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### High-level political forum on sustainable development

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### Synthesis of voluntary submissions by Functional Commissions of the Economic and Social Council and other intergovernmental bodies and forums

#### Note by the Secretariat

The present document provides a synthesis of the voluntary submissions prepared by functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council and other intergovernmental bodies and forums in response to the invitation by the President of the Council, contained in his letter to the Chairs of those bodies of 11 August 2016<sup>1</sup>, for them to offer substantive inputs to the high-level political forum on sustainable development, highlighting their contributions towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development<sup>2</sup>. The integral text of the submissions received in time for this synthesis report is available on the forum's website<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup>[https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/12890Letter\\_of\\_ECOSOC\\_President\\_to\\_functional\\_commissions\\_and\\_IG\\_bodies\\_thematic\\_reviews\\_at\\_2017\\_HLPF.pdf](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/12890Letter_of_ECOSOC_President_to_functional_commissions_and_IG_bodies_thematic_reviews_at_2017_HLPF.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> The document has benefited from inputs by Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, Commission on Narcotic Drugs, Commission on Science and Technology for Development, Commission on the Status of Women, Commission on Population and Development, Committee of Experts on Public Administration (CEPA), Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention to Combat Desertification, Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Committee on the Rights of the Child, Peacebuilding Commission, Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, Conference of the Parties to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, World Trade Organization (WTO), Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Global Forum on Migration & Development (GFMD), Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation, Industrial Development Board of UNIDO, International Labour Organization (ILO), International Telecommunication Union (ITU), Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development, Sanitation and Water for All, Committee on World Food Security, SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee, The World Bank Group, UN Environment Assembly of UNEP, United Nations System Standing Committee on Nutrition (UNSCN), Vienna Convention and its Montreal Protocol, World Energy Council, World Water Council.

<sup>3</sup> <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/inputs/>

## I. Introduction

1. The present document is based on a synthesis of voluntary submissions by functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council and other intergovernmental bodies and forums in response to the invitation by the President of the Council contained in his letter to the Chairs of those bodies.<sup>4</sup>

2. The invitation by the President of the Council is in line with the call in paragraph 85 of General Assembly resolution 70/1, entitled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, for thematic reviews of progress on the Sustainable Development Goals to be held at the high-level political forum on sustainable development. The thematic reviews will be supported by reviews by the functional commissions and other intergovernmental bodies and forums. In his letter, the President, invited recipients to share relevant input and deliberations as to how they address the goals and targets from the perspective of “Ensuring that no one is left behind”.

3. The invitation by the President of the Council reached 83 intergovernmental bodies, identified through an initial list prepared by the members of the Inter-Agency Technical Assistance Support Team.<sup>5</sup> The list comprises global platforms; intergovernmental organization-driven mechanisms were added only in the absence of a United Nations-led global process on a specific Sustainable Development Goal or target. The list should be regarded as an evolving tool to be aligned closely with the themes and focus of future sessions of the high-level political forum.

4. While the call for inputs did not include a focused request for thematic analysis of the Sustainable Development Goals under review in 2017 high-level political forum, several commissions, platforms and other bodies included additional reflections on these particular goals. These inputs provide qualitative analysis that can complement the quantitative one contained in the mandated progress report on the Sustainable Development Goals.

5. The present report reflects how the functional commissions and expert bodies of the Council and other intergovernmental forums and bodies are responding to the theme of the 2017 high-level political forum and does not suggest a formal reporting link to the forum or modify any entity’s mandate or governance. The entities reflected on the 2017 high-level political forum theme *Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world* and analysed the lessons learnt, gaps and challenges, and emerging issues related to it.

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<sup>4</sup>[https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/12890Letter\\_of\\_ECOSOC\\_President\\_to\\_functional\\_commissions\\_and\\_IG\\_bodies\\_thematic\\_reviews\\_at\\_2017\\_HLPF.pdf](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/12890Letter_of_ECOSOC_President_to_functional_commissions_and_IG_bodies_thematic_reviews_at_2017_HLPF.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> The Inter-Agency Technical Assistance Support Team prepared the list in 2014 in response to a request by the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals. The list has since evolved to respond to various needs and demands and is available from:

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/5459Tentative%20list%20of%20review%20and%20co-ordination%20platforms.pdf>.

## II. Those left behind

6. The commitment to 'leave no one behind' is a key feature of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It is also a promise that won't be fulfilled without concerted efforts by all Member States and all stakeholders, including the commissions, platforms and other bodies that provided inputs. These entities adopted different approaches to their analysis, while reflecting on the need to leave no one behind and on the theme of the 2017 high-level political forum *Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world*.

7. About one billion people in developing countries live in extreme poverty; and two-thirds of them live in rural areas. Almost half of all people worldwide living in extreme poverty are 18 years old or younger, meaning that close to 570 million children are deprived of their dignity and the right to an adequate standard of living.

8. Multiple forms of malnutrition are today occurring. Almost two billion people are overweight or obese - a figure that continues to grow and increases the risk of non-communicable diseases. Meanwhile, almost 800 million people are undernourished, most of them living in rural areas. The number includes 156 million children under the age of five years who are affected by stunting and 50 million by wasting. Despite recent progress made, 1.1 billion people, predominantly rural dwellers, still live without electricity. Half live in sub-Saharan Africa. More than 3 billion people, the majority of them in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, still lack access to clean cooking fuels and technologies.

9. Close to 58 million children of primary school age are not in school, with as many as 250 million failing to learn basic literacy or numeracy owing to poor quality of education

10. The brunt of the drug abuse problem is borne by people who are poor in relation to the societies in which they live. Women, children and youth affected by drug dependence are particularly vulnerable to deprivation, prone to stigmatization and exposed to particular negative risk factors.

11. In 2016, three out of ten working women and men in emerging and developing countries were unable to earn enough to lift themselves and their families above the moderate poverty threshold of \$3.10 per day.

## III. Gaps and challenges and lessons learnt

12. The vast majority of the inputs received stressed one key tool for implementation: sustained poverty eradication and prosperity are possible only if integrated and balanced approaches are taken to sustainable development in partnership with multiple stakeholders. It was recognized, that due to the complexity, multi-faceted nature and interlinkages of our world, achieving the 2030 Agenda as a whole would contribute to achieving the specific aims of these entities, and vice versa.

13. In general, the inputs for this current report noted that none of the individual Sustainable Development Goals or the related targets can be sustainably achieved in isolation or using simple fixes. Fundamental transformations of economic and social institutions, norms and beliefs will be required to achieve true sustainable development.

**A. Reaching the furthest behind**

14. Leaving no one behind means not just focusing on ensuring progress for entire countries, reflected by averages, but looking specifically at the people who are not benefitting from development because current strategies have been unsuccessful in reaching them. To identify the poorest and most vulnerable people and understand their needs, public institutions need to have an in-depth and holistic understanding of various dimensions, and manifestations in poverty, and of who is at risk of being left behind.

