



## Economic and Social Council Adopts Texts on Sustainable Development, HIV/AIDS, Population Concerns, ahead of High-Level Political Forum

Ahead of its High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development set to begin on Monday, the Economic and Social Council today adopted draft resolutions on sustainable development, HIV/AIDS and population and development, among other issues.

Acting without a vote on all items before it today, the Council adopted a resolution titled "Report of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration on its sixteenth session", which underlined the Committee's contribution to the Political Forum on the subject of challenges for institutions in eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world, stressing that Governments had a central role in that process and in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Council stressed that ending poverty required a whole-of-government approach as well as building the skills and capacities of elected officials at the local level. With the adoption of the draft decision also contained in that report, the Council approved the provisional agenda of the seventeenth session of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration.

Adopting a resolution titled "Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS", known as UNAIDS, the Council recognized that the AIDS epidemic was not yet over and stressed the urgency of fast-tracking the AIDS response to meet the 2020 milestones and targets, as a prerequisite for ending the pandemic by 2030. It also urged UNAIDS to continue the full, effective and timely implementation of its 2016-2021 strategy. By other terms, the Council stressed the need for the Joint Programme to continue to set a path for reform by revising and updating its operating model, particularly in the areas of financing and accountability. Noting the need to close the HIV and AIDS resource gap, it stressed the importance of a fully funded unified budget, results and accountability framework for the Joint Programme's effective functioning.

The Council also adopted three draft decisions contained in the report of the Commission on Population and Development, including one by which it decided that beginning with its fifty-third session in 2020, the Commission would adopt a four-year cycle for the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, as part of a multi-year work programme aligned with the thematic focus of the Political Forum.

On organizational matters, the Council adopted a text approving a list of nine non-governmental organizations seeking to make statements during the Council's high-level segment this year.

Throughout the day, the Council heard from the heads of several of its relevant subsidiary bodies, who underscored the progress and challenges in their respective fields.

Jose Castelazo (Mexico), Committee of Experts on Public Administration, joining via video link from Mexico, stressing that effective institutions were essential for achieving the development goals, said Governments must consider informing legislative bodies in relation to the Goals where parliaments had not yet taken a proactive role in implementation. Sectoral ministries had a critical role in developing and implementing policies in their respective areas as well. Because poverty was multidimensional, it must be pursued by all parts of Government and through integrated policies, he added, noting the continued weakness in governance, including corruption.

Morten Ussing, UNAIDS Chief of Governance and Multilateral Affairs, told the Council that sustained and bold political commitment had promoted the implementation of sound policies that would make it possible to end AIDS as a public health threat by 2030. However, reiterating what was stated in the resolution, he said the epidemic was far from over. Particularly vulnerable groups — including women, drug users and men who have sex with men — continued to be marginalized and "forced into the shadows". The funding environment of UNAIDS remained extremely challenging, he added, calling for support from Member States.

Alya Ahmed Saif Al-Thani (Qatar), Chair of the fiftieth session of the Commission on Population and Development, noted that participants in the session had pointed to the long-term changes taking place in the age distribution of the world population, with people living longer and having smaller families due to various social and economic factors. Expressing concern that

the Commission had — for the second time in the last three years — failed to achieve consensus on the draft resolution before it, she called on Member States to “open our hearts and minds” and strive harder to reach agreement in future sessions.

Other topics addressed today included follow-up to the International Conference on Financing for Development, the United Nations Forum on Forests and human settlements.

#### Public Administration and Development

JOSE CASTELAZO (Mexico), Committee of Experts on Public Administration, joining via video link from Mexico, presented the report of the Committee's sixteenth session from 24-28 April 2017 (document [E/2017/44-E/C.16/2017/8](#) (<http://undocs.org/E/2017/44>)). He said the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development continued to be at the centre of the Committee's work, adding that effective institutions were essential for the achievement of the Development Goals.

Questions remained on how best to transform institutions so that Governments could play a central role in reaching their sustainable development aspirations. Governments should consider informing legislative bodies in relation to the Goals where Parliaments had not yet taken a proactive role in implementation. Sectoral ministries also had a critical role in developing and implementing policies in their respective areas. Because poverty was multidimensional, it must be pursued by all parts of Government and through integrated policies, he added, noting the continued weakness in governance, including corruption. Governments often needed to work with civil society and the private sector to offer opportunities for those most in need. Local authorities and communities had a critical role to play as well.

