



HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Theme: Accelerated action and transformative pathways: realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development

Tuesday, 7 July 2020

Tuesday, 7 July 2020, 9:00 AM-9:15 AM

Opening

The theme for the 2020 United Nations high-level political forum on sustainable development (HLPF) and ECOSOC is “*Accelerated action and transformative pathways: realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development*” (GA decision 74/508). The **decade of action and delivery** was launched by Heads of State and Government at the SDG Summit in September 2019 in order to step up progress towards the SDGs and put the world on track to realize their targets by 2030.

In light of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), the HLPF will examine the severe impacts of the pandemic on the progress in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It will discuss concrete measures to address the impacts of the pandemic and get back on track to accelerate progress towards the SDGs during the decade of action. It will discuss how the SDGs can serve as the guideposts for building back better, leaving no one behind. It will highlight the importance of international solidarity and a multilateral response to the pandemic.

Chair and opening remarks:

- **H.E. Ms. Mona Juul**, President of Economic and Social Council

Tuesday, 7 July 2020, 9:15 AM-12:00 PM

Launching the decade of action at a time of crisis:

Keeping the focus on the SDGs while combatting COVID-19

(The impact of COVID-19 on the SDGs, SDGs Progress report, 2020 targets, regional dimensions and countries at different levels of development, including middle-income countries, data, institutions for integrated policy making)

The COVID-19 crisis is likely to have a profound effect on progress towards the sustainable development goals. COVID-19 is not only a threat to our health, but a human crisis of multiple dimensions. It might push tens of millions of people back into extreme poverty and hunger and is impacting the livelihoods of half of the global workforce due to unemployment or underemployment. This is happening at a time when we were still not on track to achieve the SDGs by 2030 and we were launching a decade of action to accelerate progress.



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The poorest and the most vulnerable people are most affected by the pandemic, including women and girls, children, older persons, persons with disabilities, migrants and refugees, persons in situation of conflict, informal sector workers and other groups. Countries in special situations, including African countries, the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing states, may be significantly affected in the long term due to their fragile health systems, limited financial and other resources, vulnerability to external shock, and dependence on international trade. Many middle-income countries are also vulnerable and require financial and other support and cooperation to cope with the pandemic and its impacts.

It is vital that, while responding to the crisis and addressing its impacts, countries keep the SDGs and climate commitments in focus so as to hold on to the gains made thus far, and in the recovery, to make investments that propel us toward a more inclusive, sustainable, just and resilient future. A gender sensitive recovery is of utmost importance.

Particular efforts are needed to accelerate progress towards the target scheduled to be achieved by 2020. The HLPF may also give directions on the kind of action to be taken with regard to those targets. Many of the transformations needed to realize the 2030 are possible, yet require strong institutions and integrated, evidence- and data-based policies. Also critical are international and national cooperation, dialogue among countries, multiple stakeholders and regions. At the geopolitical level, the crisis calls for leadership, global solidarity, transparency, trust and multilateral cooperation.

Proposed guiding questions:

- Where do we stand in terms of achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs at the time of COVID-19 and how can we protect advances made thus far on the SDGs?
- How can the responses to the impacts of COVID-19 accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs?
- What are the lessons learned from the COVID-19 crisis that can help increase country resilience and embark on risk-informed sustainable, resilient development pathways?
- What are ways to ensure that actions do not leave anyone behind?
- How can we help countries to strengthen statistical capacities, improve the quantity and quality of disaggregated data and support evidence-based swift decision-making?

Chair:

- **H.E. Ms. Mona Juul**, President of Economic and Social Council

Presentations:

- **H.E. Mr. Mher Margaryan**, Vice President of Economic and Social Council, on the messages from ECOSOC Integration Segment
- **Mr. Liu Zhenmin**, Under-Secretary-General of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations, presentation of the report of the Secretary-General on the progress towards SDGs

Followed by resource person presentations and interactive discussion with the participants.



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Tuesday, 7 July 2020, 2:00 PM-3:00 PM

Building back better after COVID-19 and acting where we will have the greatest impact on the SDGs

Protecting and advancing human wellbeing and ending poverty

(Most closely related SDGs: SDG 1, SDG 3, SDG 4, SDG 6, SDG 16, and SDG17)

Advancing human well-being is at the heart of sustainable development. It is about upholding human rights, eradicating poverty and deprivations across multiple dimensions, closing opportunity gaps and expanding capabilities – including those needed to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences as well as ensuring gender equality. Protecting the well-being of all people is also about safeguarding the natural environment on which everyone depends, including future generations, and tapping into synergies across the SDGs.

COVID-19 has tragically laid bare shortfalls in many areas and threatens to push millions of people back into poverty. Pandemic response efforts and long-term development plans must work to eliminate poverty and hunger; reduce inequalities in opportunities; ensure access to quality health care and reduce exposure to disease; increase access to quality education and other services; and address persistent gender inequality.

All of this is demonstrably possible, but recovering and building back better will require cooperation, collaboration and dialogue among multiple stakeholders to ensure no one is left behind, including the most vulnerable.

