



COMMISSION for SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

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United Nations Headquarters, New York



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Inputs of the Commission for Social Development to the 2023 HLPF under the auspices of ECOSOC, the theme of which is “Accelerating the recovery from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at all levels”

These inputs are based on the outcomes of the 61st session of the Commission for Social Development, which took place on 6-15 February 2023. Paragraphs were drawn from the following resolutions, which were all adopted by consensus during that session: Resolution on the priority theme “Creating full and productive employment and decent work for all as a way of overcoming inequalities to accelerate the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”; Resolution on the “Social dimensions of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development”; Resolution on “Policies and programmes involving youth”; and Resolution on the “Fourth review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002”.

The inputs are organized using the suggested template contained in the letter of the President of ECOSOC of 10 November 2022 addressed to the Chair of the Commission.

Overview

The 61st session of the Commission for Social Development took place on 6-15 February 2023 and deliberated on the priority theme ***“Creating full and productive employment and decent work for all as a way of overcoming inequalities to accelerate the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”***.

The Commission also reviewed relevant United Nations plans and programmes of action pertaining to the situation of social groups as well as the social dimensions of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development. The Commission convened five panel discussions: one on the priority theme, a Ministerial Forum on the priority theme, a high-level panel discussion on the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA), a panel discussion on the Emerging Issue “Addressing the social impacts of multi-faceted crises to accelerate recovery from the lingering effects of the pandemic through the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, an interactive dialogue with senior officials of the United Nations system on the priority theme, and a multi-stakeholder forum on the priority theme. A total of 26 Ministers and four Vice-Ministers participated in the general discussion of the Commission.

The Commission adopted by consensus five draft resolutions on (a) Future organization and methods of work of the Commission for Social Development; (b) Social dimensions of the New Partnership for Africa's Development; (c) Priority theme (PT) "Creating full and productive employment and decent work for all as a way of overcoming inequalities to accelerate the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development"; (d) Fourth review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002, and (e) Policies and programmes involving youth.

(a) Progress, experience, lessons learned, challenges and impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the implementation of SDGs 6, 7, 9, 11 and 17 from the vantage point of your intergovernmental body, bearing in mind the three dimensions of sustainable development and the interlinkages across the SDGs and targets, including policy implications of their synergies and trade-offs

- The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is reversing hard-won development gains and hampering progress towards achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and all its Goals and targets. The pandemic has slowed down the progress in achieving many of the Goals by 2030. The COVID-19 pandemic requires a global response based on unity, solidarity and multilateral cooperation.
- Population ageing is one of the major trends that are likely to shape the prospects for achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and all of the Sustainable Development Goals. Implementing the priority directions and recommendations for action of the Madrid Plan of Action and the relevant regional implementation strategies are now more vital than ever to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and contribute to efforts to leave no one behind, particularly older persons.

SDG 6 Clean water and sanitation

- The lack of access to safe drinking water and proper sanitation contributes to slow progress in reducing Africa's disease burden, particularly among the poorest populations, in both rural and urban areas, and conscious of the impact of the lack of sanitation on people's health, poverty reduction efforts, economic and social development and the environment, in particular water resources.

SDG 17 Partnerships for the goals

- Strengthening international cooperation is needed to provide necessary financial assistance, technical support and capacity-building to developing countries for attaining Sustainable Development Goals related to social development.
- International cooperation has an essential role in assisting developing countries, including highly indebted poor countries, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing Member States and middle-income countries, in strengthening their human, institutional and technological capacity.
- Official development assistance plays an essential role in complementing, leveraging and sustaining financing for development efforts in developing countries and in facilitating the achievement of development objectives, including the internationally agreed development goals, in particular the Sustainable Development Goals.
- Facilitating international cooperation to create full and productive employment and decent work for all is a way of overcoming inequalities to accelerate the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development for the common future of present and coming generations.
- The implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth and the achievement of all of the internationally agreed development goals, in particular the Sustainable Development Goals, require the full and effective participation of youth, youth-led and youth-focused organizations and other civil society organizations at the local, national, regional and international levels.

(b) Three key areas where transformative actions for accelerated progress have been successful, and three key areas where support is most urgently needed, with regard to the cluster of SDGs under review in July 2023

- Sustainable social protection systems play a vital role in the COVID-19 pandemic response. Member States are encouraged to ensure that recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic provides a policy window for the countries concerned to address their significant gaps in social protection coverage by making progress towards universal, adequate, comprehensive and sustainable social protection systems.

(c) Examples of specific actions taken to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic that also accelerate progress towards multiple SDG targets, including actions identified by your intergovernmental body, building on interlinkages and transformative pathways for achieving SDGs

- The Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa 2024 aims to have an impact across critical sectors such as agriculture, energy, environment, health, infrastructure development, mining, security and water.

