

Summary of the 2022 Session of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development: 5-15 July 2022

“Dream big, speak loud” sang a children’s chorus from New York City during the Ministerial Segment of the 2022 session of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF). “And implement your commitments,” exhorted many of the civil society representatives gathered for the annual event against the backdrop of an ongoing global pandemic, geopolitical tensions and open conflicts, and climate change, to review progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

As morning newspapers during the two-week meeting were filled with stories about the Russian war in Ukraine, roll-backs in women’s rights, unprecedented heat waves, and the fall of three governments, delegates were called on to prioritize action to:

- invest in equitable vaccine access, including through license sharing to allow countries to produce vaccines and other medically important products;
• tackle the food, energy and fertilizer crises, which have emerged from the war in Ukraine;
• increase investments in social and health protections, especially for women;
• increase meaningful youth participation in decision making;
• invest in people, including through the Transforming Education Summit;
• “keep 1.5°C alive,” including by ending the addiction to fossil fuels and investing in renewable energy; and
• review access and eligibility for concessional finance for developing countries.

The first in-person meeting of the HLPF in three years reviewed five SDGs in particular: SDGs 4 (quality education), 5 (gender equality), 14 (life below water), 15 (life on land), and 17 (partnerships for the Goals). The consideration of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic across all SDGs and the integrated, indivisible, and interlinked nature of the Goals was an important underlying theme throughout the meeting. Discussions also focused specifically on the needs of developing countries, including how a long-discussed Multidimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI) might assist policy makers to incorporate risk assessments into their decision making.

Forty-four countries presented their Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) during HLPF 2022. These sessions facilitated the sharing of experiences, including successes, challenges and lessons learned.

HLPF 2022 also began planning for the second “SDG Summit,” which will be convened in September 2023 during the UN General Assembly. Member States were challenged to be “disruptive” in their planning for the session and to embrace the opportunity this Summit may present for getting back on track.

On the final afternoon, the HLPF adopted a 142-paragraph Ministerial Declaration that had been negotiated by Member States over a period of six months. One paragraph of the Declaration was subject to a vote, due to long-standing disagreements over language related to “the full realization of the right to self-determination of peoples living under colonial and foreign occupation.”

The closing statements from multiple delegations revealed the differences in approach to sustainable development. For instance, some delegations came out strongly in support of sexual and

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reproductive health and rights for women and girls, while others debated the inclusion of new language on “multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination.” Other delegations lamented the exclusion of reference to the inalienable right to development and to common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, in light of national circumstances, with one delegation highlighting opposition to text related to the role of migrants in achieving the sustainable development agenda. By-and-large, however, delegates joined the consensus on the Declaration, which is “longer than the 2030 Agenda itself,” hopeful that it will further guide the implementation of the SDGs.

HLPF 2022 convened under the auspices of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) from 5-7 and 11-15 July 2022 at UN Headquarters in New York. Several hundred side events, special events, VNR Labs, and exhibitions took place in-person and on-line during the HLPF, which was attended by six Heads of State and Government, more than 130 deputy prime-ministers, ministers, and vice-ministers, as well as other representatives from governments, intergovernmental organizations, and civil society.

A Brief History of the HLPF

The HLPF was established in July 2013 by UN General Assembly (UNGA) resolution [67/290](#) as the main forum for sustainable development issues within the UN. The HLPF is one of the main outcomes of the 2012 UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) and replaced the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), which was established at the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development (Earth Summit). The UNGA resolution calls on the HLPF to meet under the auspices of ECOSOC every year, and under the auspices of the UNGA every four years, to:

- provide political leadership, guidance, and recommendations for sustainable development;
- follow up and review progress in the implementation of sustainable development commitments;
- enhance the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development; and
- have a focused, dynamic, and action-oriented agenda, ensuring the appropriate consideration of new and emerging sustainable development challenges.

In September 2015, the UN Sustainable Development Summit adopted “Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,” a package that includes the 17 SDGs, 169 targets, and a framework for follow-up and review of implementation. The 2030 Agenda called on the HLPF to take a central role in the follow-up and review process at the global level, and to carry out voluntary, state-led national reviews.

Key Turning Points

Early Sessions of the HLPF: The one-day inaugural session of the HLPF, on 24 September 2013, was held under the auspices of the UNGA and followed the closing session of the CSD. Heads of State and Government articulated a number of concrete proposals on the role of the HLPF, saying it should include stakeholders, emphasize accountability, review the post-2015 development agenda and the implementation of the SDGs, and examine issues from scientific and local perspectives. There was general agreement on the need for a genuine balance between the three dimensions of sustainable development, and for the HLPF to seek to integrate these dimensions throughout the UN system.

The 2014 and 2015 sessions focused on overcoming gaps in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the potential role of the post-2015 HLPF in implementation and review, respectively.

2016 HLPF Session: The fourth session of the HLPF (11-20 July 2016) was the first to take place after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda. It was also the first session that included VNRs, and 22 countries shared their experiences with the 2030 Agenda. This session was also the first where elements of the Ministerial Declaration were put to a vote. A controversial paragraph relating to the Paris Agreement on climate change remained intact following the vote.

2017 HLPF Session: In-depth reviews of the SDGs were initiated at this session (10-19 July 2017), focusing on six goals: SDG 1 (no poverty); SDG 2 (zero hunger); SDG 3 (good health and well-being); SDG 5 (gender equality); SDG 9 (industry, innovation, and infrastructure); and SDG 14 (life below water). SDG 17 (partnerships) was also reviewed and would be reviewed annually during this first cycle. Forty-three countries presented VNRs. Two elements of the Ministerial Declaration—relating to occupied territories and the multilateral trade system—were put to a vote. While the Declaration was adopted with both paragraphs receiving overwhelming support, a number of countries abstained from voting, protesting that the voting process itself diluted a strong political signal from the HLPF.

2018 HLPF Session: This session (9-18 July 2018) focused on the theme of “Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies.” Five goals were reviewed in addition to SDG 17: SDG 6 (clean water and sanitation); SDG 7 (affordable and clean energy); SDG 11 (sustainable cities and communities); SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production); and SDG 15 (life on land). Forty-six countries presented VNRs. A Ministerial Declaration was adopted, following a vote on the text as a whole, and specifically on means of implementation and global partnerships, peace and security, and gender equality.

2019 HLPF Session: This session (9-19 July 2019) completed the first four-year cycle of the HLPF. The key message from the meeting was that the global response to implementing the SDGs had not been ambitious enough, and renewed commitment and accelerated action was needed to deliver the SDGs in time. The session focused on the theme of “Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality.” Five SDGs were reviewed in addition to SDG 17: SDG 4 (quality education); SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth); SDG 10 (reduced inequalities); SDG 13 (climate action); and SDG 16 (peace, justice, and strong institutions). VNRs were presented by 47 countries during the Ministerial Segment, with seven countries presenting for the second time.

SDG Summit: The SDG Summit (24-25 September 2019) was the first HLPF session to convene under the auspices of the UNGA since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda. Heads of State and Government reviewed progress in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its 17 SDGs, with just over a decade left before the target date of 2030. The Summit featured six “leaders dialogues” on: megatrends impacting the achievement of the SDGs; accelerating the achievement of the SDGs: critical entry points; measures to leverage progress across the SDGs; localizing the SDGs; partnerships for sustainable development; and the 2020-2030 vision. A political declaration was adopted during the opening segment, on “Gearing up for a decade of action and delivery for sustainable

development: Political declaration of the Sustainable Development Goals Summit.”

2020 HLPF Session: This meeting was originally intended to initiate a new four-year cycle to review SDG implementation and assess progress towards achieving the 2030 Agenda. Instead, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the meeting was held virtually, and the agenda focused on the impact of the pandemic and how to “build back better.” Forty-seven countries presented VNRs, with 26 presenting for the first time. The meeting ended without the adoption of a ministerial declaration, due to lack of consensus and lack of voting procedures for a virtual meeting.

2021 HLPF Session: This session took place in a hybrid format and focused on the theme of “Sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic that promotes the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development: Building an inclusive and effective path for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda in the context of the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development.” To that end, the Forum reviewed progress on nine SDGs:

- SDG 1: No poverty
- SDG 2: Zero hunger
- SDG 3: Good health and well-being
- SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth
- SDG 10: Reduced inequalities
- SDG 12: Responsible consumption and production
- SDG 13: Climate action
- SDG 16: Peace, justice and strong institutions
- SDG 17: Partnerships

During the second week of the meeting, 44 countries presented VNRs, including 10 first timers, 24 second timers, and 10 third timers.

HLPF 2022 Report

ECOSOC President Collen Vixen Kelapile opened HLPF 2022 on Tuesday, 5 July, noting the COVID-19 pandemic has slowed down 2030 Agenda implementation and reversed progress on many SDGs but noted that the pandemic had served as a “wake-up call” to tackle fundamental problems facing societies. He highlighted the opportunity to build back better using the 2030 Agenda as a blueprint for recovery.

Amina J. Mohammed, UN Deputy Secretary-General, summarized main messages from the VNRs, noting many countries have begun to introduce innovative policies to build back better, including through debt moratoria, national resilience plans, strengthened social protection measures, and expansion of the digital economy, emphasizing the need for “deep transitions” to get back on track.

Noting that an additional USD 3.5 trillion is required for climate action in emerging and developing country economies by 2030, Nicholas Stern, London School of Economics, prioritized strong policies to incentivize investment, official development assistance (ODA), private sector financing, and tripling financing from multilateral development banks.

Stressing the importance of coordination, Suriya Chindawongse, ECOSOC Vice President, called for equity and empowerment, sustainability and synergy, a balance between people and planet, and a harmonized UN architecture to achieve the mutually reinforcing SDGs.

Highlighting the current global food and supply chain crises, the COVID-19 pandemic and the conflict in Ukraine, Qu Dongyu, Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO), underlined the need to implement a sustainable agro-food system, which can be supported by the UN Food Systems Coordination Hub.

Mari Pangestu, Managing Director of Development Policy and Partnerships, World Bank Group, reiterated the Bank’s commitment to green and blue development, including through the reduction of fisheries subsidies and the negotiation of a global instrument on plastic pollution.

Kaylash Satiyarti, SDG Advocate and 2014 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, India, condemned the increase in child laborers and the loss of access to education by children in sub-Saharan Africa, and called for increased financing for social protection, teachers, and school feeding programmes.

Valentina Munoz Rabanal, SDG Advocate and youth feminist advocate, Chile, noted women’s rights are routinely reversed in times of crises, and condemned the recent US Supreme Court repeal of access to abortion. She noted that reproductive freedom is prescribed by SDG 3 (good health and well-being).

During the opening session, delegates also adopted the agenda (E/HLPF/2022/1) and watched the music video of K-pop band aespa’s song “Next Level.”

Building Back Better and Advancing the SDGs

The theme for the HLPF session was introduced during a high-level discussion on Tuesday, 5 July. Liu Zhenmin, UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, presented the Secretary-General’s report on SDG progress (E/2022/55). He emphasized the need to: address vaccine inequality; prioritize low-carbon recovery; reform the international financial and debt architecture; renew the social contract between governments and their people to deliver global public goods; and generate and use robust data.