15. Inequalities are often perpetuated on the basis of multiple intersecting forms of discrimination, including, inter alia, gender, age, race or ethnicity, majority or minority groups, migration status, sexual orientation or gender identity, disability and income level. While some groups at risk are specified in the 2030 Agenda, others are not mentioned, and should be taken into consideration in the implementation. Many of these factors are often overlooked and hence, the burdens of persons experiencing multiple discrimination, remains unaddressed. For example, in the least developed countries, a woman living in a rural area is less likely to give birth with a skilled health professional than her counterpart in the city. These disparities have narrowed in some countries, but in others they have widened.

16. Violent conflict is one of the serious obstacles to sustainable development. Leaving no one behind requires a particular focus on conflict-affected countries since a significant and increasing share of the extreme poor is living in such countries. Addressing the root causes and drivers of violent conflict is crucial, but it is equally important to ensure that those affected by conflict or protracted crises situations, and those who are displaced internally or externally as a result of conflict or natural disasters will enjoy the benefits of SDG implementation, despite being difficult to reach.

17. While specific focus is required to ensure that the furthest behind are reached, a transformative change allowing equal quality gains for all should be sought. For instance, in relation to gender equality, rather than simply absorbing more girls into underfunded dysfunctional educational systems, schools should aim at providing quality education and a safe learning environment for girls and boys, as well as contributing to the promotion of equality through progressive curricula and well trained teachers. This applies also to the urgent need to extend nationally defined social protection floors that would reach those who are vulnerable while enhancing the lives of entire populations.

18. It is important to remember that vulnerable groups can also be a strong positive force, if necessary support measures are taken. Migrants, for example, deserve particular protection in order to ensure that they will not be left behind. However, one should also bear in mind that migration very often is development

and migrants are actors capable of bringing about positive change. International migration can for example attenuate the impact of population ageing, just to mention one positive impact.

## **B. Integration and cross-cutting issues**

19. It is notable that all inputs received highlighted the importance of integrating and mainstreaming their focus areas into national development plans, budgets and other implementation efforts.

20. Sustainable development requires a whole-of-government approach involving ministries, local authorities, agencies and a multiplicity of actors working across sectors. This is to ensure that synergies, conflicts and trade-offs that arise in policy design and implementation in the various areas are taken into consideration. In this vein, it is important that people have free access to information, law and government regulation, a precondition for the effective rule of law.

21. Many countries have been creating inter-ministerial and other coordination and collaboration arrangements for implementing the SDGs. These need to be supplemented by arrangements to ensure cooperation between groups of institutions working on given target(s) and by efforts at promoting cooperation among civil servants and all other relevant actors. Local governments, being the government institutions closest to the people, have a particular role working in close collaboration and partnership with citizens and the central government.

22. A cautious voice was also raised. Considering that the 2030 Agenda has 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets, the temptation is great to pick and choose a specific goal or target above others. Indeed, the United Nations and its Member States have repeatedly highlighted that the SDGs are integrated and indivisible, and the high-level political forum could focus on proposing concrete guidance on how this can be done on the ground.

23. Sustainable development strategies should also be integrated with other national strategies related to internationally agreed development frameworks, such as the Paris climate change agreement, the Sendai framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development, Samoa Pathway and the New Urban Agenda.

## **C. Working together**

24. Cooperation and inclusion are key words for implementation. In general, the inputs highlighted the need to include all relevant actors in the efforts, at all levels of implementation.

25. A key aspect for institutional arrangements for planning and implementation at the national level is the effective engagement of civil society, local authorities, indigenous peoples, local communities, academia and all relevant actors. Such approaches are most effective when they are adopted at the earlier stage of planning and decision-making. Support should be provided to strengthen the capacity of stakeholders and availability of information that enables the use of those approaches in decision-making processes.

26. Emphasis is also placed on promoting cooperation with financial institutions and the private sector, which is at the forefront of science, technology and innovation. While leveraging the capital and expertise of the private sector, the importance of working directly with industries and enterprises was highlighted. Such open interaction can also facilitate the eagerness of the private sector to accept new rules and regulations and to find creative, more sustainable solutions.

27. Several inputs noted that the participating bodies and platforms have made additional efforts to ensure that the voices of stakeholders are adequately heard in the intergovernmental processes, for example through multi-stakeholder dialogues, hearings or through gathering inputs.

28. There is a need to ensure integration, collaboration and coherence among UN entities in delivering integrated support on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Further coordination and cooperation was also called for between the high-level political forum and the various commissions, platforms and other bodies that submitted inputs for the current report, both in supporting implementation and enhancing monitoring and follow-up.

#### **D. Safeguarding human rights and good governance**

29. The pledge to leave no one behind and reach those furthest behind first is strongly aligned with the human rights imperative to tackle inequality and discrimination. It was noted, that in many contexts, a review of existing policies and legislation will be necessary to ensure a supportive environment for the protection of human rights in national implementation. This will require legislation to be reviewed from the perspective of human rights, including rights of women and children and indigenous peoples.

30. It was noted that the requirements applied to the state actors, such as respect for the rule of law and human rights and fundamental freedoms, should apply to all stakeholders, including private business, civil society and academia. All actors should be held accountable and responsible for the impact of their activities on the society and development.

31. In order to combat stigmatization and discriminatory social norms and practices, states should take multiple appropriate measures, including awareness-raising through education, the media and other channels. This requires the support of community or religious leaders, civil society groups, key government institutions and their representatives, as well as educational institutions, parents and children themselves.

32. Practices of good governance are essential in order to eliminate poverty and promote prosperity. The rule of law, public security, an independent judiciary and the proper administration of justice are also important for supporting poverty eradication and the rights of the poorest and most vulnerable. Independent audit institutions can also be engaged.

33. The impact of social, economic and other policies is even greater when supported by legal measures to combat discrimination in access to public services, especially in areas such as employment, access to education and healthcare. Measures are also necessary to remove or overcome obstacles to accessing public services, including financial costs, language, culture, remoteness, and a lack of access to infrastructure or technologies.