Proposed guiding questions:

- What are some promising actions to support progress toward advancing human well-being that generate synergies across Sustainable Development Goals and Targets? Are there trade-offs from these actions and if so, how can they be mitigated?
- What are the most critical interventions and partnerships needed over the next 2 years, 5 years, 10 years to protect and advance human well-being and end poverty?
- Which groups are especially vulnerable to poverty and lack access to capability enhancing services?
- What are ways to ensure that actions leave no one behind? How might COVID-19 facilitate or complicate efforts to reduce vulnerabilities among marginalized groups?
- Are there examples of successful partnerships and initiatives for advancing human well-being? Can these be scaled up or adjusted to fit other contexts?
- How can science and technology support well-being in the context of COVID-19 and in the future?



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Chair:

- President or Vice President of ECOSOC

The session will start with resource person presentations then followed by interactive discussion with the participants.

Tuesday, 7 July 2020, 3:00 PM-4:00 PM

Building back better after COVID-19 and acting where we will have the greatest impact on the SDGs

Ending hunger and achieving food security

(Most closely related SDGs: SDG 2, SDG 3 and SDG17)

Sustainable Development Goal 2 (SDG2) of the 2030 Agenda aims to “*end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture*”. Progress has been made over the last couple of decades, however, the slow-down in progress towards hunger reduction and food security since 2015, the persistently high numbers of hungry and those suffering from under-nutrition and the emergence of obesity and diet-related non-communicable diseases worldwide are adding complexity and urgency to the challenge. Our food systems are managed in an environmentally unsustainable manner and have become a major contributor to GHG emissions. Landscape degradation is already severe, and the pace of land use change, deforestation, overfishing and environmental degradation is alarming.

Simply scaling up current actions to meet the world needs for food, fibre and energy for a growing and more affluent world population will be incompatible with sustainable utilization of natural resources and will create significant trade-offs within SDG2, but also with other SDGs and targets, including SDG3 and SDG 17, as well as with the Paris Agreement for climate change. In addition, the current COVID-19 pandemic has added to and amplified existing challenges facing food systems, especially in vulnerable countries, as evidenced by the near breakdown of food supply chains, the food shortages in many developing countries and the sharp increase in people suffering from acute food insecurity as a result of COVID 19. Food systems have been unprepared to face such emergencies.

Protecting and preserving biodiversity and natural habitats is essential for protecting health. Putting food systems on a sustainable path will contribute to meeting a large number of SDGs.

Transitioning towards sustainable food systems will take policy action and individual and collective behavioural change throughout the food systems. Policies and actions should promote sustainable agriculture production and consumption, including reducing food loss and waste, providing decent livelihoods for all actors, including women and girls, minimizing the climate and environmental impacts and increasing the resilience of food systems.



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Proposed guiding questions:

- Which areas and socio-economic groups are especially vulnerable to poor nutrition and food insecurity, including women and girls, and what are ways to ensure that food systems transformations leave no one behind?
- What fundamental changes are needed to make our food systems an engine for inclusive growth and contribute to accelerating progress towards ending hunger and achieving food security for all in the Decade of Action?
- How might COVID-19 affect the implementation of needed food systems changes?
- What knowledge and data gaps need to be filled for better analyzing current successes and failures in food systems and the trade-offs and synergies, across SDGs, in implementing food systems changes to fix these failures?
- What means of implementation, including STI, and partnerships are needed to harness synergies and/or reduce trade-offs in food systems?

Chair:

- President or Vice President of ECOSOC

The session will start with resource person presentations then followed by interactive discussion with the participants.

Tuesday, 7 July 2020, 4:00 PM - 5:00 PM

Transformative pathways to realize the 2030 Agenda: **a whole of society approach taking into account the impact of COVID-19** **(Stakeholder perspective)**

Major Groups and other Stakeholders (MGoS) are crucial to the successful implementation, follow-up, and review of the 2030 Agenda. In preparation for the 2020 HLPF, they contributed to review processes at all levels, including at the regional forums on sustainable development and through national review mechanisms.

The 2030 Agenda and the UN General Assembly established ambitious modalities for the participation of MGoS in the HLPF (paragraph 89 of the 2030 Agenda and paragraphs 14 and 15 of General Assembly Resolution 67/290).

This session offers MGoS an opportunity to raise their critical concerns and concrete proposals for Decade of Action. It will discuss the recommendations of MGoS on the implementation, follow-up, and review of the 2030 Agenda and the Decade of Action. It will also place a particular emphasis on the impact of and response to COVID-19. It will also review the contributions of MGoS themselves to the implementation of the Agenda, especially at the national level and during ongoing national review processes.

The session is being organised in collaboration with the HLPF Coordination Mechanism of Major Groups and other Stakeholders



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Chair:

- President of ECOSOC

The session will have an interactive discussion format.

Wednesday, 8 July 2020

Wednesday, 8 July 2020, 9:00 AM -10:00 AM

**Building back better after COVID-19 and acting where we will have
the greatest impact on the SDGs:**

**Responding to the economic shock, relaunching growth, sharing economic
benefits and addressing developing countries' financing challenges**

(Most closely related SDGs: SDG 5, SDG 7, SDG 8, SDG 10, and SDG 17)

Economic activity provides livelihoods, jobs, incomes and the means to attain many other elements of a better life. However, in recent decades, economic growth has been accompanied by increasing or persistently high levels of inequality within countries – between the rich and poor, women and men, and different groups within society, such as between migrants and nationals. It has also been accompanied by growing environmental degradation. With current production and consumption systems threatening the well-being of present and future generations. Such trends seem set to continue and many have been brought to the fore with the differential impact of COVID-19 on different population groups, and national responses to it.

