



# Economic and Social Council

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## 2023 session

25 July 2022–24 July 2023

Organizational session

### Summary record of the 1st meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 25 July 2022, at 10 a.m.

*Temporary President:* Mr. Kelapile . . . . . (Botswana)

*President:* Ms. Stoeva . . . . . (Bulgaria)

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*The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.*

### **Opening of the session**

1. **The Temporary President**, declaring open the 2022 session of the Economic and Social Council, said that the Council's role had become even more critical in dealing with the ever-growing global challenges faced by the international community. With less than eight years until 2030, it was clear that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals must remain the guiding framework for the Council's actions. That message had been heard this loud and clear throughout the Council's various segments, forums and meetings, including at the high-level political forum on sustainable development.

2. Throughout his presidency of the Council, its work had been focused on the main theme of both the Council and of the high-level political forum for the 2022 session: building back better from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda. He had also convened Council meetings that had addressed his eight broad priorities, namely: swift recovery from the pandemic; vaccine equity; fiscal space; inequalities; post-conflict recovery; science, technology and innovation; climate crisis and biodiversity loss; inclusivity and partnerships; and youth engagement.

3. During his presidency, the Council had implemented several decisions contained in resolutions of the General Assembly to strengthen the Council and the high-level political forum. The major outcomes of the review of the Council's work would ensure that the Council could more effectively carry out its Charter mandates, while strengthening its support for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and COVID-19 response and recovery and while addressing major global challenges. Owing to the review, the Council now had a new coordination segment which renewed the focus on the Council's Charter mandate on coordination. The coordination segment and a revitalized Partnership Forum had generated fresh ideas and policy suggestions to guide and inspire the work of the Council's subsidiary bodies. The coordination segment highlighted the Council's integral coordination role and demonstrated how coordination was key in leveraging its efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by the target deadline of 2030.

4. As a result of the review process, more had also been learned about the work of the Council's subsidiary bodies and how they could further support the Council to deliver on its important Charter mandate. In particular, through its decision 2022/334, the Council

had invited the President and Bureau of the Council, the Chairs and bureaux of the functional commissions and expert bodies of the Council, all Member States and the Secretariat to implement the final recommendations. That would be an important step towards providing the Council and Member States with tools to unlock transformative action towards the accelerated implementation of the Goals.

5. The revitalized Partnership Forum in February 2022 had brought together Governments and a wide range of stakeholders, including the United Nations system, international financial institutions, international organizations, parliamentarians, local governments, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, civil society, scientists, academia, women, youth as well as other stakeholders, to exchange new ideas, expectations and priorities for the work ahead for the Council cycle and the high-level political forum.

6. The reinvigorated meeting on transition from relief to development had enabled the Council to deal with situations of conflict, post-conflict and humanitarian emergencies, with a particular focus on Haiti, South Sudan and the Sahel region, thereby permitting in-depth discussions that informed and guided country-level coordination and delivered better results to affected countries. The meeting had also allowed the Council to deal with challenges that straddled the development, humanitarian and peacebuilding nexus and involved key stakeholders, such as the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti and the Peacebuilding Commission. In addition, the Council had addressed current challenges related to food insecurity, the risk of famine and displacement.

7. To strengthen collaboration and cooperation, he had held joint meetings with the President of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General and the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission. He had also maintained an excellent working relationship with the President of the General Assembly and the Secretary-General in implementing General Assembly resolutions relating to the strengthening of the Council and in implementing recommendations pertaining to the work of Council, as contained in the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Our Common Agenda". He had also participated in Security Council meetings dealing with issues pertinent to the Council's work. The Council continued to be actively engaged with other United Nations organs and bodies in dealing with current challenges confronting the international community.

8. He had convened meetings to draw the attention of Member States to, inter alia: the outcomes of the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and their implications for the 2030 Agenda (in December 2021); the management of natural resources, peaceful societies and sustainable development (in March 2022); and the implementation of the New Urban Agenda (in April 2022). He hoped that the Council and its subsidiary bodies, as well as the high-level political forum, would continue to feature the synergies between the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the 2030 Agenda, and that they would mainstream climate change in their meetings, thereby supporting the larger efforts to end the climate crisis.

9. The Council's operational activities for development segment in 2022 had underscored the importance of international cooperation and global solidarity to address contemporary global challenges and rescue the Sustainable Development Goals. The segment had demonstrated the added value of enhanced coordination and of a whole-of-system approach by the United Nations development system under the leadership of the resident coordinators. Given the segment's important role as the accountability platform for the United Nations development system, he welcomed the fact that the Council had recently adopted a draft resolution to ensure the implementation of its outcomes.

