



THE PRESIDENT
OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

21 May 2018

Excellency,

I have the pleasure to transmit herewith a letter, dated 18 May 2018, from H.E. Ms. Alya Ahmed S. Al Thani, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the State of Qatar and H.E. Mr. Einar Gunnarsson, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Iceland, Co-Facilitators of the ECOSOC review process, in accordance with Resolution 68/1 entitled “Review of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 61/16 on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council”.

The co-facilitators are convening the next informal meeting on Thursday 24 May 2018, at 3:00 p.m, in Conference Room 4. They are also sharing with Member States a proposed zero draft of the outcome document and dates for future meetings.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'M. Lajčák', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Miroslav Lajčák

All Permanent Representatives and
Permanent Observers to the United Nations
New York



PERMANENT MISSION
OF ICELAND TO THE UN

18 May 2018

Excellency,

We wish to invite you to the sixth informal consultations on the review of General Assembly resolution 68/1 on ECOSOC on Thursday, 24 May, at 3:00 pm in Conference Room 4.

We highly appreciated your insights and feedback during our last meeting on 16 May, particularly your further clarifications on selected issues in response to the questions we posed in our letter of 14 May. We are grateful to you for your ideas and continued engagement.

Based on our understanding of the progress we have made thus far in discerning various aspects of the elements paper, we are pleased to share with you, for your consideration, a proposed zero draft of our outcome document. The draft builds on the discussions held thus far on the elements paper as well as our previous discussions on the Food for Thought paper.

We would like this zero draft outcome to serve as a basis for the continuing discussions among Member States on the review of resolution 68/1. At the meeting on 24 May, we hope to address the zero draft and seek your guidance on its content and hear any additional comments or thoughts you may have.

Regarding our future meetings, we are pleased to convey to you our proposed meetings schedule through mid-June:

- Thursday, 24 May, 3:00 pm, Conference Room 4,
- Friday, 25 May, time and meeting room tbc,
- Tuesday, 29 May, time and meeting room tbc,
- Wednesday, 13 June, time and meeting room tbc.

We see that views have converged on a number of areas and we believe that we have made significant progress. With your guidance, it is our aim to continue to make progress and conclude our consultations with agreement on our outcome document by 15 June.

We look forward to seeing you on 24 May and to your continued constructive engagement.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of our highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alya", written over a horizontal line.

H.E. Ms. Alya Ahmed S. Al Thani
Permanent Representative of the
State of Qatar to the United Nations

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Einar Gunnarsson", written over a horizontal line.

H.E. Mr. Einar Gunnarsson
Permanent Representative of Iceland
to the United Nations

All Permanent Representatives and Permanent Observers
to the United Nations
New York

19 May 2018

**General Assembly review of 68/1
Co-Facilitators' zero draft resolution**

The Co-Facilitators share the following zero draft resolution below to serve as a basis for the continuing discussion among the Member States on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 68/1.

Zero draft resolution

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 45/264 of 13 May 1991, 48/162 of 20 December 1993, 50/227 of 24 May 1996, 52/12 B of 19 December 1997, 57/270 B of 23 June 2003, 60/265 of 30 June 2006, 61/16 of 20 November 2006, 65/285 of 29 June 2011, and 68/1 of 20 September 2013,¹

Recalling further its resolutions 67/290 of 9 July 2013 and 70/299 of 29 July 2016,

Reaffirming its resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015, entitled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, and reaffirming our unwavering commitment to achieving this Agenda,

Recalling its resolution 69/313 of 27 July 2015 on the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (Addis Ababa Action Agenda),

Reaffirming the role that the Charter of the United Nations and the General Assembly have vested in the Economic and Social Council, and recognizing the need for a more effective Council as a principal body for coordination, policy review, policy dialogue and recommendations on issues of economic and social development, as well as for implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the other international development goals agreed at the major United Nations conferences and summits,²

Reaffirming the commitment to and emphasizing the need to strengthen the Economic and Social Council, within its mandate under the Charter as a principal organ of the United Nations,³

