59th Session of the Commission for Social Development

Panel discussion: Interactive dialogue with senior officials of the UN Systems on the priority theme

Wednesday, 10 February 2021, 3:00 – 5:00 pm
Virtual

Draft Concept Note

1. **Background**

The Commission for Social Development will convene its fifty-ninth session from 8 to 17 February 2021, under the priority theme of "Socially just transition towards sustainable development: the role of digital technologies on social development and well-being of all", per Economic and Social Council decision 2020/212. During the Commission, an interactive dialogue with senior officials of the UN system on the priority theme will be held virtually on 10 February 2021 (3:00pm – 5:00pm NYT).

The interactive dialogue is organized in response to the resolution on future organization and methods of work of the Commission for Social Development (2019/4), adopted by the ECOSOC on 6 June 2019. In that resolution, the ECOSOC invited the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the relevant specialized agencies, regional commissions, funds and programmes of the United Nations system and the international financial institutions to present their relevant activities and reports, which may contribute to the advancement of the priority theme, including by participating in interactive dialogues with Member States and relevant stakeholders.

In this context, the Bureau of the 59th session of the Commission invites senior officials of the UN Regional Commissions, and relevant UN organizations to participate in an interactive dialogue with members of the Commission. This will provide an opportunity for Member States to keep abreast of UN system's work at the global, regional and national levels to promote socially just transition towards sustainable development, through leveraging digital technologies for advancing social development and well-being of all. Senior officials of the Regional Commissions and other relevant UN entities will present regional trends and perspectives by reporting their work, including publications and capacity building activities, on the theme.

The two-hour dialogue is open to all Member States, regional and sub-regional organizations, UN entities, international financial institutions and development partners, Major Groups, social groups and other stakeholders. The dialogue will facilitate an exchange between Member States, senior officials of the UN entities, and relevant stakeholders, including representatives of civil society, of views and strategies to enable socially just transition towards sustainable development through addressing various challenges the world is facing, including the COVID-19 crisis. It will also discuss the role of digital technologies in paving a more inclusive, fairer, and resilient path to advance social development and well-being of people and achieve sustainable future for all.

2. Objectives

The main objective of the interactive dialogue is to link the Commission's work with regional and national actions for enhanced strengthen coordination and policy coherence. By inviting the UN Regional Commissions and relevant UN organizations, the dialogue aims to further strengthen policy coherence at the global, regional and national levels in enabling a socially just transition towards sustainable development, which will assist Member States in their implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in all its three dimensions.

The interactive dialogue also aims to keep abreast of current trends, good practices, innovative approaches, lessons learned, and to identify common challenges across regions; and to promote linkages between regional strategies and global normative frameworks. The outcomes of the dialogue will reinforce the linkage between the Commission for Social Development and the Regional Sustainable Development Forums for the 2021 HLPF.

3. Structure and format of the panel discussion

The Chair of the 59th Commission for Social Development will open the panel with brief remarks and introduce the moderator. The moderator will introduce the panellists and invite them to make **7 minutes** presentations. Following their presentations, the moderator will invite questions directly related to the presentations from the audience/participants. After a short question and answer session, the moderator will open the floor for interactive dialogue.

Panellists are expected to structure their presentations around major trends and recent activities in leveraging the role of digital technologies to advance social development and well-being of all, while mitigating new risks at the regional level, and present key messages/recommendations from their recent publications, including effective policies and strategies, common challenges and lessons learned.

The outcomes of the discussions will be reflected in the Chair's summary, which will be one of the key inputs of the Commission for Social Development to the ECOSOC, in particular, its high-level segment, and the 2021 High-Level Political Forum to be convened under the theme: "Sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic that promotes the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development: building an inclusive and effective path for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda in the context of the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development".

The time allocation for the panel discussion is as follows:

Speaker	Suggested speaking time
Chair: Opening remarks	2- 3 minutes
Moderator: Brief remarks and the introduction of panellists	5 minutes
Panellists (9): Presentations	7 minutes per panellist
Moderated interactive dialogue	Q & A and interactive dialogue (30 minutes)
Concluding remarks by panellists and the moderator	10 minutes
Closing by the Chair	5 minutes
	Total duration: 2 hours