10. The humanitarian affairs segment, with its inclusive and innovative approach, had highlighted the important work being done by the humanitarian community at such a challenging time. It had underscored the urgency of drawing lessons and actions from the pandemic recovery, reinforcing compliance with international humanitarian law and understanding and preparing for the humanitarian impacts of the climate crisis.

11. The outcome document of the Council's forum on financing for development follow-up, co-facilitated by the Permanent Representatives of Grenada and Iceland and adopted by consensus, pointed the way forward on issues that required political momentum at the highest level. Those included Member States' consideration of the potential uses of the multidimensional vulnerability index for small island developing States for both concessional finance eligibility and debt relief. The multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals had also provided a platform for a variety of stakeholders to promote the role of science, technology and innovation in advancing the Goals.

12. During his presidency, the Council had continued to be a champion for issues of interest to countries in special situations, namely the least developed countries,

landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, as well as African countries, by providing them with a platform to share their experiences and development challenges. He had also supported special needs in his role as the Chair of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries. The Council had been actively involved in policy discussions pertaining to countries in special situations, reviews of the programmes of actions for those groups of countries and the launch of successor programmes, including preparations for the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries in 2023, the third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries in 2024 and the fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States in 2024. Given the immense challenges faced by those groups of countries, as well as African countries, he had fully supported all initiatives aimed at addressing their special needs and had called for strengthened international cooperation, global solidarity and partnerships to overcome their development challenges and support their inclusive and sustainable recovery

13. In accordance with his priorities of inclusivity and partnerships, he had engaged young people around the world in the Council's efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals through its youth forum. Young people had taken that opportunity to challenge the international community not only to re-examine its assumptions, re-imagine the future and work on solutions, but also to provide them with a seat at the decision-making table.

14. To promote the participation of civil society in the Council's work, particularly at the high-level political forum, he had held extensive consultations with the Co-Chairs of the major groups and other stakeholders coordination mechanism. The Council had also secured funding from the Governments of Estonia, Germany and Switzerland to facilitate in-person participation of major groups and other stakeholders at the forum in 2022. To promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities, the Government of New Zealand had provided international sign language interpretation for most sessions of forum.

15. During his presidency he had further improved the visibility, impact and inclusiveness of the high-level political forum and had maximized the value of the voluntary national review process by allowing reasonable interactive discussions with the presenting countries. It was a great achievement that the ministerial declaration issued at the close of the forum and of the high-level segment had been adopted by consensus. The declaration provided a strong recommitment to the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, as the guideposts out of the crises.

16. The 2023 session of the Council would be a critical one as the high-level political forum would meet both under the auspices of the Council and under the auspices of the General Assembly. However, he had every confidence in the abilities of the incoming President.

#### Agenda item 1: Election of the Bureau

17. **The Temporary President** said that, in accordance with the principle of equitable geographical rotation among the regional groups, it was the turn of the Group of Eastern European States to nominate a candidate for President. He therefore took it that the Council wished to elect Ms. Stoeva (Bulgaria), who had been nominated by those States, to the post of President of the Council.

18. *It was so decided.*

19. *Ms. Stoeva (Bulgaria) was elected President by acclamation.*

20. *Ms. Stoeva (Bulgaria) took the Chair.*

21. **The President** said that three candidates had been nominated to fill the vacancies for the post of Vice-Presidents of the Council from African States, Asia-Pacific States, and Western European and other States. She took it that the Council wished to elect the candidates nominated by those regional groups.

22. *It was so decided.*

23. *Mr. Chimbindi (Zimbabwe), Mr. Nasir (Indonesia) and Mr. Massari (Italy) were elected Vice-Presidents by acclamation.*

24. **The President** said that two nominations had been received for the position of Vice-President from among Latin American and Caribbean States. She invited the Council to elect one of the two candidates to the post of Vice-President by secret ballot, pursuant to rules 68 and 69 of the Council's rules of procedure.

