

SDGs Questionnaire from New York

Response



Government of Sierra Leone

Ministry of Finance and Economic Development

**Forwarded By
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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?

First, clarify the landscape of actors and their responsibilities—at national, regional and global level—that are relevant to ensuring effective implementation of the SDGs. Thankfully, this is already clear in the 2030 Agenda Document. National governments will assume primary responsibility for implementation, with the effective participation of civil society, the media, parliaments, the private sector, the academia, local communities, development partners, and all other development actors.

Second, establish focal points at the national, regional and global level for coordinating implementation. This is getting clearer at the global level. At the national level, there has to be focal points within national government systems; civil society and the media; the UN system and development partners in general; and within other national development actors, to ensure

coherence and effective cooperation in the implementation, tracking and reporting of progress at national level. This can be replicated at sub-regional and regional level.

Third, the UN system at the national and regional level could be tasked to facilitate cooperation and coordination between Global UN System (the General Assembly, ECOSOC, HLPF, etc) and national, regional and sub-regional actors—facilitating the production of periodic reports on progress for the attention of Global UN system, and building capacities on the ground to ensure effective implementation and reporting.

Fourth, the General Assembly should continuously impress on member states during Annual Meetings and other (in-year) forums regarding the opportunities presented by the SDGs for a realistic transformation of the world for the sustainable good of all; reiterating the responsibility of developed nations, as well as developing/LDCs to ensure effective domestication and implementation of the new Agenda.

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

There is no reinvention of the wheel in the SDGs; all actors, including ECOSOC, should be constantly reminded about this. Numerous frameworks already exist at all levels with aspirations to ending poverty and increasing prosperity for all. Thus, member states and regional organizations should first ensure that the SDGs are well integrated into existing frameworks to inform coherent follow-up and review in their implementation.

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) and landlocked developing countries (LLDCs)⁵?

It should be clear for HLPF at the outset (i) how the overall institutional arrangement for implementation looks like, as well as the overall reporting framework, including clear statement and definition of key indicators to report on; and (ii) how would the overall institutional framework and reporting system be adapted and contextualized in different regions (LDCs, SIDS, and LLDCs).

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?

Yes. The guidance partly relates to answer provided to Question (2) above: (i) that there is no reinvention of the wheel in the SDGs; numerous frameworks already exist at all levels with

aspirations to ending poverty and increasing prosperity for all; member states and regional organizations should be encouraged to integrate SDGs into their existing development frameworks to inform coherent follow-up and review; and thus (ii) ECOSOC and related bodies should be required to take an inventory of existing national and regional development frameworks to ensure complementarity between SDGs and those frameworks. Generally, the principles of flexibility, harmonization, local ownership, and adaptation of the SDGs should be emphasized.

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?

This can be done through HLPF representation in those forums; and develop action points on the outcome of those forums to inform the continuous and effective implementation of the SDGs.

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

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?

We would advise option (i): focusing on clusters of closely related SDGs. Incidentally, the Government of Sierra Leone through the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development has published a simplified version of the SDGs—the 2030 Agenda. In an effort to link the Goals and targets to the eight pillars of the country’s development plan, the Agenda for Prosperity (2013-2018), the 17 SDGs were regrouped into eight broad thematic areas: (i) Reducing general poverty prevalence—Goals 1,2&10; (ii) Human development—Goals 3,4&6; (iii) Gender parity—Goal 5; (iv) Employment, economic growth and competitiveness—Goals 7,8&9; (v) Human settlement, housing and population infrastructure—Goal 11; (vi) Environmental sustainability—Goals 12,13,14&15; (vii) Governance, peace and security—Goal 16; and (viii) Means of implementation—Goal 17. (See Table below.)

Table 1: Linking Sierra Leone’s Agenda for Prosperity with the SDGs

The 17 SDGs Regrouped	Sierra Leone’s Agenda for Prosperity
1) Reducing general poverty prevalence— Goals 1,2&10	Pillar 1: Diversified economic growth— directly related to SDGs 7,8&9
2) Human development— Goals 3,4&6	Pillar 2: Managing natural resources— directly related to SDGs 12,13,14&15
3) Gender parity— Goal 5	Pillar 3: Accelerating human development— directly related to SDGs 3,4&6
4) Employment, economic growth and competitiveness— Goals 7,8&9	Pillar 4: International competitiveness— directly related to SDGs 7,8&9
5) Human settlement, housing and population infrastructure— Goal 11	Pillar 5: Labour and employment— directly related to SDGs 7,8&9
6) Environmental sustainability— Goals 12,13,14&15	Pillar 6: Social protection— directly related to SDGs 1,2&10
7) Governance, peace and security— Goal 16	Pillar 7: Governance & public sector reform— directly related to SDG 16
8) Means of implementing Goals 1 to 16— Goal 17	Pillar 8: Gender & women’s empowerment— directly related to SDG 4&5

Source: Simplified Version of the SDGs, Government of Sierra Leone (November 2015)

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?

This relates to answer provided to Question (5): inputs include reports and key outcome from the forums organized by the commissions and other bodies. The HLPF should be represented in the forums and conferences organized by these commissions/bodies, to the extent that they bear direct relevance to the SDGs success.

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?

