



ECOSOC

United Nations Economic and Social Council

TAKING ACTION TO IMPROVE LIVES

Talking points for the Town Hall meeting of PGA and PoE

H. E. Ambassador Mona Juul, President of ECOSOC

29 May 2020

Thank you President,

- **As we meet today, the world remains in the midst of a human crisis of historical magnitude – one that we can only return from by recommitting to coordinated multilateral action.**

We must address the pandemic itself, and its dramatic socio-economic impacts. And we need to get back on track to achieve the SDGs.

Now more than ever, Member States must come together and agree on solutions.

This is why the Bureau of ECOSOC and I have done our utmost to ensure that the Council and its subsidiary organs have been able to continue their work during this unprecedented crisis.

ECOSOC meetings and events have gone virtual. ECOSOC also virtually negotiated and adopted the first universal agreement to finance the immediate response to – and longer-term recovery from – COVID-19.

I thank the co-facilitators, Ambassador Elizabeth Thompson, Permanent Representative of Barbados, and Andrejs Pildegovics, Permanent Representative of Latvia for their excellent work.

- **We have adapted our work to be able to adopt decisions and resolutions via silence procedure, including by subsidiary bodies and the high-level political forum on sustainable development.**

And we have continued to adapt our work with civil society access and stakeholder participation in mind.

Their voices remain as important as ever. We know that we need the input of all stakeholders to implement the SDGs.

- **ECOSOC has also completed a successful virtual operational activities segment, which allowed for an in-depth, interactive discussion on the reforms and performance of the UN development system.**

The Humanitarian Affairs Segment and the Management Segment will likewise be held as virtual meetings in June. This might also need to be the case for the Integration Segment in early July.

- **Even now, ECOSOC continues to use its unique convening power to bring together the expertise of vital parts of the UN system with Member States.**

On 11 May, ECOSOC held a high-level briefing on “Joining Forces: Effective Policy Solutions for COVID-19 Response”.

The high-level briefing allowed us to hear from heads of several UN agencies, to plot a multilateral response, and to discuss policy solutions that countries can immediately use in their responses to the pandemic.

- **And we will continue this work on 2 June, when ECOSOC’s Financing for Development Forum will hold an informal meeting on “Financing a sustainable recovery from COVID-19”, as a follow-up of the 23 April FFD Forum meeting.**

Dear Colleagues,

- **Due to the expected continuing limitations on in-person meetings and international travel, I have been working with the ECOSOC Bureau to make adjustments to the format and programme of the 2020 High-level political forum on sustainable development (HLPF).**

An updated programme can be found on the HLPF website.

The final format of the forum will follow the recommendations of the UN Medical Director regarding in-person meetings, and take into consideration the availability of conference services.

It remains a possibility that the HLPF may also be fully virtual.

- **The Forum will take place under the auspices of ECOSOC from 7 to 16 July, with the last day of the High-level Segment of ECOSOC on 17 July.**

The HLPF programme is significantly downscaled, but will give priority to the presentation of voluntary national reviews (VNRs).

And it is excellent to hear that 47 countries are ready to present their VNR despite the impact of COVID-19 in their countries.

- **The HLPF will, as usual, also include thematic debates.**

The general debate will be in the form of submitted written or recorded statements.

And all side events, special events, VNR Labs and exhibitions will be virtual.

- **I am pleased to say that the consultations on the HLPF Ministerial Declaration are also proceeding.**

I thank the co-facilitators, Ambassador Georgi Velikov Panayotov, Permanent Representative of Bulgaria, and Amal Mudallali, Permanent Representative of Lebanon for their excellent work.

Dear colleagues,

- **On behalf of the ECOSOC Bureau, I would like to thank all of you for your guidance and support.**

Although many of our plans have had to change in the last months, ECOSOC's ability to continue to work – and deliver – has only been possible because of a flexible and constructive approach by the membership.

Thank you.