

## I. Institutional responsibilities for follow-up and review

**Q1. 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?**

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 and the mandates of their respective bodies, which will avoid duplication of work among them. The distribution of roles and tasks between these bodies should be based on their respective strengths. This requires harmonized scheduling of the calendars of the various bodies. A clear mapping of how the different mechanisms and processes are inter-related and inform each other would be required to ensure that Member States delegations and the UN system adequately contributes.

Some said **ECOSOC** should focus on the technical issues and interface related to coordination, UN operational activity, funding and technology implications of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Others see ECOSOC's main role as following-up on the main conferences and making recommendations to the GA. Some UN agencies reiterated that ECOSOC should regain its role of a principal body for coordination, policy review, policy dialogue, operational and means of implementation related to the achievement of the SDGs. ECOSOC's role could be further strengthened by linking different segments—i.e. high-level, operational activities segment; coordination segment; and humanitarian segment—with a stronger thematic focus across all areas. Since ECOSOC will be the main convener of both the HLPF and FfD Forum (as well as the Development Cooperation Forum), it may make sense for ECOSOC to take a leading role in structuring agendas (including planning) in a complementary way. ECOSOC should also permeate the 2030 Agenda in its various Forums so that deliberations and outcomes also have the 'bigger picture'.

Consensus was found on the importance of using the **HLPF** as the main follow-up mechanism at the global level builds momentum to generate political leadership, overall guidance and recommendations, in the absence of an 'enforcement' mandate, with the ECOSOC Financing for Development (FfD) Forum providing a main input on means of implementation. HLPF could guide 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 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. Although the HLPF is not authorised to adopt conventions, formal recommendations or other normative instruments, as HLPF has a Summit status, represented by Heads of State every four years, it will be important that HLPF be used as a strategic forum to provide the high-level political impetus needed to ensure the implementation efforts to achieve the SDGs are in place. This political attention could keep pressure on implementation processes and mobilise action. The quadrennial GA meetings of the HLPF could consider revisions or modifications of the SDGs over time as new knowledge becomes available.

Many UN agencies noted the role of the **GA** as the ultimate instance for decision-making way forward and the ultimate authority to provide an overall framework and guidance for the work of the HLPF. The GA should integrate the results of the reviews in the consideration of its agenda items and provide policy guidance in the fourth

year based on the outcome of the HLPF. The GA should also provide leadership and guidance on the state-led reviews of implementation and discussions that are broader in scope and forward oriented (related to overall assessments of progress on implementation, strategic discussions related to implementation of the 2030 Agenda with a general focus on addressing political hurdles and proposing concrete actions on urgent issues. The UNGA has a role to play in ensuring that the soft governance goals of the HLPF can be met. Consideration could be given to having the 2030 Agenda as one of the sub-themes under the GA Summits for the next 15 years so that an additional political platform is established for world leaders to ground their statements in the context of the new Agenda. This can serve as a good inspiration for countries that are at different stages to follow-up.

UN agencies highlighted the 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. Some UN agencies suggested that the GA and its committees should focus annually on the different dimensions of policy issues that support the achievement of the SDGs. If the Committees are expected to consider these issues, it might be useful to ensure the discussions are focused and outcomes are strategic and forward-looking so that they can inform the discussions under the FfD Forum and/or HLPF. All resolutions and mandates as well as operational guidelines should be in sync or complement each other. There may be a need to consider a standalone agenda item that doesn't necessarily have to fall within the purview of the second committee (or third committee for that matter). The General Committee could have a role in this when considering the agenda of the GA at the beginning of a session.

**Q2. 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 support coherence of the global follow up and review of the Agenda by translating inputs from its segments' discussions, those emanating from its subsidiary organs as well as from UN development system and by ensuring the flow of communication between these segments 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.. 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.

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 for 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 could also ensure coherence by: 1) determining its themes through a bottom-up approach that takes into account the conclusions of its subsidiary bodies; 2) ensuring substantive debate of the reports from the functional commissions; 3) aligning the thematic debates in the functional commissions with ECOSOC/regular HLPF themes; 4) 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; and 5) ensuring that themes recommended by the UNGA are also the same ones they are considering with regard to 2030 Agenda follow-up.

ECOSOC should devise a mechanism that captures the outcome of the reviews at national, regional and thematic levels in accordance with the guidance given in the 2030 Agenda on functions and relations. The mechanism should capture all the subtleties and ramifications of the implementation, including its universal, integrated and interrelated nature. ECOSOC should also provide and disseminate guidelines on the methodology for the reviews to ensure a consistent outcome. 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.

It is important to ensure coherence between the CSTD and the newly established Technology Facilitation Mechanism (TFM), including the multi-stakeholder Forum on STI, so that these two processes complement one another, and that messages emerging from them are in sync rather than at odds with one another. To the extent possible, synergies should be explored between the annual work of the HLPF under the auspices of ECOSOC and the deliberations of ECOSOC's Annual Ministerial Review and the Development Cooperation Forum respectively. In this regard, a new iteration covering the SDGs, such as the AMR for the MDGs, would be needed and useful to countries.

**Q3. 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>1</sup>?**

The HLPF should inform the annual review of the IPoA by ECOSOC and the GA and the VPoA and the SAMOA Pathway by the Second Committee of the GA. In the same vein, the reviews of the **IPoA, VPoA, and SAMOA Pathway** should inform the review of the Agenda 2030. This is how synergy and coherence could be established among various processes. The HLPF every year should have dedicated sessions on LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS. Similarly, the annual SDG Progress Report and the Global Sustainable Development Report must have dedicated sections on the status of implementation of the Agenda 2030 in these groups of countries based on evidences, disintegrated data and statistics. Some UN agencies reiterated that there are no two agendas for LDCs, SIDS and LLDCs but that the implementation of their respective Action Plans contributes to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and their reviews should be aligned and feed directly into the HLPF review of the 2030 Agenda. All outcomes of these different processes should give guidance on progress, constraints and challenges and recommendations for follow-up as well as emerging issues. Therefore, there is a need to coordinate the calendar of these major processes in a sequencing manner so that their outputs feed into the HLPF. These discussions could result in a compilation of good practices and policy recommendations.

