

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Since March, ECOSOC has focused on the impacts of the outbreak of COVID-19 around the world, while ensuring that the work of the Council and the United Nations continues.
- The High-level Political Forum (HLPF) preparations are well underway. The programme has been revised to reflect the impact of COVID-19 on the SDGs and the constraints on in person meetings. The declaration is being prepared under the leadership of the Permanent Representatives of Lebanon and Bulgaria.

## COVID-19 RESPONSE

### [Informal Financing for Development Forum meeting on “Financing Recovery from COVID-19”](#)

2 June 2020



On 2 June 2020, the President of ECOSOC convened an informal Financing for Development Forum meeting on financing and policy solutions to respond to COVID-19. The meeting brought together senior representatives from governments, international organizations, civil society and the private sector to present concrete solutions to finance the response to the pandemic and set the world on a resilient and sustainable recovery. The [President of ECOSOC](#) and the

[Deputy Secretary-General](#) delivered opening remarks.

In the dialogue with Member States and other stakeholders, several speakers stressed that the pandemic is not only an unprecedented challenge of our time, but also a true test of global unity and solidarity. Multilateral organizations play a crucial role. The pandemic adversely affects the realization of the SDGs. The poorest and most vulnerable are affected disproportionately by the crisis. Many countries do not have sufficient administrative and financial capacity to adequately respond to it. Building fiscal space is necessary to respond to the crisis and to build back better, greener, with more inclusion and equality. Speakers underscored the importance of debt cancellation, debt relief, investments, as well as increased and predictable development assistance to address the economic crisis. Many speakers also stressed the need to prevent and combat the diversion of funds through corruption, tax evasion, tax avoidance and illicit financial flows, in order to invest in basic service delivery and recovery from Covid-19.

The meeting explored financing and policy options to support governments and institutions tackle the COVID-19 pandemic, including those offered by some of the largest COVID Relief Funds as well as international and regional organizations, such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the African Development Bank. The meeting also served as a platform to discuss the challenges faced by countries in special situations as well as countries facing acute debt distress. A mapping of funding mechanisms for COVID-19 and other documentation on the meeting can be accessed

at <https://www.un.org/development/desa/financing/events/forum-financing-development-meeting-financing-sustainable-recovery-covid-19>.

### **ECOSOC Informal briefing "Joining Forces: Effective Policy Solutions for Covid-19 Response"**

**11 May 2020**



ECOSOC convened a high-level virtual Briefing on "Joining Forces: Effective Policy Solutions for COVID-19 Response" on 11 May. The briefing brought together the Deputy Secretary-General and the executive heads of WHO, FAO, ILO, UNCTAD, ESCAP, and the High-Commissioner for Human Rights, as well as DESA and Plan International to discuss policy solutions for an inclusive, and human-centric COVID-19 response.

The President of ECOSOC issued a [Presidential Statement](#) to share the key messages from the meeting, in which she highlighted the role of ECOSOC as the centre of the UN development

system. "ECOSOC brings people and issues together to promote collective action for a sustainable world. We must work together to deepen our efforts during this Decade of Action - to recover better, and build a: healthier, greener, fairer and a more resilient world," she said in her [remarks](#).

### **Joint Virtual Briefing on COVID-19**

**27 March 2020**



The President of ECOSOC, together with the President of the General Assembly, the President of the Security Council for the month of March (China) and the Secretary General, convened a briefing on 27 March 2020. The joint briefing focused on measures taken to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the work of the Organisation, as well as the activities of the Principal Organs of the United Nations during this crisis. In her [statement](#), the President of ECOSOC cautioned that development gains were at risk of being reversed. She underscored that the consequences of COVID-19 will be more severe for the most vulnerable countries, in particular the Least Developed Countries.

### **Impact of COVID19 on the upcoming meetings at the United Nations**

**10 March 2020**



On 10 March, a joint informal meeting of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council was convened to hear a briefing by the Secretariat regarding measures to strengthen preparedness and ensure business continuity at United Nations premises, in light of the evolving situation of the spread of COVID-19 around the world and its influence on the United Nations meetings. In her [statement](#), the ECOSOC President underscored the need to minimize the impacts of COVID-19, particularly as the UN embarks upon the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development. She highlighted the efforts of her Presidency and the ECOSOC

Bureau to ensure a coordinated approach by the Council and its subsidiary bodies in delivering on their functions during the current crisis.

