

HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: 10-19 JULY 2017

The 2017 meeting of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), under the auspices of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), convenes today at UN Headquarters in New York. HLPF is the central platform for the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The 2017 meeting will focus on the theme of “Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world.” In addition to SDG 17 (partnerships for the goals) which is reviewed annually, it will carry out in-depth reviews of SDG 1 (no poverty); SDG 2 (zero hunger); SDG 3 (good health and well-being); SDG 5 (gender equality); SDG 9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure); and SDG 14 (life below water). Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) will be presented by 44 countries.

The three-day ministerial segment from 17-19 July is expected to culminate with the adoption of a ministerial declaration.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE HLPF

The HLPF was called for by the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) in June 2012 in its outcome document, “The Future We Want,” to follow up on the implementation of sustainable development.

UNGA-67: The 67th session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) adopted a resolution (A/RES/67/290) on the format and organizational aspects of the HLPF on 9 July 2013. It decided that the HLPF, consistent with its intergovernmental universal character, will:

- provide political leadership, guidance, and recommendations for sustainable development;
- follow up and review progress in the implementation of sustainable development commitments;
- enhance the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development; and
- have a focused, dynamic, and action-oriented agenda, ensuring the appropriate consideration of new and emerging sustainable development challenges.

The resolutions called for the meetings of the Forum to be convened:

- every four years under the auspices of the UNGA at the level of Heads of State and Government – two days at the beginning of the UNGA session; and

every year under the auspices of ECOSOC – for eight days, including a three-day ministerial segment.

Both meetings will adopt negotiated ministerial declarations. The Forum, under the auspices of ECOSOC, will conduct regular reviews, starting in 2016, on the follow-up and implementation of sustainable development commitments and objectives, including those related to the means of implementation, within the context of the “post-2015 development agenda.”

FIRST SESSION OF THE HLPF: The inaugural session of the HLPF on 24 September 2013, under the auspices of the UNGA, focused on the theme of “Building the future we want from Rio+20 to the post-2015 development agenda.” Heads of State and Government and Ministers discussed moving from vision to action; global partnerships for development; and mapping the way forward for eradicating poverty and achieving sustainable development.

2014 SESSION OF THE HLPF: The second session of the HLPF, under the auspices of ECOSOC, convened from 30 June to 9 July 2014, and focused on “Achieving the Millennium Development Goals and charting the way for an ambitious post-2015 development agenda including the SDGs.” A Ministerial Declaration was adopted at the end of the meeting.

2015 SESSION OF THE HLPF: The third session of the HLPF, under the auspices of ECOSOC, convened from 26 June to 8 July 2015, and focused on “Strengthening integration, implementation and review – the HLPF after 2015.” Moderated discussions took place on, *inter alia*, supporting national action through HLPF outcomes; keeping science involved in SDG implementation; tracking progress through existing mechanisms; the HLPF in the next 15 years; reviewing and monitoring progress; and realizing the SDGs. A Ministerial Declaration was adopted at the end of the meeting.

2030 AGENDA: The intergovernmental negotiation process on the post-2015 development agenda included thirteen meetings of an Open Working Group to formulate the 17 SDGs and 169 targets; and a series of eight week-long sessions to develop “Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,” a package that includes the SDGs and a framework for follow-up and review of implementation. This 2030 Agenda, adopted at the September 2015 UN Sustainable Development Summit, calls on the HLPF, under the auspices of ECOSOC, to carry out voluntary, state-led national reviews to provide a platform for partnerships.

2016 SESSION OF THE HLPF: The fourth session of the HLPF, under the auspices of ECOSOC, convened from 11-20 July 2016, focused on the theme of “Ensuring that no one is left behind.” In addition to moderated dialogues, five sessions focused on the first round of VNRs submitted by 22 countries. A Ministerial

Declaration was adopted at the end of the Forum, following a vote on the retention of a paragraph relating to the Paris Agreement on climate change. The Declaration was adopted with the paragraph intact.

INTERSESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

IAEG-SDGs: The UN Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (IAEG-SDGs) held its fifth meeting in Ottawa, Canada, from 28-31 March 2017. The Group, which was established by the UN Statistical Commission to develop an indicator framework for the SDGs, reviewed and updated a three-tier system of classification for the SDG indicators, based on their level of methodological development and data availability. It also considered a work plan on data disaggregation, and a timeline for finalizing the proposals on possible additional indicators and other changes for the first comprehensive review of the SDG indicators in 2020.

STI FORUM: As a component of the technology facilitation mechanism (TFM) mandated by the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA), the Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the SDGs (STI Forum) provides a venue for facilitating interaction, matchmaking and the establishment of networks between relevant stakeholders, and multi-stakeholder partnerships, to identify and examine technology needs and gaps. The second STI Forum took place on 15-16 May 2017 and focused on the six SDGs selected for review at the 2017 HLPF (SDGs 1, 2, 3, 5, 9 and 14), in addition to SDG 17. A summary of the Forum will be part of the documentation for the 2017 HLPF.

