



GETTING TO KNOW THE ECOSOC SYSTEM

IN THE SDG ERA

Briefing by H.E. Inga Rhonda King

President of the Economic and Social Council

Preview of the 2019 ECOSOC Programme of Work

Remarks

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

We all agree that we have an important year ahead of us. The interlinkages among the Sustainable Development Goals and the trade-offs involved make the implementation of the 2030 Agenda challenging. ECOSOC can help to explore policy options, synergies,

coherence and trade-offs to accelerate the implementation of SDGs according to national priorities and context.

Through its various segments and forums, ECOSOC's focused and technical discussion of actions to implement the SDGs complements and contributes to the work of HLPF on reviewing progress, as well as to the General Assembly policy guidance.

The General Assembly, last June, through its resolution 72/305, gave important guidance for strengthening ECOSOC. I am committed to implementing it.

The HLPF has established itself as the platform to review the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. I am planning measures to improve it further.

Let me say a few words on how I see the year ahead.

The General Assembly decided to restructure the Council segments and forums into three groups to promote linkages in their work and enhance their visibility and impact of the Council.

Forums [Youth, Partnership and STI Forum]

The ECOSOC forums, which constitute the first group, have an important role as we continue to engage stakeholders in the work of the United Nations and our pursuit for a sustainable future.

In April, we will begin with the annual **Youth Forum**, which is now in its eighth year and which is the best attended of all the ECOSOC Fora. The Forum will be taking place on 8-9 April 2019 and will address the 6 SDGs under review for the 2019 HLPF. All of the SDGs are of interest to young people, especially on education, jobs and economic growth, inequality, climate action and peaceful societies. So, we can expect a very dynamic Forum this year. The Forum will also be mined for inputs to the various high-level events happening later in the year, in particular, the HLPF Summit, the SG's Climate Summit and the High-level dialogue on Financing for Development. We must seize the opportunity to engage young people and hear their voices for the accelerated implementation of the Agenda 2030.

On 11 April, the annual ECOSOC **Partnership Forum** will review multi-stakeholder partnerships around the SDGs under review at the HLPF this year. The Forum, under the overall theme of “*Partnerships Driving Inclusive Implementation of the SDGs*” will showcase good practices and lessons learned on the role of multi-stakeholder partnerships in driving inclusion and impacts.

The **Financing for Development Forum** will take place from 15 to 18 April. The 2019 FfD Forum, as the center piece of the FfD follow-up process, has a dual task to: 1) review the implementation of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda in the past four years; and 2) forge consensus among increasingly divergent views and spread policy know-how to advance implementation against rising economic and non-economic

risks. It will build momentum toward the first GA quadrennial high-level dialogue on financing for development, which will take place in September 2019, back to back with the HLPF at summit level.

I have appointed Ambassador Mariangela Zappia of Italy and Ambassador Lazarous Kapambwe of Zambia to serve as the co-facilitators for preparing draft conclusions and recommendations of the 2019 ECOSOC **Financing for Development Forum** and facilitating consultations among Member States.

The **2019 SDG Investment Fair**, from 15 to 17 April 2019, will facilitate direct informal interaction among representatives of governments of developing countries, the private sector and financial intermediaries to accelerate the mobilization of investment for the SDGs.

In 2019, the **SDGI Fair** will be scaled-up further to increase its impact towards the closure of the SDG investment gap.

The multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the SDGs will take place from 14 to 15 May this year. The Forum on STI for the SDGs has become a key space for our discussions on STI for the SDGs, including on cross-cutting issues such as emerging technologies and their sustainable development impacts. This forum is based on a wider collaboration among Member States, civil society, private sector, scientific communities, and UN entities.

I have appointed Ambassador Elizabeth Thompson of Barbados and Ambassador Marie Chatardová of the Czech Republic to act as co-chairs for the upcoming STI Forum. They will be co-chairing the meeting of the forum and will prepare a summary of discussions as an input to the meetings of the HLPF.

The second group will comprise segments that address actions by the UN development system and other actors to implement the 2030 Agenda (A/RES/72/305, para. 9). (operational activities for development segment, humanitarian affairs segment, and transition event – informal meeting to discuss transition from crisis to development)

Operational Activities for Development Segment (21-23 May 2019)

This year, we are expected to deliver a “strengthened” **operational activities for development segment**, which will take place on 21-23 May. Our success will be measured by whether the segment facilitates oversight of the results, coherence and accountability achieved through UN system’s support for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. We are responsible for tracking the implementation of General Assembly resolutions on the quadrennial comprehensive periodic review (QCPR) of operational activities for development of the UN development system and the General Assembly resolutions on the repositioning of

the UN development system. We will have an opportunity to discuss progress made on the QCPR and repositioning mandates, in particular, the options for reconfiguring UN regional assets, the multi-country offices review as well as the system-wide strategic document.

Humanitarian Affairs Segment (29-31 May)

Humanitarian needs and suffering is at unprecedented levels in many parts of the world, and the role of UN and its humanitarian partners in responding to that need is as critical as ever. We need to ensure that the **Humanitarian Affairs Segment**, which will take place from 29 to 31 May in Geneva this year, makes a substantive and practical difference to strengthen humanitarian coordination and to saving lives and reducing human suffering. It provides a timely opportunity to support and strengthen humanitarian coordination and response and bring together all actors to prevent humanitarian need and suffering.

