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### **FURTHER INFORMATION ON MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS RELATED TO THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

*Note by the Executive Secretary*

#### **I. INTRODUCTION**

1. As a supplementary information to the note by the Executive Secretary on mainstreaming and the integration of biodiversity across relevant sectors, and further implications of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and of other relevant international processes for the future work of the Convention” (UNEP/CBD/COP/13/10), the present document provides further information on the major developments related to the implementation, follow-up and review process of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals.

2. On 25 September 2015, the United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution 70/1, entitled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”. The Executive Secretary and the biodiversity community had provided input into the process leading to the 2030 Agenda (see UNEP/CBD/COP/12/15, para. I, subsection B), and virtually all of the elements of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets were reflected in the targets associated with the Sustainable Development Goals. This includes target 15.9, which explicitly sets out the linkage between biodiversity and poverty eradication and development by calling on member States to, “by 2020, integrate ecosystem and biodiversity values into national and local planning, development processes, poverty reduction strategies and accounts”. The linkages between the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the Sustainable Development Goals as well as their associated targets are analyzed in detail in the technical note prepared by the Executive Secretary (UNEP/CBD/COP13/10/Add.1).

3. As regards possible global implementation support mechanisms for the 2030 Agenda, and further to paragraph 90 of the 2030 Agenda, the Secretary-General, in consultation with Member States, prepared a report on critical milestones towards coherent, efficient and inclusive follow-up and review at the global level (A/70/684). Released in January 2016, the report includes a proposal on the organizational arrangements for State-led reviews at the high-level political forum and recommendations on voluntary common reporting guidelines. In March 2015, the United Nations Statistical Commission created the

Inter-agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDGs) to develop proposals for a global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals.

4. Pursuant to decision XII/4, the Executive Secretary is collaborating with the United Nations Development Programme and other organizations to discuss how best to support countries in their efforts to ensure that implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals integrate biodiversity considerations.

5. Further updates are presented in the paragraphs below.

## II. HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM 2016

6. Further to the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development of June 2012 entitled “The future we want”, which foresaw the establishment of a high-level political forum as the central platform for the follow-up and review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the United Nations General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session, in July 2013, adopted a resolution on the format and organizational aspects of the High-level Political Forum (resolution 67/290). It was decided that the High-level Political Forum will meet:

- Every four years under the auspices of the General Assembly, at the level of Heads of State and Government, resulting in a political declaration to be submitted to the General Assembly for its consideration (resolution 67/290, paragraph 6); and
- Every year under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), including a three-day ministerial segment, resulting in a negotiated ministerial declaration for inclusion in the report of the Council to the General Assembly; having a thematic focus reflecting the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development and being in line with the thematic focus of activities of ECOSOC and consistent with the post-2015 agenda; and following up and reviewing progress in the implementation of all the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and environmental fields (resolution 67/290, paragraph 7).

7. The third meeting of the High-Level Political Forum, convened under the auspices of the United Nations Economic and Social Council in New York from 11 to 20 July 2016, welcomed voluntary national reviews from 22 countries, preparations of which benefited from regional expert group meetings and a series of retreats convened with the active support of the relevant regional commissions and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA). The results of the regional forums on sustainable development organized by the regional commissions were presented in the Forum.

8. The High-Level Political Forum discussed steps for integrating the 2030 Agenda into national plans, synergies and partnerships between actors, and approaches in implementing the future development framework. The draft summary by the President of the High-Level Political Forum stressed, among others, the importance of: the science-policy interface, creating ownership at the national level, vertical cooperation among local authorities and national governments, multi-stakeholder engagement, delivering for Small Island Developing States and countries in special situations, as well as regional experiences.<sup>1</sup>

9. The Ministerial Declaration of the high-level segment of the 2016 session of the Economic and Social Council and that of the 2016 high-level political forum on sustainable development acknowledged the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity as one

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<sup>1</sup> President's summary of the High-Level Political Forum 2016

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/10858SummaryPresident%202016%20HLPF%20FINAL.pdf>

of the ongoing and upcoming international processes which will contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (E/HLPF/2016/1, paragraph 21).

