

BRIEF VI. ECOSOC and Countries in Special Situations

This brief is part of a series aimed to provide background information on ECOSOC strengthening. Briefs include (i) ECOSOC mandates and evolution of functions; (ii) policy dialogue and guidance; (iii) guiding and promoting a coherent and coordinated UN system; (iv) subsidiary bodies; (v) relationship with the General Assembly, Security Council, the Peacebuilding Commission and the Human Rights Council; (vi) countries in special situations; and (vii) addressing emergency issues.

Resolution 68/1 specifies that “the Economic and Social Council should devote time to the specific needs of countries in special situations, namely the least developed countries, the landlocked developing countries, the small island developing States and Africa and integrate their concerns into all segments as cross-cutting priorities. It will continue to address the particular development challenges of middle-income countries” (OP19).

« Least Developed Countries »

The Council has a standing item on the follow-up to the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) in the Management Segment. In addition to the LDCs report, the Council also reviews the addition to and graduation from the list of LDCs, which is based on the recommendations of the UN Committee for Development Policy during its triennial review. The review took place in 2018 and three countries (Bhutan, Solomon Islands and Sao Tome and Principe) were recommended for graduation. The next triennial review will be in 2021.

Pursuant to the General Assembly resolution 74/232, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Economic and Social Council will convene a special joint thematic event on “Accelerated implementation of the 2030 Agenda in LDCs to leave no one behind” on 13 April 2020. The thematic event will provide substantive input to the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC-V) in Doha in March 2021.

« ECOSOC Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti »

The Council has played an important role in developing mechanisms to respond to the problems faced by countries emerging from conflict to assist them on their path to development. The Council considers the report of its Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti under item “Long-term programme of support for Haiti”. This Group, composed of 17 countries and chaired by Canada, monitors the development prospects for the country and undertakes two missions per year, a visit to Washington D.C. (the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank Group, Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), the Inter-American Dialogue and the Organization of American States) and a field visit to the country, the outcome of which forms the basis of the Group’s annual report and recommendations. The Council also considers an update on the situation in the country by the United Nations Resident Coordinator, and then takes action on a draft resolution that renews the mandate of the Group.

« ECOSOC and South Sudan »

Following the independence of South Sudan on 9 July 2011, ECOSOC, through its resolution 2011/43, expressed interest in working with partners in addressing the extensive humanitarian, peacebuilding and development challenges facing the country. Since then, the Council has considered South Sudan under its agenda item “African Countries Emerging from Conflict” to promote a coherent and coordinated support to the country by the UN system. During the last years, some of the UN organizations working in South Sudan contributed to the discussion on how the political and security crisis in the country has been affecting the development prospects and reversing the gains made in the first two years of independence. An oral update is generally provided by the UN Resident Coordinator, focused more on the humanitarian aspects of the UN’s work. The consideration of this item during the Management Segment, however, does not allow for in-depth discussion to provide guidance for integrated support at country-level.

« ECOSOC and the Sahel Region »

Building on its joint meetings with the Peacebuilding Commission on the situation of countries in the Sahel region, the Economic and Social Council adopted a resolution on “Support to the Sahel region” in December 2019 (E/RES/2020/2). The Council stressed the need for strengthening collective and integrated engagement across the Sahel region, in line with existing frameworks, including the Group of Five for the Sahel Priority Investment Programme and the African Union Strategy for the Sahel Region.

« ECOSOC Meetings and Countries in Special Situations »

The following table provides an overview of specific meetings, sessions and panels in various segments of the ECOSOC devoted to addressing the needs of countries in special situations since the adoption of GA resolution 72/305 on 23 July 2018. In addition to these, speakers and panelists from countries in special situations participated in meetings of the Council to mainstream the needs of these countries in the work of the Council.

Date	Meeting	Focus
November 2018	Joint Meeting of ECOSOC and the PBC on “Linkages between Climate Change and Challenges to Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace in the Sahel”	The Sahel region
November 2018	ECOSOC Special Meeting on “Pathways to resilience in climate-affected Small Island Developing States (SIDS)– A Forward-Looking Resilience Building Agenda: Promises, results and next steps”	SIDS
April 2019	ECOSOC Youth Forum on “Youth: Empowerment, Included and Equal” Regional Breakout Session on key regional concerns and priorities for youth regarding the SDGs implementation in Africa	Africa
April 2019	ECOSOC Special meeting on “Response to Cyclone Idai in Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe”	Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe
June 2019	ECOSOC event on the transition from relief to development: “Recent advancements, challenges and best practices of the collaboration between the humanitarian, development and peacebuilding actors in Africa”	Africa
July 2019	ECOSOC Management Meeting, consideration of agenda item “Long-term programme of support for Haiti”	Haiti
July 2019	ECOSOC Management Meeting, consideration of agenda item on “African countries emerging from conflict”	South Sudan
November 2019	Joint ECOSOC-PBC Meeting on “The Impact of Cross-border Transhumance on Sustainable Peace and Development in West Africa and the Sahel”	West Africa and the Sahel