

## QUESTIONNAIRE: FOLLOW-UP AND REVIEW PROCESS AT THE HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM

16 NOVEMBER 2015

Paragraph 90 of the [2030 Sustainable Development Agenda](#) requested the Secretary General, in consultation with Member States, to prepare a report for consideration at the current 70th session of the General Assembly in preparation for the [2016 meeting of the High-Level Political Forum](#) which outlines critical milestones towards coherent, efficient and inclusive follow-up and review at the global level. To this end, the Secretary-General has conducted a consultation of Major Groups and other Stakeholders. The Danish Institute has submitted the following response to the questionnaire:

### II. INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES FOR FOLLOW-UP AND REVIEW

- 1. How can the General Assembly, ECOSOC and the HLPF work coherently in follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda? What should be the role of the General Assembly in follow-up and review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda? Do you see a need to adjust the working methods and agenda of the General Assembly, its plenary, second, third committees in particular and their relation to ECOSOC to respond to the 2030 Agenda and ensure coherence, complementarity and efficiency? If so, how?*

Human rights are a main pillar of the UN and the 2030 Agenda. Integration of human rights in FUR is an important dimension of coherence. Most SDG targets are linked to international human rights instruments with institutionalised monitoring mechanisms ([humanrights.dk/sdg-guide](http://humanrights.dk/sdg-guide)) which constitute an enormous resource for FUR. The GA, including through the Third Committee, has strong links to the human rights system, while ECOSOC has weaker and more indirect links. For coherence, the HLPF (whether under GA or ECOSOC) must ensure strong and direct links to the human rights system. Concretely, as suggested by OHCHR, the HLPF could make use of reports and recommendations from the treaty bodies, Special Procedures and the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) under the Human Rights Council. Already, compilation reports for individual countries are produced in the UPR process, which could be submitted directly to the HLPF for country reviews. In addition, similar 'thematic compilation reports' related to HLPF goal-specific or thematic reviews could be produced: [ohchr.org/EN/Issues/MDG/Pages/MDGPost2015Agenda.aspx](http://ohchr.org/EN/Issues/MDG/Pages/MDGPost2015Agenda.aspx)

2. *Given its Charter and other mandates, how can ECOSOC help ensure that global follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda is coherent?*

- In order to provide substantive leadership to the UN system, ECOSOC needs to build on and integrate work of UN human rights bodies (UPR, treaty bodies, Human Rights Council), possibly through the GA 3<sup>rd</sup> committee.
- The thematic focus of the HLPF should be reflected in the work programmes of ECOSOC functional commissions, and their input submitted to HLPF.
- To ensure an effective review and follow-up mechanism in line with the principles agreed in the 2030 Agenda, in particular para 74d, ECOSOC needs to review the efficiency and independence of its Committee on NGOs.

4. *Should the General Assembly provide some guidance to ECOSOC functional commissions and other intergovernmental bodies and forums on how they should best reflect their contribution to the review of SDGs, and to the HLPF generally, in their work programmes and sessions? And what would it be?*

The GA should clearly distinguish between the two very different roles in which UN entities and stakeholders will be involved in the global FUR:

- Holding governments accountable for progress on the 2030 Agenda by providing complementary information
- Being themselves accountable for progress on the 2030 Agenda by reporting on their own contributions

Information should be compiled in a 'UN and a Stakeholder Report, drawing on experiences from the Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review in this regard.

Further, functional commissions should incorporate the annual theme of the HLPF thematic review into their annual agenda in order to prepare contributions to HLPF that assess progress and identify major trends in the issue area from their perspective.

### **III. OVERARCHING ANNUAL THEME OF THE HLPF VS. THEMATIC REVIEWS OF PROGRESS OF THE SDGs TO BE CARRIED OUT BY THE HLPF**

6. *Should the HLPF thematic reviews of the progress on the SDGs (i) focus on clusters of closely related SDGs or (ii) examine progress in all SDGs based upon on a transversal theme such as gender, health or education or (iii) address four SDGs every year, taken in a numerical order, along with SDG17? If option (ii) is preferred, when and how should the transversal theme be decided upon?*