## ECOSOC POLICY DIALOGUES

### Management Segment

3 June 2020



The Vice-President of ECOSOC, H.E. Mr. Munir Akram (Pakistan) convened the ECOSOC Management Segment on 3 June 2020. In its resolution 72/305, the General Assembly renamed the Coordination and Management Meeting of ECOSOC as the Management Segment, to be held twice per cycle, and focus on the adoption of procedural decisions,

consideration of recommendations of subsidiary bodies, as well as the introduction of reports and consideration of draft proposals submitted under relevant agenda items. Issues considered during this meeting included drugs and crime, food security, gender, geospatial information, human rights, nutrition and refugees.

### Operational Activities Segment

(19-22; and 27 May 2020)



An entirely virtual [Operational Activities Segment \(OAS\)](#) took place through a series of morning sessions from 19 to 22 May and on 27 May 2020, under the chairpersonship of the Deputy Permanent Representative of Mexico and ECOSOC Vice-President, H.E. Mr. Juan Sandoval Mendiola. The Segment brought together hundreds of participants online in an interactive intergovernmental discussion involving

Ambassadors, experts from capital, and delegates from Member States along with heads of UN system entities and resident coordinators and agency representatives from the country level.

[At the first session of the Segment](#), the Secretary-General [presented](#) his report on implementing the quadrennial comprehensive policy review and repositioning the UN development system. Member States expressed that the UN development system has made good progress in implementing the reform efforts; highlighting that the COVID-19 pandemic is the system's first "stress test" of changes on the ground. Delegations welcomed the swift response of the system to the crisis.

It was felt that good initial progress has also been made toward the Funding Compact's mutual commitments by countries and UN entities. But further progress is needed to address remaining challenges related to funding, competition, and monitoring progress.

The session with Resident Coordinators and UN country team members from Armenia, China, Haiti, Seychelles, Uruguay and Yemen provided evidence of how the reforms are taking root at the country level. The well-coordinated response to COVID-19 was cited as a good example of how the system can work collaboratively across UN sectors and pillars to attend countries' needs.

Member States discussed two major remaining elements of the UN development system reform: the strengthening of multi-country offices (MCOs); and the proposals on revamping the UN's regional assets.

The final session included an interactive dialogue with the [Deputy Secretary-General](#), and Heads of UN entities. It examined how the system as a whole, including through specific agency commitments, can best support the Decade of Action for delivery of the SDGs. In the context of the recovery after the COVID-19 pandemic, Member States reiterated the need to reach the most vulnerable and build back better by utilizing the UN framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19, maximizing partnerships to the fullest extent possible, and enhancing access to digital technologies.

A Chair's summary will be prepared to provide the key substantive highlights from the session.

### **ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development**

**23 April 2020**



On 23 April, ECOSOC organized a virtual meeting of the ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development with a special focus on Financing Sustainable Development in the Context of COVID-19. The meeting was the first ECOSOC forum convened virtually, featuring remarks by the President of the General Assembly, President of ECOSOC and the Secretary-General, and keynote addresses by Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Chair of the Board of Gavi, Jay Collins, Vice Chairman of Citigroup Banking, Capital Markets and Advisory, and Nyaradzayi Gumbonzvanda, Chair of the Board of Action Aid.

The [outcome document](#) of the Forum, adopted by silent procedure on 27 April, represents the first universally agreed UN set of policies to finance COVID-19 response and recovery.

### **Launch of the FACTI Panel**

**2 March 2020**



The President of ECOSOC, jointly with the President of the General Assembly, [launched](#) a High-Level Panel on International Financial Accountability, Transparency and Integrity for Achieving the 2030 Agenda ([FACTI Panel](#)) on 2 March 2020.

The high-level panel is expected to contribute to the overall efforts undertaken by Member States to implement the ambitious and transformational vision of the 2030 Agenda. Our common goal, as set out in SDG 16, is to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

The Presidents mandated the Panel to make evidence-based recommendations, building on the successes and ongoing work of existing mechanisms, on how to make the systems for financial accountability, transparency and integrity more comprehensive, robust, effective, and universal in approach.

After the launch, the Panel published a background paper, and its 17 members agreed to split the Panel's further work into three clusters: (1) improving cooperation in tax matters; (2) accountability, public reporting and anti-corruption measures, and; (3) cooperation and settling disputes. The Panel held a series of consultations with Member States, civil society, experts, international institutions and other stakeholders, to hear about their concerns and priorities for action. More information about the process is available on the Panel's [website](#).