UN agencies re- called that Member States have been clear that the HLPF should devote adequate time to the discussion of the sustainable development challenges facing **SIDS** in order to enhance engagement and implement commitments (para. 123 SAMOA Pathway). Some emphasized that the HLPF should serve as the forum through which global review and follow-up of the SAMOA Pathway is to be conducted. There could be two options for how the SG mandated reports can link SIDS to the UNGA and HLPF : 1) The mandated UNGA report in preparation and support to the HLPF process could contain a substantive section on SIDS sustainable development agenda; 2) Alternatively, the UNGA could mandate the SIDS SG's report to be made published in two parts. The first part of the report to be submitted to the ECOSOC in preparation for the HLPF, and the second part, following the HLPF, could be submitted to the UNGA. The example of the SG's report on ocean affairs and its consideration at the ICP and later the UNGA in the same year is one that could be followed.

While Paragraph 76 states that the global review of the implementation of the Vienna programme of Action for **LLDCs** should be undertaken by the General Assembly, the governing bodies of organizations in the United Nations system, including ECOSOC, are invited to mainstream the implementation of the VPoA into their programme of work, and to conduct sectoral and thematic reviews of the Programme, as appropriate. ECOSOC was requested to highlight the Vienna Programme of Action and to consider incorporating the LLDCs Agenda in its programmatic cycle that includes the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF), the Annual Ministerial Review (AMR), and the Development Cooperation Forum (DCF).

The Mid-term review of the implementation of the **IPoA** provides an important opportunity to build synergy and coherence between the IPoA and the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development. Implementation of the IPoA can make a positive contribution to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and vice versa.

It was noted that other country groups that don't yet have a particular Conference also may need to be specifically addressed, such as Middle-Income Countries (**MICS**). In addition, it was suggested that since most of the issues of these conferences are already covered in the SDGs, the follow up and review could be subsumed in the main SDG

<sup>1</sup> 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, paragraph 82

reviews except for unique part of conferences that are not covered by the SDGs which could be captured separately including through periodic reports on thematic follow-up and progress in these countries.

**Q4: 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?**

Many UN agencies said it would be good if GA could establish general guidelines to steer the division of labour and optimize the work of the various already existing reviewing mechanisms. Specific mandates could be given ECOSOC functional commissions and intergovernmental bodies associated with the review of goals and targets. The guidance should be applicable across the different bodies and be relevant to their specific mandates – as such a clear definition of cross cutting issues, including what are the criteria of defining a cross cutting issue for the 2030 Agenda , could be envisioned.

According to some UN agencies, the subsidiary bodies should reflect the required changes/ additionality in their work and for a system wide approach to review in terms of: 1) 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; 2) Scheduling of review in functional commissions, taking into account the schedule of the HLPF in the GA; 3) Aligning thematic debates in functional commissions with ECOSOC/ regular HLPF themes.

**Q5. 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?**

The outcomes of the two forums should be an integral part of the agenda of the HLPF with the focus on providing relevant solutions, including policy solutions for the way forward. These two reports could be reviewed as a segment of the HLPF review. As important and crucial cross cutting means of implementation related matters, these could remain as an annual consideration on the agenda of the HLPF, regardless of changes in the focus in the themes.

Most UN agencies focused on STI, as the Financing for Development follow-up process has not yet been decided.

In order for the output of the STI forum to be effectively used by delegates at the HLPF, it should ensure that the summary of the STI forum is presented as a Secretary-General's report at the HLPF. There shall be a dedicated session during the HLPF to discuss the key messages/recommendations with regard to STI. It shall be beneficial to present its contents to the HLPF - potentially by the Co-Chairs - in one of the HLPF segments that relates most to the STI forum's theme. It would be interesting to explore whether there could be a standing item relating to STI at the HLPF, in which the summary could be presented, potentially with a following discussion linking it closer to

other HLPF reviews. The outcome of the STI Forum should be a focused document, with key messages and no negotiated recommendations. The summary should not contain negotiated recommendations.

**I. Overarching annual theme of the HLPF vs thematic reviews of progress of the SDGs to be carried out by the HLPF**

**Q6. 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?**

There was a broad consensus among UN agencies that the HLPF should focus on option (ii) - specific transversal themes, which are of relevance to the majority of goals. This would allow for a high level political strategic engagement of Heads of State. Option (ii) seems to offer the best opportunities for integration and addressing interlinkages in a focused and coherent manner throughout the whole agenda. This 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. 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. Themes could be selected in consultation with Member States, the UN System, Civil Society and other actors. One approach would be to decide on the transversal themes and set part of the agenda in advance, possibly during the HLPF session under the GA. Proposals for the themes and the agenda could come from the different thematic, national and regional follow up and review processes. However, there needs to be some flexibility, both with the themes and the agenda, particularly to accommodate for new and emerging issues.

