

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.

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?

With reference to Goal 14, it is recalled that with regard to oceans affairs and the law of the sea, the General Assembly in its resolution 49/28, stated its conviction that all aspects of oceans and seas are closely interrelated and need to be considered as a whole, and in that regard, decided to undertake an annual review and evaluation of the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and other developments relating to ocean affairs and the law of the sea, as the global institution with the competence to undertake such review. The General Assembly has thus been considering ocean issues without reference to a Main Committee under its agenda item “Oceans and the law of the sea”. Pursuant to decision 7/1 of the Commission on Sustainable Development, the General Assembly decided, in its resolution 54/33, to establish the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea, consistent with the legal framework provided by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the goals of chapter 17 of Agenda 21, in order to facilitate the annual review by the General Assembly, in an effective and constructive manner, of developments in ocean affairs by considering the Secretary-General’s report on oceans and the law of the sea and by suggesting particular issues to be considered by it, with an emphasis on identifying areas where coordination and cooperation at the intergovernmental and inter-agency levels should be enhanced. The General Assembly has in its annual resolutions on oceans and the law of the sea (see for example, resolution 69/245) recognized the role of the Informal Consultative Process as a unique forum for comprehensive discussions on issues related to oceans and the law of the sea, consistent with the framework provided by the Convention and chapter 17 of Agenda 21 (see also response to question No.26).

2. Given its Charter and other mandates, how can ECOSOC help ensure that

global follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda is coherent?

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?
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. 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?

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 cl

⁵ 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, paragraph 82

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

usters of closely related SDGs or (ii) examine progress in all SDGs based upon 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?

Option (i) – focus on clusters of closely related SDGs.

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?
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?
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?

A programme of work would enable organizations in particular to make the necessary adjustments to their programme of work including with regard to resources.

10. Should the multi-stakeholder forum on Science, Technology and Innovation address the same theme as the HLPF?
11. How should the United Nations Statistical Commission best contribute to the work of HLPF?
12. What arrangements would be needed to allow the HLPF to identify and consider new and 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?

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?

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?

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?

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)?

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

Consideration could be given to how UN-Oceans (see response to Question 26) could facilitate a coordinated input.

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

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.”

Consideration could be given to the contribution that inter-agency coordination mechanisms, such as UN-Oceans, could provide.

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

Ensure that all relevant stakeholders or competent international organizations are systematically informed of requests or developments relating to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

VI. Other views and ideas

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

The review and follow-up with respect to the Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development relating to the oceans could be assisted by existing platforms and processes concerning oceans and the law of the sea, some examples of which are described below.

United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea

Consideration could be given to the possible role of the Informal Consultative Process in the review of Goal 14 and other ocean-related goals (see response to Question 1).

Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socio-economic Aspects

The Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects, was established by the General Assembly in response to paragraph 36 (b) of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation to “establish by 2004 a regular process under the United Nations for global reporting and assessment of the state of the marine environment, including socio-economic aspects, both current and foreseeable, building on existing regional assessments”. Following the transmittal of the summary of the First Global Integrated Marine Assessment, the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole on the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects, at its sixth meeting recommended to the General Assembly that it “[encourage] States and invite relevant intergovernmental organizations to fully take the assessment into account as part of various processes, such as the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea, and recognize the supporting role of the assessment in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”. It further recommended the General Assembly to launch the second cycle of the Regular Process (see A/70/112 and A/70/418).

UN-Oceans

UN-Oceans is an inter-agency mechanism that seeks to enhance the coordination, coherence and effectiveness of competent organizations of the United Nations system and the International Seabed Authority. Its mandate is to: (a) Strengthen and promote coordination and coherence of United Nations system activities related to ocean and coastal areas; (b) Regularly share ongoing and planned activities of participating organizations within the framework of relevant United Nations and other mandates with a view to identifying possible areas for collaboration and synergy; (c) Facilitate, as appropriate, inputs by its participating organizations to the annual reports of the Secretary-General on oceans and the law of the sea and on sustainable fisheries to be submitted to the Secretariat; (d) Facilitate inter-agency information exchange, including sharing of experiences, best practices, tools and methodologies and lessons learned in ocean-related matters. The Legal Counsel/Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea is the focal point of UN-Oceans (see A/RES/68/70, annex).