



## MAJOR GROUPS & OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

### **Major Groups and Other Stakeholders Written Submission to:**

#### **Review of implementation of arrangements contained in General Assembly resolutions 75/290A and 75/290B and their annexes on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council and the review of the high-level political forum on sustainable development.**

8 march 2024

The 'Major Groups and Other Stakeholders' include 21 diverse stakeholder constituencies that are an integral part of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals as enshrined in the UNGA Resolution 67/290. The MGOS acknowledges receipt of the draft elements paper, recognizing the utility of the elements of paper as a basis for the continuing informal consultations on a zero-draft.

We strongly emphasize the critical importance of stakeholder engagement and participation in ECOSOC related activities, which contribute to better informed decision-making and greater development outcomes.

We now have the opportunity to increase multi-stakeholder participation and inclusion while implementing the needed substantive and procedural changes to strengthen the HLPF. We urge the Co-Facilitators and all Member States to be more ambitious than ever to ensure effective impact assessment and delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals.

#### **General Comments:**

- It is imperative to highlight previous agreements and prompt inquiry into forthcoming recommendations. Despite the submission of background documents and information briefs by DESA for this review, there appears to be a lack of an "assessment" regarding the implementation of Resolutions 75/290 A and B. Questions regarding the level of implementation, effectiveness, successful strategies, deficiencies, and necessary adjustments remain unaddressed. It is essential to conduct an analysis of past recommendations' implementation to inform the formulation of new ones. The forthcoming review should yield recommendations that enhance the operational efficiency of ECOSOC and HLPF without redundancy or ambiguity. Recommendations should be specific and actionable.
- Despite DESA's submission of background documents and information briefs for this review, there seems to be a lack of assessment and analysis regarding past recommendations for implementing Resolutions 75/290 A and B. The level of implementation, effectiveness, successful strategies, deficiencies, and necessary



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adjustments remain unaddressed. Consequently, how will Member States formulate new recommendations to enhance the operational efficiency of ECOSOC and HLPF without redundancy or ambiguity, ensuring specificity and actionability?

- While an assessment/analysis of the implementation of recommendations in Resolution 75/290 A and B, including the follow-up and operationalization of ministerial and political declarations seems absent, the question arises: how will Member States formulate new recommendations for adoption by ECOSOC, the HLPF, and the Secretariat?
- Insufficient attention is paid to the annual report on the synthesis of submissions by functional commissions of the ECOSOC and other intergovernmental bodies and forums. What measures are envisioned to "better leverage the inputs" of ECOSOC functional commissions, regional commissions, and other subsidiary bodies? The same holds true for reports from regional fora preceding the HLPF, or any of the other 10 reports submitted to the HLPF annually. Despite an average of 20 reports submitted to the HLPF each year, references to them and their recommendations are scant in the HLPF or Ministerial Declarations.
- We emphasize the importance of MGOS's annual report on discussion papers, which often receives insufficient attention. Member States consistently highlight the crucial collaboration with the private sector and civil society, recognizing their essential role. NGOs have historically filled critical gaps, particularly in reaching marginalized communities during crises. Their efforts in addressing famine, health emergencies, and conflicts highlight their vital role in promoting peaceful societies. Despite limited resources, NGOs have been steadfast in combating discrimination and providing essential services. We fully support implementing previous GA resolutions to strengthen MGOS's contributions.
- Reports from regional fora prior to the HLPF and other submissions to the HLPF are overlooked, with minimal references to their recommendations in HLPF or Ministerial Declarations. These reports and the outcome of the Regional Fora must be integrated into the HLPF.
- Given the current liquidity crisis within the Secretariat, Member States should scrutinise the feasibility of implementing effective reform and organisational strategies within ECOSOC, HLPF, and the Secretariat. Encouraging Member States to meet their financial obligations as per the Financial Regulations may seem challenging, but it remains a necessary pursuit amid constraints posed by physical and virtual meeting restrictions.

### **We suggest the following for the HLPF on VNR processes:**

- Encourage each country to submit two VNRs by 2030, and for those already with two, to submit at least one more following up on the recommendations received during previous reviews, with a special focus on civil society/shadow reports.
- Improve the quality and structure of VNRs with evidence-based analysis and disaggregated data for a comprehensive assessment of leaving no one behind. Advocate for a reconsideration of the presentation structure of VNRs, allocating more



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time for each review. Moreover, beyond goals under review, the countries should also report on goals where the progress is concerning, in specific country contexts.

