

Concept note for the programme of the 2020 HLPF

I. Background:

GA resolution 67/290 stipulates that the President of ECOSOC coordinates with the ECOSOC bureau “to organize the activities of the forum so as to benefit from the inputs and advice of the United Nations system, the major groups and other relevant stakeholders”.

The theme for the 2020 high-level political forum on sustainable development (HLPF) and ECOSOC is *“Accelerated action and transformative pathways: realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development”* (GA decision 74/508).

The decade of action and delivery was launched by Heads of State and Government at the SDG Summit in September 2019 in order to step up progress towards the SDGs and put the world on track to realize their targets by 2030.

The HLPF this year needs to kick off accelerated international efforts for the coming ten years. The programme was designed so as to allow the HLPF to discuss ways to operationalize the decade of action and accelerate the shift towards transformative development pathways.

The programme of the HLPF therefore places special emphasis on the kind of approaches and policies that can accelerate progress towards the realization of the 2030 Agenda and brings the most transformative changes in development pathways.

The SDG summit and its preparations gave an indication about what those approaches and policies could be. The Political Declaration adopted at the Summit identified ten cross-cutting areas where actions could have an impact on the SDGs across the board. Those will therefore be considered in the various thematic and other sessions of the 2020 HLPF¹. Some aspects will also feature prominently in the VNRs.

The programme also takes inspiration from the Global Sustainable Development Report, 2019 (GSDR) prepared by a group of independent scientists and presented at the SDG summit. The GSDR also identified areas that offer the greatest promise for achieving the transformations required for achieving the 2030 Agenda at the necessary scale and speed. Taking action in those areas allows to address the most critical tradeoffs and synergies between the SDGs, while seeking to ensure that no one is left behind. The political declaration of the SDG summit noted with appreciation the GSDR with its entry points and levers.

Each thematic session will discuss a few SDGs most closely related to the theme as well as key trade-offs and synergies among those SDGs and across all SDGs.

The programme was thus designed in a way that does not prejudge the outcome of the ongoing review by the General Assembly of the HLPF.

¹ Leaving no one behind, Mobilizing adequate and well-directed financing, Enhancing national implementation, Strengthening institutions for more integrated solutions, Bolstering local action to accelerate implementation, Reducing disaster risk and building resilience, Solving challenges through international cooperation and enhancing the global partnership, Harnessing science, technology and innovation with a greater focus on digital transformation for sustainable development, Investing in data and statistics for the Sustainable Development Goals and Strengthening the high-level political forum.

II. Approach to the programme²

1. Opening:

The programme will start with the opening session, where the ECOSOC President will speak along with ECOSOC Vice President in charge of the Integration Segment (the Integration Segment is mandated to integrate the inputs of ECOSOC subsidiary bodies to the thematic review of the HLPF). There would also be one or two inspirational speakers addressing the vision to 2030 and beyond.

2. Accelerated and transformative pathways: messages from UN Commissions and Councils to HLPF

The session will hear brief presentations of the inputs of a few selected major intergovernmental bodies to the HLPF thematic review. The messages from this session will inform the discussions throughout the Forum.

3. Our starting point for the decade: third session

The third session will allow to get an overall vision of where the world stands in year one of the decade of action for sustainable development. It will build on the assessment of the SDG Summit and also bring other more recent data and projections notably from the annual SG SDG Progress Report. It will discuss global trends, regional dimensions and SDG progress in countries at various levels of development including middle-income countries. It will also discuss issues related to strengthening institutions for more integrated solutions and policies.

4. Thematic review

The 2030 Agenda decided that: “Thematic reviews of progress on the Sustainable Development Goals, including cross-cutting issues, will also take place at the HLPF”.

The thematic review this year will build on the ten cross-cutting action areas of the Political declaration, which will be discussed throughout the programme.

Six sessions will focus on themes inspired by the findings of the 2019 Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR). They will allow for an integrated examination of synergies and trade-offs among the SDGs most closely associated with the theme of each session as well as of their interlinkages with all other SDGs. All SDGs are relevant for each session and SDG 17 will be considered under each theme.

