

## **Review of implementation of arrangements contained in General Assembly resolutions 75/290A and 75/290B and their annexes on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council and the review of the high-level political forum on sustainable development**

### **Elements paper**

This elements paper aims to serve as a basis for the continuing informal consultations on the review of the implementation of arrangements contained in General Assembly resolution 75/290A and 75/290B and their annexes. The paper reflects discussions and inputs and feedback received thus far. It contains diagnoses and identification of gaps and issues that could be prioritized during the review process, based on inputs received from Member States and other stakeholders. It also includes proposed elements for consideration by Member States, as well as some further questions for clarification.

#### **Chapeau: Overview and context**

- The present review builds on the reviews of ECOSOC and the HLPF by the General Assembly during its 75<sup>th</sup> session, as well as previous General Assembly reviews of ECOSOC and on the General Assembly mandates for the HLPF.
- The aim of the current process is to ascertain the effectiveness of the provisions contained in General Assembly resolutions 75/290 A and B, recognizing that many of these provisions will require more time to reach a full diagnosis and assessment, while identifying further possible ways to improve efficiency and effectiveness.
- ECOSOC and the HLPF serve as accountability platforms and as conduits for policy guidance and recommendations aimed at achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.
- The current review, therefore, should prioritize how ECOSOC and the HLPF can follow-up and build upon the provisions of the 2023 SDG Summit Political Declaration, to further identify action-oriented policy guidance that will lead to accelerated and enhanced SDG implementation before the 2030 target year.
- The present review should consider and coordinate with the preparatory process of the Summit of the Future and its Pact for the Future and related annexes, as well as other on-going intergovernmental processes, to ensure coherence and avoid duplication.
- Driving the review is the strong commitment to multilateralism and to accelerating implementation of the 2030 Agenda and SDGs in the remaining years, coupled with the need to respond to the interlinked current crises, while enhancing the integrated nature of the Goals and the fundamental principle to leave no one behind.

#### **Review of the Economic and Social Council**

- Reaffirm ECOSOC's role as a Charter body of the United Nations and that it remains a central platform for coordination, policy review, policy dialogue and recommendations on issues related to sustainable development.
- Reaffirm the role of ECOSOC in oversight, guidance, and coordination of its subsidiary bodies.

## Diagnosis and process

- ECOSOC and its segments, forums and subsidiary bodies play a key role in integrating the three dimensions – economic, social and environmental – of sustainable development and providing technical guidance for the implementation of the SDGs.

### *Identify gaps in implementation*

- The Council needs to be more effective and responsive in addressing global challenges and current trends.
- Take further steps to integrate a gender-perspective into the work across the ECOSOC cycle and the HLPF
- Enhance engagement of civil society, parliaments, and the private sector in ECOSOC meetings. Encourage further active and meaningful youth participation in ECOSOC segments and forums
- Include the issue of internal displacement in the ECOSOC agenda.

### *Efficiency and revitalizing*

- Strengthen the efficiency of the ECOSOC and its system through improved time-management, drawing from lessons learned from recent sessions.
- Explore means to further harmonize the calendar of meetings.
- Revitalize the ECOSOC High-level Segment, so that it serves as the culmination of the ECOSOC cycle.

## Engagement and participation

Engagement in the ECOSOC segments and forums could be strengthened, including through high-level participation by ministers from Member States, principals of UN system entities and IFIs. In some cases, the interaction in the segments and forums could be enhanced. Some ways to address and strengthen engagement and participation are:

- Encourage highest level engagement, participation and interaction of Member States and other stakeholders in all meetings of the Council.
- Consider more strategic and targeted engagement at specific ECOSOC meetings and forums, given the breadth of intergovernmental meetings across the calendar year.
- Strengthen awareness, engagement and outcomes through dedicated preparatory activities.
- Prioritize more advanced and in-depth preparation for each of the segments and forums to enhance engagement and participation, as well as to strengthen their outcomes, following the example of the preparatory process for the forum on financing for development follow-up.
- Strengthen evidence-based presentations and deliberations of Member States and other stakeholders to improve the impact of the ECOSOC and its system.

## Alignment

### *Alignment of ECOSOC with other multilateral entities, including the IFIs*

- Enhance alignment, interlinkages and further synergies and interactions with key multilateral entities, including the IFIs.

*There is need to strengthen the alignment between the Council and the ECOSOC system:*

- Fine-tune the alignment of discussions and decisions across all ECOSOC segments, forums, functional commissions and other subsidiary bodies, including through interlinkages among them. Aim to work towards the common objective to provide strong and coherent policy guidance and recommendations to accelerate SDG implementation.
- Identify clear, concise annual ECOSOC themes, decided in a timely manner, so that the expertise of the subsidiary bodies is more fully utilized.
- Strengthened alignment should result in improved inputs from the ECOSOC system, for discussions at the HLPF and the ECOSOC High-level Segment.
- Consider the revitalization of some ECOSOC subsidiary bodies, including through the review and updating of their working methods and functions.
- Further implement the recommendations of the 2022 ECOSOC review of its subsidiary bodies and look forward to reviewing implementation of these recommendations during the 2026 session of the Council.
- Encourage each ECOSOC subsidiary body to review and revitalize its functions and methods of work to enhance its output and impact.

