76th Session of the United Nations General Assembly

Informal thematic consultation as a follow-up to the report of the Secretary-General entitled “Our Common Agenda”

- 2nd thematic cluster on the theme “Accelerating the SDGs through sustainable financing and building trust”

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New York

EU Statement

By
H.E. Olof Skoog
Head of the EU Delegation
Thank you, Mr. President,

Madame Deputy Secretary-General,

Dear colleagues,

I am delivering this statement on behalf of the EU and its Member States.

We heard the Secretary-General when he raised his “five alarms”, including on the deficiencies of the global financial system.

We also heard those in the membership who stressed the massive challenges and imbalances in today’s world – including limited access to finance and investments. We will listen attentively during these consultations and look forward to working with all of you, starting at the EU-AU Summit, which has kicked off today with the Youth and Investors Forum.

In his statement last Thursday, the Secretary-General called for a New Global Deal to “ensure that power, wealth and opportunities are shared more broadly and fairly at the international level”. He pleaded that “we must do everything in our power to rescue the SDGs and the Paris Agreement”. The EU lends its support to these objectives and stands ready to engage with all partners in discussions on the shape of such a new global deal.
The EU has taken considerable steps in adjusting its policies. We have led action in many areas, including on global solidarity, debt relief, on special drawing rights, global vaccine distribution via Covax, and on assisting partners building back better.

**Financing an inclusive and green recovery**, one that increases resilience to future crises and ensures long-term prosperity, **must be a top priority**. We already have the tools and roadmaps with the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Climate deal. The EU supports the proposals in ‘*Our Common Agenda*’ aimed at accelerating- or, as the Secretary-General put it, turbo charging - the implementation of both agreements,

Let me touch upon some of them.

First, **addressing the issue of debt** and **creating fiscal space for those most in need**. The EU has promoted the Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI) and the G20 Common Framework for Debt Treatment. The EU stands ready to support the process in countries to reach restructuring agreements to help ensure that the private sector and other relevant international creditors are actively engaged. This is one important aspect of tackling weaknesses in the current debt architecture and towards ensuring the international financial system works for all.
The Secretary-General has also called for **accountable and transparent credit rating agencies** as one of the targets of SDG 17. **The EU has been regulating Credit Rating Agencies for some time**, with lot of attention being devoted to how agencies integrate Environmental Social and Governance (ESG) criteria. We look forward to the upcoming high level meeting (21 March) to discuss how Credit Rating Agencies can help deliver sustainable investment and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

We also support the **enhanced collaboration between the UN, the G20, OECD, WB and IMF** to ensure synergies and strengthen economic governance. We are open to consider the OCA proposal for a biennial summit at the level of Heads of State or Government between the G20, ECOSOC, and international financial institutions, to work towards a more sustainable, inclusive and resilient global economy, in view of strengthening economic governance, taking into account and further strengthening existing structures, in particular the *Addis Ababa Action Agenda* and the *ECOSOC Financing for Development Forum*, a to avoid unnecessary overlaps.

**Such enhanced collaboration is particularly relevant on tax issues.** The OCA report calls for "**stronger global cooperation to promote financial integrity by addressing endemic tax evasion and aggressive tax avoidance, as well as illicit financial flows**", as a
priority for achieving the SDGs. We recognize the need for international tax system’s reform as to cater for the global and digitalized economy, and urge the UN membership to join us in accelerating implementation of relevant international initiatives.

Action on financing would lack teeth without the determination to curb illicit financial flows. The EU has launched numerous initiatives in this area and we will be happy to share our experiences.

We also stand ready to engage in discussions on economic measures “beyond GDP”, to properly account for special vulnerabilities, and would happily share our experience in developing such indicators.

Improving governance also implies supporting the fight against corruption at national and international level, including via accelerating the implementation of the UN Convention against Corruption.

Other financing sources remain key. We reaffirm the international agreement on ODA as base for international development cooperation, recalling that the EU and its Member States remain the world-leading ODA provider. ODA is key to reaching those left far behind and can be a catalyst for innovative sources of financing, for example guarantees as to scale up investment, including for fighting climate change. Climate Finance remains a
top EU priority, with EU Member States being by far the largest contributors to the Green Climate Fund. The EU Global Gateway strategy will be an important part of our extended offer.

The PGA referred this morning to the fundamental role of Human Rights in rebuilding trust. The truly genuine and effective functioning of the rule of law is another core pillar to rebuilding citizens’ trust in governments and public institutions. This requires a shift from the traditional focus on institutions and the state to an approach that puts peoples’ needs at the centre of justice systems, improves the social contract and contributes to social cohesion, prevention of conflict and sustainable peace.

These are for us some fundamental entry points in any discussion of the Secretary-General’s call for a new vision for the rule of law.

Thanks for your attention.