

# ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

## 2016 INTEGRATION SEGMENT

2 – 4 May 2016

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### Implementing the 2030 Agenda through Policy Innovation and Integration

#### Concept Note

#### Background

The Economic and Social Council is mandated by the Outcome Document of Rio+20<sup>1</sup> to play a key role in the integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. The General Assembly subsequently decided<sup>2</sup> that the Council should hold an annual integration segment to promote the integration of the dimensions, both within the United Nations system and beyond. The main functions of the segment are: (a) to consolidate the inputs of Member States, the subsidiary bodies of the Council, the United Nations system and other relevant stakeholders; (b) to promote the balanced integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development; and (c) to bring together the key messages from the ECOSOC system on the main theme and develop action-oriented recommendations for follow up.

The theme for the 2016 Integration Segment is “*Implementing the 2030 Agenda through Policy Innovation and Integration*” as a contribution to the main theme of the 2016 session of the Council “*Implementing the post-2015 development agenda: Moving from commitments to results*”.

#### Objectives

The Integration Segment will consider the transformative nature of the Sustainable Development Goals and the inter-linkages within Agenda 2030. It will provide an opportunity for Member States, civil society, private sector, academia and other key actors to identify and discuss opportunities and challenges regarding innovative and integrated policy-making for the implementation of Agenda 2030. The meeting will bring together the perspectives of Member States, the UN system, including ECOSOC and its subsidiary bodies, regional commissions and other relevant stakeholders, such as NGOs, Major Groups, academia and the private sector.

The Segment will serve as a platform for dialogue and exchange of views on lessons learnt and recommendations for ways forward in policy innovation and integration. It will aim to extract policy recommendations to guide the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Its proceedings may serve as substantive input to the follow-up and review process to be carried out at the high-level political forum (HLPF) under the auspices of ECOSOC.

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<sup>1</sup> A/RES/66/288

<sup>2</sup> A/RES/68/1

## **Scope**

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is transformative in its universality, complexity and integrated approach to sustainable development that considers all dimensions - economic, social and environmental. As stated in the Agenda itself, “the interlinkages and integrated nature of the Sustainable Development Goals are of crucial importance in ensuring that the purpose of the new Agenda is realized”. The 2030 Agenda also conveys the message that a silo approach has been a barrier for achieving meaningful progress in bringing sustainable prosperity for humanity. Therefore, a new mind-set is needed in pursuing the transformative plan set out by the Agenda, implying different institutional frameworks and governance arrangements, innovative partnerships, and inclusive and integrated approaches to policymaking for successful implementation.

In order to implement the new Agenda, the new normative framework will have to be translated into national policies and strategies. As the implementation of the Agenda will take place principally at the country level, policy solutions will need to respond to needs at the national, and subnational levels. With business-as-usual being no longer a valid option, the necessity to adapt solutions to different needs, priorities and circumstances becomes central to successful policy-making and implementation. In other words, the implementation of the 2030 Agenda requires innovation in terms of how, where, when and with whom policy is developed and implemented.

Innovative thinking has taken a central role in finding solutions for the world’s most pressing challenges, offering new solutions to old problems or paving the way to previously unattainable results. In the context of the 2030 Agenda, policy innovation and integration aim at creating sustainable well-being for the society as a whole, both in the short and long run.

The exponential pace at which technology is evolving and the increasing global interconnectivity creates extraordinary opportunities for accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Digital and other forms of technology can provide innovative policy solutions for the challenges faced by the international community to improve efficiency, enable partnerships, reach wider audiences and increase citizen participation. Nevertheless, technology can also create important challenges. Therefore, careful analyses have to be undertaken of the use of technology, including information technology, in order to maximize benefits and minimize trade-offs. Ultimately, technology can be seen across the spectrum of the SDGs as a tool for the successful implementation of an integrated policy framework and for advancing the vision of sustainable development.

Innovative policy solutions can also stem from using culture, traditional and other forms of knowledge, incorporating traditional practices and information into integrated policies. These can be seen as a way to empower communities and preserve local ecosystems and beliefs among others. Traditional knowledge can also be combined with scientific methods to build a body of evidence and data to provide policy tools for implementation. Several alternative development models and strategies that incorporate these elements have also emerged in various countries. Such approaches are with the common aim of finding innovative policy solutions taking into consideration specific needs, priorities and circumstances.

The discussion during the Integration Segment will provide the space for participants to exchange views on the benefits and trade-offs that can arise from the use of innovative and integrated approaches, shaping partnerships and the application of existing and new knowledge, technology and other resources for implementing the 2030 Agenda in an integrated manner. Examples of innovative and integrated policy solutions can be found at different levels, spurred by diverse actors and implemented in myriad sectors. Such examples cut across national planning, agriculture, energy, health and finance, including areas of microfinance and business sustainability.

During the Integration Segment, participants will be able to discuss how innovative and integrated policy solutions can be applied at all levels to close gaps and break silos in sustainable development. As the principle of integration is at the core of the Agenda 2030, it also has implications for the UN system as it has to find improved ways to respond to the world's needs and opportunities. The discussion will thus consider how the UN system could develop a more harmonized approach and promote integrated and innovative policy making in support of countries' implementation of the Agenda 2030.

### **Format and participants**

The meeting will be a three-day event, chaired by H.E. Ambassador Sven Jürgenson (Estonia), Vice-President of ECOSOC. It will feature an opening session with eminent personalities, a number of roundtable sessions and panels, as well as a General Debate. Each panel or roundtable session will be moderated and followed by open floor discussions. Participants will be asked to focus on ways that policy innovation can promote implementation of the 2030 Agenda in an integrated manner. A background note with key questions will be prepared to guide the deliberations. The format of the Segment will also showcase the lessons learnt and best practices by Member States presenting benefits of policy innovation and integration, through the use of technology, institutional arrangements or partnerships, which can be applied in implementing the 2030 Agenda. Participants will include Ministers of Government, parliamentarians, private sector, academia and UN system representatives, alongside Major Groups representatives. Eminent speakers will include Heads of State or Government with best practices to share in this area.

### **Documentation**

The discussions will benefit from a report in the form of a Conference Room Paper reflecting the substantive inputs from the UN system, including ECOSOC subsidiary bodies, on aspects of their work contributing to policy innovation and integration. The DESA Policy Brief on "Concepts, Tools and Experiences in Policy Integration for Sustainable Development" will also inform the discussions.

### **Outcome**

The outcome of the Segment will be a summary by the ECOSOC Vice-President, highlighting the main policy recommendations and providing guidance on implementing the 2030 Agenda through policy innovation and integration. The summary will be available for consideration by Member States in the Ministerial Declaration of the upcoming 2016 ECOSOC High-level Segment and 2016 high-level political forum under the auspices of ECOSOC.