



TAKING ACTION TO IMPROVE LIVES

**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL
2017 INTEGRATION SEGMENT
8 – 10 May 2017**

22 February 2017

Making eradication of poverty an integral objective of all policies: what will it take?

Concept Note

Background

The Economic and Social Council has been assigned a key role in the integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, in the Outcome Document of Rio+20¹ and by General Assembly resolution 68/1. In the latter, the General Assembly decided that the Council should hold an annual integration segment to promote the integration of the three dimensions, both within and beyond the United Nations system. The main functions of the segment are to: (a) consolidate the inputs of Member States, the subsidiary bodies of the Council, the United Nations system and other relevant stakeholders; (b) promote the balanced integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development; and (c) bring together the key messages from the ECOSOC system on the main theme and develop action-oriented recommendations for follow up².

The theme for the 2017 Integration Segment is “*Making eradication of poverty an integral objective of all policies: what will it take?*” as a contribution to the main theme of the 2017 session of the Council, “Eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions through promoting sustainable development, expanding opportunities and addressing related challenges.” The consideration of the ECOSOC main theme culminates in the High-level segment. In particular, the thematic discussion on the main theme of the Council at the High-level Segment will benefit from the Integration Segment’s proceedings.

Objectives

The aim of the 2017 Integration Segment will be to: (1) consider national experiences, best practices and lessons learned on integrated policymaking for poverty reduction; (2) provide a platform for key stakeholders to identify and discuss opportunities and challenges in developing integrated approaches to tackle poverty in a sustained, inclusive and sustainable way; and (3) extract policy recommendations to guide integrated policymaking for poverty reduction as an integral part of the 2030 Agenda.

¹ A/RES/66/288

² Deliberations among Member States on the follow-up and review architecture of the 2030 Agenda have brought about a change in the work programme arrangements of ECOSOC. General Assembly resolution 70/299 requested the Council to ensure alignment of its annual main themes with the annual themes of the High-level political forum (HLPF) under the auspices of ECOSOC. Consequently, the Integration Segment and the remainder of its work, as well as that of its subsidiary bodies, will be aligned with the main theme of the Council, which in turn is aligned with the HLPF theme. The aim is to ensure an overall coherence of the UN system in providing comprehensive, strengthened support to Member States in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.



The Integration Segment offers a unique opportunity to bring together key stakeholders to assess the status of integration and coherence of actions on the SDGs, providing guidance in advance of the preparations of the HLPF. In 2017, the Segment will strive to increase cooperation with the ECOSOC subsidiary bodies by better integrating the work of the ECOSOC system in its discussions. The contributions of the ECOSOC system will be made through the participation of ministerial representatives who are integrally associated with the work of the various bodies. The subsidiary bodies will be encouraged to use the Segment's proceedings as inputs in their subsequent work. This could generate a *de facto* follow-up mechanism through the ECOSOC cycle, with the contributions of the various technical bodies to the Segment and their subsequent follow-up of its outcomes. The 2017 Segment will also aim to bring together the experience of the UN development system in initiatives to tackle poverty at the country and regional levels. These inputs will seek to assess best practices and lessons learned regarding system-wide support for poverty eradication.

Scope

The 2017 Integration Segment will have as its leitmotif the cross-cutting nature of poverty and the need for an integrated approach across disciplines and sectors to eradicate poverty in all its forms and dimensions. Specific examples will be highlighted from initiatives within and across countries that are designed to holistically address poverty eradication and broader sustainable development objectives.

There are still over 800 million people living under \$1.90 a day, the international poverty line,³ and 10% of the world's workers and their families are poor, a sign that access to a job is not enough to escape poverty. The Sustainable Development Goal 1 (SDG1) aims at ending poverty in all its forms everywhere, carrying over and enhancing the targets under the respective Millennium Development Goal. The 2030 Agenda recognizes poverty as the "greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development." To eradicate it, coordinated efforts must be undertaken to build on the achievements realized so far and to prevent that current and future challenges jeopardize further progress.

