**2020 ECOSOC Partnership Forum**

***“Partnerships furthering the Decade of Action”***

3 April 2020, UNHQ, New York

Concept Note

The ECOSOC Partnership Forum provides a unique intergovernmental space for candid and practical discussions on partnerships in support of sustainable development. As one of themeans of implementation (MoIs) included in Sustainable Developnment Goal (SDG) 17, partnerships are essential for achieving all 16 SDGs, as well as enhancing the other MoIs discussed in SDG 17, including finance, technology and data.

With only ten years left to achieve the SDGs, the 2020 ECOSOC Partnership Forum will provide a value-added policy space for Member States and other stakeholders to focus on key cross-cutting, interlinked issues that are central to accelerate the SDG implementation and discuss ways to mobilize multi-stakeholder partnerships to galvanize synergistic actions around them. The Forum is expected to result in value-added policy insights, especially related to building agile partnership approaches around interlinked issue areas.

***Background:***

At the [2019 SDG Summit](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgsummit#home), Member States underscored the need for delivery on the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and re-articulated their commitment to accelerate action to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The Political Declaration adopted at the Summit[[1]](#footnote-1) sets out ten cross-cutting areas[[2]](#footnote-2) for concerted actions including: *(i) leave no one behind; (ii) mobilize adequate and well-directed financing; (iii) enhance national implementation; (iv) strengthen institutions for more integrated solutions; (v) bolster local action to accelerate implementation; (vi) reduce disaster risk and build resilience; (vii) solve challenges through international cooperation and enhance the global partnerships; (viii) harness science, technology and innovation; (ix) invest in data and statistics;* and *(v) strengthen the high-level political forum (HLPF).*

Acknowledging the critical importance of partnerships in all these areas, the Declaration underscores the urgent need to find new ways for all actors to work together.

The 2019 Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR)[[3]](#footnote-3) is a source for new ways of working together. It identifies six cross-cutting entry points[[4]](#footnote-4) that present prime opportunities for new ways of collaborating, and through which partnerships and innovation can potentially have the greatest positive impacts on SDG progress, while alleviating or avoiding negative ones. The report further underlines the critical roles of governance, economic and financial instruments, individual and collective actions, and science as “levers” that can bring transformation across the different entry points. The report notes that rapid change can only happen when different actors work together in an integrated way towards shared goals through strategic partnerships, and by sharing and applying available scientific, technological and policymaking knowledge[[5]](#footnote-5).

Building on the 2019 GSDR, and in line with the 2020 HLPF theme, the 2020 ECOSOC Partnership Forum will focus on the theme of *“Partnering to further the Decade for Action”* and look at how major transformations could be achieved by rethinking partnerships in and between a selected number of focus areas – such as **agriculture, food and nutrition, health, well-being, energy and urban development** – among policymakers, science, business, civil society and academic communities, among other actors.

To organize the 2020 Partnership Forum, UN DESA will engage relevant UN system entities and other actors, including the United Nations Office for Partnership (UNOP), United Nations Global Compact (UNGC) and International Chamber of Commerce (ICC).

***Objectives for 2020 ECOSOC Partnership Forum:***

To support more structured and evidence-based partnership efforts in support of the SDGs, the 2020 ECOSOC Partnership Forum will aim to bring together multistakeholder partners for a candid policy dialogue on the realities of partnerships on the ground and the adjustments needed for making transformative change in support of the 2030 Agenda.

Under the overall theme of ***“Partnering to further the Decade of Action****”*, the Forum will have the following objectives:

1. To discuss the roles of different stakeholder groups in addressing systemic gaps, and to explore ways to effectively engage such groups;
2. To identify interlinked areas where biggest partnership gaps exist and more structured approach to partnerships would be beneficial; and
3. To build state-of-the-art evidence base on ways to maximize the co-benefits of efforts on the ground and address possible trade-offs.

***Format***

The half-day Forum will be opened by a keynote speech that sets the broad stage for the discussions, followed by **two substantive dialogues in Davos style** (session I and II) and a closing.

***Participants***

Participants will include representatives of Member States, UN system entities, relevant inter-governmental organizations, multilateral development banks, NGOs, the private sector, philanthropic organizations, local governments, parliaments, academiaand other stakeholders.

