



**ECOSOC**

United Nations Economic and Social Council

**TAKING ACTION TO IMPROVE LIVES**

## **ECOSOC Informal Briefing**

**Joining Forces: Effective Policy Solutions for Covid-19 Response**

**11 May 2020, 10:00 - 12:00**

### **OPENING REMARKS**

**ECOSOC President, H. E. Ambassador Mona Juul**

**Excellencies,**

**Colleagues and distinguished guests,**

**Thank you for “Joining Forces” with us this morning to discuss policy solutions for an inclusive, and truly human centric, COVID-19 response.**

**Globally, our commitment to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has not changed, but the urgency to act has.**

**We have an opportunity to plot a multilateral response and to discuss policy solutions that countries can immediately use to:**

**combat the COVID-19 pandemic, preserve advances made, and get back on track towards the SDGs.**

**Excellencies,**

**We are developing a better sense of the next steps needed to overcome the health crisis through: suppressing transmission, building capacity, and finding a vaccine.**

**At the same time, we are only beginning to realise the true scale of the social and economic crisis that lies ahead of us.**

**Not only of the new problems that this global pandemic has created:**

- Including the 1.6 billion workers in the informal economy – nearly half of the global workforce – who are in immediate danger of losing their livelihoods.**

**But also of the challenges we thought we were once on track to overcome:**

- Global poverty is set to increase for the first time since 1998, with some regions experiencing poverty levels similar to 30 years ago.**

- Or malaria, where COVID-19 related disruption in programing in sub-Saharan Africa puts us at risk of returning to malaria mortality levels from 20 years ago.
- Or violence against women and girls, which has become a shadow pandemic, with the number of victims increasing to the hundreds of millions worldwide.

**These are incomprehensible setbacks to our hard-won development gains.**

**These facts are shocking, but they all point to one conclusion: we are facing a new reality post COVID-19.**

**In dealing with this accelerating and unpredictable change, we must ask ourselves: how can we find solid footing in the new evolving normal?**

**As the Secretary-General has highlighted: the creativity of the response must match the unique nature of the crisis – and the magnitude of the response must match its scale.**

**No country will be able to exit this crisis alone.**

**Colleagues,**

**In each of our countries we've seen the daily struggles become harder.**

**Not none of us - no family, no community, and no country - big or small - has been spared.**

**And although this virus impacts us all, it has not been an equaliser.**

**It has exposed the inequalities in our societies and compounded them.**

**These disparities should be our catalyst, and our call to build back better. With responses on the national level that are shaped by, and respect human rights.**

**And global action which is country specific, taking into account those in special situations.**

**Now is truly the time to fulfil our promise of leaving no one behind.**

**Colleagues,**

**This pandemic has put a spotlight on the need to strengthen multilateral cooperation, governance, and above, all global solidarity.**

**At the individual level we show our solidarity by staying at home – if we can - and helping our communities.**

**And at the international level we show solidarity through multilateralism, and working together. Drawing on each of our strengths to find a solution for a more resilient future.**

**We must bring expertise together. This is where ECOSOC ecosystem comes into play.**

**As the centre of the UN development system, ECOSOC brings people and issues together to promote collective action for a sustainable world.**

**And that is what we are here to do today.**

**ECOSOC has a unique convening power for a range of stakeholders, from Member States, to our civil society partners, and the private sector.**

**This, together with ECOSOC's role to guide and coordinate its ecosystem of entities - and specialised agencies - leaves us**

**ideally placed to plot a multilateral response for the road ahead.**

**One that enables countries to address the immediate health crisis, stem the social and economic impacts, and accelerate our efforts to reach the SDGs.**

**Colleagues,**

**We are currently tossing and turning through dangerous waters.**

**Fortunately, we have the sustainable development goals as our chart to see us through the storm.**

**There is hope to make this a turning point in the way we do business.**

**To mobilise a coordinated and coherent global response to the pandemic. And halt its adverse social, economic and financial impact on societies.**

**I hope our discussion here today will be helpful and inspirational:**

**To hear the expertise of vital UN agencies and organisations.**

**And to work together to deepen our efforts during this Decade of Action- to recover better, and build a: healthier, greener, fairer and a more resilient world.**

**A world of solidarity.**

**Thank you.**

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