The thematic review of progress should be based on a cluster of SDGs that reflect the three dimensions of sustainable development, as well as SDG 17 on the Means of Implementation. Additionally, a transversal theme such as “inequality” or “accountable institutions” should guide the debate, which should be decided upon through a participatory and inclusive process and be announced in due time to allow for adequate preparation. It is important that the debate on the Means of Implementation create a space for private sector partners to present and reflect their contribution to the implementation of the Agenda. At the same time, the debate should address the accountability of private actors in light of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

7. *What kind of inputs should functional commissions and other intergovernmental bodies and forums provide to the HLPF (e.g. negotiated outcomes, summary of discussions and analysis or other)? And how should the inputs of various platforms be presented to the HLPF so as to best support its review and political leadership, guidance and recommendations?*

Functional commissions should contribute with an analysis of available data from the SDG monitoring system with a view to the annual theme, and based on their mandate and expertise. Furthermore, the human rights system can make significant contributions to the HLPF both with regard to the thematic debate and country reporting. To that end, the HLPF needs to be open for contributions of relevant treaty bodies, special procedures, and ILO supervisory bodies to the annual thematic debate. OHCHR can prepare compilation reports summarizing information and analysis from the human rights system regarding the annual theme of the HLPF. Furthermore, country reviews can be complemented through “compilation reports” that are readily available from the UPR.

8. *What would be good overarching annual themes for the HLPF to address (when it meets under the auspices of ECOSOC) and how can they be aligned to that the theme of ECOSOC? Please give several examples?*

A human rights-based approach to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda presupposes that human rights principles such as equality and non-discrimination, as reflected in Goal 10, as well as inclusive and accountable institutions, as reflected in Goal 16, inform the debate of the High-Level Political Forum at all times. In addition, the HLPF should consider human rights-relevant annual themes such as:

- Good practices for an inclusive and human rights-based approach to eradicating poverty and promoting sustainable growth
- Promoting and measuring progress in non-discrimination across the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including for women and other rights-holders.
- Governance and human rights as drivers of sustainable development
- The role of and requirements to private sector in the 2030 Agenda

9. *How long in advance should HLPF themes be known? For example, (i) should there be a programme of work for the four years in between two meetings of the HLPF under the auspices of the General Assembly or for a longer time period or (ii) should themes be determined every year and if so how could other intergovernmental platforms and other relevant actors contribute to the HLPF review?*

To allow time for preparation by all involved actors, option (i) is preferable. It is recommended to decide on annual themes in advance and for a four-year timeframe (see Question 6).

A four-year programme of work between the meetings of the HLPF under the auspices of the General Assembly should be established to allow for adequate preparation and meaningful contribution of all actors. The programme of work should be decided upon through a transparent and participatory process.

11. *How should the United Nations Statistical Commission best contribute to the work of HLPF?*

The UN Statistical Commission should make country level data accessible online, building on the existing practice with MDG data. With a view to the annual theme, the Commission should analyse available and identify progress, trends and gaps. The Commission should

annually report on the status of indicator development and reflect upon experiences from their application. It should also report on the capacity of all countries to deliver timely and fully disaggregated data, which is a crucial component to ensure non-discriminatory progress in SDG implementation. The efforts to build this capacity, as demanded by target 17.18, need to be regularly evaluated by the HLPF based on information from the Statistical Commission and stakeholders groups. The Commission can further guide and support member states on methodological, technical and ethical/human rights considerations in relation to the required data disaggregation, as needed in collaboration with UN agencies, funds and programmes which can support in-country capacity development.

*12. What arrangements would be needed to allow the HLPF to identify and consider new and emerging issues?*

It is recommended that the process to identify new and emerging issues involve non-governmental stakeholders, including academia and civil society, e.g. through consultation with (but not restricted to) Major Groups. This requires a permanent secretariat that is adequately equipped to receive and actively seek input from stakeholders within and beyond the UN system. Furthermore, the HLPF needs to be open and equipped to process information from the UN system, including human rights institutions such as the treaty bodies and special procedures. Finally, a review of the HLPF's work should take place on a regular basis in order to identify and address gaps and weaknesses in its working procedure.