1 Based on PP1 of 68/1

2 Based on PP4 of 68/1

3 First three lines of PP5 of 68/1

Noting the ongoing process of intergovernmental consultations aimed at enhancing synergies and coherence and reducing overlap where it is found to exist in the agenda of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and their subsidiary bodies, as well as the high-level political forum and other related forums in light of the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in accordance with paragraphs 28, 29 and 30 of resolution 71/323 of 8 September 2017,

1. *Adopts* the text contained in the annex to the present resolution, and calls upon the Economic and Social Council and other relevant bodies of the United Nations system to implement the measures contained therein in an expeditious manner;
2. *Decides* that the arrangements contained in the present resolution and its annex will be reviewed at its seventy-fourth session, in conjunction with the review of the high-level political forum (HLPF) for sustainable development, and that future review cycles of ECOSOC and the HLPF will be harmonized;

Annex

Review of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 68/1 on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council

1. In accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, the Economic and Social Council should continue to strengthen its role as the central mechanism for coordination of the activities of the United Nations system and its specialized agencies and supervision of subsidiary bodies in the economic, social, environmental and related fields. It should provide overall guidance and coordination to the United Nations development system and promote a coordinated follow-up to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the outcomes of other major international conferences and summits in the economic, social, environmental and related fields. The working modalities of the Council should be guided by the principles of inclusiveness, transparency and flexibility. It should be a platform for deliberations and exchanging national experiences.⁴
2. ECOSOC has additional critical functions – including providing leadership and policy guidance; supervising its subsidiary bodies while integrating their analysis and inputs; strengthening the coordination and effectiveness of United Nations humanitarian assistance⁵; looking to the future and frontier issues as well as addressing urgent developments in the economic, social, humanitarian and related fields; and, overall, integrating the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development and revitalizing the global partnership for sustainable development. The Council should aim at creating synergy and coherence as well as avoiding duplication between its deliberations and those of the General Assembly and the high-level political forum on sustainable development.

⁴ Based on Para. 1 of Annex to 68/1

⁵ From para. 11(b) of Annex to 68/1

3. The General Assembly is the overarching policy making body in the economic, social and related fields and receives support from ECOSOC in the follow-up and review of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and major UN Conferences and Summits.
4. The HLPF has the central role in overseeing follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda at the global level.
5. ECOSOC needs to strengthen its outcomes and the outcomes of its subsidiary bodies, making them more relevant, action oriented and ensuring their follow-up so as to strengthen the impact of the Council's work.

Annual main theme and substantive focus

6. The General Assembly will adopt for the HLPF, bearing in mind the provisions of resolution 70/299, an annual core theme, whose purpose is to facilitate the coherent selection of themes by ECOSOC, across its segments, and by subsidiary bodies. The core theme thus aims to focus attention on a broad topic that is fundamental to sustainable development and should be universal in scope and not limited by social group or geographic location.
7. ECOSOC will then adopt the same core theme as its main theme and will adopt the respective themes of its segments, based on, or derived from the core theme. Each derived theme will focus on a particular aspect of the core theme or will explore the core theme in some context. Variants of the core theme will be chosen also to assist the segments in fulfilling their respective functions. The Humanitarian Affairs Segment will continue to adopt themes based on humanitarian considerations.
8. The ECOSOC subsidiary bodies will similarly adopt their own respective themes, based on, or derived from the core theme. Variants of the core theme will be chosen also to assist the bodies in fulfilling their respective functions.
9. To allow enough time for the ECOSOC subsidiary bodies to adjust their themes, the General Assembly decides that the core themes for the HLPF in 2020 to 2023 will be:
 - a. For 2020:
 - b. For 2021:
 - c. For 2022:
 - d. For 2023:
10. Concerns for poverty eradication, gender equality, countries in special situations and those left furthest behind should be reflected in the themes chosen for the ECOSOC segments and subsidiary bodies.

