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UPDATED 6 July

Information note on the arrangements for the 2020 High-level Political Forum and the High-level Segment of the Economic and Social Council (7-17 July 2020)

I. Programme and format

High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development

1. The meetings of the 2020 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) will be organized in an informal virtual format due to the situation created by the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic.
2. The theme for the 2020 HLPF and the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) is “*Accelerated action and transformative pathways: realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development*”. (GA decision 74/508)
3. The decade of action and delivery for sustainable development was launched by Heads of State and Government at the SDG Summit in September 2019 in order to step up progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and put the world on track to realize their targets by 2030. (General Assembly resolution 74/4)
4. The 2020 HLPF will take stock of where we stand on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, taking into account the impact of COVID-19 on the SDGs. It will reflect on how to respond to the pandemic in a way that puts us back on track to realize the 2030 Agenda and accelerate progress towards the SDGs for the coming ten years. It will discuss international solidarity and multilateral action to realize the 2030 Agenda at this time of crises.
5. The programme of the 2020 HLPF and the High-level Segment of ECOSOC is available on the HLPF 2020 website <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/2020>. The annotated programme is also available at <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/2020#programme>.



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Thematic sessions

6. Thematic sessions of the HLPF will be held from 7 to 10 July 2020. Several sessions have been prepared through virtual expert consultations led by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) and UN system organizations and other partners. Background notes outlining the expected focus and guiding questions for each session may be accessed online at <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/2020#docs>. The thematic sessions will be conducted in the format of interactive dialogue.
7. A large number of the functional commissions of ECOSOC and other intergovernmental bodies and forums, as well as other actors have provided inputs to contribute to the thematic review of the HLPF and the synthesis of these inputs is available at https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/26122E_HLPF_2020_4.pdf.

Voluntary National Reviews

8. From 10 to 16 July, the HLPF will hear presentations of Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) by 47 countries, 26 of which are presenting for the first time.
9. A schedule of the presentations is available as part of the HLPF programme posted on the 2020 HLPF website. All VNR reports will be posted online at <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/vnrs/> as they are received.
10. A compilation of main messages for the 2020 VNRs is available on the 2020 HLPF website at https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/26196Compilation_Main_Messages_VNRs.pdf.
11. The VNRs will be organized as follows: countries presenting a VNR for the second or third time will present in a panel format along with other VNR countries presenting for the second or third time. Twenty minutes will be allocated per country, comprising a ten-minute presentation and approximately ten minutes for questions and answers.



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12. For countries that are presenting a VNR for the first time, thirty minutes will be allocated per country, comprising a fifteen-minute presentation and approximately fifteen minutes for questions and answers.
13. Given the virtual nature of the meetings, VNR countries have also chosen whether to present their VNR via livestreaming or through pre-recorded presentations or through a mix of the two.
14. All VNRs are expected to be presented at the Ministerial or similar level.
15. During the allotted time for questions and answers, there will be the opportunity for a limited number of questions and comments by participating States and stakeholders. At the end of the session, the VNR countries will be given a few minutes to respond to the interventions made. In case of lack of time, written responses can also be provided.
16. For those countries that have opted for a pre-recorded presentation, Member States and other stakeholders were invited to submit questions and comments on the VNR ahead of the presentation, based on the country's written report, so that the VNR country could address the questions in the video. Should this prove not to be possible, questions will be asked live or in writing, and written responses are encouraged following the HLPF session. Those will be made available at the VNR country page in the HLPF VNR online database at <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/vnrs/>.
17. Following the practice introduced at the 2019 HLPF, the President of ECOSOC has encouraged countries to participate in the Group of "Friends of VNRs" to prepare HLPF discussions on each VNR. The Chair of the Group of Friends is the Deputy Permanent Representative of Mexico (please contact the focal point at the Mexican mission at e-mail 2conu1@sre.gob.mx). This arrangement does not preclude States that do not participate in the Group of Friends from requesting the floor on any VNR. Please see paragraph 43 below regarding possible interventions by participating States, time permitting, following VNR presentations.



