

Commemoration of the 70th Anniversary of ECOSOC **22 January 2016, ECOSOC Chamber**

Concept Note

Creation

The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) was established as one of the six principal organs of the [United Nations](#), created by the Charter in 1945. The Council was mandated to offer direction to, and provide coordination of, the economic, social, and cultural activities of the United Nations, with responsibility for advancing international economic and social cooperation and development.

The Council was vested with functions to promote:

- (i) higher standards of living, full employment, and conditions of economic and social progress and development;
- (ii) solutions of international economic, social, health, and related problems; and international cultural and educational cooperation; and
- (iii) universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion.

The first meeting of the Council was convened from 23 January to 18 February 1946, in London, UK, with Sir Ramaswami Mudaliar (India) as its first President. The GA had earlier (12 and 14 January 1946) elected 18 members of the Council. The Charter was later amended in 1965, to increase ECOSOC membership from 18 to 26, and in 1974 from 26 to its current 54 members. Membership is based on geographic representation.

Much of the Council's work is performed by the ECOSOC system. These include its functional commissions in specific areas, such as statistics, population, social development, narcotic drugs, crime prevention, science and technology and forests, as well as expert bodies. It also includes the regional commissions for Africa (ECA), Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), Europe (ECE), Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and Western Asia (ESCWA).

Contributions of ECOSOC

ECOSOC serves as the principal organ for the discussion of international economic, social, humanitarian and environmental issues, and for formulating policy recommendations addressed to Member States and the United Nations system. Through its deliberations, the Council plays a key role in fostering international cooperation for development and setting global norms, standards and priorities for action. The Council also coordinates the economic, social and related work of the United Nations development system.

ECOSOC has advanced an integrated, coordinated and unified approach to follow-up and review of the outcomes of the United Nations major conferences and summits convened since 1990. The adoption by the Millennium Summit of a set of ambitious yet achievable time-bound quantitative targets, later collated into the MDGs, marked an important element towards a unified development agenda. The convening of the International Conference on Financing for Development, held in Monterrey, Mexico, in 2002, brought into the ECOSOC system an important focus on financing and means of implementation.

The Council has overseen the United Nations system-wide coordination of the development system and the balanced integration of economic, social and environmental policies and programmes aimed at promoting sustainable development.

The new era

The recently adopted 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is founded on 70 years of United Nations engagement in advancing development. It represents a remarkable evolution in international cooperation since the Organization was established in the aftermath of World War II. The new Agenda also represents an accumulation and advancement of United Nations knowledge and experience in development from the late 1940s through to today.

The implementation of the new Agenda requires a universal response. All countries will need to monitor and report on progress, with the United Nations likely to be called upon by Member States to facilitate implementation at the global, regional and country levels.

In support, ECOSOC's work will be broad. It will include advancing a balanced integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development as well as addressing specific areas and issues, such as financing for development, humanitarian affairs and promoting peaceful and inclusive societies. This will involve the ECOSOC system as a whole and include development stakeholders and actors.

70th Anniversary

The Special High-level Meeting of ECOSOC to commemorate its 70th Anniversary will be convened by the President of ECOSOC. It will engage Member States and other key stakeholders that have been involved with the Council's work.