

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 General Assembly and (ii) all other years 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:

² Agenda 2030 para 74

³ 2030 Agenda, extracts of para 83

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.

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?

This first question has several questions with several dimensions.

- We see ECOSOC's main role as following-up on the main conferences making recommendations to the GA
- No matter what happens however, there is a need to streamline the work of ECOSOC, which has too busy an agenda to go in any depth on important issues. This would remove duplications with the Second and Third Committee.
- We see the GA as the ultimate instance for decision-making
- As such, the GA second (or combined committees) needs to maintain a strong macroeconomic agenda, as the economic pillar of the UN system needs to be strengthened to ensure balanced integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development.
- According to its mandate, UNCTAD is willing to co-lead the work of the GA on trade and development and the interrelated areas of finance, investment, technology and sustainable development.
- In terms of UN Agencies, funds and programs, to better coordinate our support to Members in their follow-up we should scale up the UN Task Team established in the lead up to Rio+20, which has been the best mechanism we have had in many years to take advantage of agencies, programs and funds' mandate and expertise while removing the silos by allowing any other agencies, funds and programs to contribute their expertise, which lead to integration of the various social, economic and environmental issues.
 - o Improvements could include disincentive for merely doing PR and

instead focus on substantive inputs; incentive in ePAS for collaboration instead of competition including at the highest level.

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 and its subsidiary bodies are best placed to follow-up on major conferences.
 - However, ECOSOC agenda is already full, thus the need to streamline and reduce duplications.
 - Agenda 2030 is very broad, encompassing the entire global agenda
 - It is more important than ever to avoid conducting reviews already done by the governing bodies of agencies, funds and programs and instead synthesize those and identify key areas for discussion that can then be passed on to the GA.
 - The process for the GA to receive such recommendation from ECOSOC (and HLPF?) must be revised. Now, resolutions are negotiated for months in ECOSOC for recommendation for GA and then it lies there. There needs to be a process by which recommendations are automatically taken up by the GA within a pre-determined period.
 - UNCTAD could support the discussions held within the ECOSOC subsidiary bodies, functional commissions, and the member states on trade and development, in particular in the context of SDGs #5, #8, 9, 10, 12 and #17.
 - It is important to ensure coherence between the CSTD and the newly established Technology Facilitation Mechanism (TFM), including the multi-stakeholder Forum on STI. The CSTD, as a functional commission of ECOSOC, is tasked to assist the Council with thematic follow up of the 2030 Agenda. Its outcomes are negotiated resolutions for adoption by ECOSOC, while the outcomes of the Forum feed directly to the HLPF in the form of a summary. The Council should ensure that these two processes complements one another, and that messages emerging from them are in sync rather than at odds with one another.
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?
 - Each of these has its own conference. They need to offer political guidance to ECOSOC on (1) progress, (2) constraints, and (3) recommendation for follow-up.
 - It is clear that other country groups that don't yet have a particular

⁵ 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, paragraph 82

Conference also may need to be specifically addressed, such as Middle-Income Countries (MICS).

- UNCTAD can support the work of the HLPF through its research work on LDCs (for example, UNCTAD's Least Developed Countries Report is the only UN Report that deals extensively with the problems and constraints that LDCs face), 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?
- The GA should provide a template to ECOSOC and intergovernmental bodies and Forum how to submit recommendations related to Agenda 2030 for approval by GA within 2-4 years.
 - The template should include whatever is needed for the GA to act swiftly. For instance, it could be progress so far, constraints to progress, areas where consensus was achieved, areas for further consultations, and policy recommendation.
 - It is hard to comment on the HLPF until the modalities are further defined.
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?
- We have to be careful not to put the ECOSOC Forum on FfD and the multi-stakeholder forum on the same footing. The Forum on FfD will have a negotiated outcome, which would go to the GA presumably.
 - The multi-stakeholder forum is likely to receive guidance from the ECOSOC Commission on Science and Technology for development, which develops resolutions for the GA.
 - The outcome of the STI Forum should be a focused document, with key messages and no negotiated recommendations.
 - The HLPF value added might be on the integrated progress of the various goals using the UNTT approach as discussed above. In this case, adding social and environmental issues to the macroeconomic/scientific ones.

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?
 - Option (i) is preferred to ensure integration. It should be done using the UNTT approach.

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?
 - A template should be provided to functional commissions and other intergovernmental bodies and forum so that information is easily synthesized for/by the HLPF Secretariat.
 - The template should explicitly ask for report on how the integration of the social, economic and environmental dimensions are dealt with.
 - The template should also explicitly request information on stakeholders engaged.
 - The template should also explicitly request policy and technical cooperation recommendations
 - All inputs should be submitted online and available to all.
 - Inputs should be submitted at least 3 weeks in advance of the HLPF to

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

allow stakeholders to provide comments online.