The Council then turned to chapter 1, section A of the report, which contained a draft resolution titled “Report of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration on its 16th session”. The Council adopted the text without a vote.

Turning to the draft decision contained in chapter 1, section B titled “Provisional agenda of the seventeenth session of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration”, the Council adopted it without a vote.

#### United Nations Forum on Forests

PETER BESSEAU (Canada), Chair of the twelfth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests, introduced the report of that session held on 26 April 2016 and 1–5 May 2017 (document [E/2017/42-E/CN.18/2017/8](#) ([http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=E/2017/42](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/2017/42))), noting that it had been the first such session since the adoption of the “landmark” United Nations Strategic Plan on Forests earlier this year. In accordance with that document, participants at the session had held technical discussions focused on the exchange of experiences as well as a series of high-level panels related to the role of forests in the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals. The discussions had focused in particular on poverty eradication, food security, the empowerment of women and girls and the means of implementation for sustainable forest management, he said.

Recalling that a wide range of stakeholders had participated in those discussions — including representatives of private sector entities and senior representatives of the organizations comprising the Collaborative Partnership on Forests — he said the outcomes would contribute to the Council's 2017 High-Level Political Forum. Information transmitted to that body would include practical policy recommendations on ways to accelerate poverty eradication through the sustainable management of forests. The session had also considered ways to improve the delivery of voluntary national contributions and enhance cooperation and coordination on forest-related issues. It had generated several solid outcomes to form the basis for discussions at its next session in May 2018 as well as during the intersessional period.

Acting without a vote, the Council then adopted a draft decision contained in chapter 1, section A, entitled “Report of the United Nations Forum on Forests on its twelfth session and provisional agenda for its thirteenth session”, by which it took note of the Forum's report and approved the provisional agenda.

#### Follow-up to the International Conference on Financing for Development

The Council turned its attention to the report of its 2017 forum on financing for development follow-up (document [E/FFDF/2017/3](#) ([http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=E/FFDF/2017/3](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/FFDF/2017/3))), taking note of a recommendation contained therein, by which the Council agreed to transmit to the High-Level Political Forum on sustainable development a number of intergovernmentally agreed conclusions and recommendations. Among those were an expression of concern about the significant impacts of the challenging global environment in 2016 on national efforts to implement the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, a reaffirmation of the cross-cutting nature of the global sustainable development agenda and statements of recommitment to ensuring that no country or person was left behind and to focusing on places where the challenges were greatest.

Following that action, the representative of the United States — while noting that her delegation had joined the consensus — nevertheless reaffirmed the various statements and dissociations stated by her delegation at the Forum itself.

#### Human Settlements

FILIEP DECORTE, Acting Director of the New York Liaison Office, United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT), introduced the Secretary-General's report titled "Coordinated implementation of the Habitat Agenda" (document [E/2017/61](http://undocs.org/E/2017/61) (<http://undocs.org/E/2017/61>)) and the report of the Governing Council of UN-HABITAT of its twenty-sixth session in Nairobi from 8–12 May 2017 (document [A/72/8](http://undocs.org/A/72/8) (<http://undocs.org/A/72/8>)). The Secretary-General's report, the final report of its kind, highlighted the coordinated implementation of the Habitat Agenda, the legacy of the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (HABITAT II) in Istanbul in 1996, and preparations undertaken for the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (HABITAT III). At the regional level, UN-HABITAT continued to support the preparations for ministerial meetings in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean. ]

He said the Secretary-General's report contained four recommendations for Member States: work towards the implementation of the New Urban Agenda, support the work of UN-HABITAT as a focal point for sustainable urbanization, promote the leading role of national Governments, and strengthen subnational and local governments in local implementation. The Governing Council's report of its May session in Nairobi outlined various outcomes of that meeting, including the nine resolutions adopted, among them promoting safety in cities and enhancing the role of UN-HABITAT in urban crisis response.

