

Critical milestones towards a coherent, efficient, and inclusive follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda at the global level

COVER NOTE:

1. In September 2015, the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit adopted a new framework to guide development efforts between 2015 and 2030, entitled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development”.
2. The 2030 Agenda contains 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets¹. The SDGs address, in an integrated manner, the social, economic and environmental dimensions of development, their interrelations, aspects related to peaceful societies and effective institutions, as well as means of implementation (finance, technology, capacity development etc.).
3. Heads of State and Government also committed to engage in systematic follow-up and review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The follow-up and review will be based on regular, voluntary and inclusive country-led reviews of progress at the national level feeding into reviews at the regional and global levels.
4. At the global level, the United Nations high-level political forum on sustainable development (HLPF) will have the central role in overseeing a network of follow-up and review processes. It is to work coherently with the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and other relevant organs and forums, in accordance with existing mandates, building on their work in order to boost implementation.
5. The HLPF will meet (i) every four years at the level of Heads of State and Government under the auspices of the and (ii) every year under the auspices of ECOSOC.
6. The follow-up and review processes at all levels will track progress in implementing the universal goals and targets, including the means of implementation, in all countries, in a manner which respects their universal, integrated and interrelated nature and the three dimensions of sustainable development. These processes will be guided by a number of other principles

¹ [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/69/L.85&Lang=E]

defined in the 2030 Agenda². For example, they will be voluntary and country-led, support the identification of solutions and best practices, help to mobilize the necessary means of implementation and partnerships, as well as be open, inclusive, participatory and transparent for all people.

7. The dedicated follow-up and review for the Addis Ababa Conference on Financing for Development-and the means of implementation of the SDGs is integrated with the follow-up and review framework of the 2030 Agenda. The HLPF will build, inter alia, on the outcome of the annual ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development as well as on the summary of the annual Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation launched by the 2030 Agenda as part of a Technology Facilitation Mechanism. The HLPF will also take into account the biennial ECOSOC Development Cooperation Forum. A General Assembly Dialogue on Financing for Development will be held back-to-back with the HLPF meeting, when it meets under the auspices of the General Assembly.
8. The 2030 Agenda stipulates that the HLPF will conduct:
 - i. Regular reviews of country-level implementation, “including developed and developing countries as well as relevant UN entities and other stakeholders, including civil society and the private sector”;
 - i. Thematic reviews of progress on the Sustainable Development Goals, including cross-cutting issues, building on the work of the functional commissions of ECOSOC and other intergovernmental bodies and forums.
9. The follow-up and review by the HLPF will be informed by an annual SDG progress report and a Global Sustainable Development Report, which shall strengthen the science-policy interface and serve as an evidence-based instrument to support policymakers³.

Mandate for the report by the Secretary-General on global follow-up and review

10. The 2030 Agenda requested “the Secretary-General, in consultation with Member States, to prepare a report, for consideration at the seventieth session of the General Assembly in preparation for the 2016 meeting of the HLPF which outlines critical milestones towards coherent, efficient and inclusive follow-up and review at the global level. The report should:
 11. include a proposal on the organizational arrangements for State-led

² Agenda 2030 para 74

³ 2030 Agenda, extracts of para 83

- reviews at the HLPF under the auspices of ECOSOC, including recommendations on voluntary common reporting guidelines,
- (i) clarify institutional responsibilities,
 - (ii) provide guidance on annual themes, on a sequence of thematic reviews, and
 - (iv) [provide guidance] on options for periodic reviews for the HLPF⁴.”
12. The present questionnaire aims to collect views of Member States on milestones towards coherent, efficient and inclusive follow-up and review of 2030 Agenda at the global level, so as to inform the analysis and proposals to be contained in the report of the Secretary-General.
13. It takes existing mandates as a starting point and aims to determine how these can be operationalized or further clarified or elaborated on if needed.
14. The Secretariat kindly invites all Member States to provide responses to the following questions and submit them to the Division for Sustainable Development of the UN Department for Economic and Social Affairs (axster@un.org, copied to zubcevic@un.org and powellj1@un.org) **no later than 15 November 2015**.

