

Reflections on the High-level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development 2022, with highlights from Latin America and the Caribbean

*Meeting of the Community of Practice for Latin American and
Caribbean countries that present their Voluntary National Reviews*

10 August 2022



**HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM
ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**



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2022 HLPF and High-level Segment of ECOSOC

Theme: *Building back better from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*

9

Days

5

SDGs under review

44

Countries presented VNRs

WHO WAS THERE?

More than 140

Heads of State and Government, Deputy Prime Ministers, Ministers, Vice Ministers and Ministerial Level Officials



Keynote speakers, panelists, lead discussants, respondents, moderators in townhall meeting, panels, and fireside chats

to talk about



8 Special Events

Including a pop-up concert with an SDG Piano

VNR Labs

18

Side Events

273

(43 in person)

Exhibitions

11

The Sustainable Development Goals Report
2022



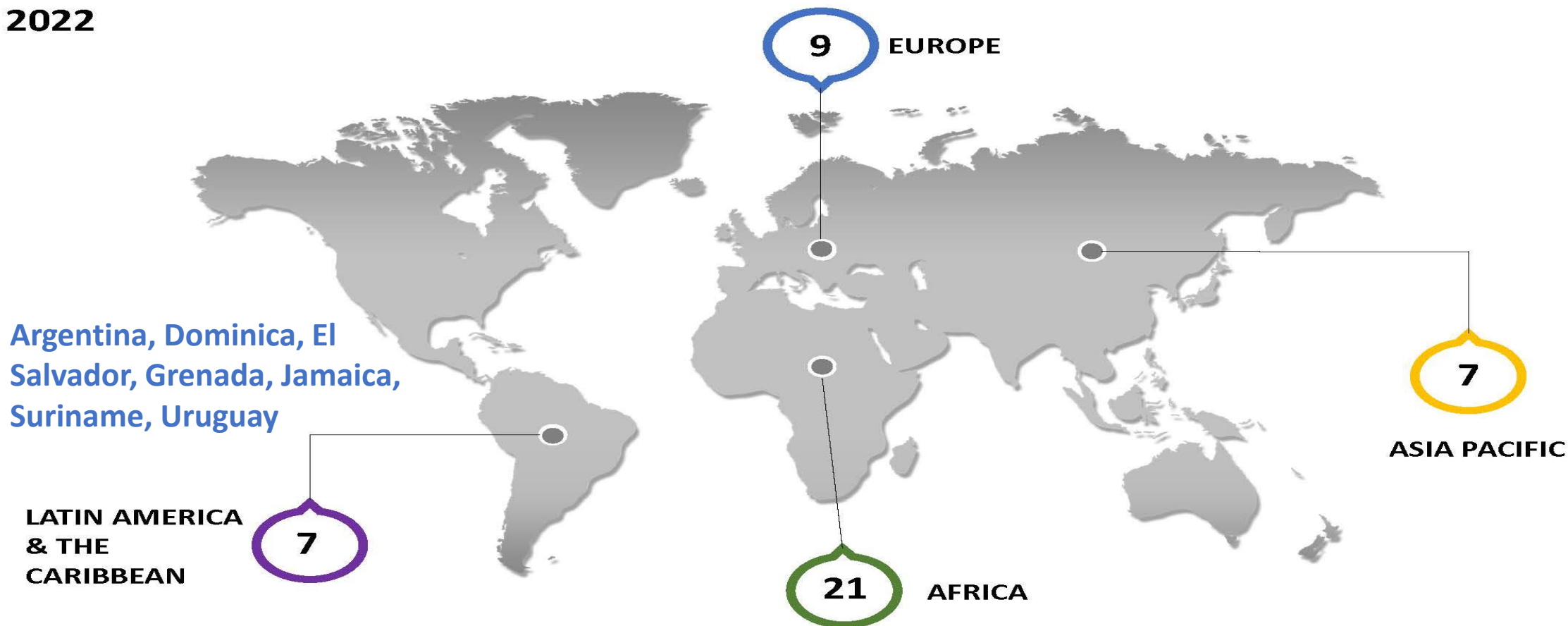
Source:

<https://hlpf.un.org/2022>



HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEWS 2022



Source: <https://hlpf.un.org/2022>

VNRs from LAC in Numbers

- From the **7 VNR presenters** from the region of Latin America and the Caribbean, **4 countries were from the Caribbean** (Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica and Suriname) and **3 countries from Latin America** (Argentina, El Salvador, and Uruguay).
- **53 VNRs** were submitted by **31 LAC countries** to the HLPF in New York between 2016 and 2022, namely 31 first-timers, 16 second-timers, 5 third-timers and 1 fourth-timer.
- **Only six countries** have not presented a single VNR at the global level. From the region of **Latin America and the Caribbean**, two countries have not presented their first VNR, yet (**Haiti and Saint Kitts and Nevis**).