- Advancing human well-being: This session will focus notably on various trade-offs and synergies related to improving human well-being, and more particularly ending poverty in all its forms and dimensions. The most closely related SDGs include SDG 1, SDG 4, SDG 6, SDG 16, and SDG 17.
- Ending hunger and achieving food security for all: This session will address policies related to strengthening the livelihoods of the poor, ensuring sustainable and healthy food production

² With the saving measures introduced by the Secretary-General, the HLPF will not be able to meet outside official meeting hours this year.

systems and improving the lives of all. The most closely related SDGs are SDG 2, SDG 3, and SDG 17.

- Protecting the planet and building resilience: The key focus in this session will be pursuing policies, investments and innovation to address disaster risk reduction and protect the Planet from degradation. The most closely related SDGs are SDG 12, SDG 13, SDG 14, SDG 15, and SDG 17.
- Ensuring access to sustainable energy: This session will be on ensuring access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services for all and making energy sustainable. The most closely related SDGs are SDG 7, SDG 12, and SDG 17.
- Sharing economic benefits: This session will discuss policies to address inequality within and among countries, decoupling growth from environmental degradation, and achieving sustainable development for future generations. The most closely related SDGs are SDG 5, SDG 7, SDG 8, SDG 10, and SDG 17.
- Bolstering local action to accelerate implementation: This session will address measures to empower and support cities, local authorities and communities, as well as issues related to sustainable urban development, infrastructure and people-centered services. The most closely related SDGs are SDG 9, SDG 11, and SDG 17.

5. Voluntary National Reviews:

From 13 – 16 July (14 – 16 July – ministerial segment) the HLPF will hear presentations of 51 Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) (28 countries are coming for the first time). Countries having already conducted a VNR will have 20 minutes each and will present in a panel format. First timers will have 30 minutes each and will be able to choose between individual presentations or a panel format. Special arrangements may be made for countries represented at Head of State or Head of Government level.

The President would like the countries members of the Group of Friends of VNRs to prepare the HLPF discussions on each VNR, following last year's model. Major Groups and other stakeholders will also self-organize to intervene during the sessions.

6. Other sessions:

Apart from the thematic review, the first week will feature mandated sessions on SIDS, African countries, LDCs and LLDCs, which will discuss ways to deliver on the decade of action.

The other mandated sessions are on financing for sustainable development and science, technology and innovation. There will also be, as in the past, a session organized by major groups and other stakeholders on a whole of society implementation of the SDGs and decade of action.

There will also be a session on Leaving No One Behind with specific emphasis on eradicating poverty.

There will also be a session on the targets whose end date is 2020. The session will take stock of where we are and look ahead at how to address those targets. There is a need for processes to decide whether and how to update these targets.

The last session will be on investing in data and statistics for the SDGs. This is one of the cross-cutting action areas of the political declaration of the SDG summit and a major issue in the 2030 Agenda. It will

19 February 2020

be the opportunity to hear about the work of the Statistical Commission on the indicators framework and to discuss statistical capacity building.

During the second week, at the opening of the high-level segment, the ECOSOC President, the SG and the PGA would speak, with the ECOSOC President sharing the main messages from the first half of the HLPF. There would be a session on the regional dimension, with reporting by the chairs of the regional sustainable development forums, showing commonalities and differences in the situation of the various regions.

7. Final day of the high-level segment:

In the morning following the HLPF, the discussions will be dedicated to the UN 75th Anniversary. ECOSOC will discuss major changes in the area of sustainable development since the creation of the United Nations, looking also at the role of multilateralism in the changing environment and the role of ECOSOC, a Charter body, itself.

The afternoon will be dedicated to discussing “future trends and scenarios related to the theme” and “the long-term impact of current trends, such as the contribution of new technologies, in the economic, social and environmental areas on the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals”. This is consistent with the mandate contained in General Assembly resolution 72/305.

The discussions will involve countries having prepared long-term development visions, along with UN system and other organizations and think tanks having developed scenarios and projections related to the achievement of the SDGs.

During the high-level segment, as per previous practice, the general debate will take place in parallel to the VNR sessions.

Inspirational speakers will be invited to the opening of HLPF and the high-level segment as well as top notch experts in panels, while leaving enough time for interaction and interventions from the floor.