



ECOSOC

United Nations Economic and Social Council

TAKING ACTION TO IMPROVE LIVES

ECOSOC Organizational Session

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ECOSOC President, H. E. Ambassador Mona Juul

Handover Remarks

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

I am honoured today to hand over the presidency of the Economic and Social Council to my successor.

But, before I give up the virtual gavel, I hope you will permit me a few parting words.

Dear Colleagues,

It has been a true honour to serve at the helm of ECOSOC.

When I assumed the Presidency last year, none of us could have imagined the challenges that lay ahead.

Nonetheless, in the midst of global upheaval and risk – from COVID-19, the climate crisis, racial injustice and rising inequalities – ECOSOC’s mandate has proven to be as relevant and compelling as ever:

To foster international cooperation on economic, social, and cultural issues.

And to promote universal respect and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all.

Without distinction to race, sex, language, or religion.

These unprecedented times call for deep reflection and strong action.

Bold and creative answers are needed to pave the way for a new normal. Returning to the old normal is unthinkable.

Like those who drafted the UN Charter 75 years ago, we have to look without illusion at today's injustices, and the suffering they engender.

Fortunately, we have the 2030 Agenda as our shared roadmap to transform the world.

The SDGs speak directly to the root causes of what is broken in our world today.

Together with the Paris agreement on climate change and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, they are our chart to see us through the storm, to the future we want.

Colleagues,

The pandemic is changing the world we live in. But, our commitment to realising the future we want has not changed.

To recover better, we must build *forward*. To a greener, fairer, more inclusive and more resilient tomorrow.

If we do not change now, then when?

Right *now* is our chance to fix the world's fragilities.

***Now* – is our moment to invest adequately in resilience. In universal health coverage, quality education, and social protection.**

***Now* – is our window to avert the devastating effects of climate change, and to reverse environmental degradation and biodiversity loss.**

***Now* – is our opportunity to right the power imbalances that leave women and girls to constantly bear the brunt of any crisis.**

***Now* – is our time to fight the social and racial injustices which plague our societies and exacerbate its inequalities.**

***Now* – is when we transform our world, leaving no one behind.**

When this pandemic passes, our collective character, and future potential, will be defined by the choices we made to protect the most vulnerable.

Dear colleagues,

In the past months, I believe ECOSOC has shown its unique strength as an inclusive platform to engage and mobilise governments, local authorities, the UN system, international finance institutions, the scientific community, civil society and young people around the world.

Throughout the crisis, we forged ahead with building partnerships and sharing information.

Although we had to modify our plans, we were showing the world that the work of the UN does not stop, even when it seems that everything else is brought to a halt.

I feel privileged to have served in the ECOSOC ecosystem during this time.

Amongst other highlights, I was proud to work closely with the President of the General Assembly, bringing the work of the two Charter bodies closer together.

And to join him in convening a High-Level Panel on International Financial Accountability, Transparency and Integrity for Achieving the 2030 Agenda, the FACTI Panel.

And, as I handover to my successor today, I do it with pride of the achievements of this Council at its 2020 session.

Let me deeply thank my colleagues of the Bureau, for your unwavering support and commitment:

**Ambassador Akram of Pakistan;
Ambassador Hilale of Morocco;
Ambassador Margaryan of Armenia;
and Ambassador Sandoval of Mexico.**

**With the hard work of you and your teams, and the
dedicated support of the Secretariat, we steered the work of
the Council forward.**

**Lastly, allow me to offer a small piece of advice from my
tenure: Be ready to embrace change!**

**Let us change for the better and make our recovery based
upon values, not value. On compassion, courage, and
cooperation.**

Thank you.