- Advocate for enhanced engagement and preparation for VNR processes at regional and sub-regional levels, modeled after UN ESCAP, integrating interactive VNR sessions into regional and sub-regional platforms for stakeholders to effectively engage in the process and contribute. Support stronger post-VNR follow-up, including national dialogues to advance and enhance SDG delivery. Call for a national plan with practical next steps for implementation agreed upon by the government.
- Parallel and shadow reports should be officially recognized by the HLPF and prominently published and easily accessible on the official UN website. Additionally, these reports should be discussed during Voluntary National Review (VNR) presentations or special side events, providing a platform for alternative perspectives and enhancing transparency and accountability in the review process.
- Adopting a "whole of society" approach to VNRs and incorporating written inputs from all stakeholders, including MGOS contributions, is critical for a comprehensive understanding of achievements and challenges, promoting transparency, ownership, and accountability, and enriching the review process.
- Despite SDG 17's consistent review, there is little to no progress on compliance of ODA commitments, Sovereign debt cancellations, Trade reforms such as abolition of ISDS, or Technology facilitation mechanism. Parallel with the goal's review in the global context, this needs to be highlighted especially in donor country reviews to also ensure that ODA does not mean in-donor refugee costs, is not substituted with climate financing, and must not be based on trade, military and political objectives of donor countries.
- This also requires a thorough review and accountability of multilateral institutions/entities such as IMF, WB and WTO role in pushing regressive measures that contravene sustainable development priorities.

### **Specific Comments on:**

#### ***Identifying gaps in implementation***

We concur with the identified gaps, especially concerning civil society engagement in ECOSOC meetings. This inclusivity must be extended to academia as well. Additionally, efforts to enhance active and meaningful youth participation should be paralleled with similar opportunities for other stakeholders.

Asia Pacific region has achieved only 17% progress by the mid-point of the 2030 Agenda and is projected to achieve the SDGs by 2062 at the earliest, while the projection is based on 52% of the available data. Such projections need to be collated at the global level as well to understand the intricacies and nuances in specific goals' achievement across national, regional and global tiers.



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### ***Efficiency and revitalising***

Bolstering the efficiency of bodies like ECOSOC should not come at the cost of diminishing the participation of NGOs with consultative status.

### ***Engagement and participation***

It is crucial to ensure the inclusion of all stakeholders, utilising the full potential of the NGO consultative relationship, especially during preparatory phases, where CSOs and other stakeholders can significantly contribute with evidence-based inputs.

### ***Alignment between the Council and the ECOSOC system***

(Bullet 1) Discussions and decisions across all ECOSOC segments, forums, functional commissions, and other subsidiary bodies, must guarantee continuous involvement of civil society and other stakeholders.

(Bullet 4) Efforts toward revitalizing certain ECOSOC subsidiary bodies, including reviewing and updating their working methods and functions, should incorporate an evaluation of the implementation of ECOSOC resolution 1996/31.

### ***On the interlinkages and alignment of ECOSOC with other UN bodies***

(Bullet 1) Emphasise ECOSOC's role in fostering enhanced cooperation and complementarity with other UN bodies, particularly concerning social issues and other specified areas.

### **Review of HLPF**

#### ***In deepening the effectiveness of the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs:***

(Bullet 1) Ensure that ministerial-level participation is complemented with high-level involvement of other stakeholders.

### ***HLPF Programme***

(Bullet 1) We endorse increasing attention to systematic barriers hindering the achievement of the SDGs and ensuring that no one is left behind.

(Bullet 3) We agree with leveraging ECOSOC functional commissions, regional commissions, etc., to contribute to thematic reviews.



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(Bullet 5 & 6) We strongly support the full implementation of provisions outlined in previous GA resolutions to strengthen the contributions of the Major Groups and Other Stakeholders regarding thematic reviews and VNRs, while maintaining the intergovernmental nature of the forum.

