



THE PRESIDENT  
OF THE  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

1 May 2018

Excellency,

I have the pleasure to transmit herewith a letter, dated 30 April 2018, from H.E. Ms. Alya Ahmed S. Al Thani, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the State of Qatar and H.E. Mr. Einar Gunnarsson, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Iceland, Co-Facilitators of the ECOSOC review process, in accordance with Resolution 68/1 entitled “Review of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 61/16 on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council”.

The co-facilitators are convening the next informal meeting on Monday 7 May 2018, at 3:00 pm, in the ECOSOC Chamber. They are also sharing with Member States a revised version of the “Food for thought” paper, a draft elements paper as well as the proposed meeting schedule for the month of May.

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



Miroslav Lajčák

All Permanent Representatives and  
Permanent Observers to the United Nations  
New York



PERMANENT MISSION  
OF ICELAND TO THE UN

30 April 2018

Excellency,

This is in follow-up to our earlier letter of 29 March regarding the General Assembly review of resolution 68/1.

We wish to convey that our next informal meeting will be convened on Monday, 7 May, at 3:00 pm in the ECOSOC Chamber.

We were encouraged by your engagement and thoughts during our recent informal meeting on 19 April, which we found very useful.

On the basis of that meeting, we are delighted to share with you a revised version of the informal "Food for thought" paper previously shared in our letter of 9 March. The revised paper is based on the informal consultations convened on 6 and 26 February and 19 April and represents a compilation of the options suggested thus far by Member States.

We are also delighted to share with you a proposed elements paper that we would like to serve as a basis for the continuing discussions among Member States on the review of resolution 68/1. The elements build on the discussions held thus far, which are reflected extensively in the revised Food for thought paper. In some cases, we went beyond the discussions and included elements to generate further feedback and reflection among Member States.

Regarding our future meeting, we are pleased to convey to you our proposed meeting schedule for the month of May:

- Monday, 7 May, 3:00 pm, ECOSOC Chamber,
- Tuesday, 15 May, 3:00 pm, Conference Room 1 (no interpretation),
- Wednesday, 16 May, 3:00 pm, Conference Room 1 (no interpretation),
- Monday, 21 May, 3:00 pm, Conference Room 4, and
- Thursday, 24 May, 3:00 pm, Conference Room 4.

At the meeting on 7 May, we hope to address the elements paper and seek your guidance on its content, elements missing from the paper, if any, and hear any additional comments or thoughts you may have.

We look forward to seeing you and to your continued positive engagement.

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



H.E. Ms. Alya Ahmed S. Al Thani  
Permanent Representative of the  
State of Qatar to the United Nations



H.E. Mr. Einar Gunnarsson  
Permanent Representative of  
Iceland to the United Nations

All Permanent Representatives and  
Permanent Observers to the United Nations  
New York

## General Assembly review of 68/1 Co-Facilitators' elements paper

*The Co-Facilitators share the elements below to serve as a basis for the continuing discussion among the Member States on the implementation of resolution 68/1. The elements build on the discussions held thus far, which are reflected extensively in the revised Food for Thought paper. In some cases, the Co-Facilitators went beyond the discussions and included elements to generate further feedback and reflection among the Member States.*

### General remarks

The General Assembly could:

- a) Stress that ECOSOC has a critical role as the central mechanism for system-wide coordination and promotion of the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences in the economic, social and related fields.
- b) Reaffirm the critical functions of ECOSOC – including providing leadership and policy guidance; coordinating the activities of the UN system at large; overall guidance and coordination of the UN development system; strengthening and coordinating humanitarian assistance; supervising its subsidiary bodies while integrating their analysis and inputs; address urgent development in the economic, social, humanitarian and related fields; and, overall, integrating the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development and revitalizing the global partnership for sustainable development..
- c) Reiterate that the HLPF has the central role in overseeing follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda at global level.
- d) Recall the respective roles of the ECOSOC forums and subsidiary bodies in supporting the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and supporting the work of ECOSOC and the HLPF.
- e) Emphasize the need for ECOSOC to strengthen its outcomes, including its ministerial declaration, and the outcomes of its subsidiary bodies, making them more action oriented and ensuring their follow-up so as to strengthen the impact of the Council's work.
- f) Recall the role of the General Assembly as the overarching policy making body in the economic, social and related fields and refer to the support it receives from ECOSOC in the follow-up and review of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and major UN Conferences and Summits.

