



# ECOSOC

United Nations Economic and Social Council

TAKING ACTION TO IMPROVE LIVES

## Management Segment

New York, 3 June 2020

### Highlights from the reports of ECOSOC Subsidiary Bodies

General Assembly resolution 72/305 on the review of the implementation of GA resolution 68/1 on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council said that ECOSOC should: (i) bring together the key messages from the ECOSOC subsidiary bodies and the UN system on the main theme; (ii) ensure that the subsidiary bodies produce technical and expert analysis, assessments and policy recommendations and build their recommendations on a solid evidence-based review of progress on the 2030 Agenda and of the outcomes of conferences and summits in their respective area; and (iii) ensure that outcomes are effective and action-oriented and result in increased levels of cooperation.

The aim of this note is to provide an overview of highlights from the ECOSOC subsidiary bodies, which will be presenting their reports during the Management Segment on 3 June 2020. These subsidiary bodies include: Commission for Social Development (CSocD), Committee for Development Policy (CDP), Statistical Commission, Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND), Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, and Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM).

#### Commission for Social Development (CSocD) [E/2020/26]

- In its report on the fifty-eighth session (21 February 2019 and 10–19 February 2020), the Commission recommended three draft resolutions and one draft decision for adoption by the Council. The Commission also recommended one decision calling for action by the Council.
- The Commission considered the priority theme of “Affordable housing and social protection systems for all to address homelessness”. The Commission also reviewed relevant United Nations plans and programmes of action pertaining to the situation of social groups and the social dimensions of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development.
- The Commission commemorated the twenty-fifth anniversary of the World Summit for Social Development by focusing the ministerial forum on “Twenty-five years of the World Summit for Social Development: addressing emerging societal challenges to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”.
- Delegations noted that the choice of the priority theme reflected the role of the Commission, as the main United Nations forum for an intensified global dialogue on social development, of deliberating on issues closely linked to social progress and the well-being of people. Homelessness was one of the crudest manifestations of poverty, inequality and housing affordability challenges, and it affected people of all ages and of diverse economic, social and cultural backgrounds across regions.
- Delegations also highlighted the need for broader social protection systems to support families, as they were the fundamental unit of society and played an important role in the delivery of the 2030 Agenda. The importance of strengthening collaboration between the United Nations and

Member States through the exchange of information and expertise, capacity-building activities, technical support and intersectoral dialogues to promote cooperation to help address common challenges was also emphasized. Member States highlighted population ageing as one of the major trends likely to affect the prospect of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and called upon all to strengthen implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action on Ageing, as well as for the age-inclusive implementation of the 2030 Agenda, by strengthening an integrated approach to improving the well-being of and promoting the rights and dignity of older persons.

- The first-ever multi-stakeholder forum on the priority theme provided a space to share solutions to a complex challenge from various perspectives, including that of persons who had experienced homelessness. The panelists highlighted the importance of addressing the structural causes of homelessness, rather than only treating individual factors. Safe, affordable housing, decent work, addressing prejudice and discrimination in the provision of public services and promoting gender equality and empowerment of women were all essential. People experiencing homelessness also needed to be part of the solutions. The panelists reiterated the need to build strong partnerships between the private and public sectors. An alliance between local governments and the private sector was critical to prevent homelessness by providing pathways to decent work for vulnerable populations.
- The representative of the children and youth major group expressed concerns about rising homelessness among youth and children and emphasized the importance of a secure environment to develop their emotional resilience and physical health, while calling for more coordinated social policies to support the overall well-being of children.
- The Commission decided that the priority theme for the fifty-ninth session would be “Socially just transition towards sustainable development: the role of digital technologies on social development and well-being of all”. The Commission adopted three draft resolutions, on social dimensions of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development, affordable housing and social protection systems for all to address homelessness, and modalities for the fourth review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002.

#### **Committee for Development Policy (CDP) [E/2020/33]**

- In its report on the twenty-second session (24–27 February 2020), the Committee for Development Policy brought a number of recommendations to the attention of the Council.
- The Committee addressed the following items: the annual theme of the Economic and Social Council for 2020, “Accelerated action and transformative pathways: realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development”; the voluntary national reviews of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; the finalization of its multi-year programme on a comprehensive review of the least developed country criteria; the monitoring of countries that are graduating or have graduated from the list of least developed countries; improved assistance for graduating and graduated least developed countries; and inputs to the preparations for the next programme of action for least developed countries.
- The Committee for Development Policy recommended that, to accelerate action on the Sustainable Development Goals and to ensure that countries are set on an equitable and sustainable development path to 2030 and beyond, the Council urgently put in motion an open, consultative process with the objective of reforming multilateral rules to make them conducive to a global transition towards equitable and sustainable development. The process should identify the rules that stand in the way of the Goals and the global response to climate change and inequality and establish a road map to address them. The experience of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals that led to the 2030 Agenda provides a model for an

open process that gives a voice to civil society, businesses and States at all levels of development.