We look forward to collaborating with Co-facilitators and ECOSOC members toward this end. Additionally, we advocate for facilitating ongoing dialogues among governments, civil society, and other stakeholders to promote collaboration and share best practices, reinforcing the implementation of sustainable policies.

### ANNEX

We recall attention to the MGOS CM submission prior to the draft of the Elements Paper, outlining key considerations in the review of ECOSOC and HLPF.

#### **1. GA resolution 75/290 A: ECOSOC (Annex paragraphs for action). Recommendations for ECOSOC refer to substantive and organizational/procedural issues**

Paragraph	Recommendation	Comments
1 and 2	General recommendations for enhancement of ECOSOC's role in implementation of SDGs	Substantive and organizational
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Continue with one main theme for ECOSOC and HLPF</li><li>- Continue adoption of themes of humanitarian affairs segment in line with main ECOSOC theme</li><li>- Subsidiary bodies will decide own themes, aligned with main theme</li></ul>	Substantive
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Provide integrated policy guidance to implementation of:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(a) Ministerial Declaration</li><li>(b) lessons learned from VNRs.</li></ul></li><li>- SG report to ECOSOC on lessons learned from VNRs with recommendations for follow-up by countries, segments and forums of ECOSOC</li><li>- Focus on the poorest and most vulnerable</li></ul>	Substantive
5	ECOSOC and SG should address special challenges facing the most vulnerable countries	Substantive



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6	ECOSOC to run from July to July and structured into four groups	Organizational
7	<b>First group</b> (Partnership Forum and Coordination segment) – to be held in February	Organizational
8	<b>Second group</b> (ECOSOC forums – FFD, STI, Youth) – held annually. Development Cooperation Forum every 2 years before FFD.	Organizational
9	<b>Third group</b> – segments on UN development system and other actors to implement 2030 Agenda (operational activities for development, humanitarian affairs, meeting on transition from relief to development)	Organizational
10	<b>Fourth group</b> - segments and forums that provide overall policy guidance for 2030 Agenda (HLPF and high-level segment of ECOSOC).	Organizational
11	Special sessions to address urgent development in economic, social, environmental and related fields, ad hoc meetings on humanitarian assistance	Substantive and organizational
12	Platform of inclusiveness, transparency and flexibility; avoiding duplication and overlap	Organizational
13	Goal is to eradication of poverty and <b>mainstream a gender perspective</b> across its agenda, work programme, meetings and documentation.	Substantive
14	Early circulation of programme of work for consultation and participation within UN working hours	Substantive and organizational
15	<b>Partnership Forum</b> to meet for 1 day by early February, back to back with the Coordination Segment - engaging countries, the UN system, international financial institutions, international organizations, parliamentarians, local governments, <b>NGOs</b> , private sector, <b>civil society scientists, academia, women, youth and other stakeholders</b> . Partnership Forum will be organized in consultation with stakeholders and will focus on exchange of new ideas, expectations and priorities and discuss forward-looking actions by countries and <b>all relevant stakeholders</b> as well as innovative partnerships to advance 2030 Agenda.	Organizational
16	<b>Coordination Segment</b> will replace Integration Segment and the informal meeting of the Council with Chairs of subsidiary bodies and will be held annually for up to two days by early February, before the first session of a subsidiary body of the Council – address coordination matters arising from subsidiary bodies, principal organs and specialized agencies in economic, social, environmental and	Organizational



