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HLPF 2016 HIGHLIGHTS: MONDAY, 18 JULY 2016

Following the opening of the Ministerial Segment on Monday, participants at the 2016 meeting of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) discussed “Main messages from first HLPF week: our starting point.” This was followed by keynote speeches and panel discussions related to the meeting’s theme of “Ensuring that no one is left behind,” on: “Reaching the most vulnerable;” “Challenges of countries in special situations;” and “Unlocking means of implementation (MOI) for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and creating an enabling environment.” The general debate took place at the end of the day, with statements from Member States, country groups and stakeholders.

OPENING

Oh Joon, President, Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea, chaired this session. He highlighted the challenges of identifying and reaching those left behind and ensuring progress. He urged Member States to take the “nuggets of innovation” shared by other countries and mold them to their local contexts.

Mogens Lykketoft, President, UN General Assembly, called on Member States to fully utilize the potential of the HLPF, and urged tackling root causes of current challenges such as inequality, exclusion and youth unemployment.

UN Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson called for sharing of experiences and transformative leadership, while assuring Member States of support from the UN system.

MAIN MESSAGES FROM FIRST HLPF WEEK: OUR STARTING POINT

This session was chaired by ECOSOC President Oh. Among key outcomes from the previous week’s discussions, Jürg Lauber, Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the UN and ECOSOC Vice President, stressed the need for: strengthening national statistical institutes; reaching the most marginalized first; revitalizing the global partnership; science, technology and innovation (STI) cooperation; and the Global Sustainable Development Report 2019 to address emerging issues and bottlenecks.

Héctor Alejandro Palma Cerna, Deputy Permanent Representative of Honduras to the UN and ECOSOC Vice President, highlighted *inter alia*, the need to: generate national- and grassroots-level ownership of the SDGs; integrate the 2030 Agenda into national and subnational plans; involve local and subnational governments; involve stakeholders; address challenges of countries in special situations; work with regional forums; and ensure robust and participatory Voluntary National Reports (VNRs).

KEYNOTE SPEECHES

In a session chaired by ECOSOC President Oh, Erna Solberg, Prime Minister of Norway, said the SDGs address the root causes of the challenges faced by the world and achieving them is the most important task of our generation.

Đặng Thị Ngọc Thịnh, Vice President of Viet Nam, highlighted the need for strong political will and a shift towards an interlinked, interdependent and holistic approach to development.

REACHING THE MOST VULNERABLE

This session was also chaired by ECOSOC President Oh, and moderated by Guy Ryder, International Labour Organization.

Panelist Hugo Roger Martínez Bonilla, Minister of Foreign Affairs, El Salvador, said his country is pioneering the implementation of the 2030 Agenda by addressing inequality and vulnerability through public policy, despite many challenges.

Urging a focus on youth and migrants among those left behind, panelist Shahidul Haque, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bangladesh, highlighted the potential of financial inclusion strategies to empower these groups.

Panelist Rita Schwarzelühr-Sutter, Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety, Germany, urged social protection for those most exposed to risks and using public budgets to reduce disparities, for instance through fossil fuel subsidy reform.

Christian Friis Bach, Economic Commission for Europe, called for coupling social media and technology with the SDGs to improve monitoring.

Noting that leaving no one behind is a human rights promise, discussant Kate Gilmore, UN Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, called for broad participation and access to decision-making and disaggregation of data to find those left behind.

In the ensuing discussion, the NETHERLANDS stressed that globalization will be in peril if it does not benefit all. KENYA said the country’s constitution, revenue allocation, Vision 2030 blueprint and devolved governance help reach the most marginalized people. INDIGENOUS PEOPLES recommended including indicators on land, territory and natural resources. VIET NAM described efforts to strengthen social protection systems. BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY underlined the importance of potable water for implementing the SDGs. PANAMA highlighted the need for countries to define vulnerability and poverty, and incorporate interculturalism in social interventions.

THAILAND said a “sufficiency economy” philosophy allowed the country to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and would guide its SDG implementation. The UK noted the importance of addressing gender-, disability- and data-related challenges. MAURITIUS

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highlighted the country's Social Registry to enable targeted policy measures to ensure no one is left behind.