Key messages from the HLPF 2022

We are running out of time to achieve the SDGs. Our world is in high trouble and so are the SDGs. We are facing enormous and multiple challenges, including **ongoing conflict, lasting impacts of COVID-19, climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution**. We are also facing a **dangerous financing situation in financing for development**.

Despite these challenges, this HLPF demonstrated the **high commitment of member States to the 2030 Agenda** and to maintain it as **the blueprint towards sustainable recovery**. 44 countries presented their VNRs despite all odds. We have the tools and means but must work together in solidarity as a global family. We must live and breathe **effective multilateralism** as called for in the **UNSG's "Our Common Agenda"** to create a better world for everyone, **leaving no one behind**.

We need to bridge the **financing gap** by **reforming international debt and taxation architecture**, towards enhanced access to **international concessional funding, especially for SIDS and MICs, expansion of global liquidity, and high levels of foreign investments**. There is an opportunity for **tailored and innovative financing** (Caribbean resilience fund, Debt for Climate swap, hurricane bonds). The **Multidimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI)**, which recognizes ecological and economic vulnerabilities, was frequently mentioned as an alternative to gross national income (GNI) when assessing eligibility for concessional financing for SIDS.

Key messages resulting from the HLPF 2022

- In a very challenging context marked by the **war in Ukraine, roll-backs in women's rights, and unprecedented heat waves**, many delegates called to prioritize concrete action to:
 - invest in **equitable vaccine access**, including through license sharing to allow countries to produce vaccines and other medically important products;
 - **tackle the food, energy and fertilizer crises**, which have emerged from the war in Ukraine;
 - **increase investments in social and health protections**, especially for women;
 - increase **meaningful youth participation** in decision making;
 - **invest in people**, including through the Transforming Education Summit;
 - **“keep 1.5°C alive,”** including by ending the addiction to fossil fuels and investing in renewable energy; and
 - **review access and eligibility for concessional finance for developing countries.**