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	related fields, leading up to the HLPF and provide policy guidance to ensure coherence.	
17	<b>Coordination Segment</b> will formulate common action-oriented policy guidance for (i) functional and regional commissions and other subsidiary bodies; and (ii) by the UN system, including guidance on implementation of the ministerial declaration, avoiding overlap.	Substantive
18	<b>Coordination Segment</b> will examine key policy issues, lessons learned, best practices and recommendations from ECOSOC subsidiary bodies and regional commissions; provide guidance and coordination to subsidiary bodies, and UN system <b>in implementation of the Ministerial Declaration</b> ; provide guidance on preparations for the HLPF.	Substantive and organizational
19	ECOSOC may discuss items that have been previously considered by the Management segment.	Organizational
20	Secretariat will prepare informal note for <b>Coordination Segment</b> to inform discussions.	Substantive
21	Heads of UN system entities, Chairs of subsidiary bodies and Executive Secretaries of regional commissions will be invited to participate; <b>NGOs in consultative status should -</b> and the private sector and <b>other stakeholders</b> involved in the policy and normative work of the UN system and the subsidiary bodies <b>may - be engaged</b> in the Coordination Segment, <b>while retaining the intergovernmental nature of the Council.</b>	Organizational
22	A non-negotiated factual summary will be prepared by PECOSOC in consultation with the Bureau.	Substantive
23	HLPF will continue to discharge functions provided for in GA resolutions 60/299 and 72/305	Substantive and organizational
24	<b>Operational activities for development segment</b> will continue with its mandates	Substantive and organizational
25	One day <b>meeting on transition from relief to development</b> will be convened immediately preceding <b>the humanitarian affairs segment</b> and will replace the special event to discuss the transition from relief to development and alternate between Geneva and New York. <b>Participation by civil society will be possible.</b>	Substantive and organizational
26	<b>Humanitarian Affairs Segment</b> will continue with its mandates	Substantive
27	<b>Management Segment</b> will continue (focus on adoption of procedural decisions, consideration of recommendations of subsidiary bodies, as well as the introduction of reports and	Substantive and organizational



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	consideration of draft proposals submitted under relevant agenda items).	
28	<b>Management Segment</b> , meeting in June, will discuss key messages from subsidiary bodies of ECOSOC and UN system on recommendations to feed into HLPF, informed by existing report of SG (E/HLPF/year/4)	Substantive and organizational
29	SG will submit annual report of UN Chief Executives Board for Coordination to Management Segment	Organizational
30	ECOSOC may furnish information to the <b>Security Council</b> .	Substantive and organizational
31	ECOSOC should strengthen dialogue with <b>Peacebuilding Commission</b> ; convene annual joint meetings.	Substantive and organizational
32	ECOSOC should strengthen its oversight, guidance and coordination role of its subsidiary bodies.	Substantive and organizational
33	President and Bureau of ECOSOC are invited to work with the bureau of subsidiary bodies and in consultation with delegations during the 2022 session of the Council.	Organizational
34	Engagement of civil society and relevant stakeholders should continue to be arranged.	Organizational
35	“While retaining its intergovernmental nature”, ECOSOC should seek to promote active participation of international and regional organizations, members of parliaments, academia, scientists, Non-governmental organizations, local governments, the private sector, women, youth <b>and major groups and other stakeholders</b> in accordance with GA resolutions 67/290 and 72/305	

### 2. GA resolution 75/290 B: HLPF (Annex paragraphs for action). Recommendations for HLPF refer to substantive and organizational/procedural issues

Paragraph	Recommendation	Actions taken
1 – 5	General principles and proceedings	Substantive and organizational
6	Strengthen peer learning and sharing of best practices and experiences relating to implementation of 2030 Agenda, on a voluntary basis, building on regional forums, VNRs and expert and other preparatory meetings	Substantive and organizational





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7	Continue to review a set of Goals and their interlinkages, including with other Goals with a view to facilitating an in-depth review of progress made on all 17 Goals over the course of its four-year cycle. Goal 17 on means of implementation shall be reviewed annually, including based on outcome of FFD follow-up.	Substantive and organizational
8	Involvement of governments, UN system, international and regional organizations, parliamentarians, local governments, women, children and youth, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, civil society, non-governmental organizations, business and the private sector, the scientific and academic community and “ <b>other major groups and relevant stakeholders</b> ”	Organizational
9	Better balance between interlinkages across Goals and targets and ensuring in-depth reviews of individual SDGs. Each year, bear in mind areas where SDGs can have the greatest and most transformative impact across multiple Goals and targets.	Substantive
10	Strengthen science-policy interface; pay attention to Global Sustainable Development report; special attention to availability of data and strengthening capabilities for data collection and analysis	Substantive
11	Decision on themes for 2022, 2023	Substantive and organizational
12	Decision on SDGs for in-depth review in 2022 and 2023	Substantive and organizational
13	In 2022 and 2023, HLPF shall pay attention to impact of COVID-19 across all SDGs	Substantive
14	In 2022 and 2023, maintain integrity of 2030 Agenda and ensure continuous action on the targets, allowing for updated targets to reflect a suitable level of ambition for 2030.	Substantive
15	In 2022 and 2023 HLPF <b>shall promote and review implementation</b> of the Political Declaration adopted at the 2019 SDG Summit, as well as ministerial declarations under auspices of ECOSOC	Substantive and organizational
16	HLPF could consider inputs from intergovernmental bodies and forums, findings, research, data and recommendations from UN system, expert preparatory process and expert and scientific sources such as the Global Sustainable Development report and the	Substantive