Opening the town hall discussion, moderator Nikhil Seth, Executive Director, UN Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), invited participants to focus on solutions to enable recovery from the pandemic. Speakers highlighted: developing countries have disproportionately borne the brunt of recent global challenges such as COVID-19, energy and food crises, and increasing debt levels; links between the SDGs and migration policy, education, employment protections, and health care; the importance of high-quality disaggregated data and increased access to contraception and comprehensive sexual education; and the human-animal interface and the need to prevent proliferation of zoonotic diseases.

A speaker recommended focusing on increasing trust between governments and young people, including through co-owned and co-created national youth strategies.

A more detailed summary is available at enb.iisd.org/high-level-political-forum-hlpf-2022-daily-report-5jul2022

SDGs in Focus

SDG 4 - Quality Education: On [Wednesday, 6 July](#), delegates discussed SDG 4. ECOSOC Vice President Diego Pary Rodríguez chaired this session and highlighted it would feed into the Transforming Education Summit taking place in September 2022. Leonardo Garnier, UN Secretary-General’s Special Adviser for the

Transforming Education Summit, emphasized we need to ignite a movement to transform education into a true human right for all.

The UN Statistics Division reviewed SDG 4 highlights from the [Sustainable Development Goals Report 2022](#), which the UN Statistics Division launched on 7 July 2022. Presentations on innovations on education featured in Antigua and Barbuda and Georgia's VNRs were also presented.

In the ensuing panel discussion, speakers highlighted the need to:

- reopen schools, renew the world's commitment to education, and invest in education, recovery and resilience;
- reach every child and keep them in school, scale up learning assessments at national and regional levels, and support children's physical and emotional well-being;
- create a "new deal" for teachers and students, which includes ensuring decent working conditions, labor rights, and decent pay for teachers, and involve teachers in policy decisions through social dialogue;
- ensure education at tertiary and vocational levels are fit for purpose;
- ensure that schools value the knowledge children in poverty have learned from their families;
- consider marginalized groups, including girls, street children, and Indigenous Peoples, in education; and
- invest in robust tax systems and combat corruption to fund education.

Participants highlighted: the importance of equitable access to inclusive education for achieving all SDGs, and Sierra Leone's 22% budgetary allocation to education; the experience of Finland with free school meals as a driver for equality and its commitment to replicate this practice globally by 2030; and recent legislative reform to improve equitable access to education in Madagascar. The need to recover from the learning losses caused by COVID-19 and the importance of education for sustainable development (ESD) at all levels of education was stressed.

Other delegates shared actions related to the promotion of nuclear science and technology; teacher training for early childhood development; inclusive education, particularly for minority communities; digital and green education programmes; and education as a public good. Delegates also highlighted the importance of hardwiring gender equity throughout education systems and curricula; youth engagement in education policy planning; closing the public-private education gap; and addressing education as a human right.

Delegates further highlighted: increased digitalization of education due to school closures; the value of municipal-level partnerships for ESD; shifting emphasis from memory-oriented education to research skills and creativity; the impacts of war on equitable and safe education in Ukraine; and the work of the Geneva Global Hub for Education in Emergencies. They also noted the need for innovative financing for education such as public-private partnerships and development bonds, and the provision of adequate training for users of digital technology.

Delegates further shared progress towards SDG 4 in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, with some concerned that setbacks would be hard to overcome due to digital divides that mostly hit low-income students and learners with disabilities. They stressed the need to invest in teachers, remove barriers to education, and engage stakeholders, including children, when developing policy solutions.

They looked forward to the Transforming Education Summit as an opportunity to foster progress towards SDG 4.

SDG 5 - Gender Equality: On [Thursday, 7 July](#), delegates discussed SDG 5. HRH Princess Dina Mired of Jordan said women are bearing the brunt of the COVID-19 pandemic and face increased levels of domestic violence.

Denis Mukwege, 2018 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, Democratic Republic of the Congo, highlighted fragile progress towards gender equality and recent setbacks for women's rights. He called on governments to invest in policies and grassroots organizations and use the legislative toolbox from the G7 Gender Equality Advisory Council report, which is based on four pillars: ending gender-based violence; education and health for all; promoting economic empowerment; and complete equality between men and women in public policy.

Delegates heard highlights from the *Sustainable Development Goals Report 2022* on progress towards SDG 5, which includes that 641 million women have been subjected to physical and/or sexual violence by a known partner and women made up nearly 45% of global employment losses in 2020.

In the ensuing panel discussion, speakers highlighted the need to:

- change social and cultural norms to allow women to work and combat gender-based violence globally;
- fully engage men in promoting gender equality;
- adopt systems of non-stigmatizing care for victims of gender-based violence, that takes into account health, legal, and economic assistance;
- respect and uphold the legal frameworks enshrining sexual and reproductive health and rights;
- compensate unpaid care and domestic work to strengthen women's economic power;
- ensure strong legislation to promote women's rights, as well as protecting those working to secure them; and
- ensure national-level gender budgeting, address the digital gender divide, and ensure energy access for women.

Initiatives by entrepreneurs to support women and girls were also shared, including: training women in self-defense in Nepal; portable ultrasound technology to ensure safer child-bearing procedures in Uganda; and a digital marketing platform for women in Zimbabwe. The Spotlight Initiative, an EU-UN partnership that has provided support to over 1.6 million women and girls affected by gender-based violence, was also noted.

Delegates highlighted: the "exodus" of women from the workforce due to the pandemic; EU legislation that has brought more active involvement of fathers in parenting; a Central American regional coalition to tackle trafficking of people; and the need to ratify International Labour Organization Convention No. 190 on Eliminating Violence and Harassment in the World of Work. The Holy See called on delegates to "cherish" women's role in the family and expressed regret at the "overemphasis" of sexual and reproductive health in the discourse on women's empowerment.

Delegates emphasized the need for gender mainstreaming, supporting LGBTQI+ rights and preventing hate speech online and offline, gender-responsive budgeting, and ensuring women's representation on all levels of governance. They also stressed the need to ensure reproductive rights, including access to contraception and abortion, highlighted an opportunity to tackle food insecurity

through advancing equality for women farmers, and acknowledged threats to women's rights resulting from Russia's war in Ukraine.

Many countries highlighted domestic initiatives to promote gender rights. Participants warned against weaponization of tradition, religion, and culture that undermines women's rights, and described the negative impacts of war and displacement on women and girls. They also: highlighted the need for disaggregated data and better data management; noted the value of childcare centers to enable women to participate in the workforce; supported women's economic empowerment and universal basic education; and called for progress on SDG 5 to be considered at every HLPF session.

SDG 14 – Life Below Water: On [Thursday, 7 July](#), delegates discussed SDG 14. Sylvia Earle, Marine Biologist and Explorer-in-Residence, National Geographic Society, emphasized that we must work to build back and maintain the ocean's biogeochemical balance, underscoring that the ocean sustains all life on Earth.

Angela Paolini Ellard, Deputy Director-General, World Trade Organization (WTO), urged WTO Member States to deposit their instruments of acceptance on the recently-agreed legally binding agreement to curb fisheries subsidies.

Delegates heard highlights from the *Sustainable Development Goals Report 2022* on progress towards SDG 14, which notes the main sources of marine pollution are land-based and outlines the link between acidification and growing inability of the ocean to mitigate climate change.

In the panel discussion, speakers highlighted:

- a change in narrative and growing awareness and financing for the ocean;
- the coherent work of all agencies working on the ocean, and the importance of engaging youth in decision-making for the ocean;
- the growing role of private philanthropy in ocean protection;
- work by the regional economic commissions on addressing land-sea interactions such as pollution, and promoting financing solutions such as blue bonds, to support the blue economy;
- the critical importance of ocean science for achieving all the SDGs; and
- SDG 14 receives the lowest level of financing among all SDGs.

They also noted the value of: introducing blue bonds; innovative solutions proposed by youth; interdisciplinary ocean science; cooperation; further expanding observation systems; and exploiting digital opportunities like using virtual reality to generate “digital twins of the ocean.” They called for: integrated planning; restoring fish stocks; building sustainable enterprises and sharing benefits with Indigenous Peoples and local communities; and using funding strategically while streamlining and simplifying funding processes.

Participants highlighted: Norway's commitments to sustainable management of oceans by 2025; the importance of enhanced cooperation at all levels; investments in innovative technologies such as plant-based fish; the FAO's Blue Transformation programme; the efforts of the High Ambition Coalition towards a treaty on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ); over 400 commitments made at the Our Ocean Conference in April 2022; and that USD 1 invested in the ocean can generate USD 5 in social, health, and environmental benefits.

Delegates also discussed, among other issues: the police brutality faced by young ocean defenders; the need for technical and financial assistance and capacity building for developing countries to address ocean challenges, including climate change, biodiversity loss, and

plastic pollution; the importance of decent jobs in the transition to blue and green economies; and the need to implement the human right to a healthy environment.

Several other initiatives to protect oceans were also mentioned, including: the International Atomic Energy Agency's Nuclear Technology initiative for controlling plastic pollution and its Ocean Acidification International Coordination Centre; the collaborative Blue Belt initiative; and the Declaration for the enhancement of marine scientific knowledge, research capacity and transfer of marine technology to small island developing states (SIDS), launched by the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS).

In closing, panelists emphasized the need to: build on political momentum after the June 2022 UN Ocean Conference; fill data gaps; leverage technology; engage local communities; forge multi-stakeholder partnerships; and ensure adequate financing. They also emphasized the importance of science and knowledge sharing to protect the ocean, including through: improving ocean literacy; investing in science; directing science towards sustainable ocean management; investing in science-based marine spatial planning; knowledge exchanges between different regions, including through learning lessons from the Global South; and involving youth through the Early Career Ocean Professional Network Programme.

SDG 15 – Life on Land: On [Monday, 11 July](#), delegates heard highlights from the UN Secretary-General's report on progress towards SDG 15. It was noted that world forest cover continues to shrink globally, with high losses in Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa in particular, and with approximately 40,000 documented species at risk of extinction. It was also noted that agricultural expansion is driving almost 90% of global deforestation.

Panelists highlighted the need:

- to re-discover our place and responsibility in nature to achieve the SDGs;
- for the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP 15) to deliver accountability, monitoring, and means of implementation, and re-direct public financing to support, rather than harm, nature;
- to address bureaucracy so funds can reach developing countries more quickly;
- to end persecution of environmental defenders;
- for a transformative push to ensure public spending is aligned with the SDGs, including by shifting to nature-based solutions, green and blue bonds, as well as carbon credits, removing subsidies for activities that contribute to biodiversity loss, fostering an understanding of the nature-health nexus, and encouraging stakeholder engagement;
- for a paradigm shift from an extractive to a regenerative economy that places value on ecosystem services to ensure their protection by markets in a way that benefits stewards; and
- to move from a siloed to an integrated approach to ensure implementation of the UN Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030 and the 2030 Agenda.

Delegates also considered the need to: take a systematic approach, aligned with the CBD and other instruments; achieve Aichi Biodiversity Target 11 on the designation of protected areas; implement a whole-of-society approach to nature-based solutions; criminalize ecocide; agree on a new, ambitious global biodiversity framework at CBD COP 15, including finances to support it; and implement the Regional Agreement on Access to Information,

Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean (Escazu Agreement).

They also considered measures to address: biodiversity loss due to climate change and land-use and land-use change; the links between the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the SDGs; women's effective participation in the 2030 Agenda; and sustainable consumption and production (SCP) to address the triple planetary threat. Some also welcomed the establishment of a global dialogue on SCP.