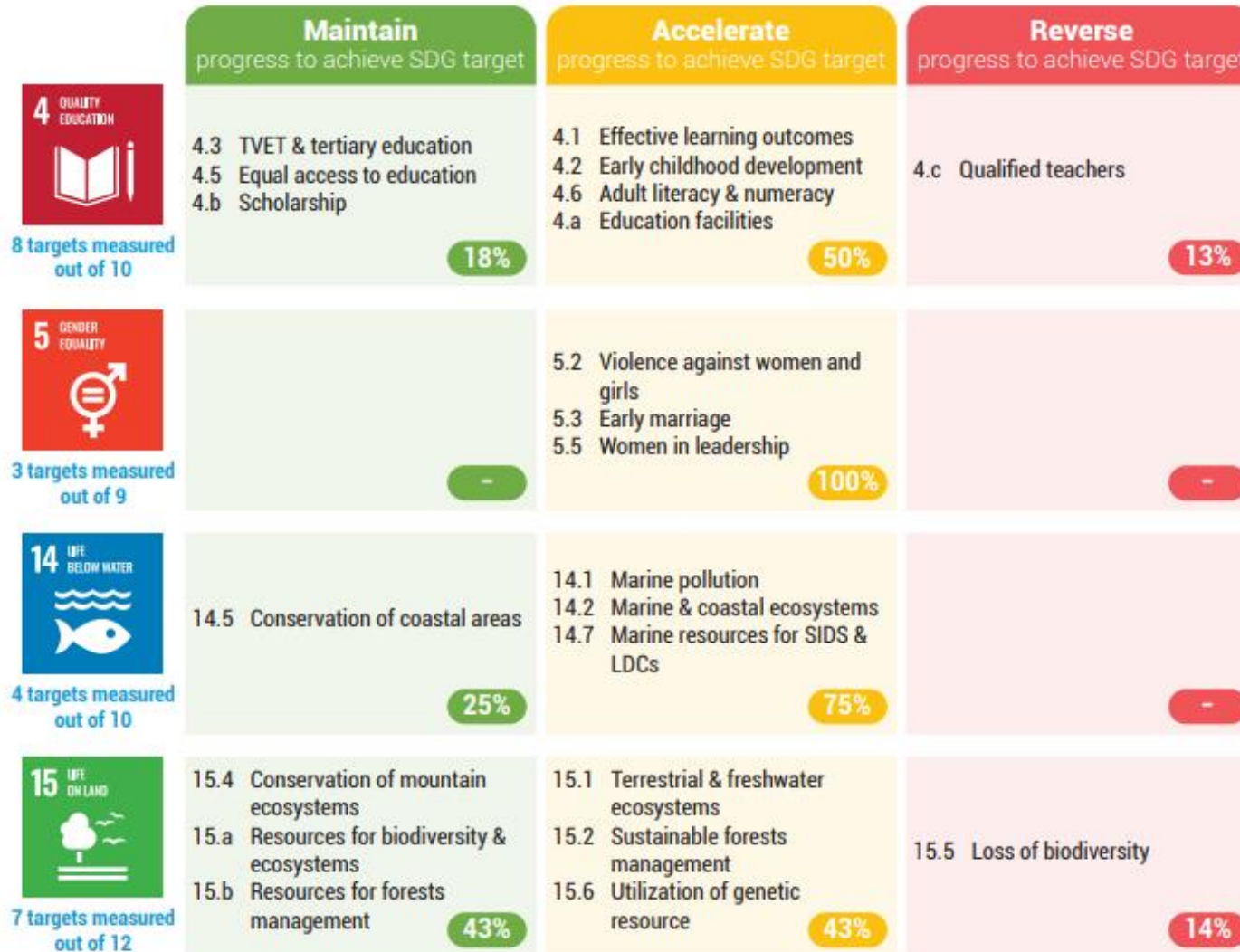
The 5 SDGs under in-depth review at the HLPF 2022

- **SDG 4:** Education is a human right and a common public good, not a privilege, with the upcoming **Transforming Education Summit** aiming to address obstacles that hinder **quality education** worldwide.
- **SDG 5:** No country has achieved **gender equality**, the needs of women and girls must be addressed more comprehensively to build back better, including eradicating **GBV** and implementing **national gender budgets**.
- **SDG 14:** The **UN Ocean Conference in Lisbon just ahead of the HLPF** showed that there is still potential for comprehensive ocean action, including the conclusion of the World Trade Organization (WTO) agreement on fisheries subsidies and ongoing negotiations towards a treaty on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ).
- **SDG 15:** Discussions were awaiting the outcome on a **post-2020 global biodiversity framework** at the upcoming UN Biodiversity Conference (CBD COP 15), 5 - 17 December 2022 in Montreal, Canada.
- **SDG 17:** A whole-of-society approach is required to effectively address global deforestation, land degradation, biodiversity loss, poverty eradication, food insecurity and climate change. Disagreements on what needs to be achieved in terms of global economic and financial systems. **Increased role of voluntary local reviews (VLRs) in enhancing SDG localization:** VLRs provide bottom-up opportunities for cities and local and regional governments (LRGs) to share experiences, challenges, and lessons learned and to facilitate partnerships for the implementation of their local vision. The VLR movement has expanded worldwide, resulting in more than 100 LRGs reporting on local SDG implementation progress.

The 5 SDGs under in-depth review at the HLPF 2022

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

WHICH TARGETS ARE ON TRACK FOR 2030?



HLPF on Sustainable Development 2022: SDGs under review

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES



- Children's access to early childhood education services and adult literacy rates have slightly improved since 2000, however more efforts need to be done.
- Despite progress, there has been a slowdown in the advancement of secondary education completion rate, with significant inequalities according to income level, territory and ethnic-racial condition, among others.



- Femicide and the prevalence of violence continue to be a serious problem despite advances in policies in some countries and the pressure exerted by women's social movements.
- Although the presence of women in the legislative bodies has gradually increased in recent years, these positions are still mostly held by men.