25. *At the invitation of the President, Mr. Driessens (Belgium) and Mr. Badubi (Botswana) acted as tellers.*

26. *A vote was taken by secret ballot.*

<i>Number of ballot papers:</i>	51
<i>Number of valid ballots:</i>	51
<i>Number of members voting:</i>	51
<i>Required majority:</i>	26
<i>Number of votes obtained:</i>	
Ms. Narváez Ojeda (Chile)	30
Mr. Fuller (Belize)	21

27. *Having obtained the required majority, Ms. Narváez Ojeda (Chile) was elected a Vice-President of the Council.*

28. **The President** said that the coming year would be especially challenging for the world. As the international community continued to pursue its recovery from COVID-19, she hoped that it would be possible to reverse the pandemic's devastating impacts on some of the Sustainable Development Goals. However, the pandemic was clearly not over and was still heavily impacting many countries and overwhelming their health and social protection systems, regressing years of development progress. At the same time, the war in Ukraine had triggered massive food insecurity, energy shortages and financial crises.

29. Against that backdrop, her first priority as the new President would be to ensure that the Council and the high-level political forum provided solid, evidence-based, innovative and actionable policy guidance to curb and address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Goals. Currently, only 50 per cent of countries had plans to recover from the devastating impacts of COVID-19 on education. Much more ambitious efforts were needed to reform and strengthen social protection and health systems in order to leave no one behind. Many investments from stimulus packages were not effectively directed at supporting the Goals. Coherent recovery policies must cater to all dimensions and interlinkages of the Goals, relaunching inclusive growth, building productive capacities and helping to face the triple planetary crises of climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss. Moving forward in a Goals-guided recovery would be the focus of the next high-level political forum. It should also be addressed by the Council's segments and forums.

30. Her second priority would be to help bridge the "great finance divide" identified in the *Financing for Sustainable Development Report 2022*. That divide had sharply curtailed the ability of many developing countries to recover from the pandemic and invest in recovery and social development. Those countries were in no position to finance the necessary investments. Debt in some of the poorest countries had now reached critical levels. The war in Ukraine and sharply tightening global financial conditions were further compounding debt challenges. Solutions to facilitate effective and fair debt crisis resolution must be considered without further delay. Unless immediate action was taken, including by increasing long-term affordable financing and updating the international financial architecture to reflect the changing global landscape, the fight against poverty and inequality could

be set back for an entire generation, posing a grave threat to the achievement of the Goals.

31. The Council would build on the ambitious outcome of its seventh forum on financing for development follow-up to make further gains to address those issues. It would also use the next Development Cooperation Forum in March 2023 to advance risk-informed development cooperation policies and practices to navigate immediate term recovery and long-term risks. She intended to work with the Co-Chairs of the science, technology and innovation forum to ensure that it, and the high-level political forum, could help poorer countries to better mobilize science and technology to overcome the crises and embark on the road to the Goals.

32. Her third priority would be to ensure that the July 2023 high-level political forum paved the way for a September summit that was focused on implementation of the 2030 Agenda, owned by all Member States and inclusive of all stakeholders. Every opportunity should be taken to build momentum for the summit and revive the passion that characterized the elaboration and implementation of the Goals. The summit should mobilize countries and all actors to adopt frontier new strategies, policies and actions to return to a trajectory that led towards the Goals. The ministerial declaration adopted a few days previously called for ambitious preparations for the summit.

33. Her fourth priority would be to build on the success of the humanitarian affairs segment to support and reinforce the work of the United Nations and its humanitarian partners in addressing the profound humanitarian challenges faced by the international community. The latter needed to urgently respond to growing food insecurity and to prevent famine, and she intended to build on the meeting on transition from relief to development held during the 2022 humanitarian affairs segment to continue to address the ongoing challenges. She also intended to reinforce the importance of respect for international humanitarian law in armed conflicts, as failure to comply resulted in suffering of civilians and loss of life of those who indeed needed the international community's assistance and protection.

34. During her presidency she would continue to do the following: focus on the important role of humanitarian responders, especially supporting and reinforcing local organizations, including women's organizations, and fully recognizing the disproportionate impact of humanitarian crisis on women and children; support the humanitarian community in its efforts to put people at the centre of

humanitarian response and ensure that humanitarian assistance reached all those in need, wherever they might be, in accordance with the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence; operationalize stronger collaboration across humanitarian, development and peace efforts in order to maximize the impact for affected people, build resilience and address the root causes that were driving humanitarian need; and contribute to action and ambition in responding to the crisis of climate change. She would place particular emphasis on improving the Council's work on peacebuilding and its interaction with the Peacebuilding Commission. She also aimed to reinforce Council's linkages with its Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti and its follow-up to the resolution on the Sahel region.