Some UN agencies preferred, however, that HLPF thematic reviews of the progress on the SDGs focus on clusters of closely related SDGs (option i), contributing to the creation of more synergy and better interaction of teams working on the indicators. This would lend for a more thorough and technically focused review of all the SDGs (perhaps more than once) during the timeframe of the agenda. As time progresses, this could help facilitate identification of where interventions for acceleration are needed. A three year rotating review cycle based on the themes People, Prosperity, Planet, for example, was suggested. SDGs would be clustered in three groups and each year would be dedicated to one cluster. The review of SDGs 16 and 17 would be integrated transversally into these clusters and special emphasis should be given to MoIs and partnerships. Alternatively, the SDGs could possibly be grouped along the dimensions of sustainable development (economic, social, environmental and resilience). One UN agency proposed that HLPF thematic reviews could have a focused approach along thematic reviews through the particular topics of major importance for SDGs completion such as for e.g. achieving gender and addressing extreme poverty. It would also provide for better means of review of goals in a more systematic and coherent way.

Another UN agency suggested that thematic reviews should focus on issues that are applicable to many or all of the Goals. Examples would be: creating conducive policy and legal environments; building institutions and institutional networks that can effectively support integrated action; overcoming inequalities and the data needed to guide policy action; participation of stakeholders to accelerate progress towards the SDGs; resources to accelerate progress, and keeping track of investments into the

goals; monitoring progress – linking up existing national systems and closing gaps, and enhancing accountability for progress.

**Q7. 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 functional commissions should provide space for discussion on national implementation focusing on the relation to the theme chosen for the regular HLPF. The outcome of the debate and a report of the Secretary-General summarizing the proceedings of the general debate 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 should also feed into the ECOSOC/HLPF discussion. In the 12 months leading to the HLPF ECOSOC review in July, the commissions and other bodies would be entrusted to discuss at length the existent evidence and provide a summary report to the HLPF. The specific thematic reviews of SDG implementation undertaken by other intergovernmental bodies, in accordance to their respective mandates, should be transmitted to the HLPF through concise analytical key messages resulting from the deliberations and outcomes in the corresponding bodies. The reports of the functional commissions and the outcomes of their review sessions should be part of the background documents for the HLPF review.

UN agencies suggested that 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 GA. There should be an option of having inputs to the HLPF presented by the corresponding bureaus to avoid a siloed approach.

Inputs should respond to the key 2030 Agenda criteria, take into account the three dimensions of sustainable development, the crosscutting issues, the interlinkages between the different issues and universality. They should also provide an analysis of the key means of implementation and a compilation of success stories and best practices that could be shared during the HLPF. Contributions and inputs should have two components: 1) Analytical contributions; 2) Summary of main salient elements raised during the discussions.

Some agencies said that contributions should ideally be provided through a template or a common harmonized grid of inputs so that information can easily be synthesized for/by the HLPF Secretariat. The template should explicitly request information on stakeholders engaged and policy and technical cooperation recommendations. All inputs should be submitted online and available to all at least 3 weeks in advance of the HLPF to allow stakeholders to provide comments online.

Other UN agencies point out that, as functional commissions' governance structure varies widely, it would be advisable not to be too prescriptive on the type of input provided to the HLPF during the first few years but rather to provide a list of guiding principles and "must have" items as well as a template that will make compilation easier for consolidation and synthesis at later stage. In their view, it would 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.

Finally, it was suggested that the HLPF can benefit from inputs at the following levels: 1) **Political and institutional level:** a. Assist in the definition of national targets, connecting to global targets, including specific benchmarks and standards at country level; b. Assist in the strengthening and alignment of institutions and policies to respond to SDGs with guidelines and handbooks; c. Assist in the definition and reinforcement of 'means of implementation', supporting the creation of country implementation plans; d. Advise on the mechanisms to integrate national and local planning processes to the SDGs both for implementation and monitoring; e. Provide technical advisory services on implementation strategies and the localization of indicators at city/urban level; 2) **At the technical and statistical level:** a. Reinforce national statistical systems to produce country reports with coherent mechanisms to integrate disaggregated data; b. Assist countries in improving periodicity in the national/local review process; 3) **At the training and capacity development level:** a. Identify capacity gaps of relevant institutions, partners and stakeholders at national and local levels to monitor SDG indicators; b. Assist in the development of strategies of dissemination, including the development of portals and online webpage and systems and the visualization of data and information.

**Q8. 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 the me of ECOSOC? Please give several examples?**

According to the different ideas shared by UN agencies, the overarching theme for the HLPF should/ could: 1) be broad enough to cover all three dimensions of sustainable development; 2) be forward looking, building on inputs from the whole UN system and reflecting intersectorality; 3) use cross cutting issues as themes as this would provide platforms for discussions and recommendations to influence the overall Development Agenda; 3) should be based on the SG's progress report on the SDGs; 4) focus on operational aspects to ensure conformity; 5) focus on the extent to which the world is on/off track in meeting the SDGs; 6) be selected to coincide with the dimensions of sustainable development; 7) focus on a limited (say 10) number of targets and indicators where there is the least progress, and 10 where there is the most progress; 8) match the transversal themes otherwise countries will be too overburdened with different reporting and reviewing activities; 9) look at a specific side of its mandate: strengthening science-policy interface, reviewing and giving guidance on emerging issues and/or consolidate the platform for partnerships, 10) be related to the implementation and monitoring process, means of implementation (finance, integration and participation, and human rights) or to the political situation unfolding at different times (e.g. forced migration).

