

## ECOSOC HAS A NEW PRESIDENT AND VICE-PRESIDENTS

### ‘COVID-19, Sustainable Development Goals, Climate Action,’ priority for ECOSOC President Ambassador Munir Akram

The handover of the ECOSOC Presidency took place during the Organizational Session of the Council on 23 July. The election of members of the Bureau of the Council for its 2021 session was conducted through silence procedure prior to the organizational session. H.E. Mr. Munir Akram, Permanent Representative of Pakistan, was elected as President of the Economic and Social Council for the 2021 session. In addition, the Permanent Representatives of Botswana, Switzerland and Ukraine were elected as Vice-Presidents. The election of the Vice-President from among the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States will be conducted at a later date.



The new ECOSOC President, H.E. Mr. Munir Akram, [outlined](#) his priorities for his Presidency. He underscored that ECOSOC deliberations should focus on implementation of the 2030 Agenda for building back better. The ECOSOC President intends to promote specific actions in three areas: (i) financing for sustainable development (COVID-19 response/recovery, SDGs and climate action); (ii) sustainable infrastructure development, and (iii) application of advanced science and technology for sustained, efficient and sustainable growth.



If we are to [#BuildBackBetter](#) from the wreckage of the [#COVID19](#) crisis & accelerate the realization of the [#SDGs](#) & Climate goals, the application & absorption of new technologies in the development paradigm is indispensable; indeed, imperative. [#GlobalGoals](#)  
[#ClimateAction](#)

**ACT NOW**

The outgoing ECOSOC President, H.E. Ms. Mona Juul, [shared](#) the highlights of her Presidency, including the virtual High-level Political Forum and High-Level Panel on International Financial Accountability, Transparency and Integrity for Achieving the 2030 Agenda (the FACTI Panel). She underscored the need to build a greener, fairer, more inclusive and more resilient world to recover better. ECOSOC's mandate has proven to be as relevant and compelling as ever in the midst of global upheaval and risk from COVID-19, the climate crisis, racial injustice and rising inequalities.

The Deputy Secretary-General [delivered](#) a video message, thanking the outgoing President for her leadership and accomplishments and congratulating the new President. She added that going forward,



This year, ECOSOC has proven to be as relevant as ever:

- ❖ To foster international cooperation on economic, social and cultural issues.
- ❖ To promote universal respect, observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all.
- ❖ To empower all women and girls, and ensure that their human rights are protected and fulfilled.

H.E. Ms. Mona Juul, Outgoing President of ECOSOC

ECOSOC must continue to play a leading role in helping countries launch the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development. Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs Liu Zhenmin congratulated both the outgoing and incoming Presidents and [shared](#) his reflections on the 2020 session of the Council. The HLPF affirmed that the response to COVID-19 offers an opportunity to build the kind of socio-economic systems and societies that are needed for a more sustainable future.

## THE ECOSOC HIGH LEVEL EVENTS

### COVID-19 cannot defeat the 2030 Agenda



“We have a responsibility to respond to the anxieties, fears and hopes of the people we serve,” [stressed](#) United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres, as the [High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development \(HLPF\)](#) and the [High-level Segment of the Economic and Social Council \(ECOSOC\)](#) drew to a close on 17 July.

Member states asserted that support for the bold 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development needs to be strengthened in light of current global challenges and the Covid-19 crisis.

Participants highlighted that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) should be the guidepost to “build back better”. “The 2030 Agenda remains our shared roadmap to achieve the future we want. And, to recover better”, [said](#) ECOSOC President, Mona Juul.

“As we move forward, let us think critically and creatively about the actions we can take to make positive changes in the world”, [stressed](#) Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, Mr. Liu Zhenmin.

“  
**The pandemic has  
 underscored the need  
 for a strengthened and  
 renewed multilateralism.**  
 ”



António Guterres  
 United Nations Secretary-General  
 17 July 2020

More than one thousand registered participants reaffirmed the importance of working together in response to the impacts of the pandemic through inclusive and effective multilateralism and multi-stakeholder approaches.

In the two months leading up to the 2020 High-level Political Forum, submissions to the SDG Acceleration Actions increased by 35 per cent. This resulted in a total of 200 bold commitments to advance the goals.

47 countries, including 26 first-timers, presented their Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs), sharing their national experiences including successes, challenges and lessons learnt in implementing the 2030 Agenda. Since the first meeting in 2016, approximately 158 VNRs have been presented at the annual HLPF.

