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Summary of the 2026 Session of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development: 7–15 July 2026

"Make these final years count!" With this simple message, UN Secretary-General António Guterres welcomed delegates to the last session of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) before the launch of negotiations on a post-2030 framework in 2027. Guterres challenged Member States to show that 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development can still deliver meaningful progress before its deadline. Overshadowed by the impacts of climate disasters, conflicts, and a global energy crisis, and challenged by decreasing trust in multilateralism, the session presented an opportunity for Member States to share their plans to accelerate implementation in the coming years.

The overall picture of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) remains sobering—only one-third of SDG targets are on track or making meaningful progress, while overall progress is too slow to reach most of the 2030 targets. Nonetheless, delegates highlighted the value of the gains achieved so far, discussed how investments made over the past decade can bring about transformative change, and, perhaps most importantly, expressed their commitment to continue implementing the SDGs to 2030 and beyond.

The seven-day Forum was organized around the following main segments:

- in-depth reviews of five SDGs: 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation); 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy); 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure); 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities); and 17 (Partnerships for the Goals);
- presentation of 36 Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) to enhance the sharing of good practices and lessons learned in SDG implementation;
- special sessions to present perspectives from different SDG contexts and stakeholder groups; and
- a three-day ministerial segment convened under the theme, "A Future Still Ours to Shape."

During the closing plenary on Wednesday, 15 July, several Member States proposed amendments to a section of the Forum's Ministerial Declaration, regarding references to transition away from fossil fuels and the impacts of conflict on sustainable development. Following votes on the respective paragraphs to accept deletion of the reference to the transition away from fossil fuels and to retain language on conflict and sustainable development, delegates adopted the declaration by acclamation. The 65-paragraph declaration is structured around three main sections:

- an opening section on "Current trends, challenges, and their impacts on accelerating the implementation of the SDGs";
- a section outlining priority actions for advancing sustainable, inclusive, science- and evidence-based solutions for the 2030 Agenda, with five sub-sections containing specific actions for the SDGs under review at HLPF 2026; and
- a final section on the VNRs.

While all Member States voted in favor of the negotiated text, several requested the floor to clarify their country positions or record an intention to dissociate themselves from final language in some paragraphs of the declaration.

Convening under the auspices of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the overarching theme of HLPF 2026 was "Transformative, equitable, innovative and coordinated actions for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals for a sustainable future for all."

HLPF 2026 convened from 7–15 July 2026 at UN Headquarters in New York. More than 100 ministers, high-level representatives, and senior UN leaders attended the Forum, along with over 1,300 stakeholders. In addition, the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) and partners convened a number high-profile

In this Issue

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special events, exhibitions, and multi stakeholder VNR Labs to galvanize the engagement of key sectors of society around the implementation of the SDGs and follow up to the 2024 Summit of the Future. In parallel to the official programme, a broad range of stakeholders organized more than 200 in-person and virtual side events, providing additional opportunities to contribute to the theme of the HLPF and to the SDGs under review.

A Brief History of the HLPF

The UN General Assembly (UNGA) established the HLPF in July 2013, in Resolution 67/290, as the main forum for sustainable development issues within the UN. The HLPF is among 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 UNGA resolution 70/1, "Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development," a package that includes 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 country-led VNRs.

Key Developments

First Session of the HLPF: The one-day inaugural session of the HLPF, was held on 24 September 2013 under the auspices of the UNGA and followed the closing session of the CSD. Heads of State and Government articulated several 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.

2019 HLPF Session: This session (9–19 July 2019) concluded the first four-year cycle of the HLPF. The meeting's key message was that the global response to implementing the SDGs had not been ambitious enough, and renewed commitment and accelerated action were 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.

First 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. A political declaration was adopted on "Gearing up for a decade of action and delivery for sustainable development."

Second SDG Summit: The second SDG Summit took place in September 2023. Marking the halfway point to the deadline for achieving the 2030 Agenda, the Summit aimed to provide renewed impetus and accelerate action. The adopted Political Declaration opens with a statement of leaders' shared commitment. Governments reaffirm their intent to implement the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs "effectively," and note that the Agenda remains the "overarching roadmap" not only for achieving sustainable development but also for overcoming multiple current crises.

Summit of the Future: The UN Summit of the Future convened at UN Headquarters in New York in September 2024 to forge a new international consensus on safeguarding the future. The Summit adopted the Pact for the Future, covering critical global themes including: the Global Digital Compact, a framework to govern artificial intelligence (AI) technology and ensure inclusive access to digital technology for all; and the Declaration on Future Generations, a commitment to ensure decision-making accounts for the needs of youth and unborn generations.

Recent Meetings

2024 HLPF Session: Sandwiched between the 2023 SDG Summit and the 2024 Summit of the Future, HLPF 2024 placed a focus on sustaining SDG momentum in the face of accelerating and intersecting global crises. In addition to SDG 17, the session reviewed SDGs 1 (No Poverty), 2 (Zero Hunger), 13 (Climate Action), and 16 (Peaceful and Inclusive Societies). The Forum's Ministerial Declaration was adopted following a vote that affirmed the inclusion of language to acknowledge the impact of "unilateral coercive measures" on countries' sustainable development aspirations.

2025 HLPF Session: Convening between the second SDG Summit and the Second World Summit on Social Development (WSSD), HLPF 2025 marked the start of the final five years of the 2030 Agenda. In addition to SDG 17, the session reviewed SDG 3 (Health and Well-being), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), and SDG 24 (Life Below Water). The Forum's Ministerial Declaration was adopted following multiple votes over references to the right to self-determination of peoples living under colonial and foreign occupation, the impact of conflict on sustainable development, sexual and reproductive rights, and gender.

World Summit for Social Development (WSSD): The Second WSSD convened world leaders in Doha, Qatar, in November 2025 to reconfirm their commitment to a more just, inclusive, equitable, and sustainable world by addressing social challenges such as poverty, unemployment, and exclusion. The summit adopted the Doha Political Declaration, which calls for holistic approaches to end all forms of multidimensional poverty and to promote inclusive economic growth.

HLPF 2026 Report

Lok Bahadur Thapa, Vice-President, ECOSOC, opened the meeting on Tuesday, 7 July, and delegates adopted the provisional agenda (E/HLPF/2026/1). Thapa recalled that peace, sustainability, and prosperity cannot be pursued in isolation, underlining that global crises and rapid societal transformation driven by AI and other technologies make this message even more compelling. Noting that complex, interdependent problems must be addressed through coordination at an equivalent scale, he encouraged delegates to explore practical pathways to accelerate implementation.

Li Junhua, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, presented the UN Secretary-General's Report on Progress towards the SDGs (A/81/93-E/2026/73). He highlighted that 37% of SDG targets are either on track or making significant progress, including access to drinking water, electricity, and the internet, and decreased child mortality and new HIV infections, and said lives are being transformed. On the other hand, he underlined that one in seven targets have regressed below their 2015 baseline, partly because conflict, climate impacts, and demographic shifts are leading to a rebound in extreme poverty and food insecurity, with repercussions for the other SDG targets. He urged action to address inequality, especially for women and youth, and drew attention to the linkages between the SDGs and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

SDGs in Focus

SDG 6 and Interlinkages with Other SDGs – Water and Sanitation: On Tuesday, 7 July, Jan Beagle, International Labor Organization, moderated a panel on SDG 6 progress, challenges, and opportunities. He stressed that water is a human right, water management is essential to achieve gender equality, and SDG 6 progress requires better governance and inclusion. UN Special Envoy on Water, Retno Marsudi, highlighted opportunities from technology and innovation, noting technologies must remain accessible.

Saroj Jha, Global Director, Water, World Bank, said underinvestment in water infrastructure is a key barrier to achieving SDG 6 targets, highlighting good practices from several countries that created an enabling environment for public-private partnerships (PPPs) that increase private sector participation.

Kaveh Madani, Director, United Nations University Institute for Water, Environment and Health (UNU-INWEH), described increasing rates of "water bankruptcy": the permanent failure of water systems. Describing water as the "medium of delivery" for food, biodiversity, security, and human rights protection, he said technological advances in water and ecosystem monitoring and growing global momentum provide an opportunity to accelerate progress and elevate water on the global agenda beyond 2030.

On partnerships, panelists highlighted: the complementary agendas of the 2026 and 2028 UN Water Conferences in the lead up to the beyond 2030 negotiations, sharing good practices for collaboration through the World Bank's Water Forward Country Compacts; recognizing farmers' role as water stewards, and collaborating along the entire water supply chain.

Reflecting on the panelists' interventions, Margaret Maina, Women in Water and Sanitation Association, underlined the importance of water for food production (SDG 2), health (SDG 3), education (SDG 4), climate resilience (SDG 14), and dignity, equality and opportunity for all. Noting that women and girls still spend significant time fetching water, she described their role as leaders in water management, whose decisions are crucial for water governance.

Lifen Li, UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), urged recognizing the role of farmers in water management and prioritized improved water productivity, scaled-up and timely investment in water systems, and inclusive water governance as catalysts for accelerated action.

In the interactive dialogue, delegates stressed the fundamental importance of water for many SDGs, with many emphasizing these linkages must be addressed through policy coordination and integrated water management. Many highlighted that the UN Water Conferences in 2026 and 2028 and the conclusion of the International Decade of Action on Water for Sustainable Development (2018–2028) will build momentum for multilateral action on water governance towards 2030 and beyond. The INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR CONSERVATION OF NATURE (IUCN) proposed the development of an intergovernmental framework for water action that would facilitate regulation and joint implementation and provide international architecture for review and accountability. Several European countries shared experiences with transboundary water management, saying the co-development and exchange of tools for water management can boost implementation and improve water governance.

Many delegates from developing countries highlighted the gap in finance for investments in water infrastructure, with some calling for stronger efforts to leverage public finance to increase private sector participation. THE MAJOR GROUP FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH advocated nature-based solutions and, with the UN OFFICE OF THE UN HIGH COMMISSIONER ON HUMAN RIGHTS (OHCHR), underlined that water should not be seen as a business opportunity. OHCHR also called for democratic dialogue with rights holders, especially women, to co-create solutions.

SDG 7 and Interlinkages with other SDGs – Affordable and Clean Energy: On Tuesday, 7 July, Moderator Hans Olav Ibrekk outlined significant but uneven progress on SDG 7 implementation, underscoring that access to energy is an enabler of progress towards all other SDGs. He added that leveraging falling costs of renewable energy technologies requires sound regulatory frameworks, robust institutions, and stable finance.

Damilola Ogunbiyi, Special Representative for Sustainable Energy for All and Co-Chair of UN-Energy, highlighted the need to: better define energy access; understand the impacts of transboundary competition and collaboration on energy affordability; and recognize the stabilizing role of energy utilities. She also called for policy support and innovative finance for renewable energy expansion. Regarding Africa's energy challenges, she mentioned that progress in energy access is masked by population growth and urged scaling up finance for clean cooking solutions.

Francesco La Camera, Director-General, International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), outlined how adequate infrastructure can improve climate resilience and provide flexibility for renewable energy expansion. Noting inequalities in energy access, he underlined the role of finance for underserved areas and identified the high cost of capital as a remaining barrier in Africa. To improve affordability, he recommended distributed renewable energy generation, removing structural bottlenecks, and electrification at scale as short-, medium- and long-term strategies, respectively.