A fundamental reconfiguration is needed in economic policymaking and the production and consumption of goods and services, in tandem with a diminished environmental footprint and greater distributional justice that prioritizes gender equality, access to decent jobs, and social protection for all. Achieving this in line with the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development will require leadership from both the public and the private sector, shifts in social norms, and engagement with civil society and the science community.

Proposed guiding questions:

- What are some promising actions to support progress toward sustainable economic growth and sharing economic benefits that generate synergies across Goals and targets? Are there trade-offs from these actions and if so, how can they be mitigated?
- Which groups are especially vulnerable to missing out on economic benefits and decent work, and what are ways to ensure that actions leave no one behind?
- How might responses to COVID-19 facilitate or complicate efforts to reduce these vulnerabilities including for informal workers and the working poor?
- What long-term policy measures and social protections are necessary to promote the resilience of the most marginalized groups to economic and environmental shocks?



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- Are there examples of successful partnerships and initiatives to harness synergies and/or reduce trade-offs in economic systems?
- What steps can be taken to promote the sustained participation of civil society organizations, women's and girls' organizations, youth-led organizations and national human rights institutions? Can these be scaled up or adjusted to fit other contexts?
- What role can science, technology and innovation (STI) play in the transformation to sustainable and equitable economic systems, and how do we prevent STI from expanding inequalities within and among groups vulnerable to being left behind?

Chair:

- President or Vice President of ECOSOC

The session will start with resource person presentations then followed by interactive discussion with the participants.

Wednesday, 8 July 2020, 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Mobilizing international solidarity, accelerating action and embarking on new pathways to realize the 2030 Agenda and the Samoa Pathway: Small Island Developing States

COVID-19 has exacerbated the existing challenges confronting Small Island Developing States (SIDS) resulting in a new array of challenges which could potentially inhibit the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and SAMOA Pathway.

The COVID-19 pandemic is first a health crisis. With their relatively weaker healthcare services and systems, SIDS require support in order to respond to this crisis. COVID-19 also can have cascading and scarring effects on economies and societal systems, and its economic impact is already hard felt in many countries. Policy responses need to be implemented with great urgency to address immediate challenges, with the ultimate objective to build back better so as to be resilient to future crises and to embark on accelerated progress towards sustainable development.

Significant financial and other support will be necessary to bolster SIDS' efforts to respond to COVID-19 and boost economic and other resilience. New and innovative financial instruments that incentivizes ex-ante resilience building are required. In this regard, the support of the international multilateral financial community and other multilateral and bilateral partners are necessary to realize the magnitude of resources required at this time.

In addition, there is emphasis on the need for immediate solutions and effective commitments for long-term debt relief for SIDS. Whilst there has been some support for the suspension of debt repayments for IDA eligible countries, most SIDS do not fall into this category. There is a need to address debt relief and restructuring in all SIDS, with greater flexibility in the assessment of developing countries' fiscal situations, and extended credit facilities.



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This session will feature resource persons and country representatives from across the three SIDS regions, who will share their challenges, strategies and approaches in response to COVID-19 and for realizing the transformational change necessary for building resilience in these economies. It will also explore the channels of support currently available, identify where gaps exist, and how the required resources can be leveraged from the international community.

Proposed guiding questions:

- What kinds of policy reforms are required to ensure that SIDS build back better in the aftermath of COVID-19 and remain on track with the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway and the 2030 Agenda?
- What are the channels of support currently available for such efforts? How can the required resources be leveraged to effectively assist SIDS?
- What innovative and other financial approaches, including support for debt restructuring and debt relief, are needed to complement international development assistance?
- How can SIDS' efforts be best supported to ensure effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda and SAMOA Pathway at national and regional levels?

Chair:

- President or Vice President of ECOSOC

The session will start with resource person presentations then followed by interactive discussion with the participants.

Wednesday, 8 July 2020, 2:00 PM-3:00 PM

Building back better after COVID-19 and acting where we will have the greatest impact on the SDGs:

Protecting the planet and building resilience

(Most closely related SDGs: SDG 12, SDG 13, SDG 14, SDG 15, and SDG 17)

The 2030 Agenda is rooted in the idea that human development and wellbeing cannot be achieved without simultaneously safeguarding and investing in nature — otherwise development gains will be short lived and unequally distributed. Biodiversity loss, land and forest degradation and climate change, and more frequent and intense natural hazards, among other, are threatening the planet and human life and wellbeing. Actions to advance economic and social development need to address these threats and build resilience, including through sustainable consumption and production practices and accounting for the true value of nature.

The past decade—including the COVID-19 crisis—has revealed the systemic nature of risk and the cascading impact of disasters, crossing economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development and affecting countries in all corners of the globe. The natural environment is humanity's first line of defence against hazards of all kinds, and nature-based solutions (NBS) enable us to protect and work with nature to build resilience and reduce risks at all scales. These concerns are addressed directly in SDGs 12, 13, 14, and 15, but they also animate the entire Agenda, including



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health, food security and economic growth and livelihoods. The current session will highlight opportunities, innovation and solutions to safeguard the planet, managing risk and building resilience.

