

United Nations  Nations Unies

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29 November 2021

Excellency,

We have the honour to invite you to participate in the **Joint Meeting of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC)** to be held on 15 December 2021, from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. in the General Assembly Hall. The Joint Meeting will address the theme, **“Promoting Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in the context of recovery from the COVID-19 Pandemic”**.


As we continue to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, it has become clear that progress towards sustainable development depends crucially on our ability to overcome crises. At the same time all crises undermine durable peace and the foundations for peaceful and inclusive societies. ECOSOC and the PBC have continued to forge and strengthen close working relations to address these multidimensional challenges. The COVID-19 pandemic has continued to compound emerging and existing stressors across the humanitarian-development-peace space, putting several countries further off track from meeting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and building lasting peace. We are also aware that before the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, widespread economic insecurity was fueling distrust and popular discontent, undermining peacebuilding and sustainable peace and development. The pandemic and global imbalance in access to COVID-19 vaccines has exposed serious weaknesses and limitations in national and global efforts to fight poverty, improve access to food, enhance social-protection mechanisms for the most vulnerable, and improve health systems. The joint meeting, therefore, offers an opportunity for a holistic dialogue and advocacy for coordinated action across this spectrum of inhibitors to sustainable development.


The outcome of the meeting will be a Joint Statement by the President of ECOSOC and the Chair of the PBC, highlighting the main conclusions and policy recommendations.

The concept note is attached. For further information, kindly contact Mr. Odyek Agona (agona@un.org) in the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs and/or Ms. Anita Mathur (mathurl@un.org) in the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs.

We look forward to your personal participation in this important meeting.

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


Colleen Vixen Kelapile
President
Economic and Social Council


Osama Abdelkhalek
Chair
Peacebuilding Commission



Joint Meeting of the Economic and Social Council and the Peacebuilding Commission

Promoting Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in the Context of Recovery from COVID-19

Wednesday, 15 December 2021, 10:00 – 13:00
General Assembly Hall (in-person and virtual)

DRAFT PROGRAMME

10:00-10:30 **Opening of the session**

- **H.E. Mr. Collen Vixen Kelapile**, President of the Economic and Social Council
- **H.E. Mr. Osama Abdelkhalek**, Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission
- **Keynote address by H.E. Ms Amina Mohamed**, Deputy Secretary General, United Nations

10:30-10:50 **Taking stock and promoting conflict-sensitive recovery while leaving
no one behind**

*Moderated by H.E. Collen Vixen Kelapile, President of the Economic and
Social Council*

- **Pre-recorded message by Ms. Antoinette Sayeh**, Deputy Managing Director, International Monetary Fund
- **Ms. Sirebara Fatoumata Diallo**, Director, "La Femme Rurale", Bamako, Mali
- **Mr. Celestin Mukeba Muntuabu**, Managing Director, Equity BCDC and Chair of Board of the United Nations Global Compact Network of the Democratic Republic of the Congo
- **Youth representative (tbc)**

10:50-12:30 **Interactive Dialogue with Member States**

*Moderated by Mr. Osama Abdelkhalek, Chair of the Peacebuilding
Commission*

12:30-12:45 **Closing remarks**

- **H.E. Mr. Osama Abdelkhalek**, Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission
- **H.E. Mr. Collen Vixen Kelapile**, President of the Economic and Social Council

2021 Joint ECOSOC-PBC Annual Meeting

Promoting Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in the context of recovery from the COVID-19 Pandemic

15 December 2021, 10am-1pm

Draft Concept Note

The COVID-19 pandemic has compounded emerging and existing stressors across the world on people, economies, and societies, putting several countries further off track from meeting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and building lasting peace. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, widespread economic insecurity was linked to rising distrust and popular discontent, undermining peacebuilding and sustainable development. The pandemic and global imbalance in access to COVID-19 vaccines has exposed serious weaknesses and limitations in national and global efforts to fight poverty, improve access to food, enhance social-protection mechanisms for the most vulnerable, and improve health systems.

According to the [2021 Global Report on Food Crises](#), the magnitude and severity of food crises worsened in 2020 as protracted conflict, the economic fallout of COVID-19 and weather extremes exacerbated pre-existing fragilities, driving hunger levels in food-insecure countries to a five-year high. OCHA has warned that three dozen countries could experience famines in 2021, pushing an additional 130 million people to the brink of starvation. In addition, UNESCO estimated that between April 2020 and January 2021, 1.6 billion learners in 199 countries worldwide were affected by school closures, with nearly 370 million children not receiving a school meal in 150 countries¹.

The contribution of Working Group I to the [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change sixth assessment report](#) warned that food production around the world will suffer as global heating reaches 1.5C and temperatures exceed what crops can stand, with serious effects on the food supply in the next two decades.

