

Unity in Action: Accelerating SDG Implementation and Building a Better Future for All

Roundtable discussion during the 2025 June management segment

Informal summary

The Economic and Social Council held a roundtable discussion on “[Unity in Action: Accelerating SDG Implementation and Building a Better Future for All](#)” in response to the mandate issued by the General Assembly in resolution [75/290 A](#)¹.

The meeting stressed the **urgent need to tackle interlinked global crises** through **coherence**, stronger **governance**, inclusive **multilateralism** and effective **partnerships**, while also emphasizing the **integration of youth and gender perspectives** across all processes, including through the revitalization of CSW and the **meaningful participation of youth in ECOSOC** and its subsidiary bodies.

The discussion also underscored the **role of ECOSOC in translating system-wide expertise into strategic guidance**, with the upcoming reviews of the Council, its subsidiary bodies and the High-level political forum on sustainable development (HLPF) as well as the 80th anniversary of the United Nations seen as an opportunity to **revitalize the Council’s role as the central platform for policy guidance, coordination and accountability on sustainable development**.

The roundtable discussion was chaired and moderated by **H.E. Mr. Lok Bahadur Thapa (Nepal)**, Vice-President of the Council responsible for the management segment, who framed the session as a bridge from the Coordination Segment to concrete and actionable guidance for the 2025 High-Level Political Forum (HLPF), the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development (FFD4), and the implementation of the outcomes of the Summit of the Future.

H.E. Ms. Paula Narváez (Chile), President of the 2024 session of the Economic and Social Council, gave a keynote address to set the stage for the discussion held subsequently with representatives from the Council’s subsidiary bodies and UN system entities. Panelists included **H.E. Mr. Muhammadou M.O. Kah (The Gambia)**, Chair of the 28th session and Chair interim of the 29th session of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD), **H.E. Mr. José Antonio Zabalgoitia Trejo (Mexico)**, Chair of the 34th session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ), **Ms. Khrystyna Hayovyshyn (Ukraine)**, Chair of the 64th session of the Commission for Social Development (CSoCD), **Ms. Andreea Mocanu (Romania)**, Vice-Chair of the 70th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), **Ms. Aluki Kotierk (Canada/Arctic)**, Chair of the 24th session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (PFII), **Mr. Claver Gatete**, Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and coordinator for the regional commissions for 2025, and **Ms. Cynthia Samuel-Olonjuwon**, Special Representative to the UN and Director of the **ILO Office** for the United Nations.

H.E. Ms. Paula Narváez (Chile), President of the 2024 session of the Council, emphasized that ECOSOC stands at a pivotal juncture and must evolve from a “passive receptacle” of technical inputs into a strategic political actor capable of guiding and coordinating the sustainable development pillar of the

¹ A/RES/75/290 A, Annex, paragraph 28.

United Nations, restoring its transformative role and strengthening its political relevance. Ambassador Narváez stressed the need for a stronger governance space for Financing for Development, including by making the ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development Follow-up (FFD Forum) more operational and fostering regular, structured engagement with International Financial Institutions (IFIs). She underlined the opportunity provided by the upcoming reviews and the Secretary-General's UN80 initiative to revitalize the Council's role through greater coherence – including by further aligning mandates with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), streamlining calendars and eliminating fragmentation. There is need for more effective feedback loops and mutual learning between intergovernmental policy guidance and implementation on the ground as well as increasing meaningful engagement with civil society as a strategic partner, rather than a passive observer.

H.E. Mr. Muhammadou M.O. Kah (The Gambia), Chair interim of CSTD, emphasized the urgent need to bridge all dimensions of the digital divide, particularly for Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and vulnerable populations, through affordable connectivity and digital infrastructure models adapted to local conditions (languages, customs, usage patterns and community contexts) to ensure meaningful access. Ambassador Kah stressed that ECOSOC has the responsibility to ensure that digitalization becomes a true equalizer and catalyst for accelerating SDG implementation. He warned against fragmented data governance frameworks that exacerbate inequalities in the global data economy, calling for a coherent, multilateral and multi-stakeholder dialogue that aligns with the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), the Global Digital Compact (GDC) and the SDGs, and that is guided by the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. He further highlighted that the CSTD had established a multistakeholder working group on the fundamental principles of data governance, as mandated by the GDC, and pointed to the strong support for renewing the mandate of the Internet Governance Forum.

H.E. Mr. José Antonio Zabalgoitia Trejo (Mexico), Chair of CCPCJ, underscored that the rule of law is a foundational enabler of all SDGs and essential to achieving sustainable development. He outlined the Commission's role in advancing international cooperation on crime prevention and criminal justice, highlighting its capacity to translate policy commitments into tangible action. Ambassador Zabalgoitia drew particular attention to the adoption by consensus of the Kyoto Model Strategies on the rehabilitation and social reintegration of offenders, which he described as a landmark normative achievement. He also noted six other resolutions adopted by consensus on key issues such as crimes that undermine environmental and economic resilience, prison reform, migrant smuggling and preparations for the 15th United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. He commended the consensus-based outcomes as a demonstration of effective multilateralism in action, particularly in a complex geopolitical context. Furthermore, Ambassador Zabalgoitia emphasized the Commission's contributions to advancing SDG 5 through efforts to prevent and address gender-based violence and to improve women's access to justice and representation in law enforcement; SDG 14 through work to combat illegal fishing and marine pollution, and to protect coastal communities; and SDG 17 through capacity-building in criminal justice systems and fostering international cooperation and multilateral action to address transnational organized crime.