The representative of Ecuador, speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, introduced the draft resolution titled "Human settlements" (document [E/2017/L.26](http://undocs.org/E/2017/L.26)). By its terms, the Economic and Social Council would take note of the Secretary-General's report on the coordinated implementation of the Habitat Agenda and the preparations for Habitat III and decide to transmit that report to the General Assembly for consideration at its seventy-second session. The Council would also recall that the Secretary-General would report on the progress of implementing the New Urban Agenda every four years and look forward to the first report to be submitted to the General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council in 2018.

The Council then adopted the draft resolution without a vote.

Following adoption, the representative of Kenya, associating himself with the Group of 77 and China, said he joined consensus on the adoption of the resolution and looked forward to the effective implementation of the report and the New Urban Agenda.

The Council also took note of the report of the Governing Council of UN-HABITAT on its twenty-sixth session.

#### Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS

MORTEN USSING, Chief of Governance and Multilateral Affairs, Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), introduced the Secretary-General's note (document [E/2017/62](http://undocs.org/E/2017/62) (<http://undocs.org/E/2017/62>)) transmitting the report of UNAIDS Executive Director. The 2030 Agenda was very important to the AIDS response as it committed to ending the epidemic by 2030, he said. Sustained and bold political commitment had promoted the implementation of sound policies in countries where evidence was now informing the response. Such substantial advances had reaffirmed that ending AIDS as a public health threat was actually achievable by 2030. More people had been reached with HIV treatment and the number of AIDS-related deaths had significantly fallen. However, prevention services must continue to be scaled up. There was a clear relationship between progress and growing domestic investment, which in Africa was being propelled by the African Union.

Nonetheless, the epidemic was far from over, representing the second cause of death on that continent and the first cause of death of women of reproductive age worldwide, he said. In addition, only 60 per cent of people living with HIV/AIDS were actually aware of their status, he added, spotlighting especially vulnerable groups, including drug users and men who have sex with men. Those groups continued to be marginalized and "forced into the shadows". While domestic resources to address the pandemic had increased in the past decade, overall investment in low- and middle-income countries had recently flat-lined. The funding environment of UNAIDS remained extremely challenging, he noted, calling for support from Member States.

The representative of Germany said that ending the epidemic was an essential element of sustainable development. He called the text well-balanced and said that it had highlighted the crucial role of UNAIDS in eradicating AIDS by 2030. The draft also captured the unique and multisectoral nature of the Joint Programme.

The representative of Estonia said that despite immense progress in eradicating the disease, difficult challenges remained. Discrimination against those affected had continued, she added, stressing the need to address the matter of infections among the most vulnerable populations. Awareness-raising, testing and diagnosing the disease early on were essential for accessing prompt care. "We need novel and innovative resources," she said, reiterating the need to invest more in prevention and treatment.

The representative of Zimbabwe said that sub-Saharan Africa had continued to bear the heaviest burden. Noting progress made in combating the epidemic, particularly in advancing access to antiretroviral treatment, he said it remained a major challenge, particularly in his region. He urged the international community to maintain political will and financial commitment in its response. For Zimbabwe, young women and girls were disproportionately affected by the pandemic, he

added, stressing the need to eliminate discrimination and violence against them. He expressed concern about the major funding gap and spotlighted how support from the international community had played an essential role in providing treatment in his country. The fight against AIDS could not be won in isolation.

The representative of Ghana, speaking in her capacity as Chair of the UNAIDS Coordinating Board and on behalf of the United Kingdom, which served as its Vice-Chair, said the Secretary-General's report before the Council demonstrated the critical role of UNAIDS in positioning and coordinating the global HIV/AIDS response at the international level. Remarkable progress had been achieved against the backdrop of uncertainty regarding the Joint Programme's funding and future. By mid-2016 some 18.2 million people had been receiving antiretroviral treatment and the rates of new infection had fallen. The rate of new infections among children had been halved between 2010 and 2015. The 2015 UNAIDS "fast-track" strategy to end HIV/AIDS had been the first in the system to be aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals.