⁴2030 Agenda states that this report should “include a proposal on the organizational arrangements for state-led reviews at the high-level political forum on sustainable development (HLPF) under the auspices of ECOSOC, including recommendations on voluntary common reporting guidelines. It should clarify institutional responsibilities and provide guidance on annual themes, on a sequence of thematic reviews, and on options for periodic reviews for the HLPF” (Paragraph 90, Transforming our world” the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development)

Questionnaire:

For each item below, please feel free to provide an answer in any format that is convenient to you. If possible, please provide a brief explanation for your responses. You may consider using the elements in italics to frame your answers. Please feel free to leave blanks for questions you feel unprepared to answer.

<Japan: General comments>

We would like to provide our general view before answering each question.

1. The implementation of the 2030 Agenda should be done through multi-stakeholder partnerships at all levels, as has been agreed. It should be kept in mind that it will not be done solely by the UN.
2. The follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda at the global level should be done mobilising the entire UN system, in particular GA, ECOSOC and its subsidiary bodies, funds and programmes. HLPF will have a central role, but a 8-day session cannot possibly do everything. Rather, HLPF should “oversee a network of follow-up and review processes at the global level” as has been agreed. In this context, discussion on revitalising the GA and especially 2C and 3C are most relevant.
3. In organising such a network of follow-up and review, three points should be kept in mind: a) the existing mandate of each organs and bodies should be respected; b) there should not be any kind of sole designated agency or institution to claim ownership of each goal and target, since such a practice will lead to the silo-ed approach, which Member States have made strenuous efforts to avoid in formulating the 2030 Agenda; and c) maximum coherence and integration among the different bodies must be pursued, in particular, through coordinating the theme and agenda.
4. The follow-up at national and local levels will be crucial. The follow-up at the global level is not supposed to prescribe the way how voluntary national, local and regional reviews are done.

I. Institutional responsibilities for follow-up and review:

1. How can the General Assembly, ECOSOC and the HLPF work coherently in follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda?

What should be the role of the General Assembly in follow-up and review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda? Do you see a need to adjust the working methods and agenda of the General Assembly, its plenary, second, third committees in particular and their relation to ECOSOC to respond to the 2030 Agenda and ensure coherence, complementarity and efficiency? If so, how?

JP:

-GA and its main committees as well as ECOSOC should work coherently.

-HLPF is an overseeing platform where the follow-up will reach through the periodical reporting of the 2030 Agenda and through speaker's participation. The inputs that should reach HLPF should not be limited to those from the member states and the UN system including ECOSOC, but should come from various stakeholders outside the UN.

-GA and its main committees as well as ECOSOC should align their working methods including the agendas in order to contribute, within their respective mandates, to the overseeing of global follow-up at HLPF.

-Serious efforts should be made to reduce the duplication of work among the committees and between GA and ECOSOC. Generally speaking, negotiating resolutions on the same topic in both GA and ECOSOC each year is not productive and also leads to silo-ed approach.

-At the very least, in view of the upcoming integrated reporting on the 2030 Agenda, the current practice of requesting the SG to report on each and every subject of 2C and 3C should be holistically reviewed with a view to consolidating these reports.

2. Given its Charter and other mandates, how can ECOSOC help ensure that global follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda is coherent?

JP:

- ECOSOC is “a principal organ in the integrated and coordinated follow-up of the outcomes of all major UN conferences and summits in the economic, social, environmental and related fields” and has the key role “in achieving a balanced integration of three dimensions of sustainable development.” (A/RES/67/290)

- In achieving this, one of the most important roles of ECOSOC is to make sure that its subsidiary bodies follow-up the Agenda effectively. Another important role of ECOSOC is in the FfD follow-up, since the outcomes of the FfD follow-up under ECOSOC is expected to feed into HLPF. ECOSOC should feed the outcomes of these follow-up into HLPF.

-In order to ensure coherent global follow-up, the high-level segment of ECOSOC and HLPF under the auspices of ECOSOC should be held as one meeting and not as separate meetings. This will reduce duplication and help us attain a more integrated approach.

3. How can the HLPF most effectively make linkages with the follow-up and review arrangements of United Nations conferences and processes on (1) least developed countries (LDCs), (2) small island developing States (SIDS), and (3) landlocked developing countries (LLDCs)⁵?

JP:

-HLPF should periodically focus on the issues of LDCs, SIDS and LLDCs. Since 2C is annually following-up all major conferences regarding LDCs, SIDS and LLDCs, however, such a focus does not need to happen every year. Instead, the follow-up through 2C should be fed into HLPF.