Ms. Khrystyna Hayovyshyn (Ukraine), Chair of CSoCD, emphasized the foundational role of social protection systems in building resilience, promoting equality as well as supporting inclusive recovery and making them central to accelerating the implementation of the SDGs. Ms. Hayovyshyn underscored the Commission's role in addressing multiple and intersecting crises, including by being a catalyst for multilateral partnerships, which mobilize resources and foster cooperation across sectors. She highlighted efforts to address structural drivers of exclusion – such as poverty, unequal access to education, decent work and technology – alongside the need to bridge digital divides. Ms. Hayovyshyn further emphasized

the work of CSocD in promoting the economy of well-being as a guiding approach that integrates social and economic policy, and the social and solidarity economy as a vehicle for decent work, inequality reduction and local development. Ms. Hayovyshyn called for rights-based, people-centered and forward-looking policy guidance and stressed the Commission's contribution to the preparations for the Second World Summit for Social Development, where its deliberations will help shape a more coherent and coordinated global response to leaving no one behind.

Ms. Andreea Mocanu (Romania), Vice-Chair of CSW, emphasized the Commission's continued role as the United Nations' central norm-setting body for gender equality. Ms. Mocanu underscored the need to systematically mainstream gender across all UN processes and called for gender-sensitive responses to interconnected global crises. She encouraged both UN entities and Member States to draw on CSW's agreed conclusions and the Political Declaration adopted at the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action as guiding frameworks for their policies and programming. Ms. Mocanu also outlined several key measures under discussion in the ongoing process on the revitalization of CSW, namely increasing visibility and responsiveness, enhancing inclusivity, strengthening the action-orientation of outcomes, improving monitoring, review and follow-up, and deepening coordination with other UN bodies and processes. These measures, she noted, aim to make the Commission more impactful and better equipped to address the diverse realities of women and girls around the world.

Ms. Aluki Kotierk (Canada/Arctic), Chair of PFII, called for the systemic integration of Indigenous Peoples' knowledge, priorities and rights across all aspects of SDG implementation. Ms. Kotierk emphasized the need for dedicated funding, Indigenous-led data collection and indicators, and inclusion of Indigenous Peoples in Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs). She also advocated for the co-design of policies and programmes with Indigenous Peoples, and for the legal recognition of their governance systems and self-determination rights. Referring to recent PFII recommendations, Ms. Kotierk stressed the importance of ensuring the meaningful and sustained engagement of Indigenous youth and women across all relevant UN forums, calling for targeted capacity-building and the establishment of advisory roles, especially in decision-making processes. She further highlighted the need for structural change to eliminate discrimination and violence, particularly against Indigenous Two-Spirit individuals, and underscored the responsibility of all UN reports and mechanisms, and national systems to reflect Indigenous Peoples' experiences and uphold their rights.

Mr. Claver Gatete, Executive Secretary of ECA and coordinator for the regional commissions for 2025, emphasized the critical role of regional approaches in translating global SDG commitments into coherent, context-specific national policies coherent and ensuring national ownership. Mr. Gatete highlighted successful examples such as the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development and the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, which have helped galvanize climate action and align the SDGs with regional priorities, including the African Union's Agenda 2063. He also pointed to innovative regional financing mechanisms – such as debt-for-climate swaps in the Caribbean, SDG dashboards in Africa and gender-responsive fiscal reforms in Latin America – as scalable models with tangible impact. Mr. Gatete called for a reform of the global financial architecture to address systemic imbalances, particularly in relation to debt distress, access to concessional finance, simplified access to climate financing and the reallocation of Special Drawing Rights, to allow countries the fiscal space needed to invest in the SDGs. He further emphasized the need to strengthening domestic resource mobilization, promoting private sector engagement through de-risking mechanisms, scaling regionally proven financing tools and supporting peer learning on successful SDG implementation strategies across regions. Mr. Gatete underlined that ECOSOC should serve as a conduit for promoting policy coherence between

regional and global levels as well as elevating regional findings, calling for regional perspectives and insights to systematically inform ECOSOC and HLPF deliberations and outcomes.