There is a need strengthen the interlinkages and alignment of ECOSOC with other UN bodies:

- Strengthen ECOSOC's role to improve greater cooperation and complementarity across the domains of peace, humanitarian action, human rights, and sustainable development.
- Strengthen coordination and collaboration across these areas between ECOSOC and the General Assembly. Increase coordination and collaboration across these areas between ECOSOC, the Security Council, and the Peacebuilding Commission.
- Enhance alignment between the intergovernmental process in Geneva and New York to ensure that the commitments in the humanitarian sphere are reflected in the work of ECOSOC and the HLPF.

## **Review of the High-level Political Forum**

Deepening the effectiveness of the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, while also enhancing alignment between ECOSOC and the HLPF

- Encourage ministerial-level participation at the HLPF and by principals of UN system entities, as well as high-level participation by other stakeholders.

## Themes and SDGs under in-depth review

*Selecting effective themes for follow-up and review and to accelerate SDG implementation*

- Adopt the themes of the HLPF and ECOSOC, and SDGs to be reviewed by the HLPF from 2025 to 2027, considering the interlinkages between the SDGs, the need to review all SDGs per four-year cycle, the three dimensions of sustainable development, and the degree of progress on the specific SDGs, with Goal 17 to be reviewed every year.
- Decide upon themes that are concise and focused on accelerating implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

- Themes should be informed by the recommendations of the GSDR 2023, annual SDGs Reports, inputs from the ECOSOC subsidiaries bodies, as well as ongoing analyses at the global, regional and national levels and from the regional sustainable development forums.
- Themes should guide the work of the ECOSOC subsidiary system, so that their policy recommendations and outcomes clearly demonstrate how ECOSOC contributes to accelerating implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

#### Voluntary national reviews

- The VNRs are a fundamental tool and means for the comprehensive review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, peer learning and sharing experiences among countries.
- The VNRs are voluntary and country-led, as set out in the 2030 Agenda, taking into consideration national priorities, circumstances and capacities. They should continue to enhance inclusivity, transparency, and accountability.

#### *Strengthening preparation and participation*

- Encourage Member States to strengthen VNR preparation, including through the better use of data and by leveraging existing frameworks, such as regional forums, expert group meetings and other preparatory meetings throughout the ECOSOC cycle.
- Encourage VNR countries to engage in an interactive participatory process at the country level that has transparency, recognizes the role of civil society, and creates space for their contribution to identifying policy priorities.
- Encourage the involvement of relevant stakeholders in a whole of society approach, and include stakeholders in deliberations at the national, regional and global levels.
- Increase UN system support to developing countries in the preparation of the VNRs.

#### *Regularity of presentations*

- Encourage countries that have not done so, to present a VNR during the next HLPF four-year cycle from 2024-2027.
- Encourage all countries to present at least one VNR by 2030, to demonstrate their contribution to the SDGs as a universal framework.

#### *Strengthening the quality of the VNRs*

- Take steps to make the VNRs more evidence-based and robust. Encourage reviews that move from descriptive narratives of progress, towards more evidence-based analysis, lessons learned from implementation, and assessment of the core transformative elements of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the means of implementation.
- Encourage Member States to focus their VNRs not only on the progress, but also on the gaps and challenges to achieving the SDGs, including those that are structural and difficult to change.
- Promote more interactive VNR presentations at the HLPF, with Member States and stakeholders, to strengthen peer learning and the sharing of good practices as fundamental principles of the reviews.
- Encourage Member States to report on progress in collecting disaggregated data, as agreed in the 2030 Agenda, including through a greater focus on leaving no one behind and on the most vulnerable.

*Post-VNR follow-up*

- Address the follow-up process and consider a feedback loop following each VNR, including by convening national dialogues to assess recommendations and take forward actions to improve SDG delivery.
- Increase UN system support to VNR follow-up, including through greater involvement of the UN resident coordinator system.
- Ensure that ECOSOC and the HLPF continue to transmit integrated policy guidance and lessons learned from the VNRs.

HLPF Programme

- Conduct thematic reviews focused on the intersectional and multidimensional aspects of poverty; increase attention to the systemic barriers to achieving the SDGs and leave no one behind; address the unique challenges of vulnerable and marginalized groups.
- Allocate adequate time to address the unique challenges of countries in special situations, including SIDS, African countries, LDCs, LLDCs, and MICs, as well as sufficient space for cross-regional dialogue.
- Better leverage the inputs of ECOSOC functional commissions, regional commissions and other subsidiary bodies, the UN system and other intergovernmental bodies to the thematic reviews of the HLPF for more impactful discussion.
- Reaffirm that the HLPF should continue to strengthen the attention given to efforts to bolster local action to accelerate implementation of the SDGs, in accordance with national circumstances, policies and priorities, and the regional forums are encouraged to discuss trends and findings from voluntary local reviews.
- Fully implement provisions of previous GA resolutions on strengthening the contribution of major groups and other stakeholders (MGoS) and NGOs, including the private sector and parliaments, to the HLPF, with respect to the thematic reviews and in VNRs while retaining the intergovernmental nature of the forum.
- Facilitate ongoing dialogue between governments, civil society, the private sector and other stakeholders to foster collaboration and share best practices and lessons learned, with the view to strengthening the implementation of sustainable policies.