

**“Our Common Agenda”  
Thematic consultation 2  
Accelerating the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through sustainable financing and  
building trust  
14-15 February 2022, UN Headquarters New York  
BACKGROUND NOTE**

**I. Background**

In line with General Assembly resolution 76/6 of 15 November 2021, and the letters from the President of the General Assembly to Member States dated 23 December 2021 and 13 January 2022, this is the second in a series of five open, inclusive, informal thematic consultations convened by the President of the General Assembly on the UN Secretary-General’s report on “Our Common Agenda”.

**II. Overview of proposals for consideration at thematic consultation 2**

This second thematic consultation is on the theme “Accelerating the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through sustainable financing and building trust”. It seeks the feedback of Member States on those proposals in our Common Agenda that aim to address the fundamental issues of building trust and ensuring rule of law as well as those that aim to ensure more sustainable and inclusive financing for sustainable development. As with thematic consultation-1, these proposals are central to accelerating the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in the Decade of Action. They are also informed by the commitments made by Member States in the UN75 Declaration.

Among this cluster of proposals are those related to building trust by **listening to and consulting with people**, in line with commitment 6 in the UN75 declaration. The UN system commits to building on recent innovations in listening to, consulting and engaging with people around the world and invites Member States to consider the same.

Measures to **strengthen the rule of law** and access to justice are also essential for building trust and constitute key elements of the social contract. The proposals in Our Common Agenda report are in line with SDG target 16.3 and commitment 4 in the UN75 declaration. They include a new vision for the rule of law that puts people at the center of justice systems, along with action to tackle corruption, in line with the UN Convention against Corruption and building on the 2021 special session of the General Assembly against corruption.

This cluster will also consider ideas for **measuring what matters** to humanity’s well-being and survival. Member States are invited to react to the proposal to urgently find measures of progress that complement Gross Domestic Product. This idea is set out in SDG target 17.19, and would allow greater alignment with priorities and needs of the 2030 Agenda. Member States’ feedback will be sought on complementary measures that better account for environmental and social considerations, including the care economy, and that build on existing work such as the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA) Ecosystem, the multidimensional vulnerability index and the inequality-adjusted human development index, including through existing mechanisms such as the UN Statistical Commission.

Addressing systemic faults in the current global financial system plays a critical role in delivering the SDGs, not least given the protracted negative impacts on the global economy of the COVID-19 pandemic and the lopsided recovery, which threatens hope of saving the SDGs. In this

consultation, proposals for **sustainable financing**, in line with commitment 9 of the UN75 declaration and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, are highlighted for Member States feedback and guidance.

Member States are invited to reflect on the specific proposal to strengthen international cooperation to tackle tax evasion and aggressive tax avoidance, including through the establishment of a **joint structure on financial integrity and tackling illicit financial flows**. Other proposed measures include steps to tax the value of the digital economy, taxation of financial technology innovation, including cryptocurrencies, and a digital development tax, with the possibility of proceeds being used to support the connectivity of the 3.8 billion people who are still offline. These steps would form part of broader efforts already underway by the G20 and the OECD to reform the international tax system. Guidance from Member States will be sought on measures they may wish to consider at the national level, as well as on the existing structures, such as the UN Tax Committee, that could further these priorities.

Bringing key actors together to overcome silos between economic governance and other areas of international agenda-setting and decision-making will be essential to ensure more sustainable financing for development. It is in this spirit that the Secretary-General has proposed a **Biennial Summit** at the level of Heads of State and Government between the members of the G20 and the members of ECOSOC, the Secretary-General and the heads of the international financial institutions to work towards a more sustainable, inclusive and resilient global economy. Member States will be invited to provide their feedback on the proposal for the Biennial Summit as well as feedback on how existing processes and initiatives can inform its preparations. This Summit would build on the spirit of previous proposals for an Economic Security Council, as well as the collaboration observed during the pandemic. With a view to advancing the SDGs as a whole, initial actions by this Summit could include consideration of ultra-long term and innovative financing for sustainable development and an SDG “investment boost” for a green and just transition for all countries in need, along with a “last mile alliance” to catalyze and elevate policy action to reach those furthest behind.

