

12 October 2015

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

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### **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 targets<sup>1</sup>. 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

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<sup>1</sup> [[http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/69/L.85&Lang=E](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/69/L.85&Lang=E)]

defined in the 2030 Agenda<sup>2</sup>. 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 policymakers<sup>3</sup>.

### **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

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<sup>2</sup> Agenda 2030 para 74

<sup>3</sup> 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 HLPF<sup>4</sup>.”
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](mailto:axster@un.org), copied to [zubcevic@un.org](mailto:zubcevic@un.org) and [powellj1@un.org](mailto:powellj1@un.org)) **no later than 15 November 2015**.

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<sup>4</sup>2030 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?
  - As the HLPF is not authorised to adopt conventions, formal recommendations or other normative instruments, the involvement of Heads of State and Government every four years under the auspices of the General Assembly, creates the opportunity for a political statement at the highest levels on the overall assessment of progress towards sustainable development. This political attention could keep pressure on implementation processes and mobilise action.
  - The General Assembly should provide leadership and guidance on the state-led reviews of implementation and should be the ultimate authority to determine the way forward.
  - HLPF has been granted only modest authority and resources, but has a broad mandate to promote integration of sustainable development throughout the UN system, within other global institutions, and at all levels of decision-making. Even in the intention is for the HLPF to “orchestrate” through intermediaries, the UNGA has a role to play in ensuring that the soft governance goals of the HLPF can be met.
  - Under the debate and vote of QCPR resolution 2016, Member States should ensure it is in line and coherent with the aim to implement the Agenda 2030 on issues affecting the UN development system, including its functions, funding practices, governance structures, partnership approaches, organisational arrangements, capacity, and impact.
  - The General Committee could be strengthened in order to ensure an integrated discussion on the three dimensions of sustainable development, giving coherence to the different work undertaken in the separate committees.

- The quadrennial GA meetings of the HLPF could consider revisions or modifications of the SDGs over time as new knowledge becomes available.
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 should fulfil its role in the 2030 review, in accordance to its Charter functions and in **complementarity** of the GA and HLPF. One essential function in this context would be to assess and provide intergovernmental guidance on UN system coordination in implementation of the agenda, in accordance to organic mandates such as the QCPR.
  - ECOSOC has direct organisational and/or legal linkages to almost all relevant bodies in the UN system, including the specialised agencies and regional commissions. In addition, ECOSOC remains “the central mechanism for coordination of the activities of the United Nations system” and for “supervision of subsidiary bodies in the economic, social, environmental and related fields”.<sup>5</sup> Fluidity between ECOSOC and the HLPF can also help the HLPF take advantage of ECOSOC’s capabilities in pursuing its own mandates.
  - The HLPF can also benefit from ECOSOC’s convening power. ECOSOC can help ensure active participation by relevant organisations. Similarly, while the HLPF’s organisational resolution “invites” participation from the IMF, World Bank and WTO, ECOSOC’s coordinating role under the financing for development initiative can encourage such participation. The HLPF is also mandated to strengthen the “science-policy interface,” including by preparing a global sustainable development report. ECOSOC can encourage functional and regional commissions to contribute relevant information and analyses.
  - ECOSOC coordinates and engages in dialogue with many of the relevant agencies, and many report to it. These actions will be important in implementing the priorities and decisions of the HLPF.
  - ECOSOC in its respective subsidiary bodies should ensure active participation of relevant agencies in its work to ensure coherence and integration of recommendations and resolutions, including with other bodies created such as the Multi-Stakeholder Forum on Science and Technology. UNEP could for example support discussions in: the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice; Commission on Science and Technology for Development; United Nations Forum on Forests; the Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals

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<sup>5</sup> “Review of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 61/16 on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council.” A/RES/68/1. 20 September.