Proposed guiding questions:

- What are the fundamental systems transformations needed to halt nature degradation, reverse loss and manage risk, while eradicating poverty, ensuring food security for a growing population, including women and girls, securing livelihoods and promoting resilience? How can we scale up the use of nature-based solutions to achieve these transformations? How can we promote sustainable consumption and production?
- How can the public and the private sector work better together to manage disaster risk across systems, in line with the Sendai Framework, and to protect the global environmental commons? What tools are instrumental towards this aim?
- What does the COVID-19 crisis reveal about the human-nature relationship and systemic risk creation? How can nature-based solutions contribute to a post-COVID-19 economic and social recovery that is more sustainable, equitable and resilient?
- How can we redirect financial flows and direct recovery efforts to create better outcomes for people, prosperity and planet? Which nature-related investments should the international community prioritize in the next 1-2 years?
- How can we increase efforts to combat climate change as we respond to COVID-19?

Chair:

- President or Vice President of ECOSOC

The session will start with resource person presentations then followed by interactive discussion with the participants.

Wednesday, 8 July 2020, 3:00 PM-4:00 PM

Building back better after COVID-19 and acting where we will have the greatest impact on the SDGs:

Sustaining efforts to ensure access to sustainable energy

(Most closely related SDG: SDG 7, SDG 12, SDG 13, and SDG 17)

Energy lies at the heart of both the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. As governments worldwide tackle the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic, we must not lose sight of the critical need for an accelerated clean energy transition. Ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all by 2030 will open a new world of opportunities for billions of people through new economic opportunities and jobs, empowered women, children and youth, better education and health, more sustainable, equitable and inclusive communities, and greater protections from, and resilience to, climate change impacts. Achieving SDG 7 will catalyze actions to combat climate change and advance targets of other SDGs and will contribute to accelerate transition to carbon neutral economy.



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Proposed guiding questions:

- How does/will the COVID-19 crisis and associated volatility in oil prices affect the energy sector?
- How can clean energy investments contribute to a better and stronger recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic?
- How do we deploy the four “levers” identified in the GSDR - governance, economy and finance, science and technology, and individual and collective action – to accelerate the clean energy transition?
- How do we accelerate the clean energy transition, while expanding access to electricity, achieving progress on clean cooking and ensuring the increase in transport movements is sustainable?
- How can we mainstream decarbonization, decentralization and digitalization of energy systems into updated Nationally Determined Contributions to maximize synergies between the energy transition and climate action?
- What are the outstanding challenges, and best practices to mobilize finance for clean energy investments, in particular in particular least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing states?
- How do we advance the SDG Decade of Action through innovative and knowledge-based policies and partnerships? What affordable, reliable and gender-responsive energy solutions do frontier technologies offer?

Chair:

- President or Vice President of ECOSOC

The session will start with resource person presentations then followed by interactive discussion with the participants.

Thursday, 9 July 2020

Thursday, 9 July 2020, 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM

**Building back better after COVID-19 acting where we will have
the greatest impact on the SDGs:**

**Bolstering local action to control the pandemic
and accelerate implementation**

(Most closely related SDGs: SDG 9, SDG 11, and SDG 17)

In the Political Declaration adopted at the 2019 SDG Summit, Member States reaffirmed the critical role of cities, local authorities and communities in implementing and realizing the SDGs and committed to empowering and supporting them in pursuing the 2030 Agenda. While SDG 11 on making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable provides a clear set of



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targets and indicators for local and regional governments and communities to strive towards, their contributions will be critical throughout all the 17 SDGs.

If current trends continue, by 2050 cities will host approximately 70 per cent of the world's population and produce 85 per cent of global economic output. While rapid urbanization poses a number of challenges, cities also offer the opportunity to achieve multiple SDGs at scale and with efficiency.

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has added unprecedented and unique challenges for cities, including pressure on their health care, education and safety systems, and disproportionately affected the most vulnerable groups of the society, including women and girls facing multiple discrimination. It also poses threats to rural areas that research and data has shown are often left behind in the development compared to cities.

The pandemic has highlighted the important role of local governments as the provider of services in closest proximity to people. The recovery phase from the pandemic will represent an opportunity for all levels of government, including local and regional governments, to build back more inclusive, equal, resilient and sustainable societies, as laid out in the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

Proposed guiding questions:

- How can the SDG framework support response to and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and strengthen preparedness for future pandemics at the local level? How have urbanization challenges changed, and what are the implications of the pandemic for urban planning, resilience strategies, deployment of technologies for connectivity? How to secure financing for the recovery?
- What are the innovative actions and partnerships that cities, local authorities and rural communities are undertaking in their SDG implementation? How can we ensure that local actions are truly transformative?
- What actions can countries take to ensure that SDG implementation at the sub-national level is effectively reported and monitored in national efforts, including VNRs? How can sub-national and local reviews support SDG implementation and what mechanisms could ensure coherence among sub-national and national actions?
- What type of capacity building and support is required to ensure that cities, local authorities and rural communities are empowered to implement the SDGs?
- How can developing countries better manage the surge of urbanisation to make cities more productive, sustainable and equitable thus enabling attainment of SDGs?
- What is the role of science, technology and innovation in the transformation to sustainable and equitable urban systems, which also incorporate and address informality and help overcome the digital divide?

Chair:

- President or Vice President of ECOSOC

The session will start with resource person presentations then followed by interactive discussion with the participants.



