



**The President  
of the  
Economic and Social Council**

22 June 2020

Excellency,

As you are aware, the United Nations high-level political forum on sustainable development (HLPF) will take place under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) from 7 to 16 July 2020, with a ministerial segment from 14 to 16 July. The high-level segment of ECOSOC, including the three-day ministerial segment of the HLPF, will be held from 14 to 17 July.

I would like to reiterate the importance of the HLPF in the situation we are facing with the COVID-19 pandemic. It is a key platform where we can discuss how to address the impacts of the pandemic and move forward in a better way, so as to get back on track to accelerate progress towards the SDGs during the decade of action and delivery. The HLPF will be a moment to demonstrate our commitment to a multilateral response and to give political guidance through the Ministerial Declaration.

As you have heard in my briefing on 11 June 2020, in light of the limitations imposed by the pandemic on in-person meetings and international travel, I have made adjustments to the working hours of the 2020 HLPF to accommodate different time zones for countries. I also adjusted the substantive focus of some sessions to reflect the impact of the pandemic on the achievement of the SDGs. I am attaching herewith the revised programme and annotated agenda of the 2020 HLPF and the High-level Segment of ECOSOC 2020 reflecting those changes. The revised programme is not setting a precedent for future forums, but reflects the special circumstances under which we are working this year.

The final format of the forum will follow the guidance of the UN Medical Director, who recommends “that in-person meetings should continue to be avoided when possible” also for July 2020. We are therefore planning for a fully virtual HLPF. The recent operational activities and humanitarian affairs segments of ECOSOC showed that it is possible for virtual meetings to be inspiring, interactive and focused, and I am sure this would be the case for the HLPF.

I made sure the programme gives time to the 47 voluntary national reviews (VNRs), in line with previous years. The sessions on the VNRs will include a combination of live presentations and discussions, and pre-recorded video presentations with written or interactive questions and answers. In preparation for the session, it would be important for delegations to examine the main messages from the countries presenting VNRs which are already available (on [https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/26196Compilation\\_Main\\_Messages\\_VNRs.pdf](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/26196Compilation_Main_Messages_VNRs.pdf)). The full reports on the VNRs are also becoming available. I encourage your country to join the “group of friends of VNRs” chaired by Ambassador Juan Sandoval-Mendiolea, Deputy Permanent Representative of Mexico, in order to support VNR countries in preparing their presentation and interaction at the HLPF. All queries can be sent to the Permanent Mission of Mexico ([2conul@sre.gob.mx](mailto:2conul@sre.gob.mx)).

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

Several thematic sessions of the HLPF are currently being prepared through virtual expert meetings and consultations led by DESA and UN system entities. The key findings and recommendations will be reflected in DESA's background note and material for each session. I have also issued a call for submissions to the session on science, technology and innovation which can be made through the website of the Technology Facilitation Mechanism.

Interventions from the floor are encouraged in all sessions. In order to have an interaction and hear as many speakers as possible, these interventions will be limited to two minutes per delegation and stakeholders taking the floor. The discussions will be interactive in nature and there will be no pre-established list of speakers.

The High-Level Segment of ECOSOC, including the ministerial segment of HPLF, will take place from Tuesday, 14 July to Friday, 17 July 2020. On 17 July, ECOSOC will hold a dedicated high-level discussion amongst leaders focusing on "Multilateralism after COVID-19: what kind of UN do we need at the 75th anniversary", as a substantive contribution by the Council to the 75th anniversary commemoration of the United Nations. The session will reflect on the kind of multilateralism needed today and in the future to deliver an effective collective response to global crises and long term development challenges. It will consider concrete steps the international community could take, including through ECOSOC, to enhance global solidarity and international cooperation in response to the COVID-19 pandemic as well as long-term challenges such as climate change, while accelerating progress towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. In addition, the Council will hold a session on scenarios and long-term trends for SDG implementation.

Let me also inform you that the general debate this year will be conducted through written general statements. Please kindly send those to the Secretariat so that they can be posted on the HLPF website and in e-deleGATE (to: Yasmine Laabas, [laabas@un.org](mailto:laabas@un.org)). In addition, a video recording of the statement may also be submitted to be posted on the HLPF website. The limit for these interventions is 6 minutes for groups and 4 minutes for individual countries and stakeholders.

All special events and side events as well as the VNR Labs will be virtual. More details about all events will be made available on the HLPF website (<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/2020>).

Major groups and other stakeholders including civil society will participate in this year's HLPF under similar arrangements as in previous forums, bearing in mind the special procedures linked to virtual meetings.

I would like to invite you to use the opportunity of the HLPF to continue to announce new SDG acceleration actions or initiatives that your government may be undertaking in line with the decade of action and delivery for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and to showcase these using the dedicated online platform that was created on the occasion of the 2019 SDG Summit (<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgactions>)

To help you prepare for the HLPF, I would like to encourage you to start looking at the Secretary-General's [SDG progress report](#). I would also like to draw your attention to the [Secretary-General's report synthesizing the numerous inputs](#) that have been provided to the HLPF by various intergovernmental bodies and international organizations, also available from the same webpage.

We will share shortly a note on practical arrangements for the HLPF and high-level segment of ECOSOC. Information on logistics including on how to register a limited number of delegates to access the

virtual platform will be circulated in the note. You may already submit the composition of your delegation through the e-List of Participants module in the [e-deleGATE portal](#) (see ECOSOC/ECOSOC meetings/segments/forums/e-List of Participants - this submission is separate and distinct from the registration process to access the virtual platform).

I thank you for your continued support and engagement in the HLPF.

I believe that with the current spirit of unity, solidarity and multilateral cooperation, we will have a successful 2020 HLPF and a strong start of the decade of action and delivery for advancing the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs while combating the pandemic.

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

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Mona Juul". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Mona" and the last name "Juul" clearly distinguishable.

Mona Juul  
President of ECOSOC