## Possible areas of action:

### 1. Annual main theme and substantive focus

- a) The HLPF and ECOSOC could adopt the same theme, and the HLPF would review progress in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, as provided for in the 2030 Agenda and resolution 67/290, while ECOSOC could (i) focus on implementation—namely policies and actions to realize the 2030 Agenda in relation to the theme, bringing together various actors, (ii) offer analysis to inform the HLPF thematic review and (iii) promote system-wide coherence and coordination and provide guidance to the work of its subsidiary bodies.
- b) The ECOSOC could adopt one annual theme for all its segments. This theme could address one subset of the theme of the HLPF, with a focus on implementation and actions by various actors. (For example, if the theme of HLPF is “Leaving No One Behind”, ECOSOC theme could be: “the role of local governments in leaving no one behind” or “the role of social policies in leaving no one behind”).
- c) The ECOSOC segments would address the theme of ECOSOC while also delivering on their broader functions.
- d) ECOSOC would ask its subsidiary bodies to align their themes with its annual theme and provide inputs to ECOSOC on the theme, and, through ECOSOC, to the HLPF. Subsidiary bodies could, in addition to the ECOSOC theme, address any specific theme related to the follow-up and review of the outcomes of the major UN conferences and summits within their remit.
- e) The General Assembly could decide that ECOSOC adopt its annual theme for a four-year cycle aligned with the cycle of the HLPF so as to enable ECOSOC subsidiary bodies to offer inputs on the theme of ECOSOC.
- f) The Assembly could decide on the theme(s) of HLPF (and ECOSOC) for 2020 and 2021 so as to give enough time for subsidiary bodies to prepare their inputs.
- g) The GA could decide that concerns for gender equality and countries in special situation should cut across the work of ECOSOC segments, forums and subsidiary bodies.

### 2. Structure of the ECOSOC cycle

- a) The ECOSOC cycle would continue to run from July to July and the General Assembly could ask the Secretary-General to advise on whether and how the elections for ECOSOC could be aligned with ECOSOC cycle, bearing in mind the provisions of Article 61 of the Charter.

- b) The ECOSOC segments could be restructured into two groups per ECOSOC annual cycle, so as to enhance ECOSOC’s visibility and impact and consolidate meeting days.
- c) The first group would include the DCF, FFD Forum, partnerships forum, youth forum, the Humanitarian Affairs Segment, the Operational Activities Segment and a redefined day on transition from relief to development. This group could place a strong emphasis on Means of Implementation and the policies and actions of all actors to implement the 2030 Agenda in relation to the theme of the HLPF.<sup>1</sup>
- d) The second group would comprise, in this order, the renamed integration segment, HLPF and HLS.
- e) ECOSOC could be invited to consider the need to update/adjust its agenda in the light of agreed changes to the structure of its meetings.

### 3. ECOSOC High-level Segment and HLPF

- a) The HLS of ECOSOC would be convened for one day following the HLPF. It could focus on future trends and scenarios related to the theme as well as emerging and frontier issues. It could include a modified dialogue with financial and trade institutions and other actors refocused on the long-term impact of current trends in the economic, social and environmental areas on the realization of the SDGs. This could include discussions of forecasts, scenarios, and foresights, based on the work of the UN and other regional and international organizations and bodies as well as other stakeholders. The outcome of the HLS of ECOSOC would be a President’s Summary. The outcome of the HLPF would remain a Ministerial Declaration.
- b) The General Assembly could recommend to the ECOSOC Bureau to consider reviewing the framework for Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) and to allow more time for countries to present their VNR during the HLPF ministerial meeting with a view to strengthening the exchanges of national experiences on implementing the SDGs.