In closing remarks, Schwarzelühr-Sutter highlighted Germany's efforts to examine the planetary consequences of national actions. Haque said dealings with vulnerable people should be based on human rights, not charity. Bonilla called for results, not only declarations of good intentions.

CHALLENGES OF COUNTRIES IN SPECIAL SITUATIONS

This session was chaired by ECOSOC President Oh. In a keynote address, Tawakkol Abdel-Salam Karman, 2011 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, highlighted the will to implement as a key requirement for the SDGs, and said national considerations should not become a justification for not implementing the 2030 Agenda.

Moderator Gyan Chandra Acharya, High Representative for Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Land-Locked Developing Countries (LLDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS), noted the recognition of the multidimensional challenges of countries in special situations in the 2030 Agenda, while calling for coherence with the Istanbul and Vienna Programmes of Action and the SAMOA Pathway.

Álvaro García, Office of Planning and Budget of the Presidency, Uruguay, highlighted governance, indicators, allocation of funds to track results, and mechanisms for social dialogue as crucial to implementing the SDGs.

Helen Clark, UN Development Programme, called for: efforts to address the social determinants of vulnerability; support for baseline data collection; and partnerships to enable full participation by those left behind.

Dame Meg Taylor, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, urged for the definition of "fragility" to include climate impacts, and be reflected in international assistance.

Ricardo Cardona, Minister of Social Development, Honduras, highlighted his country's efforts to implement the SDGs, and noted the need for implementation of Financing for Development (FfD) commitments.

Karina Gould, Parliamentary Secretary for International Development, Canada, said Canada is refocusing its international assistance policy to reach the poorest and most vulnerable, and stressed the importance of gender equality for achieving peace, prosperity and sustainable solutions.

Shamshad Akhtar, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, outlined challenges facing many countries in Africa and the Asia-Pacific in particular, and efforts by regional commissions to address these.

In discussions, ITALY urged addressing root causes in countries in special situations to deal with the refugee crisis, and announced the country's commitment to triple its current aid budget by 2018. The MALDIVES, for the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), called for adequate focus on SIDS during HLPF discussions. THAILAND, on behalf of the G-77/China, emphasized the focus of the 2030 Agenda on eradicating poverty. ZAMBIA called for investment in transport infrastructure. CHILDREN AND YOUTH highlighted the need for reporting and monitoring. PANAMA described the recent expansion of the Panama Canal to extend its benefits to other parts of the country.

In summary, García highlighted gender mainstreaming in Uruguay's five-year budget. Clark emphasized education, access to all services and equal rights for women; and Taylor described efforts in the Pacific SIDS to empower women.

UNLOCKING MOI FOR SDGS AND CREATING AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

This session was chaired by ECOSOC Vice President Cerna, who presented the outcome of the 2016 ECOSOC FfD Forum. He said the Forum recognized the close link between the 2030 Agenda and Addis Ababa Action Agenda, and welcomed the monitoring approach recommended by the FfD Inter-Agency Task Force.

Moderator Ardalan Shekarabi, Minister for Public Administration, Sweden, asked speakers to address how financing, STI, and capacity building can be mobilized, and prospects for MOI.

Neven Mimica, European Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, called for: smarter use of overseas development assistance (ODA) with instruments tailored to local contexts; improved domestic resource mobilization by tackling tax avoidance and illicit financial flows; and promoting development effectiveness by promoting coordination.

Michelle Muschett, Vice-Minister of Social Development, Panama, said her country has adopted the 2030 Agenda through a Presidential decree, established a commission involving civil society for follow-up, and allocated responsibilities across government.

Highlighting challenges in the global macroeconomic environment, Mahmoud Mohieldin, World Bank, emphasized the importance of data, and of partnerships with the private sector and civil society to complement domestic resource mobilization and international support.

Axel Bertuch-Samuels, International Monetary Fund, outlined his organization's efforts to support the 2030 Agenda, including enhancing access to concessional resources and technical assistance for revenue reforms.

Douglas Frantz, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, said a 4% increase in bilateral aid from members to the poorest countries in 2015 was "vital, but not enough," and noted that small amounts of aid can unlock billions.

