



ECOSOC

United Nations Economic and Social Council

TAKING ACTION TO IMPROVE LIVES

**High-level Political Forum on Sustainable
Development
Opening remarks
Tuesday, 7 July 2020, 9 a.m.**

Excellencies,

Colleagues,

It is a great honour and a pleasure to open the 2020 High-level political forum on sustainable development – the HLPF.

While the Forum and its related events are virtual this year, I can still sense the excitement and anticipation.

I think we all recognise that this is a crucial HLPF, as we embark on the Decade of action and delivery for the sustainable development goals.

And in the current context, our Forum has become all the more important. We could not have imagined this situation when we chose the theme for HLPF 2020.

With the dramatic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, many of our assumptions are shaken. And some of our aspirations seem out of reach, as weaknesses in our systems and societies have been laid bare.

This year, HLPF must maintain the momentum achieved during the SDG Summit last September. And create a new dynamic to overcome the negative impacts of the pandemic. Guided by the values enshrined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the framework for financing sustainable development in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

The SDG progress report reminds us that our progress so far has been uneven, and that new initiatives are required to realise the 2030 Agenda.

The COVID-19 pandemic, while primarily a health crisis, also quickly became the worst human and economic crisis in decades. It

has exacerbated the already difficult situation for millions of people living in poverty.

In the face of the current crisis, meaningful progress towards achieving the SDGs could not be more urgent.

In the coming days, we will advance our understanding of how to trigger a better recovery. And we will learn from the 47 countries who will present their Voluntary National Reviews.

They will share their experiences and challenges in their pursuit of the SDGs. And explain how they are tackling the pandemic and its impact on implementing the 2030 Agenda.

Let us use the VNRs to consider and shape the details of our own collective efforts to overcome the pandemic.

Dear colleagues,

The HLPF under the auspices of ECOSOC has confirmed its central place as the UN platform for follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda.

And this year, we should be more innovative and more ambitious than ever before.

Let us make the HLPF a springboard for greater solidarity and cooperation.

The world needs a committed multilateral effort to control the pandemic and resume SDG progress.

We often hear dismissive comments that the United Nations lack power to advance necessary systemic changes and to make a difference in the lives of people.

I disagree with the very foundation of that assumption.

The United Nations is a powerhouse of world-changing ideas and global coordination.

We adopted the remarkably ambitious 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as a common platform for equitable development for all. And we agreed on a strong global framework for financing its implementation in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

As we celebrate the UN's 75th Anniversary, let us again demonstrate the power of the United Nations.

Let us show the world that we are up to the task, and that with commitment and action – we can rebuild better and move the world forward.

And let us inspire actions from all stakeholders to improve the lives of people. We need all hands on deck to get this work done.

**So without further ado, let's get on with it! I wish you all a great
HLPF!**

Thank you.