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)<sup>6</sup>?
  - The HLPF should focus on integrating the multiple outcomes related to these processes, ensuring a multidimensional and global perspective, and taking advantage of the work and preparation done by the UN system in light of whichever 2030 follow-up and review methodology is adopted (e.g. thematic reviews, annual themes, etc.). For instance, as it is expected that different governing bodies such as UNEA will be discussing SIDS issues in relation to the Samoa Pathway—in accordance to their respective mandates and expertise—the HLPF should have a role in bringing these together.
  - All outcomes of these different processes should give guidance on progress, constraints and challenges and recommendations for follow-up as well as emerging issues.
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?
  - It should be noted that the 2016 HLPF session is scheduled to take place from 11 to 20 July 2016, after the main session of intergovernmental bodies such as UNCTAD (March), World Health Assembly (May), UNEA (May) and the International Labour Conference (June), as well as after most ECOSOC functional commissions (first semester 2016). Furthermore, it is expected that these first sessions of intergovernmental bodies after the adoption of the 2030 agenda would be key to set into motion their own mechanism and methodologies to follow-up and review the implementation of the SDGs, in accordance to their respective mandates.
  - More substantively, the GA guidance to ECOSOC functional commissions and other intergovernmental bodies should not encroach upon their specific mandates and specialised work. In this regard, the GA should focus on systemic advantages arising from its political standing and positioning, directing its efforts to encourage and facilitate the integration of the contributions of other bodies—for instance, by (a) making sure to provide opportunities for the participation and interactions of their bureaus in the context of relevant GA proceedings and discussions; and (b) to involve them in relevant GA/ECOSOC technical preparations for HLPF sessions in light of whichever 2030 follow-up and review methodology is adopted (e.g. thematic reviews, annual themes, etc.).The GA could provide guidance on the type of information needed in these contributions in view of an easier integration, well in advance, especially when contributions are negotiated documents.

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<sup>6</sup> 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, paragraph 82

- It is vital that UNEA and the intersessional meeting and the High Level Segment are scheduled to be part of the process of reviewing the environmental dimension of the SDGs. Inputs to the four-yearly meeting at the level of Heads of State should thus be viewed as a core segment of UNEA and synchronised accordingly. The thematic aspects should also be taken into account in the planning of UNEA and the intersessional meetings of CPR.
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?
- As per mandate outlined in paragraph 70 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the multi-stakeholder forum on STI will be co-chaired by two Member States and will result in a summary of discussions elaborated by the two Co-Chairs, as an input to the meetings of the HLPF, in the context of follow-up and review of the implementation of the agenda. The summary should be a concise document, focusing on key messages from the STI forum and linking them to the respective HLPF theme as much as possible, in order to ensure their relevance. The summary should not contain negotiated recommendations.
  - It could be worthwhile exploring whether there could be a standing agenda item relating to STI at the HLPF, in which discussions could link findings to other HLPF reviews.
  - The outcomes of ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development should be closely followed in the UNEP Finance activities; similarly, the summary of Co-Chairs of the multi-stakeholder forum on STI. One proposal could be to have a standing item on the CPR agenda and a mapping exercise to look at the environmental dimension of these two areas provided by UNEP at ECOSOC.

## **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 ECOSOC<sup>7</sup> and “other intergovernmental bodies and forums”<sup>8</sup>. 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”<sup>9</sup>. 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*