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	Technology Facilitation Mechanism that strengthen the science-policy interface.	
17	HLPF shall dedicate adequate time to review progress in countries in special situations(Africa, LDCs, LLDCs, SIDS, countries in conflict and post- conflict situations.	Organizational
18	Bearing in mind voluntary and country-led nature of VNRs, countries “may wish to” share best practices and experiences, successes, challenges, gaps and lessons learned, as well as next steps, informing the SDG Moment in September.	Substantive and organizational
19	Countries are encouraged to conduct a review once during the four-year cycle.	Organizational -which countries have not?
20	ECOSOC should allocate as much time as possible to the VNRs. Participation of <b>major groups and other relevant stakeholders in discuss of VNRs should continue to be ensured as mandated in resolution 67/290 and the 2030 Agenda.”</b> Countries conducting VNRs should be given priority for organizing forum side events.	Organizational
21	VNRs should be State-led, and provide a platform for partnerships, including through the participation of <b>major groups and other relevant stakeholders</b> . Role of parliaments acknowledged.	Organizational
22	Countries encouraged to strengthen evidence, science, evaluation and data basis for VNRs	Substantive
23	Countries should use SG’s reporting guidelines for VNRs, which should be updated.	Substantive
24	Countries should participate in preparatory processes for VNRs	Organizational
25	UN system and other international and regional organizations and other stakeholders are invited to provide support to countries preparing their VNRs	Substantive and organizational
26	The UN system and other organizations and stakeholders should support countries in follow-up to VNRs	Substantive and organizational
27	VNRs should be used to raise awareness about the SDGs	Organizational
28	Role of regional forums in supporting preparation and follow-up of VNRs	Organizational
29	HLPF should continue to strengthen the attention given to outcomes of regional forums.	Organizational



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30	HLPF should continue to strengthen attention to efforts to bolster local action	Organizational
31	HLPF should be informed by SG annual progress report which should include information on data gaps and how best to address them. GSDR to be presented every 4 years. ECOSOC should invite scientists preparing the GSDR to participate in the HLPF, including to discuss new and emerging issues. GSDR should be available in March to inform intergovernmental negotiations on the political declaration at the SDG Summit.	Substantive and organizational
32	Functional commissions should provide inputs on progress. All relevant stakeholders should be engaged.	Substantive and organizational
33	Ministerial Declaration should be concise, focused, action-oriented and forward-looking, outlining priority areas for accelerated action. Only one declaration when SDG summit takes place.	Substantive
34	HLPF under auspices of the GA shall begin on the first day of the general debate or the Monday before the opening of the general debate. SDG moment (held under auspices of the GA) should highlight inspiring action on the SDGs	Organizational
35	Reaffirming participation of <b>major groups and other relevant stakeholders</b> . Countries could consider including major groups and other relevant stakeholders in their delegations at the forum.	Organizational
36	Major groups and other relevant stakeholders are called upon to report on activities pursuant to para. 89 of 2030 Agenda, and Secretariat shall continue to compile and make available the documents from major groups and other relevant stakeholders, as provided for in paragraph 15(d) of 67/290.	Substantive

### Resolutions cited in A/RES/75/290 A and B with specific references to “major groups and other stakeholders”:

- A/RES/72/305 on Review of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 68/1 on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council, adopted on 23 July 2018 (paras. 20 and 21).



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- A/RES/70/299 on follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the global level, adopted on 29 July 2016 (para.12).
- A/RES/70/1 on Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted on 25 September 2015 (paras. 84 and 89).
- A/RES/68/1 on review of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 61/16 on the strengthening of the economic and Social Council (para. 23 – “major groups” only).
- A/RES/67/290 on format and organizational aspects of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, adopted on 9 July 2013 (paras. 14, 15 and 15).