



THE PRESIDENT
OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

10 August 2021

Excellency,

I have the honour to transmit herewith, a letter dated 22 July 2021 from H.E. Mr. Munir Akram, President of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations.

As an annex to the letter, the President of ECOSOC transmits the summary of the ECOSOC high-level policy dialogue on “Strengthening ECOSOC at its 75th anniversary for sustainable and resilient recovery from COVID-19 and advancing the 2030 Agenda” that took place on 16 July 2021, as a contribution by the Council to the theme of the seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly.

I take this opportunity to extend my sincere appreciation to H.E. Mr. Munir Akram for ably guiding the dialogue and to all Member States for their contribution and engagement.

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

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Volkan Bozkir'.

Volkan BOZKIR

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



The President
of the
Economic and Social Council

22 July 2021

Subject: Contribution by the Council to theme of the 76th Session of the General Assembly

Excellency,

As President of the 2021 cycle of the Economic and Social Council, it was my view that given ECOSOC's role as a Charter organ of the United Nations and a key instrument of multilateralism, it was necessary for the Council to make a substantive contribution to the theme of the 76th session of the General Assembly.

As part of the 2021 High-level Segment of the Council, a high-level policy dialogue took place on "*Strengthening ECOSOC at its 75th anniversary for sustainable and resilient recovery from COVID-19 and advancing the 2030 Agenda*" on 16th July 2021. In the spirit of an open and more inclusive multilateralism, the dialogue brought together the voices and views of a variety of stakeholders, including civil society, youth, and the private sector, and high-level representatives of Member States, including Ministers, to provide their perspectives on the role of ECOSOC and its contribution to a collective response to current global crises and long-term challenges, in particular, the COVID-19 pandemic.

I have the honour to share with you the summary of the high-level dialogue. I would be grateful if it could be circulated widely as a contribution of the Council to the theme of the 76th session of the General Assembly, on "Building resilience through hope – to recover from COVID-19, rebuild sustainability, respond to the needs of the planet, respect the rights of people, and revitalize the United Nations". The main messages are also relevant for the specific discussions to take place in response to the Secretary General's report on the Common Agenda.

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

Munir Akram
President of ECOSOC

H.E. Mr. Volkan Bozkir
President of the 75th session of the General Assembly of the United Nations



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ECOSOC High-level Segment (HLS)
16 July 2021 - 10:30 am to 1:00 pm
Virtual Meeting

Strengthening ECOSOC at its 75th anniversary for sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 and advancing the 2030 Agenda

Key Messages

- **The ECOSOC must remain the main UN deliberative charter body for coordination, overseeing the operational activities of development of the UN system, supporting the aspirations of youth and other stakeholders as well as actively work to leave no one behind for a sustainable and resilient recovery.**
- **Revitalized global solidarity and cooperation are needed to strengthen a more networked multilateralism, achieve vaccine equity, address deep-seated inequalities, and increase partnerships by all actors at all levels.**
- **Advancing the 2030 Agenda requires a whole of society and people-centered approach to protect the most vulnerable, create a more sustainable and greener economy and ensure that all voices are heard.**

Summary¹

The commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the ECOSOC this year coincided with the biggest global crisis since the founding of the United Nations. A more inclusive and networked multilateralism will be crucial for the recovery and to build resilience to avoid another crisis with devastating impact.

Over the past 75 years, for multiple reasons, the ECOSOC has struggled to fulfill the policy and coordination mandate to promote “better standards of life in larger freedoms” assigned to it by the Charter. Never before has the fulfillment of this mandate been more imperative as it is today.

The High-Level Segment of the ECOSOC was enriched by statements by a high number of Ministers, vice-ministers, and high-level representatives as well as the insights of distinguished speakers. They discussed how to strengthen the Council as the central deliberative platform at the United Nations for preparedness and response to global challenges, as a Council that facilitates

¹ The summary herein aims to contribute to discussions that may be organized by the President of the 76th Session of the General Assembly, of the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General Report on Our Common Agenda, including current and future challenges, as requested by Member States in the [Declaration](#) on the Commemoration of the Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the United Nations.



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stronger national actions and international cooperation, and as a Council that keeps the promises to current and succeeding generations on SDGs implementation.

A fireside chat session on “*Strengthening ECOSOC at its 75th anniversary for sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 and advancing the 2030 Agenda*” took place as part of the commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the ECOSOC. Moderated by Ms. Elizabeth Cousens, President and CEO of the UN Foundation, it included the participation of **H.E. Ms. Maria Fernanda Espinosa**, former Minister of Foreign Affairs and of Defense of Ecuador and former President of the 73rd Session of the UN General Assembly; **H.E. Mr. Ibrahim Assane Mayaki**, Chief Executive Officer of the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD) and Co-Chair of FACTI Panel; **Ms. Jayathma Wickramanayake**, Secretary-General’s Envoy on Youth; **Mr. John Frank**, Vice President for UN Affairs of Microsoft; and **Mr. Jeffrey Schlagenhauf**, Deputy Secretary-General of OECD.