Structure of the ECOSOC cycle

11. The ECOSOC cycle will continue to run from July to July.
12. To promote linkages in their work and enhance ECOSOC's visibility and impact, the ECOSOC segments and forums will be restructured into three groups per ECOSOC annual cycle.
13. The first group will be comprised of ECOSOC forums that place a strong emphasis on Means of Implementation. It will include the Development Cooperation Forum (DCF) (every second year), the Forum on Financing for Development follow-up (FfD Forum), and the Multi-stakeholder Forum on science, technology and innovation for the sustainable development Goals (STI Forum). It will be organized so that the FfD Forum is held back-to-back with the Spring meetings of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.
14. The second group will be comprised of segments and events that address actions by the United Nations development system and other actors to implement the 2030 Agenda, along with distinct humanitarian assistance. It will include the Operational Activities Segment, a day on transition from relief to development, the Humanitarian Affairs Segment, the partnerships forum and the youth forum, which should be held, if possible, closer to the HLPF.
15. The third group will be comprised of segments and forums that review progress in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and look to the future of the advancement of sustainable development. It will include, in this order, a stock-taking segment, the HLPF and the HLS.

Integration

16. A stock-taking segment will be held for one day immediately before the HLPF. It will replace the integration segment and take over its current functions. It will discuss and consolidate all the inputs of Member States, including case studies and lessons learned, the subsidiary bodies of the Council, the United Nations system and other relevant stakeholders to promote the balanced integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development. This segment will thus bring together the key messages from the Council subsidiary bodies and the UN system on the core theme and develop action-oriented recommendations on the HLPF thematic review. The Secretary-General will present the report of the Chief Executive Board for coordination (CEB). Heads of UN system entities, Chairs of the ECOSOC subsidiary bodies and the Executive Secretaries of the regional commissions will also be invited to participate. The outcome of the segment will be a President's summary.

ECOSOC High-level Segment and HLPF

17. The final day of the HLS of ECOSOC, following the ministerial segment of the HLPF, will focus on future trends and scenarios related to the ECOSOC theme, long-term impact of current trends in the economic, social and environmental areas on the realization of the SDGs as well as on emerging and frontier issues. This would include discussions of forecasts, scenarios, and foresights, based on the work of the United Nations and other regional and international organizations and bodies as well as other stakeholders and will provide political guidance and recommendations to the continuing implementation of the SDGs.
18. The outcome of the HLS of ECOSOC will be a President's Summary. The outcome of the HLPF will remain a Ministerial Declaration, bearing in mind the provisions of General Assembly resolution 70/299.
19. The ECOSOC Bureau is invited to review the framework for Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) to allow sufficient time for countries to present their VNRs during the HLPF ministerial meeting with a view to strengthening the exchanges of national experiences on implementing the SDGs.

System-wide coherence and coordination: operational activities for development

20. The strengthened operational activities for development segment should serve as a platform to provide accountability for system-wide performance in relation to the 2030 Agenda. The Council should provide improved guidance to and overall coordination of the United Nations development system. Such guidance should include objectives, priorities and strategies in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and of the policies formulated by the General Assembly, including the quadrennial comprehensive policy review.
21. As part of its work on the implementation of the QCPR, the Council will exercise oversight on the implementation of the resolution on the repositioning of the UN development system, including the implementation of a reinvigorated resident coordinator system, including its funding, to ensure accountability towards the Member States (OP 15 of the UNDS resolution A/72/L.52). It will also review system wide support to the SDGs and aggregated information on system-wide results by 2021 (OP. 28 (a) of A/72/L.52) as well as the annual comprehensive report, including on the operational, administrative and financing aspects, and on UNDOCO, mandated in OP 17 of A/72/L.52. In 2019, it will review the reports and aspects mandated through OP 4, 19b, 29 and 30 of A/72/L.52.
22. The Council should make efforts to reinforce the linkages between policy and operational functions while continuing to focus on improving the overall impact of operational activities of the United Nations system in support of national development priorities. The segment should address cross-cutting and coordination issues related to operational activities.

