



**Commission for Social Development**

**Fifty-fourth session**

**High-level panel discussion on the priority theme**

**“Rethinking and Strengthening Social Development in the Contemporary World”**

**DRAFT CONCEPT NOTE**

3 February 2016

**I. BACKGROUND**

The fifty-fourth session of the Commission for Social Development is the policy session of the two-year cycle under the priority theme of “Rethinking and strengthening social development in the contemporary world”, which was decided by ECOSOC in its resolution E/RE/2014/3. The resolution also reaffirmed that the Commission should assist the Council in monitoring, reviewing and appraising the progress achieved and problems encountered in the implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development. The high-level panel discussion, scheduled to take place on Wednesday 3 February 2016 from 3:00 pm to 6:00 pm, is organized by the Commission in the context of this resolution.

In September 2015, Member States adopted a new global development agenda, *Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, to succeed the Millennium Development Goals. This agenda provides the new context in which the implementation of commitments made at the Social Summit, namely eradication of poverty, promotion of full employment and social integration based on the enhancement and protection of all human rights, will take place. The new Agenda continues to place the eradication of poverty at the centre of global development, while giving greater emphasis on an integrated approach to sustainable development and pledging to leave no one behind.

The preparation for this policy session builds on the review exercise of the fifty-third session, to which the Secretary-General submitted a report on the priority theme (E/CN.5/2015/3). The report highlighted that, twenty years after the Summit, its core commitments remain largely unfulfilled and acutely relevant. There has been progress in

reducing poverty, but the international community remains far from eradicating it. Unemployment remains as high as it was in 1995 and many workers continue to struggle in the informal sector. In every country, certain groups confront barriers that prevent them from participating in social, economic or political life. At the same time, recent economic, social, political and environmental trends present new challenges and, in some cases, provide new opportunities for social development.

The Secretary-General's report to the fifty-fourth session on the priority theme represents the accumulation of knowledge and policy analysis on the subject, with a focus on concrete policy recommendations. It highlights the lesson that unless it is inclusive and participatory, development will not be sustainable. In a rapidly changing contemporary context, social policies and programmes open a crucial pathway to strengthen the social as well as the economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. It also emphasizes the importance of policy coherence and integration in ensuring socially sustainable development, for achieving social progress requires aligning macroeconomic frameworks with social and environmental goals. It further underscores that a social perspective on policy and development—that is, a people-centred and participatory approach to development towards inclusive and just societies—offers means for transformative action that will be critical to successful implementation of the new agenda.

## **II. OBJECTIVES**

The high-level panel discussion this year should provide an opportunity for members of the Commission for Social Development and other key stakeholders, including civil society organizations, to engage in a substantive dialogue on policy options to further implement the internationally-agreed social development goals in the new context of the sustainable development goals contained in the 2030 Agenda. The main objectives of the high-level panel discussion are, therefore, to (1) discuss concrete policies and strategies that have been effective in promoting social development, building on the review of progress in social development; (2) explore, based on evidence, effective ways and means to strengthen social development, with particular attention to examples of policies that can leverage the interlinkages between the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development; (3) formulate policy recommendations to guide national governments to promote the social perspective in their implementation of the 2030 Agenda; (4) identify opportunities for the Commission for Social Development to help strengthen social development, including in the follow up to the post-2015 development agenda.

## **III. STRUCTURE**

The panel will consist of six participants (five panellists and a moderator) representing Member States, academia and civil society organizations. Each panellist will be invited to make a 10-minute presentation. Following their presentations, the moderator will open

the floor for questions and an interactive discussion. The panel discussion will be chaired by H.E. Mr.I.Jinga, chair of the Commission's Bureau.

The panel discussion will be informed by the reports of the Secretary-General on rethinking and strengthening social development in the contemporary world (E/CN.5/2015/3 and E/CN.5/2016/X).

Panellists are expected to structure their presentations around concrete ideas that highlight new developments/directions and innovations in social development with emphasis on evidence-based policy examples in policy coherence and integration, strategies to leverage interlinkages as well as in the key social development areas of poverty, inequality, employment and social integration. It is critical for panellists to bring concrete evidence to: (a) analyse strategies and policy measures that have been successful in promoting social development to lay solid foundation for sustainable development; (b) show where and under which conditions these policies have been most effective; and (c) discuss the links between social development and other aspects of sustainable development.

Panellists are expected to share concrete examples and to highlight good practices and lessons learned in their presentations and interventions. Presentations should be engaging and thought-provoking. Panellists are strongly discouraged from reading prepared statements.

The concrete format of and time allocation for the panel is as follows:

Speaker	Suggested speaking time
Chair: Opening remarks	2 minutes
Moderator: Context-setting	5 minutes
Panellists (5): Presentations	10 minutes per panellist
Moderated interactive discussion	Interventions limited to 3 minutes or less followed by responses from panellists. There will be no formal statements.
Total duration of the high-level panel discussion: 3 hours	

The panel discussion will take place at the United Nations Headquarters (Conference Room to be confirmed), in New York, on Wednesday, 3 February 2016, 3:00 pm - 6:00 pm.