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Thursday, 9 July 2020, 10:30 AM-12:00 PM

Are we leaving no one behind in eradicating poverty and working towards the 2030 Agenda?

(including what COVID-19 is telling us about inequalities and the weaknesses in our social systems)

With the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Member States committed to achieving sustainable development for all nations and peoples and for all segments of society. They pledged that no one would be left behind, and that they would endeavour to reach the furthest behind first.

Against this pledge, considerable progress has been made in economic and social development over the past decades. However, such progress has been uneven across and within countries and among groups of people; more than 10% of the world population are left living in poverty and the pace of poverty reduction has been decelerating in recent years.

Now, in the year 2020, the global community is facing the greatest health and human crisis since the creation of the UN 75 years ago. COVID-19 is upending billions of lives across regions and is likely to push the global economy down to the worst recession since the Great Depression in 1929; it has exposed and exacerbated vulnerabilities and inequalities in both developing and developed countries, deepening poverty and exclusion and pushing the most vulnerable even further behind.

This session will examine implications of the current crisis for the furthest behind. It will discuss comprehensive policies and strategies to “recover better” and use the recovery from the pandemic to build the kind of social and economic systems that will leave no one behind and improve the lives of the poorest and most vulnerable, including women and girls exposed to multiple discriminations.

Proposed guiding questions:

- What did COVID-19 show us about our social and economic systems’ ability to cope with shocks and their impact on the poorest and most vulnerable?
- How can we resume and accelerate progress towards SDGs while leaving no one behind, in particular by eradicating poverty and building more just, equitable and inclusive societies?
- What lessons have we learned from the implementation of the SDGs and the response to COVID-19 thus far? How can we take advantage of policies and measures already being introduced to implement the 2030 Agenda, to address systemic vulnerabilities and recover better towards more sustainable, just, equitable and inclusive societies?
- Which groups are especially vulnerable during and in recovering from the COVID-19 crisis? What are some promising actions to improve the situations of these groups and leave no one behind? How can we ensure that actions taken to respond to COVID-19 leave no one behind?
- What kind of mechanisms (i.e., early-warning systems, rapid response funds) are necessary to enable coordinated actions at global, regional and national levels and among all segment of society to mitigate risks and enhance resilience of individuals, groups and communities in vulnerable situations, amid the current crisis?

Chair:

- President or Vice President of ECOSOC



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The session will start with resource person presentations then followed by interactive discussion with the participants.

Thursday, 9 July 2020, 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM

Mobilizing international solidarity, accelerating action and embarking on new pathways to realize the 2030 Agenda and respond to COVID-19: African countries, Least Developed Countries and Landlocked Developing Countries

The COVID-19 pandemic and the accompanying global economic recession will cause a rise in poverty, global economic inequality and inequitable distribution of development gains within and among countries. The least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and African countries will bear the heaviest burden of these impacts. These countries are already vulnerable due to the fragility of their health systems, limited coverage of their social protection systems, limited financial and other resources, vulnerability to external shocks, and significant dependence on international trade and financing.

In many of these countries the effects of the pandemic are amplified by the ongoing conflicts, instability and climate crisis. The poorest and most vulnerable populations are disproportionately affected, including women, children, older persons, persons with disabilities, migrants and refugees and informal sector workers.

Preparations for the fifth UN conference on LDCs in Doha, Qatar (21-25 March 2021) have been slowed down due to COVID-19 but are picking up again. The Conference will provide an opportunity to shape a new action plan for LDCs to build back better, smarter and resilient in the next decade. The mid-term reviews of the Vienna programme of actions led to further commitments to improve the situation of LLDCs.

Proposed guiding questions:

- How can the lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects be used as an opportunity for enhancing resilience and structural transformation in LDCs, LLDCs and African countries?
- What structural and other changes are needed to address the impacts of COVID-19 such as rising external debt, drop in remittances and tourism or impact on food security? How can they be accelerated for realizing the decade of action for the SDGs?
- What specific policy measures and international support are needed to protect medium and small-scale enterprises and their role in the economies of some of these vulnerable countries?
- What strategies can we use to build back better, smarter and resilient in LDCs, LLDCs and African countries?
- What recommendations would you make for the next decade in the context of the future programme of action for LDCs?



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- How can we resume and accelerate progress in achieving the SDGs and delivering on the programmes of action for LDCs and LLDCs and NEPAD?

Chair:

- President or Vice President of ECOSOC

The session will start with resource person presentations then followed by interactive discussion with the participants.

Friday, 10 July 2020

Friday, 10 July 2020, 9:00 AM-10:00 AM

**Means of implementation to match the scope of the crisis
and the breadth of our ambition for 2030:**
Mobilizing well directed financing

As economies are slowly reopening following a sudden halt of activity, countries have the opportunity to build back better by creating more sustainable, resilient and inclusive economies and societies. There is significant momentum in an increased number of countries around the notion that a reversion to the pre-COVID economy, which fueled environmental degradation, climate change and increasing inequalities, is not desirable. Many recognize the recovery from the economic fallout of the pandemic as a vital opportunity to shape a post-COVID economy that is greener, healthier, more inclusive and more resilient.