23. The Council should furthermore provide improved guidance to the governing bodies of the UN development system. This includes holding the segment, as feasible, closer to the annual meetings of the executive boards of the funds and programmes. With a view to avoiding repetition of discussions, the executive boards that report to the Council should further highlight in their reports to the Council the issues requiring examination and identify actions to be taken, guided by the chosen theme. The segment should continue to contribute to the preparations for the quadrennial policy review of operational activities, through which the Assembly establishes key system-wide policy orientations for the development cooperation and country-level modalities of the United Nations system.
24. The OAS will adopt a resolution on operational activities except in years when the General Assembly conducts the QCPR, when it will adopt a summary of the President to inform the QCPR. The General Assembly will normally adopt a resolution on operational activities only in the years when it conducts the QCPR, leaving it to ECOSOC to monitor implementation of its guidance on QCPR in the other years.
25. The operational activities segment should be held, as feasible, prior to the meetings of the UN funds and programmes when they meet in UN Headquarters in New York.

Humanitarian affairs segment

26. Through the humanitarian affairs segment (HAS), the Council should continue to contribute to strengthening the coordination and effectiveness of United Nations humanitarian assistance and support and complement international efforts aimed at addressing humanitarian emergencies, including natural disasters, in order to promote an improved, coordinated response by the United Nations.⁶
27. The special event to discuss the transition from relief to development will continue to be convened immediately preceding the HAS, taking into account that the HAS shall continue to alternate between Geneva and New York.
28. The special event to discuss the transition from relief to development will focus on the situation of specific countries emerging from disasters and other humanitarian crises/emergencies.

6 From para. 11(b) of Annex to 68/1

Peacebuilding Commission

29. The Economic and Social Council and the Peacebuilding Commission are encouraged to cooperate more closely, in accordance with their respective mandates, including through enhanced dialogue in support of promoting coherence and complementarity between the United Nations' peace and security efforts and its support to the 2030 Agenda, human rights and humanitarian work⁷, including through the joint annual meeting. The Council is encouraged to seek advice from the Peacebuilding Commission on issues that are relevant for the implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in countries affected by conflict.

Emerging and frontier issues

30. ECOSOC should address new and frontier issues at the HLS and throughout its segments and forums, also aiming at enhancing knowledge sharing and regional and international cooperation on and access to science, technology and innovation.

Stakeholder engagement

31. The Economic and Social Council has an important role as a platform for multi-stakeholder participation and for engaging all relevant stakeholders in the work of the Council, particularly with respect to its function related to the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development.⁸
32. The ECOSOC Bureau should consider possible ways of applying certain aspects of the modalities of engagement of major groups and other stakeholders in the HLPF (defined in resolution 67/290).
33. ECOSOC should engage a broader range of stakeholders in its work. It could hold informal forums with other actors such as local governments, indigenous peoples or other relevant stakeholders.

⁷ Based on OP10 of A/RES/262 and S/RES/2282 (2016)

⁸ From para. 22 of Annex to 68/1

Coordination and management

34. The current Coordination and Management Meeting shall be renamed the “Management Segment”.
35. Focused management meetings will be held, in principle of not more than two days duration, twice per cycle. The meetings will carry out the functions of the coordination and management segments set out in paragraph 11 (d) of resolution 68/1, focusing on adoption of procedural decisions, consideration of recommendations of subsidiary bodies, as well as introduction of reports and consideration of draft proposals submitted under relevant agenda items.
36. With a view to ensuring a streamlined consideration of related agenda items and optimal use of available time, the ECOSOC Bureau is invited to prepare a focused programme of work for each set of meetings, including possible joint consideration of related items.
37. Dedicated management meetings will also be held to conduct elections to regular and outstanding vacancies in subsidiary bodies of the Council and related bodies, normally in the first half and last quarter of the year. In preparing for elections by the Council, Member States are encouraged to present candidates at least three working days in advance of elections. The provisions of paragraphs 47 and 48 of resolution 71/323 should be followed, as applicable to the Council.