### **III. GLOBAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT REPORT AND THE ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT ON SDGS**

10. The outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development “The future we want” suggested that one of the functions of the High-Level Political Forum is to “strengthen the science-policy interface through review of documents bringing together dispersed information and assessments, including in the form of a global sustainable development report” (resolution 66/288, Annex, paragraph 85 (k)). The 2030 Agenda invited the President of the Economic and Social Council to conduct a process of consultations on the scope, methodology and frequency of the Global Sustainable Development Report (resolution 70/1, paragraph 83). Subsequently, the aforementioned ministerial declaration of the high-level segment of the 2016 session of the Economic and Social Council and that of the 2016 high-level political forum on sustainable development endorsed the outcome of the consultation process in its annex “Global Sustainable Development Report: scope, frequency, methodology and relationship with the Sustainable Development Goals progress report” (E/HLPF/2016/1, Annex).

11. The document stressed that the in-depth analytical quadrennial Global Sustainable Development Report will inform the high-level political forum, will provide guidance on the state of global sustainable development from a scientific perspective. It shall strengthen the science-policy interface and provide a strong evidence-based instrument to support policy makers in promoting poverty eradication and sustainable development. It resolved that the Report should also consider the regional dimension as well as countries in special situations, provide lessons learned, address new and emerging issues and highlight emerging trends and actions, focus on an integrated approach and examine policy options with a view to sustaining the balance between the three dimensions of sustainable development in line with the 2030 Agenda to inform its implementation (E/HLPF/2016/1, Annex, paragraphs 2 and 3).

12. The document also included a request on the creation of an independent group of scientists to draft the Global Sustainable Development Report, to be appointed by the Secretary-General and to be supported by a task-team co-chaired by the United Nations Secretariat; the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; the United Nations Environment Programme; the United Nations Development Programme; the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development; and the World Bank (E/HLS/2016/1, Annex, paragraph 7).

13. With a view to inform the high-level political forum, an annual progress report on the Sustainable Development Goals will also be prepared by the Secretary-General, in cooperation with the United Nations system and on the basis of the global indicator framework, of data produced by national statistical systems, and of information collected at the regional level (E/HLS/2016/1, paragraph 8).

14. The 2016 edition of the Global Sustainable Development Report was published in July 2016. Building upon the previous three reports, the 2016 edition maintained the science-policy interface and indivisible nature of the SDGs. Under the theme “Ensuring that no one is left behind”, in relation to biodiversity and ecosystems services, the report featured Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) schemes as one of the sectoral strategies for targeting and reaching those left behind by focusing on the three important dimensions of the 2030 Agenda: poverty, inclusiveness and inequality. The report stated that PES schemes, which have become a common tool for ecosystem management, do not generally have poverty alleviation as their primary objective; however, carefully designed PES schemes can have more focus on the poor and marginalized communities managing ecosystems, while maintaining their primary focus on environmental objectives.

15. The first report on the progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals by the Secretary-General (E/2016/75\*) underscored challenges under Goal 14 related to the impacts of overfishing, climate change and pollution, including coastal eutrophication and ocean acidification; as well as under the Goal 15 related to biodiversity loss due to habitat conversion, wildlife diseases, poaching and trafficking. The report also described the progress on other Goals with direct or indirect implications for biodiversity and ecosystem services, including Goal 1 (on ending poverty, and the harmful impacts of climate-extreme events, environmental shocks and disasters); Goal 2 (on ending hunger, and its reliance on sustainable food production systems, resilient agricultural practices, genetic diversity in livestock breeds and preventing distortions in world agricultural markets which can lead to environmental damage and the inequitable distribution of benefits); Goal 3 (on ensuring healthy lives and well-being, and the impacts of unhealthy environmental conditions); and Goal 6 (on water and sanitation, and holistic management of the water cycle).

#### **IV. FOLLOW-UP AND REVIEW MECHANISM**

16. Pursuant to the commitment of the 2030 Agenda to systematically follow-up and review progress at the national, regional and global levels, a review system was proposed by the report of the Secretary-General on 'Critical milestones towards coherent, efficient and inclusive follow-up and review at the global level' (A/70/684) published in January 2016. Subsequently, the United Nations General Assembly adopted, on 29 July 2016, a resolution on 'Follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the global level' (resolution 70/299).

17. The review system defined by these documents is oriented towards supporting national implementation with the organizational arrangements for state-led reviews at the High-Level Political Forum. Voluntary national reviews, one of the core elements of the follow-up and review framework, are geared towards accelerating implementation and enabling mutual learning across countries and regions.

18. Regional reviews will also be conducted, with an important role to be played by regional forums on sustainable development, the regional commissions, as well as other regional organizations and United Nations System entities which are recognized as being able to provide inputs to countries as well as to the High-Level Political Forum.

