



2024 ECOSOC High-level Segment

*“Current trends and their impacts:
Looking to the future and the realization of the SDGs”*

Thursday, 18 July 2024, 3:00 – 5:00 pm
ECOSOC Chamber, United Nations Headquarters, New York

Concept Note

Background

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development outlines a universal, indivisible, inclusive and integrated vision “for people, planet and prosperity”. But that promise is in peril. In many cases, progress on agreed targets is slow, or stagnant.

At the 2023 SDG Summit, Heads of State and Government adopted a Political Declaration that reaffirms their shared commitment to undertake transformative actions to accelerate efforts to fully implement the 2030 Agenda and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. This requires accelerated – turbocharged – action towards the SDGs. Yet the world continues to face multiple and interlinked challenges impacting the capacity of countries to undertake actions pledged by world leaders in the 2023 SDG Summit Political Declaration.

The ECOSOC High-level Segment will address current global trends that have significant potential to influence efforts to get implementation on track. These include the impact of geopolitical tensions on the global economy, the changing labour market, rapid technological change, the continuing and intensifying adverse impacts from climate change, and the evolving nature of social contracts.

These trends and their impacts are likely to condition the prospects for achieving most or all of the Sustainable Development Goals. While aspects of these trends can yield constructive outcomes, there are also negative impacts that have the potential to hinder and reverse progress across the SDGs and that would be faced predominantly by vulnerable countries and communities. Concrete and holistic responses are needed at all levels.

The current global economic environment is marked by slow global economic growth and increasing geoeconomic fragmentation, which is heightening uncertainty and putting poverty eradication and the SDG achievement at risk. Labour markets are being reshaped by unprecedented transformations, triggered by



the COVID-19 pandemic and driven by accelerated technological progress and digitalization.

Rapid changes in technology have potentially significant promise for sustainable development opportunities and sustainable pathways to the future, yet there remains a technological divide. Continued climate change is intensifying adverse climate impacts, which are now affecting all countries on all continents.

Across the world, in different societies, social contracts are evolving, affecting the type and impact of people's interactions. These social contracts involve terms of cooperation, rights and obligations of citizens and States for mutual benefit that are context- and culture-specific, yet that also should be consistent with global agreements.

More effective policies and institutional actions in these interconnected areas will enhance the prospects for achievement of all the SDGs, which are universal, comprehensive and interlinked. This requires addressing these trends at the national and international levels. Greatly strengthened international cooperation is needed to pursue integrated and synergistic strategies and policymaking, supportive international institutions and the necessary financing.

The current global context has brought the effectiveness of multilateral institutions to the forefront. The multilateral system has not been able to anticipate and respond to the current and rapidly changing crises and challenges, to deliver on the 2030 Agenda. One of the key challenges relates to the structure and functioning of these institutions. Effective responses to current crises and trends require a comprehensive approach where policies and programmes being implemented account for impacts across all three dimensions of sustainable development.

The Secretary-General's report *Our Common Agenda* in 2021 called upon the multilateral system to become better fit-for-purpose. It is imperative that institutions such as the United Nations, international financial institutions and the World Trade Organization are broadly capable to provide coordinated, effective, and holistic support to development efforts. They need to address current inequalities within and among countries, including unequal access to financial resources and decision-making power, particularly in least developed countries and those in protracted crisis.

Such efforts would shore up global economic growth and support collective action to reverse geoeconomic fragmentation. It would support adaptation to rapidly



changing labour markets and digitalization, facilitate access to new technologies, support climate adaptation, and revitalize social contracts. Multilateral institutions can also support broad multi-stakeholder engagement, to foster genuine collaboration. It requires ongoing support to translate dialogue into tangible actions with lasting impacts. Partnerships should embody an integrated approach, capacity building, and active engagement of all stakeholders.

The Summit of the Future in 2024, and the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development and World Social Summit in 2025 serve as milestones for the way forward for multilateral institutions befitting a world racing towards 2030. Together, they offer a platform for various stakeholders to discuss necessary reforms with a view to formulating multilateral solutions.

This session of the High-level Segment on Current trends and their impacts will present different perspectives and experiences on current trends affecting SDG implementation. It will engage Ministers and other participants and stakeholders in a dialogue on addressing current trends and their accompanying challenges and providing forward-looking solutions for advancing sustainable development. It will consider coordinated global policies and high-impact actions to deliver a better future for all that leaves no one behind. The session will also discuss multilateral collaboration and the support from international institutions needed for the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda at all levels, to the year 2030 and beyond.

Objective

The objective of this session of the ECOSOC High-level segment is to bring together ministers from different perspectives, as well as experts and development actors, to discuss experiences on how current trends are impacting SDG implementation and to advance policy recommendations for longer-term sustainable development objectives. The discussion will also focus on the fitness of multilateral institutions for the 2030 Agenda.

Guiding questions

- What are significant current trends and their potential long-term impacts and implications for the future achievement of the SDGs?
- What actions have been successful in addressing these current trends with a view towards fully undertaking the necessary transitions for advancing sustainable development?



- How can these actions be scaled up to unlock the rapid and deep transitions needed to deliver on the SDGs?
- How can multilateral collaboration and international institutions be improved to better contribute to SDG progress and support the key transitions to sustainable development to the year 2030 and beyond?

Participants

The ECOSOC High-level Segment will bring together experts from Governments, the United Nations system, think tanks, regional organizations and other stakeholders. The session will engage ministers, experts and key actors to present their views and policy recommendations. The engagement of participants from government, academia, civil society and other stakeholders will provide an opportunity to draw from different perspectives and experiences. The audience will be comprised of representatives of Member States, the United Nations system and of civil society.

Outcome

The outcome of the High-level Segment will be a Ministerial Declaration and summary by the President of ECOSOC.

Supporting documentation

The discussion will be informed by:

- Report of the Secretary-General report on [*Long-term impacts of current trends on the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals \(E/2025/55\)*](#)
- Report of the Secretary-General on [*the theme of the 2024 ECOSOC and HLPF \(E/2024/52\)*](#)
- Report of the Secretary-General [*“Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals” \(A/79/79 - E/2024/54\)*](#).

Programme

The programme for this session of the 2024 ECOSOC High-level Segment on “*Current trends and their impacts: Looking to the future and the realization of the SDGs*”, to be convened in the afternoon of 18 July, will be made available [here](#).

The overall 2024 programme for the High-level Political Forum and the ECOSOC High-level Segment, including on 18 July, can be accessed [here](#).