There is still time for a course correction to achieve the SDGs by 2030 said former President of ECOSOC

31 October (DGC Meetings Coverage) - While the world is not yet on track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030, there is still time for a course correction, the former President of the Economic and Social Council told the General Assembly.

H.E. Ms. Inga Rhonda King (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), presenting the Economic and Social Council’s Report from its 2019 session (document A/74/3), which the Assembly took note of, said that the ability of the Sustainable Development Goals to cross the traditional boundaries of international development cooperation continues to be inspiring.

“The Sustainable Development Goals are now included in the agendas and action programmes of leaders of nations, cities, and communities, the research community, and business, from banking to retail and beyond,” she said.

During the Sustainable Development Goals Summit, held in September, Member States launched a decade for accelerated action. Moreover, the 49 voluntary national reviews presented to the Council over the course of a year showed how Governments are working to strengthen the capabilities of their institutions to maximize the synergies demanded by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

“As for the High-level Political Forum, we also heard that we are yet to fully understand how to achieve progress on some of the Sustainable Development Goal(s) under review,” she continued, spotlighting the important work that needs to be done to address inequality and climate change.

“We can now steer the development system reforms through their final phase,” she said, noting that the Council’s contribution has been useful in preparing for the next quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities in 2020.

Against a backdrop of record levels of forced displacement and increasingly complex protracted crises and destructive natural disasters, the Council’s humanitarian affairs segment highlighted the importance of ongoing work and promoted action to save lives, reach those in need and reduce risks, vulnerability and need, she said.

In April, the Council convened a special meeting to mobilize international support for the response to Cyclone Idai in Mozambique, Malawi, and Zimbabwe. “This highlighted the importance of humanitarian action to meet immediate humanitarian needs, early warning and rapid response as well as longer-term recovery and reconstruction,” she noted.

At, the special meeting “Pathways to resilience in climate affected SIDS [small island developing States]— A Forward-Looking Resilience Building Agenda: Promises, results and next steps”, held in November, she said: “We saw how climate change can bring devastating consequences to small island developing States, such as my own country.”

Effective collaboration enabled the Economic and Social Council to deliver results, she added, also noting the growing cooperation between the presidents of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. Implementing the General Assembly resolution on strengthening the Council has
contributed to its effectiveness in providing strengthened direction and guidance at the global level to better respond to the 2030 Agenda and to improve outcomes.

Ambassador King also noted various initiatives undertaken to make the Council open and innovative. “[The Council] is an open and shared place where policy makers and stakeholders from every sector come together to address this integrated Agenda, accelerate its implementation, and find transformative pathways to respond to our common global development challenges,” she said.