Vijai Modi, Director of the Laboratory for Sustainable Energy Solutions, Columbia University, focused on indicators to measure progress, noting household-level data underestimate access to energy and clean cooking in urban informal settlements, and access to data must be complemented by data on affordability. as high prices can block energy access for poor people. On strategies to accelerate energy transitions, he recommended partial replacement of cooking fuels to encourage fuel stacking and using local diagnostics to identify users that do not require permanent electricity access to reduce the cost of scaling.

Discussant Diego De Leon Segovia, Out for Sustainability, explained how the design of energy policies and energy systems create unequal access and increased risk of exclusion for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex (LGBTQI) communities and other vulnerable groups, noting that decentralized energy systems and community energy generation projects, designed with active participation of LGBTQI members, can improve equal access.

In the interactive dialogue, delegates shared lessons learned and challenges in advancing SDG 7 implementation, with many highlighting the role of predictable regulatory frameworks, strong institutions, stable finance, partnerships, and regional cooperation. Many highlighted that energy access enables progress on other SDGs and drives economic development. AZERBAIJAN and others said energy security, affordability, and sustainability are linked and reinforcing objectives, with several recommending supporting decentralized domestic generation to reduce dependency on fossil fuels and exposure to international energy crises.

UKRAINE, SUDAN, and LEBANON outlined the impact of conflict on energy access and described their work to rebuild cleaner and more distributed energy systems. Several developed countries highlighted that progress in energy efficiency is lagging, noting that efficiency is key to achieving decarbonization goals. Developing countries underscored that clean cooking must advance in tandem with energy access and clean energy transitions to avoid excluding rural and remote communities. The WOMEN’S MAJOR GROUP and others said energy and housing policies exclude women from energy transition benefits by design, and suggested reframing SDG 7 through an energy justice lens to end women’s energy poverty.

SDG 9 and Interlinkages with other SDGs – Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure: On Wednesday, 8 July, Moderator Fatou Haidara, UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), explained that SDG 9 is the production engine of the 2030 Agenda that supports economic transformation, noting progress in research and development spending, industrial productivity growth, and digital connectivity, and challenges regarding infrastructure gaps, job creation, and supply chain disruptions. She prioritized mission-oriented and adaptive industrial policy, predictable and inclusive regulatory environments, finance, recognizing data as a strategic infrastructure, and creating opportunities for women and youth.

Noting the potential of Africa’s young labor force, Claver Gatete, Executive Secretary, UN Economic Commission for Africa, highlighted trade and investment, financial resources, and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) as key drivers of African development. He said the low credit ratings of African countries are critical barriers to transformation because ratings create the perception of high risk for private investment.

John Denton, International Chamber of Commerce, focused on the gap between opportunities and investment, explaining that to unlock private capital investment, governments must ensure regulatory certainty and predictable investment cycles and shift from risk management to actively supporting the scaling of private capital flows. He suggested investment policies focus on reducing friction and risk while increasing certainty and recognizing that small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are drivers of growth rather than recipients of finance.

Mark Major, Sustainable Low Carbon Transport Partnership, said freight and logistics systems are essential for development, affordable food and basic goods, disaster response, and autonomous and resilient climate transitions. He said current policies tend to discourage private investors and focus on infrastructure, ignoring the workforce, information technology and networking components of freight and logistics systems. He said policies that include transport in industrial strategies should align with intelligent industrial planning and focus on increasing intra-African trade.

Discussant Sam Fankuchen, Founder and CEO, Golden, said policymakers should take ownership of specific outcomes, recognize AI as leapfrogging technology, and consider engaging volunteers to advance goals.

In the discussion, delegates stressed that energy disparities in many developing countries represent a structural constraint for SDG progress. Several participants suggested energy represents an opportunity for structural transformation that can be realized with policy and financial support and a supportive socioeconomic enabling environment. Others mentioned that international cooperation should focus on capacity-building and technology sharing for resilient and inclusive societies.

SDG 11 and Interlinkages with other SDGs – Sustainable Cities and Communities: On Thursday, 9 July, moderator Robbert Dijkgraaf, President-Elect, International Science Council, said cities bring together the ideas, innovation, and partnerships needed to drive SDG progress, but they also present many sustainability challenges, including unaffordable housing, inadequate infrastructure, and health impacts of bad air quality. He asked panelists to share their main lessons learned from a decade of SDG 11 implementation in tandem with the New Urban Agenda (NUA) adopted by UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) in 2016.

Anacláudia Rossbach, Executive Director, UN-Habitat, explained that the SDG 11 review at HLPF coincides with the mid-term review of the NUA, noting that while there has been progress in sustainable urban transport and waste management, more needs to be done to achieve the respective targets. She stressed that urban issues like housing affordability require multi-level coordination.

Abimbola Akinajo, Managing Director, Lagos Metropolitan Area Transport Authority, said national governance must localize international frameworks like the SDGs for positive outcomes, implementation also requires coordination among municipal agencies, and cities must take charge of densification, including by improving physical planning laws. Noting rapid urbanization in Africa, she urged building more resilient and connected rural communities to reduce drivers of urban migration.

Responding to a question on housing affordability, Rossbach said that while cities in the Global North can recycle and rededicate existing buildings, cities in the Global South mostly have to create new ones, noting that decisions regarding urban planning and building materials will have implications for climate change, social cohesion, economic development, and people’s wellbeing.

Akinajo explained that since transportation systems drive urban growth, it is important that cities in the Global South, where public transport is mostly informal, develop well-designed mass transit systems to create livable cities. Both panelists agreed housing and transportation planning must go hand-in-hand and cities must be designed to minimize both the need for transportation and transit time.

Discussant Katherine Kline, International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse, focused on the needs of elderly people, especially women, elderly people with disabilities, and poor people, who are particularly affected by the lack of accessible and affordable housing. She said age-friendly urban design requires a participatory approach and should prioritize equity in housing and inclusive urban development.

Rossbach underlined the importance of participatory urban planning, noting that local governments need support. Akinajo added that infrastructure must be co-designed with people with special needs, rather than developed for them.

In the discussion, delegates underlined the importance of cities for progress on all SDGs, noting that SDG 11 enables cities to tackle other issues. Reporting on national and local initiatives on SDG 11 implementation, many supported integrated and participatory urban planning, SDG localization, multi-level coordination, and strong partnerships. Youth delegates from MALTA and IRELAND underscored the need for youth participation in urban planning and implementation in order to build cities that are fair, resilient, and inclusive.

A delegate from India, speaking for the GROUP OF FRIENDS OF SCIENCE FOR ACTION, recommended a science-policy interface for SDG 11, citing the need for interoperable data systems for urban planning. Highlighting that security is the foundation of sustainability, INTERPOL outlined actions to protect urban cultural heritage, crime prevention and security, and victim identification in disaster response.

In closing, panelists identified people-centered urban planning for inclusive, resilient, and caring cities that leave no one behind as the common denominator of the discussion.

Special Sessions

Accelerating SDG Achievement in African Countries, Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs), and Middle-Income Countries (MICs): ***African countries, LDCs and LLDCs:*** On Wednesday, 8 July, Moderator Mohamed Fathi Ahmed Edrees, Permanent Representative of the African Union Mission to the UN, asked panelists how policies and institutional frameworks can be strengthened to promote long-term economic growth and sustainable socioeconomic development in African countries, LDCs and LLDCs.

Rabab Fatima, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS, prioritized strengthening: the inclusion of 2030 Agenda, the Doha Programme of Action for LDCs, the Awaza Programme of Action for LLDCs and other frameworks into national policies, institutions, and national development planning; coherent partnerships for implementation including UN country coordinators, civil society organizations, and the private sector; and national capacities, including data systems, monitoring, and accountability frameworks. She emphasized that closing the USD 4 trillion dollar SDG finance gap is a top priority.

Vepa Hajiyev, UN Permanent Representative of Turkmenistan, recommended turning structural vulnerabilities of LLDCs into opportunities for development through national strategies that integrate planning for water, energy and transport systems with a focus on connectivity and infrastructure resilience. As practical, scalable solutions for LLDCs, he suggested focusing on scalable multi-modal infrastructure, building sustainable cities as logistics hubs, and stable collaboration with transit countries.

Pierre Nguimkeu, Brookings Institution, focused on a stronger development finance infrastructure, including domestic resource mobilization, expanded credit for SMEs, transparency frameworks and stabilization funds; structural transformation and job creation that prioritizes national demand before export; and operationalizing regional cooperation and partnerships such as continental free-trade areas. As concrete improvements, he suggested making international finance more concessional, predictable, and counter-cyclical, while protecting long-term investments against short-term fiscal adjustments.

Discussant Queen Bisseng, Africa Coordinator for the Global Forum of Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent, and the Inclusivity Project emphasized the SDGs cannot be achieved while people lack access to water, energy, and health services and are excluded from decision making and co-creation of local solutions.

In the interactive discussion, delegates outlined national experiences and priorities in advancing SDG implementation in African countries, LDCs, and LLDCs. Speaking for LLDCs, Rwanda said transformation requires national leadership, ownership, and practical partnerships that reinforce one another, noting the importance of investments in people, economic diversification, and decent job creation.

THE AFRICAN GROUP underscored the need for a supportive international enabling environment that builds on solidarity and respects national ownership. Nepal, for LDCs, said official development assistance (ODA) commitments must be complemented by innovative financial, blended finance, and expanded concessional finance for core investments in energy, infrastructure, and climate adaptation.

Underscoring the importance of strong institutions, accountability mechanisms, and a focus on impact, the EU outlined its Global Gateway Strategy for high-quality investments, such as closing physical and digital infrastructure gaps. India outlined its approach to South-South cooperation, saying it is guided by the principle to support countries in special situations with practical partnerships and tools to support their development in accordance with their own priorities.

Middle-Income Countries: Moderator Enrique Manalo, Chair of the Like-Minded Group (LMG) on MICs, invited panelists to comment on the development of a Strategic Plan of Action (SPA) for MICs and noted a framework is provided by the Makati Declaration, which prioritizes: development metrics beyond income and gross domestic product (GDP); South-South and triangular cooperation; financial architecture reform; and recognition of country-specific development pathways.

Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, Executive Secretary, UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), said MICs are exposed to converging and interlinked challenges including dependence on primary commodity export, environmental degradation, increasing debt burdens, and stagnating inequality.

She called for a broader integrated development approach based on metrics that include key vulnerabilities.

Navid Hanif, DESA, said the SPA should: respond to MICs' specific development challenges while recognizing their diversity; offer a menu of adaptable options that respect national ownership; tackle structural barriers to reducing inequality and supporting green and digital transformations; replace GDP with multidimensional metrics; and provide tailored means of support.

Paruyr Hovhannisyan, Permanent Representative of Armenia to the United Nations, Member of the LMG-MICs, added the SPA should strengthen existing national development priorities rather than redefining them or making new commitments, and address gaps between development needs and available finance, technology transfer, innovation, capacity-building, and partnership.