Vaughan Turekian, Science and Technology Adviser to the US Secretary of State, said scientists, innovators and engineers are integral to achieving the SDGs, and highlighted the STI Forum as an important step in involving these communities.

THAILAND, on behalf of G-77/China, called for reforms to the imbalances and discrimination of the global trade system. VIET NAM said secure financial resources are necessary for countries to achieve enabling environments for the private sector. MAURITIUS called for tailor-made MOI support for middle-income countries (MICs). NIGERIA said the voices of the poor and most vulnerable must be heard to make development sustainable. WORKERS AND TRADE UNIONS asked what tools countries will use to honor their commitments and how transparent these tools will be.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH called for a price on negative social and environmental impacts. NGOs called for raising resources from the rich instead of the poor; and said enabling environments cannot be created if environmentalists and women activists are "silenced, criminalized and murdered."

In summary, Mimica said the EU aspires to be not only the largest provider of ODA but also the best.

In the discussion, MALDIVES, on behalf of AOSIS, highlighted the importance of SDG 17 (partnerships) to SIDS. Muschett, with Turekian, highlighted the importance of involving the youth who will grow up to inherit the SDGs. She also emphasized the importance of robust data, and mechanisms to exchange experiences. Turekian emphasized investments in STI.

Frantz said the lack of data should not be an excuse for inaction. Mohieldin emphasized the benefits of domestic tax reform and the need to strengthen national statistical systems. Discussing the positive economic impacts of gender empowerment, Bertuch-Samuels urged attention to the quality of policies.

GENERAL DEBATE

ECOSOC President Oh chaired the general debate. The Permanent Representative of Thailand to the UN, on behalf of G-77/China, stressed the importance of improving coherence to support the 2030 Agenda and highlighted the sufficiency economy philosophy for fostering a sustainability mindset.

The European Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, on behalf of the EU, urged participatory decision-making at all levels, tackling gender inequality, and addressing the root causes of “irregular” migration.

The Minister of Economy, Planning and Development, Dominican Republic, for the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), highlighted the outcomes of the fourth CELAC Summit, and noted that Colombia, Mexico and Venezuela had prepared VNRs. The Foreign Secretary of Bangladesh, on behalf of the LDCs, stressed that the UN Statistical Commission has not adequately incorporated all LDC-related indicators; urged for the FfD Forum to discuss LDC issues; and called on the ECOSOC system to implement the Istanbul Programme of Action.

The Permanent Secretary of the Cabinet Office of Zambia, for LLDCs, underscored the need for coherence in implementation and follow-up of the 2030 Agenda and Vienna Programme of Action. The Speaker of the Parliament of Fiji, for the 12 Pacific SIDS, underscored the importance of scaling up climate mitigation ambition and financing for resilience, and ensuring healthy oceans.

The Permanent Representative of Tunisia to the UN, for the African Group, highlighted complementarities between the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, and the need for awareness raising and ambitious MOI to realize both Agendas.

The Deputy Permanent Representative of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, for the Caribbean Community, highlighted the region’s high debt as a challenge in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

The Minister of Sustainable Development and Wildlife, Sri Lanka, on behalf of the Group of 15, said global partnerships should be intensified to help LDCs.

The Minister of Environment and Energy, Costa Rica, on behalf of the Like-Minded Group of Supporters of MICs, called for UN inter-agency and system-wide action plans for MICs.

The Permanent Representative of Papua New Guinea to the UN, on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum, said strong institutions, domestic resource mobilization, just returns for fisheries resources and genuine partnerships are critical enablers for the SDGs.

The Minister for Sustainable Development and Wildlife, Sri Lanka, discussed his country’s legal and institutional framework for sustainable development, including formulation of sustainable development audits.

Noting the critical role of oceans for island states, the Minister of Environment and Energy, Maldives, highlighted the importance of sustainable resource use for improving livelihoods.

The Minister for Development, Strategic Projects and Cohesion, Slovenia, highlighted her country’s integrated policy framework for sustainable development and said SDGs have to be connected with local contexts.