FfD FORUM: The second ECOSOC Financing for Development (FfD) Forum took place at UN Headquarters in New York from 22-25 May 2017. It provided an opportunity for international trade and financial institutions to interact with their UN counterparts on issues of common interest in the follow-up on the FfD outcomes. Agreed conclusions from this FfD Forum will be part of the documentation for the 2017 HLPF.

SDG INDICATORS: On 7 June 2017, ECOSOC adopted the indicator framework developed by the IAEG-SDGs, as contained in the draft resolution on the “Work of the Statistical Commission pertaining to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.” The resolution will be transmitted to UNGA for adoption. During the meeting, delegates considered the report of the 48th session of the UN Statistical Commission (E/CN.3/2017/35), which contains the draft resolution.

UN OCEAN CONFERENCE: The High-Level UN Conference to Support the Implementation of SDG 14 took place at UN Headquarters New York from 5-9 June 2017. It produced three outcomes: an intergovernmentally agreed Call for Action; a registry of voluntary commitments; and key messages from its partnership dialogues. The Call for Action affirms the commitment to implement SDG 14 and to mobilize resources in line with the AAAA. The 1328 registered voluntary commitments by governments and other stakeholders cover a wide range of topics, from the creation of marine protected areas and action on plastic and other marine debris, to funding for scientific research and capacity-building activities. The partnership dialogues facilitated knowledge and experience sharing between participants and clarified interlinkages between SDG 14 and the other Goals.

HIGH-LEVEL SDG ACTION EVENTS: The President of UNGA convened a series of High-Level Action events at UN Headquarters in New York through 2017, to deliver a universal push for implementation of the SDGs.

A High-Level Dialogue on Building Sustainable Peace for All, on 24 January 2017, highlighted the need for: conflict prevention; addressing the root causes of conflict; ensuring the rule of law and strong and accountable institutions; and the effective management and equitable distribution of resources, as well as the protection of human rights. It also recognised the need for enhanced collaboration and partnerships, uniting the efforts of all stakeholders at the national, regional and international levels, including a reformed UN delivery system, impervious to silos and able to operate as one.

A High-Level SDG Action Event on Climate Change and the Sustainable Development Agenda, on 23-24 March 2017, discussed, *inter alia*, holistic options to address climate change, recognizing the linkages with SDGs; changes in the energy sector, including through the removal of fossil fuel subsidies; technological leapfrogging; a just transition for those affected by these changes; opportunities for financing sustainable development through the issuance of green bonds; and the role of big data in promoting “radical transparency” as an accelerator for change.

A UNGA High-Level SDG Financing Lab, on 18 April 2017, sought to highlight the critical importance of sustainable finance for the achievement of the SDGs, and to strengthen the role of the UN in this regard. It focused on how to drive the transformation of global financial markets towards alignment with sustainable development, and to showcase specific ways in which Member States can approach the financing of different SDGs.

A SDG Action Event on Innovation, on 17 May 2017, sought to bring together Member States, UN leaders, civil society, and others to engage directly with leading innovators from the technology sector to explore ways to harness the power of technology to drive SDG implementation. It sought also to showcase innovative approaches and discuss the risks and opportunities for the public good that innovation offers.

A High-level Action Event on Education, on 28 June 2017, sought to: outline the case for more and better financing to achieve SDG 4 (quality education), through domestic resource mobilization, bilateral aid and multilateral efforts as well as strong political will and good policies; encourage integration of innovative technologies in teaching and learning; highlight the importance of addressing the challenges which young people are facing in accessing and completing basic and higher education, in conditions of social and geographic fragmentation, and in post-conflict and post-disaster regions; and to emphasize the importance of raising awareness and teaching about the SDGs, including for the 126 million children who will be eighteen years old in 2030.

REVIEW OF THE 2030 REGIONAL FORA: In preparation for HLPF 2017, five regional fora were held: the Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development, 29-31 March 2017, in Bangkok, Thailand; the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) Regional Forum, 25 April 2017, in Geneva, Switzerland; the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) Regional Forum, 16-19 May 2017, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) Regional Forum, 26-28 April 2017, in Mexico City, Mexico; and the Arab Forum for Sustainable Development, 3-5 May 2017, in Rabat, Morocco.

MINISTERIAL DECLARATION: The co-facilitators appointed to lead consultations on the Ministerial Declaration for the 2017 HLPF, Jan Kickert (Austria) and Courtenay Rattray (Jamaica), shared proposed elements with Member States on 23 May 2017. Following informal consultations with UN Member States and an informal dialogue with stakeholders on 26 May 2017, a zero draft was released by the co-facilitators on 7 June 2017. Following further consultations, revised drafts were released on 19 June and on 27 June 2017. Discussions continued until the week before HLPF 2017, with the last consultation taking place on 5 July.