Asked to identify the most important mechanism for SPA implementation, Alisjahbana suggested regional cooperation. Hanif highlighted the importance of tailored financial support and monitoring and evaluation, and Hovhannisyan cited country-driven processes aligned with national priorities.

Discussant Andressa Pellanda, General Coordinator, Latin American Campaign on the Right to Education, stressed that high inequality means MICs do not have middle income societies, noting that measures beyond GDP should capture investments in people, rights, and the planet.

In the interactive discussion, many delegates supported moving beyond GDP or income-focused measures to determine MIC status, with several noting the need to adequately reflect MIC vulnerabilities and inequality. Several highlighted that their countries face the "MIC structural paradox," where the economy grows while poverty rates stagnate, leaving a country vulnerable to external shocks even though they nominally achieved upper middle-income status. Delegates called for a more responsive international financial architecture that supports diversified economies and resilience against external shocks.

Small Island Developing States: ***Strategies for SDG success:*** On Thursday, 9 July, Surangel Whipps, Jr., President of the Republic of Palau and Chair of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), said the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (ABAS), adopted in 2024, is a bold statement of SIDS' confidence in their survival and determination to navigate their own course. He outlined three priorities for implementation: integrating vulnerability into finance decisions, noting this is a matter of survival for SIDS; improving data capacity while reducing reporting burdens; and building local capacity, including a digital transformation, to ensure people can find local jobs and stay on their islands.

Li Junhua, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, summarized key findings of the first ABAS Programme of Action Review, highlighting gaps in data, finance, and institutional coordination. On priorities for action, he noted the development of national statistical strategies, including data sharing protocols; collaboration between global, regional, and national partners for transformative action on energy, water, and other core systems; and considering vulnerability in finance decisions.

Moderator Vynnette A. Frederick, Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, asked panelists to reflect on the persistent challenges faced by SIDS and what can be done to accelerate SDG implementation. All panelists and many participants called for reform of the international financial architecture to integrate vulnerability in decisions on concessional finance. Several emphasized using GDP only does not reflect the reality of SIDS, where a single storm can cause damages worth multiple years of GDP-based income, forcing countries to continuously "build back to zero," rather than investing in long-term resilience.

Va'inga Tone, Permanent Representative of Tonga, said that SIDS' challenges are related to structural barriers such as high cost of service delivery, geographic isolation, transport costs, and extreme exposure to climate-related disasters. He called for predictable and stable finance flows, strengthening institutional capacity, and prioritizing the green energy transition to eliminate dependence on imported fossil fuels.

Matthew Bishop, Co-Director, Resilient and Sustainable Islands Initiative (RESI), said ABAS implementation must adapt to the increasingly uncertain and unstable conditions that are likely to characterize the world beyond 2030. He prioritized international finance reform, scaling capacity to transform systems through integrated strategies rather than projects, and strengthening partnerships for research and knowledge sharing.

Eustace T. Wallace Jr., Minister Counselor, Permanent Mission of Saint Kitts and Nevis, highlighted how Vulnerability-Resilience Country Profiles can identify vulnerabilities at the national, regional, and household levels, saying this layered approach is crucial to understanding the vulnerability of communities, households, and businesses and including them in resilience and disaster responses.

Li Junhua called for simplifying access to climate and resilience finance, noting many SIDS lack the capacity to complete complex applications. He also recommended smarter economic diversification into the blue, green, and grey economies.

On ways to leverage existing and mobilize new resources, Bishop said aside from reform of international finance, countries should lower the cost of capital to SIDS through partnerships and risk-sharing; use loss and damage finance; and ensure that investing in finance becomes cheaper than paying for disaster.

On national experiences in addressing persistent challenges, Tone said Tonga strengthened national planning and implementation architecture using a single system across all government bodies while undergoing a digital transformation, and said UN support should align with national governance systems to reduce fragmentation.

Discussant Jotika Sharma, Assistant National Secretary and Executive Officer for Workers Education, Fiji Trades Union Congress, said a rights-based approach is needed to protect SIDS workers who are shouldering the burden of vulnerability, including grants-based finance, data collection on the rights of common citizens, and community-driven SDG localization. David Smith, University of the West Indies, recommended paying attention to slow moving issues such as health impacts of climate change.

Donor countries reaffirmed their support for SIDS, outlining recent programmes and projects. The BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY MAJOR GROUP highlighted that finance must reach SMEs and that the labor market in many SIDS suffers from a skills mismatch because the education system still needs to be retooled for the demands of the digital economy. The HOLY SEE stressed that assessing vulnerability should consider the impact on human dignity. AOSIS said that partnerships must evolve to reduce transaction costs and that finance must match SIDS' ambition.

Strengthening Alliances for SDG Implementation: ***Stakeholder engagement for the 2030 Agenda:*** On Friday, 10 July, ECOSOC President Lok Bahadur Thapa opened the session, stressing the need to leverage the expertise, leadership, knowledge and resources for action of all sectors of society to accelerate SDG implementation.

Underscoring the value of stakeholder engagement during UN reform, Moderator Oliver Henman, Co-Chair, Major Groups and other Stakeholders (MGoS) Coordination Mechanism, asked panelists to share specific alliances and partnerships that can accelerate SDG implementation and reflect on how stakeholders can enhance the UN ecosystem.

Guy Ryder, Under-Secretary-General for Policy, Executive Office of the Secretary-General, said successful inclusion has three components: stakeholder capacity, Member State attitudes, and the space created by the UN system. He called on Member States to replace their perception of "participation as a zero-sum game," where giving space to stakeholders is understood as space lost for Member States, with an appreciation of value of stakeholders' knowledge and contributions.

Noting participation is not optional for sustainable development, Claudia Fuentes Julio, Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, prioritized: protecting activists and advocates to ensure everyone can engage with the UN without fear; moving from consultation to co-creation in the development of VNRs, public budgeting and the development of national strategies; and funding participation to strengthen the multilateral system by leaving no one behind.

Yugratna Srivastava, Major Group for Children and Youth, urged institutionalizing stakeholder participation across all pillars of the UN, including by making it a standing agenda item in the High-level Committee on Programmes, and called for the launch of a UN Convention on Sovereign Debt to accelerate SDG implementation.

Vinayaraj Veesadan Kuttappan, Stakeholder Group for Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent, said the SDGs are not failing because they are too ambitious, but because they do not reach people on the ground. He called for a commitment to place those most behind at the center of decision-making and co-creation of transformative solutions.

On building a more inclusive UN system, Fuentes Julio stressed the need for: a more coherent and coordinated system anchored in human rights; operational rather than rhetorical inclusion that engages stakeholders in the co-creation of solutions; and anchoring economics in human rights.

Lauding stakeholder participation in the development of the Pact for the Future, Ryder added that follow-up should be equally participatory, noting that many aspects of the UN80 reform process would also benefit from participation.

Noting that exclusion happens unintentionally when decision-making processes are not aligned with stakeholder availability, discussant Denisse Cufré, LGBTQI Stakeholder Group, lamented that civil society groups are chronically underfunded. She urged institutionalizing inclusion in a way that is culturally sensitive.

In their interventions, countries provided examples of successful stakeholder inclusion and underlined the importance of a whole-of-society approach to SDG implementation. Many emphasized the value of the knowledge, expertise, and leadership stakeholders, and especially frontline actors, can contribute to co-creation. Several suggested the UN reform and post-2030 Agenda focus on implementing existing commitments in an inclusive manner, rather than developing new mandates.

Other Sessions

Introduction of the Report on the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns (10YFP): On Wednesday, 8 July, Annika Lindblom, Chair of the Board of the 10YFP, introduced the annual report (E/2026/60), noting the 10YFP is a voluntary cooperation mechanism to support countries in making economies more sustainable, competitive and resilient through sustainable consumption and production. She highlighted key messages urging countries to: leverage sustainable procurement to reshape markets and help value chains meet sustainability requirements; scale digital product content transparency and credible product information to build informed, fair, competitive, and trustworthy markets; and integrate sustainable consumption and production and circularity into climate strategies, biodiversity plans, procurement reforms, and economic modernization agendas.

Messages from the UN Environment Assembly: On Tuesday, 14 July, Matthew Samuda, President of UNEA-8, presented the following recommendations on the SDGs under review at HLPF 2026:

- promote integrated water resources management and improved data collection for lake protection (SDG 6);
- strengthen international collaboration for renewable energy deployment, equal access to energy and just energy transitions (SDG 7);
- shift towards circularity, resource efficiency and sustainable consumption (SDG 9);
- implement cross-sectoral action on air pollution and coordination between early warning and disaster risk reduction in cities (SDG 11); and
- enhance efforts to mobilize means for implementation including the reform of the international financial architectures (SDG 17).

Regional Perspectives on SDG Implementation: On Tuesday, 14 July, moderator Thilmeeza Hussain, Director, Regional Commissions New York Office, asked speakers from the regional commissions to share messages, challenges, and lessons learned from implementation in the UN regions.

Fatafehi Fakafānua, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Tonga, on behalf of the Asia-Pacific Regional Forum, said accelerated implementation must be resilient, inclusive, and coordinated, noting that Pacific SIDS must address the nexus between energy security and resilience while lowering their dependence on imported fossil fuels. He also highlighted the importance of transboundary water management and meaningful participation.

Samir Abdulhafidh, Chair of the Arab Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, said there can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without respect for the law. Noting that water security is at the heart of sustainable development in the Arab region, he urged Member States to "make the most" of the upcoming UN Water Conference.

Zoran Dimitrovski, Co-Chair of the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, said the SDGs remain achievable if political leaders focus on policy coherence and delivery and all stakeholders move from fragmented approaches to coordinated and integrated action.

Làszló Borbély, Co-Chair of the UNECE Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, called for: strengthening localization to empower cities to drive implementation; capitalizing on opportunities of digitalization and AI to improve public services and achieve data-driven resilience; and using partnerships to scale up innovation and accelerate implementation.

Gilles Fabrice David, Junior, Chair of the Africa Forum on Sustainable Development, highlighted that in Africa, SDG implementation is complemented by the African Union's 2063 Agenda with ten-year implementation cycles, as reflected in the Addis Ababa Declaration. He said the Declaration calls for: accelerated and integrated implementation of both agendas; increasing domestic resource mobilization; investing in skills of women and young people to increase employment; and scaling up transformative investment leveraging the African Continental Free Trade Area.

Félix Rubio, Chair of the Latin American and Caribbean Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, said his region prioritizes water security, accelerating the energy transition, productive transformation, sustainable communities and cities, and broader access to finance and development coordination.

Discussant Rosario Diaz Garavito, Founder and CEO of The Millennials Movement, underscored that the equivalent of 4% of global military spending would be enough to combat hunger. He called for: safe, inclusive, intergenerational spaces for stakeholder participation, supported by predictable resources, tax and fiscal reform, and reform of international financial architecture.

In the discussion, countries called for strengthening and integrating regional value chains, exchanging good practices, reinforcing regional forums as catalysts for implementation, promoting synergies with regional agendas, focusing on action on the ground, and synergies between global and local processes.