35. Her fifth priority will be to follow-up on the Secretary-General's recommendations addressed to Council in his report entitled "Our Common Agenda". The President of the seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly session had asked the Council to further advance the recommendations on convening a biannual summit between the Council, the Group of 20, international financial institutions and the Secretary-General, for a sustainable, inclusive and resilient economy. The Council would reflect on all aspects of that summit, including ways to make it fully inclusive. The Council would also review whether there was a continued need for a reassessment of the role of the Commission on the Status of Women vis-à-vis other intergovernmental mandates. The Council also needed to reflect on how to ensure more meaningful, diverse and effective youth engagement in its work, building on its youth forum.

36. Her sixth priority would be to open further the door of the Council not only to youth, but also to civil society and all stakeholders. She aimed to do so in all meetings. She would also strengthen the engagement of the high-level political forum with major groups and other stakeholders. At the same time, she would increase the time dedicated to Member States and stakeholders during the forum by limiting the number of panellists.

37. Lastly, her seventh priority was to implement the recommendations adopted by the General Assembly in June 2021 for reforming the work of the Council and the high-level political forum. Progress had already been made in January 2022 in that regard, with the convening of a very successful coordination segment and Partnership Forum. The operational activities segment had provided clear guidance to the United Nations development system in delivering more integrated and impactful support to developing countries in implementing the 2030 Agenda. A successful first

transition meeting had also been held to advance the coherence of United Nations system action for development, humanitarian aid and building peaceful and inclusive societies. In conjunction with the Bureau, she would continue to implement those and other reforms called for by the General Assembly. She would also push for the implementation of the recommendations resulting from the review of the work of the subsidiary bodies. Those measures could truly improve the work and impact of the Council and its subsidiary bodies. The Council and the high-level political forum should deliver their work in a way that illustrated what inclusive, impactful and networked multilateralism looked like.

38. Her objective was to ensure that the policy debates and outcomes of the high-level political forum and the Council made a positive difference on the lives of people, including the poorest and most vulnerable, at the country level. The Council was uniquely placed to do that through its oversight of United Nations development system support to the 2030 Agenda, through its guidance to humanitarian action and through its coordination of specialized agencies. Such work could assist countries in their efforts to overcome the crises that had engulfed their societies and help to transform the world into a better place.

## **Agenda item 2: Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters (E/2023/1; E/2023/L.1)**

39. **The President** said that she took it that the Council wished to approve the provisional agenda of its 2023 session, as contained in document E/2023/1.

40. *It was so decided.*

41. *The provisional agenda of the 2023 session of the Council was adopted.*

*Draft resolution E/2023/L.1: Working arrangements for the 2023 session of the Economic and Social Council*

42. **The President** said that the draft resolution contained no programme budget implications. It had been prepared in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolutions 72/305 and 75/290, taking into account the dates recommended by the Council in its decision 2022/343, adopted on 21 July 2022. In addition, the Council had adopted decision 2022/351, whereby it recommended allocating an extra day to the youth forum in 2023 and to hold the forum from 18 to 20 April 2023. The draft resolution included an oral revision to revise the dates of the forum accordingly. She took it that the Council wished to adopt the draft resolution, as orally revised.

43. *It was so decided.*

44. *Draft resolution E/2023/L.1 was adopted.*

45. **Mr. Koba** (Indonesia) said that the 2023 session would be particularly important for the Council. Against the backdrop of continuing global uncertainties and challenges owing to the global COVID-19 pandemic, increased regional tensions and climate emergencies, his delegation stood ready to support all initiatives designed to strengthen multilateralism and partnerships between key stakeholders, while seeking to avoid duplication and working in silos. It was crucial for the Council to make strong contributions to the international community's recovery efforts, particularly in such areas as ensuring pandemic preparedness and the provision of universal health-care coverage, addressing food security and the energy crisis, and bridging the financing gap for development.

46. **Ms. Nyagura** (Zimbabwe) said that it was important for countries to continue to work together in a spirit of multilateralism and solidarity so that the Council could make a positive contribution to the work of the United Nations. Council members should focus on what worked well to ensure a successful 2023 session. The 2030 Agenda remained the guiding light towards a sustainable and resilient path where no one was left behind.

47. **Ms. Narváez Ojeda** (Chile) said that her delegation was fully aware of the challenges facing the world and she stood ready to do her part as a new member of the Bureau.

48. **The President**, turning to the question of seating arrangements for delegations, said that she took it that that, as in the past, lots should be drawn to determine which delegation would occupy the first seat.

49. *It was so decided.*

50. *The delegation of Afghanistan was selected by the drawing of lots to take the first seat.*

*The meeting rose at 11 a.m.*