

Briefing of the President of ECOSOC on the 2023 HLPF and High-level Segment of ECOSOC

27 June 2023, ECOSOC Chamber, 3:00 PM

Overview

I am pleased to provide an overview of the 2023 high-level political forum on sustainable development.

The forum will be convened from 10 to 19 July 2023 under the auspices of ECOSOC, including three days Ministerial Segment from 17 to 19 July, as part of the High-level Segment of ECOSOC. The last day of the ECOSOC High-level Segment will be held on 20 July

The 2023 HLPF will be held in person. It will focus on the theme “***Accelerating the recovery from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at all levels***”.

The HLPF will conduct in-depth reviews of SDGs 6 on clean water and sanitation, 7 on affordable and clean energy, 9 on industry, innovation and infrastructure, 11 on sustainable cities and communities, and 17 on partnerships for the Goals, as well as their interlinkages.

This year marks the mid-point of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. It is the end of the second four-year cycle of the HLPF. This year the HLPF will meet twice – under ECOSOC in July and again in September, under the auspices of the General Assembly, as the SDG Summit. The July HLPF serves as a key pre-Summit event.

Participation

In my letter to Member States on 24 March 2023, I invited Ministers from all relevant fields of the SDGs to actively participate in July HLPF, to share experiences and policy recommendations on transformative actions to advance the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, for consideration at the SDG Summit.

The July HLPF will accelerate a multisectoral effort to reverse negative trends and shift towards rapid SDG progress, contributing to the momentum ahead of the Summit.

Continuing the tradition of wide engagement of the stakeholders, more than 3,000 representatives from the major groups and other stakeholders and NGOs accredited to ECOSOC have registered for the HLPF. I am especially pleased that a large number of youth participants will be joining the Forum. I have sought to boost the role of youth by ensuring speaking roles in all the sessions.

Preparations

For preparing the HLPF, meetings and events were convened by the UN system, including the regional commissions and other organizations, on the thematic reviews of the SDGs.

Some 70 written inputs were provided by the functional commissions of ECOSOC and other intergovernmental bodies to support the HLPF thematic reviews. The major groups and other stakeholders also presented their discussion papers on the HLPF theme. All these inputs have been published at the HLPF website.

Global and regional workshops were organized by DESA and the UN regional commissions to support countries preparing their Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs).

Programme and speakers

The preparation now is at the final stage. The Provisional Agenda, Programme and the Secretariat Concept Note for the HLPF and ECOSOC High-level Segment are available at the HLPF website. The Annotated Programme with speakers will be available online soon. The Information Note on arrangements for the HLPF and the ECOSOC High-level Segment, with details, is also available at the HLPF website.

The forum will have a townhall meeting on the first day in the morning of 10 July. It aims to deliver a bird's eye view on where we stand at mid-point of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. It will set the scene for the discussions.

The first five days of the HLPF will include thematic sessions on the SDGs under in-depth review, on means of implementation, and for countries in special situations, including SIDS, Africa, LDCs, LLDCs, as well as MICs.

The programme also includes sessions on local and regional actions and presentations of various reports, to hear messages from the ground, from the Regional Forums on Sustainable Development organized by the UN regional commissions, and from the UN Environment Assembly.

As in the past, the major groups and other stakeholders (MGoS) will organize a session on the theme of the HLPF, to share their views on the situation regarding the SDGs and their priority actions for inclusive transformation.

The Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly will make remarks at the opening of the Ministerial Segment of the HLPF and the High-level Segment of ECOSOC, on 17 July.

The thematic sessions will be organized in the format of interactive panel discussions. High-level panelists and resource persons are expected to join various thematic panels, including Heads of Government, Ministers, the UN system principals, such as FAO, UNDRR, UNHCR, UNFCCC, UN-Habitat, IOM, OHRRLLS, and the Executive Secretaries of UN regional commissions. Leading experts, such as the Chair of IPCC and scientists of the GSDR, the SDG

Advocate, and representatives of MGoS, including youth, the business sector, mayors, and local authorities are also in the line-up of speakers. The Chairs of the Regional Sustainable Development Forums will deliver messages in the regional session during the Ministerial Segment.

On 20 July, the last day of the High-level Segment of ECOSOC, the morning session will focus on strengthening UN system institutions for resilient sustainable development. It will elaborate on how to strengthen coordination and build capacity for UN system institutions to become more resilient, foster trust, and prepare for the future. The afternoon session will focus on long-term trends and scenarios on crisis response and recovery and the SDGs.

There is no list of speakers for the panel discussions of the HLPF. Meeting participants are invited to request the floor during the interactive discussions by pressing the microphone button on the console.

Given the limited time available and in order to allow the maximum number of participants to intervene, interventions in interactive discussions should be limited to no more than two to three minutes. Participants are discouraged from reading prepared statements. Instead, they are invited to make informal remarks and engage in an interactive discussion with the presenters. In preparing the programme, I have tried to limit the number of presenters, so as to create time for Member States to engage in interactive discussions.

