

Ministerial declaration of the high-level segment of the 2020 session of the Economic and Social Council on the annual theme “Accelerated action and transformative pathways: realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development”

Ministerial declaration of the 2020 high-level political forum on sustainable development, convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council, on the theme “Accelerated action and transformative pathways: realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development”

[\[I Introduction\]](#)

We, the Ministers, and high representatives, have adopted during this historic and challenging time that our world is facing, the present declaration at the high-level segment of the 2020 session of the Economic and Social Council and the 2020 high-level political forum on sustainable development,

1. As we commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the United Nations, and as our common future is at stake, we reaffirm our commitment to international cooperation and multilateralism. We also reaffirm our belief in the importance of the United Nations, its principles and purposes, and recognize the central role of the United Nations system in supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and coordinating a global response to the COVID-19 pandemic, based on unity solidarity and multilateral cooperation.
2. The unprecedented COVID-19 crisis has revealed more than ever our world’s vulnerabilities. This emphasizes the urgent need for a global renewed commitment to solidarity, across the multilateral system, nations and generations. We stress that accelerated progress towards implementing the 2030 Agenda should be our collective roadmap to respond and build back better, to help prevent future pandemics and achieve a sustainable, resilient and prosperous future for all.
3. As we are entering the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development, we reaffirm our full commitment to implement the 2030 Agenda. We also reaffirm the principles recognized in the 2030 Agenda, which is people-centered and transformative and whose Goals and targets are universal, integrated and indivisible, balancing the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. We need an integrated approach that will leverage interlinkages across Goals and targets and lead to sustainable, inclusive and green recovery, and accelerate the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in the framework of the decade of action and delivery.
4. We emphasize that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development.
5. Recognizing that the poor and the most vulnerable are the most affected by the COVID-19 crisis, we will undertake every effort to leave no one behind and to reach the furthest behind first.

[\[II Assessment of the situation regarding the 2030 Agenda\]](#)

6. We acknowledge that the progress in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda continues to be uneven and it has either stalled or been reversed in some areas: the number of people suffering from hunger is on the rise; climate change is occurring much faster than anticipated; and inequality continues to increase within and among countries.
7. We acknowledge the COVID-19 pandemic reinforces pre-existing obstacles, gaps and systemic challenges. The effects of the pandemic and the measures taken to mitigate its impact have overwhelmed the health systems globally, caused businesses and factories to shut down and severely impacted the livelihoods of half of the global workforce, kept billions of students out of schools, disrupted global value and supply chains, affecting the supply of products, and is expected to push tens of millions of people back into extreme poverty and hunger. The insufficient efforts to implement the Goals exacerbated the impact of the pandemic. We also acknowledge the multidimensional nature of the pandemic and its severe impact on all countries, especially developing countries and countries in special situations.

[\[Actions to be taken for the way forward\]](#)

8. We reaffirm our commitment to the actions in the political declaration adopted at the September 2019 SDG Summit and the former HLPF declarations. We emphasize that the decade of action should address the accelerated actions listed below, aimed at eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, everywhere, achieving a structural and sustained recovery from the pandemic and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

9. We commit to placing the poor and the most vulnerable people at the center of our policies and actions, ensuring that no one is left behind, with an endeavor to reach the furthest behind first. We intend to see the Goals and targets met for all nations and peoples and for all segments of society.

10. We recognize the special challenges facing developing countries and, in particular, African countries, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States and countries in conflict and post-conflict situations, as well as the specific challenges facing middle-income countries, in pursuing sustainable development. Taking into account the different levels of development, and the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on these aforementioned countries, we will support them by taking urgent steps to help them build back better and achieve sustainable development.

11. We strongly believe that peace and security are a prerequisite for sustainable development, as lack of sustainable development is a threat to peace and security. Therefore, we will redouble our collective efforts to build peaceful, just, and inclusive societies through reducing inequalities within and among countries, enhancing our ability to prevent and resolve conflicts, protecting and fulfilling human rights for all, ending all forms of discrimination, ensuring equal access to justice and achieve gender equality. We will also upscale our efforts to build and strengthen more effective, accountable and transparent institutions, and ensure equal access to basic services and opportunities, with a special emphasis on the most vulnerable.

12. We are determined to invest in prevention and resilience as essential components of disaster risk reduction. We will combine short term actions with long term policies, to resist shocks, prevent crises, and mitigate their risks and consequences, including by investing in infrastructure, information and communication networks, early warning systems, and evidence-based policymaking.

13. We will protect and advance human wellbeing, by promoting investment in, and ensure equitable access to, quality and inclusive education at all levels, health care services, social protection, affordable housing, safe drinking water, adequate sanitation, and access to electricity and ICT. We will use all policy tools to mitigate the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. We will relaunch sustainable and inclusive growth, reduce income inequalities and address the financing challenges of developing countries. Our economies will be reconfigured to protect the environment and create conditions for decent work for all and support micro, small and medium-sized enterprises to help restore jobs and incomes.