### 4. Integration

- a) The General Assembly could decide to strengthen the integration segment so that it delivers fully on its function of consolidating all the inputs received from the UN system entities and ECOSOC subsidiary bodies and stakeholders – taking into

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<sup>1</sup> This does not suggest convening all of these functions in the group back-to-back, but rather that the DCF, FFD Forum, partnership forum and youth forum could be in April and the Operational Activities Segment, the redefined day on transition from relief to development and Humanitarian Affairs Segment could be back-to-back in May.

account the outcomes of the first group. It would also include meaningful and thorough discussion on countries in special situations and the mandated relations with the Peacebuilding Commission (that were previously considered in the Coordination and Management Meetings).

- b) This segment would focus on action-oriented reviews of the inputs and recommendations of its subsidiary bodies on the theme, avoiding a repetition of the debates held in those bodies. It would focus attention on issues that require the attention of the HLPF and/or a prioritized, coordinated and integrated substantive response from the United Nations system as a whole. The segment would result in a President's summary with recommendations to inform the thematic review at the HLPF and the HLS of ECOSOC.
- c) The Integration segment could be renamed.

#### 5. System-wide coherence and coordination: operational activities for development

- a) Negotiations on this topic should wait for the completion of the consultations on the repositioning of the UN development system.
- b) The GA could reiterate that the operational activities segment should give clear guidance to the UN development system on the implementation of the QCPR.

#### 6. Coordination of humanitarian assistance and sustainable development

- a) The General Assembly could stress that ECOSOC should continue and strengthen its efforts to support and complement international efforts aimed at addressing humanitarian emergencies, including natural disasters, in order to promote an improved, coordinated response by the United Nations. ECOSOC will do this through its humanitarian affairs segment and ad hoc meetings convened in accordance with resolutions 61/16 and 68/2.
- b) The General Assembly could decide to convene the transition event and the HAS immediately following the OAS to support synergies and integrated analyses -- taking into account that the HAS alternates between Geneva and New York.
- c) The General Assembly could invite the transition event, which links discussions between the OAS and HAS, to focus on the situation of specific countries facing multiple protracted humanitarian and related crises in realizing the SDGs.
- d) The cooperation between ECOSOC and the Peacebuilding Commission could continue as mandated. The annual joint meeting of ECOSOC with the Peacebuilding Commission could be improved in order to fulfill the mandate from GA resolution

60/180 whereby the Commission can provide advice to ECOSOC as countries move from transitional recovery towards development.

#### 7. Emerging and frontier issues

- a) The GA could emphasize ECOSOC's role in supporting developing countries' implementation of the 2030 Agenda through capacity building and improving access to new technologies, building on the STI Forum.
- b) The GA could call upon ECOSOC to address frontier issues in its existing segments and forums and invite ECOSOC, in doing so, to take an action-oriented approach and establish possible follow-up mechanisms.
- c) It could urge ECOSOC to focus on producing added value and results on emerging and frontier issues, and to avoid overlaps with other fora.

#### 8. Stakeholder engagement

- a) The GA could call upon the ECOSOC Bureau to consider possible ways of applying certain aspects of the modalities of engagement of major groups and other stakeholders in the HLPF (defined in resolution 67/290).
- b) The GA could request ECOSOC to engage a broader range of stakeholders throughout the collective multi-stakeholder platform provided by ECOSOC. It could be considered to hold informal forums with other actors such as local governments, indigenous people or other major groups and other stakeholders
- c) The GA could request ECOSOC to effectively use the Partnership forum and convene it over two days.

#### 9. Coordination and management

- a) The General Assembly could decide to rename the Coordination and Management Meetings, "Management Segment".
- b) This Management Segment would deal primarily with procedural issues (adoptions of reports and recommendations of subsidiary bodies, calendar of meetings, procedural and standalone resolutions). It could be held in two short focused segments; the first between the first and second groups of meetings; the second towards the end of the cycle.

- c) Elections to ECOSOC subsidiary bodies could be held in a short organizational session to be held in the second quarter, usually in April, and, as necessary, a short resumed organizational session in November/December.

