

Integration Dialogues

May – June 2021

Background

As part of the preparatory process of the Integration Segment, the Vice-President of the Economic and Social Council will organize three informal virtual conversations denominated “Integration Dialogues”. These dialogues will provide an opportunity to identify the key policy options to inform the deliberations at the Integration Segment, and critical guidance on integration policies that should be implemented. They will focus on the most creative ideas emanating from the work of the Council’s subsidiary bodies and the UN system to break new ground in the reflection on how to continue facing and recover better from COVID-19.

The integration dialogues will also provide a platform for further discussion between Member States and the UN System on the policies and programmes that best reflect national and international priorities for an equal, resilient, and sustainable recovery.

Format

The integration dialogues will take the form of an informal dialogue and will be open to all Member and Observer States of the United Nations, as well as to all UN system and civil society.

Each dialogue will have a panel composed of representatives of subsidiary bodies of the Council and UN agencies, followed by an interactive discussion. The panels will feature Chairs of the subsidiary bodies of the Council and UN system Executive Heads. Member States would be lead respondents. Selected countries, including VNR countries, and Chairs of specific groups of countries could be invited to share their experience and lessons with the response to the pandemic and react to the ideas from panelists or other countries.

In order to capture as much as possible the integrated, indivisible and interlinked nature of the SDGs and the three dimensions of sustainable development and the work the subsidiary bodies of the Council and the UN system organizations have been doing taking these elements into consideration, in particular in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, Council subsidiary bodies and UN system organizations are encouraged to participate in interactive discussions at all dialogues, whether or not they are represented at the panel. Each dialogue will have UN agencies, Member States and civil society partners who will answer the guiding questions and provide the membership with additional

inputs on the issues. Moreover, each dialogue will provide a gender perspective, considering the nature of gender as a cross-cutting issue.

The integration dialogues will be held on the Webex platform for 90 minutes each. Information on how to register will be sent out in advance of each dialogue.

Outcome

The outcome of the integration dialogues will be a concise note identifying key policy options to inform the deliberations at the Integration Segment, including concrete examples of **integrated policy in action and providing critical guidance on integration issues that need to be addressed**. The note would serve as a basis for the delegations' preparations for the Segment, discussions at the Segment and the summary to be presented by the Vice-President to the HLPF.

Dialogue 1: Institutional strengthening, governance, inclusion and the rule of law (27 May 2021)

Building on the SDGs reviewed at the 2021 HLPF and the Council's main theme, the first integration dialogue will aim at discussing the importance of institutional strengthening, governance, and the rule of law for the SDGs as well as in the context of the recovery from COVID-19. Given the sessions focusing on the SDGs under review at the [2021 HLPF](#), the dialogue will also focus on how to build institutional capacities for more resilient health systems and to address systemic inequalities.

The COVID-19 pandemic has hit the world when the Decade of Action and Delivery for Sustainable Development was just beginning. The global pandemic has become the biggest health crisis in modern times, turning also into a human and socio-economic crisis. The pandemic and the inequity in access to vaccines revealed and further exacerbated inequalities while threatening progress towards the SDGs. This adds to the existential threat posed by climate change, which is already showing major environmental, social and economic effects around the world.

The multifaceted nature of the COVID-19 pandemic and the urgency to pursue vaccine equity has forced institutions at all levels to be even more coordinated developing integrated policies. The responses to the COVID-19 pandemic point to the urgent need for science-based governance reforms to strengthen governments' capability to address short- and long-term challenges and improve resilience to economic, social, and environmental shocks. Good governance and more participatory, effective, accountable and transparent institutions have impacted on the effectiveness of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic; evidence and science-based policy making has proved essential. Institutions impact systems as well as policies; there resides their vital importance for the recovery from COVID-19 and the implementation and achievement of the SDGs.

This dialogue could focus on the following questions:

1. What are some transformative legal, policy and institutional measures to break down the silo approaches to enable countries build back better? In particular, what are some integrated policy responses to address vaccine inequity, social protection and health systems strengthening as part of their strategy to achieve a sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic?
2. How can institutions become more effective and accountable in addressing systemic inequalities and discrimination to ensure no one is left behind in access to vaccines and the recovery from the pandemic?
3. How can the international economic and financing architecture's assistance help build capacity in developing countries to implement fiscal and monetary policies to promote a resilient recovery from the pandemic? How can they help promote inclusive, accountable and transparent public institutions and public finances for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs?

[Common question for all dialogues]

4. How can we leverage the work of the Economic and Social Council as well as its subsidiary machinery to accelerate Member States' efforts towards a sustainable and resilient recovering and in building an inclusive and effective path for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, including on financing, technology and innovation matters? How can we improve the division of labour among subsidiary bodies in areas that require further attention and action?