***Impacts***

An analytical summary will be prepared to capture the key policy messages of the Forum. The summary will serve as an input to the 2020 High-level Political Forum (HLPF), and the upcoming declaration for the 75th anniversary commemoration of the United Nations and Leaders Summit (UN 75 Summit).

The 2020 ECOSOC Partnership Forum will also be an opportunity to solicit new SDG Acceleration Actions by national governments and diverse non-state actors and have them registered on the dedicated online database: (<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgactions>).

***Background documents***

* ‘The Future is Now: Science for Achieving Sustainable Development,’ Global Sustainable Development Report, 2019 ([2019 GSDR](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/283592019_07_11_HLPF_SciPol_session.pdf));
* DESA Working Paper (forthcoming);
* Political declaration of the high-level political forum on sustainable development convened under the auspices of the General Assembly ([A/RES/74/4](https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/74/4));
* UN Decade of Action on Nutrition: <https://www.un.org/nutrition/home>;
* Nutrition in Universal Health Care (UHC): <https://www.who.int/publications-detail/nutrition-in-universal-health-coverage>
* Lancet series on the double burden on malnutrition: <https://www.thelancet.com/series/double-burden-malnutrition>
* The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2019 by FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP, WHO: <https://www.ifad.org/en/web/knowledge/publication/asset/41220342>
* The Nutrition Advantage: Harnessing nutrition co-benefits of climate-resilient agriculture: <https://www.ifad.org/en/web/knowledge/publication/asset/39435783>
* Why food and nutrition security matters for inclusive structural and rural transformation: <https://www.ifad.org/en/web/knowledge/publication/asset/39318776>

***Possible Focus Questions:***

**Session I: Transformative partnerships in areas of (i) agriculture, food and nutrition; and (ii) health and well-being**

The discussions will aim to answer the following questions:

* What are the roles of governments, civil society, private sector and other stakeholders to address the systemic gaps? How can they engage and collaborate better?
* What are the interlinked areas between agriculture, food and nutrition, health andwell-being, where biggest partnership gaps exist and more structured, tailored partnerships could bring more rapid, synergistic transformations? For instance, how can more sustainable value chains be created across these sectors including to enhance the capacities of micro, small and medium size enterprises (MSMEs) and ensure the accountability measures for all actors, with a view to reducing the waste and total use of natural resources and enhancing equitable access to food and health?
* What are some of the concrete examples that demonstrate ways to maximize the shared benefits of partnership efforts in interconnected challenges?

**Session II: Transfromative partnerships in areas of (iii) urban development; and (iv) energy and materials use**

The discussions will aim to answer the below questions:

* What are the roles of governments, civil society, private sector and other stakeholders to address the systemic gaps? How can they engage and collaborate better?
* What are the interlinked areas between urban development; and energy and materials use, where more structured and tailored partnerships could bring rapid, synergistic transformations? For instance, how can multi-stakeholder partners develop long-term circular economy solutions for healthy cities and communities; ensure policy coherence and climate resilience; and enhance sustained access to urban public goods for all, including affordable renewable energy and sustainable urban food system – based on the principles of strong country ownership and government leadership?
* What are some of the concrete examples that demonstrate ways to maximize the shared benefits of partnership efforts in interconnected challenges?
1. A/RES/74/4 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. See Op. 24 for more information. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Written by an independent group of scientists appointed by the Secretary-General. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. They include: (i) advancing human well-being along all its dimensions, with a special focus on building resilience and ensuring that no-one is left behind; (ii) ensuring the health of the global environmental commons – nature, the atmosphere, ocean and land systems; (iii) transforming economic systems towards more just and sustainable outcomes; (iv) changing food and nutrition systems towards greater health, more efficient resource use and lower environmental impact; (v) securing universal access to de-carbonised energy services; and (vi)

developing cities, peri-urban and rural areas to sustainably serve their inhabitants’ needs. Stepping up science-based research in all countries to deliver better understanding and improved solutions to the challenges of sustainable development. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. The GSDR identifies both actors (‘levers’) who can forge innovative partnerships, and areas of focus (‘entry points’) through which the greatest transformative impact on the 2030 Agenda can be expected. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)