In their interventions, delegates emphasized the need for predictable and accessible financing and an inclusive and equitable pro-poor approach in the pursuit of SDG 15, and the danger invasive alien species, land degradation, and mismanagement of waste pose for forests.

Delegates then presented achievements and ongoing activities in reforestation. They stressed the importance of: political commitments, law enforcement, and financing; inclusive growth for all; creating jobs while reversing the trend towards growing informality in the labor sector; and preventing exploitation of natural resources by markets. They also emphasized the need to: consider the interconnectedness of all SDGs; recognize Indigenous Peoples' rights to land; and increase climate investments in local communities. They noted environmental losses and adverse health effects resulting from Russia's war in Ukraine.

SDG 17 – Partnerships for the Goals: On [Monday, 5 July](#), delegates discussed SDG 17.

Financing a Robust Crisis Response and Investing in the SDGs: Calling the borrowing terms facing many developing countries “unworkable,” Jeffrey Sachs, Director, Center for Sustainable Development, Columbia University, called for: negotiated peace between Russia and Ukraine, truly global cooperation to end the pandemic, and a dramatic increase in ODA.

Vera Songwe, Executive Secretary, UN Economic Commission for Africa, called for: issuing new Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) as well as delivering on existing SDR promises; improving the Common Framework for Debt Treatment beyond the Debt Service Suspension Initiative; and ensuring voluntary carbon markets support Africa's just transition.

In an overview of the findings of the *Sustainable Development Goals Report 2022* on SDG 17, Yongyi Min, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, noted the pandemic has added to the debt burdens of low- and middle-income countries.

In the panel discussion, speakers highlighted: the difficulty in securing private finance for sustainable development; the importance of strong institutions for the mobilization of concessionary financing; the need for a strong policy framework to incentivize SDG investment; and the need to use multilateral and national development banks to leverage private capital. Speakers also stressed the need to: create decent jobs, formalize the care economy, and negotiate an international legally binding instrument to facilitate cooperation on taxation.

Mobilizing and Sharing Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) for an SDG Driven Recovery: Ambassador Kennedy Gastorn, Tanzania, Co-Chair of the 2022 STI Forum, highlighted recommendations from the Forum, including: improving international cooperation to facilitate benefit-sharing and data access; demonetizing knowledge generation; and increasing solidarity to bridge the digital divide.

Speakers noted, *inter alia*:

- the need for international STI collaboration to go beyond voluntary declarations and become a fundamental part of trade, investment, and intellectual property agreements to ensure enforcement;
- the importance of improving public trust in the scientific method and bridging the digital divide through digital governance, public financing, and digital sovereignty;
- the use of biotechnology to address the pandemic and provide climate solutions, and the need to ensure inclusion of marginalized group in biotechnology development and use;
- the work of the Monitoring for Information and Decisions using Space Technology project;
- the new technology toolbox to advance the SDGs;
- the role of Indigenous knowledge in the STI discussion; and
- the Global Development Initiative's work on STI.

They also stressed the need for: a portfolio of technology solutions to address all the SDGs; ensuring relevant technology reaches traditionally excluded groups; including grassroots groups in the development of STI policies; corporate social responsibility; and government spending on high quality science and technology.

Capacity Development and Partnerships to Maximize the Benefits of Science, Technology and Knowledge for Sustainable Development: Jan Beagle, Director-General, International Development Law Organization, highlighted the role of the rule of law in promoting equality and certainty; setting transparent framework for emerging areas like artificial intelligence and e-governance; and empowering historically marginalized groups.

During a fireside chat, speakers touched on the role of public-private partnerships in relieving SDG financing pressures and the importance of engaging other stakeholders, especially youth; benefits of new technologies like machine learning; the importance of an ecosystem approach that accounts for interconnectedness of the Goals; and the need to improve access to education.

Voluntary National Reviews

Forty-four countries presented their VNRs during the second week: 11 for the first time, 28 for the second time, three for the third time, and two for the fourth time. The summaries are listed in the order presented.

Monday, 11 July: TOGO: Simféitchéou Pré, Minister and Advisor to the President, introduced a video summarizing the country's VNR. In a video address, Prime Minister Victoire Tomegah Dogbé highlighted key areas Togo has invested in, including: strengthening the digital economy (SDG 9); improving access to education (SDG 4); gender equality, including through the African Women Programme of Excellence (SDG 5); cash transfers to the most vulnerable during COVID-19; public-private partnerships (SDG 17); the blue economy (SDG 14); and a national reforestation programme (SDG 15). She noted terrorism as a challenge to the country's sustainable development.

URUGUAY: Isaac Alfie, Director of the Office of Planning and Budget, highlighted a vaccination rate of 80% (SDG 3); investments in educational platforms and women's employment and professional development (SDGs 4 and 5); the integration of climate change considerations in economic policies and public financing planning (SDG 13); efforts to electrify public transport; the establishment of a local network to promote alignment of businesses with the SDGs; and two major programmes to increase financing for ecosystem protection (SDG 15).

A more detailed summary is available at enb.iisd.org/high-level-political-forum-hlpf-2022-daily-report-11jul2022

Tuesday, 12 July: LATVIA: Anita Muižniece, Minister of Education and Science, noted the country's greatest challenge lies in reducing income inequality and addressing the gender pay gap. She highlighted progress in knowledge, skills and education (SDG 4); civil society organization (CSO) and youth engagement (SDG 17); sustainable finance for biodiversity (SDG 15); and the transformative power of museums and libraries for sustainability and peace (SDG 16).

PHILIPPINES: Enrique Austria Manalo, Secretary of Foreign Affairs, highlighted the country's focus on innovation for sustainable development. He noted progress in addressing SDGs 14 (life below water) and 15 (life on land), with an increase in protected areas in the ocean and on land, but said the pandemic has caused a reversal on education (SDG 4). He also highlighted progress on private sector engagement.

SWITZERLAND: Jacques Ducrest, State Secretary and Delegate, Federal Council for the 2030 Agenda, highlighted efforts to digitize and thus democratize the country's VNR process. He noted the need for further progress on SCP (SDG 12), especially related to energy consumption, and on addressing inequality (SDG 10), particularly related to the gender pay gap and migrants.

ARGENTINA: Marisol Merquel, President of the National Council for the Coordination of Social Policies, highlighted CSO engagement and a strengthened healthcare system as a response to the pandemic (SDG 3) and reported on SDG alignment with national strategies to promote production and human well-being and eradicate poverty (SDG 1). She highlighted redistribution of wealth and tackling inequality among remaining challenges.

GHANA: George Gyan-Baffour, Chairman of the National Development Planning Commission, reported on the country's inclusive VNR preparation process and the recovery of school enrollment rates after pandemic restrictions were eased. He showcased improvement in gender parity in schools and decision-making bodies (SDG 5), as well as efforts on deforestation and combatting illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing (SDG 14 and 15). He also stressed digitalization and strengthened partnerships as a way to ensure social inclusion and equality and improve data (SDG 17).

THE GAMBIA: Fatou Kinteh, Minister for Gender, Children and Social Welfare, noted gains in the achievement of: SDG 4, including early childhood development and access to education centers; SDG 5, through the creation of her ministry; SDG 14, through the control of IUU fishing, among others; and SDG 17, through an increase in remittances. She noted challenges in achieving SDG 15, related to forest cover loss.

BELARUS: Irina Velichko, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said that despite international sanctions, progress has been observed on SDG 4, including an increase in digital upskilling, and on SDG 5, with women involved in decision making. She noted the country is promoting the Baltic and Black Seas' health (SDG 14); highlighted its rank in the top 10 most forested countries in Europe (SDG 15); and called for international cooperation (SDG 17) to ensure the non-politicization of SDG implementation.

ESWATINI: Sifiso Gabriel Mamba, Chief Economist, said challenges in achieving the SDGs include: the lack of resources for implementation and data for annual reviews; declining official development assistance; a lack of private sector involvement; youth

unemployment; and an absence of regional- and constituency-level SDG plans.

GREECE: Akis Skertsos, Minister of State Responsible for the Coordination of Government Policies, highlighted the journey Greece has made since 2010, having lost 26% of its GDP. He said the governance model adopted in 2019 involves robust monitoring, review, and evaluation of public policies, and linked this to: reductions in income inequality (SDG 1) and school dropout rates (SDG 4) and increases in women's leadership and renewable energy deployment (SDG 5).

MALI: Abdoulaye Diop, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, highlighted efforts to, *inter alia*: promote synergies to improve access to and quality of education (SDG 4); support gender equality including by addressing gender-based violence (SDG 5); and increase tax revenues through changes to international fund transfers.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES: Abdulla Nasser Lootah, Director-General of the Prime Minister's Office and Vice Chairperson of the National Committee on SDGs, highlighted the UAE's investments in education and gender equality, its net-zero-emissions-by-2050 plan, and an innovative system for monitoring SDG progress, as well as multi-stakeholder involvement in SDG implementation.

ERITREA: Sofia Tesfamariam, Permanent Representative of Eritrea to the UN, shared progress towards SDG 3 (health) and SDG 13 (climate action). She stressed that Eritrea has improved numerous health indicators, including life expectancy, infant mortality, proximity to healthcare facilities, and vaccination rates. She reported on efforts to eliminate malaria and a successful COVID-19 response. She also highlighted a participatory afforestation campaign and transition to renewable energy, stressing that statistics and data remain a challenge.

A more detailed summary is available at enb.iisd.org/high-level-political-forum-hlpf-2022-daily-report-12jul2022

Wednesday, 13 July: EL SALVADOR: Vice-President Félix Ulloa underscored the government's work to address security challenges (SDG 16), including bringing down the homicide rate. He also highlighted actions to decrease the infant and maternal mortality rate (SDG 3), address food security (SDG 2) through a master plan for agricultural development, and encourage participation in SDG implementation through a digital monitoring platform for SDG indicators.

SÃO TOMÉ AND PRÍNCIPE: Edite Ramos da Costa Tenjua, Minister of Foreign Affairs, noted progress on: a decrease in poverty (SDG 1); a decrease in childhood malnutrition (SDG 2); a drop in infant and maternal mortality and in malaria and HIV rates (SDG 3); improved literacy rates and class attendance (SDG 4); gender parity in basic education (SDG 5); improved access to clean water (SDG 6); increased access to electricity (SDG 7); and the country's blue economy transition strategy (SDG 14). However, she noted climate-related challenges (SDG 13) hampering growth in certain sectors including agriculture and mobility.

SOMALIA: Sharmarke Farah, Director General, National Bureau of Statistics, drew attention to gains in achieving: a decrease in maternal mortality (SDG 3); the revival of the education sector (SDG 4); increased access to clean water and enhancing sanitation (SDG 6); and an increase in internet access towards industrialization (SDG 9). He drew attention to challenges related to: "marginal food insecurity" affecting more than 70% of the population (SDG 2); a

decrease in energy access (SDG 7); and floods, droughts, and locust invasions as a result of climate change (SDG 13).

DOMINICA: Vince Henderson, Minister for Planning, Economic Development, Climate Resilience, Sustainable Development and Renewable Energy, stressed the alignment of the country's climate resilience and recovery plan 2020-2030 with the SDGs and a goal of becoming "the golden standard" for SIDS climate resilience and disaster risk management (SDG 13). He said Dominica is on track to achieve all SDGs and cited the unfair financial global system as a challenge.