Some examples include:

- *Keeping the 2030 Agenda on track*
- *Progress on the 2030 Agenda in the Americas, Asia, Africa*
- *Progress on the 2030 Agenda in LDCs, LLDCs, SIDS, MICs, OECD countries*
- *The role of industry in achieving the 2030 Agenda*
- *Structural transformation, value addition and economic diversification in achieving the 2030 Agenda*
- *The role of the public and the private sectors in the SDGs (more conceptual)*
- *The role of the media (more conceptual)*

- *The role of the State and enabling policies of implementation* (more conceptual)

Some UN agencies supported that the theme in ECOSOC and the HLPF should be the same and only one discussion should take place. ECOSOC 2016 session is: "Implementing the post-2015 development agenda: Moving from commitments to results." In line with this, HLPF could have, for example, a theme linked to strengthening the measuring of results; strengthening integrated approach in reporting and delivery; or looking at the delivery at the different levels (global, regional, national) across SDGs. One agency noted that, given the importance of the 2030 Agenda and HLPF for the broader ECOSOC agenda, the HLPF theme could simply become the ECOSOC theme.

**Q9. 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 majority of UN agencies said that themes should be determined for the 4 years ahead in between GA sessions in order to allow intergovernmental platforms and other fora, such as independent international human rights bodies, to contribute to the discussions as well as to allow for data collections, research and documentation and reporting, or in some cases, the establishment of agreed baselines. This would also allow for country-level action and deeper involvement of different stakeholders including civil society. The determination of the cycle themes should occur at the beginning of the prior cycle. An agency proposed that once the first four-year cycle is determined, one additional theme should be added every year so as to maintain the four-year planning cycle.

However, many agencies emphasized the advantages of having themes determined every year. This allows for flexibility for themes to be discussed in context of current global affairs and emerging issues and offers to opportunity to redefine strategic areas of work, as the implementation process unfolds. Some UN agencies said balance has to be found between flexibility and predictability so that Member states and UN organizations can plan appropriately. This will also permit more innovation and creativity in the selection of the themes, leading to concrete outcomes through a combination of modern and traditional working methods and enhanced and committed participation.

**Q10. Should the multi-stakeholder forum on Science, Technology and Innovation address the same theme as the HLPF?**

Many UN agencies said that the forum on STI should address the same theme as the HLPF, as coordination would be highly advantageous and desirable to maximize synergies and reduce duplications in work. This would 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. The forum could also be aligned so as to provide scientific and technological evidence to support policy recommendations that may arise from the thematic reviews.

Some UN agencies supported the forum on STI and the HLPF to be sub-theme or complimentary. There should be clear crosswalks to the HLPF to ensure that it can benefit from the deliberations of the forum, and insights of how STI can better enable sustainable development as envisaged in the outcome document. The most important issue is not that they consider the same theme but that there are clear and appropriate entry points for STI into the thematic debates.

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. Some noted that 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. In this sense, the STI forum should ensure that its theme and focus will relate to the topics the annual HLPF would discuss through its thematic review. In addition, as the STI forum is intended as a focused solution-oriented platform, it will be important that the theme reflects that specific feature and continues to bring emerging issues and capacity building into each forum.

One agency (ITC) considers useful to have differentiation of responsibility between the multi-stakeholder forum on Science, Technology and Innovation and the HLPF. The forum should focus on how innovation and technology could provide means of implementation for the challenges identified by the HLPF. This is where linkages could be done.

**Q11. How should the United Nations Statistical Commission best contribute to the work of HLPF?**

The Statistical Commission should provide guidance and support to Member States in implementing data revolution in line with international statistical, ethical and human rights standards to ensure that this data revolution helps to advance sustainable development, compiling the global SDGs indicators from global specialized sources. The UNSC should also support development of indicators that can be tailored to fit national circumstances to measure implementation at the regional and national levels, yet promote credibility.

At the global level, UNSTATS is responsible for producing the SDG Progress Report (which is equivalent to the MDG Progress Report produced annually). The scientific report to be produced by the HLPF should inform key messages/findings into the SDG Progress Report. 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.

The work of the UNSC should be both at technical and institutional level through training and capacity development programmes. Some areas of interest could be:

- Identify capacity gaps of relevant institutions, partners and stakeholders at national and local levels to monitor SDGs indicators;
- Provide specialized training and capacity development, including the creation of tools, guidelines and handbooks on data and methods;
- Assist in the definition of national targets, connecting to global targets, including specific benchmarks and standards at country level.

Collaboration could also be at the partnership level:

- Support national and local governments in the coordination of national/local actors and stakeholders to ensure the process is inclusive and transparent;
- Coordinate with the UN system and external partners on leveraging existing statistical programmes and forge partnerships in support of government initiatives.

At the global level, the UNSC could assist in various areas:

- Coordinate the aggregation of data and information for the global monitoring of SDGs;
- Assist in the preparation of the "Global Sustainable Development Report" and the "Global Thematic Reports" with data and information;
- Prepare recommendations for data and the use of data and information for policy formulation.

#### **Q12. What arrangements would be needed to allow the HLPF to identify and consider new and emerging issues?**

Identification of new and emerging issues could be done through regular consultation and dialogue with a broad range of stakeholders, including Members States, UN agencies, programmes and funds, civil society, scientific community and other relevant stakeholders. Proposals for new and emerging issues should also be put forward in the outcomes of the national, regional and international implementation and monitoring mechanisms. In this regard, the GSDR could be the right tool for the collection and analysis of the relevant contributions. The Annual Ministerial Reviews under the ECOSOC could facilitate the identification of emerging issues. The GA Committees (2nd and 3rd) could also contribute to setting priori agenda for the HLPF. In addition, call for papers as background and dedicated, multi-stakeholder expert briefing sessions according to cluster of goals (SDGs) are two possible arrangements that would allow the HLPF to identify and consider emerging issues.

Consideration could also be given to three tracks:

1. Allowing the functional commissions to bring forward new and emerging issues within the inputs to be provided to HLPF;
2. Through an open platform for collecting comments and contributions from the private sector and civil society. The platform should be kept open and transparent;
3. In addition the HLPF could organize dedicated sessions for debates with the academic and NGO communities; as well as with UN agencies, between meetings.

