



THE PRESIDENT
OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

26 February 2020

Excellency,

I have the pleasure to transmit herewith a letter dated 26 February 2020, from H.E. Mr. Kaha Inmadze, Permanent Representative of Georgia, and H.E. Mr. Jean-Claude do Rego, Permanent Representative of Benin, the co-facilitators for the intergovernmental negotiations for the review process of the Economic and Social Council and the High-level Political Forum as per General Assembly resolution 67/290 of 9 July 2013 entitled “Format and organizational aspects of the high-level political forum on sustainable development”, resolution 70/299 of 29 July 2016, entitled “Follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the global level”, as well as resolution 72/305 of 23 July 2018 entitled “Review of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 68/1 on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council”.

The letter from the co-facilitators conveys the dates of the forthcoming thematic review meetings, viz:

- (i) the first thematic meeting on the HLPPF will be held on Thursday, 5 March 2020, at 3:00 p.m. in Conference Room 2, United Nations Headquarters, New York; and
- (ii) the second thematic meeting on the strengthening of ECOSOC will be held on Friday, 6 March at 10:00 a.m. in Conference Room 2, United Nations Headquarters, New York.

I thank you, in advance, for your delegation’s active participation, constructive engagement and support in this process.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurance of my highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized, cursive script that appears to read 'Tijjani Muhammad-Bande'.

Tijjani Muhammad-Bande

All Permanent Representatives and
Permanent Observers to the United Nations
New York



Permanent Mission of Georgia
to the United Nations



Permanent Mission of the Republic
of Benin to the United Nations

26 February 2020

Excellencies,

We are writing in our capacity as co-facilitators for the intergovernmental negotiations for the review process of ECOSOC and the high-level political forum on sustainable development (HLPF).

During the first meeting we convened on Monday, 10 February 2020, we heard many ideas on the implementation of the General Assembly resolutions on ECOSOC and the HLPF. In addition, we have already started a series of bilateral informal consultations with regional and interest groups and individual delegations. We believe that we need to deepen our discussions, explore further ideas and build a common understanding on the actions that the General Assembly could recommend as a result of the review process. We have therefore decided to convene two informal thematic meetings with Member States, one on the HLPF and the other on ECOSOC related issues.

The first thematic meeting, on the HLPF, will take place on Thursday, 5 March 2020 at 3:00 pm in Conference Room 2. We are enclosing a non-paper with questions to help guide our discussions. We are encouraging you to come with concrete proposals and ideas. We have invited as a speaker Ms. Marianne Beisheim, Senior Associate, Research Division, German Institute for International Affairs.

The second meeting will take place on Friday, 6 March 2020 at 10:00 am in Conference Room 2. We are also enclosing a separate non-paper with questions for this meeting. We have invited H.E. Inga Rhonda King, former President of ECOSOC and Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to the UN to be a speaker.

Based on the thematic discussions and any additional consultations, we envision presenting a zero draft during the second half of March, with a first reading at the end of March. We then expect to revise the draft and convene consultations during April and May, with a view to completing the negotiations before the middle of June.

We reaffirm our commitment to an open, inclusive and transparent process and count on your continuous active engagement and support.

Please accept, Excellencies, the assurances of our highest consideration.

Kaha Imnadze
Permanent Representative of Georgia
to the United Nations

Jean-Claude do Rego
Permanent Representative of Benin
to the United Nations

To: All Permanent Representatives
And Permanent Observers of the United Nations
New York

Informal thematic meeting convened by the co-facilitators
for the intergovernmental negotiations for the review process of the Economic and Social
Council and the high-level political forum on sustainable development

Non paper by the co-facilitators:

High-level political forum on sustainable development;
thematic reviews, VNRs and other HLPF-related issues

5 March 2020

The present note aims to support the continuing discussions on the General Assembly review of the implementation of the resolutions on the high-level political forum on sustainable development (HLPF). It builds on proposals for strengthening further the HLPF made at the first informal consultations and on other occasions. It does not aim to be exhaustive nor does it represent the views or proposals of the co-facilitators.