In response to the discussion, Claver Gatete, Executive Secretary, Economic Commission for Africa, supported peer learning and implementation at scale. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, Executive Secretary, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, highlighted that the energy transition must be faster and fairer. José Manuel Salazar-Xirinachs, Executive Secretary, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, called for strengthening the economic foundation for development to accelerate implementation amid external shocks, and resisting pessimistic narratives.

Tatiana Molcean, Executive Secretary, Economic Commission for Europe, prioritized responses to structural trends including climate change, demographic change, technological transformation and digitalization, and peace. Rania A. Al Mashat, Executive Secretary, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, noted that her region can gain from interconnected energy infrastructure and pooled labor markets, noting that Western Asia has the highest share of youth unemployment.

Voluntary National Reviews

Friday, 10 July: On Friday, ten countries presented their VNRs, with Togo presenting for the fourth time. Burkina Faso, Estonia, Guinea, Jamaica, and Liberia, presented their third reports. Burundi, Guinea-Bissau, Marshall Islands, and Mozambique reported for the second time.

BURKINA FASO: Noting SDG implementation advanced in the context of terrorism, the COVID-19 pandemic, climate impacts, and a drop in external finance, Aboubakar Nacanabo, Minister of Economy, Finance, and Foresight, Burkina Faso, highlighted progress in domestic resource mobilization, increased food production and continued advancements regarding access to water, electricity, social protection, and housing. He called on countries to show courage in the face of crises, focus on sovereignty, build resilience, and support international cooperation and solidarity grounded in mutual respect.

Responding to questions, he explained the domestic tax rate was increased through digitalization and advances in energy access and infrastructure development were promoted through dedicated national agencies.

JAMAICA: Kamina Johnson Smith, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, Jamaica, reported achievements in fiscal reform, health, and poverty reduction. Noting that half of her country was destroyed by a recent hurricane, she stressed that fiscal reform created the space to provide multi-layered funding for crisis response. Noting that environmental shocks force SIDS to spend most of their domestic resources on crisis preparedness and response, she urged the international financial system to consider vulnerability in finance decisions.

Responding to questions, she explained that a multi-layered crisis response includes insurance, immediate relief, reconstruction aid, and investments in resilience. She also outlined efforts to improve governance, including the national statistical system, land tenure, and crime legislation.

GUINEA: Mohamed Dabo, UN Permanent Representative of Guinea to the UN, focused on progress on improved access to drinking water and electricity, industry and construction, social housing, and increases in tax revenue. He said VNR production in his country is maturing, using improved statistics, cross-cutting analyses of synergies, bottlenecks and contradictions, and the establishment of a technical committee for stakeholder engagement.

Responding to questions, he detailed the creation of water access points in rural areas, plans to expand hydroelectric generation and aluminum refining capacity, and explained that the technical committee was complemented by regional committees and that both mechanisms will also support VNR follow-up.

ESTONIA: Andres Sutt, Minister of Energy and the Environment, Estonia, highlighted progress in health, education, cybersecurity, and clean energy, noting that more work is needed to serve people with special needs, gender equality, and accelerating GHG emissions reduction.

Responding to questions, he explained that SDG monitoring data are publicly accessible and renewable energy delivers GHG emissions reductions, as well as a cleaner environment and more competitive energy prices that support economic growth.

LIBERIA: Augustine Kpehe Ngafuan, Minister of Finance and Development Planning, Liberia, said his country's national development plan aligns with 83% of SDG targets, highlighting Liberia's GDP growth and progress in poverty reduction, food security and mobile phone coverage. Noting recent spikes in fuel prices and falling ODA finance, he said his country is committed to taking ownership of its future SDG action.

In response to comments, he provided further details on a new multidimensional set of indicators to measure poverty, noting that a new national ministry will be responsible to devolve decision making powers to local governments.

MARSHALL ISLANDS: Jess Gasper Jr., Minister-in-Assistance to the President and Environment, Marshall Islands, said the VNR reflects his country's role as a large ocean state and marine steward impacted by external climate and market shocks and the legacy of nuclear testing. He outlined: a new universal basic income programme to reduce poverty; aquifer management to improve drinking water access; commitments to increase renewable energy; and nature-based solutions for infrastructure resilience.

Responding to a question regarding the increase of non-communicable diseases, he detailed a preventive health-care programme that includes screening, monitoring, healthy environments, and a sugar ban in schools.

MOZAMBIQUE: Carla Loveira, Minister of Finance, Mozambique, said her country's VNR reflects SDG localization through inclusion of voluntary local reviews (VLRs). Noting the impacts of external shocks and lack of finance, she described progress in increasing Mozambique's tax revenue, energy access and plans to expand local industrial production and processing. She cited challenges including poverty, nutrition, youth employment, and urban-rural disparities, and emphasized the need to develop early warning systems for natural disasters.

Responding to a question on future priorities, she outlined a national strategy focusing on economic transformation and financial management reform, including the establishment of a national development plan and a sovereign wealth fund to reinvest natural gas revenue.

BURUNDI: Frédéric Nimunona, Deputy Chief of Staff to the Prime Minister, Burundi, provided details on progress and actions on water and energy access, noting efforts to conserve and restore wetlands for improved water management and plans to construct multiple hydroelectricity dams that will more than triple Burundi's generation capacity. Acknowledging challenges relating to urbanization and urban infrastructure, she said a new housing agency will accelerate land reform.

She prioritized five "transformative" SDG targets, saying they will be systematically mainstreamed in sectoral plans to unlock broader development progress.

GUINEA-BISSAU: Mamadu Djaló, Ministry of Economy, Planning and Regional Integration, Guinea-Bissau, cited progress in electrification, local manufacturing, and road and bridge construction, and highlighted the establishment of a national school of administration to boost governance capacity. Noting challenges in urban-rural disparity, gender equality, and impacts of external shocks, he outlined plans for accelerated reforms and building partnerships and cooperation to ensure no one is left behind.

Responding to a question on the protection of human rights defenders, lack of monitoring for gender equality, and disregard of civil society, he said that his government works with vulnerable groups through a civil society platform and that all groups enjoy freedom of speech in Guinea Bissau.

TOGO: Paneto Bèguèdouwè, Secretary General, Ministry of Development Planning and Cooperation, Togo, said that despite security shocks from terrorism, his country advanced to the medium category in the UNDP Human Development Index. He outlined progress in renewable energy, electrification, road construction, maritime transport, youth employment, data governance, and connectivity, noting that challenges remain in ensuring access to essential services, employment for women and youth, and territorial equity.

Responding to an inquiry about Togo's SDG roadmap, he said the national plan focuses on protecting people against terrorism and poverty, uniting the population through participation in decision making, and transforming the country through investments in infrastructure, innovation and human capital.

Monday, 13 July: On Monday, seven countries presented their VNRs**,** with Switzerland presenting for the fourth time. Cabo Verde, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Italy**,** Saudi Arabia**,** Senegal, and Tunesia presented their third VNRs.

CABO VERDE: Carlos Alberto Ramos Varela, Minister of Environment, Climate Action and Energy, Cabo Verde, explained the current global energy crisis results in higher energy and water prices in Cabo Verde as drinking water is produced through energy-intensive desalination. He outlined plans to improve energy independence through an accelerated renewable energy transition and emphasized the role of partnerships in addressing remaining challenges in wastewater management.

Responding to questions, he reiterated the need for renewable energy technology transfer and partnership to make his country independent from fossil fuel imports. He also noted a new building code for resilient infrastructure design.

ITALY: Claudio Barbao, Under-Secretary for Environment and Energy Security, Italy, and other speakers presented Italy's Voluntary Local Youth Review, explaining it combines a review of Italy's Sustainable Development Strategy, aligned with the SDGs, with a series of VLRs and a Youth Voluntary Review that Italy implemented as a follow-up to the Pact for the Future. Speakers noted the report highlights the importance of coordination and improved multi-level governance for both internal and external actions for SDG implementation.

Responding to questions, speakers explained the Italian government intends to further decentralize sustainable development policy to support SDG localization.

SENEGAL: Cheikh Tidiane Dieye, Minister of Water and Sanitation, Senegal, described the participatory process for VNR development and reported progress in electricity access, public transportation, and waste collection. Noting accelerating urbanization, he said housing will be a future priority and outlined plans for economic transformation through special economic zones and measures to facilitate Senegal's graduation from LDC status.

Responding to questions, he outlined measures to enhance transparency, reduce corruption, and strengthen institutions, and confirmed Senegal's commitment support migration in line with the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration.

SAUDI ARABIA: Faisal Bin Fadel Alibrahim, Minister of Economy and Planning, Saudi Arabia, outlined his country's transition from oil-dependence towards a diversified economy, highlighting structural change in the labor market, investment in clean energy technologies, and expanded access to health services through a digital platform. He underlined the need for prioritization and discipline for the next phase of Saudi Arabia's transformation.

Responding to questions, he explained NGOs participate actively in policy development and said his country will explore measuring NGO participation. On cultural heritage, he said preservation underpins tourism and has helped create incomes for households and SMEs with activities tied to cultural heritage.

SWITZERLAND: Markus Reubi, State Secretary, Switzerland, and other speakers outlined improvements in per capita material footprint, renewable energy capacity, and gender equality, noting the pace of improvement is insufficient to meet national 2030 targets. He prioritized actions to adapt to demographic change, fight climate change and protect biodiversity, and develop an economy that preserves resources.

Responding to questions, speakers highlighted that integrated planning takes place in four-year cycles, coherence is based on effectiveness and efficiency; and civil society will continue to be engaged in sustainable development planning beyond 2030.

TUNISIA: Samir Abdelhafidh, Minister of Economy and Planning, Tunisia, reported on initiatives targeting marginalized groups, including increased spending for youth and family housing, and strategies for elder care, secondary schools, and prisoner rehabilitation. On the SDGs under review, he noted a new national water strategy, an agreement for joint aquifer management with Algeria and Libya, improved energy efficiency, and improvements in Tunisia's business environment.

Responding to questions, he said the national water strategy consists of five pillars, including water sovereignty, development of domestic water resources, water use efficiency in agriculture, and desalination, and noted additional efforts to reduce water waste, such as smart meters.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO: Zénon Mukongo Ngay, UN Permanent Representative of the DRC to the UN, focused on improvements in access to sanitation, basic education for children, and an increase in public-private partnerships, noting rapid urbanization remains a challenge. Pointing to challenges caused by conflict, demographic change, and falling ODA, he urged all partners to mobilize more resources.

In response to a question about his country's own resource mobilization strategy, he explained his government prioritizes domestic resources, which are insufficient to cover the SDG financing gap, especially given an unprecedented decrease in ODA.

Tuesday, 14 July: On Tuesday, ten countries presented their VNRs, with Uruguay presenting for the fifth time. Cameroon, Norway, Tanzania, and the United Arab Emirates presented their third VNRs. Albania, Kiribati, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Somalia, and Tonga reported for the second time.

ALBANIA: Noting that EU integration and SDG implementation provide a common framework for transformation, Enea Karakaçi, Minister of Infrastructure and Energy, Albania, highlighted progress in increasing women's representation in decision making, while acknowledging challenges in access to justice and the job market. Noting his government uses the "leave no one behind" principle as a lens for reform design and resource allocation, he outlined future priorities including investing in people and strengthening social cohesion, finance, and partnerships.

