Breakfast Meeting with Academia

In preparation for the 2018 ECOSOC Special Meeting

“Towards sustainable, resilient and inclusive societies through participation of all”

New York, 9 March 2018

Concept Note

The 2030 Agenda recognizes the need to build peaceful, just and inclusive societies that are based on respect for human rights, on rule of law and good governance at all levels, and on transparent, effective and accountable institutions. Ensuring equitable participation of all stakeholders in the development process lies at the heart of this endeavour.

In the context of the transformative 2030 Agenda, participation of all is not limited to any specific realm. To achieve the SDGs, participation of relevant stakeholders is required in policy making for all dimensions of sustainable development – the economic, social and environmental. The challenges to sustainable, resilient and inclusive societies are manifold: In the economic realm, rising inequalities in income and wealth are undermining social cohesion, fostering instability. Marginalized groups continue to lack access to social and economic life as well as representation in political processes. Environmental degradation and climate change threaten the livelihood of societies across the globe.

Studies on sustainable development stress the central role of strong public involvement in decision-making in the development process to benefit people and planet. Sustainable, resilient and inclusive societies are universally recognized as the foundations for peace and development. To build and strengthen these foundations, political, economic and social institutions need to empower all groups within society, including women and girls, persons with disability, indigenous peoples, ethnic minorities, refugees and others. At the policy level, comprehensive strategies need to focus on human rights, economic empowerment, health, education and gender and social norms as priority areas to strengthen societies.

Studies have shown several pathways for fostering participation and transparency through institutions. Some examples include e-governance and open data to facilitate citizen engagement at city, local and national levels, as well as pro-poor and gender-sensitive policy frameworks implemented by several countries. New technologies, particularly in ICT, are instrumental in driving this change. Various studies also highlight the crucial importance of enabling the empowerment of all groups through equitable access to education, social services and financing.

In the lead up to the Preparatory Meeting (26-27 March 2018, Czech Republic) and the ECOSOC Special Meeting (23 May 2018, New York), the Breakfast Meeting with academia will be held on 9 March 2018 at the Bohemian National Hall in New York. It will bring together representatives from academia and Member States. The objective of the meeting will be to advance a conceptual framework for the ECOSOC Special Meeting based on research, as well as best practices, which can inform the elaboration of actionable policy recommendations to foster sustainable, resilient and inclusive societies through participation of all.
Focus Questions:

To focus the discussions, participants may wish to prepare their intervention around the following questions:

- How can the interface between academia and policy makers be strengthened to elaborate actionable policy recommendations, informed by evidence and data, to foster sustainable, resilient and inclusive societies?
- How can science, technology and innovation be leveraged to foster participation and inclusion in all dimensions of sustainable development?
- What policy approaches can support and strengthen institutional capacity for broad-based participation and inclusive policy making?
- How can international cooperation, particularly multilateral normative frameworks, help in addressing the challenges to sustainable, resilient and inclusive societies?
- How can participation of all vulnerable groups in the development process be strengthened, including through economic empowerment and enhanced rule of law, to ensure that no one is left behind?

Format:

The Breakfast Meeting will be chaired by the ECOSOC President and moderated by Navid Hanif, Director of the Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination, UN DESA. It will begin with the intervention from three lead speakers, followed by interactive discussion with participants. Suggestions put forward in the discussions will feed into the Prague preparatory meeting as well as the ECOSOC Special Meeting.