



THE PRESIDENT  
OF THE  
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

26 March 2020

Excellency,

Further to my letters dated 12 and 16 March, and my statement circulated on 18 March 2020, I am writing to further update you on the impact of COVID-19 on the work of the Economic and Social Council.

As mentioned in my statement of 18 March, the Bureau of ECOSOC has proposed major downscaling and cancellations of several substantial ECOSOC meetings, as well as further postponing or cancelling of all ECOSOC meetings in the coming 8 weeks pursuant to the guidance from the host country which was endorsed by the UN Medical Director.

The ECOSOC Bureau met on 20 March to discuss the meetings that could be accommodated including in a scaled down version, situation permitting, as well as meetings that would need to be postponed or deferred to the 2021 session. Our decisions were taken bearing in mind the changing situation, the already heavy schedule of meetings planned for June and July 2020, and the availability of conference services. The Bureau therefore proposes the following:

- i) Postpone the Forum on Financing for Development follow-up (20-23 April) to a later date to be announced which would be scaled down to a single short meeting to adopt the outcome document. Alternatively, a “remote” adoption of the outcome document could be considered.
- ii) Postpone the dedicated management meeting to conduct elections scheduled on 15 April, possibly seek the agreement of the Council to elect candidates for which there is no request for secret ballot on a non-objection basis (by silence procedure), or look into the possibility of remotely convening a meeting (i.e. without physical presence), subject to confirming the technological and procedural feasibility of such “virtual” arrangements, on the understanding that elections by secret ballot would be postponed to a later date, possibly in June.

All Permanent Representatives  
and Permanent Observers to the United Nations New York

- iii) Defer to the 2021 session of ECOSOC the Partnership Forum (3 April), the Special meeting of the Council on international cooperation in tax matters (1 May), the Multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals (12-13 May) and the Development Cooperation Forum (14-15 May).
- iv) Proceed with the convening of the operational activities for development segment (19-21 May) with New York-based participants attending in-person and others joining remotely.

In the same vein, and following consultations with the Chairs of the subsidiary bodies, the ECOSOC Bureau proposes postponing the closing meeting of the Commission on the Status of Women (9-20 March), the Commission on Population and Development (30 March - 3 April) and the United Nations Forum on Forests (4-8 May) and holding short meetings of these respective bodies in order to adopt procedural decisions and other important proposals, as relevant. These meetings could be held back to back in order to streamline the calendar and optimize the use of conference services.

The ECOSOC Bureau also proposes postponing the Committee of Experts on Public Administration (30 March - 3 April), the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (13-24 April) and the Committee of Experts on international cooperation in tax matters (27-30 April) to a later date to be decided taking into consideration the availability of meeting rooms and conference services.

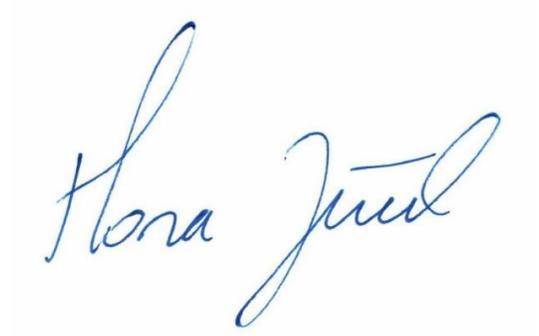
These proposals are made with a view to fulfilling the mandates entrusted to us in the best possible manner.

As mentioned in the joint letters of 10 and 19 March 2020 from the President of the General Assembly and myself, the UN75 Youth Plenary (31 March) and the ECOSOC Youth Forum (1-2 April), as well as the joint thematic event on “Accelerated implementation of the 2030 Agenda in LDCs to leave no one behind” (13 April), have been postponed to a later date to be announced. In my letter dated 20 March, I informed that the ECOSOC meeting on “The Sahel Region” (14 April) is also postponed and that I will do my utmost to reschedule the meeting at a later date.

In terms of decision making, I am consulting with the Bureau and the Secretariat on options for proposing the adoption of ECOSOC decisions through a silence procedure, when convening a plenary meeting is not practicable due to the coronavirus pandemic. I will revert on this matter in due course.

I will also continue to closely monitor the rapidly evolving situation, along with the ECOSOC Bureau, and keep you informed of developments.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Mona Juul". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'M' and a long, sweeping tail on the 'l'.

Mona Juul  
President of the Economic and Social  
Council