

**ECOSOC Management Segment Roundtable Discussion**  
**Unity in Action: Accelerating SDG Implementation and Building a Better Future for All**  
**Wednesday, 11 June 2025, 10 AM to 1 PM, ECOSOC Chamber**

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*[As prepared for delivery]*

**Question1: How can ECOSOC help advance the social dimensions of sustainable development in the context of multiple challenges, and what opportunities exist in advancing decent work and social justice in light of the Second World Summit for Social Development?**

We are living through a moment of structural uncertainty. Multiple, overlapping crises, in particular the rise of inequality, are exposing cracks in our global development model. What these crises have in common is a neglect of the social dimension of sustainable development, a renewed call for social justice and the foundational role of trust in institutions of global governance. And here, ECOSOC, as a Charter Body, has a unique responsibility.

For the ambition of the 2030 Agenda to be realized, it is important for ECOSOC to go beyond coordination. It is crucial for ECOSOC to lead in connecting the dots across the UN's social, economic, and environmental pillars. That starts with leveraging its full institutional machinery, in particular the Commission for Social Development and the High-Level Political Forum, to integrate and elevate social policy, notably social justice anchored on decent work as a cross-cutting concern. These are not just technical platforms; they are political instruments of global governance. And we need them to speak with one voice.

To be more concrete, please allow me to outline three key pathways:

**First,** A strengthened vertical coherence of ECOSOC by better aligning intergovernmental processes with the strategic and operational functions of the UN development system. This means using the ECOSOC platform to follow through on commitments made, including those of the Copenhagen Declaration and its Programme of Work as well as the outcome of the Second World Summit for Social Development in a more strategic, coherent and effective manner. The importance of the effective engagement of organizations representing employers and workers cannot be overemphasised.

**Second**, ECOSOC's horizontal coherence fostered by connecting deliberations on financing with the realities of livelihoods. For instance, decisions taken in the ECOSOC's subsidiary bodies should be explicitly assessed for their impact on social development outcomes.

**Third**, the Second World Summit for Social Development, taking place under the auspices of the General Assembly this November, offers a generational opportunity to reaffirm the centrality of people-centred development. It is crucial for ECOSOC to play a critical role in supporting the strategic follow-up, ensuring that the commitments made are embedded in the ongoing work of all its subsidiary bodies, and that social justice becomes a shared priority across the UN system.

The ILO remains committed to supporting this vision through our normative mandate, tripartite constituents and platforms like the Global Coalition for Social Justice. For these efforts to be truly effective, they should be situated within a broader context in which ECOSOC advances the integration of the economic, social and environmental pillars of sustainable development.

## **Question 2: What policy shifts are needed to better align the future of work in response to key transformations taking place to support Member States and other stakeholders?**

The world of work is undergoing rapid and profound transformations. As stated in the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work, the key drivers of the future of work are technology, demography and the environment.

To support Member States and other stakeholders in navigating these transitions, three interlinked policy shifts are essential:

**First**, the future of work must be employment centred. This calls for the promotion of policies that explicitly target decent job creation, productivity-driven growth and social investment – ensuring that economic growth translates into stable, safe, and well-paying jobs across all sectors. The quality of jobs, particularly within the context of technology, demographic shifts and climate change, is very important if we really want to eradicate poverty. Strategic investment should also be directed towards sectors with potential to create decent jobs, especially those that utilize emerging technologies or respond to emerging needs - such as the digital, green and care economies. These efforts should be underpinned by integrated policies for robust just transitions, strengthened labour market institutions and effective normative frameworks.

**Second**, skills systems must be modernized to support effective lifelong learning. Developing people's skills is essential for driving successful and inclusive structural transformation policies. Skilling, re-skilling and upskilling should occur throughout people's life courses. These efforts should be grounded in rights-based and inclusive approaches that align skills supply with labour market demands. They must enhance access for

women, youth, older persons, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and marginalized groups.

**Third**, social protection systems must be reimagined as enablers of transformation. By ensuring income security, access to healthcare, and protection against life-cycle risks, social protection enables more people – particularly women– to engage in employment and benefit from improved working conditions. Well-designed social protection policies not only reduce poverty and inequality but also boost productivity, resilience, and economic stability. This requires financing strategies that are nationally driven and supported by international cooperation.

These policy shifts will not happen by default. They require coordinated, forward-looking governance and an enabling international environment. With its integrated approach and system-wide reach, ECOSOC is strategically positioned to connect the dots across the different dimensions of sustainable development ensuring that the future of work advances the promise of SDG 8. As we know, SDG 8 is under review at this year's High-level Political Forum, and jobs and social protection was recognized by the UNSDG as one of the 6 key transitions that have the potential for turbo charging all SDGs. Furthermore, the Modalities Resolution of the Second World Summit for Social Development identified full and productive employment and decent work as one of the three pillars of the WSSD2 Political Declaration.