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18. Major Groups and other stakeholders will self-organize to intervene during the VNR sessions.

High-Level Segment of ECOSOC

19. The last day of the High-level Segment of ECOSOC on Friday, 17 July 2020, will include a session of 45 minutes dedicated to future trends and scenarios related to the theme of the Council and HLPF in 2020 and the long-term impact of current trends, on the realization of the SDGs, to be discussed in the context of recovering better after the COVID-19 crisis. This is consistent with the mandate contained in General Assembly resolution 72/305. For more information on this session, please contact Tonya Vaturi (vaturi@un.org).
20. This will be followed by high-level discussion on “*Multilateralism after COVID 19: what kind of UN do we need at the 75th anniversary?*”. The session will reflect on the kind of multilateralism needed to deliver a forward looking and effective collective response to global crises such as COVID-19 and long-term challenges such as climate change, while accelerating progress towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. A message will be circulated on ECOSOC Place on behalf of the President inviting Member States to express their interest to participate in the discussion on multilateralism, time permitting. Delegations will be accommodated on a first-come, first-served basis and in accordance with customary protocol, time permitting for a maximum of 3 minutes for Member States and a maximum of 4 minutes for Groups. For more information on this session, please contact Xenia von Lilien-Waldau (vonlilien@un.org).

General debate

21. Due to this year’s virtual nature of the HLPF and the High-level Segment of ECOSOC, the participating States and other participants are invited to provide written general statements for posting on the ECOSOC and HLPF websites and in e-deleGATE. Statements should be sent to the Secretariat (laabas@un.org) by 17 July 2020. In addition, recordings of the statements may be submitted to be posted on the ECOSOC and HLPF websites. It is encouraged that any video recordings shared be limited to 6 minutes for Groups and 4 minutes for individual statements.



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Informal meetings and events

VNR Labs

22. A set of informal VNR Labs are planned to be held virtually from 7 to 16 July 2020. In view of the current global situation, the Labs are held under the theme of “*Recovering Better*”. A programme of all VNR Labs is available on the 2020 HLPF website at <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/2020#labs>. Three Labs will allow to deepen the discussion on the VNR of specific countries and the others will address themes cutting across several VNRs.

Side events and exhibitions

23. Side events and exhibitions are organized virtually on the margins of the HLPF. The calendar of HLPF events is posted on the 2020 HLPF website, and more information is available at <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/2020#other>.

Special events

24. The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) and its partner agencies and organizations are also organizing special virtual events on the margins of the HLPF. More information is available at the HLPF website <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/2020#other> and at https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/262782020_Special_Event_Flyer.pdf.

II. Outcome

Ministerial Declaration

25. The co-facilitators of the Ministerial Declaration, His Excellency Georgi Velikov Panayotov, Permanent Representative of Bulgaria to the United Nations, and Her Excellency Amal Mudallali, Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations, are in the process of



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facilitating informal virtual consultations on the Ministerial Declaration of ECOSOC and the HLPF in accordance with the timeline provided in the letter of the co-facilitators dated 8 May 2020. It is expected that adoption of the Ministerial Declaration will be conducted through silence procedure, unless other arrangements are put in place before the HLPF and High-level Segment of ECOSOC. A ceremonial “adoption” of the Ministerial Declaration is foreseen in the draft programme at the closing of the HLPF on 16 July 2020 and the closing of the High-level Segment of ECOSOC on 17 July 2020.

Summary of the President of ECOSOC

26. The President of ECOSOC will also prepare a summary to capture the key messages of the discussions of the HLPF and the High-level Segment of ECOSOC. The summary will be issued after the meeting.