DJIBOUTI: Mahmoud Ali Youssouf, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, outlined actions to achieve SDG 14 (life below water) and SDG 15 (life on land), including the designation of 83,000 hectares as marine protected areas (MPAs). On education (SDG 4), he shared an 89% school attendance rate and noted a reduction of female genital mutilation (FGM) (SDG 5). He called for investment (SDG 17) to diversify the economy and promote post-pandemic recovery.

SURINAME: Albert Ramdin, Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Business and International Cooperation, highlighted investment in education infrastructure (SDG 4); noted the challenges of being a highly indebted country (SDG 8), linking this to 35% youth unemployment; shared various national plans related to climate change (SDG 13) including its journey to REDD+ Readiness; and called for reform to enable high middle-income countries to access concessional financing (SDG 17).

EQUATORIAL GUINEA: Ricardo Nsue Ndemessogo Obono, Director General, National Institute of Statistics, highlighted, *inter alia*, progress on improving equality (SDG 10), including through programmes for: women entrepreneurs; assisting persons with disabilities; and promoting equity among children. He also noted its national food security programme (SDG 2); strategies against malaria and sexually transmitted infections and for preventing HIV (SDG 3); the country's involvement in the Central Africa Forestry Initiative (SDG 15); and an inclusive VNR process that brought together different stakeholders. He emphasized a need for further progress on social protection, education, and health, among other issues.

TUVALU: Samuelu Laloni, Permanent Representative of Tuvalu to the UN, noted many alignments between the country's development plan and the 2030 Agenda, and highlighted the country's focus on upholding its culture and values. Among challenges, the country highlighted: climate change (SDG 13), a lack of doctors and nurses both generally and during the pandemic (SDG 3), and lack of educational resources and qualified teachers (SDG 4). Laloni called on countries to: invest in disaster risk reduction as part of climate adaptation, support the right to a clean and healthy environment; and support Vanuatu's initiative to seek an advisory opinion on climate change at the International Court of Justice.

A more detailed summary is available at enb.iisd.org/high-level-political-forum-hlpf-2022-daily-report-13jul2022

Thursday, 14 July: **GUINEA-BISSAU:** Jose Carlos Casimiro Varela, Minister of Economy, Planning and Regional Integration, reported that although the country's poverty rate had dropped to under 70% (SDG 1), challenges remain including unemployment and the need to support people with disabilities (SDG 8). He noted a decrease in maternal and infant mortality (SDG 3), highlighted the country is planning to increase the education budget (SDG 4), and lamented weak implementation of laws on FGM and gender-

based violence and trafficking (SDG 5). He shared improvements in sustainable fishing (SDG 14) and said the country would enact ecosystem protection laws (SDG 15).

GABON: Nicole Jeanine Lydie Roboty Mbou, Minister of Economy and Recovery, outlined gender parity in primary school attendance, improved school infrastructure, and an 84% literacy rate (SDG 4). She noted a drop in gender-based violence and highlighted 34% of women in government (SDG 5). She said the country has designated 67% MPAs (SDG 14) and has seen improved forest cover (SDG 15). She lamented a drop in remittances and foreign investment but said 55% of the budget is financed by national taxes (SDG 17).

NETHERLANDS: Liesje Schreinemacher, Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation, highlighted the country's leadership, within the EU, on SDGs 1 (no poverty) and 8 (decent work and economic growth). Silveria Elfriedad, Prime Minister of Sint Maarten, for the three Caribbean countries of the Netherlands, highlighted climate change (SDG 13) as an overarching concern, limited resources, and promotion of more sustainable tourism (SDG 8) and citizens' equitable development (SDG 10). Sarah Oey, the Netherlands' UN Youth Representative on Sustainable Development, drew attention to: how the student debt and housing crises are affecting young people (SDG 10); the Netherlands' highest rate of biodiversity loss in the EU (SDG 15); a need to change its food system (SDG 2); and the need to involve youth in policymaking.

GRENADA: Roxie McLeish-Hutchinson, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, outlined advancements in quality of education (SDG 4) and gender equality, including women in leadership (SDG 5), and lamented the country's high unemployment rate (SDG 8). She shared the country's emissions reductions plans to address climate change (SDG 13); highlighted Grenada's integrated coastal zone management plan (SDG 14); and called for operationalizing the MVI (SDG 17).

ANDORRA: Maria Ubach Font, Minister of Foreign Affairs, stressed that climate change and youth empowerment are among Andorrans' main concerns, and highlighted a digital tool to measure progress towards the SDGs. A local authority representative focused on stakeholder engagement, sustainable tourism, responsible consumption and production (SDG 12), and controlled sustainable urban development (SDG 11).

CÔTE D'IVOIRE: Nialé Kaba, Minister of Planning and Development, highlighted economic transformation and the goal of becoming an upper middle-income country. She stressed progress including improvements in literacy rates and school enrollment (SDG 4); platforms to fight gender-based violence, including FGM, and women's representation (SDG 5); designation of MPAs and combatting illegal fishing (SDG 14); reforestation (SDG 15); and stronger partnerships (SDG 17).

ETHIOPIA: Fitsum Assefa Adela, Minister of Planning and Development, highlighted declines in poverty and malnutrition (SDG 1 and 2); a strengthened health sector (SDG 3); improved school enrollment (SDG 4); increased women's participation and gender equality (SDG 5); and progress on clean water and sanitation (SDG 6). She also noted efforts to plant 20 billion trees by 2022, with 18 billion planted so far (SDG 15).

JORDAN: Nasser Shraideh, Minister of Planning and International Cooperation, called for renewed global partnerships and investment in human capital. He noted progress on education completion rates (SDG 4); an increase in agriculture productivity

and Jordan's goal of becoming a regional food security hub (SDG 2); almost universal access to clean water (SDG 6); achievement of a 20% share of renewable energy (SDG 7); establishment of MPAs (SDG 14); and decreases in gender-based violence and a reduced gender pay gap (SDG 5).

KAZAKHSTAN: Alibek Kuantyrov, Minister of National Economy, showcased a national system of 262 SDG indicators and a regional knowledge-sharing platform for SDGs, and noted an increase in sustainable financing and establishment of an international development agency (SDG 17). He also highlighted: Kazakhstan's own COVID-19 vaccine, QazVac (SDG 3); social support to families; abolition of the list of professions prohibited for women (SDG 5); increased salaries for educators (SDG 4); and afforestation and conservation measures (SDG 15).

SUDAN: Gibril Ibrahim Mohamed, Minister of Finance and Economic Planning, said over one million students are in school, with near gender parity (SDG 4); and highlighted the criminalization of FGM and legislation to combat human trafficking and gender-based violence (SDG 5). He noted three of the country's MPAs are part of the UNESCO biosphere reserves (SDG 14). He underlined the need for external financing, including Special Drawing Rights, for SDG implementation (SDG 17). He also emphasized the implementation of the Juba Peace Agreement to ensure peace and security in the region (SDG 16).

SENEGAL: Ndiaye Cheikh Sylla, Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development, shared the increase in school attendance and the establishment of new universities (SDG 4); highlighted a decrease in sexual and gender-based violence (SDG 5); underlined the country's work to address unemployment (SDG 8); and pointed to the country's expanded military capability to ensure peace and security (SDG 16). He highlighted the country's actions to restore mangroves, and address IUU fishing (SDG 14); and drew attention to the Senegalese Agency for Reforestation (SDG 15).

A more detailed summary is available at enb.iisd.org/high-level-political-forum-hlpf-2022-daily-report-14jul2022

Friday, 15 July: JAMAICA: Kamina Johnson Smith, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, highlighted Vision 2030 Jamaica and underlined the country's economic reform programme, which reduced extreme and childhood poverty (SDG 1). She also highlighted an expansion of coastal and MPAs beyond the global 2020 target (SDG 14), and an increase in forest cover (SDG 15) and shared that the country has updated its nationally determined contribution (NDC) under the Paris Agreement (SDG 13). Wayne Henry, Director General, Planning Institute, Jamaica, stressed that the application of multidimensional vulnerability and poverty indices would further development goals by enhancing financing.

Responding to Trinidad and Tobago, Iceland, the Gambia, the NGO Major Group, and Botswana, Johnson Smith and her team stressed the importance of South-South cooperation for achieving the SDGs and information sharing; highlighted the inclusive process involved in the preparation of the VNR and the adoption of related policies; and noted alignment of the SDGs with development policies and results-based monitoring.

LESOTHO: Underscoring the negative impacts of the pandemic, Sello Justice Tsukulu, Principal Secretary and Chief Accounting Officer, Ministry of Development Planning, said: absolute and multidimensional poverty has decreased (SDG 1); many students dropped out of school due to school closures (SDG 4); action is still

required to address gender-based discrimination and violence and early marriage (SDG 5); and land degradation is increasing (SDG 15).

Responding to Morocco, Ghana, Jordan, the Major Group for Children and Youth, and Algeria, Tsukulu highlighted remaining data challenges despite improved quality and use of statistics and weak inter-ministerial coordination and inadequate financial resources as other challenges. He said the government is preparing a "roadmap on financing framework" and public-private partnerships.

ITALY: Silvia Grandi, Director General for Circular Economy, Ministry of Ecological Transition, pointed to: a dedicated action plan for sustainable development; an SDG localization plan between central, regional, and local institutions; and stakeholder engagement to implement the SDGs. Highlighting actions undertaken to address food insecurity (SDG 2) resulting from the war in Ukraine, Fabio Cassese, Director General for Development Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, noted a stronger development cooperation approach, including realigning its ODA towards the 0.7% of GDP target.

Responding to Morocco, Benin, and the Economic Commission for Europe Civil Society Engagement Mechanism, Cassese stressed that the Mediterranean and Africa are Italy's development partners, highlighted commitment to multilateralism stressing that Italy channels more than 70% of its ODA through the UN, and acknowledged the challenge with policy coherence while noting progress as identified by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee review. Grandi highlighted regional and metropolitan sustainable development strategies, alignment of recovery plans with the SDGs and ecological transition, and stakeholder engagement.

LUXEMBOURG: Joëlle Welfring, Minister for Environment, Climate and Sustainable Development, stressed the importance of mental health and affordable housing as key youth concerns (SDG 3). She highlighted the inclusive VNR process and focus on policy coherence towards implementing the 2030 Agenda and carbon neutrality by 2050. Franz Fayot, Minister for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Affairs, reported on the adoption of a general development cooperation strategy and the whole-of-government approach to strengthen synergies (SDG 17).

Responding to the Major Group for Children and Youth and Austria, Welfring noted the introduction of a carbon tax, and measures to further reduce the country's carbon footprint. Fayot challenged the classification of tax haven, stressed that the country takes care to adhere to double taxation avoidance practices in their dealings with developing country partners, and shared their engagement with partner countries on practical actions towards development.

MALAWI: Khumbize Kandodo Chiponda, Minister of Health, reported on the inclusive VNR process and incorporation of the SDGs into Malawi Vision 2063. She stressed the reduction of child mortality and malaria (SDG 3), the increase in girls schooling with progress needed due to pandemic setbacks (SDG 4), a significant increase in women's participation in governance (SDG 5), a 45% decrease in illegal wildlife trade and the challenge of forest degradation (SDG 15), and connectivity challenges due to the high costs of information and communication technologies (SDG 9). She highlighted corruption and limited fiscal space as key challenges in achieving the 2030 Agenda.

