



E-discussion on the 2015 ECOSOC Theme
Concept Note
(updated 13 February 2015)

BACKGROUND

The purpose of the electronic discussion (e-discussion) is to engage stakeholder groups, experts, practitioners and policy-makers from various regions in a global dialogue on specific aspects of the 2015 ECOSOC theme. Since 2007, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) has held, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), yearly e-discussions on the themes of the ECOSOC Annual Ministerial Review.¹

The e-discussion provides a unique opportunity for the wider development community to formulate critical policy messages and recommendations for ECOSOC. Contributions made by e-discussion participants will be channelled into various parts of ECOSOC, particularly the report of the Secretary-General on the ECOSOC theme and the deliberations during the high-level segment of the Council in July.

PURPOSE

The theme of the 2015 ECOSOC session is *“Managing the transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the sustainable development goals: What it will take”*. The 2015 e-discussion on this theme is expected to provide ECOSOC with concrete ideas and proposals for defining the steps required for the successful transition from the MDGs to the SDGs. The discussion will focus on policy choices and mindset change for an integrated agenda, adaptation by institutions, partnerships for the implementation of the SDGs and the post-2015 agenda and structures and monitoring and review.

I. ORGANIZATION

The e-discussion will take place during the period, 17 February to 17 March 2015. DESA and UNDP will conceptualize and coordinate the e-discussion and, in collaboration with the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN), will provide joint substantive and technical support. UNDP will lend access to its networks and online Teamworks platform. SDSN will facilitate dissemination and outreach through its own networks, including academia and think-tanks. DESA, UNDP, SDSN and other partners will provide contact lists from their own networks and resource persons, where possible, for inclusion in the discussion.

The e-discussion will be organized around a series of interlinked themes of relevance to the transition from the MDGs to the SDGs. The questions will be available in English, French and Spanish. To focus the discussion and maintain user interest, the e-discussion will consist of four concurrently running thematic windows, each to be led by a selected expert moderator and supported by a shadow facilitator from DESA, UNDP or SDSN.

¹ Themes from previous years were: Challenges for meeting the MDGs by the 2015 target date (2014); science, technology and innovation and the potential of culture (2013); employment and productive capacity (2012); education (2011); gender equality and women’s empowerment (2010); global public health (2009); sustainable development (2008); and poverty and hunger (2007).

Members of relevant ECOSOC expert committees and subsidiary bodies, in particular, the Committee of Experts on Public Administration and Committee for Development Policy, will be invited to contribute through their active engagement in the discussion. The UN Department of Public Information and Global Compact office will be approached to publicize the e-discussion and promote global participation of relevant stakeholders.

Deliverables

Once the e-discussion is completed, DESA and UNDP will prepare a summary report that: (a) describes the background and structure of the e-discussion; (b) provides a general overview of participation; and (c) synthesizes key findings, messages and recommendations from participants. This summary report will serve as an input into the report of the Secretary-General on the 2015 ECOSOC theme and may also serve as an input to the report of the SG on the ECOSOC thematic discussion on *“Strengthening and building institutions for policy integration in the post-2015 era”*. The summary will be made available on the ECOSOC website and disseminated as a Conference Room Paper (CRP) during the ECOSOC High-level Segment.

II. STRATEGIC FOCUS

The 2015 theme provides an opportunity for ECOSOC to reflect on and map out preparations for ensuring a smooth transition from the MDGs to the SDGs and the post-2015 development agenda. Consideration of the theme comes against the backdrop of the outcomes of several processes already undertaken in preparation for the new agenda, including by the Open Working Group (OWG) on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing and the Structured Thematic Dialogues of the General Assembly on a technology facilitation mechanism. There are also other relevant inputs from flagship reports related to the preparations, including the 2015 World Economic and Social Survey, and the recently released synthesis report of the Secretary-General on the Post-2015 agenda.

In line with the preparation of the SG report on the ECOSOC theme, the e-discussion will address the theme through the following four thematic windows and accompanying indicative questions to guide the discussion.

Thematic Window I: Policy choices and mindset change for an integrated agenda

- What are current examples of an integrated approach to policy-making and what is their degree of success? What are the existing tools and approaches for operationalizing an integrated approach at different levels?
- What are the approaches to, and changes in behaviour required for integrated policy-making for the new agenda? What kind of communication strategies are needed for changing this mindset?
- What are the potential complementarities and synergies involved in the pursuit of a universal agenda at the national, regional and global levels?

Thematic Window II: Required adaptation by institutions, structures and individuals

- What types of changes and adaptation in institutions and structures will be needed at the national, regional and global levels to facilitate a smooth transition to a post-2015 era? What are the necessary corresponding changes in the roles and responsibilities of all partners?
- To what extent are existing global institutions and policy frameworks ready to adopt and implement a more integrated approach to development? What adjustments may be needed to ensure that governments, the UN system and other partners respond to the universal and unified agenda and deliver equitable results for everyone?

- What are the institutional and individual capacities required to facilitate a smooth transition from the MDGs to the SDGs?

Thematic Window III: Partnerships for the implementation of the SDGs and the post-2015 agenda

- What are good examples for fostering partnerships, including public-private, that can lead to implementation and development results at the global, national and local levels?
- How can multi-stakeholder partnerships be effectively established and taken into account to facilitate the implementation of development priorities?
- What elements will be needed to ensure accountability within partnerships for managing responsibilities, commitments and expectations for the implementation of the SDGs?

Thematic Window IV: Monitoring and review

- What kind of monitoring and review in the multi-tiered and multi-stakeholder responsibility structure will be required for the SDGs and the post-2015 development agenda? What would be the key features of an effective monitoring and review framework?
- How will action on the different goals at the global, regional or national levels be better tracked, taking into consideration national and regional specificities? What incentives would be needed to ensure that a broad range of actors engage in monitoring and review of results?