The full list of proposals for consideration at thematic consultation 2 is provided in the **Annex**.

#### **IV. Participation and organizational matters for thematic consultation 2**

Thematic consultation - 2 will be held over two full days and be chaired by the Permanent Representative of Tanzania in his capacity as Vice-President of the General Assembly.

The first day of the thematic consultations will take place at the General Assembly Hall and will consist of a plenary segment. It will include a statement by the President of the General Assembly and an opening briefing by the Deputy Secretary-General on the cluster of proposals for this second thematic consultation. It will be followed by an informal debate with the participation of Member States and observers of the General Assembly.

For inscribing on the list of speakers for the plenary segment, please contact the General Assembly Affairs Branch (email: [galindo@un.org](mailto:galindo@un.org) with copy to [gaspeakerslist@un.org](mailto:gaspeakerslist@un.org)). Short and focused interventions, as well as group statements, are encouraged (3 minutes for individual delegations and 5 minutes for groups of delegations). Longer statements and position papers may be submitted through *e-Statement*.

The second day of the thematic consultations will feature two moderated “fire side chat” style panel discussions with (i) senior officials from the United Nations system (morning), and (ii) relevant

stakeholders including the private sector, young people, academia and civil society representatives (afternoon). The meeting will take place in the Trusteeship Council Chamber and there will be no pre-established list of speakers. Member States and observers of the General Assembly will be able to intervene in both discussions. In accordance with resolution 76/6, to ensure broad and inclusive consultations, relevant partners will be invited to intervene in the afternoon session through either in-person participation or pre-recorded statements.

All meetings within the thematic consultations will be webcast on UN WebTV.

The Vice-President overseeing the thematic consultation will prepare a summary of the proceedings. This will constitute the outcome of the meeting.

## **Tentative Program**

### **Day 1: PLENARY SEGMENT**

#### *Morning (General Assembly Hall)*

10.00am – 1.00pm: Opening panel with remarks from the President of the General Assembly and the Deputy Secretary-General, followed by statements of Member States and observers of the General Assembly

#### *Afternoon (General Assembly Hall)*

3.00pm – 6.00pm: Statements by Member States and observers of the General Assembly

### **Day 2: PANELS (“fire side chats”)**

#### *Morning (Trusteeship Council Chamber)*

10.00am – 12.00pm: Panel-1 *fireside* chat with senior officials of the UN system.

*Opening Remarks:*  
Deputy-Secretary-General

*Moderator:*  
(TBC)

*Panelists:*  
DESA; OSAA; UNCTAD; UNDP; UNODC

#### *Afternoon (Trusteeship Council Chamber)*

3.00pm – 4.45pm: Panel-2 *fireside* chat with relevant partners from youth; civil society; private sector; academia/thought leaders; and local actors.

4.45pm – 5.00pm: Closing session

## ANNEX – Proposals from the Our Common Agenda report for thematic consultation 2

SN	Proposal	Report paragraph number
1.	<p>...I invite governments to conduct national listening and envisaging the future exercises...I also commit to ensure that the UN builds on recent innovations in listening to, consulting and engaging with people around the world. (21)</p> <p>I will also encourage United Nations country teams to actively support States in renewing the social contract, particularly focusing on trust, addressing discrimination and exclusion, and measuring what matters...I will encourage all parts of the United Nations system to make such consultations with people, including women and young people, regular and systematic going forward. (112)</p>	21, 112
2.	<p>...I encourage societies to discuss what are the most essential and valued public goods and the best means of ensuring their delivery, bearing in mind the roles of both public and private sectors and building on the Sustainable Development Goals. I would also urge investment in public systems and ensuring quality public servants....The international system needs to better support countries that lack the capacity and funding to make such investments.</p>	22
3.	<p>...I will promote a new vision for the rule of law, building on Sustainable Development Goal 16 and the 2012 Declaration of the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on the Rule of Law at the National and International Levels (see resolution 67/1).</p> <p>We will examine how our rule of law assistance can support States in rebuilding their social contract as a foundation for sustaining peace.</p> <p>It will also be important to accelerate action to tackle corruption, in line with the United Nations Convention against Corruption</p>	23
4.	<p>Governments should consider using taxation to reduce extreme inequalities in wealth...Taxation can also drive a sustainable and just transition, as governments shift subsidies from activities that damage the environment to those that sustain and enrich it....Any new approach to taxation will need to embed the principles of sustainability while also considering the views and capacities of developing countries. (24)</p> <p>Measures to increase fairness, such as a minimum global corporate tax and solidarity taxes, would be clear signals that private enterprises and the very wealthy who benefit most from current economic models must contribute to the national and global public good. (75)</p>	24, 75