- Although the region has doubled the target for 2020 of proportion of marine protected areas, most of the countries have less than 10%, including areas with high nutrient and plastic pollution.
- Major challenges remain in sustainable fisheries. Global elimination or reformulation of harmful fisheries subsidies (5% of global subsidies) would be beneficial.



- Despite progress in some targets, goal will not be achieved unless much greater effort is implemented. In the last 20 years, deforestation dropped by almost half. Indigenous peoples' territories have well-protected forests but have received almost no support.
- The challenge is to consolidate socio-environmental policies to halt deforestation and loss of biodiversity.

Ministerial Declaration

- On the last day of the HLPF, delegates adopted a **142-paragraph Ministerial Declaration** that Member States had negotiated **over a period of six months**, led by the Permanent Representatives of **Italy and Nauru**. **One paragraph was subject to a vote (131)** due to disagreements over language related to “*the full realization of the right to self-determination of peoples living under colonial and foreign occupation.*”
- The 2022 HLPF Ministerial Declaration reaffirms: that “**eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge**”; the “**importance of achieving global food security**”; and that “**there can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development.**” It contains dedicated sections on the **impact of COVID-19 on the 2030 Agenda and actions to recover better while accelerating progress towards the SDGs**, the **SDGs under in-depth review and VNRs**, “other priority issues,” and “our road map for the way forward.”
- The **work of the regions** in favor of sustainable development is mentioned in **paragraph 25**:

*We reaffirm the **importance of the regional dimension of sustainable development in addressing regional challenges and scaling up action among countries**. We welcome the work of the **regional commissions** and recognize the valuable contribution of the **regional forums on sustainable development**, as the multi-stakeholder platforms to support their member States in the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda in the regions and in the preparation of the voluntary national reviews, including at the **local and regional levels**.*

Highlights from the LAC region at the HLPF 2022 – Plenary Sessions

- **Tuesday, 5 July, 16:30 – 17:30: Mobilizing and sharing science, technology and innovation for an SDG driven recovery** (Intervention by ECLAC's Acting Executive Secretary)
- **Thursday, 14 July, 9:00 – 10:30: Messages from the regions: Regional action and leveraging regional frameworks to support countries on the road to recovery and rebuilding from the devastating impacts of the pandemic** (Intervention by ECLAC's AES; Minister of Foreign Affairs of Costa Rica; Youth from Argentina)



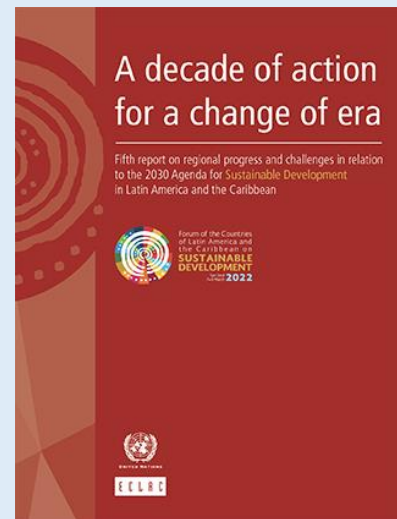
Mobilizing and sharing science, technology and innovation for an SDG driven recovery: key messages

- The **COVID-19 pandemic** has **underscored the relevance of health systems and of scientific and technological capacities** for responding to the population's demands, as well as for becoming **true drivers of technological and productive change** in developing countries.
- **Cooperation on science, technology and innovation (STI)** must be **effective** and **go hand in hand with trade and investment agreements** between developed and developing economies **including the opening up of intellectual property treaties**. This process goes far beyond voluntary declarations.
- While STI are essential to the recovery and development of **LAC countries**, the region's economies have **innovation systems with scant financing, comparatively weak institutions and supportive policies**, and a production system that does not foster the creation of capacities or innovation.
- A lesson learned from the COVID-19 vaccination process is that **vaccine distribution and scientific and technological cooperation did not reach less developed economies**. That is why the key issue is **how to effectively carry out scientific and technological cooperation**. If it is not included in trade, investment and cooperation agreements, it will remain in a vacuum.



