

## 2021 ECOSOC Integration Segment

**Sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic that promotes the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development:  
Building an inclusive and effective path for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda in the context of the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development**

**2 July 2021**

### **Background**

The 2021 Integration Segment will discuss the analysis and policy proposals from ECOSOC subsidiary bodies and the UN system on the main theme of ECOSOC and the high-level political forum on sustainable development, notably to prepare the thematic review of the HLPF. It will promote coordination among the subsidiary bodies and the UN system. The annual overview report of the UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) will also be presented.

### **Sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic**

Since the proclamation of the Decade of Action and Delivery for Sustainable Development, the world has been facing a devastating pandemic that turned into a socio-economic crisis. The COVID-19 pandemic revealed and further exacerbated inequalities, threatening progress towards the SDGs. In addition to seeing the biggest health crisis in modern times, the pandemic risks pushing half a billion people into poverty. About 1.6 billion workers in the informal economy, most of whom live in developing countries, are at risk of having their livelihoods destroyed. The international community continues to struggle how best to respond to COVID-19 and its impacts.

While the extent of the devastating impacts COVID-19 continues to be assessed, there is no doubt that these hard-hit effects are being disproportionately felt by people living in vulnerable situations such as older people, women, young workers, migrants, refugees, unprotected workers, people living in shelters, people who are homeless or in informal settlements, and people with underlying health conditions. If not properly addressed through effective integrated policies, the social crisis created by the COVID-19 pandemic may also increase inequality, exclusion, discrimination and global unemployment in the medium and long term.

The COVID-19 pandemic has provided the world with an unexpected opportunity to reassess earlier commitments, readjust previous policies and redirect the resources we have at our disposal. Any response to tackle the pandemic must be integrated, address the root causes and impacts, and be effective and sustainable. We must develop and implement targeted measures in recovery and response plans to not only include vulnerable and marginalized groups and

mitigate the immediate impact of the crisis on them but also to address the systemic and structural barriers to their inclusion that have emerged during the pandemic. We must look at our recovery plans with an “equity lens”.

On the other hand, the multifaceted nature of the pandemic forces our institutions to be even more coordinated and integrated. Our responses to the COVID-19 pandemic point to the urgent need for science-based governance reforms to strengthen governments’ capability to address short- and long-term challenges and improve resilience to economic, social, and environmental shocks.

## **2021 ECOSOC Integration Segment**

Against that backdrop, the ECOSOC Integration Segment will offer a platform for exploring ideas on innovative and ambitious policy responses, building on the work of ECOSOC subsidiary bodies and UN entities as well as on lessons learned by Member States. It will also give impetus to pioneering work by ECOSOC functional commissions and other subsidiary bodies and by UN system entities on the response to COVID-19 while building a resilient path towards the SDGs.

The discussions will be organized around the kind of actions that are likely to generate maximum impact across the SDGs while supporting efforts to recover from the pandemic and its effects. The integrated nature of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development requires a focus on an integrated approach and transformative policy options with sustainability criteria at their core. This means not only balancing the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, but also taking the appropriate timeframes for decision-making, discarding short-termism as default. The COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced the need for such integrated and sustainable actions, as it has impacted all countries and sectors of society, and brought also the relationships between planet, people, prosperity, peace and partnerships to the limelight.

Given the interlinkages across the SDGs and the need for transformative policy integration, the Integration Segment will be organized around a number of cross-cutting issues. In view of the SDGs that will be reviewed during the 2021 HLPF (Goals 1 on no poverty, 2 on zero hunger, 3 on good health and well-being, 8 on decent work and economic growth, 10 on reduced inequalities, 12 on responsible consumption and production, 13 on climate action, 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions, and 17 on partnership), the programme will be organized around three panel discussions:

1. Institutional strengthening, governance, inclusion and the rule of law;
2. Building back better towards inclusive, sustainable, and just economies for recovery: Re-designing the contract between people and planet; and
3. Human well-being and capabilities: Building back more resilient, healthy, equitable and sustainable societies.