#### 10. ECOSOC subsidiary bodies and support

- a) ECOSOC could be invited to review the work of its subsidiary bodies with a view to ensuring that they produce analysis, assessments and action-oriented policy recommendations to inform the integrated view of the Council and to improve coordination. It should effectively integrate the outcomes of its subsidiary bodies in its own work,
- b) The GA could invite ECOSOC to ask its subsidiary bodies to further review their respective working methods so as to best support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the work of ECOSOC. Their work should reflect the need for an integrated and action-oriented approach to implementing the SDGs, their recommendations should build on a solid evidence-based review of progress in the implementation of the SDGs and of the outcomes of conferences and summits in their respective area. They should produce effective and action-oriented outcomes, bearing in mind their respective nature as functional or regional commissions or expert bodies.
- c) ECOSOC could be invited to consider the need to adjust the calendar of meetings of its subsidiary bodies and to make adjustments to their reporting arrangements, as necessary, in the light of agreed changes to the structure and timing of its meetings.
- d) ECOSOC should consider ways to ensure that its Special Meeting on International Cooperation in Tax Matters results in increased levels of cooperation.

## Review of implementation of GA resolution 68/1

### Food for Thought

The Co-Facilitators have prepared this Food for Thought paper based on the informal consultations convened with Member States on 6 and 26 February and 19 April, as well as on written proposals received from delegations. The paper represents a compilation of the options suggested thus far by Member States and is offered as a basis for further reflection, proposals and analysis.

#### General remarks

- There is need for an overarching vision and strategy of what Member States wish ECOSOC and its system as a whole to deliver in support of realising the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. ECOSOC needs to provide leadership and policy guidance and the ECOSOC system needs to be strengthened to inform the ECOSOC cycle.
- Focus should also be placed on the outcomes and results of the work of ECOSOC and its system. In this regard, there is also a need for a common understanding of the division of labour between the GA and ECOSOC to complement each other and avoid duplication, with effective linkages with the HLPF.
- The ECOSOC review process should be focused on the strengthening of ECOSOC and its mandate to help developing countries, including in their efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda. It should also not interfere with, or overlap, existing processes or mandates.
- The outcomes of the ECOSOC cycle and the analysis on emerging and frontier issues would need to be pursued with the desired results in view.
- The ECOSOC cycle needs to be effective, integrated and purposeful, while augmenting the value coming from its individual functions. Outcomes achieved throughout the cycle would need to be built upon, culminating in the HLPF and ECOSOC High-level Segment.

#### Possible areas of action

##### 1. Annual main theme and substantive focus

In its resolution 68/1, the General Assembly requested the Council to adopt an annual main theme that will serve as the guiding theme throughout the ECOSOC cycle for the ECOSOC system and the UN development system, which were to align, to the extent possible, their work to the main theme.

The annual main theme intends to align the work of the Council, ECOSOC system and the UN development system and is aligned with the annual theme of the HLPF. The

ECOSOC main theme strengthens an issues-based approach to enhance its role in identifying emerging challenges and promoting reflection, debate and innovative thinking, as well as in achieving a balanced integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development. The policy recommendations emerging from the ECOSOC cycle's forums and segments and from the ECOSOC system as a whole, inform the annual Ministerial Declaration.

*Options suggested thus far:*

- Advanced complementarity is needed between the themes of ECOSOC and the HLPF.
- ECOSOC and the HLPF could adopt the same theme.
- ECOSOC, the ECOSOC system, and the HLPF should all have a single theme, and they should integrate gender equality throughout their work.
- Alignment of the themes of ECOSOC and the HLPF has already been decided; more thematic coherence and streamlining needs to be brought to the overall ECOSOC system.

## 2. Structure of the ECOSOC cycle:

Resolution 68/1 also adjusted the programme of work of ECOSOC to a July to July cycle and revised its structure around the annual main theme so as to support the review cycle. It created an integration segment and dedicated coordination and management meetings.

