

**Closing Remarks  
of  
H.E. Dr. Suriya Chindawongse  
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Thailand to the United Nations  
and ECOSOC Vice-President,  
as Chair of the Coordination Segment,  
at the Closing Session of the ECOSOC Coordination Segment  
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Distinguished Delegates,

*(Introduction)*

1. I would like to share some preliminary reflections based on the two days of discussions of the Coordination Segment. Because afterwards, we will have a written summary which will be prepared several weeks from now.

2. In my view, the last two days has been a useful and meaningful Coordination Segment. Very importantly, we have allowed the views of various bodies of the ECOSOC system to be heard—subsidiary bodies and specialized agencies, especially the regional commissions, and I thank them once again for joining us from different time zones to share regional and global perspectives on the challenges before us.

3. And of course, we should not forget the Partnership Forum, which was convened on, purpose one, day before the Coordination Segment to provide that opportunity for multiple stakeholders, and over 2,000 participants. That is what the ECOSOC is all about -- we are open to views from various stakeholders, and that was the purpose behind the Partnership Forum.

*(Overview)*

4. From the Partnership Forum to the Coordinating Segment, we have tried to instill an inclusive mindset in terms of deliberating on the challenges we are facing, of which **there seems to be a unanimity of views on what confronts us. The challenge now is to find a convergence in how we take things forward.**

5. And I believe that the Coordination Segment, in that perspective, has helped crystallize many ideas, based on the principle that this is inclusive process.

Despite different, diverse views, if we put it all of them together correctly, they make us stronger. And this is critical, in order to build momentum in the ECOSOC process for this year, and leading to the HLPF later this year.

6. Now, we are all aware of the rich diversity of the bodies under the ECOSOC system. But let us leverage on the strengths of this diversity. At the same time, we have to realize that leveraging on such strength is not automatic. It requires hard work, it requires coordination.

7. And in many ways, that is why this Coordination Segment was realized, based on our decision. Overlaps need to be identified and addressed. Complementarities identified and reinforced. And from that, synergies could be developed in order to have more effective responses to the multi-dimensional challenges that we face.

*(Multi-dimensional Challenge)*

8. The **multi-dimensional nature of ECOSOC is reflective of the multi-dimensional nature of the economic, social and development agenda that we face**, and the challenges are quite daunting indeed.

9. Over the last two days, we focused on the pandemic. There is of course also the recovery. We are all reminded that there are planet issues: climate change, changing environmental and biodiversity. Then the trajectory of all these are supposed to lead to the attainment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

10. Now, **in an ideal world, Distinguished Delegates, we would love to be able to address all these multiple challenges at the same time. Because they are all important.**

11. The reality, however, is that firstly, there are limited resources. And this varies from country to country, region to region.

12. And secondly, time is not on our side.

13. First, there is the urgency of COVID-19, with threats of new variants, possibly happening at any time.

14. Second, there is the crisis of the recovery, and all the consequences if such recovery is stalled or just not happen.

15. Third, there is the challenge of climate change and environmental degradation, loss of biodiversity, which, if we do not act today, can only get worse.

16. And fourth, there are important issues related to the Sustainable Development Agenda, which affect people's lives as we speak, and they need to be overcome.

17. Now, all this is made even more difficult, Distinguished Delegates, by the fact that there are existing inequalities and gaps.

18. And bear with me, because I think it is worth highlighting a little bit some of the information that has been underscored by the various agencies and delegations during the past two days:

- Only 0.6% of vaccines have reached low-income countries.
- In the digital gap, 96% of those not connected are in the developing world.
- On social protection, only 40% are covered by some forms of social protections and the majority of those who are not covered are in the developing world.
- There is immense diversities and gaps in terms of the capacity and fiscal tools that are available to address the recovery issue. **All these gaps -- financial, technological, digital, developmental -- and the trends are that these gaps seem to be unfortunately increasing.**

19. This makes it difficult for countries who have to make very hard choices on how to deal with the challenges of the pandemic, recovery, planet and sustainable development.

20. **Ideally, these challenges and gaps should be looked at in a holistic manner, and many countries are doing so.**

21. We have heard countries talk about **the green economy, the circular economy, even the bio economy**. We have heard countries talk about the need to find the **balance between people-centered approach and environment-centered approach and the planet-centered approaches**.