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?
 - Means of implementation (obstacles to financing SDGs – middle income countries commodities price volatility)
 - Progress on Agenda 2030 in the Americas, Asia, Africa etc.
 - Progress on Agenda 2030 in LDCs, LLDCs, SIDS, MICS, OECD countries
 - Progress in the driving economic factor
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?
 - Themes should be determined for the 4 years ahead in between GA sessions
 - This will help agencies, programs and funds as well as other stakeholders to align their program of work with the HLPF cycle
10. Should the multi-stakeholder forum on Science, Technology and Innovation address the same theme as the HLPF?
 - Yes, it would be a good idea for the Forum to link to the theme of the HLPF. This will help the Forum to focus, rather than going into other areas not explicitly linked to the SDGs and each SDG has a STI angle to it.
11. How should the United Nations Statistical Commission best contribute to the work of HLPF?
 - Transparent process to develop and agree on indicators. Would be able to contrast reports assessments at expert level particularly as part of ECOSOC HLPF preparations and recommendations before they are put forward to the consideration of high political level at HLPF in UNGA.
12. What arrangements would be needed to allow the HLPF to identify and consider new and emerging issues?
 - These could come from the agencies, programs and funds, the template for submission to the HLPF should include a voluntary entry for emerging issues. The HLPF should have a secretariat fit for purpose able to support member states procedurally and substantively (to aggregate input). Building upon Post 2015 outcome mandates there is a need to structure collaboration with UN system agencies secretariat.
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?

- Online, by having input submitted online, these various other actors can contribute to the debate and submit their own analysis.
- The HLPF should also have at least as inclusive modalities for the participation of Major Groups and other stakeholders than the CSD had
- Parallel reviews could be conducted by these various actors.
- Through the UN resident Coordinators and UNDG briefing member states at ECOSOC

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?

- Minimum one and conditional on support by the UN System, ideally twice over the next 15 years.

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?

- UNDG is already producing guidelines for UNCTs to support member states in the production of national SDG reports starting on 2016 based on the experience acquired over country-level reporting on the MDGs.
- Agencies, programs and funds could support countries according to their mandate in an integrated way using a UNTT or cluster approach. E.g. UNCTAD support countries at the national and regional level using the Cluster on trade and productive capacities that includes 9 agencies and bodies and the five regional commissions.

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?

- the progress made in the achievement of SDGs (improvement in national indicators)
- the means of implementation (including financial) at the disposal of the particular country.
- the challenges faced by the members states as main actors of the SD agenda
- the functioning of partnerships in sustaining the member states efforts
- Integrated Sustainable Development Policy Review Process

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?

- The review at national level would imply three phases: a) preparatory phase, b) the proper peer assessment and d) the follow-up.

Presentation of national reviews to the HLPF:

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

- Agencies, funds and program can support member States according to our mandate, eg. UNCTAD on issues related to the economic pillar and in particular in relation to trade and development as well as the interrelated issues of finance, investment and technology.
- The peer review could take place at the High Level Political Forum

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

- See above. Through a MoI and partnership review and sustainable development policy review process.

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?

- Those on partnership and MoI can be followed up in the FfD Forum

IV. Regional reviews and processes

21. How should the outcome of regional review processes be considered at HLPF?
- Dedicated session to each region

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)?
- See above

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

24. How should UN system contribution to the implementation of 2030 Agenda be reviewed?
- By each agency's governing body and mandate
 - It would also be useful to measure the degree to which agencies collaborate and cooperate, rather than compete with each other

25. What steps can the UN system, including the Secretariat take to best support follow-up and review in a coherent and effective manner?
- The agencies' governing bodies, program and funds can ensure alignment with Agenda 2030
 - Incentives must be provided by cooperation. The pie is big enough given the level of ambition of the SDGs, there is no need to fight for piece of a small pie.
 - The key is to ensure all UN Agencies act in accordance to their mandates

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.”

and cooperate with others, within the UN system, to ensure swift progress by Member States.

VI. Other views and ideas

We should - as a system, as a whole - be sure primarily to support Member States, who are first and foremost responsible for taking the lead on follow-up. This means ensuring that all existing bodies are well included and involved in follow-up, in particular non-resident agencies, through empowerment and effective use of the existing intergovernmental machinery. Thus overly complicated new institutional arrangements should be avoided. Rather existing mechanisms should be strengthened.

An excellent example is the "Spring Meeting" of the Bank, Fund, WTO, UNCTAD and UNDP - this should be elevated in importance in the context of the ECOSOC Forum on FfD, to serve as a platform to share views of what each institutional stakeholder in FfD has been doing to assist members in implementation, and to get feedback from Members on what more is needed.

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