Social policy alone cannot eradicate poverty, as neither can policies focusing only on the income aspect of poverty. As other policies have direct or indirect impacts on poverty results, poverty eradication objectives must be included in the design of public policy in a cross-cutting manner. Therefore, integrated policies are needed. Fighting poverty in a sustained and integrated way will also have important impacts in other areas, including in the social and economic realms. For example, liberating groups of population from poverty or vulnerability to poverty by enabling them to enter the formal economy through the job market or entrepreneurship will bring about an expansion of economic and social opportunities and thus affect national production frontiers. The Segment will discuss synergies created by integrated approaches to tackling poverty in its various dimensions, consider challenges and opportunities and highlight lessons learned.

The Segment will also consider ways to monitor and measure poverty and prosperity that will require involving a wider range of stakeholders and broadening the space for action. This will also reinforce inclusiveness and transparency while fostering greater efficiency in policymaking. The availability of data will be crucial to inform strategies, programmes and policies, as well as the capacity to manage and analyze data in order to feed into the policy-making process and monitor progress in implementation. Methodologies that consider poverty a multidimensional phenomenon already exist, and further work is ongoing in that direction. Capacity development to improve the availability, management and analysis of data will be an important element in this regard. The Segment's proceedings on integrated and innovative policy approaches to address the multidimensionality of poverty will be a key input for the thematic discussion on the main theme of the Council, taking place

³ United Nations, *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2016*:

<http://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2016/The%20Sustainable%20Development%20Goals%20Report%202016.pdf>

at the High-level segment. The thematic discussion will culminate ECOSOC's comprehensive analysis during its current session of challenges, opportunities and policy alternatives aiming at eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, highlighting innovations based on best practices in particular.

Official Development Assistance (ODA) remains an important source of development financing for many developing countries, in particular least developed countries. As in the case at the national level, it is also of vital importance to achieve policy coherence at all levels in development cooperation, in order to catalyze other sources of financing and propel developing countries to unleash their enormous sustainable development potential. This entails meeting ODA commitments, as well as the mobilization of domestic and international resources, public and private, and technical cooperation support. It further requires increased coherence of the international monetary, financial and international trade systems.

Eradicating poverty will also demand institutional change towards more inclusiveness and accountability. This will entail changes in social, cultural and political norms that govern power relations at the national, regional and global levels as the playing fields are leveled. These processes are often long-term and entail a conversation between all stakeholders involved. It seems important to entail in such conversation if we are to reach those individuals who are farther behind and once and for all free our planet from the scourge of poverty.

Format and participants

The Segment will take place over three days, chaired by H.E. Nabeel Munir (Pakistan), Vice-President of ECOSOC. It will feature an opening session with eminent personalities, a number of roundtable sessions and panels, as well as a General Debate. Each panel or roundtable session will be moderated and will include open floor discussions. Various side events, organized by Member States, the United Nations system and other stakeholders, will offer additional opportunities to consider the adequacy of integrated solutions to achieve sustainable poverty eradication outcomes, both in the short and long run. The programme will include a general debate, allowing Member States to present their experiences and share national perspectives on the issue of poverty eradication and policy integration.

The Segment will highlight best practices and lessons learned by Member States, the UN system and other relevant stakeholders, presenting challenges and opportunities of integrated policies for the eradication of poverty in all its dimensions that can be applied in implementing the 2030 Agenda. Participants will include Ministers of Government, senior policy makers, parliamentarians, private sector, academia and UN system representatives, alongside Major Groups representatives. Eminent speakers will include Heads of State or Government with best practices to share in this area.

Documentation

The discussions will benefit from a report in the form of a Conference Room Paper reflecting the substantive inputs from Member States, the UN system and ECOSOC subsidiary bodies, on integrated policies and initiatives for poverty reduction.

Outcome

The outcome of the Segment will be a summary by the ECOSOC Vice-President, highlighting the main policy recommendations and providing guidance on implementing the 2030 Agenda for the eradication of poverty through policy integration. The summary will be transmitted to the President of ECOSOC for consideration by Member States in the 2017 ECOSOC High-level Segment and High-level political forum under the auspices of ECOSOC. Relevant policy recommendations contained in the summary maybe reflected in the Ministerial Declaration as the main outcome document at the culmination of the ECOSOC cycle.