Responding to questions from Norway, Finland, the NGO Major Group, Niger, UK, and Zambia, Chiponda and her team noted the reforms in the agricultural subsidy programme to address food security, the establishment of sustainable farm inputs including fertilizers, and the promotion of the protection of people with albinism and persons with disabilities. They also highlighted the participatory nature of the VNR process and called for international support for SDG implementation.

LIBERIA: Augustus Jonathan Flomo, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, highlighted that their VNR addressed 11 SDGs. He reported an increase in poverty (SDG 1) but highlighted an improvement in infant nutrition (SDG 2), maternal and infant mortality (SDG 3), and access to clean water and sanitation (SDG 6). He also reported on better examination outcomes (SDG 4) and noted efforts to retrain FGM practitioners in other jobs (SDG 5). He drew attention to improved access to the internet and increased ownership of mobile phones (SDG 9); and reported on a revised NDC (SDG 13) and 69% forest cover (SDG 15). Finally, he drew attention to increased press freedom and an enhanced national human rights body (SDG 16), and highlighted partnerships with the private sector and development partners to assist in financing implementation (SDG 17).

In response to Niger, the NGO Major Group, and Latvia, Flomo and his team underlined the importance of good infrastructure including digital systems for SDG implementation and noted the need to strengthen the healthcare system. They underscored the government's support for persons with disabilities as well as girls in the education system, highlighted legislation on FGM, and noted that mobile clinics are sent to hard-to-reach places.

MONTENEGRO: Ana Novakovic Djurovic, Minister of Ecology, Spatial Planning and Urbanism, underlined the alignment of the country's national agenda with the SDGs. She shared that although overall poverty has dropped, some areas are at high poverty risk (SDG 1); and reported challenges related to equal access to education (SDG 4) and investment in achieving gender-related goals (SDG 5). She highlighted a lack of sufficient data to accurately assess progress on SDG 14 (life below water) and SDG 15 (life on land) and called for increased investment for implementation.

Responding to questions from the Czech Republic, North Macedonia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, Novakovic Djurovic noted the value of using the momentum of VNR preparation for further data and monitoring improvement, which will be achieved in part through a National Council for Sustainable Development. She stressed that the SDGs are aligned with the EU's integration strategy and commitment to further strengthen its institutional framework, and thanked NGOs for participating in VNR preparation.

PAKISTAN: Ahsan Iqbal Chaudhry, Minister of Planning Development and Special Initiatives, highlighted that 64% of the population is under 30 years old and called attention to the central role of youth in public policies. He noted the alignment of mainstreamed and localized SDGs with Vision 2025 and improvements in data quality (SDG 17) and the "smart village" pilot project to digitalize remote areas (SDG 8). He also said there are hotlines for human rights protection (SDGs 16 and 5), and there is an increase in social protection to mitigate the impact of the pandemic (SDG 8).

In response to questions from Ethiopia, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, the Major Group for Children and Youth, Finland, Jordan, South Africa, Venezuela, and Thailand, Chaudhry stated that the

country's policies target vulnerable groups to ensure no one is left behind and highlighted the application of a national MVI to target the most vulnerable. He highlighted the addition of data analytics to better monitor the implementation of SDG indicators; and underscored the benefits of the VNR process, including involvement of stakeholders such as academia, religious groups, and CSOs. He underlined the need to climate-proof the country's infrastructure.

SRI LANKA: Chamindry Saparamadu, Director General, Sustainable Development Council, highlighted the improvement in the population's quality of life (SDG 1), an improvement of data quality (SDG 17) and an increase in gender equality and representation in management positions (SDG 5). He also said 90% of the population has access to safe drinking water (SDG 6) while there are challenges with education financing (SDG 4). The country aims to reduce nitrogen waste by 50% by 2030 (SDG 13) and to digitalize the government, economy, and services (SDG 9).

In response to questions from Switzerland, Asia-Pacific Regional CSO Engagement Mechanism, the Philippines, Palestine, Pakistan, South Africa, and Thailand, Saparamadu and his team underscored widespread consultations in the VNR process, with more than 60 CSOs consulted; and highlighted the country's advancement in global sustainable development rankings, noting that more can be done. They noted the formulation of SDG public service delivery strategies and pointed to the launch of the national SDG monitoring platform. They also shared commitments to achieve better energy efficiency and emphasized the need to improve women's participation in the formal labor force.

BOTSWANA: Pilda Nani Kereng, Minister of Environment and Tourism, underlined the impact of COVID-19 on the country's social and economic progress, but highlighted that the economy still grew due to the implementation of its recovery plan. She highlighted the provision of free or subsidized education (SDG 4); and stated that the country is sixth in the global ranking of countries that have met the gender parity target but noted ongoing gender-based violence challenges (SDG 5). She said that the country has designated 40% of its total land area as protected (SDG 15), but pointed to challenges in addressing climate change (SDG 13). She noted that the government is working to localize SDG implementation and called for international partnerships to continue to fund implementation.

In response to comments from Jamaica, Niger, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Workers and Trade Unions Major Group, and Eswatini, Kereng and her team acknowledged the need for disaggregated data for monitoring SDG implementation; and highlighted steps to address gender-based violence, including specialized courts, and noted the role of men in addressing this issue. On social protections, she noted budgetary allocations to address the gaps, including issues related to labor and workers. Finally, she noted that all public schools will be outfitted with information and communication technologies and training, and highlighted a community-based conservation framework, where community members benefit from sustainable use hunting permits.

CAMEROON: Paul Tassong, Minister Delegate in charge of Planning, Ministry of the Economy, Planning and Regional Development, noted that some indicators such as primary school completion among girls have improved (SDG 4); and highlighted that although the government is enforcing gender-responsive budgeting, there are still challenges including related to sexual and reproductive health (SDG 5). He noted that the country is managing marine waste through public-private partnerships (SDG

14); and highlighted the increase in protected and forested areas, noting actions to limit exports of logs (SDG 15). He pointed to an ambitious tax reform that financed almost 70% of the national budget and welcomed the increase in development assistance (SDG 17). He noted that the country is addressing the challenges posed by insufficient data and statistics.

In response to questions from Ethiopia, Venezuela, Niger, Namibia, the Women's Major Group, and Iraq, Tasong announced the country's plans for a 2023 national SDG forum for the presentation of voluntary local reviews; and outlined constraints related to the pandemic, climate change and insecurity. He stressed the importance of viable data for correct assessment of SDG implementation and highlighted a framework law on national statistical information. Underlining the need for emergency preparedness, he described the country's measures to address COVID-19, noting the focus on Indigenous remedies and knowhow that kept the mortality rate low.

Acting at Local Level

On Wednesday, 6 July, delegates addressed local-level action to achieve the SDGs. Lydia Capolicchio, Swedish journalist, moderated the discussion. Ville Taajamaa, Editor in Chief for Espoo Voluntary Local Review (VLR) 2020, described the VLR as a monitoring and management tool used to signal commitment to both global and regional cooperation on the SDGs.

Panelists then shared local actions, with one suggesting that VLRs and sub-national reviews should become pillars in achieving the SDGs, and another urging local authorities to reflect on what they are doing to recognize and involve older people. One panelist from the national government of Nigeria noted the country's work with sub-national governments, including the operation of a conditional grant scheme to address education, health, and water management, among others. One panelist challenged local authorities to "dare to be holistic; form broad partnerships and do it quickly"; and another highlighted his city of Dhulikhel in Nepal for completing a VLR, pointing to health, safe and clean water, literacy, and micro-enterprises among the city's priority areas.

In the subsequent discussion, delegates engaged in an interactive online poll to answer the questions on the relationship between national and local governments in achieving the SDGs; citizen awareness of SDGs; and the role of stakeholders in implementing the SDGs.

A more detailed summary is available at enb.iisd.org/high-level-political-forum-hlpf-2022-daily-report-6jul2022

Ensuring Equal Access to Vaccines and Resources in the Poorest Countries

On Wednesday, 6 July, the Forum considered access to vaccines and resources for countries in Africa, least developed countries (LDCs) and land-locked developed countries (LLDCs). Session moderator Rabab Fatima, Co-Chair of LLDCs fifth Preparatory Committee meeting, Bangladesh, underlined the need for adequate financing, access to technology, and comprehensive capacity for the poorest countries. She also drew attention to the Doha Programme of Action for the LDCs (2022-2031), and the Vienna Programme of Action for LLDCs. Speakers discussed the need to meet SDG target 9.c on increasing access to information and communication technologies in LDCs by 2020.

Fatimé Zara Haroun, Super Banats, Chad, shared a harrowing story of child rape, underscoring that "a raped girl bears the scars

all her life." She called for stronger legal frameworks and financial commitments to prevent violence towards women and girls and enable them to enjoy their rights to healthcare and education.

Pamela Molina, Executive Director, World Federation of Deaf, said many people with disabilities including deaf women and girls are not able to access COVID-19 vaccinations due to poor consideration of their needs, calling for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in priority vaccination groups.

Others noted important partnerships in Africa promoting access to COVID-19 vaccines including partnership with Institut Pasteur de Dakar in Senegal to expand vaccine production in West Africa, and to Rwanda's partnership with BioNTech for an mRNA vaccine facility. One panelist described the UN Capital Development Fund, which has a bridge facility that provides LDCs with loan access.

Underscoring development as a human right, one speaker called out the "vaccine nationalism" of many developed countries, noting that this contravenes the legal duty of international cooperation. Another panelist, underlining that vaccine access is a human right, called for better vaccine cooperation and financing, in which LDCs should not be left behind.

Delegates from LDCs and LLDCs reported that because of structural vulnerabilities they were the most hit by COVID-19 and the subsequent financial recession and disruption of the supply chains. They highlighted low vaccination levels and called for: addressing financial gaps and providing sustainable debt; ensuring transition to renewable energy and economic transformation; South-South and triangular cooperation; transfer of technology; building national capacities, including on production of COVID-19 vaccines and diagnostic centers; and better data management systems.

A more detailed summary is available at enb.iisd.org/high-level-political-forum-hlpf-2022-daily-report-6jul2022

Working towards the 2023 SDG Summit

On Thursday, 7 July, delegates held a discussion on the 2023 SDG Summit, which will review progress on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. Nikhil Seth, Executive Director, UNITAR, moderated the discussion.

Macharia Kamau, Principal Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kenya, suggested keeping the 2023 Summit easy-to-understand and focusing on how summits can ensure implementation, warning that lack of action leads to credibility loss. Calling for a "disruptive summit," Paula Caballero, The Nature Conservancy, suggested that the Summit should identify a single, succinct suite of actions for all stakeholders to implement, and proposed engaging with the Global Stocktake process underway under the Paris Agreement. Mami Mizutori, Head, UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), called for linking the Summit to the midterm review of the Sendai Framework and underlined the need for risk-informed decision making.

Other speakers called for: states at the Summit to renew global political commitment to the SDGs, with a concrete acceleration action plan, and a renewed science-policy pact to accelerate implementation; for regional meetings, including with civil society, to understand the priorities on the ground; and the Summit to bring financial support from donors and private sector.

In the ensuing discussion, delegates highlighted that the Summit should: address carbon inequality; prioritize systemic change to improve the lives of the poorest and most marginalized; involve Indigenous Peoples; and demonstrate international solidarity to promote peace and security. They also emphasized: addressing

climate change and other challenges facing SIDS; investing in young people to build peace at the local level; and the value of sustainable forest laws and practices for achieving multiple SDGs. Several delegates noted that the lack of progress on the SDGs could not be entirely ascribed to the pandemic and called for stronger action on climate change and means of implementation.