5.	<p>...a reformed international tax system is needed to respond to the realities of growing cross-border trade and investment and an increasingly digitalized economy while also addressing existing shortcomings in fair and effective taxation of businesses and reducing harmful tax competition...Consideration could also be given to measures to tax the value of the digital economy, taxation of financial technology innovation, including cryptocurrencies, and a digital development tax...</p> <p>I also propose stronger international cooperation to tackle tax evasion and aggressive tax avoidance, money laundering and illicit financial flows, including through a new joint structure on financial integrity and tackling illicit financial flows, with membership centred around the UN, IFIs, OECD, major financial centres and expert civil society organizations. Its role could include promotion of transparency and accountability through provision of data and other information, as well as fostering agreements to address illicit financial flows.</p>	25
6.	<p>We must urgently find measures of progress that complement Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as we were tasked to do by 2030 in target 17.19 of the SDGs...In the interim I urge Member States to and others to already begin implementation of the recent System of Environmental -Economic Accounting (SEEA)...and to consider existing complements or alternatives to GDP... (38)</p> <p>Efforts to find consensus on complementary measures to GDP could be reinforced by a global shift away from relying on GDP to determine access to concessional finance and support, led by international financial institutions along with the United Nations. Indices of vulnerability to external shocks and systemic risk criteria could be given greater weight. Multilateral development banks could also revise their operations and asset management rules to increase their capacity to support investment in developing countries. (75)</p> <p>With too much of the international financial architecture still incentivizing economic growth with little or no consideration for sustainability and climate impacts, I urge States, international financial institutions and multilateral and national development banks to work with us to find complementary measures to GDP that account for the environment and to use this new measure to change fundamentally their mandates and investments. (84)</p>	38, 75, 84
7.	<p>In rethinking GDP, we must also find ways to validate the care and informal economy...Rethinking the care economy means valuing unpaid care work in economic models but also investing in quality paid care as part of essential public services and social protection arrangements, including by improved pay and working conditions.</p>	39
8.	<p>I propose a Biennial Summit at the level of Heads of State and Government between the members of the G20 and the members of ECOSOC, the Secretary-General and the heads of the international financial institutions to work towards a more sustainable, inclusive and resilient global economy.</p> <p>Immediate matters this biennial gathering could promote include ultra-long-term and innovative financing for sustainable development and a Sustainable Development Goals “investment boost” for a green and just transition for all countries in need, more flexible research and development incentives to foster innovation and a process to resolve longstanding weaknesses in the international debt architecture.</p> <p>Agreement could also be pursued on a “last mile alliance” to catalyse and elevate policy action to reach those furthest behind as part of efforts to achieve the Goals.</p>	73
9.	<p>A fairer and more resilient trading system would be open, rules-based, transparent and non-discriminatory...Efforts are also needed ...to align international trade with the green and circular economies, including by broadening negotiations on environmental goods and services...This also means promoting and valuing technological capacity, innovation</p>	74

	and resilience in developing countries...Reinstating an effective dispute settlement mechanism to be able to address trade tensions is key	
10.	...changing business models to better connect businesses, markets and society...Coordinated action by the business community to align their business practices with global goals, including the Sustainable Development Goals, is crucial	76