

**2021 HPLF**  
**Closing remarks**  
**President of ECOSOC**  
**15 July 2021**

**Deputy-Secretary-General,**  
**Excellencies,**  
**Colleagues,**  
**Ladies and gentlemen,**

We are reaching the end of an intense, inspired and action oriented high-level political forum on sustainable development.

These eight days showed the continued high level commitment to the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement.

Through the multiple interventions of countries and participants from all walks of life, we heard great concerns about the current crisis but also messages of hope.

Deep concern that the pandemic is continuing unabated in too many countries, especially developing countries, who lack fiscal resources for their health and socio-economic response.

Deep concern about the impacts of COVID-19 on the SDGs overall, notably on poverty, hunger, health, jobs, women, inequality and leaving no one behind, as well as about the continuing environmental and climate crises.

We heard the IMF's estimate that the pandemic has increased the financing needs to meet the SDGs by an average annual 2.5 percentage points of GDP for all low-income developing countries.

Deep concern also that the crisis has shows lapses and limitations in international cooperation and international solidarity, especially in the early phases. Vaccine nationalism is but one example.

But there were also many messages of hope.

There was a loud and clear call for global solidarity.

There was broad agreement that ensuring equitable, universal and affordable access to the vaccine is a moral imperative, the only way to overcome the pandemic and a sine qua non condition for a resilient and sustainable world recovery. We heard the determination of many countries, the Secretary General and financial and trade institutions to support universal access.

Some countries committed to increase their ODA, as we reach record levels, which is critical to scale up financial support for developing countries' recovery from COVID-19. The creation of new SDRs was welcomed. It should be equitably shared. We need to deliver on climate change finance. There was good feedback on the extension of the G20 Debt Service Suspension Initiative. But many developing countries called for more ambitious responses. There was a strong commitment to support LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS, which have been hard hit by the crisis.

Another positive message was that we know what we need to do to recover forward better. Stimulus packages should support investment in sustainable infrastructure, strengthening social protection systems, ensuring universal health coverage and the SDGs more generally. We were warned against a hasty return to austerity.

We must climate proof our response and ensure that it bolsters environmental protection.

Building peaceful, equal and inclusive societies also requires a people-centered approach that protects the most vulnerable and ensures that all voices are heard. We must engage all actors, national and local governments, large and small businesses, civil society and partnerships.

The past year has also underscored how central science, technology and innovation can ensure progress against massive, seemingly intractable problems. Along with closing the digital gap, they can be

a significant accelerator in the decade of action. But we need to expand international cooperation, facilitating open access to technologies, including for the vaccine, knowledge and solutions. We heard calls for suspending agreements on intellectual property rights at least temporarily. I hope they will be heard.

We learned from the 42 countries who presented their voluntary national reviews and from other participating countries that they are taking such measures. But we must lift the scale of our actions, make them more impactful and targeted, include climate, environmental dimensions, and –again-- work together across the globe to leave no one behind.

The Ministerial declaration we just adopted expresses our commitment to realize the vision of the 2030 Agenda and overcome the pandemic through international cooperation, multilateralism, global solidarity, and policies guided by evidence and the concern for equity -- and supported by adequate finance and technology.

I would like to thank Heads of State and Government, including my own, the over 100 Ministers, the Secretary-General and heads of UN system, mayors, major groups and other stakeholders, academia including the 2019 Nobel laureate as well as all participants for their contribution to the HLPF.

Let me thank also the Secretariat including DESA, DGACM, interpreters and technicians without whom this meeting could not have been possible. I also thank the organizers of over 300 side events, 17 VNR Labs, 10 special events and exhibitors for enriching the HLPF. I believe we delivered on the HLPF mandate and expectations, as an integrative platform where all voices are heard.

Let us join hands in our recovery efforts through multilateralism and global solidarity.

**I thank you.**