19. The principles for the follow-up and review processes at all levels state that these shall be:

- Voluntary and country-led, taking into account different national realities, based on national official data;
- Open, inclusive, participatory and transparent;
- People-centred, gender-sensitive, respecting human rights especially for those furthest behind;
- Building on existing platforms and processes;
- Rigorous and based on evidence, with enhanced capacity-building support for developing countries and active support of the United Nations system and other multilateral institutions. (resolution 70/1, paragraph 74)

## **V. THE WORK OF THE INTER-AGENCY AND EXPERT GROUP ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL INDICATORS**

20. In March 2016, at its forty-seventh session, the United Nations Statistical Commission agreed, as a practical starting point, on a global indicator framework proposed by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (IAEG-SDGs), which would be subject to future modifications. On 1 June 2016, the Economic and Social Council adopted the report of the Statistical Commission including a number of decisions covering the implementation of the indicators. The 230 global indicators are intended for follow-up and review at the global level. IAEG-SDGs is preparing a proposal for a first set of minor refinements of the indicators, which will be presented to the 48th session of the Statistical Commission in March 2017.

21. The 230 indicators are categorized into three tiers as follows: (a) Tier I: indicators with an established methodology and data already widely available; (b) Tier II: indicators with an established methodology but insufficient data coverage; and (c) Tier III: indicators for which a methodology is being developed. The IADG-SDGs now focuses on the proposals for the development of Tier III indicators. The agencies responsible for the compilation of the global indicators are preparing plans to develop and test methodologies for Tier III indicators, which will be reviewed by IAEG-SDGs and submitted to the next session of the Statistical Commission.

22. In addition to the above, indicators for monitoring at the regional, national and subnational levels will also be developed at the regional and national levels.

## **VI. TECHNOLOGY FACILITATION MECHANISM**

23. The Technology Facilitation Mechanism was created under the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development in recognition of the key role of science, technology and innovation in the implementation of the Agendas. The mechanism consists of three components: (i) the United Nations Inter-agency Task Team (IATT) on Science, Technology and Innovation for the SDGs, (ii) the annual Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the SDGs (STI Forum), and (iii) the development of an Online Platform to serve as a gateway for information on existing STI initiatives, mechanisms and programs within and beyond the UN system. The IATT, consisting of more than 30 members from the United Nations system, is leading the work on enhancing the efficiency of STI by the mapping of STI initiatives, needs assessments, and identification of potential gaps and synergies. The summary of the first STI Forum held in New York on 6 and 7 June 2016 was presented to the High-Level Political Forum, highlighting the importance of enhancing coherence of science, technology and innovation, and all forms of international cooperation including South-South, North-South, triangular and regional cooperation.

## **VII. THE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM**

24. The 2030 Agenda stresses the importance of strengthened national ownership and leadership at the country level in addressing the Sustainable Development Goals. At the same time, the Agenda also underlines the important role and comparative advantage of an adequately resourced, relevant, coherent, efficient and effective United Nations System in supporting the achievement of the SDGs and sustainable development (resolution 70/1, paragraph 46). Following its resolution 2014/14 of 14 July 2014, the Economic and Social Council has conducted a series of dialogue processes on the long-term positioning of the United Nations Development System, the system which provides integrated programmatic support at the country level to “programme countries” (those receiving assistance), in the context of the post-2015 development agenda, in which the need for integrated, coordinated and coherent implementation support was highlighted, which a view to effectively assist governments in mainstreaming the SDGs in national development plans, including through significant strengthening of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) as a common inter-agency framework

for planning, programming, monitoring and measuring results of the UN Development System as a whole at the country level.<sup>2</sup>

25. In response to the request of Member States for coherent and integrated support from the United Nations Development System to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the United Nations Development Group updated and issued the Interim UNDAF Guidance in May 2016. The interim guidance encompasses a future common approach for effective and coherent implementation support, and contains links to tools and resources to assist United Nations Country Teams with design and implementation of the UNDAFs in support of the achievement of the SDGs. Consideration for ecosystems is included under one of the four core underlying principles of the interim guidance, “sustainable development and resilience”, in which the role of ecosystems in resilience of societies and the necessity for an approach to prevent adverse impacts on the environment are underlined.

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<sup>2</sup> Summary/Update of the Second Phase of the ECOSOC dialogue by the Vice-President of ECOSOC, H.E. Mr. Héctor Alejandro Palma Cerna, Representative of Honduras to the United Nations Economic and Social Council, on behalf of the ECOSOC Bureau, Phase 2: December 2015 – July 2016. 18 July 2016.

<https://www.un.org/ecosoc/sites/www.un.org.ecosoc/files/files/en/qcpr/summary-of-second-phase-of-ecosoc-dialogue-2016.pdf>