14. We will strive to ensure that emergency social and economic schemes integrate a gender perspective, given the fact that the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic are felt disproportionately by women, who also face increased risks of domestic violence and exploitation. We recommit to targeted and accelerated action to remove all legal, social and economic barriers to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.

15. We will invest in strengthening national health and social protection systems, to help ensure a sustainable recovery from COVID-19, as well as pandemic preparedness and the prevention and detection of, and response to any future outbreaks. In light of the current pandemic, we commit to supporting countries in special situations, in particular those with weak health systems and limited fiscal space, with particular emphasis on providing technical assistance, improving health facilities infrastructure and investing into quality healthcare and social protection systems. We underscore that equitable access to health products is a

global priority and that the availability, accessibility, acceptability and affordability of health products of assured quality are fundamental to tackling the pandemic.

16. We remain determined to end hunger and all forms of malnutrition and achieve food security for all while minimizing the environmental impacts of food production. Recognizing the significant challenges posed by the COVID-19 crisis to ensure food security, and also recognizing that international trade is an engine for development, we will work to ensure the flow of vital medical supplies, critical agricultural products, and other goods and services across borders, and work to resolve disruptions to the global supply chains to support the health and well-being of all people. We reiterate our goal to realize a free, fair, non-discriminatory, transparent, predictable and stable trade and investment environment, and to keep our markets open.

17. We will strengthen our global response to climate change by accelerating the reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and ensure access to sustainable energy technologies. We recall the Paris Agreement and stress the importance of mobilizing further actions and support for climate change mitigation and adaptation as well as strengthening resilience, taking into account the specific needs and special circumstances of developing countries, especially those that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change.

18. We recommit to reversing environmental degradation through the restoration of ecosystem, halting biodiversity loss, integrating the conservation and sustainable use of biological resources into national decision-making, ending the illegal trade of wildlife, increasing reforestation, achieving land degradation neutrality, conserving and sustainably using oceans, seas and marine resources, promoting sustainable consumption and production patterns, and achieving a world in which humanity lives in harmony with nature. In that regard, we emphasize that biodiversity, climate and health must be addressed holistically, including through investing in scaling up nature-based solutions.

19. We will continue to strengthen the science-policy interface through evidence-based policy making, support for research and development, harnessing science, technology and innovation, leveraging technologies to build resilience across sectors. We will promote capacity-building and technical assistance initiatives as well as innovation and technologies towards advancing the Goals, with special focus on developing countries, and commit to strengthening cooperation to close the digital divide within and among countries.

20. We pledge to increase our level of ambition to mobilize and effectively use all available means of implantation, in line with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, and to fully implement the agreed conclusions and recommendations of the 2020 ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development follow-up. We are deeply concerned about the impact of high debt levels on countries' ability to withstand the impact of the COVID-19 shock, and to invest in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. We commit to addressing the needs of the developing countries, especially those highly indebted and most vulnerable, and invite the international community and relevant stakeholders to urgently and properly address those needs.

21. We commit to maintaining the integrity of the 2030 Agenda, including by ensuring ambitious and continuous action on the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals with a 2020 timeline, by redoubling our efforts to achieve these targets in an accelerated timeframe, reflecting the urgency conveyed in the Agenda, and requesting the relevant intergovernmental fora and bodies to review, and as needed, update targets to reflect a suitable level of ambition for 2030.

22. We commit to strengthening our national statistical capacities to address the gaps in data on the 2030 Agenda in order to allow countries to provide high quality, timely, reliable, disaggregated data and statistics and to fully integrate the Goals in our monitoring and reporting systems. We encourage international cooperation supporting statistical capacity-building in developing countries, in particular the most vulnerable countries, which face the greatest challenges in collecting, analyzing and using reliable data and statistics.

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23. We urge the United Nations to further capitalize on the key findings and evidence extracted from the Voluntary National Reviews in order to support the implementation of the Goals and accelerate the actions in the framework of the decade of action and encourage the peer-learning character of the voluntary national reviews. We also recognize the contribution of the regional reviews, as well as the contribution of the United Nations regional commissions, the regional fora on sustainable development, major groups and all other stakeholders.

24. Finally, we will promote public engagement and innovative partnerships through a whole of society approach, regional and local mobilization and actions, involvement of communities, people, civil society and the private sector. We also acknowledge the role of the volunteers in the implementation of the Goals. We will invest more in human capital, to empower children, adolescents and youth, as critical agents of change, and support their meaningful participation in realizing the vision of the 2030 Agenda.