The PGA and PECOSOC could convene joint sessions, under their prerogative, to discuss and consider new and emerging issues, as they arise. Every year, the HLPF, under the auspices of the ECOSOC, could dedicate at least one session to discuss new and emerging issues and make specific recommendations on addressing them and building

resilience against various types of crises. 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. The HLPF might wish to have pre-existing arrangements (for example stand-by technical capacities) that could be quickly activated to rapidly assess or monitor these types of new and emerging issues. The HLPF could have a secretariat fit for purpose able to support member states procedurally and substantively (to aggregate input). In addition, the HLPF could work with group of experts at regional level to consider the inclusions and analysis of new and emerging issues of regional relevance.

**Q13. 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?**

Establishing a predictable, long-term horizon for the thematic reviews – with a clear published calendar – would enable other platforms and processes to better plan and prepare necessary inputs. This could be made available through Member States who are involved in the platform process, or through observers, Major Groups, etc. It will be important that those charged with compiling documentation and analysis for thematic review—as well as those charged with scheduling the agenda of reviews—be empowered and encouraged to solicit the most relevant evidence from all sources available. Recent outcomes of such platforms can be part of the Forum's agenda each time it meets.

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. 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 endeavour. Reports generated from these actors should also be part of the official record of the HLPF. There is a need to connect to existing networks and platforms that are working in various thematic areas and integrate them since the beginning of the process. Inputs from these platforms and processes could be presented (informally) in the margins of the HLPF (morning meetings, or an informal day prior to the opening of HLPF). In addition, several processes and platforms do already exist outside the UN system which could be better coordinated or used as a platform for stock taking, lessons learnt and feedback on SDGs progress.

In this regard, a dynamic robust knowledge platform could also be a critical tool for collection of the relevant information from different sources. This could be done virtually and drawn on social media rather than take the form of traditional static presentations only. Inputs could be submitted online, so that these various other actors can contribute to the debate and submit their own analysis.

For instance, platforms could be used for SDG implementation to engage with stakeholders outside the UN in several ways: 1) Serve as a repository of information on progress of SDG implementation, with links to different sites of stakeholders engaged in implementation; 2) Information could be gathered periodically to show progress as well as feedback on implementation by a particular constituency, relevant sector/goal, particular country or region; and 3) Host online discussions on specific topics as well as thematic focus on HLPF. The outcomes could be consolidated and analysed with a report produced for the HLPF sessions.

## II. HLPF National Reviews of implementation

### *Preparation and conduct of national reviews*

#### **Q14. 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?**

Most UN agencies said that reviews could be done every 2-3 years. They could follow a similar format to the country reports that were prepared for the MDGs, allowing some degree of flexibility, as this would also be contingent on the in-country data sources available and up to countries themselves to decide upon. Ideally, they could be aligned with the reporting cycles of national development plans and with the HLPF meeting cycle, and feed into the regional and global reviews. A possible target could be 5 reviews within 15 years. These UN agencies highlighted that a commitment to regular reporting is essential to inform policy reforms and programme interventions designed to achieve goals and targets.

Another suggestion was that all States could report at least once every four years to ensure that each country makes at least one presentation between two HLPF meetings under the GA at the Heads of State level. This implies that 48/49 countries should make a presentation each year. To accommodate 48 to 49 countries per year the HLPF will need to add additional sessions to the HLPF or it will need to carry out reviews in parallel sessions. 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-year cycle.

Two UN agencies said that there should be at least one review and conditional on support by the UN System, but ideally twice over the next 15 years.

#### **Q15. 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 process and timelines for the reviews should be discussed in close consultation with Member States and other stakeholders prior to the HLPF so as to streamline and harmonize reporting processes at the national level to ensure full engagement and ownership by countries.

To allow for a meaningful exchange of experiences, the HLPF should set up a working group for the preparatory process at the global level. The Universal Periodic Review can serve as helpful model for the design of the HLPF review process. There is an option for States to provide "Advance Questions" which has helped to ensure a smooth and better organized review and has allowed States to prepare structured and more detailed responses to the questions raised. If a similar model were to be adopted for

the HLPF, the main role of the HLPF Secretariat would be to support the country with its preparations of its national review at the HLPF session. This would include supporting countries with conducting an open, transparent and inclusive national consultation process with multi-stakeholder participation at the country level and the preparation of a country report which will form the key background documentation for the work of the HLPF working group.

A clear set of guidelines on the format of the sessions, examples of how effective presentations can be delivered and the space available to countries to share their experiences would help them to prepare for the review process. In addition, at the country level, the UN Country Teams, in particular the office of the UN Resident Coordinator – should be the first entry point to provide technical support to countries preparing for the reviews.

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 also 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). Regional commissions should be involved in helping countries within their regions carry out the reviews. This presupposes the existence of some guidelines for review at country and regional level. ECOSOC should set up an HLPF working group to assist countries with the preparation of the reviews. This could also include assisting Member States with the mobilisation of resources for the implementation of the recommendations emanating from the review.

#### *Voluntary common reporting guidelines*

#### **Q16. 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?**

According to inputs from UN agencies, the common reporting guidelines for state-led reviews should outline both the “what” and the “how” of the voluntary reporting. They should build upon the MDG guidelines for country reviews and examine the following issues:

- Introduction – with a brief explanation of how the report was prepared and the participation of different major groups and other national stakeholders in discussions, research and writing;
- Reflecting on national milestones around the SDGs – their influence on the country’s development agenda;
- Country-specific development context including achievements, enablers and challenges towards reaching the SDGs;
- How countries have been transitioning from the MDGs to the SDGs (taking into account that the unfinished agenda of the MDGs is embedded into the SDG Framework);
- For each goal and target, the following could be highlighted:
  - Progress in addressing inequalities, promoting gender equality and strategic linkage with other relevant SDG targets
  - Identification of key implementation bottlenecks constraining progress, their prevalence across sectors and goals, and how to address them
  - New challenges for meeting the SDGs (migration crisis, violent extremism, etc.)