Yet, the context for financing this recovery is challenging. Governments have seen the fiscal space for investment in a sustainable recovery significantly limited in the context of the global economic crisis. Countries are faced with a dual challenge of declining revenues due to the crisis and increased spending demands. An increasing number of countries is also facing acute debt distress. Efforts are being made to provide debt relief for all countries requesting debt alleviation. But a comprehensive solution that engages multilateral, public and private creditors is yet to be achieved. At the same time, the private sector also faces limited space to invest, as businesses have also been hit hard.

ECOSOC has taken several steps to help countries finance their response to COVID-19 and embark on a path towards a sustainable recovery. The 2020 ECOSOC Financing for Development Forum adopted an outcome containing policies to support health measures, address socioeconomic impact of the pandemic and ensure building back better. The outcome represents the first universally agreed UN set of policies on COVID-19. In addition, the Council convened two meetings of the FfD Forum, on 23 April and 2 June respectively, to advocate for a comprehensive response; highlight the needs on the ground and help countries access resources available for COVID-19 response.

These discussions advocated that resources that are being made available must be aligned with the SDGs, including stimulus packages and bailouts, as well as international development cooperation in



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all its forms. There is also need for scaling up the availability of concessional financing for developing countries struggling to rebuild, especially the least developed and other countries in special situations. Moreover, there is the need to strengthen national and subnational capacities to manage and reduce risks and multidimensional vulnerability and advance multi-stakeholder partnerships in the efforts to build SDG-conducive economies and societies. The recovery will only be sustainable if the systemic and structural vulnerabilities exposed by the pandemic are adequately addressed, e.g. evolving durable solution to debt sustainability.

Proposed guiding questions:

- What policy measures and financing options can enable countries to build back better and achieve a resilient and sustainable recovery?
- How can the economy be aligned with the 2030 Agenda and Paris Agreement, and how can the recovery preserve the environment and build resilience to climate change and other global risks?
- What steps are needed at the global level to support the most vulnerable countries and people to achieve a resilient and sustainable recovery?

Chair:

- President or Vice President of ECOSOC

The session will start with resource person presentations then followed by interactive discussion with the participants.

Friday, 10 July 2020, 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM

Means of implementation to match the scope of the crisis and the breadth of our ambition for 2030: **Science, technology, innovation**

One of the key functions entrusted to the high-level political forum on sustainable development by Rio+20 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is to strengthen the science-policy interface, including through the Global Sustainable Development Report and the Technology Facilitation Mechanism.

Progress in science, technology and innovation (STI) continues to accelerate, promising significant benefits but also risks to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Science, technology and innovation will continue to have broad impacts on the economy, society and environment. Rapid technological advances have rarely been neutral and can present extraordinary policy and societal challenges. It is important to ensure that they are to the benefit of all, in line with the ambitions of the SDGs.



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The Decade of Action explicitly recognizes that STI are essential ingredients as part of any feasible transformative pathway towards the SDGs. This is underscored by their role in understanding, responding to, and recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Timely research, analysis and information are essential to allow identification, dissemination and adaptation of critical technology solutions. At the same time, a greater engagement with stakeholders across society is needed to ensure that these make a real and lasting difference, and that potential trade-offs across goals and targets can be resolved.

The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed new innovations and forms of collaboration. The crisis has been a wake-up call for a better science-policy-society interface, for more effective international technology cooperation, and for building public trust in science related to all areas of sustainable development. Rapid improvements in these areas – improvements that are commensurate with the far-reaching rapid technological progress – are essential to realize the full promise of STI and to ensure that no one is left behind.

Proposed guiding questions:

- What are the most promising technology solutions, innovations, and transformative technology pathways towards the SDGs?
- What are the challenges and opportunities faced in developing and deploying STI for emerging challenges such as COVID-19 pandemic?
- How can we mobilize science, technology and innovation to improve the lives of the furthest behind, and reduce inequalities, especially during rapid technological change?
- How can we strengthen international cooperation on science, technology and innovation to better deal with sustainability challenges?

Chair:

- President or Vice President of ECOSOC

The session will start with resource person presentations then followed by interactive discussion with the participants.

Friday, 10 July 2020, 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Voluntary National Reviews

As part of its follow-up and review architecture, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development encourages Member States to “conduct regular and inclusive reviews of progress at the national and sub-national levels, which are country led and country driven” (paragraph 79). These national reviews are expected to serve as a basis for the regular reviews by the HLPF, meeting under the auspices of ECOSOC. As stipulated in paragraph 84 of the 2030 Agenda, regular reviews by the HLPF are to be voluntary, state-led, undertaken by both developed and developing countries, and involve multiple stakeholders.



HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The voluntary national reviews (VNRs) aim to facilitate the sharing of experiences, including successes, challenges and lessons learned. With a view to accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The VNRs also seek to strengthen policies and institutions of governments and to mobilize multi-stakeholder support and partnerships for the implementation of the SDGs.

47 countries will conduct VNRs at the 2020 HLPF.

