



**Statement at the SDG Moment
ECOSOC President, Ambassador Munir Akram
18 September 2020**

Secretary-General,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I thank the Heads of State and Government who intervened today, as well as others who have participated in this meeting for their valuable contributions to our shared commitment to the implementation of the SDGs.

The global magnitude of the challenge we are facing today from the covid pandemic is the greatest since the creation of the United Nations.

COVID-19 is inflicting unparalleled human suffering, nearly a million people have died and hundreds of million are at risk.

The hard-fought development progress made over a decade has been initiated. More than 100 million people will fall back into extreme poverty, the achievement of the 2030 agenda is therefore, much more challenging now.

Therefore, the highest priority, we have is to control the virus. We must hope that the vaccine will be available in the very near future and we must commit ourselves to ensure that everyone rich or poor, everywhere, will have equal and affordable access to the vaccine, without discrimination.

Excellencies,

The development challenge is threefold.

First, the COVID-19 crisis, which has devastated the world economy, with a global contraction, which could go up to 20%.

Second, the challenge of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and agenda 2030. We have all heard that we need to redouble efforts to achieve those targets.

Third, the climate catastrophe, which is going to happen unless we act now.

Excellencies,

My own priorities as president of the Economic and Social Council is to focus on practical actions.

First, on financing. We need to find the financing required to respond to the covid 19 pandemic and to build back better. The Managing Director of the IMF has estimated that we need to mobilize 2.5 trillion. For the developing countries to respond to this crisis, the proposals discussed in the initiative launched by the Secretary General, Canada and Jamaica, need to be followed up, and they will need to be followed up in the economic and social councils forum on financing for development, to ensure that the commensurate commitments will be made to make that degree of financing available.

Second, infrastructure. Sustainable infrastructure is key to promoting all 17 SDG goals. It impacts on 92% of these goals. We need to focus on investment in sustainable infrastructure, renewable energy, transportation, housing, water, sanitation, unless we are able to invest about \$1.5. trillion additionally, every year in the developing countries. We will fall back further from achieving the SDGs.

I have proposed the establishment of an infrastructure investment facility as a public private partnership to accelerate sustainable infrastructure development in the developing countries.

Third, science and technology. We need to focus on clear identifiable actions. Firstly, I believe we should try to align the

intellectual property regime with the SDGs. Secondly, we need to identify precise goals for research and development goals which are the most critical ones for the achievement of the SDGs. And thirdly, we need to find ways to bridge the digital divide between the North and the South.

Excellencies,

I will shortly commence informal consultations with the interested parties. Member States, the UN Secretariat and other organizations as well as the private sector and civil society stakeholders on each of these areas. I am most grateful for the support extended to me by the Secretary General, by the Deputy Secretary General, DESA, UNCTAD, UNDP and others in the UN family in these endeavors to address our challenges and to build back better. And thank you very much.