34. Realizing the SDGs requires transforming bureaucratic mind-sets and the modus operandi of public institutions and public administrations. Proposed steps include:

- (a) Ensure continuing strong political will and transformational leadership at the highest level to drive the initiation, formulation, and implementation of poverty eradication policies in all parts of the government and public administration;
- (b) Ensure that public management takes into account the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable in every action via sustained public engagement;
- (c) Introduce or reinforce anti-discrimination measures for public sector employment so that public administrations at local and national levels are fully representative of all segments of society;
- (d) Mobilize civil servants at all levels around poverty eradication and the other SDGs and bolster their knowledge, capacities and skills to develop adequate anti-poverty measures that are truly participatory and inclusive;
- (e) Equip civil servants with innovative tools and requisite knowledge to understand the interrelations among various aspects of poverty and create and implement integrated approaches;
- (f) Put in place internal mechanisms, incentives, practices and develop skills so as to promote participation, engagement, cooperation and consultation with other institutions and civil society;
- (g) Undertake and support efforts to ensure that adequate resources are mobilized and allocated to poverty eradication and related strategies;
- (h) Boost institutional statistical capacities at all levels to produce, use and analyse disaggregated official indicators, statistics, data and big data – and promote their shared use across government agencies at all levels, the private sector, civil society and other actors.

#### **E. Adjusting timelines**

35. It was noted that in many cases lasting development requires both short- and longer-term interventions (a “twin-track approach”). Emphasis should be placed on longer-term development of institutions and capacities even if they are harder to quantify and take a longer time. For instance, providing assistance to conflict-affected countries is risky, and results might be elusive for some time. While there is demand from donor countries for concrete results, measuring peacebuilding results in correlation to financial investment is difficult. It may take a decade or longer to be able to report tangible results on the strengthening of institutions that are critical to build peace and sustainable development.

#### **F. Data**

36. The 2030 Agenda stresses that “quality, accessible, timely and reliable disaggregated data will be needed to help with the measurement of progress and to ensure that no one is left behind”. This emphasis is highlighted by the synthesized inputs for the current report.

37. At the moment disaggregated data required to monitor many of the goals and targets are seriously lacking, and policy making still has to rely on rather

piecemeal data. The weak availability of data in conflict-affected countries or those in emergency situations, and of migrants, was particularly highlighted. Disaggregated data provides a fuller understanding of equality and the development of appropriate and targeted policies and development programmes, and further use of new data for analysis of interlinkages between targets should be encouraged. Inputs recommended that data disaggregation be done on the basis of anonymity and self-identification so as to avoid misuse of data. Apart from quantitative data, extensive use should be made of other administrative data and qualitative data and reports describing interlinked systems as a whole.

38. However, new sources of data developed constantly can support the planning of effective policies for implementation. Big data and machine learning can be used to predict epidemics, medical necessities, environmental disasters, and poverty levels. For example, using simple metadata digital footprints like call duration and call frequency, it has been shown that one can predict socioeconomic, demographic, and other behavioral traits with 80-85% accuracy.

### **G. Means of implementation**

39. None of the SDGs will be met without the sufficient means of implementation. Therefore, it is urgent to strengthen global partnerships for realising the SDGs so as to ensure that developing countries have the level of resources and capacities necessary to eradicate poverty. North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation is therefore essential.

40. Adequate financing remains a challenge. Public and private investments including international cooperation and foreign direct investment should be increased to face the enormous investment needs in implementation. Simultaneously, it is crucial to continue ensuring that aid is spent effectively: Development partners should live up to commitments to make development co-operation funding increasingly predictable and transparent.

41. Numerous inputs referred to the lack of capacity development in their area of expertise. Capacity building also refers to strengthening the human and institutional capacity of developing countries. These measures include such actions as providing support to adapt to an evolving ICT and telecommunication sector, or providing training to law enforcement, border control and other relevant agencies, to counter illicit drug and wildlife trafficking.

42. Some other policy recommendations made include:

- (a) Increase the use of national systems, including procurement systems. Only half of development co-operation payments to the public sector used country systems in 2015. Most countries still need to make improvements in making their budgets more comprehensive and credible; linking their budgets effectively to policy priorities, implementing expenditure in a controlled and predictable way and subjecting budgets to timely and accurate accounting, fiscal reporting and public auditing;
- (b) Increase gender budgeting;
- (c) In line with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, establish and strengthen comprehensive and holistic frameworks to manage the totality of diverse development finance flows;



- (d) Transparency in development activities, gender tracking systems, development planning, mutual assessment reviews, as well as on development co-operation is essential for fostering strong multi-stakeholder partnerships and accountability;
- (e) Effective multi-stakeholder partnerships (MSPs) can be a central tool to share knowledge, technologies and innovation, and in mobilising additional financial and non-financial resources, including through South-South, North-South, and triangular cooperation;
- (f) Partnerships must recognise the specific challenges in Middle Income Countries and fragile and conflict-affected states, as well as the importance of gender equality and youth inclusion. Increased private sector engagement and strengthening the enabling environment for civil society's role are critical;
- (g) Ensure all development interventions are country led and are responding to specific country needs and context. It is also essential that renewed focus is put on strengthening and using country systems, including country results frameworks and public financial management and procurement systems.

## **H. Science and technology**

43. Without knowledge it is impossible to steer towards more sustainable solutions. Investments in multidisciplinary research are essential to obtain the necessary evidence on effective ways to shift toward sustainability in different socio-economic and cultural contexts. Research should support the development of metrics and indicators to review national policies and investments.

44. The level of ambition of SDGs requires new ways of thinking about development and using the potential of science, technology and innovation (STI). The goal is not only to encourage more innovation, but most importantly, to encourage the types of innovation that help to eradicate poverty. Low-cost medical products and services, such as cheap ultrasound scanners or locally developed eye care solutions detecting eye diseases, can serve the needs of untapped markets and significantly improve the life of the poor.

45. Information and communications technologies (ICTs) are creating new possibilities for pro-poor financial inclusion. Innovations in credit and payment are not only transforming mechanisms of transactions and finance, but also have the potential to reach and meet the needs of millions of people without access to formal financial services. Crowdfunding, peer-to-peer lending and social impact bonds are new ways to access capital.

46. Universal access to ICTs is of increased importance for achievement of the SDGs, including for providing crucial services to groups such as persons with disabilities and indigenous peoples. Policy options can include adoption of a national broadband plan promoting development of content and human capacities; monitoring; tax reductions to reduce overall tariffs and promote affordability; predictable and stable regulations, investments in ICT infrastructure such as broadband designed with high-speed backhaul; availability of relevant digital content, including in local languages.

47. Harnessing the potential of technologies for sustainable development requires investments in research and development, human capital (including STEM education, entrepreneurial and managerial skills), infrastructure, and knowledge

flows. Creating an environment for innovation also benefits from an enabling environment, gender-sensitive approaches to technology development and dissemination, and regional and international collaboration.

48. To measure the extent to which ICT access and use help reduce poverty and improve livelihoods, more indicators need to be considered to reflect affordability, the inclusiveness and quality of access to ICT.

#### **IV. Sectoral issues in focus**

49. While an integrated and holistic way of looking at the 2030 Agenda was shared by all commissions, platforms and other bodies, the entities also delved into analysis of specific topics.