The Minister of Sustainable Development, Economy and Promotion of Investments and Forecasting, Gabon, highlighted his country’s roadmap to implement the SDGs with a consultative process that brings together various stakeholders.

Calling the SDGs a roadmap for a just, sustainable and prosperous future, the Minister of Environment, Lithuania, stressed policy coherence and integration to achieve their full potential.

The Minister of Development and Social Inclusion, Honduras, highlighted among other issues, the need to strengthen universal peace and noted challenges faced by MICs.

The Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Devolution and Planning, Kenya, highlighted the process of integrating SDGs into Kenya’s national plans and said national capacities for statistical and geospatial information systems need to be strengthened.

Frederick Musiiwa Makamure Shava, Permanent Representative of Zimbabwe to the UN and ECOSOC Vice President, chaired the remainder of the session.

The Minister of Economy and Planning of Madagascar outlined national efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda and called for a more committed international partnership to move forward. The Minister of

Planning and International Cooperation, Guinea, said the Ebola crisis was a reminder of the need to become truly resilient, and invited more countries to contribute to post-Ebola recovery efforts.

The Vice Minister for Planning, Evaluation and Regional Development, Mexico, said the thematic clustering of SDGs for practical purposes should not be interpreted as the prioritization of one Goal over another, or a disregard for the linkages between them.

The Under-Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Land and Sea, Italy, outlined work towards renewing the country’s sustainable strategy to respond to the SDGs. The Deputy Director-General, National Economic and Development Authority, Philippines, described national efforts to conduct consultations, create a long-term vision and build SDG ownership.

The First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Georgia, highlighted commitments to: integrate new citizens; achieve gender equality; protect the rights of persons with disabilities; and end conflict leading to forced displacement. The Director of the Office of Planning and Budget, Uruguay, said the country is in the process of designing a new governance system to implement the SDGs.

The Vice Minister of Planning and Investment, Lao PDR, called on donor countries to honor their commitments for financing.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, Global Affairs, Canada, noted the country’s assistance to the poorest and most vulnerable people, and said gender equality would be at the “heart” of Canada’s international assistance strategy.

The Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Argentina, highlighted the importance of national strategies to coordinate policies and said monitoring was crucial for accountability.

The Deputy Secretary of State for International Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Hungary, identified linkages between the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda and called for an intergovernmental effort to address water issues at the political level.

The Vice Minister of Social Development, Panama, said sustainable development roadmaps need to be supported by all segments of society and called for gap analyses to identify priorities and needs.

The Deputy Director General of the Economic Planning Unit of the Office of the Prime Minister, Malaysia, highlighted the country’s 2016-2020 plan, which, he said, mirrors the multidimensionality of the SDGs. The Under-Secretary for Global Development and Cooperation, Denmark, reaffirmed his country’s commitment to the 0.7% ODA/GNI target, with 0.15-0.20% reserved for LDCs, and urged other countries to do the same.

Noting that achieving sustainable development in MICs would make a major contribution towards global development, the Deputy Head, Department of Economic Cooperation and Sustainable Development, Belarus, called for an interagency coordinating mechanism for this group.

In a number of statements, stakeholders called for, *inter alia*: a human rights-based implementation framework; presentation of VNRs three to four times before 2030; social protection floors; capacity development of developing countries through technology transfer and promoting innovation through multi-stakeholder partnerships; a focus on children; initiatives to create awareness around the impact of cheap food on the environment; increased civil society participation; family-friendly implementation of the SDGs; educating the youth to end exclusion; and the abolishment of modern slavery.

IN THE CORRIDORS

The corridors at UN Headquarters were abuzz on Monday, with Stevie Wonder visiting the ECOSOC Chamber to celebrate Madiba (Nelson Mandela) Day. In the Trusteeship Council, meanwhile, where the HLPF 2016 Ministerial Segment opened, it was clear that while the 2030 Agenda may be “signed and sealed,” it is not quite “delivered.” With the World Bank announcing a reduced global growth forecast and other fiscal constraints, several participants pondered the challenge of delivering higher ambition in the face of shrinking economies. An NGO representative wryly noted that “MOI is MIA,” (missing in action) and many seemed to be wondering if the “writings on the wall” and the “ladders ’bout to fall.”



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