22. Again, ideally, these should be taken together in a holistic manner.

23. **But because of resource constraints, the challenge of time, and the many gaps that exist and the trends that seem to be increasing, difficult choices, unfortunately, will have to be made.**

24. And therefore, we have to find a way. That is why it is important to find a way to address these gaps, so that countries can take a holistic approach, in terms dealing with the various challenges that face us.

*(Special Factors)*

25. I now would like to talk about **special factors** that need to take into account as reflected in the discussion during the last two days.

26. **First, a strong emphasis on the importance and priorities to be given to women and children, who are unfortunately disproportionately affected, not only by the pandemic crisis, but also by the slow recovery.**

27. There was a reference also to invisible ones and other vulnerable groups. These need special consideration as we seek to address these various challenges that we are facing, that ECOSOC that is in charge of the economic, social and development agendas, has to faced.

28. **Special attention also has been given to the LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS.** This seems to be a view expressed by many delegations.

29. **Second**, another issue that has been brought up are **systemic issues**. What can we do to make the system better? How to make the global response better and more systematic to the challenges -- whether it is pandemic, recovery or others.

30. For example, with regard to the pandemic, there were suggestions of a new global health architecture to deal with what will not be the last pandemic of our time. These are some of the systemic issues that are also been discussed.

31. There was some discussion also on how do we address the current global economic and financial system.

32. And this leads me to the **third** factor that is important and that is the **issue of finances**. This flows from the issue of gaps that I discussed earlier.

33. The issue of financing for development:

- How can this be taken forward as we prepare for the Financing for Development Forum that will take place?
- How do we expand the fiscal space and enhance fiscal tools for countries that need it?

- How do we deal with issues like the debt issue which is a challenge that many countries are facing?
- And the issue of illicit finance.

34. At the same time, there is also the important suggestion of catalytic investments and the role of private sector to help drive and address some of these financial gaps. So this was the third cluster of factors that we need to take into account as we go forward.

*(Positive Developments)*

35. Now, the good news is that, first, there is an effort to **enhance coordination that has taken place in the UN development system to be more integrated to address the recovery issues**.

36. There are many examples of cooperation amongst agencies to address specific issues, for example, between UNICEF and ITU, using digital tools to reach children especially in terms of education. A lot of synergized work is being done by UN Women and other agencies to deal with gender-based issues.

37. There are a number of very good initiative that have been highlighted by a number of delegations from the global accelerator for jobs and social protection to the COVID-19 global gender responsive tracker, for example.

38. Second, I seem to sense that there is optimism in the **use of science, technology and innovation as a force multiplier**, to help not only the various bodies but also Member States -- to address the various challenges that we face, whether from health, in the recovery, and in the other policies to address planet issues and in trying to attain the sustainable development.

39. The role of data, and the role of making the data more relevant and more useful, using digital technology, artificial intelligence. How can we use and leverage on these technological developments to help address these challenges and drive forward the development agenda?

40. There are gaps on the STI front. But if we promote STI, cooperatively, we can make it an important force multiplier in addressing the challenges before us.

41. Third is the **partnerships**. And not only in this last session that we discussed it, but it has been prevalent in the various sessions in interventions by Member States and bodies.

42. Partnerships within the ECOSOC system that I have alluded to earlier, between the ECOSOC and other UN bodies—the initiative undertaken by the President of ECOSOC and the PGA to work together on multiple issues.

43. And enhanced coordination we are seeing between the ECOSOC and the international financial institutions. There will be discussions next week between the ECOSOC Bureau, the World Bank and the IMF. We thank the IMF for engaging with us for the last two days.

44. Also **partnerships with other regional groupings and other non-regional groupings for example, the reference to the role the G20 and how the G20 could interact more with the ECOSOC**—on a number of issues of potential dialogue and cooperation.

45. So there are rays of hope that can help guide us through our efforts to address these challenges before so that we can do what we really want which is to have a holistic approach and address all these multiple challenges in a systematic way, at the same time, synchronized manner.

46. But, as I said, we are limited by the challenge of resource constraints and time.

*(Process Issues)*

47. Let me touch now a little bit on the **process issues** and on those specific to the ECOSOC that has been raised.

48. A number of countries focused on the need for the **alignment of mandates of various bodies**, to be focused on their mandates and on their themes, in order to get the most of their work.