Responding to question on slow progress in integrating marginalized groups, specifically Roma and Sinti, Karakaçi acknowledged persistent challenges and explained integration will be addressed as part of the EU accession process.

KIRIBATI: Stressing that the 2030 Agenda is fully integrated in national planning, Ruateki Tekaiara, Minister of Education, Kiribati, outlined mixed results in his country's key performance areas, including: increasing education participation rates amid falling finance for scholarships; stable economic growth accompanied by stagnating poverty rates; improved health service delivery and maternal and child health, contrasted by higher road traffic casualty and suicide rates; and investments in climate adaptation and community resilience in the face of increasing climate impacts.

Another speaker responded to questions regarding partnerships, suggesting that they are essential for development and must be country-led and adapted to Kiribati's reality. She also confirmed the VNR informs budget planning and follow-up reports are made to cabinet.

URUGUAY: Elizabeth Bogosian, Director-General of International Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Uruguay, highlighted progress regarding the second energy transition, including electrification of industry and transport, and added that future priorities include moving from coverage to quality and resilience with regard to water and electricity access, promoting green jobs, and strengthening means of implementation.

Responding to a question on social equity, she said reducing child poverty is a priority for Uruguay's government, outlining a unified system for financial transfers to support families and a gender-equal national care system.

TONGA: Fatafehi Fakafānua, Prime Minister of Tonga, reported progress in access to water and sanitation, primary school enrollment, mobile phone coverage, road construction, and renewable energy deployment, and cited an urgent need to reduce dependence on fossil fuel imports. Recalling the damage caused by the 2022 Hunga Tonga–Hunga Ha'apai eruption and tsunami, he described progress in urban reconstruction and the establishment of a trust fund for early warning disaster risk reduction.

Responding to questions, he supported operationalizing the multidimensional vulnerability index to reflect the vulnerability of SIDS in financing decisions and highlighted the SIDS Pacific Resilience Facility, a SIDS-led climate and disaster risk financing facility investing in resilience, noting it shifts focus from recovery to preparedness.

SAINT KITTS AND NEVIS: Konris Maynard, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Energy and Utilities, Domestic Transport, Information, Communication and Technology, and Posts, Saint Kitts and Nevis, reported that joint investments in domestic renewable energy and water desalination, storage, and distribution are transforming lives by providing families and businesses with essential needs. Noting additional investments in infrastructure and urban housing, he said in his country "sustainable development is measured by the hope it creates for the next generation."

Asked about his country's approach to reducing violent crime, he explained crime is treated as a public health issue, starting with an assessment of the conditions that allow crime to thrive. He said this approach has achieved a 75% reduction in crime and enjoys broad public support.

CAMEROON: Michel Tommo Monthé, UN Permanent Representative of Cameroon to the UN, reported on progress and challenges across the SDGs under review, including the need for renewable energy expansion to keep up with rapid demand growth. On SDG 9, he detailed progress in transport infrastructure and reform of the railway sector, noting challenges in supporting innovation and finance for business. Recalling that SDG progress is constrained by climate change impacts, food insecurity, the digital divide, and population displacement, he prioritized domestic resource mobilization, resilience and improving public governance effectiveness.

Responding to a question on factors that can unlock accelerated implementation, he said partnerships, finance, and technology sharing, especially ITC deployment, can accelerate implementation as called for in the Pact for the Future.

TANZANIA: Kitila Mkumbo, Minister of State, President's Office, Planning and Investment, Tanzania, highlighted improvements in drinking water access, renewable energy generation capacity, internet coverage, a national train network, and public transport access, noting that solid waste collection, poverty reduction, and job creation must accelerate. He underlined that private sector engagement must expand to mobilize sufficient finance and prioritized climate and biodiversity protection to safeguard the opportunity for future generations for green industrialization.

Responding to questions, he highlighted interventions to address social inequalities, including infrastructure development in both urban and rural areas, rural digitalization, and support for small-scale agricultural transformation to establish value chains.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES (UAE): Hanan Ahil, Managing Director, Chair, UAE National Committee on SDGs, outlined her country's integrated development model, noting that SDG progress is tracked using 200 indicators, 60% of which the UAE is making progress or has already achieved SDG targets. Stressing the value of shared knowledge, she highlighted capacity-building through partnerships to accelerate SDG implementation.

Responding to a question on data governance, she outlined the UAE's Data Action Plan, which includes incentives for data sharing and exchange.

NORWAY: Åsmund Grøver Aukrust, Minister of International Development, Norway, and another speaker described their country's VNR approach, including broad stakeholder participation, peer review, and a citizens' panel on sustainable production and consumption, noting Norway still faces challenges in this area. Reporting broad progress towards most SDG targets, they shared that remaining challenges will be addressed through, among other measures, improved policy coherence and systematic management of tradeoffs.

Responding to questions, they said Norway is identifying negative spillovers in other countries and is committed to improving policy coherence in this regard.

SOMALIA: Mohamud Abdirahman Sh. Farah, Minister of Planning, Investment, and Economics, Somalia, described recent events shaping Somalia's context for SDG implementation, including reduced conflict, debt relief, and drought that is leading to food insecurity and internal displacement. Reporting progress across several SDGs, he stressed that addressing food insecurity is a priority, alongside attracting investment, improving accountable governance, and establishing data systems for evidence-based transformation.

Responding to questions, he said resilience must be treated as the foundation for poverty reduction and development, not as a separate pillar, noting that Somalia's experience has shown that strong institutions need strong data.

Wednesday, 15 July: On Wednesday, nine countries presented their VNRs, with Egypt presenting for the fourth time. Bahrain, Brazil, Jordan, Malawi, and Rwanda presented their third VNRs. Algeria, Gabon, and Moldova reported for the second time.

GABON: Noting SDG integration in the national development plan and national accounts, Louise Pierrette Mvono, Minister of Planning and Foresight, Gabon, outlined progress in developing agricultural value chains for food sovereignty and actions to improve renewable energy generation while addressing urban-rural disparities in energy access. She added that aging infrastructure is slowing progress on energy and water access.

Responding to a question, she said Gabon's industrialization strategy prioritizes local transformation of minerals, manganese, and iron, developing agricultural value chains, and aligning education and vocational training with labor market demands.

JORDAN: Zeina Toukan, Minister of Planning and International Cooperation, Jordan, explained that Jordan's VNR uses nationally validated data and includes inputs from public consultations and a series of VLRs. Noting that his country meets SDG 6 and SDG 7 targets, he described the construction of a large-scale water desalination plant to ensure resilience, adding that maintaining economic stability in the face of refugee influxes and global crises requires integrated approaches to sustainable development.

Responding to a question on inclusion and accountability, he explained SDG data are publicly accessible via an online dashboard and said Jordan's modernization strategy is gender responsive.

REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA: Alexei Buzu, Secretary-General of the Government, Moldova, said despite significant impacts from Russia's war against Ukraine and the recent spike in fuel prices, his country has made progress on 13 SDGs, noting that progress on health (SDG 3) and sustainable cities and communities (SDG 11) has reversed. On health, he outlined plans to increase education and services for survivors of domestic violence, noting the EU integration agenda helps mobilize resources for further action.

Responding to a question on the impacts of and responses to high energy prices, he outlined measures to compensate households, diversify energy sources while greening the energy mix, and improve energy efficiency in public buildings.

BAHRAIN: Noor bint Ali Alkhulaif, Minister of Sustainable Development and Chief Executive, Bahrain Economic Development Board, said her country's strategy aims to empower people, celebrate identity, secure the future and ensure economic stability. Detailing progress under each pillar, she highlighted advances in medical innovation, education and retraining, especially for women, and preserving and upgrading infrastructure in heritage sites to enable sustainable tourism.

Responding to a question on economic diversification, she explained that over 20 years Bahrain has moved from an oil-focused to a diversified economy in which no sector contributes more than 20% of GDP. On gender equality, she added the establishment of a leadership council for women has increased the share of women in in education, decision-making, and business leadership.

MALAWI: Noting his country's young population and the dominance of the agricultural sector, Cliff Kenneth Chiunda, Treasury Secretary, Malawi, reported moderate progress on the SDGs under review. He said priorities include domestic resource mobilization, investments in water management and irrigation, and development of agricultural value chains. A youth delegate described how young people inform policy development and lead economic growth through youth-led enterprises.

Responding to questions, Chiunda said decentralization also aims to empower women and youth at the community level, and recognized challenges in accessing funding for investments in rural infrastructure.

ALGERIA: Lounges Magramane, Secretary General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, National Communication Abroad and African Affairs, Algeria, said his country is implementing a five-year roadmap addressing structural projects, including renewable energy transition, water security, economic diversification and African integration, participation of women and youth, and digital modernization. He noted that due to climate impacts and demographic transitions, investments in water desalination and health services must be prioritized.

Responding to questions, he detailed plans to increase the non-hydrocarbon tax base for resource mobilization and stressed that partnerships should deliver technology transfer alongside investment, especially in projects aiming to export renewable energy.

BRAZIL: Noting that Brazil's VNR was informed by over 30,000 Brazilians who participated in conferences on local realities and opportunities, Sérgio França Danese, UN Permanent Representative of Brazil to the UN, highlighted reductions in inequalities, hunger, and unemployment. He also presented Brazil's SDG 18 on ethnic-racial equality, explaining that it includes targets and indicators that track actions against racism and exclusion.

Responding to questions on SDG 18, he explained it provides a basis for affirmative action against race or ethnicity-based exclusion, working in tandem with measures for gender protection and participation of women.

EGYPT: Ahmed Mohammed Tawfiq Rustum, Minister of Planning and Economic Development, Egypt, said Egypt uses its VNR as a policy instrument for planning, prioritization, and finance, noting it employs financial intelligence to map financial inputs to outcomes. Outlining key measures to drive progress, including expanded access to social protection and education, infrastructure investment, governance reform, and private sector-led growth, he proposed making resilience, adaptive governance key pillars of the SDGs beyond 2030.

Responding to questions, he explained that his government is committed to fiscal discipline and improving its credit ratings to allow the private sector to lead expansion for job creation.

RWANDA: Yusuf Murangwa, Minister of Finance and Economic Planning, Rwanda, underlined GDP growth, life expectancy, financial inclusion, youth unemployment, and access to clean water and electricity, noting declining development finance and labor market skills match as primary challenges.

Responding to a question on Rwanda's approach to partnerships, he stressed the need for consistent, long-term partnerships that are country-owned and aligned with domestic priorities, noting that fragmented financial frameworks make it hard to consolidate and scale interventions.

General Debate

ECOSOC President Lok Bahadur Thapa opened the HLPF Ministerial Segment on Monday, 13 July. Following the presentation of a video titled "A future still ours to shape," Thapa said: the review of SDGs and the VNRs presented at HLPF 2026 show that removing bottlenecks drives smarter and faster implementation; investments in water, energy, infrastructure, and cities accelerate implementation of all SDGs; and VNRs are a platform to share what works.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres lamented that SDG progress has been limited or reversed by global conflicts, debt burdens, limited fiscal space, concentration of power, and increasing climate impacts. He urged immediate reestablishment of ceasefires and respect for the international right to freedom of navigation. Calling on delegates to make the final years count, he said the 2027 SDG Summit will be a critical opportunity to keep the 2030 vision alive.