- Identifying key factors contributing to accelerated progress on specific SDG targets to highlight good practice in a national context

- Progress achieved in developing more holistic, integrated solutions which integrate the environmental, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development;
- The means of implementation (including financial) at the disposal of the particular country;
- How partnership is being leveraged to support the 2030 Agenda implementation;
- How innovation has been applied and is captured in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda (innovation not restricted to technological innovations);
- What are the strategies countries are putting in place to plug the data gaps;
- Challenges for countries in setting up monitoring and evaluation frameworks that are not only sectoral (with clear accountability lines), but that also capture the interrelatedness of goals and targets

The HLPF should also address: whether and how different levels and sectors of Government contributed to the national review; whether parliamentary discussion took place; whether a costing exercise for realizing the SDGs has taken place and its results; and what sources of information, including those submitted to other intergovernmental and expert bodies, have been used in preparing the national review.

Outlining the process of the preparation of the report, including the participation of all key stakeholders is critical for the credibility of the national reports.

**Q17. 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 guidelines should be flexible enough to allow countries to provide information on their particular country context and the challenges this implies in meeting the SDGs, while also providing enough data on the SDGs and targets to facilitate cross-country comparisons to help track global progress. All countries should seek to address how they are working to tackle rising inequality and “leave no one behind,” and to promote gender equality and human rights. Other issues that countries may wish to consider include good governance, accountability and transparency, as well as emerging global issues such as migration, rising violent extremism and climate change. Guidelines can be adapted to changing situations, and should in no way be binding for them to be attractive.

In a first phase, HLPF reviews could focus on what countries are doing to adjust their national strategies and policies for SDG implementation. HLPF thematic reviews should look at nexus of topics and cross cutting issues, moving beyond a silo approach and examining the links between various goals. It is also important to find a balance between ensuring comparability of national reviews and preserving flexibility and national ownership. Consideration could be given to drawing also from the Guidelines developed for the Universal Periodic Review process by the Human Rights Council.

Some UN agencies agreed that defining a core set of issues would be very helpful. A set of ‘core’ elements to report against would allow at least some coherent comparison on an ‘apple-for-apple’ benchmarking. Many countries would welcome this and incentivize performance amongst them. In this sense, 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. Guidelines should include the possibility of prioritisation and policy options, linked to differentiated needs and priorities of countries.

One UN agency would not advise to create a “two-tier” approach on issues (“core set” vs. “non-core set”) as it may lead to misunderstandings and unnecessary confusion regarding what is core and non-core, which could be seen as “prioritizing the SDGs” (which should not be done as they are an interrelated unity). Guidelines should be provided to ensure comparability of statistical and analytical inputs.

#### **Q18. How should the country reviews be featured and discussed at the formal HLPF meeting?**

A synthesis should be provided of the country reviews, which highlight progress achieved, major challenges, good practices, and provide a set of recommendations for discussion on the way forward at the formal HLPF. A representative from each region could intervene and present the synthesis of the results of these reviews at the HLPF. Country reviews could also be featured by pillars (economic, environment, social) or dimensions of the implementation with cross-cutting dimensions where UN agencies, funds and Programmes can take part according to their respective mandates.

A couple of UN agencies suggested that country reviews could be done at regional level, and the HLPF could focus on bringing together the perspectives of the different regions as well as lessons learnt, challenges and progress made. Reviews could be featured through a dedicated report and an official presentation/debate at the meeting, consolidated at regional level by Regional Commissions.

Country reviews could also take into account the SDG Country Report or equivalent produced by a particular country for reporting on the progress status of SDGs. It would be important that countries engage in the production of such instruments.

Experiences with the UPR and the AMR National Voluntary Presentations were highlighted, by a UN agency, as a model that could provide helpful guidance for the HLPF. One hour could be allocated for the adoption of the outcome, divided between the State under Review (20 minutes), Member/Observer States (including UN entities) (20 minutes) and Stakeholders (including an A-status National Human Rights Institution and regional organizations (15 minutes) and the adoption of the recommendations (5 minutes). Another option is to discuss them by country groupings according to common interests and priorities.

**Q19. How can national reviews give adequate attention to the means of implementation? How can they help to mobilize new support and partnerships?**

National reviews should provide a detailed account of the means of implementation mobilized domestically and externally, as well as an exchange of lessons learned and best practices. Recommendations of the review could be prepared ahead of the HLPF session following the conclusion of the meeting of the working group. The HLPF session can serve as a forum where Member States and other stakeholders can pledge their support to the State under Review to implement specific recommendations.

National reviews should look at the interdependent mix of financial resources, technology development and transfer, capacity building, as well as the creation of a national enabling environment required to implement the sustainable development agenda, which also includes having the required systems in place for data collection and monitoring. These reviews can help to identify gaps, synergies and good practices in these areas and help to identify recommendations for mobilizing additional funding, innovative multi-stakeholder partnerships, better utilization of STI, and data collection and analysis. 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.

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 focused partnerships with specific costings to help countries achieve the next stage. Based on this information, more resources and partnerships may be mobilized and imbalances may be addressed. Stakeholders must be brought into the discussion and review to allow mobilization of new support. Each country should be encouraged to showcase innovative mechanisms and partnerships established to generate financial or technological resources. This could involve civil society and private sector groups that may be working closely with the government at national or sub-national levels.