Ms. Cynthia Samuel-Olonjuwon, Special Representative to the UN and Director of the ILO Office for the United Nations, underscored the importance of ECOSOC's role in championing social development and in ensuring stronger integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development. Ms. Samuel-Olonjuwon proposed three key policy shifts to support a just and inclusive future of work, namely (1) employment-centered transitions, particularly in the context of climate, digital and demographic change; (2) universal, high-quality lifelong learning systems that equip individuals for rapidly evolving labor markets; and (3) inclusive, well-financed social protection floors that ensure no one is left behind. She highlighted the value of ILO's tripartite social dialogue model, which brings together governments, employers and workers as a proven framework for inclusive policymaking, and stressed that global guidance must better reflect the lived realities of workers and communities. Ms. Samuel-Olonjuwon emphasized the need to enhance coherence between ECOSOC's normative and operational roles to ensure that global direction translates into programmatic implementation by the UN development system and tangible results on the ground. She also recommended that ECOSOC plays a strategic role in the follow-up to the Second World Summit for Social Development, helping to sustain political momentum and coordinate system-wide action to advance social development.

During the interactive discussion², **Member States** emphasized some key priorities to accelerate SDG implementation and strengthen ECOSOC's role:

- **Multilateralism and the role of ECOSOC** were described as essential in addressing today's global challenges. Several delegations reaffirmed ECOSOC's role as a central hub for fostering coherence, mobilizing partnerships and translating political guidance into action. ECOSOC's value in coordinating system-wide development efforts, shaping thematic expertise into adaptable frameworks for national implementation and facilitating cross-regional learning and solidarity were highlighted.
- **Acceleration of SDG implementation** emerged as an overarching concern in the limited time remaining and the slow or even regressing progress on key targets. Delegations called for urgent, coordinated action at all levels to avoid setbacks in areas such as food security, inequality and climate change. The 2025 HLPF was seen as a vital opportunity to revitalize political commitment to the 2030 Agenda and to translate ECOSOC's recommendations into concrete, actionable results.
- **Climate and environmental sustainability** were stressed in connection with upcoming milestones and the need for integrated, well-financed climate action.
- Speakers also highlighted **youth and gender equality** as essential accelerators, urging stronger youth participation, particularly from LDCs, and supporting CSW revitalization efforts to make it more inclusive, action-oriented and impactful.
- **Inclusion, coherence and localization** of the SDGs were seen as vital to ensure impact on the ground, through stronger national strategies, digital access and ethical governance, while support for countries in special situations, especially LDCs and landlocked countries, was

² The representatives of Bangladesh on behalf of the Least Developed Countries, Saint Kitts and Nevis as co-facilitator of the process of revitalization of the Commission on the Status of Women, Gabon on behalf of the African Group, Colombia, Morocco, Indonesia and Azerbaijan, as well as representatives of the International Associations of Youth and Students for Peace, Children and Youth International, Bonaire Human Rights Organization Foundation and Association Ma'onah for Human Rights and Immigration, took the floor during the interactive discussion.

underscored as critical, with upcoming global conferences offering key opportunities for renewed partnerships and action.

- **Means of implementation** were widely discussed, with calls for urgent reform of the global financial architecture, including bold mechanisms to resolve sovereign debt, equitable treatment by financial institutions and expanded access to concessional and innovative financing, especially for climate resilience and sustainable development.
- **Access to technology, effective development cooperation** and **sector-specific partnerships** in areas such as nutrition, digital connectivity and the blue and green economies were also highlighted as critical to transformative change, and ECOSOC was seen as a key forum for guiding policy and mobilizing resources to support implementation.

Civil society organizations also advanced several recommendations:

- They called for civil society to be treated as **strategic partners**, rather than merely advisors, in the implementation of the SDGs and in ECOSOC processes.
- Representatives urged **stronger, more institutionalized partnerships** between ECOSOC and accredited civil society organizations, including in monitoring and shaping upcoming policy frameworks.
- Speakers emphasized the need for **systemic transformation, inclusive governance** and the **full implementation of the Pact for the Future**.
- Youth representatives advocated for **formal and resourced participation of youth in ECOSOC** and its subsidiary bodies, including co-creation of policies, especially by marginalized youth. Speakers stressed the importance of intergenerational equity, support for youth-led and community-based data, and called for addressing digital divides. Proposals included the creation of a youth-led forum under the Third Committee of the General Assembly, institutional youth representation in science and technology governance as well as the extension of the ECOSOC Youth Forum to four days.
- There was **strong support for the revitalization of CSW** to embed gender equality and intersectional youth engagement throughout its processes, including through models like the CSW Youth Forum.
- Some civil society representatives emphasized that **justice, accountability** and **human rights must be central to development**, particularly in post-conflict contexts, and called for more dynamic roles for ECOSOC and its subsidiary bodies in guiding coherent multilateral responses.

H.E. Mr. Lok Bahadur Thapa (Nepal), Vice-President of the Council, concluded the discussion by highlighting the importance of coherence, multilateral solidarity and actionable outcomes. He reiterated that ECOSOC must be a platform not only for deliberation but for bold policy action, and emphasized the Council's role in ensuring effective follow-up to intergovernmental commitments, including through system-wide coordination and integrated implementation. He stressed the need for inclusive, rights-based approaches and underscored that the roundtable discussion must contribute directly to the 2025 HLPF, FFD4 and the follow-up to the Summit of the Future. Ambassador Thapa further reaffirmed the Council's commitment to accelerating SDG progress through unity in action.

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