Annalena Baerbock, President of the General Assembly, described the impacts of the renewable energy transition, which most believed to be impossible only a decade ago. She suggested that if the international community chooses hope and collaboration, it will prevail where individual governments cannot. Noting that many FIFA World Cup games are decided in the last minutes, she urged states to keep fighting to save the SDGs.

Noting the current debt crisis is "mortgaging our future," Jaewon Choi, Major Group for Children and Youth, called for: negotiation of an international convention on sovereign debt; maintaining and reinforcing the independence of the UN Human Rights System; and integrating citizen-generated and disaggregated data in SDG reviews. He said progress on international tax cooperation and AI governance shows that true partnership can drive progress. He also called for enhanced participation of youth and other stakeholders across the UN system and follow-up to all actions agreed under the Pact for the Future.

General Debate: The Ministerial Segment's General Debate convened from 13-15 July. More than 60 ministers and other high-level representatives of Member States, as well as numerous representatives of regional groups, civil society, and the private sector delivered statements. Many reaffirmed their commitment to the 2030 Agenda and to multilateralism, emphasizing that no government can achieve sustainable development alone. Delegates acknowledged that conflict, climate disasters, declining ODA finance, and price shocks have reversed hard-won gains and reduced investments in SDG implementation and resilience where they are most needed. Speakers also addressed proposals for the process to shape the post-2030 framework, which will begin in 2027.

URUGUAY urged investing in the ability of institutions to transform human lives for a more caring and human world. The EU said the promise that global cooperation can deliver for the people is being tested by crises and eroding trust, noting the upcoming meetings of the Conferences of the Parties of the three Rio Conventions and the UN80 Reform initiative are opportunities to rebuild trust. NORWAY, for the Pathfinders for Peaceful Just and Inclusive Societies, said action on SDG 16 pays dividends across all SDGs and cautioned that energy transition without inclusion will deepen inequalities.

Noting that national ambition must be met by global support, TUVALU called for recognizing vulnerability in concessional finance allocations for SIDS. Bangladesh, for LDCs, urged Member States to participate in the mid-term review of the Doha Programme of Action, reform the international financial architecture to reflect the vulnerabilities of LDCs, and ensure that climate finance is accessible. Haiti, for the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), called for the operationalization of the Multidimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI) to reflect SIDS' vulnerability in concessional finance. The Solomon Islands, for the PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM (PIF), outlined priorities of the PIF's Blue Pacific Continent 2050 Strategy regarding the SDGs in focus, including: prioritizing water security for health; dignity, and resilience; dual energy strategies for immediate electricity access; long-term independence from fossil fuel imports; and a Pacific resilience facility for locally led resilience investments.

CZECHIA called for a conservative sustainable development agenda based on free markets and free decisions that rejects false choices between prosperity and sustainability. EGYPT said sustainable development is most successful when it is supported by integrated planning and partnership.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA reported on establishing a water and sanitation authority, completing an electricity transmission assessment, and housing policy reform aligned with green policy standards. KYRGYZSTAN said climate change is already threatening its water supply from mountain glaciers and urged countries to support the protection of mountain ecosystems. ANGOLA requested international cooperation on SDG 11 to strengthen public services, given rapid urbanization. AZERBAIJAN noted its "18th SDG" on humanitarian demining action. EQUATORIAL GUINEA said institutions must listen, build consensus, and evaluate public policy. PERU championed its National Development and Social Inclusion Policy to strengthen infrastructure in rural areas. CANADA noted Indigenous knowledge remains vital to protect land and ecosystems.

Many speakers focused on local-level transformation and a whole-of-government/whole-of-society approaches, with many stressing the needs of women, girls, youth, and the elderly. BULGARIA stressed that peace, human rights, and the environment are indivisible. ESWATINI bemoaned structural bottlenecks and stressed the importance of closing the urban-rural divide. ECUADOR invited everyone to the International Mayors Forum 2026 on localizing the SDGs. Iceland, for the UN LGBTQI Core Group, said the 2030 Agenda must benefit everyone. BRAZIL urged focusing on whether countries' progress includes those who are systematically excluded. NEPAL stressed the need for disaster resilience and participatory local and regional development planning. GUATEMALA called for emulating Mayan 20-year planning cycles.

Many speakers addressed specific concerns about the current geopolitical situation. Delegates cited the negative impacts of current or recent armed conflict, noting that it has undermined prospects for sustainable development in many places. Delegates mentioned destruction of energy infrastructure, depletion of natural resources, pollution of water, damage to industries, and weakening of institutions. CAMBODIA and BELARUS said that without peace there is no sustainable development. HAITI said the state must renew trust in public action, because without security and state authority there is no lasting stability or transition. LIBERIA emphasized the importance of laying the foundation for a peaceful nation. BELARUS bemoaned artificial unilateral coercive barriers and highlighted the joint Russian Federation-Belarus Eurasian Charter of Diversity and Multipolarity in the 21st Century. The HOLY SEE quoted Pope Leo, saying lasting peace requires the participation of all. FINLAND underscored that arming countries uses up resources.

The UAE condemned Iran's attacks on Gulf countries and maritime routes, calling shipping an essential foundation of sustainable development. UKRAINE said Russian aggression targets civilian infrastructure and thanked partners for their support. QATAR supported peaceful means of settling disputes for peace and security and to avoid further repercussions from the situation in the Gulf.

LEBANON requested flexible financing for post-crisis countries, noting reconstruction efforts despite having the world's highest rate of refugees. ALGERIA urged equitable solutions addressing the international situation's root causes, including reducing debt burdens, and a responsible and equitable global AI system. MALI highlighted reestablishing state authority after conflict to ensure security and peace and stressed the importance of the mining sector. ISRAEL noted its new damage limitation legislative framework for rebuilding communities after war.

Many developing and middle-income countries, as well as some donor countries, called for revitalizing multilateral cooperation and global partnerships for financing sustainable development. ZAMBIA urged reform of the international financing system. INDONESIA called for resilient value chains. LAOS and THAILAND called for the 2027 SDG Summit to foster commitments and international development architecture. CAMBODIA advocated increasing and leveraging foreign direct investment (FDI). NEPAL urged derisking investments for greatest-need countries. MAURITIUS said traditional economic activity cannot singlehandedly support health care and food security. BANGLADESH requested compensation for losing access to concessional funding after graduating from LDC status. SURINAME called for international recognition of forests' services, with predictable finance and direct support for Indigenous Peoples and local communities. KENYA urged more concessional, inclusive, and predictable development-oriented finance. FIJI said debt servicing competes with sustainability, noting green and blue bonds cannot replace concessional finance. Uruguay, for the GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA, said eradication of poverty is the greatest global challenge, calling for ending colonial and foreign occupation, and respect for territorial sovereignty and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

Several countries noted their participation in regional cooperative partnerships. Laos, for the ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS (ASEAN), reported on ASEAN's Community Vision 2045 for political cohesion, economic integration, and social responsibility. GUINEA requested support for its new International Institute for Research and Capacity Development on South-South and Triangular Cooperation. TURKMENISTAN noted its proposal to establish a Regional Centre for Climate Change Technologies in Central Asia to combat desertification. MALI reported on the Confederation of Sahelian States for strengthening resources and solidarity.

Several donor countries noted their commitment to development assistance. ITALY said responses must be interconnected. GERMANY lamented increasing social inequalities alongside the growing financing gap. SPAIN urged implementation of the 2025 Seville Commitment. LATVIA noted its assistance to Ukraine and eastern Asian developing countries. TÜRKİYE announced its aim for the 2026 UN Climate Change Conference to bring climate partnerships to everyone and enable coalitions of interested actors to move faster. PORTUGAL highlighted debt-for-climate swaps and mobilizing responsible private investment.

NORWAY raised concerns about finance, noting ODA declines must stop, and emphasized the importance of accountable institutions and the rule of law. DENMARK, with SWEDEN, said it has provided 0.7% of its GDP to ODA for 40 years. SWEDEN said only four countries have achieved this and called for stronger contributions from all partners. FRANCE said there are no "a la carte" solutions and called for greater innovative and private financing, coherence between multilateral and other partners, and implementation of the Seville, Nice, Doha, and Paris commitments.

ETHIOPIA stressed the importance of effective partnerships, including on capacity-building and technology transfer, to address the challenges, risks, and continuing crises undermining its development trajectory. JAMAICA said national efforts to confront challenges cannot overcome global structural constraints. Morocco, for the AFRICAN GROUP, said closing gaps requires an international enabling environment delivering on already-made commitments. TIMOR-LESTE requested concessional financing as it graduates from LDC status.

The RUSSIAN FEDERATION invited experts from various regions to establish an expert group on the post-2030 agenda for countries at different development levels. SINGAPORE said post-2030 contours must address where SDG synergies have delivered results or fallen short.

GABON stressed that sustainable development is the bedrock of economic, social, and environmental transformation, through structural reforms. The REPUBLIC OF KOREA and DENMARK added that the SDGs remain our strongest roadmap to a sustainable, inclusive, and peaceful future. NIGERIA stressed the importance of SDG monitoring frameworks to measure outcomes. SIERRA LEONE and others noted progress in aligning national development plans with the 2030 Agenda and other international frameworks. ARMENIA emphasized that translating commitments into tangible results requires collective responses. China, for FRIENDS OF THE GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE (GDI), highlighted their commitment to policy dialogue and invited countries to join. ERITREA said sustainable development requires national ownership. IRAN noted immense opportunities exist, but without equitable access there is a risk of widening inequalities.

AUSTRIA emphasized that implementation must start where people live. HUNGARY cautioned against excluding members of ethnic minorities. LITHUANIA emphasized local and regional authorities' engagement with the 2030 Agenda. MALAWI noted progress on justice system reforms, including victims' support units. ICELAND called for locally led development through genuine partnerships as energy insecurity, geopolitical tensions, and humanitarian needs increase. UGANDA underscored the importance of social and economic transformation at local levels, with a whole-of-government/whole-of-society approach.

Jamaica, for FRIENDS OF CHILDREN AND THE SDGS, lamented that investments in early childhood deliver high economic returns yet are frequently cut. A youth representative from the NETHERLANDS noted flaws in systems meant as solutions, but said youth are not giving up on humanity and nature.

On AI, the HOLY SEE cautioned that any transformation that undermines human dignity will undermine sustainable development. SLOVAKIA highlighted opportunities in responsible AI use. MONTENEGRO noted infrastructure includes digital connectivity now. SWITZERLAND announced the Geneva AI Summit in 2027. COLOMBIA stressed more productive economies based on knowledge, including digital.

HUNGARY noted it chairs the UN Group of Friends in Support of Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) in Health Care Facilities, saying meaningful results come from such multilateral cooperation. SWEDEN, for the JUSTICE ACTION COALITION, called for equal access to legal protections regarding water, based on human rights. KAZAKHSTAN noted its leadership of a global initiative to establish an international water organization to shape the water agenda beyond 2030.

