



18 February 2014

## **Integration Segment**

### **Achieving sustainable development: Integrating the social, economic and environmental dimensions**

#### **Background Note**

The Outcome Document of the Rio+20 Conference gave ECOSOC the mandate to play a key role in the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development; that is, economic, social and environmental. This key role of the Council was also recognized in the establishment of the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development (A/RES/67/290).

To promote the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development both within the United Nations system and beyond, in its resolution A/RES/68/1 on the strengthening of the Council, the General Assembly decided that “an integration segment shall be held annually. The main functions of the segment will be to:

- consolidate all the inputs of Member States, the subsidiary bodies of the Council, the United Nations system and other relevant stakeholders;
- promote the balanced integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development;
- bring together the key messages from the Council system on the main theme of ECOSOC and develop action-oriented recommendations for follow-up.

The work of the segment will thus facilitate the transmission and incorporation of policy guidance by governing bodies of the United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies. The segment will also address the interplay of the three dimensions of sustainable development and cross-cutting issues such as gender, science and technology, trade and finance, particularly in relation to policy options and their implications. The integration segment can thus serve as a platform to identify the potential short-term policy choices, the resulting adjustments and longer-term gains inherent in an integrated and balanced sustainable development approach.

The segment could complement the work of the HLPF by providing a platform for the ECOSOC system, policymakers and key stakeholders to identify policy choices that could allow for an integrated approach to sustainable development. The outcome of the Integration Segment will be a summary by the ECOSOC Vice-President highlighting the main policy recommendations coming out of discussions and providing guidance on integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development. The summary will serve as an input to the high-level segment of the Council and the HLPF.

The Integration Segment will also reinforce the Council’s mandate to promote the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits.

Integration requires an inclusive process that brings together not only sectoral and central government agencies in the formulation and implementation of development plans, but also other stakeholders such as civil society and major groups. The Integration Segment will therefore attract high-level participants from all three areas of sustainable development. The Segment will serve as a platform to bring together sustainable development champions, including government officials and local authorities, representatives of the United Nations system, Bretton Woods

institutions, civil society, major groups, academia, scientific community and the private sector, to identify policy choices that allow for an integrated approach to sustainable development. The Segment will go beyond multi-stakeholder policy dialogue and focus on the substance of policy integration, with concrete national and regional experiences and exchange of ideas, practices and strategies.

In preparation for the Segment<sup>1</sup>, a background note will be prepared by the Secretariat to analyze how integration has taken place at the national, regional and global level with regard to the theme, what policy actions need to be taken, and what the trade-offs may be. The subsidiary bodies of the Council will provide inputs on the theme around the three dimensions of sustainable development, with recommendations and technical guidance on how ECOSOC can integrate their inputs into the larger picture of sustainable development. Inputs from the United Nations Funds and Programmes, Bretton Woods Institutions will also be sought to examine how integration is pursued at the operational level and how the United Nations system addresses the obstacles faced in doing so. The regional commissions will bring regional perspectives on integration to the Council. Particular attention will be paid to the African countries and their efforts for integration at the regional and sub-regional level.

## **Objectives**

In the context of the annual theme, the Segment could:

- Serve as a platform to identify the potential short-term policy choices, the resulting trade-offs, and longer-term gains inherent in an integrated and balanced sustainable development approach;
- Facilitate a multi-stakeholder dialogue, integrating the views of major groups and scientists and hence the quality of ensuing policy recommendations;
- Provide solutions, innovations and partnerships on the theme of the Segment; and
- Identify tools and instruments to facilitate inputs that can be used to assess the integrated approach by the Council.

## **Format**

The segment will be a three-day event with formal Council meetings, as well as side events and ministerial breakfasts organized by Member States, UN system and other stakeholders. It will feature opening and closing plenary sessions plus interactive panels and dialogues. The panel sessions will feature substantive presentations and discussions on how to achieve policy convergence to address the theme in an integrated manner.

Presidents of Governing Boards and heads of UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes, chairs of relevant ECOSOC subsidiary bodies, representatives of the scientific community and academia, as well as of major Groups, civil society and the private sector will interact with the Council and bring their perspectives during the segment.

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<sup>1</sup> The Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination will work in close collaboration with the Division for Sustainable Development and UN-Habitat, as well as other DESA Divisions and relevant UN system organizations and Secretariats of the subsidiary bodies in supporting the deliberations at the segment. A note verbale will be sent to Member States seeking their recommendations for integrated policies to accelerate the achievement of the MDGs, with a focus on the theme of the segment.