ECOSOC INTEGRATION SEGMENT
Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality
8 July 2019

Highlights from ECOSOC Subsidiary Bodies

The present document provides highlights from the voluntary submissions prepared by the functional commissions and expert bodies of the Economic and Social Council. Contributions were provided in response to an invitation by the President of the Council, dated 30 October 2018, requesting the respective Chairs to offer substantive inputs to the high-level political forum on sustainable development (HLPF), highlighting their contributions towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The complete texts of the submissions received are available on the Integration Segment website.[1]

Key messages and policy recommendations on ways to accelerate progress in empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality, and achieving SDGs

- Addressing world inequality requires overturning development models and processes that disempower people and communities, exclude the most vulnerable, and concentrate wealth and power. This requires the redesign of the relationship between public and private spheres and the orientation of policies, regulations and institutions based on a comprehensive vision of stakeholders, thus redirecting economic, social, environmental and technological trends, including production and consumption patterns, towards greater inclusiveness.
- The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is unequivocally anchored in human rights, and linked peace with development. The importance of highlighting those connections in the attainment of the Goals was stressed. Governments are called upon to uphold human rights and advance policies that reduce inequalities in opportunities and outcome, promote the social interaction of diverse communities, promote greater social cohesion and reduce xenophobia and discrimination.
- Silo-thinking is hampering the holistic implementation of the SDGs and the cross-cutting challenge of empowering people, ensuring inclusiveness and equality. Overcoming these silos requires equal and accountable partnership arrangements between stakeholders, and in many cases, cultural change and institutional reform. Communication and awareness-raising on the SDGs must be emphasized.
- Achieving the SDGs calls for an immediate change in course where the pledge to leave no one behind is fulfilled on the basis of internationally agreed principles and standards of human rights; elements of multilateral system that are holding back implementation are addressed; there is concerted action to improve upon the mobilization of national and international financing to achieve the goals; resources and capacities for SDG implementation are effectively channelled to the local level; additional resources are invested in strengthening the capacity of national statistical offices (NSOs) to develop their national data for SDG monitoring; there is broad and meaningful participation in decision-making for implementation of the SDGs at all levels, as well as in the mechanisms for review of SDG progress and for accountability, in line with the innovative processes for consultation and participation that were introduced in elaborating the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.
- Empowering people and ensuring their inclusion can help accelerate progress towards many of the SDGs. Existing economic, social, political and environmental inequalities interact with emerging challenges, such as climate change, to create new vulnerabilities. There is a need to identify these emerging

vulnerabilities and vulnerable groups at national and subnational levels through disaggregated data generation, context-specific research and constructive social dialogue.

- Empowerment that benefits all can be achieved by ensuring non-discriminatory legislation and policy-making at all levels of administration coupled with equal access to justice and to quality public services, infusing transparency and accountability in public administration at all levels and by balancing long-term needs and short-term urgencies in public policy.
- Empowerment without resources and skills could lead to ineffective policy implementation. Therefore, capacity-building should be accorded highest priority. Strengthening an enabling environment for volunteering, including through investment, can promote social inclusion.
- Inclusion in the productive system is fundamental. However, it must not be in underpaid, exploitative and vulnerable conditions. Productive systems should be based on an engagement of all stakeholders in the creation, management and sharing of value. Universal social policies, safeguards, accountability mechanisms and effective access to justice must be in place to ensure the empowerment of people and communities to defend their interests.
- Safeguarding the collective rights of indigenous peoples to lands, territories and resources is necessary not only to ensure their own well-being, but also to address some of the most pressing global challenges, such as climate change and environmental degradation.
- Efforts to achieve the SDGs and to effectively address and counter the world drug problem were complementary and mutually reinforcing.
- Ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all and investing in the prevention of violence against children can be a catalyst of many other goals as well as strengthening crime prevention and criminal justice responses to violence against children.
- Policies and programmes for implementing the SDGs should be designed, executed and monitored in participatory and transparent manners. At the same time, national legislation and policies may be necessary to enable adequate local governance for the SDGs. To scale up bottom-up approaches, collaborative governance approaches can be instrumental. Real-time, multilevel and multi-stakeholder strategies with practical methodologies supported by smart, sustainable use of technology can turn abstract plans into actionable roadmaps.
- Securing the means of implementation of the SDGs is essential. Governments should review their fiscal policies to ascertain whether the collection of taxes on basic goods and services negatively impacts the individuals and groups that are left behind and to assess the extent to which tax policies advances or impede the interests of groups with different levels of resources.
- Without appropriate STI policies, technologies are unlikely to deliver progress on the global development agenda. Countries seeking to orient STI policies towards sustainable development could also consider integrating inclusiveness to their cores. Gender-inclusive innovation policies may be directed to women's participation as innovators or entrepreneurs while youth-oriented policies can also be helpful in making technological change inclusive.
- Digitalization and connectivity are in the centre of rapid technological change. It is therefore critical that digital policies be calibrated according to countries' readiness to engage and benefit from the digital economy. One major factor keeping women from reaping the benefits of new technologies is access to the Internet. As the digital gender gap has increased globally in recent years, education and training programs that focus on digital skills for all should be inclusive and accessible to everyone.
- While emphasizing the interlinkages and mutually reinforcing relationship among social protection systems, public services and sustainable infrastructure, the need for coordinated approaches, financing and policy coherence at all levels so as to ensure their complementarity was also underlined.
- There was a call to the United Nations system, international and regional organizations and all sectors of civil society, including non-governmental organizations, to fully commit themselves and to intensify their contributions to the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- Policies and actions to be undertaken by governments and other actors are needed in strengthening normative, legal and policy frameworks; strengthening women's and girls' access to social protection;

