

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

COVER NOTE:

1. In September 2015, the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit adopted a new framework to guide development efforts between 2015 and 2030, entitled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development”.
2. The 2030 Agenda contains 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets¹. The SDGs address, in an integrated manner, the social, economic and environmental dimensions of development, their interrelations, aspects related to peaceful societies and effective institutions, as well as means of implementation (finance, technology, capacity development etc.).
3. Heads of State and Government also committed to engage in systematic follow-up and review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The follow-up and review will be based on regular, voluntary and inclusive country-led reviews of progress at the national level feeding into reviews at the regional and global levels.
4. At the global level, the United Nations high-level political forum on sustainable development (HLPF) will have the central role in overseeing a network of follow-up and review processes. It is to work coherently with the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and other relevant organs and forums, in accordance with existing mandates, building on their work in order to boost implementation.
5. The HLPF will meet (i) every four years at the level of Heads of State and Government under the auspices of the and (ii) every year under the auspices of ECOSOC.
6. The follow-up and review processes at all levels will track progress in implementing the universal goals and targets, including the means of implementation, in all countries, in a manner which respects their universal, integrated and interrelated nature and the three dimensions of sustainable development. These processes will be guided by a number of other principles

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

defined in the 2030 Agenda². For example, they will be voluntary and country-led, support the identification of solutions and best practices, help to mobilize the necessary means of implementation and partnerships, as well as be open, inclusive, participatory and transparent for all people.

7. The dedicated follow-up and review for the Addis Ababa Conference on Financing for Development-and the means of implementation of the SDGs is integrated with the follow-up and review framework of the 2030 Agenda. The HLPF will build, inter alia, on the outcome of the annual ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development as well as on the summary of the annual Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation launched by the 2030 Agenda as part of a Technology Facilitation Mechanism. The HLPF will also take into account the biennial ECOSOC Development Cooperation Forum. A General Assembly Dialogue on Financing for Development will be held back-to-back with the HLPF meeting, when it meets under the auspices of the General Assembly.
8. The 2030 Agenda stipulates that the HLPF will conduct:
 - i. Regular reviews of country-level implementation, “including developed and developing countries as well as relevant UN entities and other stakeholders, including civil society and the private sector”;
 - i. Thematic reviews of progress on the Sustainable Development Goals, including cross-cutting issues, building on the work of the functional commissions of ECOSOC and other intergovernmental bodies and forums.
9. The follow-up and review by the HLPF will be informed by an annual SDG progress report and a Global Sustainable Development Report, which shall strengthen the science-policy interface and serve as an evidence-based instrument to support policymakers³.

Mandate for the report by the Secretary-General on global follow-up and review

10. The 2030 Agenda requested “the Secretary-General, in consultation with Member States, to prepare a report, for consideration at the seventieth session of the General Assembly in preparation for the 2016 meeting of the HLPF which outlines critical milestones towards coherent, efficient and inclusive follow-up and review at the global level. The report should:
 11. include a proposal on the organizational arrangements for State-led

² Agenda 2030 para 74

³ 2030 Agenda, extracts of para 83

- reviews at the HLPF under the auspices of ECOSOC, including recommendations on voluntary common reporting guidelines,
- (i) clarify institutional responsibilities,
 - (ii) provide guidance on annual themes, on a sequence of thematic reviews, and
 - (iv) [provide guidance] on options for periodic reviews for the HLPF⁴.”
12. The present questionnaire aims to collect views of Member States on milestones towards coherent, efficient and inclusive follow-up and review of 2030 Agenda at the global level, so as to inform the analysis and proposals to be contained in the report of the Secretary-General.
13. It takes existing mandates as a starting point and aims to determine how these can be operationalized or further clarified or elaborated on if needed.
14. The Secretariat kindly invites all Member States to provide responses to the following questions and submit them to the Division for Sustainable Development of the UN Department for Economic and Social Affairs (axster@un.org, copied to zubcevic@un.org and powellj1@un.org) **no later than 15 November 2015**.

⁴2030 Agenda states that this report should “include a proposal on the organizational arrangements for state-led reviews at the high-level political forum on sustainable development (HLPF) under the auspices of ECOSOC, including recommendations on voluntary common reporting guidelines. It should clarify institutional responsibilities and provide guidance on annual themes, on a sequence of thematic reviews, and on options for periodic reviews for the HLPF” (Paragraph 90, Transforming our world” the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development)

Questionnaire:

For each item below, please feel free to provide an answer in any format that is convenient to you. If possible, please provide a brief explanation for your responses. You may consider using the elements in italics to frame your answers. Please feel free to leave blanks for questions you feel unprepared to answer.

