

22nd session of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration

Remarks by Mr. Arunabha Ghosh, Vice-Chair of the Committee for Development Policy (CDP)

Madam Chair, Excellencies, esteemed members of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration,

I am speaking on behalf of the Committee for Development Policy, or CDP, which, like CEPA, is a subsidiary body of ECOSOC, composed of 24 members appointed in our personal capacity.

A significant part of the CDP's work, and that for which it is best known, is on the least developed countries, or LDCs. Another important part of our work is to provide inputs to ECOSOC on the annual theme, which you are discussing here today.

I was invited to provide the views of the CDP on the issues addressed in your document on "Urgently transforming institutions for a greener, more inclusive and more resilient world at a time of multiple crises". I will therefore draw some of the key messages from the CDP's most recent session, held in February this year.

We share with you the concern for urgency in the response to this multidimensional crisis, and the importance of resilience. LDCs in particular have been hard hit by the compounded effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine, which has led to increases in fuel and food prices, severely affecting households and governments. The Committee has expressed its concern at the limited national capacity of these countries to address the diverse challenges originating from multiple crises, which stresses the need for these countries to be supported, among other areas, in the institutional and governance directions you propose.

Overall, the CDP has stressed the need for urgent, faster and more ambitious transformative action to achieve the SDGs. This year it has focused on the need to leave no one behind and ensure justice in this transformative action, in particular climate and environmental action. The concept of a just transition is important as governments grapple with trade-offs and distributional issues related to climate and environmental action.

- A just transition, broadly defined as ensuring no one is left behind or pushed behind in the transition to low-carbon and environmentally sustainable economies and societies, is a matter of equity but also of efficacy, as it is necessary to enable ambitious climate action and provide an impetus to attaining the SDGs.
- The CDP highlighted that just transition strategies should be based on inclusive processes of social and political dialogue that reflect the specific contexts of each country and their historical responsibilities.
- While the concept of just transition arises from concerns for justice at the local and national level, it cannot be separated from the broader issues of global climate justice and common but differentiated responsibilities.

- A globally just transition requires countries to meet their climate commitments and ensure that, in doing so, they do not push poorer countries further behind by creating barriers to trade or excluding them from the opportunities associated with the expansion of new product markets.
- We identified four additional key requirements: 1) policy space for developing countries to develop their productive capacities; 2) new intellectual property frameworks for and the co-development of clean technologies; 3) the expansion of systems for the payment of ecosystem services; and 4) scaled up international cooperation to ensure financing for infrastructure and resilience-building.

Another issue addressed this year by the CDP in the context of ECOSOC's theme is the escalating external debt distress and the financial constraints faced by many developing countries, particularly in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic, rising interest rates, high food and energy prices and currency depreciation.

- The CDP is calling, among other measures, for urgent improvements in the process and speed of debt relief to developing countries; a comprehensive financing strategy to address the large scale of investment needs of developing countries, accompanied by short-term solutions to the current crisis; efficient allocation of financing sources, including those relating to climate change; and for the historical carbon debt owed to developing countries to be taken into account.
- In terms of resilience-building, the CDP is also calling for preventive actions to avoid future debt crises, including, of relevance to CEPA, by increasing their debt management capacity.

On the Voluntary National Reviews, I note in your document the call to integrate reflections of a long-term vision of society in planning, monitoring and reporting of the SDGs and in the VNRs themselves. This is in line with our own view that it is time for a new generation of Voluntary National Reviews that makes them fit for purpose as vehicles for exchange of experience and peer learning and accelerators of action towards the SDGs, emphasizing the core transformative elements of the 2030 Agenda. National processes should be inclusive and participatory, creating space for civil society contributions to identifying priorities, obstacles and opportunities.

Excellencies, I am speaking to you from Australia, where it is now almost/past 1am, so I hope you will forgive me for not staying on for what I am sure will be an interesting discussion. I want to thank you for the opportunity of sharing the CDP's insights at your session, wish you all the best in this weeks' work, and look forward to collaborating with CEPA.