**Q20. What kind of outcome should result from the HLPF national reviews of implementation, and how could there be a follow-up to these reviews?**

The HLPF national reviews should provide an analysis of progress achieved, challenges encountered and recommendations on how to move forward. The follow up to these reviews could include time-bound targets for reaching the recommendations, clearly linked to national development plans. Therefore, according to some UN agencies, country reviews should identify a set of recommendations to be adopted. Subsequent, country reviews should focus mainly on progress in implementing the recommendations previously agreed. Recommendations could also 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 through their respective ongoing work, and thereby help reinforce the implementation. A virtuous cycle would then be created, generating potentially significant efficiencies, avoiding duplication, and enhancing positive impacts.

Policy recommendations and advisory guidelines could be followed-up through national reporting and peer-review mechanisms. There should be suggested template and clear-cut guidelines for the national reviews, particularly to assist least developed countries in undertaking national reviews.

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

Another idea was that 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.

Given that the national reviews are voluntary in nature, participating countries at each round could volunteer to include a section in the SDG Country Report, reporting on its experience at the HLPF national reviews. It could also include specific details on follow up recommendations/actions. It is important to note that production of SDG Country reports are also voluntary in nature and periodicity is decided by each country.

### **III. Regional reviews and processes**

#### **Q21. How should the outcome of regional review processes be considered at HLPF?**

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 could also produce reports for the various regional sectoral mechanisms. Reviews could be featured through these reports and an official presentation/debate at the meeting.

Outcome of the regional reviews should be factored into the annual SDG report and Global Sustainable Development Report and could be issued as a background document for HLPF meetings under ECOSOC and GA. The regional reviews should build upon the findings included in the national reports, as well as the input of the reviews held by the regional economic commissions, as well as other regional reviews held on thematic issues by other stakeholders.

A couple of UN agencies suggested that there could be dedicated regional aspects in the thematic reviews, and a session for each region at the overarching session.

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

**Q22. 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)?**

The HLPF should build on the good practices established by the OWG and the negotiations of the post-2015 development agenda which encouraged participation of and consultation with major groups. A specific amount of time should be dedicated to interactions with major groups at each session of the HLPF.

Effective mechanisms and modalities will need to be developed to allow major groups and other stakeholders to contribute to the follow up and review processes conducted at the global level including the thematic and country reviews. This could include the development of online fora (similar to the my world surveys and e-discussion on the post-2015 development agenda) to solicit their engagement through direct stakeholder interventions and live webcasts, as well as inputs to relevant documents and reports, physical access to meetings, and speaking opportunities during meetings.

The HLPF should exploit crowd sourcing and other social media applications to solicit the inputs of key stakeholders. It should continue to expand its sustainable development platform and increasingly make it available in multiple languages.

The UN might seek not just to involve the major groups but additional voices that currently lie outside of the well-established avenues for participation. Additionally, established global partnerships can potentially play an important role in strengthening national and regional reporting.

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

For the thematic reviews, HLPF needs to set clear guidance of engagement of major groups during its various processes/meetings and clearly indicating the type of inputs sought from major groups. As per usual practice, major groups should be allowed sufficient time to convene a series of caucus meetings to review documentation and prepare their respective inputs into the HLPF as a group of stakeholders, like CSOs, either in the form of reports to be submitted or presentations to be made at hearings, where major groups are invited to participate.

For the country reviews, HLPF can recommend a series of options on how countries can engage major groups and how major groups can contribute to the country reviews. Given that the country reviews are a voluntary process – it is important that each participating country has the space to shape the type and degree of engagement of different major groups. Countries should not feel that major groups or peer are evaluating its performance in achieving the SDGs.

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.

Another key lesson comes from the Universal Periodic Review of the Human Rights Council, essential to integrate the contributions are the stakeholder reports, which supplement the State's official report and the information furnished by the UN system. In their inputs, stakeholders are encouraged to clearly indicate the specific recommendations to which their contribution relates.

**Q23. 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? 2**

<sup>2</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.”

The main results received from reports prepared by major groups and other stakeholders should feed directly into the national, regional and thematic reviews, while full stand-alone reports could be made available online on a dedicated 2030 follow up and review website. The HLPF should design and distribute a common reporting format to key stakeholders along with guidance on expected reporting requirements, frequency of reporting, sources of evidence, etc. The HLPF could then establish a reporting process with submission of standard reports on a regular basis (yearly or biennially). Based on the individual reports received from the key stakeholders, the HLPF could then produce a synthesis report for public consumption. Partnerships and networks related to specific topics of the SDGs could be identified and contacted. They could serve as an organizing entity that would coordinate their network's report on contributions to the SDGs, as part of their action plans.

Mechanisms and modalities to gather information and create engagement from major groups and other stakeholders will need to be developed. This should be coupled with appropriate outreach, and could also include online platforms in relevant languages, to reach a greater audience, when making calls for contributions to the review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Ensuring online platform accessibility will be important in this regard. Thematic reviews should provide the space for collecting information on participation of civil society advancing and contributing for specific issues. On country reviews, government could be encouraged to provide the space for major groups to report on how they are directly engaging on SDG implementation. It will also be important to identify appropriate networks to reach different types of stakeholders, to reach beyond the 'usual suspects' and include stakeholders which often do not have access to UN processes, including smaller civil society organizations and grassroots activists from the global South. Existing networks could be mobilized in this regard.