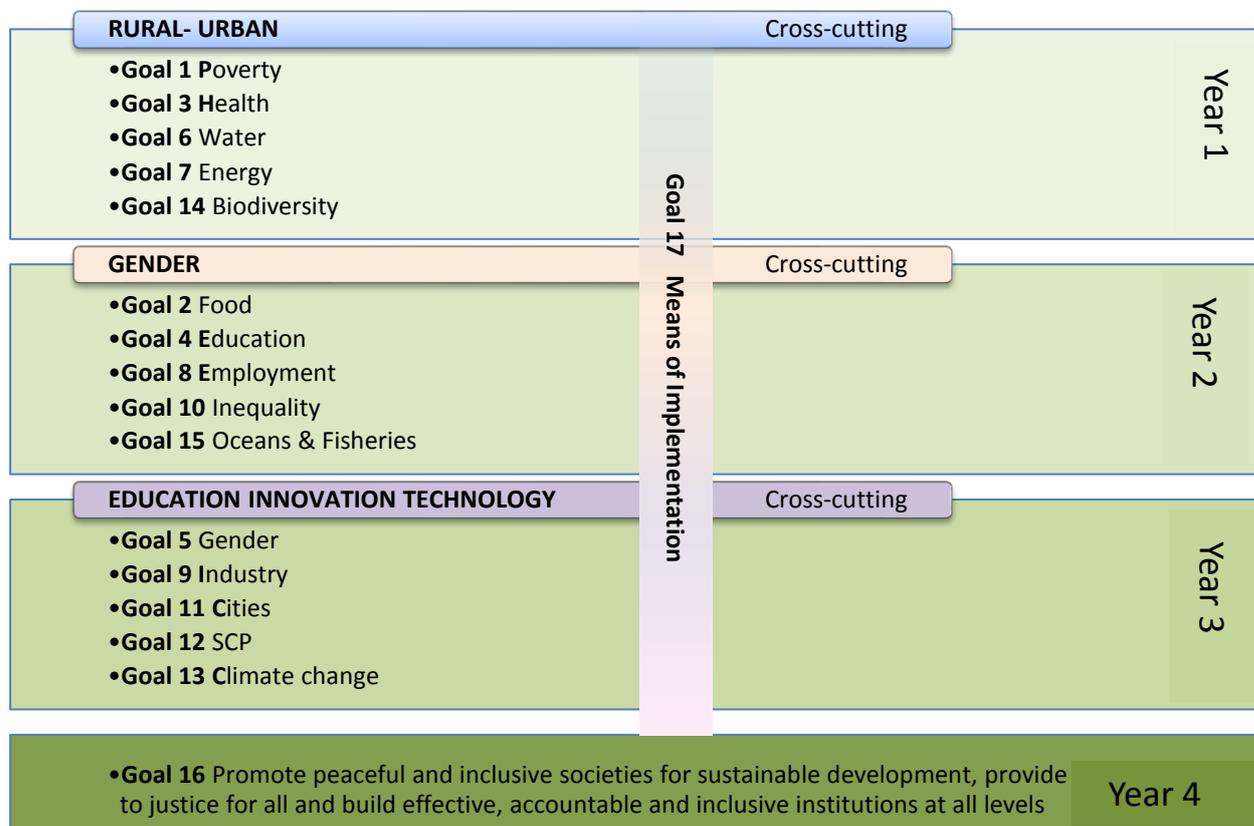
<sup>7</sup> For example, the Commission on Social Development, Commission on the Status of Women, Commission on Population and Development etc....

<sup>8</sup> Examples would include the World Health Assembly, International Labour Conference etc.

<sup>9</sup> 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, para 85

consistent with the post-2015 development agenda”<sup>10</sup>. 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.<sup>11</sup>]

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?
- The HLPF thematic and transversal themes could be organised on an annual basis along the lines of the attached structure. Each year a cluster of SDGs would be considered with a cross-cutting theme and with key parts of Goal 17; in the fourth year the focus would be on Goal 16 as one of the core outcomes of the SDGs.



- While option (i) offers relative space for integration and addressing interlinkages, there are significant uncertainties with respect to periodicity and continuity of follow-up on all SDGs and respective targets —which could affect the possibility of comprehensive, continuous, consistent and progressive reviews.
- Option (ii) seems to offer the best opportunities for integration and addressing interlinkages in a focus and coherent manner throughout the whole agenda. This

<sup>10</sup> General Assembly resolution 67/290, op 7c

<sup>11</sup> General Assembly resolution 68/1, paras 7-9

option would also allow for the possibility of periodic and permanent reviews of all SDGs—even if from different thematic perspectives every year. However, it is likely that this option would imply significant coordination and preparation requirements from all stakeholders and processes. Furthermore, option (ii) is likely to present political challenges, as the selection of themes might involve intergovernmental deliberations, which—taking into account the ECOSOC precedents— may affect thematic coherence, the balanced representation of the three dimensions of sustainable development, and the possibility of addressing politically sensitive aspects of the 2030 Agenda, including those related to gender and SDG16.