During the two-week virtual gathering, the HLPF brought together 137 High-level Government Officials, including 134 speakers who participated in various panels. In addition, nine special events provided platforms for different communities to engage around the 2030 Agenda, attracting over 6,000 participants across 10 virtual exhibitions, 194 side-events and 17 Voluntary National Review Labs. The [SDG Media Zone](#) brought together influencers, experts on the SDGs and eminent personalities to further amplify the topics discussed at the HLPF.

## HLPF IN NUMBERS

HLPF 2020 -- The FIRST Virtual HLPF



**HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM  
 ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**



**DAYS**



**MEETINGS**



**HEADS AND  
 DEPUTY HEADS  
 OF STATE AND  
 GOVERNMENT,  
 MINISTERIAL  
 LEVEL OFFICIALS**



**SPEAKERS  
 IN PANELS**



**VOLUNTARY  
 NATIONAL  
 REVIEWS**



**REGISTERED  
 PARTICIPANTS**



**VNR LABS**



**SIDE EVENTS**



**SPECIAL EVENTS**



**EXHIBITIONS**



**VIEWS ON UN WEBTV**

## ECOSOC Integration Segment 2020

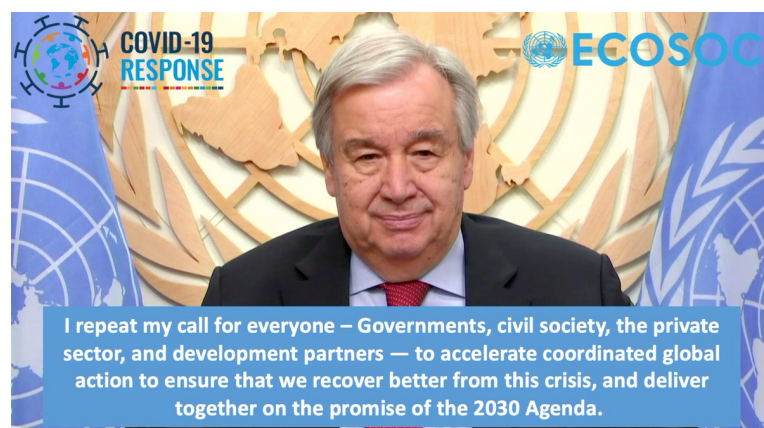
The [2020 ECOSOC Integration Segment](#), chaired by H.E. Ambassador Mher Margaryan (Armenia), Vice-President of ECOSOC



([Opening](#); [Closing](#)), was convened virtually on 6 July. The Segment discussed analysis and policy proposals emanating from ECOSOC subsidiary bodies and the UN system on the 2020 theme of ECOSOC and HLPF “*accelerated action and transformative pathways: realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development*”. In view of the COVID-19 pandemic, the theme was explored through the lens of overcoming the human crisis and recovering better. The

Segment brought together the heads of UN entities and chairs of subsidiary bodies, as well as the Chairs of the Groups of LDCs, LLDCs, MICs and AOSIS.

The Secretary-General delivered a [keynote address](#) via video message at the opening. This was followed



by the presentation of the annual overview report of the CEB. The ECOSOC Vice-President (Armenia) [delivered](#) the key messages from the Integration Segment at the HLPF the next day.

The discussions highlighted that siloed thinking and approaches continue to hinder progress not only in the implementation of the SDGs, but also in COVID-19 response. The pandemic impacted all the SDGs and revealed and exacerbated existing vulnerabilities and inequalities. Many viewed the

COVID-19 pandemic as a historic opportunity to launch transformative pathways to realize the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. Participants emphasized the need to build on the many interlinkages among the SDGs to rebuild inclusive and resilient societies. Recovering better requires a coherent whole-of-government approach and meaningful engagement of all relevant stakeholders. Financing in all its forms remains critical for the transformations needed to get back on track for the SDGs. Harnessing the work and expertise of the ECOSOC subsidiary bodies and the UN system, the Economic and Social Council should continue to provide an inclusive platform to explore integrated policies to respond to the world’s most urgent challenges.

## OTHER ECOSOC POLICY DIALOGUES

The [ECOSOC Management Segment](#) was scaled down to one day and held virtually on 21 July 2020. It was chaired by H.E. Mr. Munir Akram, Ambassador of Pakistan to the United Nations and Vice-president of the Economic and Social Council. Over 195 Member States and UN System entities participated in the virtual meeting.



The meeting considered reports from the Chairs of subsidiary bodies of ECOSOC on issues related to advancement of women, African countries emerging from conflict, crime prevention, forests, human rights, non-communicable diseases, population, public administration, regional cooperation, science and technology for development, support for Haiti and tax matters.