4. Should the General Assembly provide some guidance to ECOSOC functional commissions and other intergovernmental bodies and forums on how they should best reflect their contribution to the review of SDGs, and to the HLPF generally, in their work programmes and sessions? And what would it be?

⁵ 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, paragraph 82

JP: No. GA and ECOSOC are two of the main organs of the UN with independent mandates. Therefore GA cannot interfere with ECOSOC.

5. How can the HLPF best build on the outcome of ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development and the summary by the Co-Chairs of the multi-stakeholder forum on Science, Technology and Innovation?

JP: Both outcomes will be fed into HLPF as part of the global follow-up. Technically, it could be done through reporting (to be included in the report) or by inviting relevant persons to speak.

II. Overarching annual theme of the HLPF vs thematic reviews of progress of the SDGs to be carried out by the HLPF:

[The 2030 Agenda decided the thematic reviews of the HLPF will be supported by the reviews conducted by the functional commissions of ECOSOC⁶ and “other intergovernmental bodies and forums”⁷. These various bodies and forums are mandated to “reflect the integrated nature of the Goals as well as the interlinkages among them”. They “will engage all relevant stakeholders and, where possible, feed into, and be aligned with, the cycle of the HLPF”⁸. The HLPF, when meeting under the auspices of ECOSOC, “shall have a thematic focus reflecting the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development, in line with the thematic focus of the activities of the Council and consistent with the post-2015 development agenda”⁹. The thematic focus of the HLPF should allow the HLPF to follow-up and review the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The GA decided that ECOSOC will base its annual programme of work on a main theme and defined the characteristics of this annual theme.¹⁰]

6. Should the HLPF thematic reviews of the progress on the SDGs (i) focus on clusters of closely related SDGs or (ii) examine progress in all SDGs based upon on a transversal theme such as gender, health or education or (iii) address four SDGs every year, taken in a numerical order, along with SDG17? If option (ii) is preferred, when and how should the transversal theme be decided upon?

JP:

-Our preference goes to option (ii). In our view, options (i) and (iii) could lead to silo-ed approach.

⁶ For example, the Commission on Social Development, Commission on the Status of Women, Commission on Population and Development etc....

⁷ Examples would include the World Health Assembly, International Labour Conference etc.

⁸ 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, para 85

⁹ General Assembly resolution 67/290, op 7c

¹⁰ General Assembly resolution 68/1, paras 7-9

-The theme does not need to be limited to one per year. It should be coordinated with and preferably common to the theme of ECOSOC.

7. What kind of inputs should functional commissions and other intergovernmental bodies and forums provide to the HLPF (e.g. negotiated outcomes, summary of discussions and analysis or other)? And how should the inputs of various platforms be presented to the HLPF so as to best support its review and political leadership, guidance and recommendations?

JP:

-There should be no interference by GA to functional commissions (see Q4).

-These bodies should continue fulfilling their mandates and should not come up with a separate input to HLPF, which would be an additional and unnecessary burden. Technically, inputs can be done through either submitting the reports (to be put on the HLPF website) or by speaker's participation.

8. What would be good overarching annual themes for the HLPF to address (when it meets under the auspices of ECOSOC) and how can they be aligned to that the theme of ECOSOC? Please give several examples?

JP: see Q6

9. How long in advance should HLPF themes be known? For example, (i) should there be a programme of work for the four years in between two meetings of the HLPF under the auspices of the General Assembly or for a longer time period or (ii) should themes be determined every year and if so how could other intergovernmental platforms and other relevant actors contribute to the HLPF review?

JP: Efforts should be made to provide the themes in advance for the ease of the participants, but not necessarily four years in advance. There should be enough flexibility to take into account the new and emerging challenges regarding the implementation.

10. Should the multi-stakeholder forum on Science, Technology and Innovation address the same theme as the HLPF?

**JP: STI forum will focus on more technical issues than HLPF.
Therefore the themes do not need to be the same.**

11. How should the United Nations Statistical Commission best contribute to the work of HLPF?

JP: The Commission should continue to support the implementation through the maintenance of global indicators, on which the HLPF could be informed.

12. What arrangements would be needed to allow the HLPF to identify and consider new and emerging issues?

JP: Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR) is expected to identify new and emerging issues, which can be discussed at HLPF.

13. How can platforms and processes outside the UN system, including those run by other international or regional organizations and by non-state actors, contribute to thematic reviews at the HLPF?

JP: Technically, it can be done through reporting or by speaker's participation.