*13. How can platforms and processes outside the UN system, including those run by other international or regional organizations and by non-state actors, contribute to thematic reviews at the HLPF?*

The HLPF must live up to the commitments to be inclusive and participatory and strengthen the consultative role and participation of Major Groups and other relevant stakeholders, as stipulated in GA Resolution 67/290 para. 14 and 15. National Human Rights Institutions are among the stakeholders that can systematically contribute to the FUR. Further it is recommended to:

- Provide a common format to submit information
- Compile Stakeholder Information
- Identify one or more UN entities responsible for compilation. The task of compilation could be given to one or several entities

- Make the Compilation of Stakeholder Information available online well in advance of the HLPF so it can be used by all actors for preparation.

#### **IV. HLPF NATIONAL REVIEWS OF IMPLEMENTATION**

*Preparation and conduct of national reviews:*

*14. How often would countries be expected to participate in regular state-led reviews in order to allow for a meaningful exchange of experiences and feedback at the HLPF? Should there be a minimum number of reviews within 15 years to be presented at the HLPF?*

The basis for a meaningful follow-up and review process lies in participatory and inclusive national planning processes with broad stakeholder participation, including by National Human Rights Institutions. Such processes should serve to formulate national goals, strategies and benchmarks, where necessary measured against additional national indicators, and evaluate and align existing national policy frameworks for implementation. Based on this, the aspiration for the voluntary country review at the global level should be to establish a culture of universal participation similar to the Universal Periodic Review. In line with the 4½-year cycle of the UPR, a 5-year cycle for country reviews at the HLPF would ensure that countries participate in three reviews until 2030.

*15. How can the HLPF discussions on the reviews be best prepared in order to facilitate a sharing of experiences and the provision of political leadership, guidance and recommendations at the HLPF? How would countries like to be supported in preparing the review process at global level?*

In order to provide leadership, HLPF need a systematised information flow from the national level. Reporting at the national level should reflect the multi-stakeholder and participatory character of the Agenda. Regular and inclusive country reviews should lead to submission of country reports to the HLPF by States and other stakeholders, including indigenous peoples, civil society, the private sector and national institutions such as National Human Rights Institutions (A/70/L1, para 79). In addition, the UN-system should report on its contribution to national implementation. Building on the successful UPR modality under the Human Rights Council, country-level reporting could comprise 3 distinct reports: 1) a report by the State, 2) a report

prepared by the concerned UN Country Team or regional Commission, which would include information from the UPR review, 3) a condensed stakeholder report, compiled by the concerned UNCT or Regional Commission, following the modality adopted under the UPR.

*Voluntary common reporting guidelines:*

*16. In order to help elaborate voluntary common reporting guidelines for State-led reviews at the HLPF, kindly indicate what issues you would want the HLPF to address systematically when it examines national implementation reviews?*

Given the high degree of convergence between SDG targets and human rights instruments, human rights need to be prominently addressed in the reporting format. Drawing on existing mechanisms, the information for the HLPF should incorporate recommendations from the Universal Periodic Review and Treaty Bodies. Moreover, to live up to the pledge of “leaving no one behind”, review of country reports should address the situation of particular rights-holders (women, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, migrant workers), including through disaggregated data based on prohibited grounds of discrimination. Reporting should address crosscutting human rights principles of accountability, non-discrimination and participation. States should not only report on implementation outcomes, but also on the country review processes and plans and structures to overcome gaps. State reports should be complemented by additional reports from the UN system and stakeholders, including National Human Rights Institutions.

*17. How can the guidelines leave enough flexibility to Member States while ensuring sufficient comparability between HLPF reviews to facilitate cross-country comparisons and to help track global progress? Could guidelines identify a core set of issues, in addition to the status of all SDGs and Targets, which all countries would be encouraged to address in their reviews and, in addition, a number of issues which countries might consider addressing if feasible?*

It is recommended that all countries:

- Make specific commitments on implementation and identify responsibilities of specific state entities for implementation actions
- Report on all goals or explain if they do not report

- Report on progress for different rights-holders and population groups based on disaggregated data and sharing the reasons for focusing on these groups as well as methods for data disaggregation and for focusing implementation on marginalised groups
- Report both on successes and on challenges and lessons learned with regard to both.