50. Depending on their mandates and priorities, several commissions, platforms and other bodies delved into specific SDGs, particularly the SDGs in review during the 2017 HLPF. The entities<sup>6</sup> gave numerous examples of previous and on-going initiatives to support the implementation of these goals.

##### **A. Conflict and safety**

51. The most recent projections suggest that approximately half of the global poor now live in states characterized by conflict and violence. Protracted crises call for specially designed and targeted assistance that addresses the immediate need to save lives and alleviate suffering, and also boosts resilience and the capacity to prepare for, absorb and prevent humanitarian disasters, crises and long-term stresses in the future.

52. Conflicts and situations of instability and insufficient governance exacerbate pre-existing patterns of discrimination against women and girls, exposing them to heightened risks of violations of their human rights. Women and girls are primarily and increasingly targeted for the perpetration of acts of sexual violence, including as a tactic of war. Violence against women and girls and their trafficking also spikes in post-conflict societies. Access to essential services such as health care, including sexual and reproductive health services, can be disrupted. Internally displaced women can be disproportionately affected by the loss of livelihoods during displacement. Women's exclusion from conflict prevention efforts, post-conflict transition and reconstruction processes are ongoing matters of concern for the international community.

53. Extreme poverty and hunger, unequal distribution of resources, limited access to health and education, and social and political marginalization are conditions that can be effectively exploited by terrorists in order to attract, radicalize and recruit more supporters. Increasing cross-border terrorism activity represents a major challenge and requires more efficient and faster law

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<sup>6</sup> Commission on Narcotic Drugs, Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Committee of Experts on Public Administration, Global Forum on Migration and Development, International Telecommunication Union, Vienna Convention and its Montreal Protocol, World Trade Organization, and the World Bank Group

enforcement, intelligence and judicial cooperation. These include expedited exchanges of information on individual terrorists and terrorist organizations, including foreign terrorist fighters, terrorist financing and effective legislation and treaties for enabling extradition and mutual legal assistance, to name a few.

## **B. Decent work and employment**

54. The pursuit of decent work along its four dimensions of employment creation, social protection, fundamental rights at work and social dialogue is an effective approach to the pursuit of the 2030 Agenda. Poverty is often the outcome of being trapped in the informal economy without opportunities for formal jobs that would provide a stable income, social security and decent work, and transition to formal economy should be supported.

55. In many countries and regions with higher rates of poverty and hunger, more than half of the population is currently under 25, with the majority of these young people living in rural areas and settlements, even as migration to cities expands. This calls for concerted efforts to support youth employment.

56. Policy recommendations on ways to accelerate progress in poverty eradication include:

- (a) Creating financial and non-financial partnerships at the national, regional and international level, including South-South and triangular cooperation, as means to unlock additional resources, intensify collaboration and improve the effectiveness of the efforts to achieve the SDGs;
- (b) Strengthening national institutional and local capacity and creating an enabling environment of sustainable enterprises;
- (c) Promoting transition to formality;
- (d) Supporting capacity building and partnerships for strengthening of statistical data collection and analysis;
- (e) Addressing the specificities of countries in greater need such as Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS);
- (f) Reducing gender inequality in all its forms by creating decent work opportunities and increasing minimum wages, and promoting equality in the world of work;
- (g) Strengthening institutions and building capacities for enabling rights such as freedom of association and collective bargaining.

## **C. Education**

57. As a basic human right, education is an enabling right for other social and economic rights, such as the right to a decent income. In addition to the individual benefits of schooling, education also plays important social and economic roles. Therefore, it is vital to tackle inequality in access and inequity in quality and learning outcomes.

58. In 2014, one out of ten primary school-age children worldwide had either dropped out or had never set foot in a classroom. Pre-primary access in low income countries is still hovering at 17% compared to 83% for high income countries. Access to higher education has expanded rapidly in wealthier countries with enrolment in the richest countries at 74%, compared to 8% in the poorest. But even in the richest countries significant disparities in access among the rich and poor are observed.

59. A range of countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, will need to invest substantially in school infrastructure, strengthening the provision of pre-primary and early childhood development services and human capital as the lack of trained teachers and appropriate school conditions is jeopardizing the prospect of quality education for all.

60. The emphasis on lifelong learning is important for ensuring that individuals' skills and competencies are maintained and improved as work, technology, and skill requirements change. Accordingly, education systems must be relevant and respond to rapidly changing labour markets, technological advances, urbanization, migration, political instability, environmental degradation, natural hazards and disasters, competition for natural resources, demographic challenges, increasing global unemployment, persistent poverty, widening inequality and expanding threats to peace and safety. Education for Sustainable Development can enable children, youth and adults to deal with global challenges - extreme violence, climate change, financial crises or health pandemics - collectively in an increasingly interconnected world.

#### **D. Gender equality**

61. Numerous inputs synthesized in this report highlighted the need to address gender inequality in implementation of all SDGs and to recognize the vital role women can play in achieving the goals.

62. Despite raised awareness of the impact of gender-based violence against women including domestic violence, harmful practices and violence in conflict situations, effectiveness of these policies remains low. Disturbingly, the level of gender-based violence against women increasing in many parts of the world, as linked with conflict situations, environmental degradation and rising economic and social inequality.

63. The sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and girls are insufficiently, and sometimes not at all, implemented. Violation of these rights are frequent and takes many forms including denial of access to services that only women require, such as safe abortion and post abortion care, as well as provision of low quality healthcare services and non-consensual performance of medical procedures including forced sterilization, forced virginity examinations and forced abortion. Rights are also violated when they are subjected to female genital mutilation and early, child and forced marriages which expose girls to the dangers of early pregnancies.

64. Access to justice by women remains an overall problem, due to factors such as gender stereotyping, discriminatory laws, including discriminatory procedural and evidentiary requirements and practices, intersecting or compounded discrimination, and a failure to systematically ensure that judicial mechanisms are physically, economically, socially and culturally accessible to all women.

65. Unpaid domestic and care work burdens women disproportionately and there is a need to reduce and redistribute it among the State, private sector, communities, families, men and women. Governments should adopt policies to support the participation of women in the labour force, parental leave for both fathers and mothers, affordable child care, and long-term care for older persons, when needed. Such policies can ease downward pressures on the birth rate while contributing to gender equality and women's empowerment.

