

# UNGA SECOND COMMITTEE DIALOGUE WITH THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARIES OF THE REGIONAL COMMISSIONS

## RISING GLOBAL INEQUALITIES: TURNING PROMISES INTO ACTION

**MONDAY, 18 OCTOBER, 10 am – 1 pm (EST)**

### **MODERATOR'S NOTES**

#### **OPENING REMARKS**

Madame President, Ambassador Vanessa Frazier, Permanent Representative of Malta to the UN,

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

It is an honor to be a moderator for this important session. I am humbled to accompany the five Executive Secretaries of the Regional Commissions that I have the honor to represent in New York.

Before I proceed, allow me to briefly introduce myself. My name is Rosa Malango and I was appointed on 22 June by the Secretary-General to lead the Regional Commissions New York Office. My almost 30 years of experience with the UN include my recent assignment as the UN Resident Coordinator and Designated Official in Uganda for five years where, supported by a diverse group of partners, I led the implementation of the reforms transforming the UN Country Team from 18 to 29 agencies and working with Ugandans to bring the SDGs to life. I have served in Guatemala, Cote d'Ivoire, Geneva, Angola and have been responsible for operations and partnerships in every continent.

Having served the past six years in the field, I look forward to my role here in HQs and stand ready to reinforce our collaboration with all the Member States guided by three critical instruments - the UN Charter, the 2030 Agenda with its Sustainable Development Goals, and now also the SG Common Agenda. I will work closely with all of you to make the extraordinary and valuable knowledge that the Regional Commissions generate more readily accessible by all national actors and other key stakeholders as we focus on implementing the SDGs during this last Decade of Action.

Excellencies,

We are living in a world where wealth and power have become disproportionately concentrated in the hands of few. High levels of inequalities, combined with decades of under-investment in public services, healthcare, and social protection, have magnified the socio-economic impacts of the pandemic in many countries, disproportionately impacting workers, women and girls, racial and ethnic minorities, older persons, youth and Indigenous peoples. Although globally a massive fiscal stimulus has been mobilized, it is overwhelmingly concentrated in high-income countries. *Unequal access to vaccines* is the starkest illustration of the way in which global inequalities have been exacerbated. In addition to *health*, inequality across regions is manifesting itself on the way climate change is impacting our societies; on the prospects for today's *youth* to prosper and have access to education and employment opportunities; on *gender equality* with women seeing their rights reversed and taking the brunt of unpaid care work; and on *financing for development*, undermining the policy space to plan long term resilient and sustainable development pathways. As the Secretary-General has stated in his Common Agenda, unchecked inequality is undermining social cohesion, creating fragilities that affect us all.

Excellencies,

Over the past decade, the Regional Commissions have generated a wealth of knowledge on the adverse social, environmental, and economic consequences of inequality and have advocated tools and solutions to promote greater equality through social protection, health, education, labour and fiscal policies. Through their platforms, they have catalyzed action and built partnerships, with their member States, within the UN family but also with other regional and sub-regional organizations and key stakeholders. It is critical to leverage this extensive body of knowledge and expertise to re-examine prevailing global asymmetries and their impact on equitable, inclusive and sustainable recovery from the pandemic.

Today, the five Executive Secretaries will share latest data from their respective regions and their unique perspectives on how the pandemic has exacerbated inequalities, be it through unequal access to vaccines, job losses, austerity measures and other forms of discrimination. They will also present the innovative thinking and initiatives emerging in their regions to turn the pandemic recovery into an opportunity to build forward more inclusive and sustainable societies and to reverse underinvestment in social protection systems and accelerate achievement of the SDGs.

I thank our Chair, Her Excellency Ambassador Vanessa Frazier of Malta, for her opening remarks.

Without further delay, I will now turn to the Executive Secretaries.

### FIRST SPEAKER (10 MINS) 10:10

First, I will give the floor to **Ms. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP).**

In the Asia Pacific region, shrinking economies, job losses and falling household incomes have pushed up poverty, particularly among vulnerable groups, leading to greater inequality within and between countries.

- How is ESCAP supporting policymakers to reach those vulnerable groups and to design policies and programmes that effectively reduce poverty and inequality?

