



United Nations

Department of
Economic and
Social Affairs

Draft Concept Note

Ministerial Forum

“Twenty-five years of the World Summit for Social Development: Addressing emerging societal challenges to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda”

Tuesday, 11 February 2020, 10:00am – 1:00pm
Conference Room 4, UN Headquarters, New York

**COMMISSION for
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

United Nations Headquarters, New York

1. Background

The General Assembly, in its resolution “Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly” (A/C.3/74/L.12/Rev.1), stressed the importance of the World Summit for Social Development, and invited all Member States, relevant organizations of the United Nations development system and the specialized agencies, regional commissions and other international organizations, as well as civil society and private sector organizations, to actively promote and undertake activities during 2020 to support appropriate celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the World Summit. Further, the General Assembly invited the Commission for Social Development to give an appropriate consideration to the commemoration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the World Summit by organizing a half-day meeting during its fifty-eighth session.

The Bureau decided to hold a Ministerial Forum on 11 February 2020 to focus on “**Twenty-five years of the World Summit for Social Development: Addressing emerging societal challenges to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda**”. It will be under sub-agenda item “Emerging issues” to also contribute to the theme of the 2020 HLPF “*Accelerated action and transformative pathways: realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development*”.

2. Context

Twenty-five years ago, in 1995, 186 countries gathered in Copenhagen, Denmark for the World Summit for Social Development (WSSD), joined by 2,300 representatives from 811 non-governmental organizations and over 2,800 journalists.¹ At this Summit, world leaders pledged to make the eradication of poverty, the goal of full employment and decent work and fostering social integration the overriding objectives of social development. Five years later, the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly adopted further initiatives to enhance social development. This year marks the 25th anniversary of this landmark Summit.

Over the past 25 years, countries have made significant progress in advancing social development. The progress, however, has been uneven across countries and inequalities persists. Moreover, countries face emerging challenges, such as changes in demographic dynamics, high and rising inequality, negative effects of climate change and natural disasters, rapid technological change, and more recently backlash against globalization. These challenges, if not adequately addressed, could have significant negative impacts on the progress so far made, and potentially hamper the prospects of achieving the major objectives of the Social Summit, and the Sustainable Development Goals.²

At the SDG Summit held in September 2019, Heads of States reaffirmed the determination to implement the 2030 Agenda, emphasizing that eradication of poverty in all its forms and dimensions is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development, and reaffirming the commitment to leave no one behind by taking more tangible steps to support people in vulnerable situations and the most vulnerable countries and to reach the furthest behind first, and decided to launch an ambitious and accelerated response to reach the common vision by 2030.³

The commemoration of the 25th anniversary of the World Summit for Social Development this year coincides with the activation of a decade of action to ensure the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The Commission for Social Development, as a functional commission of the Economic and Social Council serving as the main United Nations forum for an intensified global dialogue on social development issues and in promoting the integrated treatment of social development issues in the United Nations system, will celebrate the 25th anniversary of the World Summit in the context of its contribution to the July 2020 HLPF and to accelerating action for SDGs.

3. Objectives

The primary objective of the Ministerial Forum will be to highlight successful strategies and policies from 25 years of implementation of the World Summit for Social Development to contribute to a decade of action to deliver the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. It will provide an opportunity for Ministers and senior Government officials to

¹ United Nations. 1995. World Summit for Social Development and the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action. 6-12 March. United Nations: New York.

² E/CN.5/2020/

³ A/RES/74/4, Political declaration of the high-level political forum on sustainable development convened under the auspices of the General assembly

share collective knowledge, insights, and lessons learned from their experience in the implementation of the Copenhagen Programme of Action in the past 25 years to prompt actions for SDGs. They will exchange good policies/practices and innovative approaches that have proven to be effective in addressing emerging societal challenges at the national and regional levels in an interactive dialogue with a wider audience, including members of the Commission and relevant stakeholders.

4. Structure and format

The Ministerial Forum will be chaired by the Chair of the 58th session of the Commission for Social Development. The Chair will open the Forum with brief remarks and invite high level official to make opening statements. This opening segment will be followed by keynote speeches, after which the ministerial panel discussion will ensue. The moderator will introduce the panellists (Ministers and high-level policymakers) and invite them to make 7-10 minutes presentations. Following the presentations, the moderator will open the discussion and invite questions and comments from the floor.

Panellists are expected to structure their presentations around concrete policies and strategies that have proven to be successful in addressing emerging societal challenges, and to highlight innovative approaches, strategies and lessons learned at the national and regional levels to address them.

The outcomes of the discussions will be reflected in the Chair's summary, which will be part of the inputs of the Commission for Social Development to the ECOSOC, in particular, its high-level integration segment, and the 2020 High-Level Political Forum to be convened under the theme: *'Accelerated action and transformative pathways: realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development: Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality'*.

5. Guiding questions

- I. What are the most important lessons learned from implementing the Copenhagen Programme of Action over the past 25 years? Please share your experience and insights in the context of the way forward to deliver the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs?
- II. What are good policies and practices that have proven to be effective in addressing emerging societal challenges in your country? Please share successful strategies and innovative approaches, as well the challenges you have encountered.
- III. How can countries accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda while ensuring that no one is left behind?

Time allocation

Speaker	Suggested speaking time
<p>Opening remarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair of the 58th session of the Commission • Vice President of ECOSOC • President of General Assembly 	5 minutes for each speaker
<p>Keynote speaker</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Liu Zhenmin, Under-Secretary-General, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) 	15 minutes for keynote speech
<p>Ministerial Panel</p> <p>Panellists (4-6): Presentations</p>	7 -10 minutes per panellist
Moderated interactive discussion	Q & A directly related to the presentations for clarification, if any (10 minutes)
	Open discussion with questions and comments from participants of the Commission (Interventions limited to 3 minutes, followed by responses from panellists)
Concluding remarks by panellists and Closing by the Chair	10 minutes
	Total duration: 3 hours