- While option (iii) seems to be the easiest to implement, it is also the one that entails the biggest risks of falling back into the “silos” approach. It is difficult to envision how such an approach would be able to address the integrated and universal nature SDGs and could result in missed opportunities arising from emerging issues.
  - More generally, thematic reviews should focus on clusters of closely related SDGs; build upon the work of UN Bodies and platforms and avoid duplications with regards to the UN system. To this end the HLPF should build on the work from bodies and commissions of the UN system which, as is the case with United Nations Environment Assembly, are aligning their programs of work with the 2030 agenda. To avoid duplications, it is suggested that the HLPF relies on these bodies and platforms to present the outcomes and findings of thematic reviews undertaken prior to the HLPF. This way the HLPF under the auspices of ECOSOC could accommodate more than one thematic review per session allowing a more comprehensive and complete review process of the 17 SDGs.
  - A concrete example is the theme "Healthy Environment-Healthy People" in the context of the SDGs and the 2030 agenda, which has been chosen as theme for the ministerial policy review at UNEA-2 to be held in May 2016. The review will be supported by a Global Thematic Report developed with by UNEP in partnership with WHO, UNDESA, Regional Commissions and other relevant UN entities. The findings and outcomes of this thematic review can be presented a the HLPF in a specially dedicated segment of the HLPF organised in partnership between UNEP, WHO and UNDESA along other agencies, thus allowing synergies and avoiding unnecessary duplications of work.
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?
- The specific thematic reviews of SDG implementation undertaken by other intergovernmental bodies, in accordance to their respective mandates, should be transmitted to the HLPF trough concise analytical key messages resulting from the deliberations and outcomes in the corresponding bodies. They should highlight

how the key principles of Agenda 2030 and requirements are dealt with notably integration, universality, inequality, human rights and data.

- This should not preclude the official transmission of outcomes in order to support policy/political synergies between the HLPF and the governing body on the specific area of a thematic review (e.g. ministerial outcome document of UNEA).
- In order to ensure a close linkage between intergovernmental bodies and the HLPF it would be worthwhile exploring the option of having inputs to the HLPF presented by the corresponding bureaus. Strengthening interlinkages and exchanges between bureaus of existing governing bodies of agencies, funds and programmes would give further opportunity to address interlinkages and avoid silo approach.
- On formats, each functional commission and intergovernmental body has its own governance mechanism. It will be therefore difficult to prescribe a single format on how inputs could be presented to the HLPF. In this regard, it should be highlighted the need to avoid duplications as ECOSOC currently considers the reports from functional commissions and of many intergovernmental bodies. As the United Nations Environment Assembly has a Ministerial Segment it is expected that Ministers of the Environment will endorse an outcome associated with "Implementing the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development".
- In this regard the recommendation from UNEP is that the HLPF receives the outcomes of these ministerial forums through the respective elected chairpersons of such intergovernmental bodies during HLPF's ministerial segment when convened under the auspices of ECOSOC and receives a special contribution every four years when convened under the auspices of the General Assembly.
- UNEA should be taken in here, as well as the MEA COPs. UNEP could provide an oversight function bringing together key outcomes from the various COPs in relation to the thematic and overarching assessment of the environmental aspects of the GSDR.

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?

- In order for the HLPF to be aligned with the ECOSOC theme, it should have an overarching theme linked to ECOSOC session and HLPF role in that theme. For example, ECOSOC 2016 session is: "Implementing the post-2015 development agenda: Moving from commitments to results." In line with this, HLPF could have a theme linked to strengthening the measuring of results; strengthening integrated approach in reporting and delivery; looking at the delivery at the different levels (global, regional, national) across SDGs. It could also decide to look at a specific side of its mandate: strengthening science-policy interface (addressing thereof data revolution, reporting capacities and mechanisms etc.); reviewing and giving

guidance on emerging issues and/or consolidate the platform for partnerships (reviewing and providing guidance on the multi-stakeholder approach).

- In addition, the overarching themes should match the transversal themes otherwise countries will be too overburdened with different reporting and reviewing activities. So the cycle could follow as above, the Rural-Urban – thus capturing the spatial planning and development aspects of sustainable development, Gender, Education and Peaceful societies.

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?

- The HLPF themes should be announced across the whole cycle, i.e. countries should know the whole four-year cycle, in advance. The determination of the cycle themes should occur at the beginning of the prior cycle.

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

- The forum on STI should reflect the themes but should continue to bring emerging issues and capacity building into each forum. It should be synchronised with the biennial World Science Forum meetings, which now has regional meetings in the intervening years.
- The STI forum's theme should, therefore, establish a broad linkage to the overarching annual HLPF theme, in order to help the STI forum focus rather than going into other areas not explicitly linked to the SDGs. However, this should not be enacted through a mechanical mirroring of the HLPF theme by the STI forum, in order to safeguard some extent of flexibility. It is our understanding that the STI forum will ensure that its theme and focus will relate to the topics the annual HLPF would discuss through its thematic review, in order to increase synergies and focus global discussions. The best results in this context could be achieved if the HLPF would structure its thematic reviews according to either option (i) or (ii) under question 6 in this questionnaire.

