

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:

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.”
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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?

UNFPA Response:

The GA, ECOSOC and HLPF can work coherently by conceptualizing and structuring their work on the 2030 Agenda along a strict division of labor based on their respective mandates. ECOSOC by focusing on the technical issues and interface related to coordination, UN operational activity, funding and technology implications of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda; the HLPF by guiding the national reporting and in the three years preceding the fourth year regular review organizing a forum for debate on key themes of a cross-cutting nature whose outcome is critical for facilitating the implementation the 2030 Agenda as well as the fourth year review based on the analysis of a global questionnaire; the GA by integrating the results of the reviews in the consideration of its agenda items and providing policy guidance in the fourth year based on the outcome of the HLPF.

Since the 2030 Agenda requires an integrated approach to the treatment of the SDGs, there is a need to review the agenda of the GA and its committees and re-frame the agendas to ensure that the themes reflect a division of labor that ensures complementarity; enables a clear distinction between agenda items allocated to committees on the basis of specialization, such as financing for development or technology transfer in the Second Committee and agenda items that require different committees to address them from the specialized perspective, taking into account the dimensions addressed in the other committees. This requires

better description and more narrowly focused items grouped along the following headings: equality and empowerment; population dynamics; resilience and capacity. In addition, the duplication between the work of the committees of the General Assembly, ECOSOC, and in future the HLPF can be eliminated by greater attention to the mandates of the respective bodies, which would end the current practice of bodies organizing broad policy debates that are more appropriate in the General Assembly and its committees.

The General Assembly and its committees should focus annually on the different dimensions of policy issues that support the achievement of the SDGs. ECOSOC should focus on coordination, operational and means of implementation related to the achievement of the SDGs. The HLPF should address each year a key issue critical to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, taking into account the policy, coordination, operational and means of implementation issues brought forward through the work of all the organs and their subsidiary bodies. This requires harmonized scheduling of the calendars of the various bodies.

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

UNFPA Response:

By determining its themes through a bottom-up approach that takes into account the conclusions of its subsidiary bodies; ensuring substantive debate of the reports from the functional commissions; aligning the thematic debates in the functional commissions with ECOSOC/regular HLPF themes and scheduling its meetings to follow those of the functional commissions, using their reports and outcomes in the fourth year of HLPF review as background documentation.

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 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, paragraph 82

UNFPA Response:

The existing mandates of the functional commissions for the monitoring and follow up to the implementation of the outcomes of the major UN conferences and summits are intended to support implementation, including through addressing emerging issues and lessons learned. The 2030 Agenda either reinforces those mandates or brings additional dimensions, including in some cases linkages between the three dimensions of sustainable development. What is required is for the subsidiary bodies to reflect the required changes/ additionality in their work and for a system wide approach to review as follows:

- **Harmonizing the schedule of reviews of the major UN conferences and summits with the 4-year review cycle of the HLPF and consolidating global surveys through one UN-system questionnaire for national reviews:** Any process for the review and follow up of Agenda 2030 that aims for the sweep and ambition of the sustainable development goals requires harmonized scheduling of reviews of the major UN conferences and summits with the review and follow up in the HLPF.

- **Scheduling of review in functional commissions, taking into account the schedule of the HLPF in the GA:** The scheduling of the review sessions of the functional commissions and the GA review of the HLPF needs to be considered in the light of the need to ensure that sufficient time is available between the two processes for the SG to produce a global report for the HLPF that takes into account the reports, proceedings and outcomes of the functional commissions.

- **Aligning thematic debates in functional commissions with ECOSOC/ regular HLPF themes:** In the three years before each four year review, the CPD and other functional commissions can contribute to the discussions in the HLPF by focusing on a theme that is aligned with the ECOSOC/regular HLPF theme and reinforces the substantive depth of the discussions and the linkages.

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 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?

UNFPA Response:

The 2030 Agenda can be grouped under three headings with capacity as cross-cutting- the demographic dividend, including ageing; equality and empowerment and resilience, including peace and security, strengthening health systems, disaster preparedness and humanitarian emergencies and response and climate change. The HLPF thematic reviews should focus on a particular dimension of each of these headings respectively each year, with capacity gaps and support as a cross-cutting issue.