I. Background:

The 2030 Agenda mandated the high-level political forum on sustainable development (HLPF) to be a central platform for the follow-up and review of the Agenda at the global level. It is broadly agreed that, during its first four-year cycle, the HLPF was largely successful in fulfilling this mandate and established itself as a global platform for dialogue; reviewing SDG progress; and sharing good practices and experiences¹. The General Assembly review of the resolutions on the HLPF (67/290 and 70/299) should build on what has worked well, while improving the Forum's follow-up and review and making it more integrated, evidence-based, effective, impactful and conducive to peer learning. There will be a need to discuss what changes require additional mandates from the GA and what can be achieved through improved preparations, planning and organizing within existing mandates.

II. The HLPF under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council:

A. Thematic reviews:

The General Assembly review of the HLPF will need to build on the principles identified by the 2030 Agenda to guide follow-up and review processes at all levels, such as the voluntary and country led nature of all reviews, their open and inclusive nature, their focus on identifying achievements, challenges, gaps and critical success factors or their rigorous and evidence-based nature (para 24 of the 2030 Agenda).

The HLPF thematic reviews aim to foster in-depth review of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including cross cutting issues, taking into account the interlinkages among the goals.

Preparations for the thematic reviews have extended over several months. To the extent possible, DESA, the UN system and stakeholders have organized meetings at various levels to take stock of progress towards the SDGs under review and conduct in-depth analysis. ECOSOC functional commissions and other intergovernmental bodies

¹ See survey conducted by DESA during the 2019 HLPF

https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/24802Comprehensive_HLPF_Survey_Results_FINAL.pdf

and platforms have contributed to these reviews. Preparations have also been conducted through the regional forums on sustainable development.

The GA review of the resolutions on the HLPF needs to determine how best to organize the thematic reviews for the next cycle of the HLPF. There are varied views among Member States. Some countries would like to continue reviewing small groups of SDGs every year, as done thus far, while increasing the focus on interlinkages. Others find it preferable to review the entire agenda every year, based on cross cutting themes or transformative pathways to achieve the SDGs such as the six entry points in the Global Sustainable Development Report.

It has also been proposed that the HLPF highlights better country specific progress and identifies countries at risk of being left behind. Some say that it should examine in greater depth the factors supporting or hindering progress, including bottlenecks and policy failures or successes. It should provide incentives and guidance so that implementation efforts focus more on the interlinkages among the SDGs and on the interrelations between sub-national, national, regional and global) levels of governance.

It has also been suggested that the HLPF dedicates time to discuss the policy lessons from overall SDG implementation and reflects, for example, on how best to include the SDGs in national planning and budgeting.

Some also want to further strengthen the preparations of the thematic reviews by ensuring that they fully build on science and evidence. The panel discussions at the HLPF should build better on the preparatory process. It has been underscored that the HLPF should be a year-long process culminating in the thematic panels at HLPF session.

B. Voluntary National Reviews

The Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) have proven to be very successful with 142 countries having already presented their VNRs. They are voluntary, country-led, and country-driven. They have to take into account national priorities and be open and inclusive. They aim to provide a platform for partnerships. They serve as mechanisms for highlighting progress, challenges and gaps in the national implementation of the 2030 Agenda, with the purpose to enable peer learning and the exchange of best practices and experiences – thus accelerating implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

At the same time, some countries are of the view that the VNRs should be more comparable and follow the Secretary-General's voluntary guidelines more closely. Some want them to serve more as an accountability mechanism. Other countries underline the voluntary nature of VNRs and want to preserve their flexibility and countries' ability to frame the reports in the manner each deems best. There is generally agreement that the VNRs should put more emphasis on challenges and gaps and not only on success stories, so as to enable peer learning. Some want the VNRs to be more evidence-based and inclusive throughout the process. Some feel that the VNRs, especially second or third VNRs, should examine the trends and the impact of measures taken, rather than only describing them. Some feel that countries who have not yet presented the VNR, should be encouraged to do so. Others ask to take into account the limited capacities of some countries for conducting VNRs.

