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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

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

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 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.

² Agenda 2030 para 74

³ 2030 Agenda, extracts of para 83

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 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.

Spain fully aligns with the Joint EU+MS reply to this questionnaire.

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?

- *The HLPF is the main body in charge of the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda and the AAAA. However, there is a need to restructure and rethink the roles and coordination between UNGA and ECOSOC, to avoid duplication and achieve effectiveness.*
- *UNGA`s must generate political attention and raise awareness on emerging global issues, while mobilizing action at the highest political level. Its main role is to keep political ambition high, and meetings must be organized in the form of a summit at the opening of the UNGA attended by Heads of State.*
- *Nevertheless, the 2030 Agenda has a wider dimension, and its topics and themes are related mainly with the 2nd and 3rd Committee, but also with the 1st Committee (peace and security) and other Committees. Thus, the revision of the 2030 Agenda must not be framed within a single committee, but in a more comprehensive way. The relation and structure with ECOSOC in this sense must be changed and re-thought in the grounds of policy coherence. Some options include:*
 - *UNGA, ECOSOC, platforms/UN bodies and HLPF should all be aligned in time and substance, with meetings scheduled in a logical cycle (mainly a 4 years cycle).*
 - *Restructure Committees in order to approach the 3 dimensions.*
 - *Avoid duplication and overlapping between ECOSOC and UNGE.*
 - *Reconsider the number of reviewed resolutions in order to avoid overburden and duplicity (a high number of resolutions cause low impact and diminish added value).*

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

ECOSOC must be strengthened to become an effective oversight body to coordinate the UN Development System (UNDS) and enhance coherence. The HLPF must draw from ECOSOC' work, as ECOSOC will provide a comprehensive input to the HLPF meetings. Inputs from different bodies must be submitted to the ECOSOC who will revise all contributions as a whole in order to assure every theme is covered, and that there is balance between the 3 dimensions.

In order to achieve this, it should be considered:

- ECOSOC is the focal point for the UNDS, and must use its mandate to draw information from existing platforms and thematic monitoring and review processes: many organs and forums will make contributions to the follow-up of a specific theme or issue (e.g., the Committee on Food Security, thematic Conferences – UN-Habitat, etc.). Functional Committees might also be considered (e.g., CSW, Science and Technology).*
- ECOSOC must set a broad UNDS agenda and programme of work, which should be organized around the 2030 Agenda.*
- Duplication and overlapping within the UNDS must be avoided.*
- There should be a clear role division between UNGA and ECOSOC (e.g., Funds and Programmes report to both ECOSOC and UNGA).*
- ECOSOC regional commissions could have an active role in the follow up and review process at regional level.*

ECOSOC bureau has work on “food for thought” proposals that could be considered in view of this questionnaire (coordinate 2nd dialogue at ECOSOC with the design of the implementation of the 2030 agenda), with suggestions to consider the Operational Activities for Development Segment (OAS) uses the HLPF and the annual ECOSOC themes to review how the UNDS is supporting the implementation of the Agendas.

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?

Strategies and programmes of action are also considered a Mean of Implementation (para. 64 2030 Agenda).

Discussions on emerging issues in these countries could be taken into consideration as progress is made on the 2030 Agenda and AAAA.

⁵ 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, paragraph 82

There is a strong linkage between priorities of each Action Plan with targets from the 2030 Agenda, but also with some ECOSOC commissions. E.g. Istanbul Action Plan priorities:

- 1. Productive Capacity:*
 - a. Infrastructure (target 9.a)*
 - b. Energy (target 7.b)*
 - c. Science, technology, innovation (target 17.8, AAAA, Commission on STfD)*
 - d. Private sector development (target 17.17, AAAA)*

Vienna Action Plan priorities:

- 3. International Trade and trade facilitation (targets 8.a, 10.a, 17.10, 17.11 and 17.12).*

When specific themes from each Action Plan are discussed, a specific point could be done on special situation of LDC, LLDC and SIDS.

- 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?**

UNGA could set broad guiding criteria to determine global architecture for organizational purpose on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. However, it is up to ECOSOC to set guidance on functional matters, shared responsibilities, alignment and coordination, and organization of work and cycle. Technical details on how best reflect the contributions to the agendas must be defined by 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?**

The AAAA must be integrated in the same frame as the follow up of the 2030 Agenda. In this sense, the Forum on FfD should cover the AAAA and MoIs reflected at the 2030 Agenda. The monitoring of the AAAA should draw from indicators developed under SDG17 and other MoI targets under other SDGs (although this information is complemented by extra indicators developed to monitor AAAA).

ECOSOC could mandate each forum to serve as a platform for follow-up and review FfD and STI, with a multi-stakeholder participation.

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?**

Although there is a need for further reflection, a variation and combination of Option (i) and (ii) would be preferred. It is not possible/necessary to review all SDG each year, but elect and cluster some themes into a reduced number in order to assess progress in a time frame (e.g. every 4 years to adjust the UNGA-HLPF cycle). In order to avoid silos, themes could be approach not only through a single SDG but also through related targets under other SDGs. E.g. Food Security and Nutrition: SDG2 but also other targets directly related 14.4, 14.6, 14.7, 14.b, 15.1, 15.3, 15.6. Other indirect targets: 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.b, 5.a, 6.1, 6.3, 6.4, 6.a, 6.b, 12.2, 12.3, 12.4. SDG16: 16.3, 16.6, 16.7, 16.8, 16.10, 16.a and 16.b. SDG17: 17.3, 17.5, 17.6, 17.7, 17.8, 17.9, 17.10..... (This methodology would imply the repetition of some targets, but it will assure an integrated and comprehensive approach).