7. What kind of inputs should functional commissions and other intergovernmental bodies and forums provide to the HLPF (e.g. negotiated

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

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?

UNFPA Response:

The reports of the functional commissions and the outcomes of their review sessions should be part of the background documents for the HLPF review. Key to this is ensuring consecutive scheduling of the functional commissions leading to the HLPF. More specifically:

- The functional commissions should provide space for discussion on national implementation, focusing on challenges, gaps, lessons learned and recommendations for going forward and highlighting in-depth issues/s that require in-depth analyses and which could inform the theme chosen for the regular HLPF. The outcome of the debate on national implementation, a report of the Secretary-General summarizing the proceedings of the general debate with a focus on gaps and challenges, action-oriented information and lessons learned as well as any negotiated outcomes could feed into ECOSOC/HLPF discussion.**
- The SG's report submitted to the functional commission on the annual theme of the commission (aligned with ECOSOC/regular HLPF) will be a focus of a dedicated segment of the commission and together with possible negotiated outcome or report should also feed into the ECOSOC/HLPF discussion.**
- The discussions and negotiated outcomes of the functional commissions every four years should form part of the background documentation for the HLPF under the GA. The fourth year CPD session will be based on the consolidated report on review results from the SDG follow up and disaggregated and triangulated data analyzed by the Regional Commissions every fourth year.**

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?
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?

UNFPA response: Every three 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?

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?

UNFPA response: Based on past experience with MDG national reports, the focus of discussions at the HLPF should be the global report of the SG, with a matrix summarizing key action points based on national reports. Countries should be afforded the chance to make statements and interventions based on their national reports, which will be part of the background documentation.

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?

UNFPA Response:

Regional Commissions will have a critical role in compiling and analyzing the data from their respective regions, based on which they will produce regional reports for regional consultations and consolidation into a global report of the Secretary- General for the HLPF. Working with UN agencies mandated under the major UN conferences and summits, the Regional Commissions would also produce reports for the various regional sectoral mechanisms, based on the disaggregated data from the consolidated Agenda 2030 review data as well as relevant triangulated data and information, for their respective inter-governmental meetings in the functional commissions such as the CPD and CSW.

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)?

UNFPA Response:

Building on the experience gained through the post 2015 inter-governmental negotiations, Resolution 67/290 and the OWG modalities, civil society organizations and others need to be functionally integral to the processes of review, including the submission of inputs for the SG's reports on evaluation and participation in the major debates of the intergovernmental bodies. With the exception of negotiations, all relevant stakeholders must be enabled by standing legislation to participate meaningfully. This could include, but is not limited to, inputs to relevant documents and reports, physical access to meetings, and speaking opportunities during meetings.

24. 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

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

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

UNFPA Response:

Currently, the existing follow up and review mechanisms comprise of regular surveys (as well as complementary studies/research data, including technical reports; data on health outcomes, population change, gender values, socio-economic status, and education based on evidence reported by countries through censuses, household surveys (such as, Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey), data generated by the UN Population Division, from UN-based surveillance systems (WHO; UNAIDS; UNICEF), and other surveys, including the World Values Survey, which result from academic collaborations, data and analysis from peer-reviewed sources and related inter-agency processes/special ad-hoc consultations; as well as other studies) undertaken by UN agencies with mandates emanating from the major UN conferences and summits and the UN Regional Commissions at country level, every 4-5 years, with the data analyzed for regional reports and review conferences and consolidated global reports for the work of the functional commissions.

The UN System would benefit from the use of consolidated questionnaires designed collectively by the UN System (as in the ICPD Beyond 2014 review) for a global survey every three years that provides data for the national reports and also for regional and global analyses and follow up for both HLPF and the functional commissions. The data from the national responses can be processed centrally by the UN System for standardization and quality assurance and shared with the Regional Commissions.

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.”

VI. Other views and ideas

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