SDG Acceleration Actions

27. Countries and other actors are encouraged to continue registering and announcing new SDG Acceleration Actions -namely initiatives that governments and other actors may be undertaking in line with the decade of action and delivery for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. They can showcase such SDG Acceleration Actions using the dedicated online platform (<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgactions>) that was created on the occasion of the 2019 SDG Summit.

III. Documentation

28. All official documents are expected to be delivered on schedule. They are available for download and review from the 2020 HLPF website at <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/2020#docs> (some still in advance unedited version) and will be available on UNODS site in all official languages.



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29. Documentation includes notably¹:
- Report of the Secretary-General on progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals
 - Synthesis of voluntary submissions by functional commissions of the ECOSOC and other intergovernmental bodies and forums,
 - Compilation of the main messages for the 2020 voluntary national reviews
 - Reports of regional forums on sustainable development
 - Discussion papers on the theme of the HLPF, submitted by major groups and other stakeholders
 - Follow-up and review of the financing for development outcomes and the means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
30. VNR reports submitted by countries presenting a Voluntary National Review are being posted on the VNR database (<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/vnrs/>) as they become available.
31. As mentioned above, background notes and other background materials developed by the Secretariat through the preparatory process (<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/2020#docs>) and a background note on key messages from VNR countries (<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/vnrs/>) are also available.

¹ This listing does not include the documentation for the high-level segment ECOSOC day which is:

- Report of the Secretary-General on accelerated action and transformative pathways: realizing the decade of the action and delivery for sustainable development
- Report of the Secretary-General on long-term future trends and scenarios - impacts in the economic, social and environmental areas on the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals



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IV. Logistical and technical arrangements

Registration

Meetings without interpretation (7-9 July, the morning of 10 July and 17 July)

32. Meetings without interpretation will be held on the WebEx platform. Participating States were invited to register up to 10 participants who would participate in the meetings on the virtual platform over the course of the HLPF/HLS (7 – 17 July 2020). The Secretariat sent an email with updates to registered participants containing all the necessary technical details, including the meeting link. So as not to overload the platform, participating States should limit their participation on the virtual platform to no more than two representatives at any given time. Participating States are kindly encouraged to coordinate virtual participation on the platform among their delegates in order to ensure that the two-delegate participation limit is respected at any given time. All other members of the delegation can watch the meetings live on UN Webcast at <http://webtv.un.org/>. In case participation on the platform is close to capacity, the presiding officer may authorize the Secretariat to remove participants. There is no limit to the number of persons who can follow the discussions through UN Webcast, and the Webcast will be recorded.

Meetings for which interpretation has been requested (the afternoon of 10 July to 16 July)

33. The Secretariat is in the process of rolling out the remote simultaneous interpretation platform for use during the meetings to be held from the afternoon of 10 July to 16 July. Meetings for which interpretation has been requested would be held on a separate virtual platform (see paragraph 43 below). In this regard, participating States were invited in a message circulated on ECOSOC Place on 5 July to inform the Secretariat of the name of one member of their delegation who would participate with a view to taking the floor at meetings of the HLPF between 10 and 16 July. This is the first time the United Nations is organizing meetings on this platform in New York, so the Secretariat seeks the indulgence of participants in case technical problems occur.



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34. Participating States were also invited to indicate the full composition of their delegation (including delegates who do not have access to the virtual platform) through the e-List of Participants module for the HLPF/HLS in the e-deleGATE portal by 30 June 2020 (the deadline has been extended but registration should be received urgently).
35. Representatives of intergovernmental organizations, specialized agencies or representatives of the UN system entities are invited to register up to 3 participants who would participate in the meetings on the virtual platform over the course of the HLPF/HLS. So as not to overload the platform, participating organizations/entities should limit their participation to no more than one representative at any given time. Representatives of an organization/entity are kindly encouraged to coordinate virtual participation on the platform among them.