On 10 July 2020, the President of the Economic and Social Council and the President of the United Nations



General Assembly co-convoked a [virtual side event](#) on the margins of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development to update the international community on the progress and initial ideas from analytical work of the High-Level Panel on International Financial Accountability, Transparency and Integrity for Achieving the 2030 Agenda ([FACTI Panel](#)). The Panel was launched on 2 March this year by the two presidents.

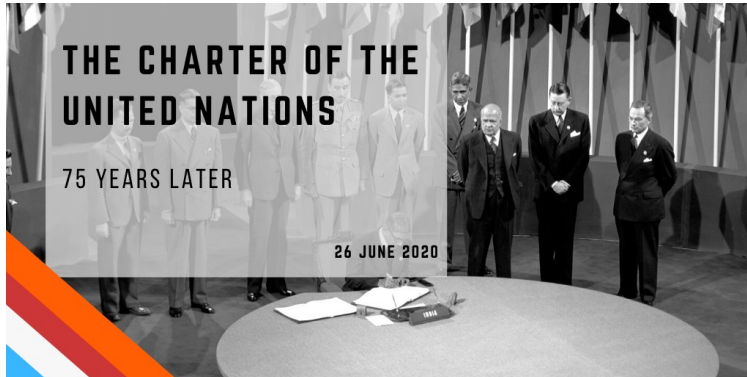
The event brought together high-level representatives from member states, civil society and the business sector to explore challenges and priority actions for promoting international financial accountability, transparency and integrity. The FACI Panel Co-chairs provided a [public update](#) on their work. The virtual event can be viewed on [UN WebTV](#) and [FACTI Panel websites](#).

## OTHER EVENTS



A High-level Meeting on Poverty Eradication was held on 30 June 2020. The President of the General Assembly, the [President of ECOSOC](#), the UN Secretary-General and the Co-Chairs of the Alliance for Poverty Eradication addressed the meeting. ECOSOC President Mona Juul stressed that “We must attach the same level of urgency to the fight against poverty, as we deepen our efforts in the Decade of Action and Delivery for the Sustainable Development Goals.” The event emphasized the actions to be taken to

eradicate widespread poverty and its consequences, particularly, the consequences that are aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The meeting also underscored the important role of the Alliance for Poverty Eradication to accelerate the achievement of SDG 1 and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.



During the Commemoration of the UN Charter Day on 26 June 2020, ECOSOC President Mona Juul addressed the event by [highlighting](#) the relevance of ECOSOC today, in the future, and as it was when first envisioned in the Charter 75 years ago. She emphasized that in the anniversary year we face challenges and that “COVID-19 pandemic is a wake-up call for us to strengthen international collaboration.” Ambassador Juul stressed that “we can only succeed through a coordinated

multilateral response, strong political leadership, and global solidarity with those most vulnerable.”

## STORIES FROM THE FIELD



As part of the [SDG Acceleration Actions](#), the State University of Haiti registered a [student-led project initiative](#) that aims to implement the SDGs by providing creative solutions to local problems under the Sustainable Development Goal 3 on health. The main objectives have been to reduce the number of people who do not have access to health care by strengthening the quality of care in Haiti.

The Haiti project was submitted among others in the lead up to the 2020 HLPF. Around 200 [SDG Acceleration Actions](#) were presented. The SDG Acceleration Actions are initiatives voluntarily undertaken to accelerate the SDG implementation by governments and any other non-state actors - individually or in partnership.

### The United Nations in action

#### UN supporting “trapped” domestic violence victims during COVID-19 pandemic



- The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) in Brazil is providing emergency cash-based intervention (CBI) for people who register with the agency as refugees.
- Funds are loaded onto “UNHCR Support” cards, empowering refugees to pay for housing, food, health needs, and other urgent and priority expenses.
- UNHCR disbursed more than one million reais in CBI transfers (about \$190,000 or €170,000) to help more than 2,000 refugees from Venezuela; Democratic Republic of Congo, Colombia, Cuba, Syria and Morocco.
- Donors supporting the initiative include Luxembourg and the United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund. Funds also help UNHCR distribute personal hygiene kits and other essential items and sustain activities to prevent and combat gender-based violence implemented in partnership with UN Women and the UN Population Fund.
- UNHCR's goal is to reach 15,000 people. It has raised \$1.2 million of the \$2 million required.

Source: <https://www.un.org/en/coronavirus/un-cash-grants-provide-safety-net-during-covid-19>



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