General debate

This year, the general debate of the ministerial days of the HLPF and the High-level Segment of ECOSOC will be held in person from 17 to 20 July for preparing the SDG Summit. The general debate will focus on the theme ***“Building momentum towards the 2023 SDG Summit: Transformation for accelerating implementation of the SDGs.”***

The general debate will allow Ministers and high-level representatives of Governments and the UN system, IGOs and major groups and other stakeholders to exchange experiences, lessons learned, offer policy guidance, and identify transformative actions and initiatives for the SDG Summit.

The list of speakers is open for inscription on the e-deleGATE platform until 17:00, on 12 July 2023, following which a rolling provisional list of speakers will be circulated. The list of speakers will be maintained in accordance with customary protocol and on a first-come, first-served basis, with group statements being heard first.

As of 26 June, there were 120 inscriptions by participating States, including more than 60 States inscribed at the level of Minister or higher and around 20 at the level of Vice-Minister. I welcome the high degree of interest in intervening at a high level. I also ask participating States to kindly update their inscription in case of any change before the beginning of the general debate.

Due to the high number of speakers expected the time limits of SIX minutes for statements on behalf of groups and FOUR minutes for national statements, as well as THREE minutes for Statements by Observers and UN entities, will be strictly implemented.

Voluntary National Reviews

Thirty-nine countries will carry out Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) of their implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The European Union will also conduct a voluntary review. One country and the European Union will be presenting for the first time; 37 countries will be presenting for the second time, and one for the third time.

The presentations of the VNRs will start on Friday, 14 July and will continue in the three days of the Ministerial Segment of the HLPF, until 19 July. The schedule of VNRs is contained in the updated programme which has been posted on the HLPF website.

The Group of Friends of VNRs, co-chaired by the Permanent Representatives of Morocco and the Philippines, are assisting countries conducting VNRs in pairing with other countries to prepare the interaction on their VNR at the HLPF.

A final preparatory workshop for all VNR presenting countries will be held in hybrid format on Thursday 6 July. More information will be shared by the Secretariat.

Reports and Background Notes

The HLPF is informed by two key reports, the Global Sustainable Development Report and the Special Edition of the Secretary-General's SDG Progress Report. The 2023 GSDR focuses on interventions that show promise at different stages of transformation to accelerate SDG progress through key entry points. The GSDR complements the Secretary-General's SDG Progress Report, which is published annually, providing the latest measurement of SDG progress using the Global Indicator Framework.

A fireside chat featuring GSDR scientists will be organized in the Ministerial Segment of the forum, to hear key recommendations from the GSDR on accelerating implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

A range of other inputs also inform the HLPF, among them, the synthesis of inputs from ECOSOC functional commissions and other bodies, the Secretary-General's report on the HLPF and ECOSOC theme, and the Secretary-General's report on future trends and scenarios of the SDGs. The reports from other forums and processes also contribute to the HLPF, including those from the ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development, the STI Forum, and

the 10-Year Framework of Programme on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns.

Background Notes for the thematic sessions of HLPF and High-level Segment of ECOSOC have been prepared by the Secretariat for supporting the debate in the meeting. They are available at the HLPF website. The Notes propose key questions for delegations to prepare their deliberations in the thematic discussions.

Outcomes

After conclusion of the forum, I will prepare a summary to capture the key messages of the discussions. It will be the outcome of the HLPF this year and will be a contribution to the SDG Summit.

The HLPF will not adopt a Ministerial Declaration in July this year, as a political declaration will be adopted by the SDG Summit in September. The negotiation for the political declaration is being conducted by the co-facilitators, H.E. Mr. Fergal Mythen, Permanent Representative of Ireland to the UN and H.E. Ms. Alya Ahmed Saif Al-Thani, Permanent Representative of Qatar to the UN, appointed by the President of the General Assembly.

The July HLPF is also an opportunity to share information about new and ambitious initiatives, actions, or commitments to achieve the SDGs launched by participating States, including the VNR countries, the UN system and other stakeholders on the occasion of the SDG Summit.

Other events

There will be a large number of other events to be organized in the margins of the HLPF, including 197 in-person side events, 26 virtual side events, 17 VNR Labs, and 12 high-level special events.

As in previous years, UN DESA, in collaboration with key partners, curates a set of high-profile special events for the HLPF, featuring high-level report launches and discussions to galvanize broad ownership and engagement on the SDGs from key sectors, such as higher education institutions, private sector, local and regional governments, parliamentarians, among others. Most of these events are recurring every year under different themes.

The HLPF Special Events offer additional platforms for Member States, UN entities, intergovernmental organizations, major groups and other stakeholders to showcase their contributions to SDG implementation, share tools, methodologies and relevant data.

Twelve Special Events will be held during the 2023 HLPF. DESA/DSDG and partners are updating information about special events on the HLPF website, including their programmes.

Overall, the preparations for the HLPF and the High-level Segment of ECOSOC are progressing smoothly. I am confident that it will be a successful high-level meeting with dynamic deliberations to prepare and set a solid stage for the SDG Summit.

I look forward to seeing the Ministers and other high-level representatives and stakeholders at the meeting.

I am pleased to answer your questions.

Thank you.