Regarding time, there is a view that the VNR presentations at the HLPF are constrained by time limits. There has been a suggestion to give more time for the presentation and particularly for discussions, which may also entail adding days to the HLPF. One proposal is to offer to VNR countries side events at the HLPF as an additional opportunity to discuss VNRs in more detail. On the other hand, some countries and actors consider that VNR countries should rather be encouraged to be succinct in their presentations at the HLPF and focus on sharing

lessons learned, good practices with transformative potential, challenges and areas where they need advice or support.

Many have called for strengthening the engagement of stakeholder in the HLPF and its preparations, including by giving more time to discussions with stakeholders during VNR preparations and presentations. Others have welcomed stakeholder's participation but cautioned about the need to preserve the intergovernmental nature of the HLPF.

Another issue to consider is the follow-up to the VNRs. One of their original purposes was to lead to the launch of partnerships. It would be important to discuss how they could lead to mobilizing support for VNR countries or continuing cooperation.

C. Ministerial Declaration and other HLPF mandates

Many feel that the political guidance and recommendations provided by the HLPF through the Ministerial Declaration could be strengthened. This could include identifying better the reasons for national and global SDG successes and shortcomings. There have been proposals to ensure that the HLPF Declarations are more evidence-based and better-prepared, identifying entry points for transformative change, and spelling out "who should do what". Some have also said that the Ministerial Declaration should reflect the discussions held during the HLPF, rather than being agreed before the Forum. At the same time some questioned whether there should be a negotiated ministerial declaration every year and instead opted to be guided by summit declarations of HLPF under the auspices of the General Assembly.

There has been a major emphasis on the need for the HLPF to give greater attention to the regional dimensions, building on the regional forums on sustainable development. Another issue is how to use the forums better to discuss issues before the HLPF.

Many have said that the HLPF should give more prominent attention and more time to countries in special situations, including to the integrated implementation of the 2030 Agenda and their respective plans of action. There has also been the view that all countries at various levels of development should have dedicated attention, including developed countries (given that this is a universal agenda).

While the HLPF is mandated to receive the agreed conclusions of the ECOSOC Financing for Development Forum and the co-chairs' summary of the Multistakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation, some have underscored that the HLPF should not repeat, and, instead, should add value to the discussions of those fora.

III . HLPF under the auspices of the General Assembly:

While few proposals have been made for improving the HLPF when it meets under the auspices of the General Assembly at summit level. Some have called for improving this meeting and using its two allotted days in full. It has also been proposed to use the July HLPF for preparing that SDG summit in September, in years when the HLPF meets under the auspices of the General Assembly.

There have also been discussions on whether to maintain the current four years cycle of the HLPF, which is aligned with the GA Comprehensive Policy Review of UN system operational activities (QCPR) or whether to move to a five year cycle aligned with UN Anniversaries.

IV. Connections between ECOSOC and HLPF

The 2030 Agenda mandated ECOSOC functional commissions and other inter-governmental bodies and forums to support the thematic reviews of the HLPF. Many countries and actors have recommended to make better use of the wealth of inputs received from those intergovernmental forums, the UN system and others. At the same time, the inputs of the respective forums need to adequately support the elaboration of integrated and action-oriented policy guidance and recommendations by the HLPF.

In 2018, ECOSOC was mandated to use its Integration Segment to bring together the inputs of its subsidiary bodies to the HLPF, thus paving the ground for the HLPF thematic review. The Integration Segment will be reviewed as part of the review of the implementation of resolution 72/305 on ECOSOC.

The present GA reviews of the HLPF and ECOSOC are also the opportunity to examine the contribution of ECOSOC itself to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and to the HLPF. It has been proposed that ECOSOC discusses the policy guidance that would be necessary to implement the conclusions of the HLPF reviews and the integrated policies recommended by the HLPF.

