



ECOSOC

United Nations Economic and Social Council

TAKING ACTION TO IMPROVE LIVES

**Statement by H.E Ambassador Munir Akram,
President of the Economic and Social Council at the High-Level
meeting to commemorate the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the
United Nations**

(21 September 2020)

**President of the General Assembly, H.E Mr. Volkan Bozkir,
Distinguished Secretary General of the United Nations,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is a great honour and a privilege for me to address this High-Level commemorative meeting as the President of the UN Economic and Social Council.

2. Seventy-five years ago, the United Nations was established to “save succeeding generations from the scourge of war” but also to promote “better standards of life in larger freedoms”. The

fundamental principles of the Charter have served as the foundations of the post-1945 order. Against all odds, the world's nations have avoided another global conflict.

3. The last 75 years have also been a “golden age” – in economic growth and productivity; the reductions in poverty and maternal and child mortality; the rise in life expectancy; and scientific and technological advances.

4. Yet, as the Secretary-General has observed “inequality is the hallmark of our times”. The COVID-19 pandemic has starkly revealed the reality of inequality among and within nations. It is the poorest who have suffered most from the pandemic. The richer countries have mobilized \$11 trillion while the developing countries are struggling to find even a small fraction of the resources they need.

5. In fact, Ladies and Gentlemen, we are confronted with a triple challenge; recovering from COVID; realizing the SDGs; and avoiding the looming climate catastrophe.

6. The response to these challenges must be collective. No one will be safe until everyone is safe from the virus.

7. A vaccine against COVID-19 – once developed – must be available to everyone, everywhere, at affordable prices, without discrimination.

8. Our response to the triple crisis must be composite and synergetic. And, our response must leave no one behind.

9. This will require unprecedented levels of international cooperation. Such cooperation cannot be promoted anywhere, except within the United Nations and its family of organizations. The United Nations is more indispensable today than ever before.

10. At no time also has ECOSOC's mandate been so vital.

11. The Economic and Social Council should take the decisions needed to overcome COVID, sustainable development and climate challenges.

12. During Pakistan Presidency of ECOSOC this year, we will focus on practical steps and concrete actions:

One, mobilizing the requisite finances which are vital to meet the triple challenges, through debt restructuring, new SDRs, and new loan facilities.

Two, greatly expanded investment in sustainable infrastructure which impacts on 90% of the SDGs. A sustainable infrastructure facility could serve to accelerate such investment.

Three, the application and absorption of new technologies is imperative. The Intellectual Property regime must be aligned with the SDGs. Research and development should be directed to specific Sustainable Development Goals and the digital divide must be bridged.

Mr. President,

13. The UN Charter recognizes that ‘prosperity’ and ‘peace’ are interdependent.

14. The United Nations cannot be made “fit for purpose” if the Security Council is paralyzed; and if the General Assembly and ECOSOC are marginalized. The United Nations cannot be

effective if unilateral actions are preferred over multilateral solutions; if the United Nations is starved of the resources to fulfill its vital mandates in peacekeeping and peacebuilding; if the resolutions of the Security Council are flouted at will.

15. The course upon which the world is drifting threatens to erode the structures that have been built to preserve peace and promote prosperity, including the erosion of the United Nations. This would be a tragedy of epic proportions for all mankind. Let us commit ourselves through the Declaration we will adopt today to reverse this course.

I thank you, Mr. President.