TAJIKISTAN pointed to the 2025–2034 Decade of Action for Cryospheric Sciences and, with ANDORRA, called for stronger partnerships and funding for sustainable development in mountain regions. TAJIKISTAN stressed the challenges faced by mountainous LLDCs.

AUSTRALIA said SIDS have the highest stakes in sustainable development, with acute water and energy threats, "tyrannies of scale," and crises all imposing constraints. Palau, for AOSIS, with AUSTRALIA and MALTA, called for measuring not just national income but countries' vulnerability, using the Multidimensional Vulnerability Index. FRIENDS OF THE GDI, CUBA, IRAN, and VENEZUELA called for ending restrictive unilateral measures. INDIA and VENEZUELA said technology and innovation must be shared as a public good. The UK called for a "modern approach," bringing many more partners on board to unlock new finance, innovation, and impact.

Many SIDS and other countries urged using multidimensional progress and vulnerability measures, not just GDP, in accordance with the Sevilla Commitment. MICRONESIA called for strengthening access to climate and development financing supported by monitoring systems to remain responsive to needs. VIET NAM requested supportive partners for avoiding the "middle-income trap" as it graduates to middle-income status. SRI LANKA juxtaposed its regained upper middle-income status with interconnected pressures and vulnerabilities, saying the Sevilla Commitment must protect hard-won development gains.

PHILIPPINES noted its new middle-income status and efforts to ensure its sustainability despite its climate vulnerability through community-led solutions. The CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC called for reform of the international financial architecture to allow countries to leverage their resources for sustainable development. Outlining recent financial commitments received, CÔTE D'IVOIRE said commitments must now translate ambition into action.

CROATIA highlighted its path from victim of conflict to sustainable development, requiring rule of law, human rights, and resilience. MALAYSIA said sustainable development cannot flourish amid conflict and human suffering. CHILE noted the persistent annual financing gap of almost USD 4 trillion.

CYPRUS, for the GROUP OF FRIENDS FOR CULTURE, said cultural heritage must be recognized for building inclusive, resilient, cohesive societies. The DOMINICAN REPUBLIC cited challenges in achieving results at the pace citizens expect, stressing the value of volunteer work. SLOVENIA cautioned that progress on SDG 12 (Sustainable Consumption and Production), SDG 13 (Climate Action), and SDG 14 (Life Below Water) is too slow.

NEW ZEALAND reiterated its commitments on partnerships despite global fiscal pressures. MEXICO proposed rethinking how multilateral policies are designed amid global pressures of conflict, geopolitical tensions, and environmental disasters. NICARAGUA called for an equitable international framework that respects international law, internal affairs, and the right to development. MONGOLIA noted its economic liberalization reforms, green development agenda, and upcoming hosting of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD).

COSTA RICA called for an integrated agenda aligned with the Sevilla Commitment, with stronger data, accounting, and public policy systems. KUWAIT condemned Iran's actions targeting civilians and vital infrastructure. BELGIUM supported integrating gender equality across the SDGs and science-based decision making.

THE GAMBIA criticized inequitable progress on the 2030 Agenda, structural imbalances in the global economy, and growing vulnerabilities and financing gaps. TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO highlighted the Loss and Damage Fund and the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS, saying global commitments must improve lives locally through national ownership. BELIZE said they, along with numerous other SIDS, have cut their debt burdens. PANAMA said it is one of few carbon-negative countries, with over 60% forest cover.

BURKINA FASO reported a multidimensional crisis of security, climate change, and indebtedness, and drastic drop in development. TOGO requested concessional funding for structural transformation with social inclusion and environmental sustainability. OMAN noted the digital transformation's importance for supporting innovation and technology to enhance competitiveness.

SENEGAL reported progress on poverty and food security but worsening environmental harms, economic challenges, and lack of financing. LIBYA outlined its National Youth Strategy for developing youth-specific policies and programmes, an enabling environment for digital start-ups, and nature-based solutions for water scarcity. GHANA reported on its recent co-chairing of the Water for People International Dialogue. POLAND called for mutually reinforcing efforts to consolidate development gains and reverse harms from conflict during the 2027 SDG Summit.

Closing Plenary

On Wednesday afternoon, 15 July, delegates gathered for the closing plenary.

Adoption of the Ministerial Declaration: Suela Janina, UN Permanent Representative of Albania and Co-Facilitator of the negotiations on the Ministerial Declaration, introduced the draft Ministerial Declaration (E/HLPF/2026/L.1), thanking delegates for sending a strong signal of commitment to the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

Uruguay, for the GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA, introduced an amendment to remove a reference to the UAE Consensus on a just, orderly, and equitable phase out of fossil fuel consumption adopted at the 28th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Dubai in 2024, saying the HLPF should not mention specific UNFCCC initiatives. Noting the UAE Consensus was unanimously adopted and is indispensable for climate action, the EU opposed removing the reference. Delegates voted to remove the reference. BRAZIL, COLOMBIA and the UAE expressed their continued support for the UAE Consensus.

Saying they could not support politicized elements in the Declaration, ISRAEL requested removing a paragraph stating that there can be no sustainable development without peace and that factors that can give rise to conflict, such as inequality, corruption, poor governance, and illicit financial and arms flows, are addressed in the 2030 Agenda. The reference asks Member States to redouble their efforts to resolve or prevent conflict and support post-conflict countries. Delegates voted to retain the reference.

Delegates then adopted the amended Ministerial Declaration by acclamation.

ISRAEL asked to record its dissociation from the paragraph on peace and sustainable development in the HLPF 2026 report. IRAN reiterated that the 2030 Agenda is voluntary and military aggression is detrimental to its achievement. GUATEMALA clarified that transboundary cooperation between states must be voluntary, in the exercise of the states' sovereignty and aligned with their national priorities and circumstances. PARAGUAY added that follow-up and review is also voluntary, states produce VNRs in the exercise of their sovereign rights, and the Ministerial Declaration cannot limit a country's capacity to produce food.

JAPAN and the UK distanced themselves from a reference to the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR), noting it does not reflect recent discussions under the UNFCCC. AUSTRALIA, speaking also for CANADA and NEW ZEALAND, lamented disruptive practices during the negotiation of the Ministerial Declaration, noting that the Rio Principles, a set of 27 guidelines including CBDR adopted by over 175 countries at the 1992 UN "Earth Summit," are a package and the isolated reference to CBDR in the Ministerial Declaration does not set a precedent for other processes.

The RUSSIAN FEDERATION asked to record its dissociation from references to gender equality. The HOLY SEE stated its interpretation of gender as referring to the biologically determined identities of men and women.

Closure of the Meeting: Delegates adopted the draft report of the meeting (E/HLPF/2026/L.2) on the understanding that the ECOSOC Secretariat would make final revisions.

Navid Hanif, Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development, DESA, delivered closing remarks on behalf of UN Secretary-General António Guterrez. He said while HLPF 2026 showed that progress on many SDGs is stagnating or reversing, it also demonstrated that progress is possible. He said the world is expanding renewable energy at record speed. He added that more than 400 VNRs to date show that development works best when policies are integrated, country-led, and aligned with national priorities. Noting that reducing debt and sustainable financial management are essential, he urged countries to rapidly implement the Sevilla Commitment to close the SDG financing gap.

Reminding delegates that multilateralism can succeed if countries are willing to compromise and follow up their commitments with tangible action, ECOSOC President Lok Bahadur Thapa gaveled HLPF 2026 to a close at 5:22 pm.

Ministerial Declaration

The 2026 Ministerial Declaration identifies current trends, successes, and challenges, and their impacts on accelerating the implementation of the SDGs, alongside priority actions for advancing transformative, equitable, innovative and coordinated actions for the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs for leaving no one behind.

On current challenges to achieving the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs, the Declaration:

- reaffirms Ministers' commitment to effectively implement the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs;
- reaffirms that eradicating poverty, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge today and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development;
- recognizes that the gap between sustainable development aspirations and financing for them continues to widen, particularly in developing countries;
- reaffirms there is no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development; and
- reaffirms commitment to upholding international law, including sovereignty and territorial integrity, and calls for immediate cessation of damage to, or disruption of, critical infrastructure.

Regarding priority actions for the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs, the Declaration:

- recommits to accelerate implementation;

- reaffirms all Rio Declaration on Environment and Development principles, including common but differentiated responsibilities;
- stresses the need to reinvigorate the multilateral system, with the UN at its core;
- recognizes the special challenges facing all developing countries, in particular African countries, LDCs, LLDCs, SIDS, middle-income countries, and countries in conflict and post-conflict situations;
- urges the UN to elaborate on the specific inter-agency, system-wide response plan for middle-income countries;
- commits to working for a significant increase in investments to close the gender gap and eliminate all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls;
- calls for scaling up international public finance and improved access to concessional finance; and
- commits to strengthening digital cooperation to achieve an inclusive, open, sustainable, fair, safe and secure digital future for all.

On ensuring the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all (SDG 6), Ministers and high-level representatives commit to, *inter alia*:

- strengthen the institutional capacity of local, subnational, and national authorities and achieve universal, equitable, affordable, and non-discriminatory access to safe drinking water, sanitation, and hygiene services;
- enhance risk-informed, sustainable, and disaster- and climate-resilient integrated water resources management;
- increase water use efficiency and improve sustainable water resource allocation and management across all sectors and supply chains;
- scale up finance, investment and capacity-building for the implementation of SDG 6 targets from all sources;
- invest in restoration, conservation, revitalization, and sustainable use of water-related ecosystems; and
- strengthen early warning systems, flood risk management, and disaster-resilient water infrastructure.

On ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all (SDG 7), Ministers and high-level representatives commit to, *inter alia:*

- promote an enabling environment for the increased usage of sustainable, cleaner and more efficient cooking and heating methods in all countries;
- strengthen technology development and dissemination on mutually agreed terms, innovation, capacity-building, data and technical cooperation;
- expand and modernize grids;
- scale up finance and investment in energy; and
  mobilize partnerships among all stakeholders.

On building resilient infrastructure, promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialization, and fostering innovation (SDG 9), Ministers and high-level representatives commit to, *inter alia:*

- mobilize and align financing for structural transformation;
- build integrated industrial ecosystems and value chains of developing countries, ensuring access to clean energy technologies;
- increase the added value and competitiveness of exports of critical minerals and commodities of developing countries;
- upgrade infrastructure and retrofit industries to make them sustainable, with increased resource-use efficiency and greater adoption of clean and environmentally sound technologies and industrial processes, and advance sustainable consumption and production;
- strengthen skills development, including digital and information literacy and technical, vocational, and education training, and tertiary education; and
- promote decent work and access to opportunities for youth, women and workers in informal sectors, including by expanding access to technology-intensive industries and expanding women's full, equal, and meaningful participation.

On making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable (SDG 11), Ministers and high-level representatives commit to, *inter alia:*

- progressively achieve the full realization of the right to adequate housing for everyone;
- make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable, including through implementation of the New Urban Agenda;
- continue to strengthen efforts in providing access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport;
- stress the importance of integrated, participatory and inclusive urban planning;
- increase investments in sustainable urban infrastructure;
- enhance localization of SDGs; and
- strengthen the role of cities as a catalyst for global sustainability and innovation.