66. Women's poverty is directly related to the absence of economic opportunities and autonomy, lack of access to economic and productive resources, quality education and support services, gender digital divide and women's minimal participation in the decision-making process. These challenges can be exacerbated during economic, financial and humanitarian crises, armed conflict and post-conflict situations, natural and man-made disasters, and refugee and internal displacement settings. Situation of women with disabilities, indigenous, rural and migrant women and girls also deserves special attention. Globally, and with few exceptions, rural women disproportionately experience poverty and exclusion. Policy recommendations for ensuring women's economic empowerment include:

- (a) Strengthening normative, legal and policy frameworks
- (b) Strengthening education, training and skills development
- (c) Implementing economic and social policies for women's economic empowerment;
- (d) Addressing the growing informality of work and mobility of women workers;
- (e) Managing technological and digital change for women's economic empowerment;
- (f) Strengthening women's collective voice, leadership and decision-making; and
- (g) Strengthening the role of the private sector in women's economic empowerment.

#### **E. Health**

67. The tobacco industry and the deadly impact of its products cost the world's economies more than US\$ 1 trillion annually in healthcare expenditures and lost productivity. In every region of the world tobacco use is highest among the poor. Nearly 80% of 1 billion smokers worldwide live in LMICs. Effective tobacco price and tax measures are an important means of reducing tobacco consumption by various segments of the population, in particular young persons, women and the poor, who have been shown to be more responsive to price increases.

68. Multi-pronged approach to working on drug demand reduction and related health issues is required, including: supporting a balanced public health-oriented approach to the drug problem; working to end discrimination against, and promote interventions for, people who use drugs and strengthening the access to comprehensive, evidence-based, and gender-responsive services for prevention of drug use and treatment of drug use disorders, including as an alternative to conviction or punishment.

69. Availability of internationally controlled drugs for medical and scientific purposes, including for the relief of pain and suffering, remains low to non-existent in many countries of the world. There is a need to enhance national efforts and international cooperation at all levels to address that situation by promoting measures to ensure their availability and accessibility for medical and scientific purposes, within the framework of national legal system, while simultaneously preventing their diversion, abuse and trafficking in order to fulfil the aim and objectives of the three international drug control conventions.

70. Policies to support further improvements in maternal and child care and to ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services are critical to achieve further reductions in maternal and child mortality. Typically, such policies lead also to a reduction in the birth rate.

#### **F. Social protection**

71. Addressing the deep inequalities that exist in many countries may require governments to play a greater role in the effective redistribution and social protection. Well-functioning social protection policies not only improve equity for the poor and vulnerable people, but also enhance resilience against impacts of different shocks for the most vulnerable and the near poor and create opportunity for all people.

72. Social protection floors provide a framework for coordinated public support to households and thus require integrated support from governments. One-stop shop models for delivering social protection floors and related programmes can assist in reaching the poorest, most vulnerable and most remote people. The extension of social protection systems provides a fundamental contribution to the elimination of both extreme and working poverty, reducing hunger and improving access to health services and the situation of women and marginalized groups, including migrants and young people and therefore a contribution to the realization of the principle of “leaving no one behind”. Social protection floors are much more sustainable where there is a progressive shift towards formal economic activities.

73. Poverty eradication strategies on conditional cash transfers coupled with empowerment have been shown to bring improvements in incomes, children’s health, nutrition, and education, thereby having long-term positive impacts on productivity and wealth creation as well as contributing to breaking the intergenerational transmission of poverty.

#### **G. Ecosystems and biodiversity**

74. Ecosystems are the Earth’s life support systems and provide the services that underpin human lives and prosperity. Globally, some 2.6 billion people draw their livelihoods either partially or fully from agriculture, 1.6 billion from forests, and more than 3 billion people depend on marine and coastal biodiversity. However, these ecosystems are under threat. Over-reliance on firewood and charcoal use in remote rural areas, for example, exacerbates deforestation, which in turn increases the incidences of landslides, avalanches and floods in these areas, wiping out many development gains that would have been made. Indoor air pollution related to the use of open fires or traditional stoves for cooking and heating results in

4.3 million premature deaths annually. In coastal communities, increasing marine debris is taking a heavy toll on local fisheries.

75. Between 660 and 820 million people (workers and their families) are estimated to depend totally or partly on fisheries, aquaculture and related industries as a source of income, and many aquaculture ventures are considered small-scale, often family-based activities. To promote sustainable fisheries and aquaculture, it is crucial to address fish consumption in diets, food safety, over capacity and over-fishing, loss and waste along the fish-value chain, climate change adaptation strategies, the specific contribution and requirements of small-scale fisheries, fish trade, social protection and labour rights, and the gender dimension of fisheries.

76. Illegal trade in wildlife has become a sophisticated transnational form of crime, comparable to other serious organized crimes, such as trafficking of drugs, persons, arms and counterfeit goods. It is driven by rising demand, and is often facilitated by corruption and weak governance. There is strong evidence of the increased involvement of organized crime groups and non-State armed groups. Illegal wildlife trade undermines the rule of law, threatens national security, and degrades ecosystems. Criminals often exploit impoverished local communities by encouraging them to engage in illegal harvesting in exchange for a small payment, which exposes them to the risk of injury from dangerous animals or arrest by the authorities.

77. Several conservation measures include innovative mechanisms to address poverty, mainly in rural areas. However, studies and discussions suggest that the existence of these mechanisms alone does not guarantee that they contribute to poverty reduction. It is necessary to ensure that the benefits produced by such mechanisms reach the poorest and the most vulnerable by embedding rights-based approaches into policy designs and accountability of such interventions through monitoring and reporting. In this vein, the customary rights and laws of indigenous peoples and local communities to access, use, govern and manage lands and natural resources were repeatedly highlighted.

78. Concrete proposals were made to strengthen multi-level environmental governance through:

- (a) The development and implementation of integrated policies, international and national legislation and actions incorporating specific measures targeting the most vulnerable, including women and children, and through them future generations;
- (b) The involvement of the public and private sector, researchers, relevant stakeholders and citizens in creative strategic partnerships which can foster innovation and disseminate good practices;
- (c) The increased coherence in the implementation of different international agreements including the Paris Agreement on climate change and the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol, as well as major outcome documents such as the Sendai Framework for disaster risk reduction, the Addis Ababa Agenda for Action on financing for sustainable development, and the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III)

## **H. Desertification**

79. Hundreds of millions face consequences of desertification. Various studies have been made that global environmental change could drive anywhere from 50 to almost 700 million people to migrate by 2050. The environmental signal in migration patterns may grow as the impacts of climatic and societal change become more apparent, and this is especially true for people living in drylands. Given that over 40% of the world's poor depend on degraded lands for essential services, such as food, fuel, raw material, and water purification, restoring productive capacity of the land could lead to significant strides in decreasing economic vulnerability and promoting long-term development.

80. Proposed policy actions to tackle desertification include:

- (a) Formulate and/or mainstream and implement proper policy interventions in line with the principle of Land Degradation Neutrality. Enforce existing rules and regulations in the areas of land use planning and land tenure. Support the scaling up of best technologies and human /institutional capacities for effective sustainable land management;
- (b) Increase investments in sustainable land management by devoting significant national budget resources and mobilize international funding;
- (c) Strengthen partnership and synergy by building a common action-based sustainable land management framework with governments, donors, NGOs and UN agencies.