A more detailed summary is available at enb.iisd.org/high-level-political-forum-hlpf-2022-daily-report-7jul2022

Building Back Better in Vulnerable Situations

On Monday, 11 July, delegates addressed how to build back better in vulnerable situations, with a specific focus on the special circumstances of SIDS. In his keynote address, Co-Chair of the Multidimensional Vulnerability Index Panel, Prime Minister Gaston Browne, Antigua and Barbuda, pointed to the UN Secretary-General's guiding principles for the proposed MVI, including that the indicators should represent multidimensionality, universality, exogeneity, availability, and readability. Underlining that there is no sustainable development without resilience, Hyginus Leon, President, Caribbean Development Bank, proposed an internal resilience capacity indicator to underpin concessional financing decision-making, in order to incorporate SIDS' vulnerability into issues such as climate change, conflicts, fallout from wars, and global pandemics.

Moderating the session, Heidi Schroderus-Fox, Acting High Representative, UN Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and SIDS (UN-OHRLLS), noted the sustainable development reversals in SIDS over the pandemic period, and said an MVI would better reflect the realities on the ground. Many delegates highlighted MVI as a potentially life-saving tool to help SIDS gain access to concessional financing.

Delegates heard from MVI Panel Members, who stressed that external shocks are not reflected in income-weighted indices such as gross national income (GNI) and noted that the MVI would be applied universally to all developing countries. Other panelists recognized the need to put "vulnerability at the heart of finance," stressed the importance of addressing challenges of debt eligibility and bureaucracy and highlighted several initiatives to support SIDS in becoming more resilient to shocks.

Speakers also considered: the need for a speedy conclusion to MVI discussions; the long journey to get to the MVI process under the UN; the need for a clear MVI with quantifiable indicators; the need for international financial institutions to be part of the MVI discussion; and the "Band-Aid nature" of international support to SIDS that does not address vulnerability.

A more detailed summary is available at enb.iisd.org/high-level-political-forum-hlpf-2022-daily-report-11jul2022

Introduction of the Report on the 10YFP on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns

On Monday, 11 July, Irfan Tariq, 10YFP/One Planet Network Chair, presented the progress report on the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on SCP. He said SCP can be an enabler of global efforts to build back better, but noted continuing challenges including lack of data, capacity, technology, and financial support to developing countries.

Vision of Civil Society: Leaving No One Behind in Recovering Better

On Tuesday, 12 July, delegates engaged with members of civil society to address post-pandemic recovery strategies and accelerating the implementation of the SDGs. Liu Zhenmin, UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, highlighted the important role of civil society in reaching those furthest behind, and their valuable role in informing the 2023 SDG Summit.

Major Groups and Stakeholder (MGoS) Coordination Mechanism Co-Chair Mabel Bianco, President, Fundacion para Estudio e Investigación de la Mujer, urged governments to make meaningful political commitments that leave no one behind. MGoS Coordination Mechanism Co-Chair Ajay Jha, Director, Centre for Community Economics and Development Consultants Society, India, highlighted civil society priorities including: improved vaccine equity, addressing the debt crisis, and stronger climate action. Several supported calls for a fourth financing for development conference.

Speakers called for: stronger government recognition of the value volunteers bring to SDG implementation and accountability; and an end to public investment in oil and gas. Others prioritized access to and control of land for a more sustainable prosperity, and community farming over corporate, industrial farming; and called out "disaster profiteering," which prevents vaccine equity. One panelist said the right to development is a holistic, multi-stakeholder process, and underlined the need to revise taxes and finance policies to address the concerns of the most vulnerable, including women. Another proposed the establishment of a 10-member panel under the auspices of ECOSOC on the status of CSO engagement and participation.

In the ensuing discussion, participants expressed concern over the diminishing space for civil society and political repression against CSOs in Belarus and Russia. They highlighted various efforts to include civil society in national and local SDG processes. They also noted the need to: address systemic barriers to equality such as sexism and misogyny; protect civic space and human rights defenders; combat disinformation; shift power to children, communities, and local organizations; and provide girls with high quality education and information on sexual and reproductive health and rights.

A more detailed summary is available at enb.iisd.org/high-level-political-forum-hlpf-2022-12jul22

Ministerial Segment

Opening Session: The Ministerial Segment was opened on Wednesday, 13 July 2022, by ECOSOC President Collen Vixen Kelapile. In the face of the multiple crises we face, he called for optimism and using this period for transformation. He highlighted the 2030 Agenda, Addis Ababa Action Agenda and Paris Agreement as providing the blueprint for building back better and achieving sustainable development for all.

Emphasizing "our world is in deep trouble, and so are the SDGs," UN Secretary-General António Guterres called on the world to "rescue the SDGs." Among areas for immediate action, he highlighted: investing in equitable vaccine access, including through license sharing to allow countries to produce vaccines and other medically important products; tackling the food, energy and fertilizer crises; investing in people, including through the Transforming Education Summit; the need to "keep 1.5°C alive,"

including by ending the addiction to fossil fuels and investing in renewable energy; and reviewing access to and eligibility for concessional finance for developing countries.

Speakers also called for: advancing the MVI; accelerating digitalization to create enabling conditions for the private sector; keeping commitments made at the UN Ocean Conference and the Glasgow Climate Change Conference; working towards an ambitious, balanced, and pragmatic global biodiversity framework at the upcoming UN Biodiversity Conference; increased investment in social protection, strengthened institutional capacity and female leadership, and increased and meaningful youth participation in decision making.

Reports from the Regions: On Thursday, 14 July, representatives of the regional forums shared outcomes from the five Regional Forums on Sustainable Development, including on the need to:

- enhance social protection, education, gender equality, inclusive and green economies, and support for developing countries (Asia-Pacific);
- improve care services and flexible working arrangements to promote gender equality, invest in nature-based solutions and timely and sufficiently granular data, and bridge the global digital divide (Europe);
- enhance multilateralism, in particular financing for development, improve implementation of policies, increase resilience of institutions, and overcome conflicts (Latin America and the Caribbean);
- ensure COVID-19 vaccine availability, ensure adequate financing for climate change and innovative funding solutions, invest in education, digitalization, and data collection and its analysis, and promote regional value chains (Africa);
- address education losses and tailor curricula to correspond with labor market and societal requirements, promote women's participation in public life, and use partnerships and SDG-based national budgeting (Western Asia).

Comments from CSOs included a call for states to uphold their extraterritorial obligations to uphold human rights globally and provide democratic and safe spaces for marginalized communities, including LGBTQI+ persons in Central Asia.

Outcomes from the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA): On Thursday, 14 July, UNEA-6 President Leila Benali, Minister of Energy Transition and Sustainable Development, Morocco, conveyed key messages from UNEA to the HLPF. To accelerate the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and to build back better, she underlined the need for policies to enhance: the science-policy interface to drive shifts in SCP; ecosystem approaches and nature-based solutions to address current and future health risks; circular economy approaches; global coordination to eliminate plastic pollution; gender equality and human rights; access to information, public participation, and environmental justice; and mobilization of resources.

Ministerial Roundtable: On Thursday, 14 July, one vice-president, two deputy prime ministers, and 39 ministers offered perspectives on the ongoing crises and challenges at the national, regional, and global levels. Many speakers emphasized ways in which challenges related to the pandemic, the climate crisis, and the war in Ukraine have impacted their countries. Additional—and related—challenges identified included worsening inequality, economic and structural reforms and debt distress, inflation,

fertilizer scarcity and rising prices of agricultural goods, food and water insecurity, pollution, biodiversity loss, sea level rise and drought.

Success stories included:

- cooperation with development partners to achieve a 90% vaccination rate among adults;
- creation of distance education resources;
- the value of localizing the SDGs;
- co-organizing a national SDG Forum with CSOs;
- more than 30% of certain marine areas already designated as protected and 14 million trees planted;
- introduction of extended sickness insurance; and
- pursuing pandemic interventions based on a consultative, science-based process.

Proposals for further action included:

- establishment of a fund for the development of mountainous countries and a financing mechanism for blue economy projects;
- bridging the digital divide and enhancing internet access for households;
- investing in flexible and quality education systems;
- “future-proofing” the public health system;
- support to build productive capacity and improve food security;
- development of a smooth graduation process; and
- a call for leaders to continue to express a strong message of optimism.

Many called for strengthened multilateralism in the face of the multiple crises facing the world. Some called for an end to unilateral sanctions.

Closing Session

ECOSOC President Collen Vixen Kelapile chaired the closing session on Friday afternoon, 15 July. Introducing the draft Ministerial Declaration, Maurizio Massari, Permanent Representative of Italy to the UN, also on behalf of Margo Debye, Permanent Representative of Nauru to the UN, said that after six months of negotiations, the Declaration represents a “comprehensive, ambitious, and action-oriented agenda” that calls on all actors to redouble efforts towards all dimensions of sustainable development and sends a strong signal that multilateralism can and will deliver for all and leave no one behind.

Massari noted that there had been objection to a paragraph that referred to removing the “obstacles to the full realization of the right to self-determination of peoples living under colonial and foreign occupation.” Member States voted on whether to retain the paragraph, with 101 favoring its retention, 3 against, and 41 abstaining. ISRAEL disassociated itself from the paragraph that was put to a vote, expressing concern about attempts to “politicize” the HLPF. Delegates then adopted the Ministerial Declaration (E/HLPF/2022/L.1).

Country Statements: Pakistan, for the GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA, said the process for the Ministerial Declaration could have allowed more time for in-depth negotiations and internal consultations with better scheduling and timelines. They regretted that language on countries in special circumstance does not include countries and people living under colonial and foreign occupation, noting “a grave and existential threat against Palestine.” They also: rejected unilateral financial or economic trade measures; rejected the terminology “vulnerable middle-income countries,” and regretted the Declaration does not include language on the inalienable right

to development and on common but differentiated responsibilities in light of national circumstances.

CANADA, on behalf of a range of countries, stressed their support for gender equality, underlining the right of women and girls to have control over all aspects of their sexuality, and regretted that negotiations on language around gender had been “unnecessarily challenging.”

The Czech Republic, for the EU, said sustainable development challenges have been exacerbated by the “atrocious, unprovoked, and unjustified aggression” of Russia against Ukraine. He stressed the need for dramatic advances in gender equality as a prerequisite for achievement of all SDGs and regretted this is not reflected in the declaration. He also regretted that the declaration does not make links between food production and biodiversity loss, and the unambitious language on climate action.

Colombia, for the Like-Minded Countries, supporters of the middle income countries (MICs), rejected language in relation to “vulnerable” MICs, which he said was based on unclear criteria and creates a dangerous precedent.

Antigua and Barbuda, for the ALLIANCE OF SMALL ISLAND STATES, said the Ministerial Declaration is “unbalanced” and reflects an “obscure narrative” that fails to raise ambitions and put forward bold solutions, and pointed to the importance of the Programme of Action for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS. They emphasized the role of the HLPF is to review, rather than reword or redefine the SDGs and noted “deep concerns” with procedural inconsistencies compared to previous meetings.

The US emphasized the importance of SDGs 4 (quality education) and 5 (gender equality). He disassociated the US from reference to the Kunming Declaration, which he said was not negotiated, and the paragraph that was put to a vote.