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

- The UNSC should continue to focus on the intense transformation of the national and international statistical system, concentrating on disaggregation by gender, age etc., moving to a spatial basis using the cadastre or underlying ordnance

surveys, open access data policies, deployment of data standards and utilisation of big data

- Statistical Commission, in collaboration with other data collecting institutions at the national, regional and global level, should provide reports and data to support delivering on the overarching theme of HLPF and notably on helping measuring progress. the NSOs would be key in gathering the national data to complete the national reports on indicators and forwarding national tables are to the international organisation(s) tasked with preparing the Annual SDG Report.

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

- Each area of the SD agenda should be specifically requested to provide inputs to the listing of emerging issues, through Foresight studies and ongoing assessments such as GEO. The UN system should be specifically tasked to co-ordinate this activity with scientific institutions, and ethics and standards bodies.

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?

- Each thematic review should be coordinated by the UN system and through regional bodies of the UN undertake a national to regional process to properly reflect differences across the world. These processes should include all relevant non-state actors and institutions.

The HLPF should also:

- Ensure a strong and inclusive participatory mechanism of Major Groups and Stakeholders
- Strong review and guidance on existing multi-stakeholders partnership involving UN agencies, funds and programmes with other type of actors, in the delivery of Agenda 2030.
- Strengthen thematic reviews, guidance and monitoring at the regional level where Regional Economic Commissions can channel, with their UN partners, the contributions of broader non-UN regional actors.

### **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?

- Reflecting on the fact that many countries now have annual indicator-based SOER (state of the environment reporting) in their legislation and that we are working towards a biennial reporting it would be appropriate for national reports to track the HLPF structure and report on the goals as set out over a four yearly cycle. The benefit would be that with the structure that UNEP is implementing for environmental reporting at the national level, there would be very little duplication of activities and the burden of reporting would be minimised.

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 critical element, that should be mandatory, for every review would be a policy assessment i.e. are policies working and demonstration of good examples that others could follow.
- The UN system could offer support to Member States by strengthening the capacity of the UNDG at global level, and UNCTs and RC system at the national level, to provide capacity on data collection, analysis and reporting.
- The UN system could support the review process in all countries through a UN Technical Support Team or Working Groups for example that could work on different aspects of SDGs (cluster approach).

*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 HLPF could assist national reporting and reviews by examining i) the capacity of the statistical and ministerial reporting systems; are there sufficient trained officials and is legislation in place and implemented to support the collection /data gathering necessary; ii) development of fiscal and economic instruments; supporting ways in which citizen awareness can be increased around the SDGs.

UN system-wide coherence at the country level.

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?

- Guidelines should include the possibility of prioritisation and policy options, linked to differentiated needs and priorities of countries.
- A strong peer-review process is important
- The guidelines should set out metadata standards, and outline pathways to achieve these standards and provide interim data flows supported by the international community. It would be more feasible for countries to focus on a core set of goals and targets plus indicators in line with the rolling programme of thematic reviews. In this way for some areas countries would have up to three years to develop their first reporting and tracking of progress.

*Presentation of national reviews to the HLPF:*

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

- By pillars (economic, environment, social) or dimensions of the implementation with cross-cutting dimensions where UN agencies, funds, Programmes can take part according to their respective mandates.
- Another option is to discuss them by country groupings according to common interests and priorities.

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

- HLPF should review through a dedicated session, shortfalls and challenges identified in the means of Implementation and how MoI can be strengthened for a better delivery.
- In UNEP we have developed a simple graph to demonstrate progress in policy implementation through looking at policy development in stages (x-axis) against instruments in use (y-axis). Thus countries can use a qualitative approach to establish their base-line and then continuous progress through stages of policy drafts, transposition into law, guidelines and acts in place and enforcement. All countries would be using the same criteria for the evaluation in each policy domain. Targets can be used in this context to attract focussed partnerships with specific costings to help countries achieve the next stage.

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?

- Recommendations to be taken-up by respective governing bodies of other funds, programmes, agencies, through specific relevant ECOSOC committees and forums and to inter-agency level for supporting Member States such as UNDG.
- The HLPF could establish a form of country review, similar to that deployed by the OECD, and which many countries are now requesting. These could be undertaken by the Regional Economic Commissions with support across the UN system; recommendations which would carry funding and resource implications could be submitted to the HLPF for consideration under the Financing for Development process. Such a mechanism would enable independent evaluation of the needs of countries to meet specific targets and goals.