## **I. Energy**

81. The world is going through an energy transition driven by the fast-paced development of new technologies, a digital revolution, global environmental challenges and changing growth and demographic patterns. Countries around the world are facing the triple challenge of simultaneously improving energy security, expanding energy equity and reducing carbon emissions.

82. Energy policies will play a key role in achieving global climate goals, but current market signals alone are not enough to improve critical areas such as energy efficiency, improved electrical storage, penetration of clean transport and much needed adoption of Carbon Capture, Utilisation and Storage (CCUS). Focused policies and institutional frameworks are required to reinforce a wider deployment of solutions that accelerate the transition and drive consumer choice towards the most carbon and cost effective solutions. Rapid and successful transitioning of global transport to low carbon solutions presents the biggest obstacle or opportunity in achieving climate goals. Solar and wind power will continue their rapid growth with the electrification of energy use an unstoppable trend. Entirely new skills-sets, business models and financing solutions are required to deal with these new realities.

83. With increasing systems integration, resilience is no longer just about building systems stronger and returning single assets to full operation after a disruptive event. When interdependent systems are blacked out, by extreme weather or cyber-attack, the system as a whole is at risk of being deadlocked. Black-starting capability, decentralised decision autonomy and local empowerment have become key concepts of a new “soft resilience” approach.



84. Despite strives towards global energy strategies work remains to be made: minimising international tariff and non-tariff trade barriers for clean energy goods and services to enable clean energy deployment; introducing carbon pricing mechanisms to ensure adequate investment signals; reinforcing regional infrastructure integration and market harmonisation measures to ensure effective resources sharing.

#### **J. Water and sanitation**

85. Access to water, sanitation and hygiene promotes economic development for the individual, household and society, thus being key to ending poverty. A lack of sanitation alone costs the global economy 222.9 billion USD every year. Open defecation is a symptom of poverty – but it also leads to ill-health and malnutrition, particularly in young children, and leads to reduced life chances.

86. Governments and other development partners should increase investment in the enabling environment – better institutions, better systems for the delivery, operation and maintenance of water and sanitation services to ensure that no-one is left behind. Delivering universal access to sanitation sustainability requires the community as a whole, to provide and pay for the infrastructure and operations of the services with predictable cost recovery through service charges or taxes. Some short-term support from national budgets or international aid should be allocated to assist meeting the initial costs where this is possible. Those people who are unable to pay their full share of the charges or taxes need to be identified and provided support.

87. Water scarcity and healthy ecosystems are interlinked. Over 1.7 billion people are currently living in river basins where water use exceeds recharge. By 2050, at least one in four people is likely to live in a country affected by chronic or recurring shortages of fresh water. With increasing competition for water in agriculture and other sectors, national and provincial governments will need to effectively communicate water scarcity conditions, and allocate water with the right mix of concern for equity and efficiency. Just as security of land tenure is essential for encouraging efficient use of land, secure water rights and allocations can motivate farmers to invest in their land and improve returns generated from irrigated agriculture.

88. Without easy access to safe water and sanitation, women and girls struggle, as the management of water and sanitation so often falls on their shoulders within the household. It has long been recognized that education of girls and women has a direct impact on health and education levels not only of the girls and women themselves, but also of the generation that follows.

#### **K. Food and nutrition**

89. An estimated 793 million people, 10.8 percent of the global population, lack access to an adequate amount of dietary intake. This includes 156 million stunted children. Progress is uneven across regions, with the majority of hungry people concentrated in sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia. In 2017, for the first time in 6 years, famine has been declared.

90. Food systems should urgently be transformed and move away from feeding people to “nourishing people”, with the aim of eliminating all forms of malnutrition, ensuring well-being and prosperity. Good nutrition is associated with mental acuteness and higher individual earnings. These outcomes in

turn support macroeconomic and societal growth. Good nutrition during the first 1000 days of a child's life is critical to achieving full physical, intellectual and human potential in adolescence and adulthood.

91. Food systems have an impact on natural resources in the way we produce, transform, transport and consume food. Hence, there is a need for improved management of agriculture, aquaculture and wild capture fisheries. Realistic changes in management of crops and livestock could substantially reduce both water consumption and pollution. Significant reductions in fishing pressure and changes in fishing techniques in most marine fisheries would lead to rebuilding of fisheries over the next one to two decades. Considering that an estimated one third of all food produced for human consumption is lost or wasted on an annual basis, it is imperative to address this. Food is also linked to climate change. At the global level, it is estimated that shifting to more plant-based diets could reduce global mortality by 6–10% and food-related GHG emissions by 29–70% compared with a reference scenario in 2050.

92. Small-scale food producers (including small-scale farmers, artisanal fisher-folks, and pastoralists) and other key actors across agri-food systems play a critical role in catalysing rural transformations that ensure sustainable livelihoods and human dignity, particularly in countries where smallholder agriculture is the main provider of food and employment. They should be supported by enabling policies and targeted investments.

93. Some of the important policy recommendations arising from the inputs include securing tenure rights and equitable access to land, fisheries and forests, investing responsibly in agriculture and food systems, giving special attention to countries in protracted crises, supporting smallholder access to markets, developing nutrition sensitive integrated social protection policies and programs, empowering women in rural areas and agriculture, developing decent work and empowering youth, and promoting sustainable fisheries and aquaculture.

#### **L. Industrialization**

94. The recent successful cases of poverty reduction through rapid industrialization show that inclusive and sustainable industrialization, with an early focus on labour-intensive and export-oriented industries and accompanied by structural transformation towards manufacturing industries, is one of the most effective ways to eradicate poverty.

95. Proposed policy steps include:

- (a) Promote partnerships of host country governments and all relevant actors to mobilize private and public investments around a long-term inclusive and sustainable industrialization plan for export-oriented and job-creating industrial capacity;
- (b) Design and implement industrial policies that promote employment, reduce poverty and comply with local and international standards to facilitate integration into global value chains;
- (c) Provide technical cooperation services for capacity building, vocational and other training, especially for women and youth;

- (d) Increase public and private sector, domestic and foreign investments in research and development, innovation, education, training and infrastructure to increase competitiveness, including of SMEs;
- (e) Support efforts to reduce risks associated with industrialization;
- (f) Promote industrialization that encourages employment instead of displacement, and analyze and disseminate evidence and statistics associated with the effect of skilled labour bias on policy decisions.