HUNGARY said it could not support paragraphs related to migration, stating its belief that “migration has no positive impact on inclusive growth and development,” and highlighting a need to improve circumstances in migrants’ countries of origin instead.

GUATEMALA said it could not support language on: reproductive rights, which she said can be interpreted as including abortion or abortive practices; and cross-border cooperation in the context of sustainable water governance.

TÜRKIYE underscored that SDG 6 (clean water and sanitation) was not under review at HLPF 2022, noting that the language prioritizes certain SDG targets over others. He also underlined the note that common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities is the key principle in the fulfilment of climate change related obligations; and highlighted the need for approaches other than nature-based solutions to address the protection, conservation, restoration and sustainable use of oceans.

Noting that the Declaration struck a delicate balance, the RUSSIAN FEDERATION highlighted the document’s focus on global problems and said previously agreed language from other agreements is open for discussion at the HLPF due to the differing contexts. He welcomed the inclusion of family values as part of sustainable development in the Declaration, and the need to address the global drug problem; noted the “politicization” of the 2030 Agenda by some countries; and said the term “multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination” is not agreed language.

The HOLY SEE said the rights of the child should be considered within the context of the family and the role of parents must always be respected; and the term “multiple and intersecting forms

of discrimination” does not enjoy consensus. He also reaffirmed reservations related to access to abortion and to an expanded description of gender.

AUSTRALIA, also for CANADA and NEW ZEALAND, supported the mainstreaming of gender; underlined the importance of a strong global biodiversity framework; and underscored that the 2022 Ministerial Declaration is longer than the 2030 Agenda and should not set a precedent.

NIGERIA called for practical measures, such as debt swaps, to address inequalities between developed and developing countries; and underlined the need for a new non-discriminatory international trading system to benefit the world’s poorest countries.

MEXICO welcomed the inclusion of language on vulnerability, climate financing, and sustainable infrastructure; and called for the Ministerial Declaration in 2023 to reflect greater coherence between the realities on the ground and political consensus.

CHINA noted that some good results were achieved, and a consensus-based decision was adopted with constructive participation. Calling out slow implementation, he called for a drastic increase in financing and capacity building and highlighted China’s Global Development Initiative.

NICARAGUA noted negotiations should be transparent with respect to the intergovernmental and inclusive nature of the UN, and condemned the lack of language opposing unilateral coercive measures. He stressed that the reference to reproductive health does not mean support for abortion, noting Nicaragua’s recognition of “right to life from conception.”

INDONESIA noted that despite constructive efforts, reference to multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination does not enjoy consensus.

The UK stressed that ODA alone will not bridge SDG financing gaps and called for strong public-private partnerships. She warned against spending time debating already established commitments and language on climate change and gender instead of acting with urgency on current crises. Welcoming the language on scaling up climate action, she called for combatting gender-based violence.

SAUDI ARABIA noted that references to intersecting forms of discrimination, as well as to sexual and reproductive rights, should be interpreted according to their laws, religion, and cultural norms.

QATAR commended paragraphs referencing the Doha Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2022-2031 and noted that reference to sexual and reproductive rights should be interpreted according to their laws, religion, and cultural norms.

SOUTH AFRICA lamented that text on climate change falls short of adequately reflecting key interests and concerns of developing countries, changing the status of an imbalanced Glasgow Pact that puts too much emphasis on mitigation without addressing funding obligations of developed states. He also expressed full support for implementation of SDG 5 and hoped that one day women’s and girl’s rights will not be a dividing factor among countries.

EGYPT noted that text on minorities and religious minorities is unclear and noted the lack of consensus on the reference to intersecting forms of discrimination.

VENEZUELA stressed the need to allow enough time for intergovernmental consultations and for including all positions. He regretted the lack of language opposing unilateral coercive measures, which are “cruel experiments inflicted on countries to undermine their development.” He also expressed reservations to

a reference to the Convention on the Law of the Sea, stating that Venezuela is not a party to the Convention.

YEMEN expressed disappointment that a vote was requested for a paragraph, and voiced reservations to the norms on intersecting forms of discrimination and sexual and reproductive rights, which he said should be interpreted according to the culture, tradition, and religion of Yemen.

CUBA stressed the lack of transparency in the process of negotiations, condemning the lack of language opposing unilateral coercive measures, noting these hinder sustainable development in Cuba.

IRAN noted the lack of consensus on certain provisions and expressed regret there is no language opposing unilateral coercive measures. He stressed the non-legally binding nature of the declaration, and noted the lack of consensus on the language on intersecting forms of discrimination. He stated that provisions on gender equality and on the transition to low emissions should be interpreted according to national laws, policies, and regulations.

IRAQ highlighted lack of consensus on multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, and stated they interpret references to diversity as cultural diversity.

LIBYA noted that references to intersecting forms of discrimination, as well as to sexual and reproductive rights, should be interpreted according to their laws, religion, and cultural norms.

SYRIA expressed regret over inclusion of “controversial phraseology” that does not enjoy consensus referring to multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, and stated that language on sexual and reproductive rights should be interpreted according to national laws, religion, and cultural norms.

Closing Statements: In her closing statement, UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina J. Mohammed said the HLPF had demonstrated “unwavering commitment” to achieving the 2030 Agenda. She urged delegates to come together to make the 2023 Summit “a turning point for saving the SDGs.”

ECOSOC President Collen Vixen Kelapile said that while the complex challenges of the present day threaten the SDGs, they also form an opportunity for multilateralism and innovation that challenge the status quo. He stressed: “We know the challenges and solutions, and we have the tools and means, if we only shared them equitably.” He announced that Liu Zhenmin, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, would be leaving at the end of the month, thanking him for his service. Vixen Kelapile gavelled HLPF 2022 to a close at 6:35 pm.

Ministerial Declaration

The 2022 HLPF Ministerial Declaration strongly reaffirms commitment to the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs, recognizing it as the blueprint for an inclusive, sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and accelerating the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development, leaving no one behind. It further:

- reaffirms: that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty is the greatest global challenge; the importance of achieving global food security; and that there can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development;
- highlights the need for greater collaboration and partnerships at all levels to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda; and

- recognizes the importance of addressing the diverse needs and challenges faced by countries in special situations, in particular African countries, LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS, and countries in conflict and post-conflict situations, as well as the specific challenges faced by MICs.

On the impact of COVID-19 on the 2030 Agenda, the Declaration:

- notes with alarm that years, or even decades, of development progress have been halted or reversed, due to multiple and widespread impacts of COVID-19, conflicts, and climate change;
- calls upon the international community to enhance international cooperation to preserve and strengthen global value and supply chains, in particular for essential goods and services;
- reaffirms the urgency to ensure timely, affordable and equitable access to safe, effective and quality COVID-19 vaccines, therapeutics, diagnostics, and other health technologies; and
- recognizes the important role of the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator (ACT-A) and its COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access (COVAX) Facility, the COVID-19 Technology Access Pool (C-TAP) and other relevant initiatives.

For Goals under in-depth review and VNRs, the Declaration encourages the full, equal and meaningful participation of all relevant stakeholders, including local governments, civil society organizations and academia, in the design, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and reporting of national sustainable development strategies and in the preparation of VNRs and notes with concern that the SDG targets with a 2020 deadline have not been fully achieved.

On SDG 4 (quality education), Ministers and high-level representatives:

- commit to take additional measures to avert a multi-generational crisis in education and call for mitigating the effects of school closures and cuts in national education budgets, including on learning, child nutrition, all forms of violence, including sexual and gender-based violence and child abuse; and
- encourage promoting digital technologies, including low- and no-tech strategies, access to broadband internet and technology devices, connectivity, digital inclusion and literacy and incorporating digital competences into the education system.

On SDG 5 (gender equality), Ministers and high-level representatives:

- reaffirm commitment to achieve gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls ensuring systemic mainstreaming of a gender perspective in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and to end all forms of discrimination against women and girls everywhere, acknowledging that women and girls often face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination;
- commit to ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights; and
- encourage strengthening and implementing gender-responsive planning and budgeting processes and developing and strengthening methodologies and tools for the monitoring and evaluation of investments for gender equality results, and reaffirm the importance of collection, analysis, and dissemination of sex-disaggregated data in order to develop and strengthen evidence-based public policies and programmes.

On SDG 14 (life below water), Ministers and high-level representatives, among other issues:

- emphasize the importance of ending IUU fishing and welcome the Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies reached at the twelfth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization;
 - stress the urgency of taking immediate actions towards the long-term elimination of plastic pollution in the marine environment and welcome resolution 5/14 adopted by UNEA at its resumed fifth session;
 - stress the need for ambitious, balanced, practical, effective, robust and transformative post-2020 global biodiversity framework in the context of the CBD; and
 - welcome the decision by UNEA at its resumed fifth session to establish a science-policy panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution.
- On SDG 15 (life on land), the Declaration:
- emphasizes the necessity to build on and strengthen the complementarity in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the three Rio Conventions on biodiversity, climate change and desertification;
 - recognizes the importance of nature-based solutions and ecosystem-based approaches, that protect, conserve, restore, sustainably use and manage natural or modified terrestrial, freshwater, coastal and marine ecosystems; and
 - highlights the need for long-term and affordable financing for biodiversity, including to support the implementation of the CBD and its post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

On SDG 17, Ministers and high-level representatives:

- reaffirm their commitment to the Goal, and the outcome document of the 2022 ECOSOC forum on financing for development follow-up; and
- encourage international cooperation in supporting statistical capacity building and data access in developing countries.

A section on other priority areas recognizes the positive role and contributions of migrants for inclusive growth and sustainable development, and welcomes the appointment by the President of the General Assembly of the high-level panel of experts to finalize an MVI for SIDS by the end of 2022.

In the final section, “Our road map for the way forward,” Ministers recommit to leaving no one behind and accelerating action to reduce inequalities, and commit to stepping up efforts to fight against racism, all forms of discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, stigmatization, hate speech, through cooperation, partnership and inclusion and respect for diversity. They also commit to redoubling efforts to resolve or prevent conflict and to support post-conflict countries, and call for removing the obstacles to the full realization of the right to self-determination of peoples living under colonial and foreign occupation.

A Brief Analysis of the 2022 HLPF

A World in Crisis

“Our world is in deep trouble—and so too are the Sustainable Development Goals.” UN Secretary-General António Guterres did not mince words when he addressed delegates during the HLPF’s high-level segment. This year’s Conference took place at a time of significant international crisis, uncertainty, and upheaval. The war in Ukraine and other conflicts around the world are the highest number of conflicts since 1945, exacting a humanitarian toll, with knock-on effects for geopolitical stability, the global economy, as well as food and energy security.

As if this were not enough, vaccine inequity and new COVID-19 sub-variants continue to plunge the world into uncertainty, with renewed pressure on health systems. There has been no respite: for three years countries have been reeling from the pandemic’s significant, negative impacts, reversing or stagnating progress in SDG implementation, with large numbers of lives lost due directly or indirectly to the pandemic.

And to top it off, the worsening climate crisis rages on. Many delegates highlighted challenges such as droughts, storms, flooding, locust invasions, and wildfires exacerbating already-difficult circumstances. During the two weeks of HLPF 2022, the localization of these pressures as well as unique national circumstances saw three governments fold: the UK, Sri Lanka, and Italy. No one has been left unscathed.