Nevertheless, she said, the epidemic was far from over, with 2.1 million new infections in 2015. Young women and girls were at particular risk, 40 per cent of those living with HIV were still unaware of their status and regional disparities in treatment were still prevalent. There was also a worrying decrease in the global funding response, with an annual investment gap of about \$7 billion. Encouraging donors to remain engaged in that respect, she said all those issues were captured in the text currently before the Council. The document reflected consensus across regional groups and struck a balance between welcoming strides made in the HIV/AIDS response, expressing concern about the critical challenges that remained and recommitting to ending the epidemic by 2030.

The United Kingdom's representative, also voicing his delegation's strong support to UNAIDS and to the text before the Council, expressed concern about the significant funding gap which had left 28 per cent of the 2016 UNAIDS core budget unfunded. Underscoring the need to reposition the Joint Programme in line with the 2030 Agenda and to equip it with the necessary resources to fulfil its mandate, he said the United Kingdom had recently approved a new five-year funding commitment to UNAIDS and called on other donors — both current and new — to do the same.

The representative of the United States agreed that it was critical for all partners to continue to fight the HIV/AIDS epidemic, stressing that a shared responsibility and increased investment was needed in that regard. Pointing to insufficient progress in reducing new infections among young women and girls, as well as other remaining challenges, he encouraged UNAIDS to invite new donors from both the public and private sectors and urged Member States to scale up funding for the global response.

Turning to a draft resolution titled "Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS" (document E/2017/L.27), the Council adopted the text without a vote.

#### Adoption of the Agenda and Other Organizational Matters

The Council then approved requests from nine non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council to be heard by the Council at the high-level segment of its 2017 session, as contained in document [E/2017/73](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/2017/73) ([http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=E/2017/73](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/2017/73)).

#### Population and Development

ALYA AHMED SAIF AL-THANI (Qatar), Chair of the fiftieth session of the Commission on Population and Development, introduced the report of that session (document [E/2017/25](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/2017/25) ([http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=E/2017/25](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/2017/25))) held on 15 April 2016 and 3–7 April 2017. Recalling that the session's theme had been "Changing population age structures and sustainable development", she said it had provided an occasion for the Commission to focus on Chapter VI of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development on population growth and age structure. Some participants had pointed to the long-term changes taking place in the age distribution of the world population, with broad consensus emerging on the importance of taking those shifts into account as Member States sought to implement the 2030 Agenda. States had, for the first time, shared their experiences through a "national voluntary presentations" segment, she said.

Despite extensive informal consultations, she went on, Member States had not reached consensus on all the issues addressed in a draft resolution before them. In the end, she had withdrawn her proposed text and received authorization from the Commission to prepare a summary of the deliberations, which was contained in the report being presented today. Besides the three draft decisions contained in that report, she also drew attention to two decisions adopted by the Commission — namely, one determining that the themes for its fifty-first and fifty-second sessions would be "Sustainable cities, human mobility and international migration" and "Review and appraisal of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and its contributions to the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development", respectively, and a second taking note of several documents considered by the Commission.

Briefly outlining some of the main themes emerging from the session's discussions, she said participants had acknowledged that the transition towards longer lives and smaller families appeared to be universal and that those shifts were influenced by various social and economic factors. Expressing concern that the Commission had — for the second time in the last three years — failed to achieve consensus on the draft resolution before it, she called on Member States to “open our hearts and minds” and strive harder to reach agreement in future sessions.

The Council then adopted, without a vote, three draft decisions contained in chapter 1, section A of the report. By the terms of the first, entitled “Report of the Commission on Population and Development on its fiftieth session and provisional agenda for its fifty-first session”, the Council took note of the report and approved the provisional agenda. By the terms of the second, entitled “Report on the flow of financial resources for assisting in the further implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development”, it requested the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) to provide a report on that topic — including technical recommendations and information on a potential revision of the methods, categories and data sources used as the basis for preparing the report — to be reviewed by the Commission at its fifty-first session.

By the terms of the third draft decision, entitled “Multi-year work programme of the Commission on Population and Development, including the cycle for the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development”, the Council decided that, beginning with its fifty-third session in 2020, the Commission on Population and Development would adopt a four-year cycle for the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Programme of Action, as part of a multi-year work programme aligned with the Council's main theme and with the thematic focus of the High-Level Political Forum.

 For information media. Not an official record.

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