Dialogue 2: Building back better towards inclusive, sustainable, and just economies for recovery: Re-designing the contract between people and planet (3 June 2021)

The COVID-19 pandemic has provided the world with an unexpected opportunity to reassess earlier commitments, readjust previous policies and redirect the resources at its disposal. Any response to tackle the pandemic must be integrated, address the root causes and impacts, and be effective and sustainable. Bringing these efforts into the context of the urgent global threat that is climate change means that environmental sustainability, including sustainable consumption and production, needs also to be a central element in policies and strategies to recover from COVID-19. Major recovery packages have been implemented in developed countries while developing countries have faced rising constraints and demands in the response to the pandemic. The recovery packages should contemplate longer term investments to realize the SDGs for every part of society and ensure that growth is inclusive, sustainable and promotes decent work.

In order to develop targeted and effective policies, availability of high-quality data is imperative. The pandemic has shown the integral role of, and increased demand for, timely and reliable data, including statistics, geospatial data, Earth observations, and other location-based data, to readily assess the impact of COVID-19, develop needs assessments, design timely and effective policies, and tools to tackle them, and monitor implementation and progress. Public policies need better data and

information to be more sustainable, green, and resilient, particularly for the post-pandemic reconstruction.

Tackling the digital divide is also imperative for developing data-driven, integrated and effective policymaking, promoting a business-friendly environment and inclusive societies. This will require investment in data-related infrastructure, as the world also adjusts to new ways of working, as well as in education.

Working towards the 2030 Agenda, which encompasses the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the Paris Agreement, will allow countries to design their recovery strategies focusing on prevention and building resilience. The 2030 Agenda provides a consistent, integrated and inclusive roadmap for resilience, sustainability, peace, security and prosperity.

The second integration dialogue could focus on the following questions:

1. How can we make sure that recovery strategies and policies are transformative and take into account the integrated nature of the sustainable development goals and provide relief in the short term while creating resilience and promoting sustainability in the long run?
2. How are countries' experiences in dealing with COVID-19 and climate change shaping a new social contract that can help recover better and put countries on track to achieving the SDGs?
3. How can we strengthen institutional, policy and human resources capacities to harness the potential of data and digital technologies, particularly in developing countries, towards recovery from COVID-19, vaccine equity and accelerating progress towards the SDGs during the Decade of Action and Delivery for sustainable development?

[Common question for all dialogues]

4. How can we leverage the work of the Economic and Social Council as well as its subsidiary machinery to accelerate Member States' efforts towards a sustainable and resilient recovering and in building an inclusive and effective path for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, including on financing, technology and innovation matters? How can we improve the division of labour among subsidiary bodies in areas that require further attention and action?

Dialogue 3: Human well-being and capabilities: Building back more resilient, healthy, equitable and sustainable societies (10 June 2021)

COVID-19 is the biggest health crisis in modern times. The pandemic has overwhelmed health systems and highlighted their inefficiencies and weaknesses. It has highlighted the need for strengthening health systems at national and international levels. The COVID-19 pandemic has also become a major socio-economic crisis that risks pushing an additional 119 to 124 million people into extreme poverty in 2020 and causing extreme poverty rate to rise for the first time in a generation. It has put further pressure on food systems, threatening the food security and nutrition of millions of people around the world. About 1.6 billion workers in the informal economy, most of whom live in developing countries, are at risk of having their livelihoods destroyed. If not properly addressed through effective policy, the socio-economic crisis created by the COVID-19 pandemic may also increase inequality,

exclusion, discrimination and global unemployment in the medium- and long- term. It is also imperative that COVID-19 vaccines are supplied equitably and in a timely and affordable manner to all.

The hard-hit effects created by the pandemic are being disproportionately felt by people living in vulnerable situations such as older people, women, young workers, migrants, refugees, unprotected workers, people living in shelters, people who are homeless or in informal settlements, and people with underlying health conditions. People living in conflict-affected countries or regions have also been particularly exposed during the pandemic due to a lack of adequate access to water, soap or sanitizer, COVID-19 testing facilities, health-care services and information, which compound to the preexisting vulnerabilities.

Furthermore, as digital overtakes an increasing number of activities, whether at work or at home, in government services, schools, health-related services and companies, education will become a defining factor of success for individuals as much as for communities, businesses and countries. Education, including civic education, will be key to prepare all members of society to deal with a more and more pervasive online component, including social media, and in combating disinformation and misinformation, hate speech and discriminatory, racist and xenophobic language, which have risen during the pandemic.

The integration dialogue 3 could focus on the following questions:

1. How can we work towards sustainable food systems while taking into account people, planet and prosperity concerns? What are the trade-offs that need to be addressed?
2. How can we make sure that recovery strategies and policies are people-centric and promote participation, inclusion and empowerment of different groups of society?
3. How can we ensure that education is viewed as essential elements to counter hate and discrimination and promote peace, and that education and life-long training are included in national strategies as key factors of prosperity?

[Common question for all panels]

4. How can we leverage the work of the Economic and Social Council as well as its subsidiary machinery to accelerate Member States' efforts towards a sustainable and resilient recovering and in building an inclusive and effective path for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, including on financing, technology and innovation matters? How can we improve the division of labour among subsidiary bodies in areas that require further attention and action?

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