- The Committee agreed with the following five principles to guide the design of a new multilateralism, formulated through a series of recent consultations involving a group of stakeholders from the global policy, advocacy and research communities:
  - (a) Global rules should be calibrated towards the overarching goals of social and economic stability, shared prosperity and environmental sustainability and protected against capture by the most powerful players;
  - (b) States share common but differentiated responsibilities in a multilateral system built to advance global public goods and protect the global commons;
  - (c) The right of States to policy space to pursue national development strategies should be enshrined in global rules;
  - (d) Global regulations should be designed both to strengthen a dynamic international division of labour and to prevent destructive unilateral economic actions that prevent other nations from realizing common goals;
  - (e) Global public institutions must be accountable to their full membership, open to a diversity of viewpoints, cognizant of new voices and have balanced dispute resolution systems.
- The Committee emphasized that the issues that need to be urgently reformed are:
  - (a) Rules that limit the capacity of countries to implement progressive tax systems, mobilize fiscal resources, manage international capital flows and curb illicit financial flows;
  - (b) Provisions in global, regional and bilateral trade and investment agreements that limit the ability of countries, in particular least developed and other developing countries, to adopt policies to develop their productive capacities and industries in a way that would enable them to move towards equitable and sustainable development;
  - (c) Intellectual property rights rules that limit access to or increase the cost of technology related to essential goods, including medicines and inputs for smallholder farmers;
  - (d) The current fragmentation of environmental multilateralism, including the climate change architecture, which is incompatible with the interdependencies between global environmental problems. The environment should not be relegated to a secondary status in the multilateral system;
  - (e) Governance arrangements that do not guarantee adequate representation of developing countries in international institutions.
- The Committee recommended that new and innovative forms of assistance for graduating countries should be identified, in order to pursue the path to sustainable development. Development partners were urged to be ambitious and flexible in their stance towards such initiatives. The Committee viewed the further specification and implementation of such measures as an important element of a strengthened graduation support framework and will submit its proposals as an input to the preparatory process of the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries.
- The Committee welcomed the work of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) on transition finance and recommended a continued refinement of related tools to support least developed countries in their graduation process. The Committee also commended the OECD production transformation policy review process, which supports developing countries in building productive capacities and participating in the global economy. The Committee recommended that the process be undertaken, on request, in a graduating least developed country, in conjunction with relevant United Nations and international bodies.

- On the ECOSOC and HLPF theme, the Committee stressed that trends in inequality and climate change were driving the 2030 Agenda backwards. Inequalities in income and multiple other dimensions of well-being were rising and the weak global response to climate change were pushing people behind. Inequality and climate change could not be treated as issues on the margin of sustainable development policies. They were at the core of the systems of synergies and trade-offs that made up the Sustainable Development Goals. A transformation commensurate with the scale of the challenge presented by the Goals, inequality and climate change required coherent strategies which harnessed the action of public and private actors and civil society, creating opportunities for employment and investment. A condition for the success of these strategies was a strong, supportive multilateral system. The Committee recommended that the Council should promote an inclusive process of reform of multilateral rules and institutions to ensure that they supported equitable and green development.
- The Committee reviewed its analysis on the reflection of key principles and cross-cutting issues in the 2018 voluntary national reviews. Among the key findings, the Committee highlighted the fact that, while most countries acknowledge the principle of leaving no one behind, voluntary national reviews often remain vague on how to implement it in practice. Regarding the reporting on Sustainable Development Goal 17, the Committee raised concern about the fact that certain targets such as policy space and leadership or investment promotion regimes for least developed countries were hardly mentioned. The finding that Goal 10 on reduced inequalities receives the least attention in voluntary national reviews was also met with concern.
- The Committee finalized its multi-year programme on the comprehensive review of the least developed country criteria. The Committee refined the criteria by simplifying their structure, expanding their coverage of structural impediments to sustainable development and strengthening their individual components. The refined criteria will be applied at the 2021 triennial review of the list of least developed countries, utilizing the established graduation and inclusion rules. The Committee also strengthened the application of the criteria, including by expanding the additional information it uses before making recommendations for graduation. In the view of the Committee, the outcome of the review will contribute to shifting the graduation debate beyond a country classification exercise towards a discussion of how a country can further its momentum towards sustainable development with the support of the international community.
- In its monitoring of countries that are graduating and have graduated from the least developed country category, the Committee reviewed the cases of Angola, Bhutan, Sao Tome and Principe, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, which are graduating, and Equatorial Guinea, a graduated country. The Committee expressed its concern on declining income, high inequality and limited diversification in Angola and Equatorial Guinea. It will continue to monitor these countries closely in terms of the income sustainability and macroeconomic stability. The Committee also discussed actions to improve the effectiveness of the monitoring mechanism and to encourage the participation of the countries in the monitoring exercise.
- The Committee reiterated that many least developed countries are concerned about losing international support measures following their graduation. The Committee continued its work on improving support for graduating and recently graduated countries. The Committee recommended the continuation of current pilot initiatives on improving the process to support graduating countries. It also called for new and innovative forms of assistance for graduating and graduated countries where possible, to ensure their continued sustainable development progress after least developed country graduation.

