



# General Assembly Economic and Social Council

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**General Assembly**  
**Sixty-seventh session**  
Item 15 of the preliminary list\*\*  
**Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields**

**Economic and Social Council**  
**Substantive session of 2012**  
New York, 2-27 July 2012  
Items 4, 6, 8 and 13 of the provisional agenda\*\*\*  
**The role of the United Nations system in implementing the ministerial declaration of the high-level segment of the 2011 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council**  
**Implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits**  
**Implementation of General Assembly resolutions 50/227, 52/12 B, 57/270 B and 60/265**  
**Economic and environmental questions**

## **Periodicity and scope of future reports on the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits**

**Note by the Secretary-General**

### **I. Mandate**

1. The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 2009/29, requested the Secretary-General to prepare, taking into account the views of Member States, a report on the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits, including recommendations on the periodicity of future reports, in the light of relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, notably resolution 61/16. In its decision

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\*\* A/67/50.

\*\*\* E/2012/100.



2010/252, the Council took note of the report of the Secretary-General on the role of the Council in this field (A/65/84-E/2010/90), which included proposals for future consideration of the matter, and decided that the scope and periodicity of future reports on the subject should be reviewed in connection with the review by the Assembly of the implementation of resolution 61/16. During this review, undertaken at its sixty-fifth session, the issue was not discussed and the Assembly did not take a decision on the matter. Consequently, at its substantive session of 2011, the Council, in its decision 2011/216, requested the Secretary-General to prepare a note containing recommendations on the periodicity and scope of future reports for consideration at its 2012 substantive session.

## **II. Background**

2. Since the mid-1990s, the Economic and Social Council has promoted the integrated follow-up to conferences by advancing a holistic approach to economic, social and related issues that takes into account the interrelatedness of the different goals and targets of the major United Nations conferences. The shared vision of development that emerged from those conferences laid the groundwork for the Millennium Summit, which in turn led to the adoption of the time-bound goals and targets known as the Millennium Development Goals.

3. The Heads of State and Government gathered at the World Summit in 2005 reaffirmed this broad vision of development, which is now commonly referred to as the United Nations development agenda. The agenda encompasses the internationally agreed development goals derived from the major United Nations conferences and summits, including the Millennium Development Goals, which are its most visible and concise expression.

4. The two new functions entrusted by the World Summit to the Economic and Social Council, namely the holding of the annual ministerial review and the biennial Development Cooperation Forum, aim at effective implementation of the development agenda. Both the review and the Forum are considered to be innovative, producing action-oriented policy proposals and new substantive insights, which contribute to a more effective follow-up to conferences.

5. The value of the annual ministerial review is that it takes an in-depth look at a cross-cutting theme common to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits, including the Millennium Development Goals and other development goals. The results of various follow-up processes are consolidated during the review. This is, in effect, an integrated and substantive way in which the Economic and Social Council reviews progress made in the implementation of the outcomes of those conferences and summits and their follow-up processes, as envisaged by the General Assembly in its resolution 61/16.

6. For the process to function adequately, it is important that the Economic and Social Council work as a system, that is, that its functional commissions and other subsidiary bodies, which often have a specific role to play in the follow-up to specific conference outcomes, contribute to the annual ministerial review. In addition, the Council should continue to adopt the theme of the reviews well in advance in order to give different actors sufficient time to actively contribute to its deliberations.

7. It is noteworthy that the consideration, at the coordination segment, of the implementation of the ministerial declaration adopted by the Economic and Social Council at the annual ministerial review of the previous year provides an additional opportunity to review the follow-up and implementation of the outcomes of specific conferences and summits. This helps to facilitate the coordination and integration of the work of the United Nations system on the theme of the ministerial declaration.

### **III. Scope and periodicity of future reporting**

8. As noted in the report of the Secretary-General submitted to the Economic and Social Council at its 2010 substantive session (A/65/84-E/2010/90), given that the integrated review of conferences is now being pursued under the annual ministerial review process, a separate annual report on the integrated follow-up to conferences adds little substantive value to the existing reports prepared annually for the review process and the coordination segment.

9. However, the Economic and Social Council may still wish to review the role of the United Nations system in the integrated follow-up to conferences and the modalities through which actors within the Organization contribute to such follow-up. Such an integrated follow-up architecture to conferences and summits has evolved considerably since the adoption by the General Assembly of its resolution 50/227. At the country level, the system has focused its efforts on coordinated technical and policy advice for the planning and implementation of national development strategies for achieving the Millennium Development Goals, culminating in the launching of the “Delivering as one” initiative in pilot countries. At the regional level, mechanisms of the regional commissions and the regional directors teams, composed of regional directors of the United Nations Development Group, increasingly tend to coordinate their efforts to maximize results. At the inter-agency level, the United Nations System Chief Executive Board for Coordination (CEB) and its three pillars (the High-level Committee on Programme, the High-level Committee on Management and the United Nations Development Group) has become an important player in promoting horizontal coherence across the United Nations system and has served as an umbrella for the development of toolkits to mainstream cross-cutting issues into the activities of the organizations of the common system. The Millennium Development Goals Gap Task Force and the Millennium Development Goals Africa Steering Group are other valuable examples of mechanisms for increased programmatic coherence.

10. Finally, at the intergovernmental level, the follow-up to United Nations conferences and summits is subject to a three-tiered review, involving: (a) a lead functional commission or another intergovernmental body, such as the executive boards of the funds and programmes or the governing bodies of the specialized agencies; (b) the Economic and Social Council, for overall guidance and coordination; and (c) the General Assembly, for high-level policy reviews. New modalities for enhanced coordination among the institutional tiers are constantly being tested by the system, including through the new interaction between the Bureau of the Council with the Chairs of the functional commissions, or the institutionalized contribution of the functional commissions to the annual ministerial

review. The United Nations system is a dynamic one, with progress in various instances as well as persistent challenges in others.<sup>1</sup>

11. In this context, it is important that the Economic and Social Council continue, on a regular basis, to look into the most appropriate modalities for follow-up to major conferences and summits, with a view to promoting the coherence, coordination and integration of the United Nations apparatus in this context. The architecture for such follow-up by the United Nations system at the country, regional, inter-agency and intergovernmental levels should therefore encompass the full scope of future reporting in this area, with a special focus on the role of the machinery of the Council.

12. The relevance of future reporting depends on developments in the definition of the United Nations development agenda. Rather than having a fixed periodicity, future reports should be submitted when intergovernmental decisions call for the renewed consideration of the integrated follow-up to conferences by the Economic and Social Council. The major forthcoming events that would call for such a review are the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, to be held in June 2012, and the review of the Millennium Development Goals in 2015. Consequently, the Council may wish to request that reports on the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits be submitted to it at its substantive session of 2013, in order to take into account the outcome of the Conference on Sustainable Development, and at its substantive session in 2016, in order to take into account the outcome of the review of the Millennium Development Goals. In this way, the Council will be able to consider the integrated architecture of the follow-up to those processes, including the role of the Council therein.

13. Thereafter, the Economic and Social Council may choose to consider these reports in such a way as to coincide with the review cycle of the Millennium Development Goals, which is likely to continue to take place every five years.

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<sup>1</sup> For more information, see A/64/87-E/2009/89.