*Options suggested thus far:*

- The July-July ECOSOC cycle need not change, and the HLPF should continue to be the main event in July along with the conclusion of the substantive work of ECOSOC. At the same time, integration and coordination should be strengthened throughout the cycle, and the different entities of the ECOSOC system should feed into the HLPF.
- The HLPF could be retained as the culmination in July, yet the ECOSOC segments could be concentrated into two or three substantive sessions times per year.
- A concentration could be around three substantive clusters: i) a Means of Implementation cluster in April and May, with the FFD, STI Forum, the Partnership Forum and the DCF; ii) an operational activities cluster with the OAS in May and the HAS in June, linked by a special event in between; and iii) the HLPF in July as the central platform for follow up and review of the 2030 Agenda.
- The Development Cooperation Forum should be rethought to make it more operational. The DCF should take place before the FFD forum, followed by the HLPF.

### 3. ECOSOC HLS and HLPF

The ECOSOC cycle culminates in the High-level Segment (HLS) and the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) convened under the auspices of ECOSOC. The ECOSOC theme is aligned with the theme of the HLPF. ECOSOC's examination of its theme draws upon and integrates the work of the Council segments and forums, the ECOSOC system and the UN development system. The policy recommendations emerging from the ECOSOC segments and forums, and from the ECOSOC system as a whole, inform the annual Ministerial Declaration. As ECOSOC and the HLPF have adopted the same Ministerial Declaration, the Declaration is also informed by the discussions and various reviews conducted at the HLPF. The HLPF review of its own theme is supported by reviews conducted by UN system intergovernmental bodies. The HLPF also conducts a global review of SDG progress, a review of selected SDGs and voluntary national reviews.

*Options suggested thus far:*

- ECOSOC should be empowered to deliver on its mandate, and its visibility should be raised. The High-level Segment should not be diluted into the HLPF, and the HLS and HLPF should not be decoupled in terms of timing, since this would not favour the participation of many developing countries.
- Further options should be explored for a distinct HLS outcome document that would be more action-oriented and/or geared towards reflecting the deliberations of the Council and ECOSOC system from throughout the year.
- The ECOSOC HLS and HLPF should be merged to avoid confusion and duplication, thus getting rid of adopting the Ministerial Declaration twice.
- The HLS should be eliminated or merged it into the HLPF, and the Ministerial Declaration replaced by a Chair's Summary, with a negotiated HLPF Political Declaration every four years.
- The HLS should be reduced into a one-day format to reduce overlap and complexity and to allow for the adoption of the outcome document by both the HLS and HLPF on the same day.
- The HLS and the HLPF have different functions and mandates. The HLS is a cumulative point of the ECOSOC cycle and the work of the subsidiary bodies. Changes to the HLPF should be handled in the appropriate process, though the HLS and HLPF review processes could be aligned.
- It would be important to merge the review cycles of ECOSOC and the HLPF and align them. The three ministerial meeting days of the HLPF, which include the VNRs, are contained in the HLS. Also, 15 minutes are not enough time for a VNR, which should be one hour, and the VNRs should have a structured system determining when a country can present for a second time.
- The review of the HLPF could be considered both in the review of 68/1 and in 2019.

- There is no need for the dialogue with the IFIs in the HLS, as such a dialogue takes place already in the FFD forum.

#### 4. Integration

In “The Future We Want”, ECOSOC was given the mandate, together with the HLPF, to integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development. Its role in this regard is to bring together the work of the ECOSOC subsidiary bodies to provide technically-oriented guidance on policy integration.

Generating integrated policy guidance requires close coordination between the Council, the ECOSOC system and the UN development system with respect to agenda-setting and reporting, including specific timelines for all inputs, so that they can inform the global review by the Council. In particular, in resolution 68/1 Member States established an Integration Segment to provide specific, integrated and inclusive policy guidance and recommendations through the consolidation of inputs on the ECOSOC main theme from the ECOSOC system, the wider United Nations system, Member States and other relevant stakeholders.