- The Committee reiterated its recommendation that the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries adopt the theme “Expanding productive capacity for sustainable development” as an organizing framework for the new programme of action for the least developed countries for the decade 2021–2030. The adoption of the proposed framework would provide the basis for an integrated and coherent approach to the formulation of the policy actions needed to overcome key challenges faced by the most disadvantaged countries. It would contribute to ensuring that no country is left behind, thereby furthering a key element of the decade of action and delivery for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

#### **Statistical Commission [E/2020/24]**

- In its report on the fifty-first session (3-6 March 2020), the Statistical Commission brought one resolution and one draft decision for adoption by the Council and twenty-eight decisions to be brought to the attention of the Council.
- In resolution “Strengthening coordination of the statistical programmes in the United Nations system”, the Commission recognized that the coordination between the statistical programmes of the United Nations system requires streamlining and improving in order to better support the efficiency of the United Nations statistical system to provide harmonized, reliable statistical information for monitoring progress towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, to minimize the reporting burden, support national ownership and improve coordination of capacity-building. The Commission requested the Committee of the Chief Statisticians of the United Nations system to more effectively strengthen coordination of statistical programmes within the United Nations system, guided by and in support of the work of the Statistical Commission. The Commission also requested the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, as the secretariat of the Committee of the Chief Statisticians of the United Nations System to provide adequate support to the coordination function of the Statistical Commission as well as related activities of the Committee, by considering pursuing a range of activities that could include improved functional coordination, regional and national coordination, coordination in thematic areas, coordination with other professional networks and secretariat coordination.
- In decision 51/101 “Global indicator framework for Sustainable Development Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, the Commission agreed to and adopted the proposed major changes and minor refinements put forward in the 2020 comprehensive review, while noting concerns regarding specific indicators and recognized that the work on Sustainable Development Goal indicators is in progress, and asked the Group to continue its annual refinement, research and methodological work to improve the global indicator framework, including addressing important policy issues, such as sustainable tourism and climate change. The Commission also expressed support for the establishment of a United Nations working group to further develop and refine the measurement of development support in line with the 2030 Agenda and welcomed the inclusion of member States representing all geographic regions, both donor and recipient countries, in the working group.
- In decision 50/102 “Data and indicators for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, the Commission expressed strong support for the Data for Now initiative to build capacity in countries to utilize new data sources for more timely and disaggregated statistics and indicators, and requested that efforts be focused on less developed countries. The Commission also welcomed the scaling up of the federated system initiative by including more countries and increasing capacity at the national level, and stressed the need to mobilize funding while ensuring coordination with related efforts. The Commission further welcomed the efforts of the

Intersecretariat Working Group on Household Surveys, and stressed the need for an integrated and harmonized household survey programme within countries.

- In decision 50/103 “Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, the Commission approved the proposed programme of work for the High-level Group, and asked the Group to report back to the Commission at its fifty-second session on the implementation and outcome of the third United Nations World Data Forum, scheduled to be held in Bern in October 2020. The Commission noted the work of the High-level Group and the Programme Committee for the United Nations World Data Forum 2020 in preparation for the third United Nations World Data Forum, and asked the Secretariat to continue to support the organization of the Forum as the critical space for constructive exchange among different data communities and users for the launch of solutions and new initiatives and partnerships. The Commission also welcomed the way forward to achieve a better coordinated and more efficient United Nations statistical system, which should also aim at reducing the response burden of countries. The Commission expressed support for the way forward in the area of financing for data and statistics and the proposed financing mechanism around three pillars (to secure domestic funding, to improve the efficiency of existing resources through better coordination and to increase the overall amount of funding), stressed that more statistical capacity-building and financing for statistics are needed and welcomed the efforts undertaken by the High-level Group.