Questions for discussion:

1. How can the thematic review of the HLPF better analyze the interlinkages, synergies and trade-offs among the SDGs? Should the HLPF review all SDGs or combine a review of a small group of SDGs with a greater focus on interlinkages and a review of action areas with the greatest transformative power (such as the entry points outlined in the 2019 Global Sustainable Development Report? What would be a good substantive focus for the HLPF in 2021, 2022 and 2023?
2. What can be improved in the VNR process? What can be achieved within existing mandates, such as through the annually revised SG's guidelines and handbook for VNRs? Are countries ready and equipped to make their VNRs more evidence-based and focused on policy results and challenges? How far can we go in making the VNRs more comparable? How can we improve the impact and follow-up of the VNRs and their discussions at the HLPF, building on the innovations of the recent years?
3. How can we make HLPF declarations more evidence-based and more action oriented? Should the declarations of the HLPF be more concise and political, or fairly detailed and operational? How can the policy guidance and recommendations of the HLPF be transformative, integrated and inclusive, reflecting the principle to leave no one behind?
4. Is there need to introduce changes to the structure or duration of the session of the HLPF?
5. Are any mandated changes necessary to improve the HLPF preparatory process and to build better on the preparations including the regional forums, preparatory expert meetings, inputs of intergovernmental processes as well as analysis produced within and outside the UN system?
6. How can the regional dimension be better addressed in the HLPF?
7. What steps need to be taken to ensure that HLPF can become more inclusive of all relevant stakeholders, so that no one is left behind?

8. How can we improve the HLPF under the General Assembly (SDG Summit) and is there need to improve on its outcome? How should the July HLPF contribute to the summit? How can we make the summit more inclusive?
9. How can ECOSOC and HLPF promote the integration of economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development in a complementary manner within existing mandates? How can the Council help advance the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development, working in tandem with the HLPF? Could ECOSOC deliver some tasks that the HLPF has no time to deliver, and which ones would this be? Is there need to further clarify the respective roles of the GA, ECOSOC and the HLPF and how can this be done?

Informal thematic meeting convened by the co-facilitators
for the intergovernmental negotiations for the review process of the Economic and Social Council and
the high-level political forum on sustainable development (HLPF)

Non-paper by the co-facilitators¹:
6 March 2020

Review of the implementation of GA resolution 72/305 on
Strengthening the Economic and Social Council

The present note aims to support the continuing discussions on the General Assembly review of the implementation of the resolutions on the high-level political forum on sustainable development (HLPF) and ECOSOC. It provides an overview of issues related to resolution 72/305 on ECOSOC strengthening. It does not aim to be exhaustive nor does it represent the views or proposals of the co-facilitators.

I. Background

The mandates of the Economic and Social Council have been defined by the Charter of the United Nations and various General Assembly resolutions. The responsibilities of the United Nations in the area of international economic and social cooperation established by the United Nations Charter are “vested in the General Assembly and, under the authority of the General Assembly, in the Economic and Social Council”. The UN Charter envisions that ECOSOC may make recommendations with respect to any international economic, social, cultural, educational, health, and related matters to the General Assembly, to the Members of the United Nations, and to the specialized agencies concerned (article 62). The Charter also gives to ECOSOC the mandate to coordinate the activities of the specialized agencies.

ECOSOC’s diverse functions were reaffirmed in General Assembly resolution 72/305 as well as previous resolutions, including 68/1 and 61/16. They include, very broadly, policy dialogue and policy guidance; coordinating and ensuring the accountability of the UN development system; coordinating the work of the broader UN system including specialized agencies; supervising and guiding its subsidiary machinery; and addressing new and emerging issues (see box 1).

Efforts to strengthen the Council have been ongoing almost since its creation. General Assembly resolution 72/305 on strengthening ECOSOC, the latest in this effort, addressed a wide range of issues, including aligning the theme of ECOSOC and the HLPF, refocusing the mandate of some segments and reducing their duration, revisiting the ECOSOC calendar, and enhancing the Council’s oversight and coordination of its subsidiary bodies. Resolution 72/305 decided that its “arrangements...shall be reviewed at its seventy-fourth session and at subsequent review cycles in conjunction with the review process of the high-level political forum on sustainable development”.

In the present note, the co-facilitators have taken the liberty to include not only proposals that are being discussed but also a few possible issues to trigger the discussions.

¹ This non-paper should be read in conjunction with the non-paper on the HLPF prepared for the informal thematic meeting on the HLPF.