49. The discussion on the **alignment of the work with SDGs**, and this is also a challenge because we all know that the various goals of the SDGs are cross-cutting and interrelated, which makes it even more necessary for the various bodies under the ECOSOC to coordinate across institutions and across bodies.

50. There was discussion on how to **make the various bodies more effective** in view of constraints in resources and other factors. And we will therefore need to leverage on one another strengths so that each body each commission could get the most out of what they are doing.

51. There were reflections also on the need to focus on the role of Member States, it is a Member States-driven process. The ECOSOC is Member States-driven, but we should be open minded because there are multiple stakeholders. And with the multiple challenges facing us, the more partners we have, the better we are because we are all in this together.

52. So we need a **balanced modality so that we can engage with various stakeholders while ensuring that Member States drive the process.**

*(Suggestions)*

53. And of course, there were many suggestions how to reinforce the complementarities and synergies within the ECOSOC system. Let me touch on those because these are some very concrete suggestions made.

- One is for the ECOSOC to draw more systematically on the expertise of UN Specialized Agencies and its Functional Commissions to provide data and evidence-based policy guidance to member states.

- Gender considerations need to be more systematically integrated in the work of the Council and the whole ECOSOC system. HLPF's review of SDG-5 can trigger further advances.

- Poverty reduction, food security, education, digital transformation, bridging the digital divide, sustainable infrastructure all these are issues that deserve the priority attention by the Council and across its subsidiary bodies.

- ECOSOC's FfD Forum will be critical to address the financial needs of developing countries and advance ambitious structural solutions for debt sustainability.

- Another area that requires heightened attention by the ECOSOC system and the UN system is climate change and delivering on the Paris Climate Agreement. The Council could also play a role in advancing a Global Agreement on Plastics, for example.

- There is the need to give special attention to countries in special situation, LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS.

- Regional dimensions need to feature prominently in the work of ECOSOC and the HLPF, and regional commissions are making critical contribution within their regions but also at global and country level. A couple of regional Commissions, for example, in Latin America and Africa, the great work they have done regionally to address the vaccine issue and the vaccine challenge. These are important regional solutions which are critically needed at this time.

- The role of ECOSOC and its subsidiary bodies to accelerate coordinated efforts and innovate to support the implementation of major UN agreements and mandates given by Member States.

- Lastly, forthcoming UN conferences and meetings, UNEA-5, Stockholm+50, COP-15 on biodiversity, UN Oceans Conference, should be used in

order to advance the agenda and inform work of ECOSOC, in particular with the context of the HLPF review of SDG14 and SDG15 this year.

- Also critical is the follow-up to the recent conference of UNCTAD, the HLPF declaration, and other meetings held in 2021

*(Conclusion)*

Distinguished Delegates,

54. Going forward, we must keep in mind that, in its resolution 75/290 A, the General Assembly also mandated a discussion to integrate key messages from ECOSOC subsidiary bodies and the UN system on the Council's main theme, develop action-oriented recommendations for follow-up and feed into the HLPF, to take place during the ECOSOC Management Segment in June. That would be an opportunity to build on the outcome of the Coordination Segment.

55. I encourage you to engage with the upcoming ECOSOC segments and forums, and the sessions of its subsidiary bodies in the coming months. And as you do so, please bring to bear the outcomes and recommendations coming from both the Partnership Forum and the Coordination Segment.

56. The contributions of all the Segments and Forums should inspire our deliberations for the 2022 Ministerial Declaration and the SDGs.

57. My final message is that **we are committed in the sustainable development framework to leave no one behind. Let us also, in the ECOSOC process, work to enhance coordination, so as not to leave any of us, any subsidiary body, any entity behind.**

58. **Because we are stronger together -- but only if we do it right.**

59. So on that note, which I hope is an optimistic one, I would like to thank all delegations for their contributions, all the panelists and the Secretariat, and especially all the teams involved.

60. I heard in our deliberations a lot of good references were made to the technical Information Note that has been kindly provided by the Secretariat team, very important food for thought.

61. As I said, this is only the first step, and I hope to continue to work with you, no longer as the Chair, but as one of you and part of the ECOSOC, to **take forward our work together to attain the Sustainable Development Goals.**

62. Thank you.

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