

UNITED NATIONS



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PRESIDENT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

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**Remarks**

**Briefing on the 2018 High-level Political Forum and the High-level Segment of ECOSOC**

**30 May 2018**

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Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to welcome you to this briefing on the preparations for the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development to be held under the auspices of ECOSOC, and for the ECOSOC High-level Segment.

The 2018 meeting of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development will be convened at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, from Monday, 9 July to Wednesday, 18 July 2018.

The theme of the 2018 High-level Political Forum will be "Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies."

This year, the set of goals to be reviewed in depth, including Goal 17 on strengthening the means of implementation and revitalizing the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development that is considered each year, are as follows:

Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

Goal 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

Goal 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

The invitations to Member States for the Forum and the HLS were sent to all Permanent Missions in New York last week.

I also understand that the information note for the participants is being prepared and will be posted on HLPF website.

I take this opportunity to remind you that the expectation of the GA resolution on the HLPF is that governments are represented by participants from the economic, social and environmental fields.

### [Inputs]

HLPF has received a number of inputs from ECOSOC functional commissions, intergovernmental bodies and platforms as well as other entities and the Secretariat will inform you of that.

### [Programme]

The programme for the 2018 HLPF and the High-level Segment of ECOSOC have been approved by the Bureau of the Council and posted online to share with Member States and with all stakeholders.

The programme has accommodated suggestions from Member States. Three hours are allocated to review SDGs 6, 7, 11, 12, 15 and 17.

Thematic reviews examining the Forum's theme from various angles, such as the integrated approach on implementation, strengthening statistics and data, building resilience, strengthening science-policy interface, countries in special situations, regional perspective, and leaving no one behind will also take place.

The keynote speakers, panelists and lead discussants featured are a mix of leaders, distinguished experts, scientists and actors on the ground, who are at the forefront of policy research and action on the implementation of Agenda 2030 and SDGs.

Invitation letters to the speakers are in the process of being sent, and positive feedback has already been received, including from distinguished speakers, such as Ministers and the Secretary-General's envoys on youth, disability and road safety.

### [VNRs]

The Ministerial Segment of the Forum will be held from 16 to 18 July and will be dedicated to the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs). 47 countries will be presenting their VNRs this year. The schedule of the presentations is available online.

The Secretariat will inform you of the deadlines important for VNR countries.

Regarding the Q&A segment following the VNR presentations, countries are encouraged to actively take part in this peer-learning element of the HLPF by posing questions to the presenting countries. The self-organized Coordination Mechanism of the Major Groups and other Stakeholders for the HLPF will be collecting their potential questions for each of the VNR

countries prior to the HLPF and the Secretariat will share them in advance with VNR countries. I encourage countries and other actors to ask questions in writing, through the Secretariat, before the meeting.

VNR countries are encouraged to consider in advance the composition of their Delegation and the representatives taking part in the VNR presentation, giving consideration also to other Stakeholders. Previous years have seen countries representations include youth delegates, parliamentarians, and representatives of civil society, private sector, and academia, to name a few.

### **[ECOSOC High-level Segment]**

The 2018 ECOSOC High-level Segment will be convened in parallel to the ministerial meetings of the HLPF on 16-18 July, as well as on Thursday, 19 July.

The morning meeting on 19 July will consist of the ECOSOC High-level Policy Dialogue, which will be informed by the mid-year update of the DESA publication entitled “2018 World Economic and Social Prospects”.

An innovation this year is that the Dialogue is envisaged to include projections from the chief economists of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank Group, World Trade Organization (WTO), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA).

Also invited will be UN system Heads and experts in the other dimensions of sustainable development to share forward-looking visions and perspectives on how these projections will affect the long-term advancement of sustainable development in all its three dimensions.

In the afternoon of 19 July, the 2018 ECOSOC thematic discussion will address resilience and sustainability in the context of the promise of new technologies for achieving the 2030 Agenda. The Secretary-General’s report reflects his personal vision on the key issues that come with new technologies.

### **[Ministerial Declaration]**

In accordance with the practice of previous years, a Ministerial Declaration will be adopted at the conclusion of the High-Level Political Forum and at the conclusion of the High-Level Segment of the Council.

To that end, I have appointed H.E. Ms. Gillian Bird, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Australia to the United Nations and H.E. Mr. Masud Bin Momen, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations, to act as co-facilitators to lead consultations on the Declaration. I would like to thank

Ambassador Bird and Ambassador Bin Momen for graciously accepting this responsibility. They will be in touch with you shortly to share their proposal of timetable for negotiations.

### **[General debate]**

As per previous practice, a general debate will be held during the high-level segment of ECOSOC on 16-19 July, beginning in the afternoon of Monday, 16 July.

Before the opening of the general debate, half an hour will be dedicated to reporting by the Chairs of regional forums on sustainable development, followed by a 5-minute presentation by the President of UNEA, a 15-minute introduction of the report of the Secretary-General on the 2018 ECOSOC theme and a 15-minute introduction of the report on the Committee on Development Policy.

The Secretary of ECOSOC will say more on the general debate.

### **[Venue, webcast, closed captioning and overflow room]**

The meetings of the HLPF will be held in Conference Room 4 on 9-13 July. During the week of 16-20 July, the opening of the high-level segment and the VNR meetings of the HLPF will be held mainly in Conference Room 4.

The meetings to hear the general debate, for adoption of the ministerial declaration and the final day of the HLS will be held in the Trusteeship Council Chamber. The meetings will be webcast and will have closed captioning.

The Secretariat will endeavor to provide an overflow rooms for meetings, especially during the second week. For participants other than Member States, observers and representatives of UN system entities, a ticketing system will be organized. Special arrangements may also be made for access during the opening of the high-level segment on 16 July.

### **[UN system]**

The Secretariat is mobilizing the entire UN system to participate in the HLPF by providing their substantive analysis on the review of the SDGs as well as the thematic reviews through the various documentation, expert group meetings and through side-events. We are also now beginning to receive significant expressions of interest from intergovernmental organizations to participate at a high level in the Forum.

### [Multi-stakeholder participation]

An official, dedicated two-hour session to hear about MGoS implementation of the 2030 Agenda is currently being designed in collaboration with the HLPF Coordination Mechanism.

Through coordination with their organizing partners, Major Groups and other stakeholders can intervene from the floor throughout all formal round table sessions and ask questions during the VNR presentations.

Major Groups and other stakeholders will also serve as lead discussants in the HLPF thematic review segment.

Major Groups and other stakeholders will also organize side events.

The Secretariat will also inform you further about their participation.

### [Communication and outreach]

Efforts to engage the public through communications and outreach for the 2018 HLPF have been kickstarted and the Secretariat will inform you further on this.

I understand that several special events as well as exhibitions will be organized by the Secretariat and I will give them the floor to talk about them.

### [Closing]

Thank you very much. As you can see, overall the preparations for the 2018 session of the HLPF are well underway. I am confident that the deliberations and presentations to take place at the Forum and the high-level segment of ECOSOC will help push further the Agenda's implementation, and our goal of achieving a sustainable world.

I now give the floor to the Secretariat to inform us further on some points I have raised.

Ms. Barthelemy, you have the floor.

[...]

Thank you.

Ms. Tahtinen, you have the floor.

[...]

Thank you.

Ms. Herity, you have the floor

[...]

Thank you.

I am now available to answer questions from the floor with the help from the Secretariat.

Thank you.