- a) Ending Endemic Poverty
- b) Overcoming Vulnerability and Inequality
- c) Education for All
- d) Ensuring Resilient Health Systems in LDCs
- e) Heightening Gender Sensitivity and Women Empowerment
- f) Building Diversified Economies in LDCs
- g) Housing and Population in LDCs
- h) Inevitability of Environmental Consciousness
- i) Truth of Global Partnership and Cooperation

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?

It pays better for the themes to come out every four years to reduce the frequency and cost of planning them.

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

Not necessarily.

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

What gets measured gets done. The role of the Commission to mobilize and help build the capacity of statistical offices in the field to support the development of indicators and monitoring and evaluation systems cannot be overemphasized for the work of the HLPF.

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

Once the institutional framework is right at the outset, with clarity of actors and responsibilities, and coordination framework linking the national, regional/sub-regional and global level, then tracking emerging issues should not be far-fetched. Annual reporting of progress within this arrangement should

include documentation of lessons learned and emerging issues. Development is a cycle. These issues once consolidated should feedback and be integrated into the implementation process.

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?

As noted earlier, actors outside the UN System are part of the implementation process. Their platforms are linked to those relating to the implementation of the SDGs. There are good lessons to learn from past and present experiences in the implementation of national strategies in Sierra Leone, where all development actors come together to common forums to review progress on these strategies. Non-state actors are required to mainstream national agendas in their respective plans to ensure coherence and coordinated delivery of national development. The UN MDGs have benefited from this arrangement, on which the SDGs will also rest. Already, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development has held a sensitization meeting on the SDGs with Civil Society Organizations in Sierra Leone along these lines.

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?

It may be more practical to follow the 4 years between which the HLPF conducts its review under the auspices of ECOSOC.

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?

A timetable should be agreed at the outset as to when each country is expected to produce progress report to inform global review coordinated by HLPF. The UNDP and other UN Agencies have played laudable role in the coordination of the reporting of the MDGs in Sierra Leone and we could build on this.

Country Permanent Representatives at the UN, as always, have huge role to play in preparing countries participating for such reviews, in terms of coordination between New York/Global Level and the field. On the other hand, coordination should be strengthened between Global UN Level and National UN System in preparing countries' participation in these reviews, accompanied by the necessary technical and financial assistance as the case may be.

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?

This includes capacity for reporting; having integrated and functional national monitoring and evaluation systems; and having effective and sustainable development planning and coordination mechanism.

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?

Yes, guidelines should identify core set of issues/indicators, in addition to the status of all SDGs and targets, which all countries would be encouraged to address in their reviews, and so on.

Presentation of national reviews to the HLPF:

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

Progress reports shall be prepared by countries at agreed timeframe and submitted for the attention of the HLPF, which could suggest format as to how it could be taken from there for the review.

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

The Government of Sierra Leone has had long experience in promoting and managing country level development partnership and cooperation. Since the end of the civil war in 2002, it has organized quarterly Development Partners Committee (DEPAC) meetings co-chaired by Government and Development Partners with the overarching objective of discussing national development issues—reviewing progress on implementation of development plans such as the Agenda for Prosperity, and providing recommendations. Support to implementation is intensely discussed at such forums. Currently the government is in the process of integrating the SDGs into the Agenda for Prosperity; outcome of this exercise is expected to be discussed at DEPAC with a view to highlighting capacity and other support needs towards effective implementation of an SDG-driven national development plan. It is worth noting that the Government of Sierra Leone has already integrated the SDGs into its 2016 National Budget.

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?

Progress on achievement of key milestones, challenges and recommendations are expected for each country. These will be consolidated into a global report that will be disseminated worldwide to cross-fertilize lessons and experiences.

As a follow-up to these reviews, it would be critical to be holding/organizing in-between-review discussions/forums for country and regional level experts and focal points, including country/regional UN Offices and other institutions to provide update on progress including implementation of recommendations before the next review.

IV. Regional reviews and processes

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

Regional reports are important in complementing national reports to produce global consolidated reports.

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)?

As usual, representatives of these institutions can be invited to participate in the review forums at global level, as they will be part of such reviews at national level. This could be coordinated with Government Institutions responsible for development coordination and country UN System.

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

National reporting led by government should draw input from all stakeholders, as it has been the case in Sierra Leone. To that extent, national reviews at HLPF forums should represent all actors. Recently, a practice of joint government-development partners progress reporting has been adopted in Sierra Leone. This should be supported across countries, including the participation of civil society organizations for coordinated and coherent review of country status at HLPF forums.

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

This can be done through continued participation in national development processes, as fore-described in the case of Sierra Leone.

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

Strengthen UN Country (as well as regional) System for effective and increased collaboration with government and non-governmental actors in the implementation process.

The statistical and data systems and monitoring and evaluation frameworks of national governments should be strengthened.

VI. Other views and ideas

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

Development partners (especially developed countries) should increase their commitment to internationally agreed principles of aid effectiveness, such as the New Deal, Mutual Accountability Frameworks and the use of country systems in general. This is fundamental to sustainably building capacity of national governments in LDCs and for the achievement of the SDGs. Lessons should be drawn from the implementation of the Paris Declaration vis-à-vis the MDGs in terms of what needs to be improved on as we move into the SDGs.