II. ECOSOC in the SDG Era:

Member States and other actors agree that, at the start of the decade of action on sustainable development, and on the eve of the 75th Anniversary of the United Nations, ECOSOC, as a UN Charter body, should be fully relevant, fit for purpose, and action oriented. Many Member States have said that the Council's role in policy guidance, oversight and coordination should be strengthened and built upon to address the three dimensions of sustainable development. The GA review of resolution 72/305 is the opportunity to equip ECOSOC for supporting the 2030 Agenda and effectively discharging its functions and ensure that the full potential of ECOSOC is realized.

Box 1: ECOSOC's roles and functions based on resolution 72/305:

ECOSOC has:

- A policy guidance role: resolution: the Council is “a principal organ for coordination, policy review, policy dialogue and recommendations on issues of economic and social development”. It has a “leadership and policy guidance role”. “It should promote a coordinated follow-up to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development² and the outcomes of other major United Nations conferences ...”.
- A coordination role: This includes
 - Ensuring the accountability of the UN development system in relation to the 2030 Agenda and GA guidance on operational activities: the Council is to provide guidance to, and coordination of the activities of the UN development system and its specialized agencies.
 - Coordinating the full scope of the work of the broader development system, including specialized agencies. The Charter established that “[ECOSOC] may co-ordinate the activities of the specialized agencies through consultation with and recommendations to such agencies and through recommendations to the GA and to the Members of the UN”.
- A supervisory role over its subsidiary bodies, “while integrating their analysis throughout its segments”.
- A role to “address new and emerging issues in the economic, social, environmental and related fields”

The focus of the work of the Council has evolved over time to respond to various development frameworks. The Council has promoted the integrated follow-up to major UN conferences and summits in the 1990s and then reviewed the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals in the 2000s. In 2015, ECOSOC shifted its focus to promoting a coordinated UN system support to Member States in the delivery of the 2030 Agenda and other international commitments.

² Resolution [70/1](#).

III. ECOSOC Functions and segments

Structure and duration of ECOSOC session and segments:

GA resolution 72/305 recommended to regroup ECOSOC forums and segments at three moments in the year (see box 2). This aimed to give greater visibility to the meetings of ECOSOC and increase synergies between them.

Box 2: ECOSOC segments and forums during the year based on 72/305:

First group: ECOSOC forums -- Development Cooperation Forum every second year and, annually, the forum on financing for development, the multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation, the partnership forum and the youth forum.

The second group -- operational activities segment, humanitarian affairs segment and the informal special event to discuss the transition from relief to development.

The third group -- segments and forums that provide overall policy guidance and foster progress in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda-- the integration segment (one day and a Vice-President's summary), the high-level political forum (8 days and a declaration) and the high-level segment (one day in addition to the three days jointly convened with the HLPF ministerial days, and the same declaration).

Management Segment-- no more than two days, twice per cycle. In addition, dedicated management meetings are held to conduct elections.

Some Member States want the review of 72/305 to preserve the current structure of the segments. Others have argued for discontinuing the high-level and integration segments -which they feel do not deliver on their functions, with some proposing to use the time allotted to those segments (one day each) for increasing the duration of the HLPF. Yet another proposal is to shorten the sessions of some of the subsidiary bodies and, instead, use the days for the HLPF.

There have also been discussions about the timing of some of the segments. Some delegations have noted that holding the operational activities segment in May (so as to be close to the annual session of the executive boards as mandated by 72/305) is too late to reflect the outcome of the segment in the reports to the executive boards. The scheduling of the Humanitarian Affairs Segment also complicates the timely production of the report of the Secretary-General given the timing for the availability of data.

The discussions on the structure and duration of the session need to take into account the various functions of ECOSOC and whether the Council is equipped to deliver on them.

ECOSOC's role regarding policy dialogue and policy guidance

The Council discharges its policy dialogue and guidance function in particular through its High-level Segment. Resolution 72/305 envisioned that the High-level Segment would provide the space to enhance regional and international cooperation and knowledge sharing on current and future trends and scenarios impacting the achievement of the SDGs. This shifted the focus of the segment which used to include a dialogue on the theme and one on the world economic situation with financial and trade institutions.

