



#SDGs #GlobalGoals #2030Agenda

## **ECOSOC HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT 2021**

*Sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic that promotes the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development: building an inclusive and effective path for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda in the context of the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development*

### **DRAFT CONCEPT NOTE**

**16 July 2021 – 10:30 am to 1:00 pm**

***“Strengthening ECOSOC at its 75th anniversary for sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 and advancing the 2030 Agenda”***

This year, the United Nations Economic and Social Council celebrates its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary, which was commemorated on 26 January 2021. On 16 July, ECOSOC will hold a conversation and interaction among Member States on how it can maximize its support to the implementation of the 2030 Development Agenda, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and other major UN conferences and summits while supporting an inclusive and resilient recovery from COVID-19 and delivering on its functions. ECOSOC will reflect on its positioning and role in the international intergovernmental architecture in the area of sustainable development and on ways to maximize the impact of its segments, subsidiary bodies and forums, building on the recent reforms adopted by the General Assembly on 25 June 2021.

As the UN intergovernmental body entirely dedicated to sustainable development, further strengthening of the Council is part of efforts to move towards a more inclusive, impactful and networked multilateralism in the area of sustainable development. The discussions at ECOSOC high-level segment will address ways to achieve this objective by introducing new ambition, new dynamics and new ways of working within ECOSOC and among the key UN system and other intergovernmental bodies engaged in the policy dialogue and governance of sustainable development and its economic, social and environmental dimensions.

The Council continues to advance sustainable development, integrated policy responses and solutions to global economic, social and environmental challenges and crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Its range of functional commissions, regional commissions, expert bodies and forums (on financing for development, science, technology and innovation and youth) are giving it the knowledge and expertise to contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and to mobilizing financing for sustainable development and science, technology and innovation to realize the SDGs. It supports putting women and girls at the center and allows listening to and working with youth. It also addresses other critical issues identified in the 2030 Agenda and the UN 75 Declaration, including leaving no one behind, improving digital cooperation and preventing conflict.





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The General Assembly recently asked ECOSOC to build on the outcomes of the reviews of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda conducted by the high-level political forum on sustainable development and ensure their implementation.

The Council also has a Charter mandate to coordinate the UN system, including all specialized agencies, in a decentralized international architecture. It continues to oversee the UN development system in implementing the guidance of the General Assembly on the operational activities of the UN system, including the recently adopted quadrennial comprehensive policy review of UN system operational activities (QCPR) and the reforms undertaken to reposition the UN development system.

ECOSOC discusses the specific challenges of countries in special situations and offers dedicated opportunities for youth to engage with policy makers as equal partners. ECOSOC is also supporting post-conflict countries in pursuit of long-term development and working in close collaboration with the Peacebuilding Commission.

ECOSOC also promotes the active engagement of diverse stakeholders in the delivery of UN mandates. Over 5,000 non-governmental organizations from around the world are in consultative status with ECOSOC and are actively engaged in the work of the Council and the UN more generally. The Council is also looking at ways to boost partnerships with the private sector.

ECOSOC also delivers expert work through some of its subsidiary bodies such as on statistics, population trends and issues, geospatial information or international tax cooperation.

ECOSOC stands ready to contribute to achieving the SDGs by 2030 and to lead in promoting a more inclusive and networked multilateralism for a more resilient, greener, and sustainable recovery from COVID-19.

As the world is progressing with rebuilding and recovery efforts that launch new momentum to achieve the SDGs, 75 years after its creation, ECOSOC's role and mandate are more relevant than ever in advancing the necessary committed global solidarity and cooperation to advance people's well-being, build resilience and minimize risks associated to catastrophic events with devastating impact.

The meeting will provide the space for ECOSOC to elicit from its members and observers some innovative ideas in a number of areas that could contribute to the reflection on how best to maximize the use and real impact of ECOSOC and improve multilateralism, while celebrating the Council's impact during its 75 years of existence.

Among the issues of special interest for a new type of multilateralism would be those of an existential nature and that would severely impact the achievement of the 2030 Agenda as we move forward on the Decade of Action and Delivery for sustainable development.





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These include topics such as the economic and social impact of climate change, pandemic preparedness and the policy implications of global public goods and their financing and delivery, countering worsening inequalities, and resources for achieving the SDGs.