Chair:

- President or Vice President of ECOSOC

Remarks:

- **Ms. Amina J. Mohammed**, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, key messages from the voluntary national reviews (*tbc*)

VNRs of Nigeria and Slovenia

Friday, 10 July 2020, 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM

Voluntary National Reviews

Chair:

- President or Vice President of ECOSOC

Armenia, Ecuador, Honduras, Kenya, Samoa

Monday, 13 July 2020

Monday, 13 July 2020, 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Voluntary National Reviews

Chair:

- President or Vice President of ECOSOC



HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Bangladesh, Georgia, India, Morocco, Nepal, Niger, Uganda

Monday, 13 July 2020, 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM

Voluntary National Reviews

Chair:

- President or Vice President of ECOSOC

Argentina, Benin, Costa Rica, Panama, Peru



***Theme: Accelerated action and transformative pathways:
realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development***

Tuesday, 14 July 2020

Tuesday, 14 July 2020, 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM

Opening of the High-level Segment of ECOSOC / Ministerial Segment of HLPF

Chair:

- **H.E. Ms. Mona Juul**, President of Economic and Social Council

Opening remarks:

- **H.E. Ms. Mona Juul**, President of ECOSOC
- **Mr. António Guterres**, Secretary-General of the United Nations
- **H.E. Mr. Tijjani Muhammad-Bande**, President of the General Assembly
- **H.E. Ms. Sanna Marin**, Prime Minister of Finland
- **Youth representatives**

Tuesday, 14 July 2020, 10:00 AM-1:00 PM

HLPF

Voluntary National Reviews

Chair: President or Vice President of ECOSOC

Finland, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burundi, Gambia, Russian Federation



Tuesday, 14 July 2020, 3:00 PM-3:15 PM

HLPF

Keynote by the President of UN Environment Assembly

The UN Environment Assembly contributes to the full integration and effective implementation of the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, acknowledging that a healthy environment is an essential requirement and key enabler for sustainable development. In his allocution, the President of the UN Environment Assembly, H.E. Mr. Sveinung Rotevatn, Minister of Environment and Climate of Norway, will convey the main messages of the UN Environment Assembly and present the contributions of the Assembly to the debates of the HLPF.

The fifth UN Environment Assembly will take place in February 2021 in Nairobi.

Chair: President or Vice President of ECOSOC

Keynote speaker: H.E. Mr. Sveinung Rotevatn, President of the fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, Minister of Climate and Environment of Norway

Tuesday, 14 July 2020, 3:15 PM-4:15 PM

HLPF

Voluntary National Reviews

Chair: President or Vice President of ECOSOC

Micronesia, North Macedonia

Wednesday, 15 July 2020

Wednesday, 15 July 2020, 9:00 AM-10:00 AM

HLPF

Messages from the regions

The 2030 Agenda stressed the importance of the regional and sub-regional dimensions in the follow-up and review of the Agenda. Since the creation of the HLPF, regional forums on sustainable development have been organized by the United Nations regional commissions to contribute to the forum's preparations. Their importance was recognized in the Political Declaration of the SDG Summit in September 2019.

In 2020, the regional forum for the African region was organized by ECA from 24 to 27 February. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the ECE and the ESCAP regional forums on sustainable



HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Ministerial Segment



ECOSOC
United Nations Economic and Social Council

TAKING ACTION TO IMPROVE LIVES

HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT

development had to be scaled down and held virtually (ECE – 19 March 2020 and ESCAP – 20 May 2020). The regional forums on sustainable development of ECLAC and ESCWA had to be postponed and were held through virtual consultations, knowledge platforms, publication of various documents as well as summaries from different meetings in the respective regions. The session will discuss the findings and recommendations from the regional forums on sustainable development.

It will start with presentations by the regions' spokespersons and Ministerial Chairs of the Regional Forums on Sustainable Development followed by interactive discussion with participants. The session will address the following general questions:

- As we enter the Decade of Action and prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, were regions delivering on the 2030 Agenda aspirations? What were the critical gaps and opportunities for action at the regional level to make progress towards the achievement of the SDGs?
- What is the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the different regional trajectories towards the realization of the 2030 Agenda?
- What are the key opportunities and potential for building back better in the regions?

Chair: President or Vice President of ECOSOC

Presentations of messages by the Chairs of the regional forums on sustainable development

Wednesday, 15 July 2020, 10:00 AM-1:00 PM

HLPF

Voluntary National Reviews

Chair: President or Vice President of ECOSOC

Estonia, Austria, Seychelles, Syrian Arab Republic, Ukraine, Uzbekistan

Wednesday, 15 July 2020, 2:00 PM-4:00 PM

HLPF

Voluntary National Reviews

Chair: President or Vice President of ECOSOC

Mozambique, Papua New Guinea, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago



Thursday, 16 July 2020

Thursday, 16 July 2020, 9:00 AM-1:00 PM

HLPF

Voluntary National Reviews

Chair: President or Vice President of ECOSOC

Comoros, DRC, Kyrgyzstan, Libya, Malawi, Republic of Moldova, Zambia

Thursday, 16 July 2020, 2:00 PM-4:00 PM

HLPF

Voluntary National Reviews

Chair: President or Vice President of ECOSOC

Barbados, Liberia, Solomon Islands

Thursday, 16 July 2020, 4:00 PM-5:00 PM

Closing of the HLPF

Chair: H.E. Ms. Mona Juul, President of Economic and Social Council

“Adoption” of the Ministerial Declaration¹

Closing remarks of **Ms. Amina J. Mohammed**, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations (*tbc*)

Closing remarks of **H.E. Ms. Mona Juul**, President of Economic and Social Council

Conclusion of the HLPF

¹ The Ministerial Declaration is expected to be agreed through a silence procedure.