#### **M. Trade**

96. Trade is an engine for inclusive economic growth and poverty reduction that contributes to the promotion of sustainable development. Accounting for more than 50% of low-income countries' GDP, international trade can be an important source of finance to both the private sector and the public sector in developing countries. One argument often made against trade is that it sends jobs overseas, particularly in manufacturing. The reality is that technology and innovation are having a much bigger impact on the structure of labour worldwide. It is crucial, to ensure that trade is inclusive and that it benefits the big and the small; that it creates wealth and decent jobs and that when trade has adverse effects, we are able to assist those which have been affected to readjust to this new environment.

97. Some policy recommendations going forward include: continuing reducing trade costs; building supply side capacity and trade related infrastructure; focusing on export diversification and value addition; enhancing the services sector; applying flexible rules of origin to increase utilization of preference schemes; reducing the distortionary effects of non-tariff measures; making e-commerce a force for inclusion; addressing the shortfalls of micro small and medium enterprises (MSMEs); deepening the Multilateral Trading System

#### **N. Emerging challenges and opportunities**

98. The high-level political forum is mandated to address new and emerging issues, thereby providing a space for all stakeholders to discuss these unaddressed challenges. In this regard, the entities providing inputs highlighted the need for evidence-based decision-making, and free access to discussions by all stakeholders, to ensure that the latest information available could be used by the policy-makers.

#### **O. Changes in food systems**

99. Growing demand for agricultural products is driving major changes in food systems worldwide, with multiple and diverse economic, social and environmental consequences, including the increasing challenge of food loss and waste. Unsustainable practices in agriculture and forestry, such as pollution by fertilizers, chemicals and pesticides, conversion of habitats and excessive water withdrawal, cause substantial environmental degradation and biodiversity loss. The combination of expanded agriculture and bioenergy could result in a global land squeeze in which there would not be sufficient room to conserve natural terrestrial habitats, leading to large declines in biodiversity. Simultaneously, world's oceans and coasts are highly threatened and subject to rapid environmental change. Coral reefs continue to be degraded, and nearly 90% of fisheries stocks are said to be fully fished or overfished.

## **P. Climate change and the environment**

100. Numerous inputs highlighted the increased effects of climate change. For example, frequency, severity, and range of droughts in arid regions have increased significantly in the last few decades, causing desertification, water shortage, reduced crop production and loss of grazing land. Furthermore, prolonged droughts cause nitrates to accumulate to toxic levels in common crop plants, such as barley, maize and millet, which, when consumed in large quantities, causes poisoning in cattle, sheep and goats as their ruminant digestive processes cannot break down the nitrate fast enough. Such plant toxicity can ruin the livelihoods of smallholder farmers and herders.

101. Projected changes in climate would have a broad range of impacts on biodiversity at genetic, species and ecosystem levels, and the services these ecosystems provide. These conditions exacerbate poverty and deepen existing tensions among affected communities. Climate induced migration rips communities apart. Often women, children, and the elderly suffer the consequences of climate change disproportionately.

102. Other emerging issues identified in relation to environment included, for example:

- (a) Significance of the financial sector in advancing environmental sustainability by investing in low carbon, resource efficient and environmentally sound assets;
- (b) Zoonoses – diseases that can be passed on between animals and humans – and their linkage with ecosystem health;
- (c) Micro-plastics, which threaten the marine environment and various organisms in it, with high risk to human health through consumption of contaminated food;
- (d) Toxin accumulation in crops due to increased aridity; and
- (e) Illegal trade in wildlife.

## **Q. Conflicts, crime and terrorism**

103. Radicalization and violent extremism that lead to terrorism are growing problems throughout the world. Simultaneously, current nationalist backlashes against multilateralism, tolerance, international solidarity between and openness of societies seriously hamper efforts to create development-oriented migration policies aimed at contributing to poverty alleviation at the international level. In this regard, in addition to addressing the root causes discussed earlier in this report, it is important to ensure the criminalization of incitement to terrorism, glorification of terrorism, recruitment, and terrorist propaganda, as well as to set up the necessary legal and administrative measures in this regard with the rule of law and human rights serving as the fundamental bases for preventing and countering terrorism.

104. Proliferation of new forms of illicit trafficking and crime and continued activities of criminal groups hinder access to public goods by the most vulnerable, also in urban contexts. These activities also pose a significant risk especially for the disenfranchised and vulnerable groups, such as youth and single mothers, who may choose to follow opportunities for income generation linked to crime and

subsequently be imprisoned for minor and non-violent crimes. Women also suffer disproportionately at cramped refugee camps where thousands of people are living in extreme poverty, without access to basic services. Violence against women is escalating and becoming normalized in many of these camps.

#### **R. Migration and anti-globalization**

105. In the midst of economic austerity, armed conflict and humanitarian disasters, people are increasingly on the move, seeking a better life in wealthier and more peaceful societies. International migration, particularly at the levels experienced over the last five years, triggers significant changes in societies which, if poorly managed, can lead to tension and intolerance. A rise in anti-globalization discourse has evolved in some countries and communities. In this rhetoric, international trade is often, wrongly, singled out as a major cause of instability in labour markets.

106. Migrants and refugees have been subject to racial discrimination, hate speech and violence in host countries, which can lead to exclusion from accessing rights, including decent work and social services, leaving them anew to a situation of poverty. With the increase in incitement to racial discrimination in public discourse, the risk of discrimination within the public administration can also rise, and protecting against racial discrimination in the public administration, in particular in the administration and functioning of the criminal justice system, is highlighted.

#### **S. New technologies**

107. The rise of new technologies brings with it opportunities and challenges. New technologies can provide new forms of employment and enhance robust governance and participation of, if proper measures are taken. ICT has been instrumental to developing new and more affordable digital financial products that better respond to the needs of unbanked people in the world today, most notably rural and remote communities. A broader uptake of e-commerce, supported by ICT adoption, offers significant opportunities for growth, development and job creation, if access and affordability of ICT, as well as connectivity issues, are tackled.

108. Artificial Intelligence (AI) is growing rapidly with the potential to become truly scalable and capable of solving some of the most pressing challenges to our societies and economies. A multi-stakeholder approach is needed in designing AI based systems as not only would this help ensure the responsible and beneficial development of AI by allowing additional cross-checks, it would also contribute to dispelling misconceptions and fears surrounding AI.

109. The Internet of Things (IoTs), connecting smart devices, applications, services, and even people over the Internet network, provides both opportunities and challenges. IoT applications in agricultural fields can check soil conditions, connected thermometers can monitor vaccine delivery and storage in real-time, smart sensors can measure a level of pollution in the air or water, and other smart devices can also provide remote diagnosis of diseases. Standards are required to enable interoperability of IoT applications and datasets employed by various vertically oriented industry sectors IoT systems.

