

Introduction of the 2019 Financing for Sustainable Development Report
of the Inter-agency Task Force on FfD

ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development follow-up
15 April 2019, New York

Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to briefly introduce the 2019 Financing for Sustainable Development Report. Mobilizing sufficient financing remains a major challenge in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. As we complete the first full review cycle for implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, key investments in the SDGs remain underfunded, jeopardizing our prospects.

There are signs of progress in the whole process of implementation, for example, interest in sustainable financing is growing, and sustainability considerations are increasingly guiding public budgets and development cooperation efforts. However, in light of the significant challenges we face, the sustainability transition in financial systems is not happening at the required scale, nor at the required pace.

The 2019 Financing for Sustainable Development Report of the Inter-agency Task Force is an urgent call for action to accelerate this transition, through national and multilateral action.

Before I highlight some of its main findings, allow me to briefly thank the members of the Inter-agency Task Force for their excellent collaboration. As you know, the Task Force brings together expertise from over 60 entities throughout the UN system and beyond. The major institutional stakeholders – the IMF and the World Bank, WTO, UNCTAD and UNDP – all play a key role, and have contributed their data and analysis throughout the report. I am grateful for their support.

Excellencies,

The Report contains an overview of 10 areas, 6 issues and policy advice relating to financing for development: the global economic context and its implications for sustainable development; integrated national financing frameworks; domestic public resources; domestic and international private business and finance; international development cooperation; international trade as an engine for development; debt and debt sustainability; addressing systemic issues; sciences, technology innovations and capacity building; and data monitoring and follow-up.

Six key messages emerge from this year's analysis.

First, global growth has peaked at 3 per cent. Debt risks are rising, with 30 LDCs and other low-income countries in or at high risk of debt distress. Climate change continues apace, with carbon emissions rising in 2017. These global challenges put our aspirations at risk and raise the urgency of action.

Second, in this difficulty, we see opportunity. The multilateral system is under strain, but as we revisit existing arrangements in trade, debt, tax cooperation and other areas, we open the door to making them fit for purpose for sustainable development.

Third, and in response, we call on the international community to recommit to the Addis Agenda. Rather than retreating from multilateralism, we should strengthen collective action to address global challenges.

Fourth, global approaches need to be complemented by national actions. We have put forward building blocks for countries to operationalize integrated national financing frameworks to support national development strategies. National financing frameworks were introduced in the Addis Agenda, and we think it is time to start using them to implement Addis on the ground.

Fifth, achieving sustainable development requires a long-term perspective. Public and private incentives need to be aligned with sustainable development so that all financing decisions incorporate sustainability as a central concern.

And sixth, we must harness the potential of innovation to strengthen development finance. However, such innovations do not eliminate financial and sustainability risks, which policy makers and regulators need to manage carefully.

Allow me to note also that the Report puts special emphasis on the five Sustainable Development Goals under in-depth review at the 2019 High-level Political Forum in July. They are:

- quality education
- decent work and economic growth
- reduced inequalities
- climate action, and
- peace, justice and strong institutions.

We will endeavour to make this analysis available in a suitable format for the HLPF in July.

Excellencies,

In this short intervention, I am not able to reflect the full range of analysis and recommendations emanating from the Task Force's work. The work will inform the discussions over the next several days at this Forum, and indeed will be indispensable in this critical year of sustainable development, as we prepare for three high-level events in September, including the High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development, the SDG Summit and the High-level Review of the SAMOA Pathway on SIDS.

Distinguished Delegates,

I strongly encourage you to take the time and read the report carefully. I trust that it provides a sound analytical foundation for your deliberations.

Thank you.