**Q24. How should UN system contribution to the implementation of 2030 Agenda be reviewed?**

The contribution of the UN system in providing support to governments in implementing the 2030 agenda should be a key component of national, regional and global reviews. This includes the contribution of the specialized agencies to providing normative, operational and capacity building support in its areas of competence, as well as support for data collection and analysis, facilitating multi-stakeholder consultations and public-private partnerships, leveraging additional funding, and facilitating South-South and triangular cooperation. It should also include the contribution of global coordination mechanisms to support countries in implementing the 2030 agenda.

One UN agency suggested that HLPF could conduct a UN system mapping exercise wherein individual UN agencies, funds and programmes are required to map their foreseen contributions across the 169 SDG targets. The mapping exercise should require that each agency, fund or programme indicate its foreseen percentage of effort (adding up to maximum of 100% per agency) across the various SDG targets. This exercise will expose areas of inter-agency intersection, potential overlaps and gaps. It will also reveal where agencies might be spreading themselves too thin across multiple targets, rather than strategically focusing on a realistic, limited number of the targets. Once the mapping is complete it should be clear which agencies are expected to contribute to which SDG targets. A standard reporting format should then be designed and issued on a regular basis (e.g. biennially) to each of the UN entities contributing to the various targets. The reporting format would call for narrative information on individual agency contributions to each of the targets, track related investments by agency and also allow include a section on indicator reporting.

Through periodic reports to the HLPF, the UN system should be qualitatively reviewed by the extent to which its coordination ensures policy coherence in the implementation of the SDGs. There should be a system-wide review of the UN system at the four-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. Based on these reports, an annual report on mapping UN system efforts to support SDGs may be produced (by UNDESA) and presented at each year's HLPF, in conjunction with the global progress report on the SDGs.

Some UN agencies emphasized that HLPF should not focus on reviewing the UN's support for SDG implementation. In this sense, specific contributions of UN specialized agencies, funds and programmes should be reviewed by their respective governing bodies, which in turn could be summarized in a UN SG report.

Another UN agency said that 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.

**Q25. 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 should do every effort in supporting a clearly State-led, intergovernmental follow-up and review mechanism, based on a decentralized and flexible architecture, building on specialized bodies and their natural multi-stakeholder settings. This could be done by proposing tools, mechanism, platforms that help track progress in achieving SDGs, monitor gaps in implementation, identify successful and evidence based practices that could be replicated. UN governing bodies should encourage strategic frameworks, business models and a performance review based on results, aligned with the 2030 Agenda, including the SDGs with their targets and indicators. The UN System can also provide contributions to the follow up and review of the 2030 Agenda through its global monitoring reports. The UN system should also play a convening role in ensuring all multi stakeholders stay engaged and for bringing in new partners.

First, detailed technical guidance notes could be developed for each of the SDG indicators. Second, the UN should establish a programme to support the strengthening of national capacity in selected countries. Third, dedicated support should be provided to countries by UN entities at regional level. Such support should include provision of guidance on the conduct of national baseline and follow-up surveys for relevant SDG indicators at national level, capacity development activities, validation and quality assurance of data inputs, supporting reporting, etc.

An interagency SDG coordination mechanism could be formed following the TST model, including coalitions of agencies whose mandates fall into the implementation of each one of the goals/targets, to support the follow up and review process. Monitoring coalitions should be built on the implementation partnerships formed under the respective goals and targets.

UN system could also submit periodic reports to the HLPF. In such reports, UN entities should go beyond helping coordinate the follow-up and review of the goal(s) and targets for which they have a clear comparative advantage and help cross-coordinate other relevant targets, including those under other goals, and contribute to the monitoring of key cross-cutting areas.

From a data perspective, the UN system could do the following: 1) Improve coordination and coherence between UN agencies and other development stakeholders to support national statistical capacity for SDG monitoring and the production of national SDG reports; 2) Encourage interoperability of data systems through standardization, knowledge sharing and collaboration; 3) Facilitate partnerships to strengthen national statistical capacities, mobilize resources for SDG monitoring and explore innovative approaches for engaging stakeholders and plugging data gaps.

In terms of the Secretariat, 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. It is crucial 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.

## **V. Other views and ideas**

Thematic reviews:

In line with the agreed upon thematic reviews of the HLPF using a "thematic focus reflecting the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development (i.e. social, economic and environmental), the UN should consider a more effective integration of development, peace and security and human rights (i.e. the three key pillars of the UN) pillars, under the overall framework of the rule of law in order to achieve the holistic/integrated approach called for by the 2030 agenda. In addition to the thematic review, there should be a complementary/standing focus on SDG16, as none of the SDGs can be fully sustainable in the longer term if the UN cannot work together to ensure policy coherence in implementing this goal. Or, if it is decided to examine progress in all SDGs based upon a transversal theme, we should then propose the rule of law. The review process should also consider several cross-border issues (e.g. migration, water, trade, partnerships).

National reporting framework:

Most of the target areas of the SDGs fall under existing reporting and follow up mechanisms; with very wide ranging periodicity - certainly not annually in most cases. The challenge for Member States would be to consolidate this information and (more difficult) draw conclusions on how and whether the targets were being achieved which supplement the indicators themselves. In this context, MS implementation of policies designed to achieve progress on goal 17 targets, in particular policy coherence, could provide them with the basis of a comprehensive national reporting framework. This would offer the Member States the opportunity to describe not only progress on the targets but also on how effective and efficient (for example, using the achievement of one target to leverage progress on another) the targets themselves have been in informing policy frameworks.

In terms of reporting, the following review cycle could be taken into consideration:

- Every year: provide a general report on select SDGs (e.g. the four chosen for the year)
- Every two years: provide a thematic report (on the overarching themes)
- Every four years: provide major reporting on all SDGs (the first one being in 2018 and the last in 2030)

Moreover, a template for each of these reviews should be provided.

Contributions from UN system:

The UN 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.