*Options suggested thus far:*

- It is important to maintain, while improving, the role of the integration segment to ensure the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development.
- The integration segment should be eliminated to reduce redundancy, as its functions are incorporated into the HLPF.
- The HLPF thematic discussion and the integration segment are the same, and should therefore be combined.
- The integration segment should be convened back to back with the HLPF.
- The integration segment could include addressing the needs of countries in special situation and regional situations.
- The youth and partnership forums could be integrated into the HLPF.

#### 5. System-wide coherence and coordination

In resolution 68/1, the General Assembly decided that ECOSOC, through its Operational Activities for Development Segment, will

- provide overall coordination and guidance for operational development funds and programmes on a system-wide basis. Such guidance should include objectives, priorities and strategies in the implementation of the policies formulated by the General Assembly, including the quadrennial comprehensive policy review;
- concentrate this guidance on cross-cutting and coordination issues related to operational activities;

- focus on improving the overall impact of operational activities of the United Nations system in support of national development priorities.

In his recent report A/72/684–E/2018/7, the Secretary-General has proposed that Member States consider institutionalizing the ECOSOC Operational Activities Segment (OAS) as an accountability platform for system-wide performance on the 2030 Agenda. This could be realized several options, including biannual sessions of the OAS with distinctive focuses.

To avoid overlap with discussions taking place in the intergovernmental process on the UN Development System, only options and issues related to the structure of ECOSOC and its subsidiary bodies have been reflected below.

*Options suggested thus far:*

- The operational activities segment (OAS) should give clear guidance to the UN system in line with the QCPR. There should not be two OAS per year. This issue is currently addressed within the UN Development System reform process; it would be appropriate to wait for the conclusion of that process.
- There should be two OAS per year, yet without increasing the total number of meeting days, with the second session held back to back with the humanitarian affairs segment.
- The CEB report should be presented to the OAS rather than to the CMM.
- The OAS should be convened before the annual session of the Executive Boards in June to bring about better coherence and implementation of the OAS functions.
- The OAS should be transformed to have open-ended participation.

## 6. Coordination of humanitarian assistance and sustainable development

In recognition of the inextricable link between humanitarian assistance and sustainable development, resolution 68/1 called for the Council to continue, through the Humanitarian Affairs Segment in June of every year, to contribute to strengthening the coordination and effectiveness of United Nations humanitarian assistance. It also called upon the Council to support and complement international efforts aimed at addressing humanitarian emergencies, including natural disasters, in order to promote an improved, coordinated response by the United Nations.

These calls have been complemented by the most recent Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR), where Member States requested the United Nations development system to enhance coordination with humanitarian assistance and peacebuilding efforts at the national level in countries facing humanitarian emergencies and countries in conflict and post-conflict situations.

The legislative basis for a relationship between ECOSOC and the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) is derived from General Assembly resolutions 60/180 and 61/16. In 2016, the review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture stressed the

importance of closer cooperation between ECOSOC and the PBC, and the centrality of development to sustaining peace. The review encouraged the PBC to draw on the expertise of relevant parts of the Economic and Social Council system.

In his recent report A/72/684–E/2018/7, the Secretary-General has proposed that Member States consider using the Humanitarian Affairs Segment (HAS) to enhance guidance on the development system's coordination with humanitarian assistance and peacebuilding efforts. He has suggested that Member States could, for example, leverage a redesigned ECOSOC transition event on development and humanitarian collaboration, which could be held back-to-back with the Council's HAS to promote coherence, as well as the joint meeting of ECOSOC and the Peacebuilding Commission. The Secretary-General has advanced these proposals in an effort to help consolidate ECOSOC's role as an intergovernmental space to reinforce the UN's transition towards a culture of prevention and with a focus on results.

To avoid overlap with discussions taking place in the intergovernmental process on the UN Development System, only options and issues related to the structure of ECOSOC and its subsidiary bodies have been reflected below.

