

## HLPF 2022 Highlights: Thursday, 14 July 2022

HLPF delegates received reports from regional meetings during the morning. Eleven VNRs were presented and 42 high-level speakers addressed a ministerial roundtable.

### Messages from the Regions

Rosa Malango, Director, Regional Commissions New York Office, moderated the session. Olga Algayerova, Coordinator of the Regional Commissions, said the regions are an important part of the solution for overcoming challenges associated with SDG progress. Representatives of the regional forums shared outcomes from the five Regional Forums on Sustainable Development, including on the need to:

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

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

### Outcomes of the UN Environment Assembly

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

### Voluntary National Reviews

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

weak implementation of laws on female genital mutilation (FGM) and gender-based violence and trafficking (SDG 5). He shared improvements in sustainable fishing (SDG 14) and said the country would enact ecosystem protection laws (SDG 15).

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

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

Responding to MEXICO, JAMAICA, PORTUGAL, the WOMEN'S MAJOR GROUP, MOROCCO, NIGER, and MADAGASCAR, Casimiro Varela (Guinea-Bissau) reported on the upcoming census and multisectoral review for data collection and efforts to improve planning and statistics; anticorruption laws including on publicly available asset disclosures; commitment to overcome implementation of FGM laws; and efforts in improving education, training for teachers, and women's participation.

Responding to JAMAICA, SLOVENIA, SWITZERLAND, BENIN, MOROCCO, the STAKEHOLDER GROUP FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES, and MADAGASCAR, Mbou (Gabon) stressed efforts to: improve vocational training; engage civil society in economic transformation; and diversify the economy away from oil.

Responding to DENMARK, BARBADOS, KENYA, UGANDA, the LGBTI STAKEHOLDER GROUP, RUSSIAN FEDERATION, and MADAGASCAR, Schreinemacher (the Netherlands) noted many ministries have a youth advisory body providing input in decision-making and stressed the country's intersectional approach to the SDGs. Jacobs (Sint Maarten) noted digitalization of education. Oey (youth representative) called for future-oriented thinking.

Roxie McLeish-Hutchinson, Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Grenada, outlined advancements in quality of education (SDG 4) and gender equality, including women in leadership (SDG 5), and lamented the country's high unemployment rate (SDG 8). She shared the country's emissions reductions plans to address climate change (SDG 13); highlighted the Grenada's integrated coastal zone management plan (SDG 14); and shared that the country is under 35% forest cover (SDG 15).

In her response to VENEZUELA, DENMARK, TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO, the CHILDREN AND YOUTH MAJOR GROUP, SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES, PORTUGAL, and MALAWI, McLeish-Hutchinson highlighted the number of young people in decision-making; shared the

country's new focus on centralizing data for monitoring SDG implementation; called for operationalizing the multidimensional vulnerability index (MVI); and acknowledged the need for greater coordination to implement the SDGs.

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

Nialé Kaba, Minister of Planning and Development, Côte d'Ivoire, highlighted economic transformation and the goal of becoming an upper middle-income country. She stressed progress including improvements in literacy rates and school enrollment; platforms to fight gender-based violence, including FGM, and women's representation; designation of marine protected areas and combatting illegal fishing; reforestation; and stronger partnerships.

Fitsum Assefa Adela, Minister of Planning and Development, Ethiopia, highlighted declines in poverty and malnutrition; a strengthened health sector; improved school enrollment; increased women's participation and gender equality; and progress on clean water and sanitation. She also noted efforts to plant 20 billion trees by 2022, with 18 billion planted so far.

Nasser Shraideh, Minister of Planning and International Cooperation, Jordan, called for renewed global partnerships and investment in human capital. He noted progress on education completion rates; an increase in agriculture productivity and Jordan's goal of becoming a regional food security hub; almost universal access to clean water; achievement of a 20% share of renewable energy; establishment of marine protected areas; decreases in gender-based violence and a reduced gender pay gap.

Responding to SAN MARINO, CHILE, and the WOMEN'S MAJOR GROUP, Ubach Font (Andorra) shared that the country is working on a green curriculum for schools; and is committed to protecting the rights of the most vulnerable including women, children and persons with disabilities, including through legislation on non-discrimination and to combat sexual and gender-based violence.

