Assembly and ECOSOC can succeed by working in sync. This can perhaps inject new ideas into the ongoing process of aligning the agendas of the General Assembly and ECOSOC.

And what we are doing today, jointly, is our small but meaningful contribution to alignment. If the PGA and President of ECOSOC can work together to implement their priorities and mandates, then we are on the right track. After all, the UN will not function optimally if the right hand doesn't know what the left hand is doing and vice versa. This, of course, does not pre-empt the possible outcomes of the alignment process.

The objective of the work on alignment is to ensure adequate strategic direction and guidance on sustainable development at the global level.

It aims to ensure that the work of intergovernmental bodies is fully aligned with and supportive of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

And it aims to enhance synergies and coherence and reduce overlap in the agendas of the General Assembly, ECOSOC and other bodies. (GA resolution 72/313).

These aspects inspired the General Assembly in developing some of the measures for strengthening ECOSOC it adopted last July (GA resolution 72/305).

I have moved ahead with implementing these recommendations, for example regarding the high-level and integration segments and the work of subsidiary bodies.

The Bureau and I are also determined to ensure that ECOSOC fully supports the work of the General Assembly. In particular, we will ensure that the Operational Activities Segment effectively assesses the response of the UN development system to the General Assembly resolutions on its repositioning and on the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR).

### **[Input on Youth Forum]**

Dear colleagues,

We in ECOSOC consider the ECOSOC Youth Forum one of the most successful innovations to date in bringing the voices of young people to the UN.

The theme of this year's Forum is "Empowered, Included and Equal", which is closely aligned with the theme of ECOSOC and the HLPF. It also speaks to the SDGs under review at the July HLPF.

These goals are of critical importance to young people. They want high quality education that will allow them to get good jobs and they do want to live in peaceful societies on a healthy planet. And we look forward to hearing from young people on what matters to them, including their views in the HLPFs this year.

Their ideas will inspire the July HLPF, and the September High-level events, in particular, the Summit level HLPF, the Secretary-

General's Climate Summit and the General Assembly's High-level dialogue on Financing for Development.

I am particularly pleased that you, Madame President, have decided to leverage the opportunity created by the Youth Forum to strengthen your dialogue with young people. Indeed, as you indicated early in your presidency (in fact as early as the Presidential Debates last summer), your intention was to use existing platforms, rather than duplicating them. It is fortuitous that the themes being considered this year dovetail with the PGA's own priorities and will allow us to work together quite closely.

The President has already explained her priorities related to decent work, and her intention to have a high-level event on "The Future of Work", the day following the Youth Forum.

I am pleased that the PGA has agreed to invite a youth representative attending the Youth Forum to deliver remarks in the Opening Session of this Event.

As you are aware, SDG 8 on Decent Work and Economic Growth is also under review this year. It is thus timely that the President of the General Assembly and ILO are putting a spotlight on it.

I also commend you, Madame President, for taking up the issue of "Youth, Peace and Security" as one of your priorities. This is one of the areas ripe for integrated approaches across all intergovernmental bodies.

I have therefore invited the President of the General Assembly to dialogue with young people at the Youth Forum to understand their perspectives on what is needed to make progress for peaceful, equitable and sustainable societies and their roles in promoting and maintaining international peace and security.

### **[Input on financing for development]**

Distinguished Delegates,

Given the increasingly complex and uncertain global context, the UN's voice on Financing Sustainable Development must be coherent, loud and clear.

Let me highlight two critical milestones coming up in 2019.

The first is the ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development, or FfD Forum, to be held 15 to 18 April 2019. It offers the opportunity to review the first four-year implementation of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. The second is the GA high-level dialogue on Financing for Development, held back to back with the HLPF at Summit level in September.

The FFD Forum and its outcome will be especially important this year. The Forum will address many pressing challenges, from debt and vulnerabilities to job creation and disruptive technologies. It will help build momentum and develop concrete opportunities for the High-level Dialogue to accelerate progress on financing for sustainable development, leaving no one behind. The outcome document of the

FFD Forum could highlight issues to be discussed at the High-level Dialogue.

I am working closely with the President of the General Assembly to ensure careful sequencing and coherence from the discussions at the FfD Forum in April through to the High-level Dialogue in September. The co-facilitators of the FFD Forum outcome and the High-level Dialogue are also working together towards the same objective.

In December last year, I joined the FfD retreat together with the representatives of the PGA and the four FfD co-facilitators. This practice was also repeated in the ECOSOC retreat that I convened earlier this month. Such discussions help to keep all of us on the same page regarding expectations and priorities of Member States.

In the same spirit, I invited the four co-facilitators to join the ECOSOC Bureau's visit to the Headquarters of the Bretton Woods Institutions in Washington D.C. on 17 January. The visit allowed the co-facilitators to seek inputs on their respective processes from these institutions.

In preparing for the FFD Forum in 2019, I have aimed for an inclusive process that fulfills the commitment made in Addis Ababa to ensure multi-stakeholder participation in the follow-up and review of the financing commitments. The stakeholder consultation that I convened earlier this month generated a number of innovative ideas and perspectives from civil society, the private sector, local authorities

and others regarding their contributions to a successful FfD follow-up process in this important year.

I look forward to continuing the good collaboration with the PGA in making the FfD follow-up process in 2019 a great success.

### **[Closing]**

As you may have gathered by now, we have a lot to do, but I believe it will be very rewarding work that awaits us this year.

It is going to be an exciting year for the future of sustainable development and I look forward to our continuous and close collaboration to this end.

Thank you.