

Agreements

General

- Lead agencies for the plenary sessions and the parallel special sessions are responsible for preparing a concept note and background paper; identifying speakers from different stakeholder groups; identifying partner agencies – as per organizational guidelines document.
- Representatives of member States and non-government stakeholders to be included in all plenaries and parallel special sessions.
- ESCWA to organize a civil society preparatory meeting in April. ESCWA and UN Environment to organize an environment preparatory meeting at the end of April. Key messages from both as input to AFSD and outcome document. Partnerships encouraged. LAS on board.

Plenary Sessions (4, 5 and 6 under the broad theme of HLPF/AFSD)

- Move Session 6 (conflict) to the morning of Day 3 and organize 4 special sessions on the afternoon of Day 2 (each two simultaneously);
- ESCWA will take the lead on Session 4 (distribution).
- ILO and ESCWA will co-lead Session 5 (decent work-inclusive sustainable growth).
- ESCWA, UNDP and UNHCR have expressed an interest in co-leading Session 6 on conflict. The session will also consider the impact of occupation on poverty in Palestine. The title of the session should refer to vulnerability and resilience in order to take into account natural disasters and climate-induced vulnerability.

Special Sessions (6 max during the three-day Forum)

- Special sessions should be related to the topic of the Forum (poverty and prosperity) and feed into its conclusions. Where possible, they will be organized in partnership with another UN agency or member State.
- The following special sessions were agreed: WHO (health and poverty), UNFPA and ESCWA (demographic dividend and population issues in SDGs), UNEnvironment (integrated approach), UN-Habitat (sustainable urban development with the Gov. of Morocco (tbc)), ESCWA and FAO (road map to food security)
- The special sessions should include a regional dimension. For example, what are the key cross-border issues and what regional strategies to address common challenges?
- Special sessions should include case studies to illustrate lessons and good practices

Regional Mol Session (afternoon of Day 3)

- A session on means of implementation will focus on the regional perspective of the different components of Mol.

Action Points

- All agencies chairing plenaries and special sessions to submit Concept Notes and suggestions for keynote speakers and panelists by **15th March 2017**

Welcome and background (ESCWA – Karima El Korri & Ramla Khalidi)

- ESCWA gave an outline of the AFSD agenda and the background to the “RCM Working Group on the 2030 Agenda” and “Scientific Committee”

Discussion

UNFPA (Hala Youssef)

- UNFPA would like to contribute to Session 4 on Distribution.
- Session 5 should encourage countries to develop a strategy for decent work and growth, looking at different dimensions, including green growth, entrepreneurship, reconstruction, etc. Creating an enabling environment to support entrepreneurship, including SMEs is also important.
- Demographic dividend side-event proposed to take into consideration health, education, employment and population growth characteristics of different countries. Having this session would promote harnessing the potential of the youth in addressing poverty and promoting prosperity. UNFPA organized a similar event with Algeria, and it was very well received. All African countries have decided that 2017 will be the year of the demographic dividend, showing how you can use data to analyse different sectors and SDGs.

UNDP (Nader Kayrouz)

- Propose focusing on data, youth and the content of the Arab HDR report and resilience-based approaches to development.

WHO (Maha El-Adawy)

- There must be equity of SDGs. It is important that we take this multi-faceted approach. Keynote speaker should be from the region

LAS (Mohamed Abdel Maksoud Hassan)

- The links between SDGs need to be made clear, such as between food security and poverty

ILO (Tariq Haq)

- 'Poverty Eradication' and 'Prosperity' are vast topics; we must focus in to avoid very generic discussions. Can we take fewer points and go into more detail on these?
- If the purpose of the AFSD is to feed into the HLPF then being too broad (i.e. dealing with all six goals) may not be the best approach
- The Arab Region has the highest unemployment rates, the lowest levels of women's participation, the highest levels of labour migration. One of the key issues is the macroeconomy and structural transformation/economic diversification and how that could help create jobs and help meet the aspirations of the region's youth and growing population. Education and training certainly comes into that, but we should make sure it's not only a demand-side issue. Talking about decent work, we could bring in wages, social protection, social dialogue and the right to organise and collectively bargain (huge issue in the region). If we want to keep the session focused, we could hone in on the growth/employment nexus. We will happily co-lead this with ESCWA and we would be open to other agencies as well.
- Sceptical about extent of the role of entrepreneurship in creating employment and growth, but it certainly has some role to play. There was a phase when IFIs pushed for this as THE vehicle of job creation, but I don't think it is as topical anymore. It's a partial aspect of tackling employment challenges.
- ILO is organizing a meeting in April in Beirut, which will include a youth panel on the future of work.