The panel on institutional strengthening, governance, inclusion and the rule of law will address SDG16, its cross-cutting interlinkages with other SDGs and the principle of leaving no one behind to explore solutions to eliminate structural barriers and systemic patterns of exclusion and to promote effective institutions. The panel on sustainable and just economies will include, within the discussion of the broader theme, particular focus on Goals 8 on decent work and economic

growth, 10 on reduced inequalities, 12 on responsible consumption and production and policies addressing the related trade-offs and synergies. The panel on human well-being and capabilities will include a particular focus on Goals 1 on no poverty, 2 on zero hunger, 3 on good health and well-being and policies that build on the interlinkages among those goals and with other SDGs.

Furthermore, Goals 13 and 5 on climate action and gender equality will be addressed throughout the programme.

Each panel aims to (i) demonstrate integrated policies in action (ii) bring out the most novel policy messages from the ECOSOC functional commissions and expert bodies, UN system bodies/organizations as well as from Member States and (ii) provide guidance to improve the collective results of UN system bodies/organizations, by directing some of them towards specific issue/policy options or by identifying policy or normative areas where they should work in a coherent and integrated manner to effectively deliver as one UN.

The panels will feature subsidiary bodies' chairs and UN system executive heads. Member States would be lead respondents. Selected countries, including VNR countries, and chairs of specific groups of countries could be invited to share their experience and lessons with the response to the pandemic and react to the ideas from panelists or other countries.

To ensure that the Integration Segment effectively advances policy integration and UN system coordinated policy and normative work on the response to COVID-19, an informal preparatory process will start in June. The preparatory process included "Integration Dialogues" in the form of three 90 minutes webinars engaging the ECOSOC functional commissions and expert bodies and invited UN entities on the topic of each panel (See Annex). The purpose is to identify the key policy options to inform the deliberations at the Segment, showcase concrete examples of integrated policy in action and provide critical guidance on integration issues that need to be addressed.

## ANNEX 1.

### Integration dialogues: preparatory process for the 2021 Integration Segment

As part of the preparatory process of the Integration Segment, the Vice-President of ECOSOC organized three informal virtual conversations or “Integration Dialogues” on 27 May, 3 June and 10 June. These dialogues provided an opportunity to identify the key policy options to inform the deliberations at the Segment, and critical guidance on integration issues that need to be addressed. They focused on the most creative ideas emanating from the work of ECOSOC subsidiary bodies and the UN system to break new ground in the reflection on how to recover better from COVID-19.

They also provided a platform for further discussion between Member States and the ECOSOC system on the policies and programmes that best reflect the national and international priorities for an equal, resilient, and sustainable recovery.

In view of the SDGs reviewed at the 2021 HLPF and the ECOSOC’s main theme, the dialogues were convened under the following themes:

1. Institutional strengthening, governance, inclusion and the rule of law
2. Building back better towards inclusive, sustainable, and just economies for recovery: Re-designing the contract between people and planet.
3. Human well-being and capabilities: Building back more resilient, healthy, equitable and sustainable societies.

Efforts were made to ensure complementarity and avoid duplication with the Expert Group Meetings that were convened to prepare for the 2021 HLPF thematic reviews and SDGs.

The outcome of the preparatory conversations would be a concise note with “integrated solutions” (to recover better from COVID-19) and “policy directions” (guidance for the ECOSOC system on what to do or where to join forces), which would serve as a basis for the delegations’ preparations for the segment, discussions at the segment and the summary to be presented by the Vice President to the HLPF.

**ANNEX 2.**  
**Proposed Programme for the Integration Segment**

**Overall theme:** *Sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic that promotes the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development: building an inclusive and effective path for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda in the context of the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development*

*SDGs to be reviewed during July 2021 HLPF: Goals 1 on no poverty, 2 on zero hunger, 3 on good health and well-being, 8 on decent work and economic growth, 10 on reduced inequalities, 12 on responsible consumption and production, 13 on climate action, 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions, and 17 on partnership*

Opening

Panel 1: Institutional strengthening, governance, inclusion and the rule of law

Panel 2: Building back better towards inclusive, sustainable, and just economies for recovery: Re-designing the contract between people and planet

Panel 3: Human well-being and capabilities: Building back more resilient, healthy, equitable and sustainable societies

Presentation of the report of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board (CEB) by the Secretary of the CEB and interactive dialogue with Member States

Closing Remarks