I. Institutional responsibilities for follow-up and review:

1. How can the General Assembly, ECOSOC and the HLPF work coherently in follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda? What should be the role of the General Assembly in follow-up and review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda? Do you see a need to adjust the working methods and agenda of the General Assembly, its plenary, second, third committees in particular and their relation to ECOSOC to respond to the 2030 Agenda and ensure coherence, complementarity and efficiency? If so, how?
2. Given its Charter and other mandates, how can ECOSOC help ensure that global follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda is coherent?
3. How can the HLPF most effectively make linkages with the follow-up and review arrangements of United Nations conferences and processes on (1) least developed countries (LDCs), (2) small island developing States (SIDS), and (3) and landlocked developing countries (LLDCs)⁵?
4. Should the General Assembly provide some guidance to ECOSOC functional commissions and other intergovernmental bodies and forums on how they should best reflect their contribution to the review of SDGs, and to the HLPF generally, in their work programmes and sessions? And what would it be?
5. How can the HLPF best build on the outcome of ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development and the summary by the Co-Chairs of the multi-stakeholder forum on Science, Technology and Innovation?

⁵ 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, paragraph 82

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?

HLPF and ECOSOC themes should be coherent, and should be broad enough to draw on and respond to all 17 SDGs. Themes should not draw on select goals/targets, but take a multi-sectoral and integrated approach, e.g. child well-being, data, capacity development, public-private partnerships, innovation, “health in all” approaches etc. Themes could be selected in consultation with Member States, the UN System, Civil Society and other actors.

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?

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

HLPF should draw on existing structures/mechanisms of the functional commissions to the extent possible, and reports produced through these structures submitted to the HLPF for their consideration. Important examples include the UN Statistical Commission, the Commission on the Status of Women and Commission on Social Development.

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?

Please see answer to question #6. Important recurrent annual theme should focus on the extent to which the world is on/off track in meeting the SDGs.

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?

Option i that allowed for a longer period of time for themes to be known would allow for country-level action and deeper involvement of different stakeholders including civil society. Ideally a minimum of 3 years would be desirable to allow for data collections, research and documentation and reporting, or in some cases, the establishment of agreed baselines.

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

Yes. This will create synergies and a common focus and will allow for people to think about the STI angle to the different SDGs.

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

Member States have delegated responsibility to the UNSC for the development of indicators. The UNSC should continue to be involved in developing statistical standards in areas such as gender, disaster risk reduction, etc. UNSC can also provide advice on how to combine official statistics with other new/emerging sources of data.

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

There should be space at all HLPF meetings to discuss new and emerging issues. These could be collected from submissions by the UN System, Civil Society and other stakeholders. The consideration of new topics should be done through a transparent and inclusive process that accurately reflects a particularly timely or relevant issue of importance to different stakeholders.

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?

The inclusive processes that were used during the SDG negotiations should be equally employed to bring in non-state actors views for SDG follow-up and review, including civil society and global partnerships such as the SUN initiative, GAVI, Education for All, Sanitation and Water for all, etc. These activities might include online consultations, space for non-state actors to speak during HLPF deliberations and country-level consultations. The UN system can help play a convening/coordinating role in this endeavor. Reports generated from these actors should also be part of the official record of 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?

A commitment to regular reporting is essential to inform policy reforms and programme interventions designed to achieve goals and targets. Ideally this would take place every 2-3 years in line with national planning cycles.

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?

The UNCT would play a strong role in supporting the government in preparing reports/inputs to the review process.

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?

- Inclusion of civil society and other non-state actors;
- Policy and institutional reforms focused on achievement of the SDGs in line with national development plans;
- Reporting on means of implementation/allocation of domestic financial resources and other financial resources;
- Data that is disaggregated to take account of different age and population groups wherever relevant and possible.

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?

See answer to question #16.

Presentation of national reviews to the HLPF:

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

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

20. What kind of outcome should result from the HLPF national reviews of implementation, and how could there be a follow-up to these reviews?

Repository of national reviews, including reporting on agreed-to global indicators, for the purpose of comparability. Repository could also serve as a resource of good practices for other countries in conducting their own national reviews.

IV. Regional reviews and processes

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

The HLPF should draw on existing reporting structures, including the work of the Second Committee. These reports will be a valuable input to the HLPF.

V. Inclusion of UN system and other stakeholders in global follow-up and review

22. How can the HLPF support the participation by the major groups and other relevant stakeholders in the follow-up and review processes conducted at the global level including the thematic and country reviews? What are possible options to seek their contributions to the reviews at the HLPF, (building on the modalities for the participation of major groups defined by General Assembly resolution 67/290 and the practices of the General Assembly open working group on SDGs)?

See answer to #13. Additionally, established global partnerships can potentially play an important role in strengthening national and regional reporting.

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

See answer to #13. Monitoring and follow-up on SDG implementation should use participatory monitoring approaches involving civil society, communities and individuals, in developed and developing countries.

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

- The HLPF should take a comprehensive approach, including follow up to Addis Ababa Agenda on FfD, together with SDG implementation.
- The HLPF should not focus on reviewing the UN's support for SDG implementation.
- The UN's contribution to Agenda 2030 should be defined by the QCPR and by the individual strategic plans/frameworks of agencies, funds and programmes. New versions of the QCPR and strategic plans/frameworks should be fully aligned with and contribute towards the 2030 Agenda.

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.”

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 UN System can support MS in developing statistical and data related capacity in order to feed into review at all levels as well as assist in providing channels for peoples' participation in monitoring progress.

VI. Other views and ideas

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