There has been limited participation by Member States in the last day of the high-level segment which is held the day after the HLPF. Some delegations find that the segment has lost its relevance and see the HLPF as the culmination of the ECOSOC cycle. There have, on the other hand, been proposals to re-establish the high-level segment as a prominent ECOSOC platform for Ministers and heads of UN system entities to discuss high-level policy guidance to foster progress in SDG implementation (for example by disconnecting it from the HLPF). The high-level segment and the HLPF adopt the same negotiated ministerial declaration. For legal reasons, this declaration is adopted once by the HLPF and once by ECOSOC - a practice that many Member States want to discontinue.

Some Member States have underscored that the complementarity between ECOSOC and the HLPF should be increased to better align with the 2030 Agenda. As one example, ECOSOC could discuss the policy guidance that would be necessary to implement the conclusions of the HLPF reviews and the integrated policies recommended by the HLPF. It could mobilize various actors to ensure implementation and support to VNR countries, including the UN system, the private sector, civil society, young people, or others such as possibly local governments. ECOSOC could also strengthen its support to the thematic reviews of the HLPF, depending on the approach they take.

It has been underscored that ECOSOC should give greater attention to the situation of countries in special situation, including SIDS, LDCs, LLDCs.

Guiding and promoting a coherent and coordinated UN system

ECOSOC's functions to guide and coordinate the UN system is currently delivered in its Integration Segment, Operational Activities Segment and Humanitarian Affairs Segment.

Resolution 72/305 broadened the mandates of the **Integration Segment**, which now include, in addition to its previous mandate to develop integrated policies based on inputs of subsidiary bodies and others: coordination and guidance of subsidiary bodies, coordination of the UN system as well as preparations of the HLPF thematic review based on the inputs of subsidiary bodies. The GA review can assess whether ECOSOC can deliver on those functions in an impactful way within the current arrangements (see box 2).

As the organ of the UN explicitly mandated by the Charter to coordinate the activities of the specialized agencies, ECOSOC is also expected to bring coherence in a decentralized UN system where each agency also reports to its own governing body. There has been a feeling that ECOSOC's coordination of the UN system is not effective enough and that its policy outcomes have a limited impact on UN system entities.

In addition to coordination of policy and normative work, the Council is the preeminent UN mechanism for the oversight and coordination of the UN development system operational activities, at its **operational activities segment**. Some Member States have called for strengthening this segment and turning it into a universal platform. ECOSOC's ability to hold the UN system accountable for its performance and results in supporting countries in implementing the 2030 Agenda may be reviewed in the context of the 2020 Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review of UN system operational activities (QCPR) or through the present review.

Regarding coordination of humanitarian assistance, some countries have proposed to strengthen ECOSOC **Humanitarian Affairs Segment**. It has also been proposed to improve the informal Transition Event convened jointly by the ECOSOC Vice-Presidents responsible for the Operational Activities Segment and the

Humanitarian Affairs Segment. The purpose would be to recognize that there is usually not a linear transition from relief to development, and that humanitarian crises require coherent humanitarian and development collaboration.

Issues related to UN system integrated support to specific countries or regions are on the agenda of ECOSOC **Management Segment**. They relate to support to the Sahel region, the report of ECOSOC Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti and integrated support to South Sudan. Member States could consider whether those issues would benefit from a more in-depth discussion, which is not possible in the current mandate of the Management Segment.

The same may apply to other system wide coordination issues appearing on the agenda of the Management Segment, such as gender mainstreaming in the work of the UN system, the inter-agency task force on non-communicable diseases, the report of the United Nations Standing Committee on Nutrition (UNSCN), the review and coordination of the implementation of the Program of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020 or the report of UNAIDS or the report on coordination aspects of the work of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees.

Providing leadership, oversight and coordination of subsidiary bodies

One of ECOSOC's key responsibilities is to guide, oversee and coordinate the work of its subsidiary bodies. The **Integration Segment** is where ECOSOC should look at the combined work of all its subsidiary bodies to ensure such coordination and an adequate division of labour as well as address possible gaps and duplications. The Management Segment, on its part, is dedicated to the sequential examination of the reports of individual subsidiary bodies and the consideration of their recommendations and draft proposals.