LINK TO THE REGISTRATION FORM TO ACCESS THE VIRTUAL PLATFORM (WEBEX):

The link to the registration form was circulated in an announcement sent from ECOSOC Place on the e-deleGATE platform on 23 June 2020. For any questions, please contact Ziad Mahmassani (mahmassani@un.org)

36. In order to assist the presiding officer in identifying participants on the virtual platform, when joining the meeting, participants should enter their details as follows:

Join Event Now

To join this event, provide the following information.

First name:

Last name:

Email address:

Event password:

37. If participants do not clearly identify their delegation/affiliation when joining the platform, admission to the meeting may be delayed and they may be requested to leave the meeting and rejoin. In case participation on the platform is close to capacity, the presiding officer may authorize the Secretariat to remove participants.



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38. Representatives of major groups and other stakeholders (MGoS) should go to <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/2020#stakeholders> and could sign up to the MGoS Coordination Mechanism mailing list if they have not yet done so.
39. A guide with technical requirements for the WebEx platform for **meetings without interpretation** (7-9 July, the morning of 10 July and 17 July) has been shared with registered participants in advance. Testing of the platform was also organized. Each meeting will be opened approximately one hour before the start time in order to ensure that connections are working properly. Participants who expect to take the floor during the meetings are strongly encouraged to participate in a test in advance.
40. Information will be provided separately on the use of the virtual platform for **meetings for which interpretation has been requested** (the afternoon of 10 July to 16 July). Familiarization sessions are being organized in the week of 6 July in order to “onboard” participants and ensure that they are able to connect to and use the platform (see paragraph 43 below).

Interventions

41. In order to request the floor during interactive discussions at a given meeting, participants will be invited to inscribe through an on-line speaker form. The Secretariat will provide a dedicated link to the speaker form to request the floor along with the link to access the WebEx meetings. The form will only be enabled at the start of a given meeting or discussion and no requests can be made before that time. Requests for taking the floor during the interactive discussions of the HLPF should be made through the speaker form. Please see paragraph 43 below regarding advance expressions of interest to participate in discussions held on the remote interpretation platform from the afternoon of 10 July to 16 July and paragraph 20 above regarding advance expressions of interest to participate in the discussion on multilateralism of the high-level segment on 17 July on the WebEx platform.
42. Given the limited time available and in order to allow the maximum number of participants to intervene, interventions should be limited to no more than two minutes each. The time limit will be strictly implemented, including through the use of a timing device and sound



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alert. The Chair or moderator may intersperse the interventions of participating States with interventions by international organizations, representatives of the UN system and major groups and other stakeholders.

Interpretation

43. The meetings of the HLPF and high-level segment taking place from the afternoon of 10 July until 16 July will be held on the remote interpretation platform 'Interprefy'. All meetings will be webcast. Access to the Interprefy platform is distinct from the WebEx platform and participation in a familiarization session is required in order to be able to intervene, time permitting, in meetings held on the platform. In this regard, participating States were invited in a message circulated on ECOSOC Place on 5 July to inform the Secretariat of the name of one member of their delegation who would participate with a view to taking the floor at meetings of the HLPF between 10 and 16 July. A registration link will be shared with participating States through e-deleGATE. Familiarization sessions on the Interprefy platform are being organized in the week of 6 July. Questions in this regard should be directed to Wannes Lint (lint@un.org) (for participating States, other than VNR countries); Maame Agyeben (agyeben@un.org) (for VNR countries); Gwilym Roberts-Harry (tomos.roberts-harry@un.org) (for major groups and other stakeholders); Patricia Chaves (chavesp@un.org) (for the regional session on 15 July). All other members of the delegation can watch the meetings with interpretation in the official languages live on UN Webcast at <http://webtv.un.org/>. In case participation on the platform is close to capacity, the presiding officer may authorize the Secretariat to remove participants. There is no limit to the number of persons who can follow the discussions through UN Webcast, and the Webcast will be recorded.

Webcast

44. All informal plenary meetings of the 2020 HLPF and High-level Segment of ECOSOC will have UN Webcast at: <http://webtv.un.org/>.