Opening Remarks

H.E. Ambassador Diego Pary Rodríguez, Permanent Representative of Bolivia to the United Nations & Vice-President of ECOSOC responsible for the Humanitarian Affairs Segment

2022 United Nations Economic and Social Council Meeting on the Transition from Relief to Development

Roundtable 1 - Recurrent crises and sustainable solutions: building resilience and addressing rising food insecurity

Monday 20 June 2022, 10:00-13:00 (New York time)
ECOSOC Chamber, United Nations Headquarters, New York

Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen,
Representatives of civil society, Ladies and Gentlemen

I am delighted to be welcoming you along with my fellow Vice President, H.E. Ambassador Miia Rainne of Finland. We have worked closely on the preparations for this important Meeting on the Transition from Relief to Development under the theme of Recurrent crises and sustainable solutions: building resilience and addressing rising food insecurity.

This is the first time that we hold this Meeting in a new format. I am pleased to demonstrate how ECOSOC can be innovative and implement concrete changes on how we do our business, further emphasizing the relevance of its deliberations.

This new format with formal, in-depth roundtables allows Member States, UN bodies, the UN system, and a range of partners – amongst them international financial institutions, non-governmental organizations and civil society – to come together and explore the pressing issues that directly impact countries, communities and people across the globe. This also enables us to deliberate on how the United Nations can make the biggest impact to improve people’s lives through its humanitarian, development and peace efforts and to help us get back on track towards the Sustainable Development Goals. We need to build resilience and move towards sustainable, durable solutions and peaceful and equitable societies, in line with the promises of the 2030 Agenda.

Today, we will focus our attention on two crises that seriously and simultaneously threaten our progress towards sustainable development and are drastically increasing humanitarian needs.

The morning session will focus on assessing the scale and impact of food insecurity and on mobilizing collective action in the most affected countries and regions.

The afternoon session will focus on displacement to deepen our understanding of current and future challenges to discuss mobilizing action and support for durable solutions.

In the spirit of this Meeting, I expect both roundtables to examine the collaboration, coherence and complementarity across humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding efforts, drawing from concrete experiences on the ground in regions across the globe, particularly in
fragile and conflict-affected contexts. We will also have a special focus on Haiti, South Sudan and the Sahel in line with the mandate set for us in General Assembly Resolution 76/290A.

We must be aware that any crisis today cannot be understood outside the context of recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, conflicts and the ever more concerning climate crisis. Against this backdrop, food insecurity and displacement are already at extraordinary levels and continue to rise – our deliberations today and the work that must be done ahead is urgent and imperative.

I hope we can garner concrete ideas and action points to help address - and finance - solutions to these crises more effectively and efficiently.

Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen,

Let us now turn to the first roundtable entitled “Recurrent crises and sustainable solutions: building resilience and addressing rising food insecurity”.

Global hunger is at levels not seen in generations. Over just the past 2 years, the number of severely food insecure people has doubled, from 135 million pre-pandemic to 276 million today. The number of people facing a hunger disaster has seen a 9-fold increase since 2016. Hunger – perversely – is not driven by a global lack of food, but due to a staggering lack of equality in access to food and means to produce food, especially for the most vulnerable.

In my role as the Vice-President for the Humanitarian Affairs Segment, I particularly look forward to our speakers who can provide input on the most critical and impactful solutions to prevent and respond to food insecurity and the real risk of famine.

I now invite H.E. Miia Rainne, Chargée d’Affaires of Finland to the United Nations and Vice President of the Council responsible for the Operational Activities for Development Segment to also offer her thoughts and reflections. Excellency you have the floor.
Closing Remarks

Thank you very much Ambassador Rainne,

Well we have come to the end of an important and thought-provoking discussion on the first roundtable for the day. Allow me to join my colleague and Vice-President in thanking our distinguished keynote speakers and panelists for their excellent contributions.

I also wanted to thank Ms. Uusikyla for skillfully moderating the discussion; and all of you for your participation.

This morning’s roundtable reminded us of the challenge ahead in addressing the current food insecurity crisis. The combination of factors is undeniable and we have to respond together with development and humanitarian assistance, as the majority of distinguished panellists pointed out this morning. It was also clear that inequalities have been made worse by the combination of various factors. But, inequity, rather than being an inconvenient aspect of economic growth, is one of the main causes for poverty and conflict and food insecurity that it creates. The global data presented as well as the specific experiences in Haiti, South Sudan and the Sahel and Burkina Faso show these gaps in development in terms of access to natural resources, water and land. And gender also plays a role here. These things have been going on for many years and have lead to structural gaps. We must not only take into account inequalities, but also we need to try to reverse these. This should be the central aim of the multi-sectoral coordinated approach that has been proposed. It's fundamental that we keep stability of production and distribution systems, diversifying products but also actors. Food security that is resilient will be viable when all producers in all regions, on all scales have the necessary capacity to participate.

Before adjourning I would like to remind delegations about the side events taking place on the margins of this session.

And finally, the Council will continue its meeting this afternoon at 3pm in this Chamber to hold Roundtable Session 2 on “Recurrent crises and sustainable solutions: building resilience and addressing rising displacement”. The meeting is adjourned.