



22 October 2020

Excellency,

In keeping with my commitment to strengthen collaboration and coordination between the principal organs of the United Nations, I have the honour to transmit herewith a memorandum of my meeting with the President of the Economic and Social Council, His Excellency Mr. Munir Akram, held on 19 October 2020.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.



Volkan BOZKIR

All Permanent Missions
and Permanent Observers to the United Nations
New York

Meeting between the President of the General Assembly and the President of Economic and Social Council on Monday, 19 October 2020

The President of the 75th session of the General Assembly, H.E Mr. Volkan BOZKIR met with the President of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), H.E. Mr. Munir Akram, on Monday, 19 October 2020, as part of their efforts to strengthen relations between the principal organs of the UN and increase collaboration and coherence in the work of the General Assembly (GA) and the ECOSOC.

Both Presidents underscored the importance of maintaining the ongoing cooperation between the two organs to capitalize on the areas of complementarity in their work. The Presidents used the monthly coordination meeting to exchange views on enhancing coherence and synergies across their respective works for the session.

General Assembly review of ECOSOC and the HLPF

The President of the General Assembly (PGA) emphasized the importance the GA review process of ECOSOC and the HLPF for the 75th session and registered his intent to appoint to co-facilitators by November 2020. The President of ECOSOC outlined the significance of the HLPF to the membership and flagged key areas that have been considered in the review process thus far: (i) more time for the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs); (ii) improving the reviews of the SDGs, including examining the SDGs in a holistic and integrated manner; and (iii) enhancing the political guidance of the HLPF. He further highlighted the need for bringing additional focus on investments in sustainable infrastructures in order to recover better from the pandemic and synergize efforts for achieving the 2030 Agenda. Importantly, he outlined the need to base the review on the role and Charter functions of ECOSOC, while strengthening its coordination of the UN system and its subsidiary bodies. The PGA indicated his intent to consult further with the President of ECOSOC as the process ensues.

Group of Friends of Voluntary National Review, Follow-up and Review of the high-level political form on sustainable development

The PGA and the President of ECOSOC discussed the efforts of the Group of Friends and their support in engaging Member States in the review of VNRs at HLPF and their contribution to the intergovernmental process. Both agreed to support the continuation of the Group's work. A joint letter will be circulated to the membership as per the practice in previous sessions.

Alignment of the agendas of the GA, the ECOSOC and their subsidiary bodies with the 2030 Agenda

Both Presidents highlighted the importance of the alignment of the agendas of the GA, ECOSOC and the HLPF to achieve the 2030 Agenda. The PGA underscored the need to accelerate momentum based on the work done during the previous sessions. The launch of the

Decade of Action and Delivery for sustainable development and the call to recover better from COVID-19 sparks inspiration for the work of the GA, ECOSOC, their subsidiary bodies, and the HLPF. The President of ECOSOC underscored rationalization of the mandates as a key output of this process and that we could shift the focus on results that are achieved by the GA or ECOSOC when addressing a given issue. The PGA indicated his intent to appoint co-facilitators for this process early in the session. Both Presidents agreed that the co-facilitators for this process would need to undertake extensive consultations with Member States to build consensus.

Joint Briefing of the Presidents

The PGA and the President of ECOSOC committed to maintaining the practice of the Joint Briefing of the Presidents in light of the mutually reinforcing agendas between the two organs and to further demonstrate the synergies and collaboration in their work, and maximize their common impact. A joint briefing of the Presidents to the Member States will be convened in January 2021 on a date to be determined. They also engaged on business continuity during COVID-19 and noted the positive impact of in-person meetings.

Priorities for the ECOSOC Presidency

The President of ECOSOC outlined for the PGA three priority issues he will pursue for the session, namely (i) Financing the SDGs; (ii) Sustainable Infrastructure; and (iii) Science and Technology. On SDG financing, the Presidents discussed the initiative being led by the Secretary-General, Jamaica and Canada which has proposed around 250 options for financing. The process is ongoing, and the SG is expected to convene another meeting in December to provide greater clarity on the agreed options going forward. The President of ECOSOC raised opportunities for engagement of the private sector on financing, as well as the need to respond to overwhelming need for countries who are in debt-distress.

In relation to sustainable infrastructure, the President of ECOSOC noted the strong calls for ensuring a green recovery and noted that the building of sustainable infrastructure would need to be at the heart of such efforts. There exist multiple platforms for promoting infrastructure investment. However, these institutions and initiatives have not led to the desired global harmonization of investment policies, standards and practices and have not accelerated the pace and volume of sustainable infrastructure investment in developing countries. The United Nations is well placed to overcome these shortcomings. The President of ECOSOC further highlighted the importance of digitalisation to the economies of developing countries and identifying concrete ways to implement the Secretary-General's Digital Cooperation Roadmap. The two Presidents noted the need for identifying relevant research and development objectives, as well as the benefit of identifying new technologies and databases to be aligned with the SDGs and used for development objectives.

Priorities for the 75th session

The PGA outlined his priorities for the session and the meetings at which GA and ECOSOC can demonstrate coherence and synergies, including: the High-Level Meeting on Middle-Income Countries; High-Level Meeting on the water-related goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda. As mandated, this meeting is expected to make a contribution to the HLPF; High-Level Dialogue on Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought; and the Special Session on COVID-19.

The PGA laid particular emphasis on the issues faced by Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS)– the 91 most vulnerable Member States. While all countries face risk, these countries are at greatest risk of losing an entire generation of hard-won development gains owing to the COVID-19 pandemic and its related socio-economic impacts. He indicated his intent to establish a Board of Advisers on Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) to support the framing of high-level meetings and other engagements throughout the session. The President of ECOSOC noted that the PGA's initiative provided an opportune space to address the three priorities identified for ECOSOC and other critical development issues, and to make practical proposals to take forward.

Joint activities of the GA and ECOSOC

Both Presidents seized the opportunity to discuss the joint activities for the session.

Preparations for the joint commemoration of the **25th anniversary of the World Summit on Social Development** in early December 2020 are underway. There was agreement that the event should provide the opportunity to highlight the importance attached to the poorest and most vulnerable people and give Member States the opportunity to speak in person on their achievements and challenges, share good practices and lessons learned.

The half-day Joint Thematic Debate on LDCs will provide substantive input to the fifth conference on LDCs. The theme remains relevant - "Accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in LDCs to leave no one behind". Both Presidents agree to engaging with the LDCs for the preparations of the event.

Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR)

Both Presidents commended the Second Committee for prioritizing the QCPR during the session and indicated they would follow the process closely.

Other ECOSOC events

The President of ECOSOC expressed that he welcomed and appreciated the collaboration with the PGA on the upcoming events of ECOSOC and his participation in the HLPF and Youth Forum.