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## SECOND MEETING OF THE HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, UNDER THE AUSPICES OF ECOSOC: 30 JUNE – 9 JULY 2014

The second meeting of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) under the auspices of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) will begin today at the UN Headquarters in New York, US, and conclude on Wednesday, 9 July 2014. The theme of the second Forum is “Achieving the Millennium Development Goals and charting the way for an ambitious post-2015 development agenda including the Sustainable Development Goals.”

The first week is expected to include Moderated Dialogues on a number of topics from the sustainable development agenda, including: sustainable consumption and production (SCP); means of implementation; the role of science; partnerships; countries in special situations; progress in implementing the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD, or Rio+20) outcomes; the future of the HLPF; and the post-2015 development agenda. The second week will feature a High-Level Segment, with Ministerial Dialogues addressing the post-2015 development agenda, implementing Rio+20 outcomes, climate change, poverty eradication, multi-stakeholder partnerships, international cooperation, and preparing the HLPF for the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda and reviewing progress.

### A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE HLPF

The establishment of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development was called for by Rio+20 in June 2012 in its outcome document, *The Future We Want*. Paragraph 84 states: “We decide to establish a universal intergovernmental high-level political forum, building on the strengths, experiences, resources and inclusive participation modalities of the Commission on Sustainable Development, and subsequently replacing the Commission. The high-level political forum shall follow up on the implementation of sustainable development and should avoid overlap with existing structures, bodies and entities in a cost-effective manner.”

### COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT:

The Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) emerged from Agenda 21, the programme of action for sustainable development adopted in June 1992 by the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, also known as the “Earth Summit.” Agenda 21 called for the creation of the CSD to ensure effective follow-up of UNCED, enhance international cooperation, and examine progress in the implementation of Agenda 21 at the local,

national, regional and global levels. In 1992, the 47<sup>th</sup> UN General Assembly (UNGA) adopted resolution 47/191, which established the CSD’s terms of reference and composition, organization of work, relationship with other UN bodies, Secretariat arrangements, and guidelines for the participation of Major Groups.

The CSD held its first substantive session in June 1993 and convened annually for 20 years at the UN Headquarters in New York. During its first five years, the CSD systematically reviewed the implementation of all chapters of Agenda 21. The second five-year programme of work was organized around sectoral, cross-sectoral, and economic thematic issues. Following the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), which convened in Johannesburg, South Africa in September 2002, and reaffirmed that the CSD was the high-level forum for sustainable development within the UN system, the Commission adopted a new multi-year programme of work to be organized as a series of two-year implementation cycles. Each cycle consisted of a Review Session and a Policy Session and considered a thematic cluster of issues and crosscutting issues.

The CSD held its 20th and final session on 21 September 2013, just prior to the first session of the HLPF. Among the CSD’s accomplishments, participants highlighted, *inter alia*: the innovative, inclusive engagement of Major Groups; its contribution to an improved understanding of sustainable development, particularly by the private sector; and the CSD’s work on SCP. Participants also mentioned shortcomings, including: the lack of means of implementation; clear targets and indicators; a review mechanism; and flexibility in choosing its agenda.

**UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (Rio+20):** During ten days in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June 2012—the third and final meeting of the Preparatory Committee, Pre-Conference Informal Consultations facilitated by the host country, and the UNCSD—government delegations concluded negotiations on the Rio+20 outcome document, titled *The Future We Want*. The outcome calls for the UNGA to take decisions on, *inter alia*: designating a body to operationalize the 10-year Framework of Programmes on SCP; identifying the format and organizational aspects of a high-level political forum on sustainable development to replace the CSD; strengthening the UN Environment Programme (UNEP); constituting an Open Working Group (OWG) on a set of sustainable development goals (SDGs) to be agreed by the UNGA; establishing an intergovernmental process under the UNGA to prepare a report proposing options on an effective sustainable development financing strategy; and considering a set of recommendations from the UN Secretary-General

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for a facilitation mechanism that promotes the development, transfer, and dissemination of clean and environmentally sound technologies.

In addition, the outcome document called on the UNGA to take a decision in two years time on the development of an international instrument under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea regarding marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction. The UN Statistical Commission was called on to launch a programme of work on broader measures to complement gross domestic product. The UN system was encouraged, as appropriate, to support best practices and facilitate action for the integration of sustainability reporting. The outcome document also includes text on trade-distorting subsidies, fisheries, and fossil fuel subsidies.