strengthening access to public services for women and girls; making infrastructure work for women and girls; and mobilizing resources, strengthening women's participation and improving evidence.

- Emerging demographic mega-trends need to be taken into account in policies and programmes to achieve sustainable development;
- International migration, when well-managed, contributes to sustainable development in countries of origin and destination and helps migrants and their families to improve their standard of living.
- Universal access to quality education and health care, including for sexual and reproductive health, amplifies the benefits of the demographic dividend, supports a virtuous cycle of development and is integral to the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda.
- To maintain the crucial contribution of forests to empowerment of people, inclusiveness and equality, as well as the achievement of the SDGs, it is imperative to reverse the loss of forest cover and increase efforts to prevent forest degradation. It is also essential to have an integrated, participatory and inclusive approach to forests and other sectors at the time of policy planning and implementation. In addition, improving governance in support of local communities, as well as promoting forest-based education for sustainable development would be key.
- Insufficient statistical capacity remains key challenge for the implementation and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda. Without the necessary data, the implementation of the Agenda would be seriously hindered and, the ambition of no one left behind would not be realized.
- Inclusion and equality come from being counted, namely from the production, analysis and use of high-quality demographic data disaggregated by income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, migration status, and other relevant characteristics, and having policies and programmes in place to ensure that no one is left behind.
- Additional financial resources are needed to accelerate implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action and the 2030 Agenda, including through ODA, with a focus on the least developed countries.

High-level Political Forum for Sustainable Development (HLPF)

Many inputs emphasized the need for the HLPF to increase the visibility of the work of the subsidiary bodies and demonstrate the value and relevance of their work for the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. The contributions also highlighted the need to seek synergies between the 2030 Agenda and the policy frameworks of subsidiary bodies.

- The HLPF is considered an important forum within which to identify and propose solutions to challenges within the multilateral system to the empowerment of governments. When assessing progress on the SDGs under review, the HLPF should not lose touch with the spirit of each of the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda. For many reasons, targets and/or indicators often do not capture that spirit.
- The HLPF's review of inequality should consider the multiple dimensions and intersectionality of inequality. It is not enough to address inequality by focusing on those "left behind" at the bottom. It is also necessary to address the concentration of wealth, income and decision-making power at the top and break the link between economic and social exclusion and decision-making power.
- The HLPF is an important forum where discussions should focus on how to ensure the political commitment for building strong data and statistical systems that would help ensure the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the realization of the ambition of no one left behind. In particular, the HLPF could provide guidance and support to the statistical community on how to mobilize resources, domestically and internationally to ensure that all countries have the necessary data and statistical system in place to meet the data demands of the 2030 agenda.
- To give statistics and data and their sources the importance they deserve in terms of policy formulation, one or more sessions of the HLPF should be fully dedicated to data and statistics, their utilization and sources, and to the needs for statistical capacity building. Moreover, where appropriate, the measurement aspect of the SDGs under review could be blended in other sessions on the successes, challenges and lessons learned in their implementation.
- For many developing countries, achieving the SDGs by 2030 will be practically impossible without effective and widespread application of science, technology and innovation. STI is also necessary to measure the SDG indicators and monitor the progress made. It is equally important to ensure that

technology and innovative ideas are disseminated in an inclusive way, without widening existing technological gaps or creating further divides. The High-level Political Forum could recognize and highlight the role of STI in achieving the Goals and advocate the systematic inclusion of STI in policies for sustainable development.

Additional proposals for areas for further guidance by HLPF included:

- Guidance on all relevant ways to ensure that the contributions of the ICPD Programme of Action to the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda are fully considered and integrated in reviews of progress by the high-level political forum.
- Advice on additional ways in which demographic data and evidence about interlinkages between population and development may support thematic reviews of progress on the SDGs.
- Contribution to bridging the divide between the human rights and development communities.
- Addressing and integrating gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls throughout national, regional and global reviews of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and ensure synergies between the follow-up to the Beijing Platform for Action and the gender-responsive follow-up to the 2030 Agenda.
- Guidance on the effectiveness of the voluntary national reviews as instruments to advance the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Effectiveness would be reinforced with greater space both in the review processes at the national and regional levels and at the HLPF for the views of non-state actors.