On strengthening the means of implementation and revitalizing the global partnership for sustainable development (SDG 17), Ministers and high-level representatives commit to, *inter alia:*

- support the launch of an ambitious package of reforms and actions to close this financing gap with urgency and catalyze sustainable development investments at scale;
- strengthen domestic resource mobilization, including through international support to developing countries, to improve domestic capacity for tax and other revenue collection;
- commit to continued reform of the international financial architecture;
- urge developed countries to scale up and fulfil their respective official development assistance commitments;
- resolve to strengthen the rules-based, non-discriminatory, open, fair, inclusive, equitable and transparent multilateral trading system with the World Trade Organization at its core;
- assist developing countries in attaining long-term debt sustainability;
- call for the full and effective implementation of the mandates of the newly appointed members of the Independent Expert Advisory Panel on the Multidimensional Vulnerability Index.

On VNRs, the Ministerial Declaration encourages countries to:

- align VNRs with national sustainable development strategies and other national development plans, strategies and policy frameworks;
- encourage the full, equal and meaningful participation of all relevant stakeholders, and strengthen youth engagement, in the design, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and reporting of national sustainable development strategies and in VNR preparation;
- continue supporting other countries in preparing VNRs;
- support local and regional authorities in the preparation of voluntary local reviews; and

- consider strengthening follow-up to the VNRs, including through partnerships, so that recommendations from the VNRs translate into concrete support and scalable initiatives.

A Brief Analysis of HLPF 2026

Compared to previous sessions, the 2026 High-level Political Forum (HLPF) unfolded in a markedly subdued atmosphere. The UN Headquarters in New York City lacked both the decorations and colorful protests that usually accompany major international summits. Some of this was due to the acute funding strain the UN is experiencing caused by withdrawal or delayed contributions of certain Member States; however, many delegates saw the somber, efficient mood as appropriate to the state of implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

This brief analysis examines whether the choices countries are making can bend development trajectories enough to achieve these shared goals by 2030.

A Future Still Ours to Shape?

With four years to go until the 2030 deadline, conflicts, climate-related disasters, and external macroeconomic disruptions are shaping national actions to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The 2026 Sustainable Development Goals Report repeated the familiar finding that only about one-third of targets are on track or making notable progress, while overall advancement remains too slow to achieve most SDGs by 2030. Given the number of countries impacted by war or internal strife, record-breaking storms and droughts, and surging energy costs, delegates appeared relieved that the outlook was not worse.

Against this backdrop, some said the theme of the ministerial segment, "A future still ours to shape," sounded more like a cautious question than an inspiring slogan. Can we still make meaningful progress in the time remaining? The answer provided by General Assembly President Annalena Baerbock in her opening remarks was yes, we can, if we choose hope and remember the UN was built for times like these.

Will countries choose hope? The resounding expressions of recommitment to the SDGs throughout the week suggest countries are determined to do so.

Choosing Hope

One choice is to read the SDG progress report as baseline for acceleration rather than evidence of failure. This is also a good way to acknowledge the joint efforts undertaken by a myriad of stakeholders to bring these successes forward. Throughout the meeting, delegates reminded each other that every percentage-point improvement at the global level means millions of lives transformed. Every advance in targets like access to water and sanitation, electricity, housing, or decent work reflects people and families spending less time focused on assuring their basic needs and more time educating themselves, or engaging in productive labor, innovation, and other contributions to society.

The SDGs under review this year illustrated this transformative potential. Delegates described SDGs 6 (clean water and sanitation) and 7 (clean and affordable energy) as the "medium" through which transformative change is delivered. They called SDG 9 (industry, innovation, and infrastructure) the "engine" of transformation and they described SDG 11 (sustainable cities and communities) as the "fabric" for innovation, collaboration, and action that drives sustainable development.

It was remarkable that many countries are tackling these challenges through integrated projects. Water-stressed countries, including Tonga, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Jordan, Mozambique, Somalia, among others, reported on projects tackling water and energy through combined desalination and renewable energy generation projects, or, in the case of Mozambique, dams that improve both water and electricity supply. Beyond addressing multiple SDG targets, these projects ensure that energy-intensive water supply from desalination is insulated against global fuel price fluctuations, while diversifying local energy supply. Both are measures that will make both water and energy supplies more resilient.

The shift towards more integrated solutions was also visible at a more fundamental level; countries increasingly framed the SDGs as an organizing framework for policy coherence, planning, and budgeting. Italy and Saudi Arabia, for example, reported they are using the SDGs to increase policy coherence via tools such as inter-ministerial coordination mechanisms to align sectoral policies and budgetary processes with the SDGs. Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, and Brazil also use the SDGs to guide national budgeting and are integrating SDG indicators, or their domestic derivatives, into monitoring and evaluation. These measures set countries on track to more effectively serve their populations in the future and are thus a prerequisite for accelerated action. They can also make governance systems more resilient, which is particularly important for countries affected by conflict, disaster, and external shocks.

Data is another prerequisite for acceleration. It does not by itself feed, house, or employ people, but it helps identify where needs are greatest and pathways to effective support. Since the adoption of the SDGs, poor countries have reported their struggles to provide the human and financial resources needed to consistently collect and use high-quality statistical data. On this front too, things are beginning to change. Kiribati, Egypt, Rwanda, the United Arab Emirates, and others reported that their investments in data capacity are delivering tangible results for SDG monitoring, and, perhaps more importantly, to inform planning and provide support to stakeholders like small and medium-sized enterprises. At the global level, these efforts have led to significant improvements in SDG data coverage with the share of Tier 1 indicators—indicators for which at least 50% of countries regularly produce data—almost doubling from 35% in 2016 to 69% in 2025, according to data from the UN Economic Commission for Europe.

Financing remains the central constraint, but demands are becoming more specific. Many delegations lamented the unprecedented decline in official development assistance (ODA)—down 23.1% in 2025 after a 6% fall in 2024, according to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)—but their interventions often moved quickly from complaint to remedy. Many developing countries, including Liberia and Moldova, reported successful efforts in domestic resource mobilization by broadening the tax base or through fiscal discipline. Jamaica stood out with its multi-year fiscal reform plan which allows it to create the fiscal space to establish a multi-layered resilience programme, even in the face of massive destruction from a major hurricane. As more recipient countries are doing their part to mobilize domestic resources, their requests for external support are also becoming more specific.

Small island developing states (SIDS), least-developed countries (LDCs), and middle-income countries (MICs) repeatedly called for eligibility criteria for concessional finance to move beyond gross domestic product (GDP) per capita. For countries exposed to acute climate, economic, or security shocks, income categories often obscure vulnerability: a single storm can erase years of development gains, while compounding crises can quickly undermine debt sustainability and access to capital.

To break this cycle, SIDS specifically requested operationalization of the Multidimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI), a set of metrics reflecting a country's actual exposure to external climate, economic, and environmental shocks. This would make eligibility for concessional finance more responsive to risk, rather than economic output alone, and enable countries to invest in resilience before the next shock. The MVI has been vetted and, according to many SIDS, is ready for a real-world test. Similarly, MICs and LDCs called for debt-sustainability measures and support for reforms that improve sovereign credit ratings, which are an important determinant of access to private capital and borrowing costs.

Taken together, the reports on improving domestic resource mobilization and specific requests to improve financing show the Sevilla Compromise is beginning to take hold. Together with donor countries reiterating their commitment to global financial architecture reform, there may be reason for optimism that even though ODA finance for the SDGs might stay lower for longer, other financial resources might finally start narrowing the SDG finance gap as 2030 approaches.

The Hope We Create for the Next Generation

A positive mindset, strategic planning, data capacity, and pragmatic finance strategies are leading indicators of potential acceleration. The choices countries are reporting in their voluntary national reviews (VNRs) show that they believe in the long-term transformative potential of the SDGs. The VNRs reflect confidence in the value of aligning national institutions, strategies, and plans with the SDGs, collecting data to report on sustainable development indicators, and pushing for a better financial architecture. It will take time for the impact of these systemic investments, most of which fall under SDG 17, to move the needle on the more iconic SDG indicators tracking changes in access to water, electricity, housing, transport and other basic needs.

In the end, these choices are an expression of the will to shape a better future and the belief that it is possible. In his VNR presentation, Konris Maynard, the Minister of Public Infrastructure of Saint Kitts and Nevis, reminded delegates that the SDGs are not a numbers game: "Sustainable development is measured by the hope it creates for the next generation." Despite the challenging global context, HLPF 2026 generated hope for the next generation of the SDGs, and optimism that meaningful progress towards 2030 is still possible.

Upcoming Meetings

UN Convention to Combat Desertification COP 17: Delegates at the 17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties will address the interconnected challenges of desertification, land degradation, and drought under the theme "Restoring Land, Restoring Hope." **dates:** 17–28 August 2026 **location:** Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia **www:** unccd.int/cop17

SDG Moment: The UN General Assembly's SDG Moment is an annual high-level event held during the opening of the UN General Assembly in New York. **date:** TBC September 2026 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York, US **www:** un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sdg-planning-calendar

UN Biodiversity Conference (CBD COP 17): The 17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity will assess implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and continue negotiations on biodiversity conservation, finance and implementation. **dates:** 19–30 October 2026 **location:** Yerevan, Armenia **www:** cbd.int/conferences/2026

World Data Forum 2026: The Forum aims to nurture partnerships, mobilize high-level political and financial support for data, and build a pathway to better data for sustainable development. **dates:** 9–12 November 2026 **location:** Riyadh, Saudia Arabia **www:** unstats.un.org/unsd/undataforum

UN Climate Change Conference (UNFCCC COP 31): The 31st session of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change will bring governments together to advance implementation of the Paris Agreement, including mitigation, adaptation, finance and transparency. **dates:** 9–20 November 2026 **location:** Antalya, Türkiye **www:** unfccc.int/cop31

2026 UN Water Conference: Co-hosted by the United Arab Emirates and Senegal, this conference will focus on accelerating implementation of water-related challenges, including water security, sanitation, and financing. **dates:** 8-10 December 2026 **location:** Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates **www:** sdgs.un.org/conferences/water2026

HLPF 2027: The theme of the 2027 HLPF will be: "Scaling up just transitions to achieving sustainable development, poverty eradication and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs." The SDGs to be reviewed in depth are Goals 4 (Quality Education), 10 (Reduced Inequalities), 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), 15 (Life on Land) and 17 (Partnerships for the Goals). **dates:** TBC **location:** UN Headquarters, New York, US **www:** hlpf.un.org

For additional upcoming events, see sdg.iisd.org

Glossary

AI	Artificial intelligence
AOSIS	Alliance of Small Island States
DESA	UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs
ECOSOC	UN Economic and Social Council
GDP	Gross domestic product
HLPF	High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
LDCs	Least developed countries
LLDCs	Landlocked developing countries
MICs	Middle-income countries
ODA	Official Development Assistance
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SIDS	Small island developing states
SME	Small and medium enterprise
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UNGA	UN General Assembly
VLR	Voluntary Local Review
VNR	Voluntary National Review