*Options suggested thus far:*

- The mandate of 68/1 should be adhered to in the humanitarian area; as 68/1 addresses the link between the humanitarian assistance and sustainable development only, ECOSOC should not be discussing peacebuilding process issues.
- The humanitarian affairs segment (HAS) in its current form should be retained, while there should be further articulation of GA and ECOSOC resolutions with a view to avoiding duplication.
- The OAS and HAS should be convened back-to-back or close enough in the calendar to speak to each other.
- The transition event should be redesigned.
- The transition event should be convened before the HAS, and, to deepen substantive discussions on the development-humanitarian-peacebuilding nexus, a case-study approach could be used.
- The ECOSOC Transition Event, which links discussions between the ECOSOC OAS and HAS, could focus on protracted conflicts.
- The cooperation between ECOSOC and the Peace Building Commission should be supported.
- The annual joint meeting of ECOSOC with the Peacebuilding Commission should be improved.
- On peacebuilding and humanitarian affairs, ECOSOC's contributions should be strengthened to have more meaning.

## 7. Emerging and frontier issues

The General Assembly emphasized in resolution 68/1 that the Council “needed a strengthened issues-based approach to enhance its lead role in identifying emerging challenges and promoting reflection, debate and innovative thinking, as well as in achieving a balanced integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development. In addition to its focus on its main theme, the Council analyzes and discusses frontier issues that warrant a global response.

*Options suggested thus far:*

- ECOSOC’s engagement on emerging and frontier issues should be increased, and ECOSOC should take an action-oriented approach and establish possible follow-up mechanisms. ECOSOC’s role is in supporting developing countries’ implementation of the 2030 Agenda through capacity building and improving access to new technologies.
- It would be important to ensure that ECOSOC added value and produced results on emerging and frontier issues, and stressed avoiding overlaps with other fora.
- ECOSOC should address frontier issues, yet they should be addressed in the existing ECOSOC segments and forums and not lead to a proliferation of meetings. The role of the Multi-Stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation in addressing these issues is significant.
- Emerging issues could be addressed in an ad hoc fashion, incorporated into the regular meetings.
- The whole UN system should identify emerging issues, which should be addressed in all segments as a cross-cutting issue, without convening extra meetings

## 8. Stakeholder engagement

Resolution 68/1 emphasized the important role that the Economic and Social Council plays as a platform for multi-stakeholder participation and for engaging all relevant stakeholders in the work of the Council, particularly with respect to its integration function and contribution to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The resolution mandated ECOSOC to strengthen the active participation of major groups, non-governmental organizations and other relevant stakeholders. Resolution 68/1 also stressed that ECOSOC should further promote the integration of youth into its deliberations, building on the past positive experiences of the informal youth forums, and that the Council should also continue with the informal partnership forums.

*Options suggested thus far:*

- The modalities of stakeholder participation as outlined in the 68/1 resolution remain valid for ECOSOC offering a platform for civil society engagement. At the same time, the intergovernmental nature of ECOSOC must be underscored, as well as the importance of working under the established parameters of civil society participation, notably the non-objection basis, and respect for the terms of

reference for participation. Efforts to strengthen stakeholder participation should not divert or undermine relevant existing rules. Participation also needs to be streamlined.

- The engagement of stakeholders is crucial throughout the ECOSOC cycle and for strengthening partnerships. A review of the functions of the NGO Committee should be conducted and its working methods improved. The modalities of stakeholder engagement in the HLPF could serve as a model.
- The Partnership forum could more effectively use the presence of the wide range of its participants; currently they attend for one day and then leave. The Partnership forum also lacks the necessary attention.

## 9. Coordination and management

Resolution 68/1 created dedicated Coordination and Management Meetings (CMMs) to effectively carry out its coordination and management functions.

There are some 30 UN bodies that have a direct reporting relationship to the Council: eight functional commissions, five regional commissions, three standing committees, one ad hoc body, eight expert bodies and four related bodies. ECOSOC also reviews the work of another 14 standing bodies that report formally to the GA.

Resolution 68/1 also called for a closer engagement between the work of ECOSOC and its system to maximize the benefit of the substantive work of its subsidiary machinery. The resolution mandates that the adoption of the Council's annual main theme be decided based on inputs from the subsidiary bodies, as well as from Member States.