Messages from the regions: Regional action and leveraging regional frameworks to support countries on the road to recovery and rebuilding from the impacts of the pandemic

- **The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Costa Rica**, in his capacity as **Chair of ECLAC** and of the **fifth meeting of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development** (March 7-9, 2022 in San José) presented the conclusions and recommendations from this regional gathering.
- Recounted the presentation of “[A decade of action for a change of era](#)” the fifth report on regional progress and challenges in relation to the 2030 Agenda in LAC prepared by ECLAC. He stressed the importance of **strengthening political dialogue and regional cooperation for a sustainable, inclusive and resilient recovery** and **reaching those who lag furthest behind first**.
- **ECLAC** stressed the importance of **enabling policies for financing for development, food security, the energy transition, integrated management of natural disasters, and climate action** to allow for the **effective fulfillment of SDGs**.
- Only eight years to go until 2030, the **structural challenges have increased in a context of multiple crises**. **Enhanced fiscal space** for **Latin American and Caribbean MICs and SIDS**, better management of the **accelerated rise in food prices** and the implementation of the **energy transition** are urgently needed to get on track to achieve the SDGs.



Highlights from the LAC region at the HLPF 2022 – Side Events


In addition to the plenary sessions, other events, including **Side Events, VNR Labs, Special Events, and Exhibitions**, were organized on the margins of the 2022 HLPF.

- **VNR Lab organized by all 5 UN Regional Commissions:** Increased policy coherence and accelerated implementation of the 2030 Agenda: the role of VLRs in the VNR process
- **Argentina/ ECLAC:** Opportunities for integrating biodiversity, sustainable agriculture and transformative action by women, indigenous peoples and local communities, and subnational governments in LAC for the advancement of SDGs 5, 14 and 15
- **Chile/Uruguay and Costa Rica/ ECLAC:** Towards an inclusive and sustainable recovery in LAC from the perspective of **middle-income countries and in development in transition**
- **Uruguay/ ECLAC:** The implementation of SDG 4 in LAC: strategies for recovering from the impact of the pandemic and accelerating action through to 2030



Outlook towards RFSD and HLPF 2023

- The 2023 Forum will hold in-depth reviews of **SDG 6** (clean water and sanitation), **SDG 7** (affordable and clean energy), **SDG 9** (industry, innovation, and infrastructure), **SDG 11** (sustainable cities and communities), and **SDG 17** (partnerships for the Goals).
- The 2023 HLPF will focus on the theme **‘Accelerating the recovery from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda at all levels.’**
- A preliminary list of **2023 VNR countries** is out. To date, **25 countries** have expressed their interest to present their VNRs at the 2023 HLPF, with two countries from the region of Latin America and the Caribbean so far, namely **Panama and Saint Kitts and Nevis**.
- The maximum number of countries presenting during the 2023 HLPF cannot exceed **42**. **Priority will be given to countries presenting their first VNR**, as well as to **those who have not yet presented a VNR in the ongoing four-year cycle of the HLPF (2020-2023)**. Expressions of interest should be communicated to DESA by **15 September 2022**.
- HLPF 2023 will be preceded by the **Forum of LAC countries on Sustainable Development 2023** organized under the auspices of ECLAC and to be chaired by Argentina in **March/April 2023** (dates TBC)
- HLPF 2023 will be followed by a **summit-level HLPF at UNGA in September 2023**, known as the **SDG Summit**. The SDG Summit is a **quadrennial gathering** to consider **four years of progress** towards the 2030 Agenda. A **political declaration will be adopted** at the Summit.



Overcoming the
multiple crisis that
have engulfed our
societies

The new ECOSOC President Ambassador Lachezara Stoeva from Bulgaria outlined seven priorities:

1. Ensuring that ECOSOC and the HLPF provide “**solid, evidence-based, innovative and actionable policy guidance**” to address the **impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the SDGs**;
2. Helping **bridge the “great finance divide,”** identified in the [2022 Financing for Sustainable Development Report](#);
3. Ensuring that the HLPF and ECOSOC contribute effectively to the preparations for the **September 2023 SDG Summit**;
4. Supporting and reinforcing the work of the UN and its humanitarian partners in **addressing the “profound humanitarian crisis”** faced by the international community;
5. Following up on the **UN Secretary-General’s recommendations** addressed to ECOSOC in **Our Common Agenda**;
6. Providing **better access to ECOSOC for youth, civil society, and other stakeholders**; and
7. Implementing the recommendations adopted by UNGA for **reforming the work of ECOSOC and the HLPF**.

Thank you



UNITED NATIONS

ECLAC