The theme for the HAS will be adopted by ECOSOC in the coming weeks.

And the third group of ECOSOC segments comprises segments and forums that provide overall policy guidance and foster progress in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, contribute to the overall review of the 2030 Agenda at the high-level political forum and look to the future of the advancement of sustainable development. These include the

Integration Segment, the **HLPF** and the **High-level Segment** of ECOSOC.

Integration Segment (8 July)

The principle of integration is at the core of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development and the work of the ECOSOC system. This year, we have an opportunity to deliver a more effective **Integration Segment** that leverages the work of the UN system and the Council's subsidiary bodies to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

With its redefined mandate, the Segment will be held for one day immediately before the HLPF on 8 July. We will use this segment to coordinate and guide the work of its subsidiary bodies and the UN system at large. We will bring the UN system's analysis and policy proposals to the forefront to enrich the work of the Council and to contribute to the thematic review of the HLPF.

I count on your support to ensure that this redesigned segment delivers on its objectives.

High-level political forum on sustainable development (HLPF)

Much has been achieved since 2015 to nurture the development of the HLPF. We are watching it mature and grow into its role as a central component guiding the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs.

Since its inception, the HLPF has provided a platform for the sharing of experiences, including successes, challenges and lessons learned. It has created a new space for political leadership, substantive policy guidance, and recommendations for the implementation of sustainable development in all its dimensions. It is inspiring sustainable development policies across the board. It aims to ensure that the 2030 Agenda remains relevant and ambitious, and focuses on the assessment of progress, achievements and challenges faced by all countries.

I will convene the HLPF under ECOSOC's auspices this year from 9 to 18 July. It will be an critical year, as governments will begin a process of reviewing the HLPF modalities, format and organizational aspects of the HLPF, building on lessons from its first four-year cycle.¹

The July HLPF is expected to contribute to the Summit and its declaration.

The theme of the HLPF this year will be “*Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality*”. And as I mentioned in my opening remarks, the SDGs under review will include SDG 4, on quality education; SDG 8, on decent work and economic growth; SDG 10, on reducing inequalities; SDG 13, on climate change; SDG 16, on peace, justice and strong institutions; and, as every year, SDG 17, on means of implementation and partnerships for the Goals.

¹ Resolution 67/290 on the 'Format and organizational aspects of the high-level political forum on sustainable development' and Resolution 70/299 on 'Follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the global level'.

There will be sensitive political differences to navigate, as the SDGs under review this year are sensitive, and we hope to begin laying the groundwork early to support an agreed Summit's outcome that can make a difference for the work needed to achieve the 2030 Agenda.

I intend to prepare a very good President's summary to capture the discussions at the HLPF. I may ask a group of rapporteurs to help me put it together. The summary will help feed into the Summit's declaration.

The Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) have proven to be very successful at highlighting country level progress, identifying gaps and generating partnerships. The Secretariat will continue to organize global, regional and sub-regional workshops to support countries in their VNR preparation. I am exploring the possibility of creating a group of countries that will serve as friends of VNRs who will assist in preparing for the discussions on the VNRs at the HLPF.

High-level segment

The High-level segment will be held from 16 to 19 July, including the Ministerial days of the HLPF.

The High-level segment has been reshaped by the GA resolution 72/305, aiming to identify issues on the horizon while simultaneously increasing the preparedness of Member States and the United Nations to address them.

On Friday 19 July, the segment will serve to build on and look beyond the HLPF outcomes. It should generate discussions on long-term trends and their impact on the SDG's. This will allow consideration of scenario outcomes and their implications, and produce in-depth foresight analysis and policy guidance.

Inputs to the segment could include an integrated analysis of work on scenarios from various fields.

The High-level segment will also seek to unpack the drivers of future possible trends related to empowerment and engaging people in decision-making, as well as examine the implications of different levels of inequalities, both within and across countries. The discussions could also draw upon other relevant work on inequalities, institutions and participation.

And last but not least, we have the **Management Segment** of the Council.

Management Segment

Last year, In its resolution 72/305, the General Assembly renamed the coordination and management meeting of ECOSOC as the management segment. The Management Segment, will take place on 6-7 June and 23-24 July this year, focusing on the adoption of procedural decisions, consideration of recommendations of subsidiary

bodies, as well as the introduction of reports and consideration of draft proposals submitted under relevant agenda items.

We will also have dedicated management meetings on 7 May 2019, to conduct elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary bodies of the Council and related bodies.

I am positive that we will succeed in working together to achieve our shared aims, and I am looking forward to working closely with you as we move ahead this year.

In September, the HLPF under the auspices of the GA will provide an opportunity to reinvigorate international commitment, showcase areas of global progress towards the SDGs, and provide access to tools that can accelerate change. It is imperative that the HLPF Summit in September is successful in meeting the high expectations around it and gives renewed momentum to achieving the SDGs.

We must therefore ensure that our focus this year remains only on accelerating action in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Our political declaration should focus on global solidarity but could also address key critical areas where collective actions are needed.

I call upon all members of ECOSOC—and all of you here today—to become leaders in this process, so that we can maintain a high level of ambition among Governments—and all actors—to leverage progress in key areas, engage with each other as “champions” of SDGs, and

ultimately ensure a successful Summit outcome.

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