## WORK OF ECOSOC SUBSIDIARY AND AD HOC BODIES: PARTICIPATION OF PRESIDENT OF ECOSOC

### Meeting of the ECOSOC Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti

29 April 2020



The ECOSOC Ad Hoc Advisory Group (AHAG) on Haiti organized a virtual meeting on the COVID-19 pandemic and food crises in Haiti on 29 April 2020. Chaired by the Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations, the meeting saw the participation of the Chargé d’Affaires of Haiti to the United Nations; the President of ECOSOC; the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Haiti; the Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH), and United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Haiti; representatives from the UN System; and Haitian health experts. In total 55 people took part to the virtual meeting, including AHAG members and representatives of UN in Port-au-Prince (UNCT and BINUH), NY (DPPA, OCHA, and WFP) and Geneva (OHCHR).

The meeting focused on the current challenges posed by Covid-19 in the country, with serious health as well as socio-economic impacts on the vulnerable Haitian population. Following the meeting, the AHAG issued a “[Statement of solidarity](#)” in support of Haiti on 8 May 2020.

### Commission on the Status of Women, 64th Session

9 March 2020



The 64th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), which was scheduled to take place from 9-16 March 2020 to review and appraise the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 25 years after its adoption in 1995, had to be scaled-down to a half-day procedural meeting on 9 March, as a result of the COVID-19 health pandemic.

The President of ECOSOC participated in the opening session on 9 March [noting](#) that despite progress, the task of gender equality remained unfinished. The session resulted in the adoption by consensus of the Political Declaration ([E/CN.6/2020/L.1](#)) which reaffirmed the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

### Committee for Development Policy

24-27 February 2020



The Committee for Development Policy (CDP) organized its annual plenary meeting on 24- 27 February.

Participating at the opening, the President of ECOSOC [stressed](#) that the 2030 Agenda and the Programme of Action are complimentary and mutual reinforcing. She also highlighted that the “CDP’s analysis of the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) has been important in shedding light on what countries emphasize, and that the work of the Committee is recognized as a source of information and ideas about the VNRs”.

This year the CDP laid the groundwork for the 2021 Triennial Review of the least developed country (LDC) category and discussed support to graduating and graduated countries. It discussed its substantive inputs to the new Programme of Action for LDCs.

### ECOSOC Bureau consultations with World Bank and IMF Executive Boards

6 February 2020



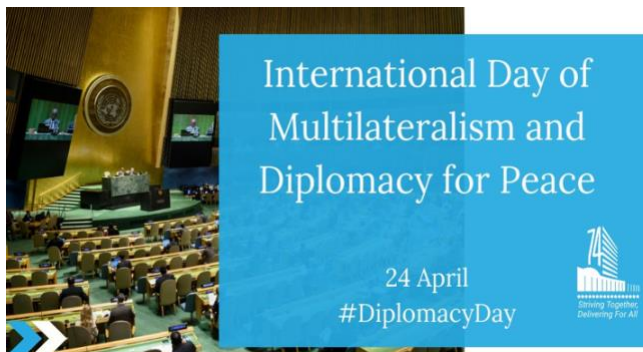
forward.

On February 6, the ECOSOC Bureau engaged in its annual consultations with the Executive Boards of the World Bank and IMF in Washington, DC. The consultations featured an interactive and frank discussion on the agreed priority themes: debt sustainability, illicit financial flows, resource mobilization and countries in special situations. The consultations identified joint issues and priorities that seem promising for deeper global coordination and collaboration among the institutions and laid the groundwork for an action-oriented dialogue on joint priority themes going

## INTERNATIONAL DAYS

### International Day of Multilateralism

24 April 2020



not less, cooperation across national borders. She called for a united global response with a strong UN at its centre.

The 2020 International Day of Multilateralism took place against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has disrupted billions of lives with far-reaching health and socio-economic impacts and comes as the multilateral system embarks on the Decade of Action and Delivery to implement the Sustainable Development Goals.

The President of ECOSOC **highlighted** that the crisis has brought to the fore the interdependence of the world today. Global challenges need to be solved through global solutions, requiring more,

### International Day of Forests

21 March 2020



Forests and their biodiversity benefit us all – it is time we took better care of these precious resources.”

On the occasion of the International Day of Forests, the President of ECOSOC **stressed** that “Although forest biodiversity is being lost at alarming accelerated rates, we must not give up hope. If we work together, we can turn the tide. Innovative solutions exist, and it is up to us to be a voice of change for forests and the biodiversity that lives within them. Not just because it is the right thing to do, but because our very future depends on it.



On the occasion of the 2020 International Women’s Day, the President of ECOSOC issued a [statement](#). Recalling ECOSOC’s long tradition of, and deep commitment to, fighting for the realisation of women’s rights, gender equality, and the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and girls, the President observed that gender equality and the empowerment of women was central to the achievement of every sustainable development goal of the 2030

Agenda.