*Presentation of national reviews to the HLPF:*

*18. How should the country reviews be featured and discussed at the formal HLPF meeting?*

Based on reports by states and the UN system, and a stakeholder summary report, the review should take the form of a constructive and interactive dialogue that includes Member States, rights-holder and other stakeholders in accordance with GA Resolution 67/290. To ensure transparency, these review dialogues need to be publicly accessible through webcasts and all information to be available online well in advance. A support fund should be set up to ensure broad stakeholder participation. It is recommended

- for the first review, for each country to focus on: commitments and adaptation efforts, including identification of responsibilities of different state entities, adaptation of targets and indicators, establishment of a national review mechanism etc.
- For subsequent reviews, for countries to report on adopted recommendations and to highlight one main success and one main challenge experienced during implementation.

*19. How can national reviews give adequate attention to the means of implementation? How can they help to mobilize new support and partnerships?*

The participation of the private sector as a Major Group at the HLPF will be an important contribution to mobilize new partnerships and support. At the same time, country reviews should address the accountability of all actors in Development finance, including the private sector. States should therefore report on the process of aligning relevant national regulations with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights to secure the safeguarding of human rights in development partnerships domestically and abroad.

20. *What kind of outcome should result from the HLPF national reviews of implementation, and how could there be a follow-up to these reviews?*

Through an interactive dialogue, the national reviews should generate a catalogue of publicly available recommendations to countries under review. Furthermore, the country under review should produce a statement as to which recommendation it adopts and commits to report on in future reviews.

## **V. REGIONAL REVIEWS AND PROCESSES**

21. *How should the outcome of regional review processes be considered at HLPF?*

Regional FuR processes should aim to exchange experiences, good practice, analysis of regional trends based on information from regional bodies and considerations on the annual theme with a special view to challenges unique to the region. These review processes should involve regional human rights mechanisms as well as Major Groups and stakeholders, including regional networks of the International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights. It should be avoided under all circumstances that regional reviews serve as a 'filter' for information from the national level, i.e. country reports, UN compilations and stakeholder compilations should not be summarized or condensed at the regional level but should remain the basis for country reviews at the global level.

## **VI. INCLUSION OF UN SYSTEM AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS IN GLOBAL FOLLOW-UP AND REVIEW**

22. *How can the HLPF support the participation by the major groups and other relevant stakeholders in the follow-up and review processes conducted at the global level including the thematic and country reviews? What are possible options to seek their contributions to the reviews at the HLPF, (building on the modalities for the participation of major groups and other relevant stakeholders defined by General Assembly resolution 67/290 and the practices of the General Assembly open working group on SDGs)?*

National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) constitute an important element of the accountability and human rights architecture in 106 countries. The International Coordinating Committee (ICC) undertakes accreditation of NHRIs under the auspices of the OHCHR in accordance with the Paris Principles ([nhri.ohchr.org/EN/Pages/default.aspx](http://nhri.ohchr.org/EN/Pages/default.aspx)). Under the Human Rights Council and treaty bodies, NHRIs enjoy direct participation opportunities including to provide information to the UPR. The GA encourages NHRIs to participate in relevant UN mechanisms and processes, including the post-2015 agenda (A/RES/68/171). The UN Secretary General (A/70/347) recommends that NHRI participation “in the General Assembly and its subsidiary bodies and working groups, as well as in the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary bodies and working groups, including [...] the processes related to the post-2015 sustainable development goals, should be considered, on the basis of the modalities for national institutions’ participation in the Human Rights Council”.

*23. The 2030 Agenda calls on major groups and other stakeholders to report on their contribution to the implementation of 2030 Agenda. How can such reviews be prepared and conducted at the HLPF? How can these actors be encouraged to engage in such reviews?*

In order to live up to the vision of a participatory and inclusive FUR process, the HLPF needs to establish procedures that allow for meaningful input of stakeholders, including Major Groups, rights-holders, discriminated groups, and others. Stakeholders need to be granted the opportunity to present their contributions to the implementation of the Agenda as well as their challenges and recommendations. This presupposes a formal right to deliver written and oral statements to the thematic debate of the HLPF. Furthermore, stakeholders should be able to highlight their contributions at the national level by submitting complementary reports in the framework of the country review process. Likewise, the HLPF should commit to make all relevant data and information publicly available in a timely manner. Besides questions regarding access and procedures, a support fund is required to ensure participation of all stakeholders in practice.