***Theme: Accelerated action and transformative pathways:
realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development***

Friday, 17 July 2020

Friday, 17 July 2020, 9:00 AM-9:30 AM

High-level Segment of ECOSOC

(Continued)

Chair:

- **H.E. Ms. Mona Juul**, President of Economic and Social Council

Presentations:

- **Mr. Liu Zhenmin**, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations, introduction of SG reports on the theme of HLPF and ECOSOC and on long term impact of current trends on SDGs
- **Mr. José Antonio Ocampo**, Chair of the Committee on Development Policy (CDP), introduction of the CDP report

Friday, 17 July 2020, 9:30 AM -10:30 AM

Multilateralism after COVID 19: what kind of UN do we need at the 75th anniversary?

ECOSOC will hold a high-level conversation among leaders on global solidarity and renewed multilateralism during times of crisis and in the continuing pursuit of long-term sustainable development. The session is a substantive contribution of ECOSOC to the 75th Anniversary Commemoration of the United Nations to be held under the overall theme of *“The future we want, the United Nations we need: reaffirming our collective commitment to multilateralism.”*

This session will reflect on the kind of multilateralism needed today to deliver a forward looking and effective collective response to global crises such as COVID-19 and long-term challenges such as climate change, while accelerating progress towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Central to the discussion will be the role of the UN and its institutions in charting the way forward towards more trusted and impactful international cooperation.

Against the backdrop of a changing international environment, the session will focus on critical forces shaping the trajectory of multilateralism and explore ways to reinvigorate the multilateral agenda through



strong multilateral leadership, effective international institutions and an enhanced focus on global public goods and justice for all.

The event will also consider how to evolve towards a more “inclusive multilateralism” by strengthening the voices and participation of civil society, the private sector, academia and other non-state actors in the work of the United Nations.

Proposed guiding questions:

- What concrete steps could the international community take, through the United Nations, to enhance global solidarity and international cooperation in response to the COVID-19 pandemic?
- In light of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, what would an “ideal United Nations” look like and how can we get there?
- What actions would need to be taken to make the work of the UN more open and inclusive?
- Looking ahead, what is the role and contribution of ECOSOC in a reinvigorated and strengthened multilateral system that is fit for addressing short and long-term global challenges, including the provision of global public goods and justice for all?

Chair:

- **H.E. Ms. Mona Juul**, President of Economic and Social Council

The session will bring together leaders from the fields of international development, politics, economics, academia, civil society and youth in a moderated high-level discussion and exchange of view.

Friday, 17 July 2020, 10:30 AM -11:30 AM

Where are we heading: Visions and scenarios for the future of the SDGs following the COVID-19 crisis

This session will focus on future trends, projections and scenarios around the ECOSOC theme of “*Accelerated action and transformative pathways: realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development*” following the COVID-19 crisis.

The General Assembly decided that the ECOSOC High-level Segment would focus on “*future trends and scenarios related to the Council theme, the long-term impact of current trends, such as contribution of new technologies, in the economic, social and environmental areas on the realization of the SDGs based on the work of the UN and other regional and international organizations and bodies as well as other stakeholders.*” (resolution 72/305)

This year, as part of this discussion, the High-level Segment will address the current COVID-19 pandemic and its economic, social and environmental effects on the SDGs. The COVID-19 outbreak has mobilized emergency action at local and national level. The reports of the Secretary-General on the theme of ECOSOC 2020 and on “long term future trends and scenarios -impacts in the economic, social and



environmental areas on the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals” will provide background for the session.

To advance the thinking around transformative pathways that can advance the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development, the first report discusses particular accelerated actions required during and beyond the response to COVID-19 along pathways for reducing income inequality and eradicating extreme poverty, as well as reducing CO2 emissions to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

The second report presents a set of best-case, aspirational long-term scenarios in line with the SDGs and contrasts them with business-as-usual and worst-case scenario outcomes for 2030 and 2050. It also explores the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as new Internet technologies and artificial intelligence.

Proposed guiding questions:

- What are the long-term implications of current and near-term decisions, such as those to address COVID-19 or the impacts of new Internet and artificial intelligence technologies? How will they influence our capacity and available options to deal with other great sustainability challenges that humanity is facing in the longer run?
- How can governments turn the COVID-19 crisis into an opportunity to “build back better”? What are the most important policies and actions to overcome the current global economic crisis and put the world on a pathway towards the SDGs, eradicating extreme poverty, saving the environment, and “leaving no one behind”? What could be achieved with much higher water, energy and materials efficiencies?
- How can governments better shockproof healthcare, social protection and other key systems and institutions for unexpected events like COVID-19?
- What role can governments and the United Nations play in the coming decade to strengthen solutions-oriented international cooperation on sustainable development?

Chair:

- President or Vice President of ECOSOC

The session will start with resource person presentations then followed by interactive discussion with the participants.



Friday, 17 July 2020, 11:30 AM -12:30 PM

Closing of the High-level Segment of ECOSOC

Chair:

- **H.E. Ms. Mona Juul**, President of Economic and Social Council

“Adoption” of the Ministerial Declaration²

Closing remarks

- **Mr. Liu Zhenmin**, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations
- **H.E. Ms. Mona Juul**, President of Economic and Social Council

Conclusion of the High-level Segment of ECOSOC

² The Ministerial Declaration is expected to be agreed through a silence procedure.