

# COMMISSION for SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

United Nations Headquarters, New York

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

### Emerging Issues:

### Addressing the Social Impacts of Multi-faceted Crises to Accelerate Recovery from the Lingering Effects of the Pandemic through the Full Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Wednesday, 8 February, 3:00 pm-6:00 pm, Conference room 4

### Draft Concept Note



#### 1. Background

Pursuant to Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) decision in 2006, the Commission for Social Development has included an agenda item on 'Emerging issues' in its work programme. Under this agenda item, the Commission addresses issues affecting social development that require urgent consideration or new cross-cutting issues in the context of evolving global development challenges.

The Bureau of the Commission decided **"Addressing the social impacts of multi-faceted crises to accelerate recovery from the lingering effects of the pandemic through the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development"** as the theme of Emerging Issues for its 61<sup>st</sup> session.

The theme expressly addresses the fact that, with time running out for achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, multiple crises are now threatening the success of the Agenda and the world remains off-track on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The theme also echoes the theme of ECOSOC for 2023, which is: **"Accelerating the recovery from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at all levels,"** and is therefore integral to the Commission's effort to align its work with that of ECOSOC and the HLPF.

#### 2. Context

The COVID-19 pandemic caused an unprecedented disruption to almost all aspects of daily life. According to the Sustainable Development Goals Report 2022, "the pandemic wiped out more than four years of progress on poverty eradication and pushed 93 million more people into extreme poverty in 2020. It has disrupted essential health services, resulting in

a drop in immunization coverage for the first time in a decade and a rise in deaths from tuberculosis and malaria, among many other impacts. Prolonged school closures put 24 million learners – from pre-primary to university levels – at risk of not returning to school<sup>1</sup>.”

The COVID-19 pandemic and its lingering effects have led to a reversal in human development in almost every country of the world. According to the United Nations Development Programme, the Human Development Index recently declined for the first time in the 32 years that the index has been measured. In fact, the Human Development Index, which measures a nation’s health, education, and standard of living, has declined globally for two years in a row. Human development has fallen back to its 2016 levels, reversing much of the progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals.<sup>2</sup> The report adds that 90 percent of countries registered a decline in their HDI score in either 2020 or 2021.

Although many countries have seen a rebound in economic growth since the downturn caused by the pandemic, this recovery remains fragile and uneven, with some of the most vulnerable countries being left behind.

The recovery is further complicated by the existential threat of climate change that has seen record high and low temperatures, leading to an increase in the severity and frequency of heatwaves, droughts and apocalyptic wildfires and floods that are already affecting billions of people around the world.

In addition, the world is currently witnessing the largest number of violent conflicts since 1946, with one quarter of the global population now living in conflict-affected countries. As of May 2022, a record 100 million people have been forcibly displaced from their homes<sup>3</sup>. In particular, the consequences of the war in Ukraine have led to a sharp increase in the price of food, fuel and fertilizer; disrupted supply chains leading to a global food crisis and a global cost of living crisis.

The multiple crises are likely to increase inequalities within and between countries, between developed and developing countries, between men and women, and between formal and informal sector workers.

High inflation, slowing economic growth, poverty, inequality, the increase in food and commodity prices and the significant rise in global food insecurity further endanger development prospects and contribute to a further divergence in recovery, particularly in the most vulnerable countries already suffering from high levels of poverty, food insecurity and malnutrition.

The multiple and interlinked global crises are putting the Goals at great risk and jeopardizing the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. The world must mobilize and accelerate actions for rescuing the Goals and to leave no one behind by adopting resilient, sustainable, inclusive, low greenhouse gas emission and climate-resilient development pathways in a transparent and inclusive manner in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication and for the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda. On the basis of policy

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<sup>1</sup> <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2022/The-Sustainable-Development-Goals-Report-2022.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.undp.org/asia-pacific/press-releases/multiple-crises-halt-progress-9-out-10-countries-fall-backwards-human-development-undp-report-warns>

<sup>3</sup> <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2022/The-Sustainable-Development-Goals-Report-2022.pdf>

successes Member States have achieved, especially through leveraging and expanding social protection to vulnerable population groups during the pandemic, the Commission could discuss and identify good practices to support an inclusive recovery from multi-faceted crises and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

### **3. Objectives**

Drawing on a Note by the Secretariat on Emerging Issues and the insights of experts, the objective of the panel is to share national experiences and identify policies and measures that have proven to be effective in addressing poverty, inequality, and the other social impacts of the multiple crises. It will also draw upon lessons learned during the pandemic and identify common challenges to getting back on track towards the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The outcome of the panel discussion will be a unique contribution to the 2023 High-Level Political Forum and the ECOSOC high-level segment.

More specifically, the panel aims to:

- a) Discuss how national policies and measures are helping to address the social impacts of the current global crises to get back on track to achieving 2030 Agenda.
- b) Examine lessons how these national policies and measures to tackle poverty and food insecurity could best be designed, implemented, monitored, and evaluated.
- c) Explore further mechanisms for the implementation of the social dimension of global agreements for mitigating the climate crisis in the wake of the recently concluded COP 27.
- d) Explore how the Commission could continue and enhance its role in empowering people, promoting inclusive and equitable recovery, and contributing to the building of more inclusive and resilient societies and sustainable development.

### **4. Structure and format of the interactive dialogue**

The high-level panel discussion on Emerging issues will be chaired by the Chair of the Commission for Social Development. The Chair will open the panel with brief remarks and introduce the Moderator. The Moderator will introduce the panelists and invite them to make presentations. Following their presentations, the moderator will invite questions directly related to the presentations from the audience/participants and open the floor for interactive dialogue.

Panelists are expected to structure their presentations around effective social policies and innovative strategies to address the social impacts of the multiple global crises and the bold actions required to address them. Highlights and outcomes of the panel discussion will be reflected in the Chair's summary. The summary will be contribute to the preparation of the Commission's inputs to the ECOSOC, in particular, the high-level segment of the ECOSOC and the 2023 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

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

<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Suggested speaking time</b>
Chair: Opening remarks	10 minutes
Moderator: Brief remarks and the introduction of panellists	5 minutes

Panellists (4): Presentations	15 minutes per panellist
Moderated interactive dialogue	Q & A (15 minutes)
	Interactive dialogue (60 minutes)
Concluding remarks by panellists and the moderator	15 minutes
Closing by the Chair	5 minutes
	Total duration: 3 hours

## 5. Guiding questions

The Commission for Social Development may wish to consider the following questions in its deliberations:

- What national policies and measures have been effective in addressing the social impacts since the onset of the COVID-19? How do these policies support a more inclusive and resilient recovery and protect the poorest and the most vulnerable?
- What are the common challenges countries face and how can these challenges be addressed in order to get back on track towards the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda?
- What are the bold actions required at the national, regional and international levels to get the world back on track to achieving the sustainable development goals?
- How can successful measures and policies be (1) scaled up nationally and (2) shared with other countries through mutual learning processes and the exchange of good practices.