Responding to MOROCCO, the PERSON'S WITH DISABILITIES MAJOR GROUP, SWITZERLAND, GHANA, and NIGER, Kaba (Côte d'Ivoire) underlined the importance of making the economy more resilient, including through promoting self-sufficiency and food security, and diversifying international funding sources. She drew attention to actions to integrate persons with disabilities into employment and highlighted the country's national migrant policy to strengthen protections of migrants.

Responding to SENEGAL, PAKISTAN, CHILE, the CHILDREN AND YOUTH MAJOR GROUP, CUBA, the NGO MAJOR GROUP, DJIBOUTI, MALAWI, and CAMEROON, Adela (Ethiopia) noted the country's land and watershed management systems to address climate change and reclaim degraded lands. She underlined the government's commitment to address conflict-induced human rights violations, and highlighted reforms related to the wheat trade.

Responding to PAKISTAN, PALESTINE, LESOTHO, and the COUNCIL OF EUROPE, Shraideh (Jordan) and his team noted: the country's commitment to working with local governments; stakeholder participation in the development of the VNR; and migration-related challenges.

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

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

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

Responding to BANGLADESH, UZBEKISTAN, RUSSIAN FEDERATION, and IRAQ, Kuantyrov (Kazakhstan) and his team pointed to a special committee tasked with SDG monitoring; stakeholder involvement during the VNR preparation; and the adoption of inclusivity policies and infrastructure adjustments to be completed by 2025 to ensure accessibility for persons with disabilities.

Responding to GERMANY, the WORKERS AND TRADE UNIONS MAJOR GROUP, the PHILIPPINES, MOROCCO, UAE, BENIN, and NIGER, Ndiaye Cheikh Sylla (Senegal) highlighted it is a pilot country for collecting inclusive and integrated statistics to enable review at local, regional, and national level and strengthening links with civil society as part of the country's development plan.

Responding to the CHILDREN AND YOUTH MAJOR GROUP, IRAQ, MOROCCO, UAE, and MALTA, Gibril Ibrahim Mohamed (Sudan) noted efforts to resuscitate the Arab Initiative on Food Security, produce fertilizers and more food products; and emphasized the need for support to ensure food security among the country's refugees and internally displaced people.

### **Ministerial Roundtable: Accelerating the Achievement of the SDGs by 2030**

One vice-president, two deputy prime ministers, and 39 ministers offered perspectives on the on-going crises and challenges at the national, regional, and global levels. Many speakers emphasized ways in which challenges related to the pandemic, the climate crisis, and the war in Ukraine have impacted their countries. Additional – and related – challenges identified included worsening inequality, economic and structural reforms and debt distress, inflation, fertilizer scarcity and rising prices of agricultural goods, food and water insecurity, pollution, biodiversity loss, sea level rise and drought.

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

Proposals for further action included: establishment of a fund for the development of mountainous countries and a financing mechanism for blue economy projects; bridging the digital divide and enhancing internet access for households; investing in flexible and quality education systems; “future-proofing” the public health system; support to build productive capacity and improve food security; development of a smooth graduation process; and a call for leaders to continue to express a strong message of optimism. Many called for strengthened multilateralism in the face of the multiple crises. Some called for an end to unilateral sanctions.

### **In the Corridors**

As participants sped through 11 VNRs and 42 ministerial statements, they also considered the fate of the Ministerial Declaration. The co-facilitators from Italy and Nauru informed delegates that a second silence procedure had been broken on 12 July by one delegation over a paragraph that calls for measures “to remove the obstacles to the full realization of the right to self-determination of peoples living under colonial and foreign occupation.” Many were hopeful the full draft Declaration, which was forwarded to the HLPF ministerial segment for consideration, would be adopted during the closing session Friday night, possibly with a vote on the paragraph in question.

The *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* summary and analysis of HLPF 2022 will be available on Monday, 18 July 2022 at [enb.iisd.org/high-level-political-forum-hlpf-2022](http://enb.iisd.org/high-level-political-forum-hlpf-2022)