**UNGA-67:** The 67th session of the UNGA adopted a resolution on the implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of Rio+20 (A/RES/67/203), which outlines the negotiation process for the creation of the HLPF and recommends that the CSD hold a “short and procedural” final session following the conclusion of negotiations on the HLPF. The text also calls for the OWG on SDGs to report to the UNGA at its 68th session and to report regularly, taking into account the convening of the first HLPF. It further calls for a special event in 2013 to follow up on efforts towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

**RESOLUTION 67/290:** The President of the 67th UNGA called on the ambassadors from Brazil and Italy to conduct informal consultations on the format and organizational modalities of the HLPF. These consultations began in January 2013 and concluded with the adoption of resolution 67/290 on 9 July 2013. Resolution 67/290 decided that the HLPF, consistent with its intergovernmental universal character, will:

- provide political leadership, guidance, and recommendations for sustainable development;
- follow-up and review progress in the implementation of sustainable development commitments;
- enhance the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development; and
- have a focused, dynamic, and action-oriented agenda, ensuring the appropriate consideration of new and emerging sustainable development challenges.

The meetings of the Forum will be convened:

- every four years under the auspices of the UNGA at the level of Heads of State and Government—for two days at the beginning of the UNGA session; and
- every year under the auspices of ECOSOC—for eight days, including a three-day ministerial segment.

Both meetings will adopt negotiated declarations.

The Forum, under the auspices of ECOSOC, will conduct regular reviews, starting in 2016, on the follow-up and implementation of sustainable development commitments and objectives, including those related to the means of implementation, within the context of the post-2015 development agenda. The resolution also considers the arrangement of a 2015 HLPF meeting, under the auspices of the UNGA, to launch the post-2015 development agenda.

**FIRST SESSION OF THE HLPF:** The inaugural session of the HLPF on 24 September 2013 took place under the auspices of the UNGA at the UN Headquarters in New York. The session theme was “Building the future we want from Rio+20 to the post-2015 development agenda.” The session was divided into several segments that featured keynote presentations from Heads of State and Government and Ministers and remarks from the floor on the following themes: “From vision to action,” “Global partnerships for development to create jobs and improve sustainable lifestyles,” and “Mapping the way forward for eradicating poverty and achieving sustainable development.”

In his inaugural address, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon announced the establishment of a Scientific Advisory Board, to be housed at the UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), to strengthen the interface between science and policy.

## INTERSESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

### EXPERT GROUP MEETING ON THE ROLE OF THE HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT

**FRAMEWORK:** An Expert Group Meeting (EGM) took place on 30 April and 1 May 2014 at the UN Headquarters in New York, to provide a space for reflection on how the forum could best be shaped to fulfill its role in the context of the post-2015 sustainable development agenda. The EGM resulted in a set of key messages on the architecture of the HLPF; the review process for the SDGs; and policymaking, coordination, and the role of science.

### INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FINANCING:

Following a mandate from the UNCSD, the UNGA established an intergovernmental committee to prepare a report by 2014, proposing options on an effective sustainable development financing strategy to facilitate the mobilization of resources and their effective use in achieving sustainable development objectives. The committee comprises 30 experts nominated by regional groups, with equitable geographical representation, and has held four sessions. A Working Group on Financing for Sustainable Development has also been set up under the UN System Task Team to support the work of the Committee.

### OPEN WORKING GROUP ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS:

During Rio+20, governments agreed to launch a process to develop a set of SDGs and in January 2013 the UNGA established an OWG to elaborate a proposal for SDGs. The OWG has met 12 times since March 2013 at UN Headquarters in New York. During its first eight meetings (March 2013 - February 2014), the OWG conducted a “stocktaking” review on a series of issue clusters covering the three dimensions of sustainable development (environmental, economic, and social development), as well as conflict prevention, post-conflict peacebuilding, and the promotion of durable peace, rule of law, and governance.

Based on these sessions, the Co-Chairs released a “stocktaking” document on 14 February 2014 and a “focus areas” document on 21 February 2014, containing 19 focus areas, which were the basis for discussions at OWG-9 (3-5 March 2014). The Co-Chairs released a revised focus areas document for consideration at OWG-10 (31 March-4 April 2014). OWG-10 featured the first extended discussion of possible targets to accompany each focus area, with over 300 targets presented by Member States and Major Groups. Based on the OWG-10 discussions, the Co-Chairs released a “working document” on 18 April, to guide delegates’ preparation for OWG-11. At OWG-11 (5-9 May 2014), delegates commented on a new document containing a list of 16 “focus areas” and approximately 150 potential targets related to each focus area, which the Co-Chairs distributed two weeks before the session. The Co-Chairs also prepared a document they titled “Encyclopedia Groupinica,” which contains all of the proposals presented during OWG-10.

At OWG-12 (16-20 June 2014) and a set of informal consultations held the previous week, delegates met informally and discussed the “zero draft” of the proposed SDGs and targets, containing 17 goals and 212 targets. Delegates worked through the entire document goal-by-goal and target-by-target. The OWG’s final meeting will take place from 14-18 July 2014.