



# COMMISSION for SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

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## 61<sup>st</sup> Session of the Commission for Social Development

### Multi-stakeholder Forum on the priority theme “Creating full and productive employment and decent work for all as a way of overcoming inequalities to accelerate the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”

Thursday, 9 February 2023, 3:00 pm– 6:00 pm, Conference room 4

#### Draft Concept Note



#### 1. Background

The ECOSOC, in Resolution E/RES/2019/4 on future organization and methods of work of the Commission for Social Development, “Invites the Bureau of the Commission to continue to propose interactive dialogues that engage Member States and relevant stakeholders, so as to encourage dialogue and enhance the impact of its work, including by addressing the implementation of, follow-up to and review of the social dimension of the 2030 Agenda” (operating paragraph 10).

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted efforts to achieve many of the SDGs by 2030, including SDG1 (End poverty), SDG5 (Achieve gender equality) and SDG10 (Reduce inequality). It dislocated the world’s economy, provoking a major reversal in poverty reduction, and exacerbating pre-existing inequalities and multiple forms of deprivation.

In particular, it disproportionately impacted women and girls with regards to increased family and caregiving responsibilities, gender-based violence and loss of jobs and as a result, women were the majority of those who left the workforce. The COVID-19 pandemic also exacerbated the hardships faced by workers in the informal economy due to the disproportionate negative consequences of protective pandemic measures on these workers because they often have low incomes, little or no job security, and no pensions, health insurance or social protection.

In most countries, the negative impacts of the COVID-19 crisis are now receding, but other overlapping economic and political crises are threatening labour market recovery around the world. These crises are likely to further increase labour market inequalities within countries. They also contribute to a growing divergence between developed and developing economies as the latter, recovering more slowly from the COVID-19 pandemic,

are now facing less policy space to respond to these colliding crises. This divergence is most acute for African countries.

New data collected by ILO<sup>1</sup> show that within countries, a strong reduction in gender gap in hours worked was recorded in late 2021 and the first quarter of 2022. Despite this encouraging progress, the gap remains high with women currently working 14.5 fewer paid hours per week than men or, equivalently, 57.5 paid hours per every 100 worked by men. Moreover, during the second and third quarters of 2022, which saw stagnation in overall working hours growth, there was no further progress in reducing the gender gap. The multiple crises that are now impacting on global economic and labour market prospects also put at risk the progress recently achieved in reducing the gender gap in hours worked.

Between countries, gaps in hours worked and employment persisted. In more than 75 per cent of high-income and upper-middle income countries with data, the number of hours worked and employment-to-population ratios returned to, or exceeded, the pre-crisis level by the first quarter of 2022, although the rate of improvement has decelerated since the conflict in Ukraine. By contrast, the majority of low-income and lower-middle-income countries continued to have an employment deficit in the second quarter of 2022 relative to the pre-crisis situation (the same quarter in 2019), with a gap in the range of 2–3 per cent.

With seven years left to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), it is necessary to accelerate the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. This requires comprehensive, integrated and balanced policies which address the broader implications of the multiple crises. These policies include creating full and productive employment and decent work for all as a way of overcoming inequalities.

Governments cannot achieve sustainable development without partners. National and local governments, public institutions, the international community, United Nations entities, the private sector, academia, civil society organizations and disadvantaged social groups, among others, need to work together in a complementary manner.

## **2. Objectives**

The forum will identify opportunities, lessons learned, good practices and innovative approaches to create full and productive employment and decent work for all to overcome inequalities and achieve an inclusive and resilient recovery. The forum aims to focus on practical solutions from different stakeholders to combat poverty and inequality.

More specifically, the forum aims to:

- a) Share knowledge and experiences on how different stakeholders can work together to design and implement policies that help countries create full, productive and decent employment to recover better after the COVID-19 pandemic.
- b) Share lessons learned of how other stakeholders can support governments with financing employment creation efforts.
- c) Share measures or programmes put in place at the local, national and international levels that have worked in reducing the gender gap in employment/working hours.
- d) Share social policies that have worked in reducing inequalities.

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<sup>1</sup> ILO (2022). “Multiple crises threaten the global labour market recovery”. *ILO Monitor: COVID-19 and the World of Work, Tenth Edition*, Policy Brief.

- e) Share measures or programmes towards formalization of employment that can be applied to Africa (where the majority of workers work in the informal economy).

### 3. Structure and format of the interactive dialogue

The panel discussion will be chaired by the Chair of the Commission for Social Development. The Chair will open the session with brief remarks and introduce the moderator, who will introduce the panellists. The panellists will each make a 7-minute presentation, addressing the guiding questions. Following these presentations, the moderator will invite questions directly related to the presentations from the audience. After a short question and answer session, the moderator will open the floor for interactive dialogue. The forum will last approximately three hours and proceed according to the following agenda.

**The tentative time allocation for the panel discussion is as follows:**

<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Suggested speaking time</b>
Chair: Opening remarks	5 minutes
Moderator: Context-setting and presentation of panellists	5 minutes
Panellists (6): Presentations	10 minutes per panellist – 60 minutes in total
Moderator: Guidance on interactive discussion – Questions from participants to the Commission and answers from panellists	Q & A and interactive dialogue (60 minutes)
Moderator: Summary of issues and conclusion	10 minutes
Closing by the Chair	5 minutes
	<b>Total duration: 3 hours</b>

Panel members are expected to present concrete strategies that have proven to be successful in shaping a more inclusive, equitable, resilient and sustainable development. They are invited to highlight innovative approaches and lessons learned.

The outcomes of the discussions will be reflected in the Chair’s summary, which will be one of the key inputs of the Commission for Social Development to the ECOSOC, in particular, its high-level segment and the 2023 High-Level Political Forum.

### 4. Guiding questions

- In your view, what concrete social policies worked in reducing inequalities and recovering better from the COVID-19 pandemic and other inter-connected crises?
- What role do broad-based partnerships have in ensuring that no one is left behind during the Decade of Action to deliver the SDGs, in particular SDG1 (End poverty), SDG5 (Achieve gender equality) and SDG10 (Reduce inequality)? Can you make specific suggestions to improve such partnerships?

- How can various stakeholders, including the private sector, work with governments to ensure that the COVID-19 recovery is accompanied by the creation of full, productive and decent employment and a reduction in inequality?
- What measures or programmes should be in place at the local, national and international levels in order to reduce the gender gap in employment and working hours?
- Can you share any grassroots, national and regional good practices towards formalization of employment that may be helpful to Africa?