Since the outset of the pandemic, ECOSOC and the PBC have repeatedly stressed that the 2030 Agenda constitutes the roadmap for planet, people, prosperity, peace and partnership to a sustainable, inclusive and resilient recovery from the pandemic. This was reiterated at the 2021 High-level Political Forum (HLPF) held under the auspices of ECOSOC and during the ECOSOC Management Segment to which the PBC Chair was invited to participate. The two bodies have underscored that the recovery requires concerted local, national and international efforts with a strong global solidarity for vaccine equity for all, while at the same time noting that limited manufacturing capacity, intellectual property (IP)-based approaches and barriers to entry of foreign vaccine producers are some of the factors that impact the availability of vaccines in many countries. They have also increased awareness of the associated multi-dimensional challenges for sustainable development and peacebuilding, including misinformation, and have supported coherent multi-dimensional responses that are conflict and gender sensitive, with emphasis on close attention to environmental stress, such as climate change and extreme weather conditions, as well as other triggers of conflict. In doing so, they have stressed the need to

¹ [COVID-19: Missing More Than a Classroom. The impact of school closures on children's nutrition \(unicef-irc.org\).](#)

maintain international attention to and ensure adequate, predictable and sustained funding for development and peacebuilding.

The [outcome](#) of the 2021 HLPF and other ECOSOC and PBC deliberations have confirmed that the pandemic continues to have devastating effects on the lives and livelihoods of people across the world, including on their efforts to achieve the SDGs. This is particularly the case with respect to the least developed countries, where most of the conflict-affected populations reside. A number of these countries undertook voluntary national reviews for a second and third time. These reviews demonstrated that, while these countries have been able to integrate response plans into their programming frameworks, with the assistance of the UN, the pandemic continues to have a deleterious impact on their ability to finance their health and socio-economic recovery, including providing vaccines for their populations. Because of the fiscal realities of these countries, including lower earnings from natural resources exports due to the COVID-19, and the high costs of security and maintaining peace, most of them do not see the possibility of meeting their financing needs from domestic revenue sources. Some countries called for debt relief and cancellation to minimize the impact of the pandemic on the achievement of the SDGs. The positive is that these countries cited as priorities governance and improving access to justice, including through the strengthening of institutions and laws for crime prevention and the promotion of human rights. They also emphasized the merits of inclusive approaches and engagement by civil society and people in vulnerable situations such as women and young people.

Consistent with their commitment to support effective responses to the pandemic and contribute to the continuing global fight to save lives, promote economic recovery and social cohesion, and develop resilience against future infectious disease outbreaks, the ECOSOC and the PBC will consider, during their joint annual meeting, the compounding impact of conflict, the COVID-19 pandemic, and other stressors on sustainable peace and development as well as the UN system response.² The joint meeting will also be utilized as a platform for continuing the urgent advocacy to reach the “furthest behind first,” so that the most vulnerable people living in conflict and post-conflict situations could also have the possibility of getting back on track to achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) during the Decade of Action.

Purpose

The annual ECOSOC-PBC meeting offers an opportunity to provide an update on the impact and responses to COVID-19 in countries recovering from conflicts and emergencies and to reiterate the call of the two intergovernmental bodies for global solidarity in boosting support for conflict-sensitive socio-economic recovery. It also offers an opportunity to identify approaches, experiences, and innovative solutions that Member States and their partners can share to help mitigate immediate and long-term impact of the pandemic on conflict and poverty-related risks, and to ensure that UN agencies, funds and programmes and all partners work more coherently to ensure that solutions are designed holistically and contribute to sustaining peace and sustainable development.

² UN socio-economic response to COVID-19: Lessons learned, analysis of programmatic data, and way forward (draft available).

Guiding questions

- What are the key lessons that have been learned about the challenges of COVID-19 and the response to it in situations of conflict and transitions to peace and development?
- How can approaches, experiences, and innovative solutions be identified and shared that support development and peacebuilding actors and contribute to accelerated implementation of SDG 16 and integrated “whole-of-society” approaches to tackle complex, interrelated challenges such as entrenched conflict, increasing inequalities, gender inequality, social and economic insecurity, climate change and rapid technological disruption?
- What can ECOSOC and PBC cooperation and coordination do to further promote coherence, solidarity and more robust support for short- and long-term recovery efforts from COVID-19 globally, particularly in conflict affected settings?
- How can the UN system and other partners, including the IFIs, regional and sub-regional organisations, civil society and private sector, better support countries in their recovery and sustainable development planning and programming towards building back better and achieving the SDGs?

Format and participants at the meeting

This meeting will be co-convened by the President of the Economic and Social Council and the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission for a three-hour duration. Efforts will be made to secure participation of the members of the ECOSOC and the PBC at the highest possible level. Efforts will, similarly, be made to secure the participation of the relevant UN entities and other international organization and sub-regional groups and other stakeholders at the highest levels.

Expected Outcomes

The outcome of the meeting will be a joint summary by the ECOSOC President and the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, with recommendations for further action for the consideration by the Economic and Social Council and the Peacebuilding Commission.