Over 20 ministers and vice-ministers made interventions. Statements from Ministers and other members of delegations noted that ECOSOC’s mandate and convening power are more important than ever in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. ECOSOC reforms must ensure that the body is fit for purpose to address current and emerging challenges, including those identified in the 75th Anniversary Declaration.

Upgrade the United Nations

The dialogue centered on the importance of strengthening the United Nations and multilateral cooperation in a highly interconnected world. Building resilience and preparing for future challenges require strengthening both existing and new instruments for collaboration, as well as be guided by the rightful demands of “we the peoples” for a better, fairer, and more sustainable world. ECOSOC is critical to this task.

There was a call to strengthen the alignment and revitalization process of ECOSOC as well as retool the United Nations for better tackling emerging issues as well as create a mechanism for stronger coordination and collaboration across the UN system, especially the main Charter bodies. A more networked multilateralism where international organizations collaborate based on their comparative advantages is needed.

Youth and Future Generations

The speakers noted that youth call for a more inclusive UN that moves from talk to action and that utilizes multilateralism to urgently address issues such as racism, climate change, systemic inequality and gender inequality. They also discussed the need to include young people in accountability systems and governance frameworks to achieve sustainable development and future prosperity.



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Leave No One Behind

Many countries spoke about the devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic globally and cited a rise in poverty and economic recession at national-level. Some member states noted that the mostly vulnerable populations, in middle income countries, LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS have faced the brunt of the negative impact of the pandemic, slowing their growth and threatening development gains. Countries called for equitable access to the COVID-19 vaccines as a global common public good. Others stressed that recovery efforts must be holistic and target the most vulnerable people. Countries emphasized the given the massive rise in poverty and vulnerability caused by the triple crisis – the COVID-19 pandemic, the worst economic recession in a century , and a looming climate calamity – it is essential to incorporate a sustained social protection programme as an essential component of our response. It was emphasized that ECOSOC should be able to leverage the experience from the pandemic to reshape global development and ensure that no one is left behind.

Digital Cooperation

Countries also noted that COVID-19 has exacerbated the digital divide between the connected and the unconnected, revealing just how far behind many are on digital uptake. This hinders the ability of many developing countries to take advantage of relevant technologies that could support recovery and rebuilding. It was also highlighted that Governments, civil society, and private sector can work together to ensure greater digital connectivity, especially for countries and individuals that are not connected to ensure no one is left behind and that solutions are human-centred.

It was emphasized that the ECOSOC must also ensure fair technology transfers to developing countries to advance their necessary digital transformation and to collaboratively work to develop open-source technology platforms. The ‘Tech Access Partnership’ launched by the UN Technology Bank, UNDP and WHO was highlighted as an initiative to increase LDCs’ access to health technologies and strengthen their local protection capacities.

Protection of Our Planet

Some countries indicated the importance of the recovery plan to help create a greener economy. Efforts such as the ‘Green Middle East initiative’, a regional initiative aimed at reducing CO2 emissions by 4% through the planting of 50 billion trees in the region and 10 Billion Tree Tsunami by Pakistan as worth replicating and scaling up. Other initiatives were proposed such as the commitment to creating a ‘green island’ by foresting and reforesting 40,000 hectares per year.

Sustainable Financing

It was highlighted that ECOSOC can play a role in connecting the needs of developing countries with adequate financial resources as well as in addressing debt service relief and restructuring. The also stressed that the hold of international financial institutions on economic and financial governance must be rationalized and the Council’s role as a precursor in promoting a closer



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relationship between the UN and the international financial and trade institutions to address financial needs and economic transformation of developing countries must be restored.

A call for a universally agreed vulnerability index which could better reflect national realities was also proposed. Other countries mentioned that addressing the refugee crises and migration are pivotal to achieving sustainable development.

African experiences with innovative platforms for multilateral cooperation were highlighted as well as the need to foster more financial transparency and integrity for sustainable development. Member States expressed the hope that the post-pandemic recovery would get the investments required to tackle the debt burden and illicit financial flows as they have detrimental impacts in developing countries. ECOSOC can play an important role in promoting solutions to financing gaps in SDG implementation.

Infrastructure

Member states emphasized that in order to build resilience against future shocks and to build back better; it is imperative to bridge the existing infrastructure gap between developed and developing countries. During the pandemic, this gap has widened as investments declined by US\$50B in 2020. They called for support to the proposal for a high-level dialogue on sustainable infrastructure investment at the United Nations to support developing countries in leapfrogging in the development domain.

Partnerships

ECOSOC was encouraged to continue developing multi-stakeholder partnerships to achieve the 2030 Agenda by creating innovative alliances and engaging young people more robustly. The readiness of the private sector to respond to the existential challenges faced by societies was highlighted, from the current pandemic to the economic and social impact of climate change as well as provide cutting-edge technologies to facilitate the implementation of the SDGs.