110. At the same time, the impact of technological change on the existence and quality of jobs may also negatively influence poverty eradication. The impact of new technologies on employment goes beyond job creation or destruction:

technological change can also replace jobs traditionally carried out by unskilled workers with new tasks requiring more qualified workers, leading to polarization of the labour market. With ICTs increasingly underpinning a broad range of human activities, modern societies have developed a growing dependency on ICTs in their daily operations and management of critical infrastructure. This creates risks and vulnerabilities, due to natural disasters, cyberattacks or other challenges, that need to be addressed at all levels in collaboration with all stakeholders.

#### **T. Private sector accountability**

111. Private actors, including business, have the potential either to support or undermine rights-based implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Business activities that do not respect human rights pose a risk, including in the case of business enterprises that have adverse impacts on the livelihoods and rights of local and indigenous communities, or on the environment. In addition, it will be important to provide sufficient safeguards to ensure accessibility, affordability and quality of the services and infrastructures that popular public-private partnerships (PPPS) are expected to deliver, or to ensure that they do not create unacceptable contingent liabilities for governments.

### **V. HLPF**

112. The high-level political forum serves as the apex platform for the review of and follow-up to the Sustainable Development Goals. The inputs received from the various commissions, platforms and other bodies highlighted numerous additional areas in which the forum can accelerate progress towards the SDGs. Several inputs noted that the forum should provide strong political guidance, including for prioritization of actions. The encouragement, guidance and engagement of the forum could contribute significantly to achieving prioritized aims. Now that the 2030 Agenda has been agreed on, the forum should examine how it can contribute to keeping up the momentum for integrated implementation of the SDGs.

#### **A. Supporting integration and policy coherence**

113. Governments and stakeholders need to translate the global goals and targets to country level policies, programmes and actions. It was noted that the high-level political forum should champion the idea of integrated planning, which should be seen as the cornerstone of policy making under the sustainable development agenda. In this regard, the forum could:

- a) Provide a platform for exchanging lessons learned and for sharing and encouraging the adoption of good practices on the implementation, while addressing implementation challenges;
- b) Provide guidance and improve understanding on the diverse interlinkages that exist among the different goals as well as among the different dimensions of sustainable development, and peace and security. Encourage holistic nexus-thinking and highlight the cross-cutting issues and their importance.
- c) Foster development of a shared national vision at country level and a common corporate strategy for non-state actors, breaking down silos for delivery, building understanding, capacity and skills for changing the “business as

usual” model as well as developing creative strategic partnerships across stakeholders;

- d) Draw attention to examples of good practices for coordination of SDG implementation at the national level, including for stakeholder engagement;
- e) Consider how action regarding respect for human rights including fundamental principles and rights can strengthen the integrated implementation of the 2030 Agenda and ensure that it remains people-centred. In this vein, the forum should encourage the inclusion of human rights, including women’s and children’s rights, as the corner stones of national planning, implementation and monitoring;
- f) Encourage subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council, including the regional commissions, to foster synergies with the existing relevant global processes, such as multilateral environmental agreements
- g) Increase the coherence of the UN actors implementation efforts towards the SDGs;
- h) Increase awareness of numerous technical tools and policy products on integrated planning and policy making, provided by numerous actors, including UN entities;
- i) Ensure coordination and coherence between efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and numerous other international commitments and action plans.

#### **B. Reviewing new information**

114. By its mandate, the high-level political forum should strengthen the science-policy interface by examining documentation, bringing together dispersed information and assessments. In this vein, the forum could serve as the unique place to review the findings of scientific assessments and the work of scientific panels and bodies in an integrated manner. The forum should encourage the academia to produce and share technical and scientific information and evidence to build a sound knowledge-base on priority issues.

115. Effective and widespread application of science, technology and innovation will be crucial for the achievement of the SDGs, particularly in developing countries. The forum could recognize and highlight the role of STI and advocate the systematic inclusion of STI in implementation policies.

#### **C. Monitoring progress**

116. The forum serves as the apex for monitoring and review of implementation towards the SDGs. In addition to hosting the voluntary national reviews by volunteering member states, the forum could:

- (a) Share lessons learnt regarding monitoring and reporting systems, at all levels. Countries and non-state actors could discuss remaining challenges and institutional constraints linked to the reporting burden as well as data collection, management and processing;
- (b) Promote coherence, coordination and cooperation at all levels by providing an overview of existing databases, monitoring systems and reporting initiatives at all levels;

- (c) Support the development and use of appropriate data collection and monitoring methodologies and adopt approaches to data, statistics and monitoring that focus on the progressive reduction of inequalities and ending discrimination;
- (d) Encourage a multi-stakeholder accountability mechanism that ensures the robust participation of a diversity of stakeholders at both national and international levels;
- (e) Incentivise peer learning;
- (f) Support better integration of monitoring and review between different levels; local, national, regional and global;
- (g) Establish cross-sectoral cooperation and enhance communication and data sharing, so as to maximize the synergies and avoid trade-offs
- (h) Recognize human rights mechanisms as an invaluable source of data to support implementation and review of the 2030 Agenda;
- (i) Highlight the importance of strengthening of statistical data collection and analysis, and the need for enhanced international support especially for LDCs;
- (j) Make better use of existing mechanisms for data collection and programme development within the UN system;
- (k) Address the specificities of countries in greater need such as LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS to ensure no country is left behind;
- (l) Support inclusion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls throughout national, regional and global reviews.

#### **D. Connecting people**

117. It was noted that the forum can serve as a unique place for connecting all stakeholders and raising awareness on the most needed policy-actions. In this way, the forum could:

- (a) Engage the wide range of stakeholders concerned with the SDGs and provide them with opportunity to be part of the solution. Identifying “who can do what” is crucial for development of mutually-supportive initiatives;
- (b) Support the systematic integration of stakeholders representing a wide range of stakeholders into implementation and monitoring at local and national levels, reaching from indigenous community leaders to social and legal specialists;
- (c) Raise awareness of the importance of sustainable development and the implementation actions, particularly for prioritization and for tackling emerging issues;
- (d) Consider how action on inequality can be best integrated with other goals through work of all actors;
- (e) Increase the visibility of the work of numerous commissions, platforms and other bodies and encourage further enhanced the involvement of all interested stakeholders in the work of these bodies;



- (f) Raise awareness on the need for increased international cooperation, including South-South and triangular cooperation, in the field of science, technology and innovation,

**E. Ensuring adequate support**

118. The forum should be seen as a venue where countries can openly talk also about their development challenges and to seek support for their efforts. Inputs highlighted that the forum can provide a platform for political guidance on means of implementation, including financing, required for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

119. Several inputs noted the significant financing gaps for the implementation of the SDGs. The forum could give political support to existing financing initiatives and for better-targeted financing from all sources. It was noted that for majority of the initiatives there is no doubt that the bulk of resources will need to come from domestic resources, although external finance will remain critical for the poorest countries at least for the next generation.

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