



UN-DESA Division for Sustainable Development

Advancing the 2030 Agenda: Interlinkages and Common Themes at the HLPF 2018

*An expert group meeting in preparation for HLPF 2018:
Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies*

25-26 January 2018
United Nations Headquarters, New York
Room S-2726

Introduction:

The theme of the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) in 2018 is *transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies*, and it will maintain a special focus on SDGs 6 (water and sanitation), 7 (energy), 11 (cities), 12 (sustainable consumption and production), and 15 (terrestrial ecosystems) - in addition to SDG 17, which is considered each year.

Agenda 2030 is itself considered to be universal, holistic and indivisible, with a special imperative to leave no one behind. As such, understanding the interlinkages between the various goals and targets, as well as the ways in which these interlinkages can be leveraged during implementation to accelerate progress across multiple objectives, is central to the overall success of the Agenda. Apart from these interlinkages, issues such as data availability, financing, capacity and technology also present challenges and opportunities that have much in common across these SDGs.

Rationale and key questions:

DESA/DSD will be conducting an Expert Group Meeting (EGM) that will examine these aspects in preparation for the HLPF 2018. Interactions across the SDGs in focus at HLPF 2018, as well as with the rest of Agenda 2030, will be crucial to realizing the Goals on the ground, as well as being significant for attaining overarching objectives such as resilience, inclusion and sustainability.

For example, Goal 6 (Ensuring availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all) is intimately linked to targets such as those relating to energy access (SDG 7), urban basic services (SDG 11) pollution and waste management (SDG 12) and freshwater/terrestrial ecosystems (SDG 15). At the same time (and without seeking to be exhaustive), Goal 6 is also linked to other parts of Agenda 2030 such as those related to poverty, nutrition, health, education, gender, economic growth and climate change. The relative importance of these interlinkages can vary by regional or socio-economic context, meaning that synergies and trade-offs can do so as well, with specific implications for policies and programmes, including those intended to 'leave no one behind'; and secure resilience and sustainability.

Participants will therefore be challenged to reach beyond their respective areas of expertise to explore interactions across goals and targets in focus at HLPF 2018; as well as with the rest of Agenda 2030; map pathways that leverage progress in multiple areas; shape an understanding of common challenges and shared approaches towards achieving overarching outcomes; and produce recommendations on new and innovative ways in which diverse actors can work together towards these ends.



The EGM will help prepare for the thematic review sessions at the 2018 HLPF and answer the following questions:

- What are the most significant interlinkages – based on the most recent scientific thinking and evidence – among SDGs 6, 7, 11, 12 and 15 and the rest of Agenda 2030?
- How do the strength and nature of these interlinkages vary across countries in different circumstances, or impact specific population groups differently?
- How do these interlinkages lead to concrete recommendations for advancing sustainability, resilience and inclusivity?
- What are some practical ways – including through modelling tools and other approaches - in which policy makers and participants in multi-stakeholder partnerships can leverage these interlinkages for effective action at sub-national, national, regional and global levels?
- Based on the above, what would be the most fruitful areas in which data availability; science, technology and innovation; financing; and capacity development can be advanced for ensuring acceleration towards the SDGs?

Contribution to HLPF 2018:

The knowledge and insights of experts – practitioners and academics - from across the world will be crucial to addressing these questions. The EGM will serve to bring together a cross-section of such expertise from across a diversity of countries and regions to help:

- provide substantive inputs into the thematic reviews at the HLPF;
- identify cases from regions and specific countries (including those that are conducting or have conducted Voluntary National Reviews) and could illustrate cross-cutting challenges or highlight innovative practices;
- propose concrete, action-oriented recommendations for the outcome documents of the HLPF, and;
- suggest effective presenters for the specific sessions at the HLPF, as well as contributors to blog posts, e-discussions and other activities leading up to the HLPF.

Participation and organization:

Participation at the EGM will be by invitation. A small number of experts from think tanks, academia, NGOs, the private sector and Governments will be invited by UN-DESA/DSD, with financial support provided on a case-by-case basis. Experts from the UN system and other international organizations will also be invited to participate.

Individual sessions at the EGM will run sequentially, and will address specific themes. The mode will be interactive, with presentations from a panel serving to initiate discussion. This is a working-level meeting, with all participants encouraged to speak openly and informally.

The EGM will be conducted in English. Arrangements will be made to brief the member States in early 2018 on the outcomes, based on a document to be prepared following the EGM.