The resolution also called upon ECOSOC and its system to harmonize their respective work programmes and consider changes to their methods of work, reporting and timing of sessions. This was intended to facilitate consideration of substantive changes to their work programmes, if required, as well as of meaningful ways to contribute to the High-Level Segment and the High-Level Political Forum under the auspices of ECOSOC.

The timing of the CMMs need to consider the calendar of meetings of the subsidiary and related bodies as well as the timing of the issuance of the reports of these bodies for consideration by ECOSOC.

### *Options suggested thus far:*

- There is a need to adhere to the mandate provided by resolution 68/1 on the functions of the Coordination and Management Meetings (CMMs). The CMM should be utilized as a platform to provide meaningful discussions and thorough consideration of issues concerning countries in special situations.
- These should be fewer CMM meetings.
- One CMM on procedural matters could be convened back-to-back with the HLPF.
- Two CMMs could be convened per cycle, focusing on procedural matters.

## 10. ECOSOC subsidiary bodies and support

In resolution 68/1, the General Assembly sought the establishment of a more coherent and integrated ECOSOC system, where all components of the Council—and its annual cycle—are complementary and deliver results “greater than the sum of its parts”. The resolution reflected Member States’ awareness of the need for ECOSOC to improve the use of its entire analytical reserves and intergovernmental architecture to support the implementation, follow-up and review of the new sustainable development agenda. A key priority has been improving the complementarity and effectiveness within the ECOSOC system, drawing on the different strengths of each subsidiary body. However, historically, ECOSOC had operated in a highly decentralized manner where the Council largely took note of decisions made by its subsidiary bodies.

There have been some concerns that the contributions of the Council’s various subsidiary bodies are sometimes limited by a range of factors – distinct working methods, agendas and calendar sequencing, among others – in contributing to the Council’s work in keeping with the agreed theme. However, with sufficient notice and a multi-year perspective in choosing themes, the ECOSOC system could be better positioned to adjust their work, to support and enrich the Council’s work.

*Options suggested thus far:*

- There could be more effective integration of the subsidiary bodies work into the work of ECOSOC and greater integration of their policy recommendations into the HLPF.
- There could be a discussion on the operation and functionality of ECOSOC subsidiary bodies, with a view to reducing duplication in mandates and improving efficiency.
  - This discussion should not only focus on where improvements can be made but should consider the specific attributes of the respective subsidiary bodies of ECOSOC and the unique value each brings to bear with respect to guidance and recommendations for the 2030 Agenda, whether, for example, as an intergovernmental space, a more independent, expert-led body, or an enhanced multi-stakeholder platform.
  - Additionally, it could discuss how each forum can maximize its impact and relevance of the policy guidance it produces. Whether it is the Ministerial Declaration or the agreed conclusions, decisions and resolutions resulting from the ECOSOC system’s various deliberations, the Council could improve the impact of its overall policy dialogue and recommendations.
- Subsidiary bodies could be encouraged to hold discussions on their methods of work with the aim of delivering on the 2030 Agenda, as well as how they can best contribute to the work of the Council more broadly, such as through developing multi-year programmes of work that consider the future themes of ECOSOC.

- The review of 68/1 is the opportunity to strengthen ECOSOC's oversight over its system, including the regional commissions. There is a need to further strengthen the ECOSOC system to make its contributions and recommendations more effective and action-oriented. ECOSOC should also ensure that its system complies with the QCPR mandates.
- There is a need to better integrate the policy recommendations of the ECOSOC system's work, notably to inform the deliberations on the Ministerial Declaration.
- There is also a need to improve the value-added and efficiency of the functional commissions. The functional commissions and expert bodies have lost some of their relevance and could benefit from a review of their methods of work in support of the 2030 Agenda.
- Consideration could be given to whether it is necessary to have all of the current subsidiary bodies, and instead consider whether perhaps some may be merged. There should be sufficient time allotted to meaningful and engaging consideration of their reports in ECOSOC.
- Avenues should be explored to upgrade the level of cooperation on tax cooperation at the United Nations through the Special Meeting of the Council on International Cooperation in Tax Matters.
- DESA reform should be addressed in the UNDS reform process, while there should also be an update during the review of 68/1.

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