



ECOSOC INTEGRATION SEGMENT

Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality

8 July 2019, ECOSOC Chamber

ECOSOC VICE-PRESIDENT'S SUMMARY

The Integration Segment, chaired by the ECOSOC Vice-President H.E. Ambassador Valentin Rybakov (Belarus), took place the day before HLPF on 8 July, following the guidance of the GA resolution 72/305 on ECOSOC strengthening.

The United Nations Secretary-General introduced the annual overview report of the UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) at the opening of the Segment. The Secretary-General has placed innovation on CEB's agenda and asked the CEB to examine the opportunities and challenges presented by frontier technologies and the Fourth Industrial Revolution, as well as the potential entry points for United Nations system engagement. The Board has tasked the CEB Secretariat, along with the UN Innovation Network, to develop a set of tools to enable United Nations system entities to cultivate and scale up innovation. The toolkit is envisioned to help navigate topics such as human-centered design, ecosystem analysis, and managing innovation partnerships. The UN System Staff College, which will host and manage the tools, will start rolling out the first-generation United Nations system innovation toolkit over this summer. In addition, the CEB developed a strategy on the "Future of Work" and adopted a UN system common position on drug policy. The CEB also issued a Joint Appeal for the Climate Action Summit this September, outlining concrete UN system actions and targets in the areas of mitigation, adaptation, finance and innovation

Several chairs of ECOSOC subsidiary bodies and representatives of the United Nations system participated as panelists during the three interactive discussions, and Member States participated as lead discussants. The interactive discussions focused on the interlinkages among the SDGs under review at the 2019 July High-level Political Forum for Sustainable Development (HLPF).

The Integration Segment demonstrated that the ECOSOC functional commissions, regional commissions and expert bodies and the UN system had strongly embraced the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. The High-level Political Forum for Sustainable Development (HLPF) could build on the combined policy frameworks of the subsidiary bodies for advancing the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and addressing a wide range of sectoral and cross-sectoral issues in a cohesive manner. The voluntary national review process was considered particularly useful for engaging actors and enhancing an integrated approach at national level.

Participants highlighted the challenges facing today. Multilateralism and institutions were being questioned by some actors; accelerated climate change, environmental degradation, technological advancements and protracted crises have important implications for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Achieving the SDGs required an immediate change in course where the pledge to leave no one behind would be fulfilled on the basis of internationally agreed principles and standards of human rights. For this, policies and programmes for implementing the SDGs should be designed, executed and monitored in participatory and transparent ways. This would maximize their positive impacts and ensure that policies reflect all facets of people's lives in an integrated manner.

One of the strong messages from the Integration Segment was the need to address deep-rooted inequalities and vulnerabilities across the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. Addressing inequalities required a strengthened focus on policies that not only aim to leave no one behind, but also that address the mechanisms that lead to concentration of wealth and power at the top. Measures were needed to improve the situation of specific groups and ensure that no one would be pushed further behind. Anti-discriminatory legislation remained an important tool, including for gender equality. The need to address the burden of unpaid care and domestic work on women and girls, which hindered their participation in education and employment, was also emphasized.

The subsidiary bodies and the UN system recognized the need for a profound overhaul of current development models. It implied that all actors should work together to change behaviors so that they support the achievement of the SDGs, including the private sector.

It was widely agreed that, four years into the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, many policies, legislation and investments still failed to consider the potential trade-offs and synergies between the SDGs, namely the impacts of measures in one sector on the other sectors, groups of people and countries, as well as the consequences for future generations. This kind of silo-thinking continued to slow down progress towards the 2030 Agenda. Integrated policies were considered one of the key transformative elements of the 2030 Agenda and a tool for accelerating progress. In some cases, too much emphasis was placed on the short-term trade-offs without the consideration of long-term synergies.

SDGs on poverty (SDG1) and zero hunger (SDG2), for example, needed integrated and coordinated action. It was important to deal with their root causes through mutually reinforcing actions while enhancing resilience against shocks and climate change. Another example was child-related interventions that yielded relatively low financial costs and high returns, in terms of human lives and economic productivity.

Integrated policies were also needed to equip people with the skills they needed to take the jobs of the future, which would be shaped by new technologies and the focus on green jobs. New content for education and training was considered vital. Education and training should also help to uproot discrimination and infuse a sense of solidarity, including in the public sector. Macroeconomic, industrial, fiscal and labour policies also needed to ensure inclusive sustainable growth, reduce inequality and prepare the ground for future changes. Budgets needed to be SDG coherent and SDG-aligned. The much needed fiscal space could be created through innovative financing, reform of tax administration, combatting illicit financial flows and tax transparency.

Improved governance, capacity-building and public sector reform were also all necessary ingredients for advancing sustainable development. Local governments could play a critical role breaking down silos and accelerating the implementation of the SDGs.

An integrated approach to the SDGs also required a focus on the peace and security, human rights and development nexus. There was a need to ensure women's engagement and participation in all stages of peace processes. Sustainable development and the rule of law were strongly interrelated and mutually reinforcing. Crime needed to be addressed in a broader development context, ensuring that no one was left behind.

Another major challenge was the insufficient statistical capacity as well as limited disaggregation of data. 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.

Mobilizing the means of implementation for realizing the SDGs remained a challenge. One aspect was mobilizing resources from all sources. Another was the need to carry out a deep review of macro-economic and fiscal policies to ensure that they did not push people further behind and help direct resources where they would have the greatest impact on the SDGs, human rights and gender equality. International cooperation was considered essential.

The ECOSOC Vice-President reported on these main messages from the Integration Segment at the opening of the High-level Political Forum (HLPF) the following day.