And yet despite—and indeed because of—these challenges, delegates meeting at the HLPF in person for the first time in three years agreed that the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are more important than ever, offering a blueprint for a green recovery that leaves no one behind. This brief analysis looks at how the meeting fared in fulfilling its function of reviewing progress on the 2030 Agenda and, crucially, fostering renewed commitment for its implementation.

Progress on SDG Implementation?

The meeting’s first week painted a sobering picture of progress across the five SDGs scheduled for in-depth review this year. On education (SDG 4), speakers revealed that over 20 million students who have been affected by school closures may never return to school, and uneven access to digital learning tools significantly increased inequalities among learners both between and within countries. Similarly, on gender equality (SDG 5), many countries reported a worsening socio-economic situation for women, as well as increases in gender-based violence, child marriage, and teen pregnancy as lockdowns forced many women and girls into confinement with their abusers, isolating them from support networks and services. It seems it has been “one step forward, two steps back,” commented one observer bleakly.

But while some of these setbacks can be attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic and measures to contain it, several commentators pointed out that the pandemic was not solely responsible. Some illustrated, for example, erosions of women’s sexual and reproductive health and rights as a broader trend independent of the pandemic, as illustrated by the recent overturning, after 50 years, of the right to safe and secure abortion in the US. As one youth activist lamented, “We are fighting for rights that we had considered won.”

Similarly, on SDG 15 (life on land), some civil society representatives regretted “the missed opportunity” that more attention has not been paid to the need to transform the human-animal-environment interface, including by spotlighting harmful activities such as poaching, trade in wild animals, and industrial livestock farming, given strong indications of the zoonotic origins of the COVID-19 virus. “The pandemic should be a wake-up call, but we prefer to snooze,” bemoaned one civil society representative.

Nevertheless, a cautious note of optimism emerged from some quarters on SDG 14 (life below water), as delegates pointed to recent decisions to end plastic pollution and to curb fisheries subsidies, both with a bearing on the health of the ocean. At HLPF 2022, several countries shared national efforts to expand marine protected areas, indicating a real desire to achieve the related target.

With financing as the perennial challenge, delegates welcomed that news that the second UN Ocean Conference in late June 2022 and the April 2022 Our Oceans Conference resulted in substantial commitments and financial pledges towards achieving SDG 14, which has historically been the least financed of the SDGs. “A lot still needs to be done,” shared one delegate, “and we’ve pushed off late, but there is some hope now.”

Inspiring Implementation?

During the second week, discussions turned towards the urgent question of implementation. Countries’ progress, challenges, and lessons learned with regard to 2030 Agenda implementation were once again shared through Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs). With 189 countries having presented at least one VNR, the process is now almost universal in its scope. It is doubtful that the architects of the HLPF could have suspected that the list of presenting countries would need to be capped due to the popularity of the process.

This year, 44 countries presented on their sustainable development progress in 10-minute sessions followed by an opportunity for questions, with time limits strictly upheld to ensure everyone who wanted to had the opportunity to speak. With a significant number of countries presenting their second VNRs and applying lessons from their first reviews, participants observed a “maturing” of the VNR process with many reviews offering an informative picture of countries’ circumstances.

Notably, delegations presented “a more honest” review of their SDG progress, moving away from the “country showcases” that characterized earlier VNR presentations, towards a more thorough assessment of successes and shortcomings. This came out most profoundly in countries’ reviews on progress to address sexual and gender-based violence. “Although we *are* moving the needle,” acknowledged one delegate, after one review highlighted ongoing efforts to bring down cases of intimate partner violence, “we are still a long way from safeguarding the lives and rights of 50% of the world’s population.”

Many participants also highlighted the value of hearing and learning from others. Given the complexity of implementing a 17-Goal agenda, best practices can be instructive, and many raised questions to their neighboring countries about how they have overcome certain odds that are common to the region. For instance, Niger raised questions about overcoming common challenges faced by Sahelian countries including conflict and land degradation while striving to implement the SDGs. And several developing countries questioned Botswana about their successful roll out of digital learning tools during the pandemic. In this sense, the process plays the role of a “watering hole” where “we can draw on lessons from others to make our own journeys easier.”

The VNR process also helped to spotlight the role of civil society in holding governments to account in the achievement of the Goals. Among other issues, Major Groups and other stakeholders questioned Switzerland and Luxembourg on their status as tax havens; queried Andorra and others’ failure to uphold women’s rights; and asked several countries about the inclusion of civil society in the development of the VNRs. Interventions also emphasized the human rights incursions facing environment defenders, with hundreds killed and many more persecuted in the last year, including through state-supported actions, undermining the very goals that governments have committed to achieve.

Leaving No One Behind?

The cross-cutting thread throughout the discussions was the limited means and crippling debt that make it difficult for many developing countries to meet their development targets. The pandemic has brought unprecedented reversals in poverty reduction, which are further exacerbated by rising inflation and the war in Ukraine. According to World Bank estimates, this will lead to an additional 75 million to 95 million people living in extreme poverty in 2022, compared to pre-pandemic projections.

In a keynote address, economist Jeffrey Sachs drew attention to borrowing terms that are “unworkable” for many developing countries, as the UN Secretary-General emphasized the need for a “New Global Deal” to allow developing countries a fair shot at building their own futures, including through raising access limits, re-channeling unused Special Drawing Rights to countries in need, and reviving the Debt Service Suspension Initiative. Indeed, many noted that the 2030 Agenda’s vision of “leaving no one behind” had experienced particularly heavy setbacks over the past two years, with the poorest and most vulnerable being hit hardest by compounding crises.

One area of progress was the creation of a High Level Panel in February 2022 to provide recommendations on a clear and coherent Multidimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI). For three decades, small island developing states (SIDS) have been calling for the formulation of a form of measurement that truly recognizes ecological and economic vulnerability. Despite being highly vulnerable to climate change and other external shocks, many SIDS are unable to access concessional financing due to their status as “high middle-income countries.” The MVI can be an alternative to gross national income when assessing eligibility for concessional financing, with many of the proponents noting that it provides a more nuanced picture of development in SIDS, including their vulnerability to repeated external shocks. The MVI could mark a “significant step” towards improving the global financing system by providing a differentiated approach to development financing and ensuring much needed support gets to those most vulnerable countries for whom time is literally ticking, given that most SIDS are losing territory to rising seas.

Overall, the Forum’s discussions made clear that the status quo is not working for sustainable development, but rather keeps the door open to leaving many behind. Many commented on the need for the global financing system to be radically transformed to ensure sufficient support for developing countries in the face of the compounding crises they face. But whether governments will rise to meet the call for change remains to be seen. As Secretary-General António Guterres noted, since the original development system was not created to benefit developing countries, “perhaps it is more accurate to say the current system is working as intended.” Continued resistance to the sorely needed transformations may lie ahead.

Where Do We Go Next?

With a hectic schedule of international summits planned in the coming months, HLPF participants asked how multiple conferences can dovetail and build off each other, rather than simply compete for our attention. In one session, Ambassador Macharia Kamau, Co-Chair of the Open Working Group that birthed the SDGs, called for a transition from the “business of conferencing to the business of implementation.” While commitments and pledges are piling up, it

is clear from the VNRs presented that a lot more needs to be done to accelerate progress on the SDGs.

Whether the upcoming conferences and summits prove themselves to be more “than just talk shops,” remains to be seen. Some participants remained hopeful that the UN Secretary-General’s Transforming Education Summit in September 2022 will help inject momentum and financing towards education systems that are fit for the challenges of the 21st century, including by helping to bridge the digital divide. But beyond these meetings, the realities on the ground continue to bite. The world needs urgent action to address all 17 SDGs, and create more resilience in the face of crisis.

Another key concern moving forward is the need for peace, as there is no sustainable development without peace. Indeed, discussions on achievements in education (SDG 4) or health (SDG 3) seem surreal while military assaults are destroying vital infrastructure causing hundreds of billions of dollars in losses and ravaging the lives of millions of people around the world. While the UN was established in the aftermath of a horrible tragedy, its main goal still remains to sustain peace—and so far, that remains the hardest goal to achieve.

Participants in a panel on local level action were encouraged to remember that “progress moves at the speed of trust.” With face-to-face interactions becoming more frequent now, such as during HLPF 2022, the opportunities to build collective action will increase. Some said HLPF 2022 was testament to the fact that states can rally in the face of multiple crises, but with most of the SDGs far from being achieved and only eight years left to meet the global targets, how do we keep the commitments made at these conferences? The often-credited “mother of the SDGs”—Paula Caballero—suggested that disruption may be the key to move at a faster pace. But just how to go about shaking up the time-honored system is up to governments to decide.

Upcoming Meetings

BBNJ IGC-5: This session will continue to negotiate, and possibly agree on, an international legally binding instrument under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction. **dates:** 15-26 August 2022 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **www:** un.org/bbnj

SDG Moment: The third SDG Moment of the Decade for Action to deliver the Global Goals will convene as part of the 77th session of the UNGA. **dates:** September 2022 (TBD) **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **www:** un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sdg-moment

Transforming Education Summit: The UN Secretary-General will organize this event as part of the 77th session of the UNGA. **dates:** 19 September 2022 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **www:** un.org/en/transforming-education-summit

2022 World Bank Group/International Monetary Fund Annual Meetings: The Annual Meetings will include the meetings of the joint World Bank Group/IMF Development Committee and the IMF International Monetary and Financial Committee (IMFC). The Development Committee and the IMFC advise the Boards of Governors on issues of global concern, including the world economic outlook, poverty eradication, economic development, and aid effectiveness. **dates:** 14-16 October 2022 **location:** Washington, DC **www:** worldbank.org/en/meetings/splash/about

UN Climate Change Conference: The 27th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP-27) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, the 17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP 17), and the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA 4) will begin work on the Global Stocktake, among other matters. **dates:** 6-18 November 2022 **location:** Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt **www:** unfccc.int/cop27

Plastics INC-1: The first meeting of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, is tentatively scheduled to begin its work. **dates:** 28 November – 2 December 2022 (TBC) **location:** Uruguay **www:** unep.org/events/unep-event/Intergovernmental-Negotiating-Committee-end-plastic-pollution

UN Biodiversity Conference (CBD COP 15): This meeting includes the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the CBD, the 10th meeting of the COP serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, and the 4th meeting of the COP serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing. The meetings are scheduled to review the achievement and delivery of the CBD’s Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. It is also expected to take a final decision on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, as well as decisions on related topics, including capacity building and resource mobilization. **dates:** 5-17 December 2022 **location:** Montreal, Canada **www:** cbd.int/meetings

HLPF 2023: The 11th session of the HLPF will take place to review implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. **dates:** July 2023 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **www:** hlpf.un.org
For additional upcoming events, see sdg.iisd.org/

Glossary

2030 Agenda	2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
COP	Conference of the Parties
CSOs	Civil society organizations
ECOSOC	UN Economic and Social Council
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN
FGM	Female genital mutilation
HLPF	High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
IUU	Illegal, unreported and unregulated (fishing)
LDCs	Least developed countries
LLDCs	Landlocked developing countries
MPAs	Marine protected areas
MICs	Middle income countries
MVI	Multidimensional Vulnerability Index
NDC	Nationally determined contribution
ODA	Official development assistance
SCP	Sustainable consumption and production
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SIDS	Small island developing states
STI	Science, technology, and innovation
UNEA	United Nations Environment Assembly
UNGA	UN General Assembly
VNR	Voluntary National Review