UN-Habitat (Katja Schaffer)

- Identifying the most vulnerable people at the level of local government is a contribution we could make
- Happy to contribute with a side event on urban development (more details to be provided later)

UNEnvironment (Melanie Hutchinson)

- We want to look at individual issues separately as well as in an integrated way. We must look at the individual issues from an environmental perspective. This fits into the 'integrated' approach. Perhaps we should think less about the heading of 'conflict' and instead consider the theme of 'vulnerability' – this allows more scope for environmental issues

ESCWA (Karima El Korri, Ramla Khalidi, Adib Nehmeh, Niranjan Sarangi, Reem Nejdawi, Maisaa Youssef, Rouba Arja)

- It is not our aim to cover everything. What we want is to bring the voice of the Arab Region to the HLPF in New York, to demonstrate our regional understanding of terms such as 'Poverty'. Also to focus our own thoughts, decide and discuss which problems we want to tackle collectively.
- The first objective of the 2030 Agenda is eradicating poverty. This is what is most important, and what affects every country. We need to decide what Poverty means for our region. Is it just income poverty, or does lack of access come under this heading? Lack of access to justice, and gender inequality? In the Arab region, we must put on focus on multi-dimensional poverty.
- What is different about Poverty in the 2030 Agenda? Specifically, How does it deal with poverty differently from the approach to poverty under the MDGs?
- The 2030 Agenda is a 'transformative agenda': we must tackle causes, tackle inequality. This is no longer a narrow approach to poverty, within the limited perspective of income poverty. This is a broad approach, which is why a whole range of policies have to be improved and introduced.
- There are interlinkages between the three sessions. We should focus on similar aspects in all the different sessions – for example, distribution raises issues about social protection and taxation, which are linked also to the decent work session. The issue of short-term interventions in the context of conflict, as well as migration and labour, have linkages to the conflict session. Regarding the content, let's try as much as we can to highlight the common issues we know about, like including the informal sector in our analysis of entrepreneurship. We could also look at why prosperity should not be defined in terms of economic growth – it is more about sustainability and distribution. Let's focus on the issue of solidarity economy instead of public-private partnerships. What type of transformation is needed to move towards a care economy? The global aspect of the problem, such as global trade and what is being done about it? Or ODA and investment policies? How do we transform our economic policies to lead to greater prosperity?
- The keynote that begins Day 2 needs to bring the link with the SDGs and approach the issues of poverty and prosperity in the region in a holistic way that sets the scene for the following three Sessions. The keynote must emphasise the big challenges: Peace and War, huge migration movements, unemployment, governance, weak institutions, all these are integral to the issue in our region.
- One option for the keynote speaker is the DSG, but we should also identify high calibre speakers from the region.

- Given their importance, conflict & gender will be mainstreamed across the different sessions, with Session 6 dedicated to many of the challenges of conflict and crisis.
- Day 1 is an assessment of the situation at national level and stocktaking exercise bringing the country level implementation and FUR to the forefront.
- We must understand the overall 'logic' and 'philosophy' of the 2030 Agenda. What is important is that we 1. Identify the problems that we want to deal with and 2. Coordinate and plan our response to them
- For the HLPF, we must put these issues into a regional context. How do we go about this – prioritise certain issues over others? Food security is very much interlinked with other issues, but we must also focus on single issues/sectors as individual issues. Food security, for example, must be presented as an individual issue to the HLPF
- We should not be limited by the goals; we should not consider some issues as off-limits just because they are not one of our six goals under in depth review in 2017. As long as they stay within the overall heading, agencies should raise whichever issues they feel need raising
- In the short-term we need public works programmes, but we also need to look at how to move from low value-added work to high value-added work (services sector). The youth are not getting sufficient opportunities in the high value-added sector. That will require also appropriate fiscal policies. How to bring in the green dimension is also a key challenge. We would also need some contributions, maybe from UN-Environment. Regarding social dialogue and bargaining and negotiating as a tool for structural change; we could have a discussion about what that means (empowering the people seeking work to be part of the bargaining process), perhaps as a side-event
- The people-centered approach considers the implications of age-structural changes for development and advocates priority setting in coherence with the specific needs of each population group. This approach should be advocated in the proposed special session on what should Arab countries do in order to reap the demographic dividend.

List of Participants

Agency	Name
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UNEP	Melanie Hutchinson
UNDP	Nader Keyrouz
WHO	Maha El-Edawy
ILO	Tariq Haq
UN-Habitat	Katja Schaffer
LAS	Mohamed Abdel Maksoud Hassan
UNHCR	Kaidar Ayoub
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