



COMMISSION for SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

United Nations Headquarters, New York

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59th Session of the Commission for Social Development

Ministerial Forum:

“Promoting multilateralism to realize inclusive, resilient and sustainable recovery from COVID-19 in the context of the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development and its social dimensions”

Tuesday 9 February 2021, 10:00am – 12:00pm
Virtual meeting

Draft Concept Note



1. Background

The Commission for Social Development will convene its fifty-ninth session from 9 – 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***”. The theme was decided by ECOSOC in its decision 2020/212.

ECOSOC resolution E/RES/2019/4 on the methods of work of the Commission “*Invites* the Bureau of the Commission to continue to propose interactive dialogues, such as high-level events and ministerial and expert workshops that engage Member States and relevant stakeholders, so as to encourage dialogue and enhance the impact of its work, including by addressing the implementation of, follow-up to and review of the social dimension of the 2030 Agenda” (para 10).

In accordance with this resolution, the Bureau decided that the Commission organizes a Ministerial Forum on “**Promoting multilateralism to realize inclusive, resilient and sustainable recovery from COVID-19 in the context of the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development and its social dimensions**” on 9 February in the morning. The Forum will provide an opportunity for Ministers and/or senior Government officials to share their experience in ensuring inclusive, resilient and sustainable recovery from COVID-19, and discuss how to promote multilateralism to support national efforts to build back better towards achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the decade of action.

2. Context –Multilateralism for inclusive, resilient and sustainable recovery from COVID-19 to accelerate action and delivery for sustainable development

The World Summit for Social Development (Copenhagen, 1995) marked a paradigm shift towards more inclusive and equitable social and economic development in which people are placed at the centre of development. At the Summit, Member States affirmed their commitment to social justice and solidarity. They also committed to the strengthening of cooperation in social development through the United Nations system.

At the joint informal high-level meeting of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council to commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Social Summit held on 1 December 2020, Member States acknowledged that the visions, principles and commitments made at the Summit remained valid and were crucial for addressing emerging global challenges, including widening inequality, changing population dynamics, the effects of climate change and rapid technological change. The COVID-19 crisis poses unprecedented challenges to social development and the well-being of people worldwide, exacerbating pre-existing inequalities, deepening poverty, affecting disproportionately the poorest and most vulnerable population. The crisis has also had a negative impact on the abilities of Governments to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals.

At the same time, recovery from the COVID-19 crisis provides an opportunity to bring transformative changes needed to build more inclusive, equitable, resilient and sustainable societies. This requires a renewed commitment to ensure equal opportunity, universal protection systems that foster economic security, and robust public institutions that ensure equal rights. Social policy has a key role to play in mitigating and overcoming the negative socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 crisis, so that recovery strategies are people-centered and inclusive and resilient to mitigate future risks/shocks.

There is a need to strengthen international solidarity, multilateral cooperation, and genuine partnerships among all stakeholders, to support countries facing especially severe challenges to recover better from the COVID-19 crisis. Such solidarity, multilateral cooperation and partnership are necessary to end poverty, combat inequalities, ensure equal access to basic services, including quality education and universal health coverage, and achieve the objectives of social development and the 2030 Agenda.

3. Objectives

The objective of the Ministerial Forum is to facilitate the exchange of national and regional experiences to learn from good practices, innovative approaches, and lessons learned, and identify common challenges, explore effective policies and measures for enabling inclusive, resilient and sustainable recovery from COVID-19. How to promote multilateralism to support national efforts to build back better will be a focus of exchange and discussion among ministers to support national governments to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, building upon national efforts towards the implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action agreed at the World Summit for Social Development.

4. Structure and format of the panel discussion

The Ministerial Forum will be moderated by the Chair of the 59th session of the Commission for Social Development. The Chair will open the session with brief remarks and introduce the panellists (Ministers and high-level policymakers). The Chair will then invite the

panellists to make **7 - 10 minutes** presentations. Following their presentations, the Chair will open the discussion and invite questions and comments from the floor for a dialogue.

Panellists are expected to structure their presentations around concrete policies and strategies that have proven to be successful in promoting inclusive, resilient and sustainable recovery from COVID-19, and to highlight innovative approaches and lessons learned at the national and regional levels. The Chair/panellists will identify common challenges and effective policies and strategies to address them.

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”.

5. Guiding questions

- i. What policies and measures put in place to counter the impacts of COVID-19 have been effective in protecting people from income and job losses and sustaining their livelihoods?
- ii. Building on unprecedented fast-acting temporary measures to weather the crisis, how can we develop more comprehensive long-term policies and strategies that enable inclusive, resilient and sustainable recover?
- iii. How to strengthen international solidarity and multilateral cooperation to support people and countries being hit hard by the crisis so that no one and no country are left behind in the recovery from COVID -19 crisis?
- iv. How can we galvanize political will towards a New Social Contract to address the root causes of inequality and vulnerability so that countries can build back better to achieve social development and the 2030 Agenda for all?

The time allocation for the panel discussion is as follows:

Speaker	Suggested speaking time
Chair: Opening remarks and the introduction of panellists	5 minutes
Panellists (4-6): Presentations	10 minutes per panellist
Moderated interactive discussion	Q & A and open discussion (Interventions limited to 3 minutes, followed by responses from panellists)
Concluding remarks by panellists and Closing by the Chair	10 minutes
	Total duration: 2 hours