(d) Assessment of the situation in the mid-point of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, against the background of the COVID-19 pandemic and within the respective areas addressed by your intergovernmental body, and policy recommendations, commitments and cooperation measures for promoting a sustainable, resilient and inclusive recovery from the pandemic while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda

- At this critical moment in the decade of action to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, the visions, principles and commitments made at the World Summit for Social Development remain valid and are central to addressing emerging global challenges. Social policies have a key role to play in addressing the immediate effects of socioeconomic crises and in the design of recovery strategies.
- Recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic gives additional opportunity to develop integrated long-term policy frameworks to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.
- Member States are encouraged to promote affordable and equitable access to information and communications technology and infrastructure, through advancing gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.
- Member States are encouraged to address underlying causes of inequality by promoting a sustainable economy for the well-being of all, investing in programmes for poverty eradication, as well as in the promotion of equitable and universal access to basic services and in quality and resilient infrastructure, including health-care services; education infrastructure; safe drinking water and sanitation; affordable housing; affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy services; sustainable transport systems; and affordable access to the Internet and connectivity, including by working to ensure that service delivery is aimed at progressively reaching universal access, with particular attention given to the needs of those in vulnerable situations.
- Member States are encouraged to develop long-term, risk-informed, inclusive and prevention-oriented social development recovery plans that will improve people's capacities and well-being, through investing in social services and quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure, including basic school infrastructure, and health-care services, safe drinking water and sanitation, affordable housing, ensuring decent employment, adequate social protection coverage and affordable and reliable digital technology, Internet access and connectivity.

- Developed countries are encouraged to implement their official development assistance commitments, including the commitment by many developed countries to achieve the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national income for official development assistance to developing countries and 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of gross national income for official development assistance to the least developed countries.
- The international community is encouraged to intensify development cooperation, including through South-South, North-South and triangular cooperation, as well as multi-stakeholder partnerships, to support countries, especially developing countries, upon their request, in building their national capacity for science, technology and innovation for social development, as well as to support research networks that reach across borders, institutions and disciplines.
- The international community is called upon to strengthen multilateral cooperation, by mobilizing resources for an inclusive recovery and making use of special drawing rights and its voluntary channelling allocation to countries most in need. Playing an important role, the United Nations and the international financial institutions, in accordance with their respective mandates, are encouraged to continue to support global efforts towards sustained and inclusive growth, sustainable development and the external debt sustainability of developing countries.
- The United Nations system is requested to continue to support Member States, upon their request, in their pursuit of inclusive and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic for sustainable livelihoods, well-being and dignity for all, and facilitate international cooperation to create full and productive employment and decent work for all as a way of overcoming inequalities to accelerate the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development for the common future of present and coming generations.
- Development partners are invited to continue to assist African countries in their efforts to strengthen national health systems, including by providing skilled health personnel, reliable health information and data, research infrastructure and laboratory capacity.
- Member States are encouraged to continue to provide international cooperation and capacity-building support to developing countries, particularly African countries, in water- and sanitation-related activities and programmes, including water harvesting, desalination, water efficiency, wastewater treatment, recycling and reuse technologies.
- While social development is primarily the responsibility of Governments, international cooperation and assistance are essential for the full achievement of that goal. The international community is called upon to continue to support the resolution of challenges faced by developing countries, especially the least developed countries, including in Africa, to independently achieving sustainable development. The international community, including the international financial institutions, is encouraged to support the efforts of African countries, including through trilateral cooperation.

(e) Key messages for inclusion into the Political Declaration of the September 2023 SDG Summit
(based on sections above and resolution on youth)

- **Encourages Member States to invest** in programmes for poverty eradication, as well as **in the promotion of equitable and universal access to basic services and in quality and resilient infrastructure**, including health-care services; education infrastructure; safe drinking water and sanitation; affordable housing; affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy services; sustainable transport systems; and affordable access to the Internet and connectivity, with particular attention given to the needs of those in vulnerable situations;

- **Encourages Member States to develop long-term, risk-informed, inclusive and prevention-oriented social development recovery plans** that will improve people’s capacities and well-being, including through ensuring decent employment and adequate social protection coverage..
- **Encourages Member States to ensure that recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic provides a policy window for the countries concerned to address their significant gaps in social protection coverage by making progress towards universal, adequate, comprehensive and sustainable social protection systems**, by including, in accordance with their national legislations, basic income, child benefits, maternity benefits, sickness benefits, disability benefits, unemployment benefits and old-age pension, and that these social protection systems should identify and close coverage gaps, especially for those who are in vulnerable situations, including informal workers, migrants and unpaid care-givers.
- **Encourages the international community**, including the international financial institutions, to continue **to support** the resolution of challenges faced by developing countries, especially **the least developed countries, including in Africa**, to independently achieve sustainable development.
- **Encourages Member States to strengthen further the implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action** and use it as a tool for building an inclusive society with intergenerational solidarity in which **older persons participate fully** and without any kind of discrimination and on the basis of equality in the implementation and attainment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals.
- **Urges Member States to ensure that youth issues are adequately addressed** in the implementation, follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in consultation with and actively involving youth and youth-led and youth-focused organizations in its implementation.