Guiding questions:

- How can the ECOSOC be better equipped to ensure that it continues to support the peoples of the world in peace, dignity and equality, building on the recent reforms introduced by the General Assembly?
- How can we maximize the impact of the work of ECOSOC and its segments, forums and subsidiary bodies as well as its coordination role?
- How can we evolve towards the kind of multilateralism that can better respond to existential challenges to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, such as the current pandemic or the economic and social impact of climate change?
- What mechanisms are needed to make multilateralism more inclusive and more conducive to the policy coordination, international solidarity and delivery of global public goods?
- What should the multilateral architecture, including ECOSOC, look like to advance transformative actions for a more resilient, greener and sustainable recovery and for long-term sustainable development?
- How can ECOSOC offer meaningful engagement of youth and other marginalized groups to ensure that the United Nations advances a more inclusive multilateralism that would be relevant for youth and future generations?



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*“Scenarios and possible medium and long-term trends related to the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and the achievement of SDGs”*

**16 July 2021 – 3:00 pm to 4:30 pm**

The response to the COVID-19 pandemic should not be guided only by emergency concerns. It is important to reflect on how the policy measures being taken today can shape a better future. As decided by the General Assembly in its resolution 72/305, the High-level Segment of the Economic and Social Council will focus on “future trends and scenarios related to the Council theme, the long-term impact of current trends, such as contribution of new technologies, in the economic, social and environmental areas on the realization of the SDGs based on the work of the UN and other regional and international organizations and bodies as well as other stakeholders.”

The Council will accordingly examine policies that can both respond to COVID-19, overcome its negative impacts on the SDGs and kick off accelerated progress to realize the 2030 Agenda. It will also discuss scenarios for reaching sustainable development in the long term within the context of the current pandemic.

While the pandemic has accelerated digitalization, it has also amplified persistent technology divides due to underlying inequalities, excluding billions of people from reaping the benefits of digital technologies and innovations. Currently, the potential of digital consumer innovations in mobility, food, buildings, and energy services remains largely untapped, and could be readily deployed worldwide to radically transform global service efficiencies, bridge gaps, open up more feasible pathways towards the achievement of the SDGs, and ensure that no one is left behind. However, the vast majority of financial stimulus packages in response to the pandemic are not yet focused on longer-term measures and sustainable investments. There is need to analyze cooperative, near-term actions for transforming service efficiencies and discuss economic, social and environmental strategies that promote a sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and the achievement of the SDGs by 2030.

This year’s High-level Segment is informed by two Secretary-General’s reports. The first report on this year’s theme, and thus addresses how to drive a sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic that puts us on an inclusive and effective path for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda in the context of the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development (E/2021/62). The report highlights economic, social and environmental strategies that countries could consider to achieve this objective. It offers analysis and policy recommendations to inform discussions during the High-level Segment.

A complementary report by 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” (E/2021/61) details a best-case scenario for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, especially in terms of achieving high living standards for everyone. It explores the untapped potential of





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digital consumer innovations in mobility, food, buildings, and energy services, which could be readily deployed worldwide at a level commensurate with the global “best-case scenario” identified in last year’s report.<sup>1</sup>

Guiding questions:

- How can national COVID-19 recovery plans incorporate innovations for reducing inequalities and bridging the digital divide over the medium and long-term?
- How can women be empowered to contribute to recovery strategies, so that gender perspectives are well represented?
- What strategies are being adopted to ensure that financial stimulus packages are applied toward sustainable solutions for a resilient recovery?
- What are some examples of national legal, policy and institutional measures that can enable better social protection and healthcare systems, as part of sustainable and resilient recovery strategies?
- What are examples of near-term decisions that can be made immediately to ensure long-term positive outcomes in areas of food security, education, energy and transport?

## Programme

The ECOSOC High-level Segment will bring together expert panellists, eminent personalities, and keynote speakers from Governments, the UN system, think tanks, regional organizations and other stakeholders. All sessions will be held virtually, New York time.

Details on the programme, including speakers and links to reports and statements can be accessed at: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/2021#programme>

## Morning:

**10:00 to 10:30** - Presentation of the Secretary-General’s reports (E/2021/61) and (E/2021/62) and the report of the Committee on Development Policy (E/2021/33)

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<sup>1</sup> E/2020/60.



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**10:30 to 13:00-** High-level interactive discussion on “*Strengthening ECOSOC at its 75th anniversary for sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 and advancing the 2030 Agenda*”

**Afternoon:**

**15:00 to 16:30-** High-level interactive discussion on “*Scenarios and possible medium and long-term trends related to the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and the achievement of SDGs*”

**16:30 to 18:00-** The High-level Segment will conclude with the adoption of the Ministerial Declaration, as adopted by the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development on 15 July 2021.