Resolution 72/305 noted that ECOSOC should:

- strengthen its oversight and coordination role of its subsidiary bodies. It should review their work with a view to ensuring their continued relevance. It will also ensure that they produce technical and expert analysis, assessments and policy recommendations to inform the integrated view of the Council and inform efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda. It should effectively integrate the outcomes of its subsidiary bodies into its own work (para.26)
- request its subsidiary bodies to ensure that they best support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the work of the Council. Their work should reflect the need for an integrated and action-oriented approach to the SDGs. Their recommendations should build on a solid evidence-based review of progress on the 2030 Agenda and of the outcomes of conferences and summits in their respective area. They should work in an efficient, effective, transparent and inclusive manner (para. 29).

Each subsidiary body was called on to consider whether there is a continued need for annual negotiated outcomes and ensure that, when they produce such outcomes, they are effective and action-oriented and result in increased levels of cooperation. The need to adjust the calendar of meetings of ECOSOC subsidiary bodies and/or make adjustments to their reporting arrangements was raised in the light of agreed changes to the structure and timing of Council meetings and to make recommendations to the Council for its consideration, as appropriate.

Many Member States have called for instituting new ways for ECOSOC to guide the work of its subsidiary bodies. This is consistent with the mandates of 72/305. Some Member States have also asked questions about the relevance and expert nature of the work of some subsidiary bodies.

Following 72/305, efforts to strengthen ECOSOC's oversight and coordination of its subsidiary bodies have been conducted mainly through initiatives by the ECOSOC President and the Bureau, who convened or wrote the Chairs of subsidiary bodies to engage them in the follow-up to 72/305. But there has not been a resolution of ECOSOC conveying new guidance to its subsidiary bodies based on 72/305, nor a mandated report or a background document that would allow Member States to, for example, identify gaps, duplications or other coordination issues in the work of subsidiary bodies.

The former President of ECOSOC asked Chairs of subsidiary bodies to informally report on their respective body's follow-up to 72/305. The responses showed that many subsidiary bodies have embraced the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. Most bodies had aligned their respective themes with the main theme of the 2019 HLPF and ECOSOC, but this could not be done in 2020 since the theme was only known recently. Some expressed the continued need for annual negotiated outcomes, as those include policy guidance and have the ownership of Member States. Subsidiary bodies also have taken steps to produce technical and expert analysis, assessments and policy recommendations to inform the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

The five regional commissions are key subsidiary bodies of ECOSOC. Many feel that regional dimensions are insufficiently recognized in the HLPF. ECOSOC reviews a report on regional cooperation, including the actions proposed by regional commissions, and is to discuss the analysis of regional commissions on the situation in their region. It used to have a dialogue with the Executive Secretaries of regional commissions. This dialogue was moved to the HLPF. But, for the last two HLPF sessions, it was decided instead to address regional dimensions in the various sessions. There is also a panel with the Chairs of regional forums on sustainable development in the HLPF. The GA review is the opportunity to consider ways to reestablish the importance of regional dimensions in ECOSOC.

ECOSOC within the broader UN architecture

Some Member States have emphasized the need to ensure a balance between the responsibilities of the General Assembly and those of ECOSOC. Others consider that there is a lack of clarity on the division of labour between ECOSOC and the GA.

Questions for discussion

- Should the GA review focus only the implementation of the provisions of 72/305 or should it explore other ways to improve the functioning of ECOSOC and strengthen its relevance in light of the Decade for Action?
- What steps would need to be taken to strengthen the Council's capacity to provide high-level policy guidance and foster progress in SDG implementation within the context of the Decade of Action? How could it best complement and bolster the HLPF?
- How can ECOSOC be better equipped to fulfil its Charter mandate of promoting policy coordination and coherence among the UN system, including the specialized agencies, particularly in key areas emanating from the 2030 Agenda?

- Are changes needed in the various segments and the structure of the session?
- How can the Council provide better guidance to its subsidiary bodies and help channel their contributions to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda? How ECOSOC's work be best supported by the subsidiary bodies?
- What further improvements are needed in the work of subsidiary bodies?
- How can ECOSOC provide better guidance for integrated, coherent and coordinated support to countries which are considered during the Management Segment?
- Should further steps be taken to strengthen the contribution of civil society, the private sector and other actors such as local governments or scientists in the work of the Council?