There are a number of issues that must be also considered:

- It is not possible to review every single theme or SDG evert year. There is a need to be focused.*
- A programme of work must be scheduled previously in order to assure that every theme/subject is well covered in a comprehensive way.*

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

- *Human rights and gender must be always integrated into any reviewed theme, as well as environmental linkages of the theme (without prejudice of examining progress on gender or environmental issues as a stand-alone theme), alongside with the Means of Implementation*
- *The selection of annual reviewed themes and the way the revision is carried out must guarantee the balance of the 3 dimensions of SD*
- *It must include different regional perspectives.*

- 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?**

Monitoring must be based on existing structures and mechanisms, and it may depend on the scope and how intergovernmental bodies are structured. In any case, already existing reporting systems must be structured around the new Agenda. Examples of existing instruments for review and reporting:

- *The Committee on Food Security (CFS), a platform with all stakeholders integrated. Advantages on its inclusive structure could be taken to submit an endorsed report to the ECOSOC (or event to the HLPF).*
- *International Hydrological Programme (IHP) from UNESCO, the only intergovernmental programme of the UN system devoted to water resources.*

- 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?**

HLPF annual meetings under ECOSOC should be the same as the annual theme of ECOSOC, and should be focus on review progress of the 2030 Agenda. ECOSOC must also promote knowledge exchanges. ECOSOC programme must be previously scheduled to make sure every SDG and targets is covered, and assure coherence and effectiveness.

UNGA themes must be more political and globally relevant.

- 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?

HLPF themes must be scheduled well in advance to make sure every theme and topics is well covered. A general programme of work might assure coherence and a comprehensive approach.

Option (i) seems more suitable, to be adapted to a 4 years cycle (also aligned with the QCPR). In any case, flexibility is required in order to adapt to emerging and unexpected issues.

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

The outcome of the forum on science, technology and innovation will feed the HLPF, so both processes must be coordinated and aligned.

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

UNSC should provide statistical information on global indicators. In addition, UNSC' work will be also essential to review indicators as methodologies and information become more accurate and improved (indicators reviews could be done every 4 years for example).

The UNSC could also serve as a coordination unit to inform on statistical capacity building activities directed to developing countries (to gather information on what partners, donors, agencies or other stakeholders are doing on statistical capacity building, and assure that every country is well covered).

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

The HLPF will identify emerging issues at global level through its functional commissions and throughout the inputs received from the different intergovernmental bodies.

Following-up at regional level might also help to identify regional emerging issues, which could be highlighted at the ECOSOC Regional Commissions.

Special concern must be also given to regional emerging issues.

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?

There must be a commitment from every single stakeholder to recognize the role of the HLPF as the foremost body responsible for follow-up and review of the Agendas at a global level. But there should be mechanisms to allow other non-UN stakeholders to present their inputs to the HLPF. These mechanisms should build from existing platforms (OECD, Global Platform for Effective Development Cooperation, etc.)

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?**

Although follow-up and review process is set on the grounds of voluntariness, it is important to encourage countries to commit with this process, and seek for political commitment. However, setting a minimum number of reviews could become counterproductive as it would be seen as imposed (considering the objections expressed by several countries on the FoW chapter during the negotiations). Some issues that must be considered:

- National Sustainable Development Strategies could be also reviewed*
- How participation of CSO is guaranteed. Also if CSO are able to ask questions to the government.*
- It is important to set a strategic plan of communication and assure participation of other stakeholders, especially national civil society organizations (non-developmental NGOs).*

- 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?**

There should be a standardized format to ensure consistency. It is also important to assure that information gathered is manageable.

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?**

Some issues: Inequalities, gender equality, Human Rights approach and sustainability, means of implementation. Also, how civil society organizations are involved in the process.

Moreover, ECOSOC could set guidelines through its regional commissions, or through some functional commissions that are focused on specific issues that all countries are encouraged to address: Commissions on status of women;

Commission on sustainable development, etc.

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?

Presentation of national reviews to the HLPF:

18. How should the country reviews be featured and discussed at the formal HLPF meeting?
19. How can national reviews give adequate attention to the means of implementation? How can they help to mobilize new support and partnerships?
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?

IV. Regional reviews and processes

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

Regional review could be an opportunity for peer learning (or peer review). It must also consider existing platforms (UN System, but also out of UN System such as OECD, A-NEPAD, ECOWAS, ECLAC, etc), and how these are organized and structured.

Regional reviews are also essential to tackle transboundary issues (e.g.: water resources).

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 already mentioned, we fully aligned with the EU answer to this questionnaire. Additionally, regarding this question, we believe that environmental organizations should be included in the list as a representation of the environmental dimension of SD.

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

Major groups and other stakeholders must participate throughout every stage of national, regional and global reviews. The HLPF must draw from existing platforms (CFS, Global Compact, Beyond 2015, etc.). There is a need also to strengthen the politic-scientific interface.

24. How should UN system contribution to the implementation of 2030 Agenda be reviewed?
25. What steps can the UN system, including the Secretariat take to best support follow-up and review in a coherent and effective manner?

VI. Other views and ideas

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

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.”

A communication strategy must be launched, to distribute the text in parliaments and CSO (non-development NGOs, for example), and change the general vision from society that sustainable development applies only to the environmental scope.