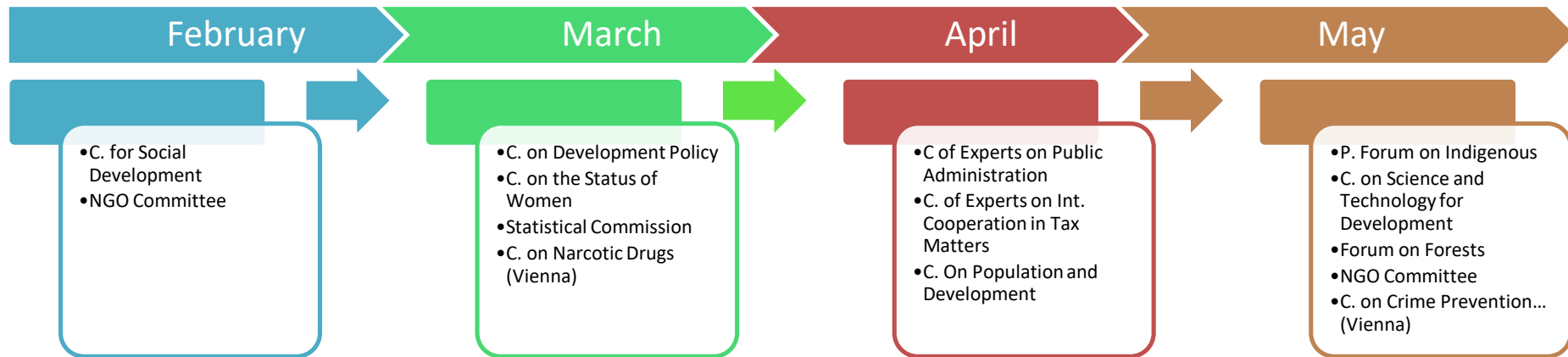
ECOSOC subsidiary bodies and support

38. The Council should strengthen its oversight and coordination role of its subsidiary bodies. It should review their work with a view to ensuring that they produce technical and expert analysis, assessments and policy recommendations to inform the integrated view of the Council and inform efforts to implement the SDGs. It should effectively integrate the outcomes of its subsidiary bodies into its own work;
39. ECOSOC should invite its subsidiary bodies to further review their respective working methods so as to best support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the work of ECOSOC. Their work should reflect the need for an integrated and action-oriented approach to implementing the SDGs. Their recommendations should build on a solid evidence-based review of progress in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and of the outcomes of conferences and summits in their respective area. They should work in an effective, transparent and inclusive manner.
40. ECOSOC should also invite its subsidiary bodies to consider the need for annual negotiated outcomes and to ensure that the outcomes they produce are effective and action-oriented outcomes, bearing in mind their respective nature as functional or regional commissions or expert bodies.

41. The Secretary-General should consider the need to adjust the calendar of meetings of ECOSOC subsidiary bodies and make adjustments to their reporting arrangements, as necessary, in the light of agreed changes to the structure and timing of the meetings of ECOSOC.
42. ECOSOC should consider ways to ensure that its Special Meeting on International Cooperation in Tax Matters results in increased levels of cooperation.
43. With a view to ensuring continuity, the Bureau of ECOSOC is invited to consider the merits of expanding the Bureau to include two representatives per regional group and of a possible extension and staggering of their terms, for possible further consideration by the Council.
44. The Bureau of the Economic and Social Council should convene regular open ended informal consultations of the Council to consult delegations on the preparations of the programme of the segments. It should explore effective ways to support dialogue and exchange of national experiences, including discussions of case studies.
45. The Secretary-General is requested to further consider ways to improve its the public profile of the Economic and Social Council, including by effectively communicating its role, work and achievements to the public in a compelling manner.⁹

9 Para. 34 of Annex to 68/1

ECOSOC Subsidiary cycle



ECOSOC Segments and Forums

