



ECOSOC NEWS

Inga Rhonda King, President

New York, 24 June - 5 July 2019

PREVIEW

Integration Segment; High-level Political Forum; and High-level Segment 8-19 July 2019



One day before the HLPF, the [Integration Segment](#)¹ (8 July 2019) will be held on the theme of ECOSOC and HLPF. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres will present the annual overview [report](#) of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB). The Segment will focus on the interlinkages among the SDGs under review at the 2019 HLPF. It will reflect on the messages of the ECOSOC Subsidiary Bodies and the UN system.



Next week, More than two thousand representatives of governments, businesses and civil society leaders will gather at the [High-Level Political Forum \(HLPF\)](#) for the period 9-18 July 2019) to discuss the theme “*Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality*”. HLPF will review progress in the thematic areas of quality education ([SDG 4](#)), inclusive economic growth and decent work ([SDG 8](#)), reducing inequalities ([SDG 10](#)), climate action ([SDG 13](#)), peace, justice and strong institutions ([SDG 16](#)) and means of implementation ([SDG 17](#)). Forty-seven countries, both developed and developing, will present their [Voluntary National Reviews \(VNRs\)](#)— sharing their national experiences, including successes, challenges and lessons learnt, in implementing the 2030 Agenda and SDGs.



The HLPF will set the stage for the [high-level week](#) during the 74th Session of the UN General Assembly in September, during which the organization will host the [Climate Action](#) and [SDG](#) Summits as well as the high-level meetings on [Financing for Development](#), [Universal Health Coverage](#) and the [Small Island Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action \(SAMOA\) Pathway](#)— galvanizing support for some of the major issues at the heart of the 2030 Agenda.

¹ The Operational Activities Segment draft resolution E/2019/L.21 will be considered at 3 p.m. on 8 July.

The SDG Progress Report, which will officially be launched on Tuesday, 9 July, will provide the HLPF with an overview of the world's SDGs implementation efforts to date, highlighting areas of progress and areas where more action needs to be taken to ensure no one is left behind.

The first five days of the HLPF will also include sessions on each one SDG under review as well as sessions on science-technology-innovation, on financing for sustainable development and on countries in special situation. There will also be a session on lessons learned from four years of Voluntary National Reviews on how to implement the SDGs. Two panel sessions will engage countries presenting a VNR for the second time.

Approximately [156 side events](#) will take place on the margins of the HLPF. A number of [special events](#) will also take place

A series of [VNR Labs](#) will be convened on the margins of the 2019 HLPF, to provide an informal platform for discussing specific themes from the VNRs and reflecting on the VNR process. The Labs will be open to Member States, the UN system and representatives of Major Groups and other Stakeholders.

The second week (16-19 July) will consist of the ministerial HLPF week and the [ECOSOC High-level Segment](#). The ministerial HLPF days will include an opening session with remarks from H.E. Ms. Inga Rhonda King, President of ECOSOC; H.E. Ms. María Fernanda Espinosa, President of the General Assembly; Mr. António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations; and keynote statements by Ms. Mary Robinson, Chair of The Elders; Mr. Richard Curtis, Screenwriter, Producer and Film Director, UK, SDG Advocate; and Mr. Hoesung Lee, Chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), and Endowed Chair Professor at Korea University Graduate School of Energy and Environment. A group of children will also share key messages on the SDGs.

The days will be largely dedicated to the VNRs, with the exception of a session on key lessons from the VNR process and work of the HLPF and a session on the key messages from various intergovernmental bodies to the HLPF. The former will contribute to the review of the format and organization of the HLPF at the GA 74th session. The ECOSOC high-level segment will focus on future-oriented trends, projections and scenarios addressing the most relevant issues around the SDGs with an impact on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

An [SDG Media Zone](#), to be held on 9 and 10 July at the UN Headquarters Visitors' Lobby. The Media Zone will feature action-driven and solutions-based initiatives by the UN System and its partners. Live programming, including panel discussions, interviews, Ted-style talks and presentations will take place. The space will also showcase major UN initiatives that inspire people to do their part to care for the Planet, such as the award-winning [Act Now climate action campaign](#). All major events will be live-streamed on [UN Web TV](#)

Reporting on the Humanitarian Affairs Segment of ECOSOC



H.E. Mr. Omar Hilale, Vice-President of ECOSOC, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Morocco to the United Nations

The theme of the 2019 [Humanitarian Affairs Segment \(HAS\)](#) was “*Promoting action to save lives, reach those in need and reduce humanitarian risk, vulnerability and need: looking towards the seventieth anniversary of the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and the climate summit called for by the Secretary-General*”. The HAS was convened under the Chairmanship of the ECOSOC Vice-President, Ambassador Omar Hilale, Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Morocco at the United Nations.