### SECOND SPEAKER (10 MINS) 10:20

Next speaker will be **Ms. Vera Songwe, Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA).**

In Africa, the world's youngest continent, we see that limited access to vaccines and macroeconomic fragilities, as well as deepening inequalities across health, education and gender continue to constrain Africa's prospects for recovery.

- How is ECA supporting Member States address the liquidity crisis and multiple manifestations of inequality in the continent?

### THIRD SPEAKER (10 MINS) 10:30

I now give the floor to **Ms. Olga Algayerova, Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)**

In the case of Europe and Central Asia, we also see unequal vaccination rates and exacerbated impacts in the most vulnerable sectors of the population, most recently with inflationary pressures on food and energy prices.

- How can regional cooperation in this diverse group of countries facilitate access to essential goods and services and help break the cycle of inequality?

### FOURTH SPEAKER (10 MINS) 10:40

I now give the floor to **Ms. Alicia Barcena, Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)**

In the case of Latin America and the Caribbean, we see the hardest hit developing region by the Covid-19 pandemic, the worst economic recession in 120 years, and soaring income inequality that could set the region back more than a decade in development progress.

- In this context, what capacity support is ECLAC providing countries in LAC region to strengthen their emergency preparedness and local vaccine production capabilities?

#### **FIFTH SPEAKER (10 MINS) 10:50**

Finally, I will give the floor to our Coordinator this year, **Ms. Rola Dashti, Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia.**

In the case of the Arab region, we see a complex region where enormous economic and social disparities prevail between high- and low-income countries.

- What type of support has ESCWA offered to the very diverse needs of its member countries?

Excellencies,

We have now heard from the five Executive Secretaries. I wish to thank them for their very comprehensive and illustrative presentations.

I will now declare the floor open for questions and interventions from Member States.

Delegates wishing to intervene during today's Dialogue are requested to complete and submit the form in the Chat Box.

#### **MEMBER STATES LIST OF SPEAKERS (11:00- 12 NOON)**

#### **SECOND ROUND OF COMMENTS (12 NOON – 12: 20 TBD)**

We will now open a second round of comments for the Executive Secretaries to address questions and comments by Member States. (2/3 minutes each, depending on time available).

I first invite **Ms. Rola Dashti, Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia.**

I would like now to invite **Ms. Alicia Barcena, Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.**

It is the turn now for **Ms. Olga Algayerova, Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Europe.**

I am inviting now **Ms. Vera Songwe, Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa.**

And finally, I invite **Ms. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific.**

(IF TIME ALLOWS, OPEN THE FLOOR FOR ADDITIONAL INTERVENTIONS FROM MEMBER STATES AND RESPONSES)

### **CONCLUDING REMARKS (12:50)**

I would like to express our gratitude to the Executive Secretaries for the very substantive presentations and for the time dedicated to this Dialogue.

Importantly, I wish to reiterate on behalf of the Regional Commissions and my own behalf our deep appreciation to all the Member states and delegates that have accompanied us today and that have contributed to our Dialogue with their insightful remarks.

The 76<sup>th</sup> session of the General Assembly is a session of hope, and I want to conclude this Dialogue on that note. A note of hope and optimism. A note of reinvigorated sense of purpose to rebuild from the bottom up and to leverage the action and initiatives that are burgeoning in the regions to create a more sustainable, inclusive, and resilient global economy and as advocated by the SG in his Common Agenda, a renewed social contract.

We are grateful for the expressions of support to the work of the Regional Commissions that we have heard today from you, Member States. And we are encouraged by your commitment to the advancement of the 2030 Agenda and the vision enshrined in the SG Common Agenda. Our discussion today demonstrated the importance of regional cooperation and of exchanges of good practices among the regions. Your comments and recommendations will guide our next steps. We are ready to organize more opportunities for dialogue with the Executive Secretaries at the request of Member States.

The sense of urgency and the message emanating from today's Dialogue is clear: we have nine years left and we need to inject dynamism to the Decade of Action. As Nelson Mandela stated: *"As long as poverty, injustice, and gross inequality persist in our world, none of us can truly rest."* The Regional Commissions, as well as me and my Office will be by your side to support you in this joint endeavor.

Thank you.