III. HLPF National Reviews of implementation:

Preparation and conduct of national reviews:

14. How often would countries be expected to participate in regular state-led reviews in order to allow for a meaningful exchange of experiences and feedback at the HLPF? Should there be a minimum number of reviews within 15 years to be presented at the HLPF?

JP:

-National reviews should be a process to share the lessons and successes regarding the implementation of the Agenda in order to identify gaps and challenges. It is voluntary in nature and not a punitive process.

-The frequency and style of participation in the national reviews at HLPF should be left to each member state. Although it may be desirable for all member states to take part in national review at the global level at least once during the 15-year, such desirability should not impede the most relevant and flexible use of the review session.

15. How can the HLPF discussions on the reviews be best prepared in order to facilitate a sharing of experiences and the provision of political leadership, guidance and recommendations at the HLPF? How would countries like to be supported in preparing the review process at global level?

Voluntary common reporting guidelines:

16. In order to help elaborate voluntary common reporting guidelines for State-led reviews at the HLPF, kindly indicate what issues you would want the HLPF to address systematically when it examines national implementation reviews?

JP: As has been agreed in the 2030 Agenda, reporting is encouraged but not obligatory. The guidelines should not be too prescriptive or go into too much detail, since the national reviews are voluntary. It should focus on the successes, obstacles, challenges and emerging trends, among others.

17. How can the guidelines leave enough flexibility to Member States while ensuring sufficient comparability between HLPF reviews to facilitate cross-country comparisons and to help track global progress? Could guidelines identify a core set of issues, in addition to the status of all SDGs and Targets, which all countries would be encouraged to address in their reviews and, in addition, a number of issues which countries might consider addressing if feasible?

JP: See Q16.

Presentation of national reviews to the HLPF:

18. How should the country reviews be featured and discussed at the formal HLPF meeting?

JP: It should be done as part of the overall theme.

19. How can national reviews give adequate attention to the means of implementation? How can they help to mobilize new support and partnerships?

JP: By focusing on successes and challenges, national reviews will help identify the gaps and challenges in all areas, including on MOI.

20. What kind of outcome should result from the HLPF national reviews of implementation, and how could there be a follow-up to these reviews?

JP: National reviews are voluntary. No separate outcome or follow-up is necessary.

IV. Regional reviews and processes

21. How should the outcome of regional review processes be considered at HLPF?

JP: Regional reviews and process will provide inputs to HLPF. It should be noted that regional reviews and process widely vary from region to region and therefore universal format should not be expected.

V. Inclusion of UN system and other stakeholders in global follow-up and review

22. How can the HLPF support the participation by the major groups and other relevant stakeholders in the follow-up and review processes conducted at the global level including the thematic and country reviews? What are possible options to seek their contributions to the reviews at the HLPF, (building on the modalities for the participation of major groups defined by General Assembly resolution 67/290 and the practices of the General Assembly open working group on SDGs)?

JP: The open, transparent methods of work that was firmly established during the SDGsOWG and the negotiations for the 2030 Agenda should continue in HLPF. Apart from encouraging reports, stakeholders should be invited to speak at HLPF when they have analysis to share with regard to the theme of the HLPF.

23. The 2030 Agenda calls on major groups and other stakeholders to report on their contribution to the implementation of 2030 Agenda. How can such reviews be prepared and conducted at the HLPF? How can these actors be encouraged to engage in such reviews? ¹¹

JP: The reports sent by major groups and other stakeholders should also be posted on HLPF website as inputs to HLPF. Also see Q22.

24. How should UN system contribution to the implementation of 2030 Agenda be reviewed?

JP: The contribution to the implementation of 2030 Agenda is not a one-time issue and involves the UN system as a whole. Therefore, rather than a separate review, it should be reviewed as part of the annual oversight.

25. What steps can the UN system, including the Secretariat take to best support follow-up and review in a coherent and effective manner?

¹¹ Agenda 2030 states in para 89 that “the high-level political forum will support participation in follow-up and review processes by the major groups and other relevant stakeholders in line with resolution 67/290. We call on those actors to report on their contribution to the implementation of the Agenda.”

JP: The secretariat should align and recalibrate itself to the 2030 Agenda and support the HLPF. In particular, ECOSOC and HLPF should be supported coherently, rather than separately.

VI. Other views and ideas

26. Please add any other points you would like to raise.