



THE PRESIDENT
OF THE
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

11 March 2020

Excellency,

We learned today from the Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization that a pandemic has been declared around COVID-19. The widespread economic, social and human impact of the virus cannot be underestimated.

Together with the President of the General Assembly, I convened an informal meeting yesterday, 10 March, to have a briefing by the Secretariat on preparedness and mitigation measures and to hear views from Member States on the risk assessment at the United Nations, as well as discuss next steps. We appreciated the candid and valuable interventions and suggestions.

The President of the General Assembly has sent [a letter to you](#) today outlining measures to be adopted and including additional information on a risk assessment matrix to have a common evaluation tool to ascertain the viability of holding, postponing, cancelling or scaling down scheduled mandated and non-mandated meetings at the United Nations. This tool is useful to facilitate necessary decisions that we must take jointly to ensure the health and safety of delegates and staff of the United Nations.

I wish to inform you that the Bureau of ECOSOC met yesterday to evaluate the heavy calendar of ECOSOC meetings in the coming months against health, safety, security and business continuity issues. We also took into account the views expressed at the briefing held that morning. The decisions made by the Bureau, as reflected in the attached table, were based on the risk assessment matrix, consultations with the President of the General Assembly, as well as input from Member States and stakeholders. I intend to convene a formal meeting of the Council in the afternoon of Monday, 16 March, to decide on a revised schedule of ECOSOC meetings, in accordance with the Bureau's deliberations. The decisions must be made with the understanding that the situation may change rapidly, and that further adaptations may be needed.

All Permanent Representatives and
Permanent Observers to the United Nations
New York

As the situation of COVID-19 is evolving rapidly in New York as well as in our countries, we must demonstrate flexibility and adaptability to challenges in holding meetings at Headquarters. Most importantly, we must ensure that the impact of COVID-19 is minimized in our daily lives and that we address this unprecedented crisis together.

The Office of the President of the General Assembly, the Secretariat as well as my team will consult daily regarding COVID-19 responses, based also on updated information from the World Health Organization and the City of New York. I will also continue to consult and update the ECOSOC Bureau as the situation evolves.

This pandemic is a test to the resilience of our countries and societies. I offer my condolences to the families and countries who have already suffered the loss of their dear ones and express appreciation to health providers around the world for their unwavering dedication and support.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Mona Juul", enclosed in a thin black rectangular border.

Mona Juul
President of the Economic and Social
Council

Name of event	Host Country	Original dates	Proposed dates	ECOSOC Bureau Recommendation
ECOSOC meetings, segments and forums				
UN75 Youth Plenary (GA and ECOSOC joint meeting)	UNHQ	31 March	TBC	Postpone, in agreement with PGA
ECOSOC Youth Forum (to be held in conjunction with UN75 Youth plenary)	UNHQ	1-2 April	TBC	Postpone. Hold in conjunction with UN75 Youth Plenary, possibly in scaled down format.
ECOSOC Partnership Forum	UNHQ	3-Apr	Defer to 2021 session	Decide not to hold during 2020 ECOSOC session
Joint GA/ECOSOC event on LDCs	UNHQ	13-Apr half-day PM	No change	Proceed with NY-based participation and possible participation of speakers
ECOSOC Special meeting on the Sahel	UNHQ	14 Apr half-day PM	No change	Proceed with NY-based participation and remote participation of speakers
ECOSOC Management Meeting (Elections)	UNHQ	15-Apr	No change	Proceed with NY-based participation
ECOSOC Financing For Development	UNHQ	20-23 April	20-22 April	Proceed with NY-based participation, and remote participation and scaled-down format
ECOSOC Special Meeting of the Council on international cooperation Tax Matters (back to back with Cttee of Experts, 27-30 April)	UNHQ	1-May	TBC	Postpone until later date TBC (possibly late June) following the meeting of the Committee of Experts.
ECOSOC Multi-Stakeholder Forum on STI for the SDGs	UNHQ	12-13 May	Defer to 2021 session	Decide not to hold during 2020 ECOSOC session
ECOSOC Development Cooperation Forum	UNHQ	14-15 May	14 or 15 May	Proceed with one-day meeting, with NY-based participation and scaled-down format, including remote participation of speakers
ECOSOC Operational Activities for Development	UNHQ	19-21 May	No change	Proceed with NY-based participation and remote participation.
Sessions of ECOSOC subsidiary bodies based in New York				
Commission of Population and Development	UNHQ	30 March-3 April	30-31 March	Proceed with NY-based participation, bureau of CPD to communicate with MS and scaled-down format
Committee of Experts on Public Administration	UNHQ	30 March-3 April	TBC	Postpone until later date TBC
Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (PFII)	UNHQ	13-24 April	TBC	Postpone. Feasibility of rescheduling within 2020 session to be examined.
Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters	UNHQ	27-30 April	TBC	Postpone until later date TBC (possibly late June)
United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF)	UNHQ	4-8 May	Half-day only	Proceed with reduced (half-day) session within originally scheduled dates.