

17 July 2020

Subject: Adoption of the draft ministerial declaration of the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council and the high-level political forum on sustainable development convened under the auspices of the Council through silence procedure

Excellency,

I have the honour to refer to the draft ministerial declaration of the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council and the high-level political forum on sustainable development (HLPF) convened under the auspices of the Council.

The world is going through a public health crisis which is turning into a global economic and social crisis. The HLPF is one of the first major intergovernmental meetings with universal participation and broad stakeholder engagement since the onset of the crisis.

It is critical that the United Nations send a strong message to all people demonstrating that we can forge consensus and give a multilateral response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and that we are committed to rebuilding better after the pandemic, with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as our roadmap. Countries, societies, youth and the media will all be looking to the United Nations for its guidance.

It has thus never been more important that the HLPF and the Economic and Social Council adopt their ministerial declaration by consensus.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to Ambassador Georgi Velikov Panayotov, Permanent Representative of Bulgaria to the United Nations, and Ambassador Amal Mudallali, Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations, and their teams, for having led an intensive and inclusive process of informal consultations to reach agreement on the draft declaration. I also thank all delegations for your utmost flexibility and the constructive manner in which you have engaged in these deliberations.

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

This year's HLPF and ECOSOC meetings have been substantive and issued a clear call to action even though they took place in a virtual format. However, the pandemic has prevented us from working together in a fully interactive way as we usually do during informal consultations. Based on the latest text shared with me by the co-facilitators, I attach the draft ministerial declaration for your consideration. The draft before you is my best assessment of what could achieve broad consensus. This includes previously agreed language on matters where we have not been able to reach agreement. In these exceptional circumstances, normal decision-making, including voting, is not possible.

I therefore kindly appeal to you for your understanding and support.

The attached draft declaration (to be issued as E/2020/L.20 – E/HLPF/2020/L.1) looks at the impact of COVID-19 on the SDGs, calls for international cooperation and solidarity in responding to the pandemic and commits to building back better, using the 2030 Agenda with the Sustainable Development Goals as our guide. It focuses on what can unite us and the crucial messages we want to give to the world.

The draft ministerial declaration does not give rise to programme budget implications.

It is therefore my pleasure to place under silence procedure until Wednesday, 22 July 2020, at 5 p.m., the attached draft ministerial declaration of the high-level political forum on sustainable development and the Economic and Social Council, in accordance with ECOSOC decision 2020/205 of 3 April 2020, entitled "Procedure for taking decisions of the Economic and Social Council during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic", decision 2020/206 of 22 May 2020 extending the procedure for adopting decisions through silence procedure to meetings of the HLPF under the auspices of the Council, and decision 2020/219 of 24 June 2020 by which the Council agreed that decisions 2020/205 and 2020/206 should continue to be in effect until the end of July 2020.

Members of the Council wishing to make statements in explanations of vote/ position or non-members of the Council wishing to make general statements in connection with the draft proposals are invited to refer to the procedure annexed to this letter.

Any objections to proceed with the adoption of the draft ministerial declaration should be made via a letter or Note Verbale addressed to the President of ECOSOC. Such correspondence should be sent via e-mail to [Susan.eckey@mfa.no](mailto:Susan.eckey@mfa.no) / [Sunniva.Helen.Abrahamson@mfa.no](mailto:Sunniva.Helen.Abrahamson@mfa.no). Please clearly indicate the title of the draft ministerial declaration in the subject line of the communication.

Let me take this opportunity to once again express my solidarity with Member States who are fighting COVID-19 and extend my sincere condolences for their loss.

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

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Mona Juul". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'M' and a long, sweeping tail.

**Mona Juul**  
**President of the Economic and**  
**Social Council**

## ANNEX

### Explanation of vote/position

#### DRAFT MINISTERIAL DECLARATION OF THE HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Members of the Council wishing to make an explanation of vote/position and other Member States wishing to make a general statement in connection with the proposal, may do so in either of the following ways, without prejudice to the delegations' rights under the rules of procedure to explain their vote/position or the practice to allow delegations to deliver a general statement in connection with the proposal at the first plenary meeting to be held in order for the Council to take note of the decision after the cessation of the precautionary measures as soon as the circumstance allow:

- a. Option 1: Electronic versions of the statements in explanation of vote/position or general statements in connection with the draft proposal will be posted on the [e-deleGATE](#) portal, under ECOSOC announcements. Please indicate the title of the draft decision/resolution and document symbol in the subject line of the e-mail to be sent to the Economic and Social Council Affairs Branch, DGACM (Catalina De Leon, email: [leonc@un.org](mailto:leonc@un.org)).
- b. Option 2: Council members and other Member States can address their communication to the President of the Economic and Social Council (to be sent to her office as per the details in the letter), which can then be circulated in a subsequent letter from the President to all members of the Council, with a copy to all other Member States for their information. Please clearly indicate the title of the draft decision/resolution and document symbol in the subject line of the communication.

**DRAFT MINISTERIAL DECLARATION OF THE HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL  
FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT CONVENED UNDER THE  
AUSPICES OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL**

**Explanation of vote/position**

Participating States wishing to make an explanation of vote/position or a general statement in connection with the proposal, may do so in either of the following ways.

- a. Option 1: Electronic versions of the statements in explanation of vote/position or general statements in connection with the draft proposal will be posted on the [e-deleGATE](#) portal, under ECOSOC announcements. Please indicate the title of the draft decision/resolution and document symbol in the subject line of the e-mail to be sent to the Economic and Social Council Affairs Branch, DGACM (Catalina De Leon, email: [leonc@un.org](mailto:leonc@un.org)).
  
- b. Option 2: Participating States can address their communication to the President of the Economic and Social Council (to be sent to her office as per the details in the letter), which can then be circulated in a subsequent letter from the President to all participating States. Please clearly indicate the title of the draft decision/resolution and document symbol in the subject line of the communication.