#### **Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) [E/2019/28/Add.1]**

- In its report on the reconvened sixty-second session (12-13 December 2019), the Commission brought one draft decision for adoption by the Council and one resolution to be brought to the attention of the Council.
- The Commission highlighted that the revised and updated annual report questionnaire needed to reflect, in line with the 2019 Ministerial Declaration, all international drug policy commitments made in the past decade. The importance of receiving the revised and updated annual report questionnaire in all six official languages of the United Nations, in advance of the sixty-third regular session of the Commission, was underscored.
- The Commission approved the projected use of general-purpose funds in the biennium 2020–2021, and invited Member States to provide contributions totaling at least 4,819,200 United States dollars.
- The Commission endorsed the estimates of special purpose funds for the biennium 2020–2021 and programme support cost funds for 2020, and decided that the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ) and the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) were to review the allocation of programme support costs for 2021 during their reconvened sessions in 2020.
- The Commission requested the co-chairs of the standing open-ended intergovernmental working group on improving the governance and financial situation of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to establish, in consultation with Member States and with the support of the Secretariat, a workplan with clear time frames to follow up on and review the full implementation by the Office of the mandates contained in the resolution, taking into account the new cycle structure for programming and budgeting derived from the management reform process, in order to enable the CCPCJ and the CND to effectively discharge their oversight functions, as mandated by the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council.
- The Commission requested the UNODC to continue to ensure the mainstreaming of a gender perspective into the development, implementation and evaluation of its programmes, policies,

practices and strategies, and to report on the progress thereon to the Commission at its reconvened sixty-third session, in 2020.

#### **Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations [E/2020/32 (Part I)]**

- In its report on the 2020 regular session (20-29 January and 7 February 2020), the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations recommended two draft decisions for adoption by the Council.
- The Committee recommended 274 applications of non-governmental organizations for consultative status, deferred 339 for further consideration at its resumed session in 2020 and closed without prejudice consideration of 18 applications that had failed to respond to queries over two consecutive sessions of the Committee.
- The Committee also had before it five requests for reclassification of consultative status. It recommended two of those requests and deferred its consideration of the other three. The two non-governmental organizations were reclassified from special to general consultative status.
- The Committee took note of one request for merger and recommended that the newly formed organization be granted special consultative status.
- The Committee took note of nine requests for a change of name.
- The Committee took note of 614 quadrennial reports, including new and deferred reports.

#### **Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM) [E/2020/46]**

- In its report on the ninth session (7-9 August 2019), the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management recommended fifteen decisions to be brought to the attention of the Council.
- The Committee of Experts continued to be encouraged by the activities and progress of its subcommittee, expert and working groups, deliberated and debated, provided guidance and made joint decisions that further strengthened the coordination and coherence of global geospatial information management, including the application of geospatial information for sustainable development.
- The Committee welcomed the efforts of the United Nations and the Government of China in developing a proposal to jointly advance the establishment, led by the United Nations, of a global geospatial knowledge and innovation centre in Deqing, China, providing opportunities to build global geospatial capacity and capability and to improve and strengthen expertise on how to prepare for national geospatial information management arrangements in countries, especially developing countries.
- The Committee welcomed the progress being made on a new edition of the report on future trends in geospatial information management by the Ordnance Survey of Great Britain, and encouraged Member States and relevant stakeholders to contribute to the global consultation currently under way.
- The Committee adopted the Global Statistical Geospatial Framework as an important bridge that enabled a range of data to be integrated from both the geospatial and statistical communities and that, through the application of its five principles and supporting key elements, permitted the production of harmonized, standardized and integrated, geospatially enabled statistical data to facilitate data-driven decision-making.
- The Committee commended the working group on geospatial information and services for disasters on the preparation of the assessment survey on the Strategic Framework, and endorsed the survey as a tool to help Member States to develop national implementation plans for geospatial information and services in support of disaster risk reduction and management.

- The Committee requested the Open Geospatial Consortium, the technical committee 211 of the International Organization for Standardization and the International Hydrographic Organization to continue to work with Member States on developing and adopting technical standards and to keep the Committee informed of their ongoing work regarding the use of geospatial standards in supporting the implementation of national geospatial data and systems, the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework and the measurement and monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals.