

**United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
Division for Social Policy and Development**

**Expert Group Meeting
on
“Social Development and Agenda 2030”**

United Nations Headquarters, New York, 21 – 23/26-27 October 2015

DRAFT Concept Note

Purpose of the meeting

The Division for Social Policy and Development (DSPD) of UNDESA will organize an expert group meeting on “Social development and Agenda 2030” to position DSPD/DESA for better supporting Member States in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The outcomes of the meeting will be concrete, action-oriented recommendations for strategically guiding the effective integration of the social dimension of sustainable development in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Background

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development will be adopted at the United Nations Summit to be held in New York from 25 to 27 September 2015. The 2030 Agenda will be a broad and universal policy agenda, with 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with 169 associated targets which are integrated and indivisible. Building on the Millennium Development Goals, the 2030 Agenda will seek to guide Member States to transform their approach to achieve inclusive, people-centred and sustainable development with no one left behind.

Implementation of the new Agenda for sustainable development will require a more holistic, coherent and integrated approach at the national, regional and global levels. Policies to implement the new Agenda need to address inter-linkages within the social sector, as well as between the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. Similarly, existing institutions or institutional mechanisms that are working in the field of social development will have to adjust or expand the scope of work so as to accommodate the new mandates arising from the post-2015 development agenda.

Recognizing the need for strengthening the social dimension of sustainable development, Member States, during the 53rd session of the Commission for Social Development (February 2015), urged to enhance policy coherence: 1) within social sectors (i.e. poverty eradication strategies, policies to promote employment and decent work and social inclusion, policies to enhance access to quality education, basic healthcare, safe drinking water, sanitation, group specific policies – youth, older persons, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, etc.); and 2) through integrating social policy/perspectives into broader and more complex policy-making processes, and vice versa, incorporating economic and environmental perspectives into social policy-making.

While the details of the follow-up and review processes of the new Agenda at national, regional and global levels will need to be further clarified, the annual High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) is expected to carry out regular reviews. One will be a voluntary and State-led review, involving ministerial and other relevant high-level participants from developed and developing countries.

The other will be **thematic reviews of progress on the Sustainable Development Goals, including cross-cutting issues**, at the HLPF under ECOSOC. These will be **“supported by the reviews of the ECOSOC functional commissions** and other inter-governmental bodies and forums which should reflect the integrated nature of the goals as well as the interlinkages between them. They will engage all relevant stakeholders and, where possible, feed into, and be aligned with, the cycle of the HLPF” (Finalised text for adoption dated 1 August 2015, para 85).

As a preparatory and advisory body of ECOSOC on social development matters, the Commission for Social Development is the only Commission mandated to advise the Council in the fields of social policy development, research in areas affecting social and economic development and policies and programmes designed to promote social progress (ECOSOC resolution 830 J (XXXII) of 2 August 1961). Consequently, the Commission will be requested to provide substantive inputs to thematic reviews of progress on Sustainable Development Goals from social perspectives (on social goals or social dimensions of SDGs).

The United Nations entities will be requested to develop a system-wide strategic plan of the implementation and reporting of the SDGs (para 88). In light of this, it is critical for the Division to build strong partnerships with the UN entities that are working in the social development field.

The challenge for the UN entities is to avoid a silo approach (focusing on solely one goal at a time by sectoral institutions/actors) to ensure that a coherent and integrated support will be provided to implement the 17 Goals, and to identify and address key interlinkages that will create synergies (win-win situation) among social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

Objectives

The overall objective of the expert group meeting is to prepare DSPD for its support the work of the Commission beyond 2015 by providing a strategic framework for addressing sustainable development from a social perspective. Building on the work of the Division, including the outcomes of the expert group meeting on “Strengthening social development in the contemporary world” (May 2015, New York), the meeting will produce a set of concrete and action-orientated recommendations.

In specific, the meeting aims to:

1. Analyse the Sustainable Development Goals with a social lens, and identify options for reviewing the progress of their social dimensions in order to achieve inclusive social development objectives;
2. Identify areas that require greater policy coherence to effectively address inter-linkages and create synergies among the three dimensions;
3. Review how to address specific needs of (or how to involve) vulnerable social groups, in particular, youth, older persons, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, as cross-cutting issues in the implementation of the 17 SDGs, and
 - a) Examine how to harmonise the implementation of the SDGs with the implementation of and follow-up to existing policies and instruments related to social groups (i.e., conventions, treaties, you policy, etc.) into 17 Goals.

Outputs

The Expert Group meeting will result in the following outputs:

- Substantive papers produced by expert participants on the core themes of the meeting;
- Key conclusions and action-oriented recommendations, including new initiatives, for the Division to effectively support the work of the Commission;
- A report summarizing the expert deliberations and presenting the meeting outcomes; and
- Optimization of the partnerships with key UN entities.

Organizational aspects

Date and venue of the meeting

The expert group meeting is scheduled to take place from Wednesday 21 to Friday 23 October (for the Part I) and from Monday 26 to Tuesday 27 October 2015 (Part II) in New York .The meeting will be organized by the Division for Social Policy and

Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, of the United Nations Secretariat.

The meeting will be divided into two parts. The first part will focus on thematic aspects and the second part will focus on social groups.

Organizational set-up of the meeting

About 12 - 15 experts, identified by DSPD as well as lead UN entities will be invited by the Division for Social Policy and Development to attend the meeting.

In addition, the following will participate/contribute to the meeting: Members of the Bureau of the 54th session of the Commission, representatives of the UN Regional Commissions, UN specialized agencies and funds and programmes¹, UNDESA Divisions, civil society representatives and other relevant stakeholders

DSPD will prepare an annotated agenda of the expert group meeting. Prior to the meeting, experts are required to submit short written papers with key recommendations (3- 5 pages) in English.

The working language of the meeting will be English. There will be no interpretation provided

¹ ILO, UNESCO, WHO, FAO, WIPO, ITU, IOM (International Organization for Migration), UNRISD, IFAD, UNHABITAT, OHCHR, UNODC (Office on Drugs and Crime), UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNWomen, UNHCR, UNAIDS, the World Bank, UN Global Compact, etc.