In his [remarks](#), Ambassador Hilale highlighted some factors that had influenced this year's ECOSOC:

- 1) Increased frequency and intensity of disasters in the face of a changing climate had ramped up humanitarian needs and reversed development gains, affecting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. Noting that natural disasters multiply risks, he lauded the Secretary-General's Climate Action Summit in September as timely and as a platform that would allow Member States to express their concerns about our planet.
- 2) Noting that 2019 will mark the 70th Anniversary of the Geneva Conventions, the need to bring about real change in the behavior of the warring sides to respect international humanitarian law is urgent, especially in the face of ongoing violations.
- 3) Reinforcing national and local actors and systems, as well as finding ways to put an end to ongoing, protracted humanitarian situations is critical. Conflict combined with climate change compounds the needs of the most vulnerable, exacerbating poverty.



Mr. Mark Lowcock, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) at the opening of the HAS.

In his opening [remarks](#) Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC), Mark Lowcock underlined the fact that humanitarian needs cannot be reduced in the long-term unless countries advance towards the SDGs at a faster pace.

In his address, Mr. Lowcock made two key points about the worldwide humanitarian response:

- 1) Humanitarian partners reach more than 100 million people every year, saving millions of lives. This means that the humanitarian system is an effective system.
- 2) For humanitarian partners to sustain their work, investing in humanitarian action is critical and de facto, "one of the cheapest ways of saving a life."

"We don't have to change the law, we have to enforce it"

This year's HAS shed a light on the complexity of some of today's worst humanitarian crises, where protracted displacement, gender-based violence and disregard of international humanitarian law are becoming the "new normal".

This was done through the lens of various themes such as gender-based violence, climate change, the Geneva Conventions, effective financing and protection of civilians. "As time passes and generations change, it is really important to remind everybody why the Geneva Conventions were put in place", said Mr. Lowcock. "We do not need to change the law, we just need everybody to obey the law."



Ms. Ursula Mueller, Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) at the Cyclone Idai event

"Climate change is worsening vulnerabilities and increasing needs"

In a side event dedicated to lessons learnt from the humanitarian impact of Cyclone Idai, 100 days after the it wreaked havoc in Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy ERC Ursula Mueller [presented](#) the state of play, highlighting the ongoing humanitarian needs as they outpace the resources, stressing the need for durable solutions for those affected.

As she had just returned from a mission with ECOSOC Chair's Representative to all countries affected by Idai, Ms. Mueller shared an update on the humanitarian response to help the affected people. The disaster reminded us of the pivotal importance of investing in resilience, both of communities and national systems, said Ms. Mueller. Governments are moving as fast as they can to repair vital infrastructure in cyclone-affected areas, so they are ready for the next cyclone season, which begins in November. "They will need all the support they can get", Ms. Mueller concluded.

"We are beginning to change the narrative" - Making gender equality a reality

In several discussions during the HAS, empowerment of local actors, and in particular the role of women and girls, in the reinforcement of local systems helped to generate momentum among humanitarian actors. Women and girls are essential contributors to effective humanitarian action. Ms. Mueller [called](#) for women and girls, to be included, empowered and protected in all aspects of humanitarian action."

Activities of the ECOSOC President



ECOSOC President Ambassador Inga Rhonda King speaking at the briefing on the HLPF, HLS and Integration Segment

On 26 June 2019, ECOSOC President, H.E. Ambassador Inga Rhonda King, hosted a briefing on the modalities of the [High-level Political Forum on sustainable development \(HLPF\)](#) convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council (9-18 July 2019), the [High-level segment](#) (16-19 July 2019), and the [Integration Segment](#) (8 July 2019).



ECOSOC President Ambassador Inga Rhonda King speaking at the retreat on "Synergies among Developing Countries for Achieving a World Free of Terrorism and Agenda 2030"

ECOSOC President, H.E. Ambassador Inga Rhonda King, delivered a statement at the retreat on "Synergies among Developing Countries for Achieving a World Free of Terrorism and Agenda 2030" on 29 June 2019.

Ambassador King [stressed](#) that the 2030 Agenda and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) can help to address conditions that are conducive to the spread of violent extremism and terrorism. Although SDG1,2, 4, 5 8, 10 and 13 are particularly relevant, she

highlighted SDG 16 as it embodies one of the key messages of the 2030 Agenda, that there is no peace without development and no development without peace. This is increasingly recognized as the General Assembly and Security Council embraced the concept of "Sustaining Peace" which recognizes that peace cannot be sustained when people's lives are not improved through sustainable development paths and unless institutions are strengthened.