#### **IV. Regional reviews and processes**

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

- A similar approach to that above could be deployed and reported through the regional ministerial processes.
- There could also be dedicated regional aspect in all thematic reviews, and a session for each region at the overarching session.
- UN regional commissions and institutions could support members of five UN regional groups with discussing and reviewing their commitments and progress; provide support if they want to go global (building on existing review mechanisms like APRM)

#### **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)?

- Allow for more meaningful participation of major groups and other stakeholders at all levels (ECOSOC rules), ensure active participation in HLPF sessions and provide the documents in advance.
- General Assembly resolution 67/290 and the practices of the General Assembly open working group on SDGs set out valuable precedents that will inform the processes of thematic reviews. In the case of the thematic review "Healthy Environment-Healthy People" in the context of the SDGs and the 2030 agenda,

which has been chosen as theme for the ministerial policy review at UNEA-2 to be held in May 2016, UNEP has opened to the contributions of major groups and stakeholders the process of developing the Global Thematic Report that will underpin the ministerial discussions. In addition, UNEP has established a specially dedicated platform entitled myunepa.org to reflect the contributions and activities from major groups and stakeholders to UNEA and will continue to organize regional consultation meetings and multi-stakeholder dialogues as part of UNEA's preparatory processes. Finally, building on rich precedents set put during the preparatory process for the 2030 agenda major groups and other relevant stakeholders will be invited to participate during the ministerial segment of UNEA and will have an opportunity to submit recommendations and contributions for Member States in accordance with the existing rules of procedure.

- A formal component of the outreach and evaluation should include MGS. Just as in the development of the INDCs for the COP21, the aim was to encourage wide participation in the formulation of the INDCs and their follow-up. This could be a model to follow as all countries have adopted this as a modus operandi which has led to an unprecedented level of civil society participation across the world. It would also help in the communication and implementation of the SDGs more broadly.

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?<sup>12</sup>

- There should be a component in the thematic reviews covering specifically MGS participation in the delivery of the SDGs, plus stakeholders should be part of the national and regional review process.

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

- Through each UN agency, fund, programme governing body
- The UNSSO has provided a significant backdrop to the development of the SDG indicators and will be actively pursuing the follow-up of statistical capacity building at the national level through the UN DA funding process. The SG's activities on UN system data and the use of big data are also critical in this delivery. This should be flanked by the UN system as a whole reflecting the relevant goals and targets in their PoWs and MTSs, specifically linking reporting processes and monitoring to capacity development across the domains of expertise. There should be a system-wide review of the UN system at the four-

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<sup>12</sup> 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.”

yearly cycle which should be submitted to the HLPF at the time of the Heads of State, so that the UN system can demonstrate its support to countries in achieving the SDGs.

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

- UN governing bodies should encourage strategic frameworks, business models and a performance review based on results, aligned with the Agenda 2030, the SDGS, its targets and indicators.
- The UN system should try to include in the regular reporting to countries through their assemblies and councils, the way that their PoWs and MTSs are linked to delivery of the SDG processes, including participation in UNDAFs and the One UN approach.
- Further incentives for real integration and cooperation within the UN system especially regarding MoI, Integration and universality to Deliver as One UN and provide the best possible support to Member States and regions.
- The UN system in its inter-agency level and interactions with countries should better ensure its ability to integrate the universality of the Agenda in order to support follow-up in all countries, with effective inclusiveness of non-resident agencies with specific expertise. UN system should adapt by streamlining existing processes to really be able to work universally according to Member States needs.
- The experience of the MDGs confirms that an effective review process requires adequate resources, in particular to ensure systematic preparations and follow-up. It illustrates the need for reinforcing secretariat support, particularly to prepare the review process and ensure its adequate connection with national development plans, which requires a new level of expertise and support from a multiplicity of actors, whether UN system agencies, country-teams or others players involved in supporting national implementation.
- To this end UNEP supports the need to identify measures to enable the HLPF Secretariat to better support the implementation of a unified development agenda particularly by promoting a UN inter-agency support structure for the HLPF and ECOSOC building on the UN Technical Support Team experience

## **VI. Other views and ideas**

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