**Much more still needs to be done to:**

- 🕒 Promote women’s rights
- 🕒 Eliminate all forms of discrimination
- 🕒 End violence against women and girls, everywhere

- 🕒 Promoting women’s rights and equality needs to be a key priority of the Decade of Action to deliver sustainable development for every woman, man and child by 2030

- 🕒 Gender equality and the empowerment of women is one such transformative pathway for accelerating SDG achievement. It is in and by itself a critical accelerator for SDG progress

- 🕒 Women’s rights and equality is an essential key priority of the Decade of Action to deliver sustainable development for every woman, man and child by 2030

From H.E. Mona Juuf’s statement on International Women’s Day 2020

**ON THE HORIZON**



The ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment (HAS) 2020, chaired by ECOSOC Vice-President, Ambassador Omar Hilale (Morocco), is scheduled to take place from 9 to 11 June. The theme for the HAS is “*Reinforcing humanitarian assistance in the context of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations: taking action for people-centred solutions, strengthening effectiveness, respecting international humanitarian law and promoting the humanitarian principles*” (E/2020/L.4). The opening session of the HAS will include a forward-looking discussion about the humanitarian landscape

considering the impacts of COVID-19 together with global trends and emerging challenges. The HAS will provide a key opportunity for Member States, the United Nations system, development actors, the private sector and other humanitarian partners to discuss emerging and pressing humanitarian issues. An annual ECOSOC Humanitarian resolution will be adopted during the HAS.



# DECADE OF >>>> ACTION

The [2020 ECOSOC Integration Segment](#), chaired by ECOSOC Vice-President, Ambassador Mher Margaryan (Armenia), is scheduled to take place on Monday, 6 July. The Segment is intended to bring together the key messages and recommendations from the subsidiary bodies of the Council and the UN system on the 2020 ECOSOC and High-level Political Forum (HLPF) theme on "Accelerated action and transformative pathways: realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development" through the

lens of COVID-19. The ECOSOC Vice-President will share the key messages at the opening of the HLPF the following day as the Segment is envisioned to feed into the HLPF thematic reviews.

## High Level Political Forum and High-level Segment of ECOSOC

7-17 July 2020



The [High-level Political Forum \(HLPF\)](#) will take place from 7 to 16 July 2020 under the auspices of ECOSOC. This will include a three-day ministerial meeting of the HLPF and High-level Segment (HLS) from 14 July to 16 July 2020. The HLS will conclude on 17 July.

The HLPF and HLS will address the theme of "Accelerated action and transformative pathways: realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development" ([Programme](#)).

The HLPF will bring countries and other development actors together to address questions concerning the impact of

COVID-19 on the implementation of the SDGs. This year, 47 countries are expected to present their Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) at the HLPF– with an aim to share experiences with the global community, in efforts to accelerate the implementation of the sustainable development agenda.

## STORIES FROM THE FIELD

The global COVID-19 pandemic has seen a surge in gender-based violence (GBV) and violence against children. In Kenya, a third of crimes reported since the start of COVID-19 were related to sexual violence.

- The UN country team is mobilizing around a rights-based response which includes strengthening and increasing availability of essential GBV services and public awareness-raising.
- The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) is collaborating with the Kenya Red Cross Society to sustain clinical management of sexual violence supplies and personal protective equipment in all humanitarian hubs in the country.
- UN Women, UNFPA and UNICEF are working closely with Kenya's national child and GBV hotlines, to increase psychosocial support through telephone services
- UN Women is supporting the Ministry of Health to develop GBV guidelines during COVID19.

### Fighting the shadow pandemic of violence against women and children during COVID19



Source: <https://unsdg.un.org/blog/fighting-shadow-pandemic-violence-against-women-and-children-during-covid19>; Photo: WHO-MOH



## DID YOU KNOW THAT...



**The Human Rights Commission** was one of the first functional commissions created within ECOSOC. With its inaugural meeting in January 1947, it was charged with drafting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Commission was later transformed, in 2006, into the Human Rights Council

- 🌐 Eleanor Roosevelt served as a U.S. delegate to the United Nations General Assembly, as well as the first Chairperson of the UN Human Rights Commission in 1946
- 🌐 She was also instrumental in drafting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and was posthumously awarded the UN Human Rights Prize

*“The UN is our greatest hope for future peace. Alone we cannot keep the peace of the world, but in cooperation with others we have to achieve this much longed-for security.” - Eleanor Roosevelt*



The ECOSOC newsletter is produced by the [Office for Intergovernmental Support and Coordination for Sustainable Development](#) in the [UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs](#).