



United Nations

Commission for Social Development

**Report on the fifty-ninth session
(19 February 2020 and 8–17 February 2021)**

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Note

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Summary

The fifty-ninth session of the Commission for Social Development was held on 19 February 2020 and from 8 to 17 February 2021. Taking into account the prevailing conditions relating to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the Commission was convened in hybrid format, with its opening and closing meetings held in person and its general discussion and panel discussions held virtually.

The Commission deliberated on the priority theme of “Socially just transition towards sustainable development: the role of digital technologies on social development and well-being of all”. It also reviewed relevant United Nations plans and programmes of action pertaining to the situation of social groups, and the social dimensions of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development. The Commission held a high-level panel discussion on the priority theme, a ministerial forum, a high-level panel discussion on emerging issues, a multi-stakeholder forum on the priority theme to share solutions, and an interactive dialogue with senior officials of the United Nations system on the priority theme. A total of 25 ministers and vice-ministers participated in the general discussion of the Commission.

The President of the General Assembly, the President of the Economic and Social Council, the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, the Co-Chairs of the NGO Committee on Social Development and a youth representative participated in the opening session. In his opening remarks, the President of the General Assembly stated that the COVID-19 pandemic had reversed decades of development gains and had increased poverty. Yet, the pandemic had also unlocked resources and political will, and an opportunity to change the development trajectory. He underscored the need to align recovery efforts with the Sustainable Development Goals and called for a new social contract that addressed the root causes of inequality and vulnerability. Any recovery efforts must continue to be people-centred and accompanied by visionary action, solidarity and multilateral cooperation.

The President of the Council stated that the pandemic had highlighted the key role of social policy in protecting people’s lives and livelihoods and the planet. He addressed the need to foster “transformative resilience” by tackling high and rising inequality, investing in infrastructure and addressing the underlying causes of the digital divide. Sustainable infrastructure was fundamental to achieving all the Sustainable Development Goals, as it facilitated a socially just transition towards more resource-efficient and greener economies, a prerequisite for inclusive growth. He called for enhanced international cooperation to build a digitalized global economy, with necessary regulation and fair competition.

The Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs stated that the long-term outcomes of countries’ efforts to recover from the pandemic would be determined by whether their policy choices enabled a socially just transition. He outlined four key imperatives for rethinking economic activity to advance human well-being and protect the environment: (a) a new social contract that guaranteed quality public services and universal social protection; (b) promoting equal opportunity and decent work for all; (c) fostering economic security; and (d) closing the digital divide.

The Co-Chairs of the NGO Committee for Social Development advocated that Internet data and artificial intelligence be considered “digital public goods”, with protections concerning digital identity, privacy, online harassment, online content and data. They called for all regulatory frameworks to be updated so that digital technologies could be directed towards building better societies. A youth representative expressed commitment to working collaboratively and constructively

with the United Nations to foster meaningful youth engagement, including in connecting the 1.3 billion school-age youth who do not have access to the Internet.

During the general discussion on sub-items (a) and (b) of agenda item 3, most Member States expressed their appreciation for and commitment to the work of the Commission and thanked the Secretary-General for his comprehensive and insightful reports. The session's priority theme was highly relevant to support their efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and recover better from the devastating consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. The outcome of the World Summit for Social Development remained as relevant as ever, in the context of the pandemic, and the Commission played an important role in promoting social protection and social justice, eradicating poverty and ensuring that no one was left behind. With the pandemic exposing massive disparities in access to health, education and employment across regions, there was a need to prioritize the protection of the most vulnerable. Delegations highlighted the need for inclusive and human-centred recovery to protect people from hunger, income and job losses, and gender-based violence and build resilience to future shocks. The pandemic had also shed light on the huge gap in access to digital technologies, while accelerating the pace of digital transformation. There was an urgent need to bridge the digital divide and promote digital inclusion, while addressing new risks brought by digital technologies, to ensure the well-being of all. To address multiple barriers faced by the offline population, especially women, children and youth, older persons, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and poor families, Governments needed to take a holistic and integrated approach across sectors and in collaboration with other stakeholders, including the private sector. Access to digital technology was a prerequisite for a solid new social contract, and key to building back better towards achieving the 2030 Agenda for all. Forward-looking social policy was needed to invest in people's capacities and resilience through ensuring equal opportunities and access to quality education, health care and information and communications technology and by enhancing digital skills.

During the high-level panel discussion on the priority theme, panellists shared good policies and new initiatives at the national level, such as the expansion of high-speed Internet services to connect universities and schools in rural areas, skills development and training for workers of all ages to enable them to enter new economic sectors, and national plans to push the informal economy towards the digital economy. The Chair of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, a keynote speaker, welcomed the opportunity for cooperation and cross-fertilization between the Commission for Social Development and the Commission on Science and Technology for Development and underscored the need to promote digital technologies in a context-specific manner and as one of the tools for addressing the root causes of complex issues.

At the ministerial forum, held under the theme of "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", ministers from different regions presented national policies and measures being implemented to address the fallout from the pandemic and emphasized the need to strengthen multilateralism in order to ensure inclusive and resilient recovery.

Participants in the high-level panel discussion on emerging issues focused on opportunities and key challenges facing Member States in addressing the socioeconomic impact of the pandemic and shared effective social policy and social protection measures. Policymakers and experts made policy recommendations concerning four main areas: investing in human capacities; improving access to the

Internet and closing the digital divide; strengthening and consolidating social protection and health systems; and increasing cooperation and shared learning across countries and sectors.

During the interactive dialogue with senior officials of the United Nations system, the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union, the Deputy Executive Director for Resource Management, Sustainability and Partnerships of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), and the Special Rapporteur of the Human Rights Council on the rights of persons with disabilities, who participated in his personal capacity, discussed major trends, common challenges and recent activities in leveraging digital technologies for social development to facilitate a just transition. They also made policy recommendations. During the fifty-ninth session of the Commission, the multi-stakeholder forum built on the successful discussions of the previous forum, which had been held for the first time during the fifty-eighth session of the Commission, and brought together perspectives of diverse stakeholders, including a Minister, a policymaker at the national level, experts from the private sector, research institutions and civil society organizations, and a local innovator, to reflect a broad spectrum of society, provide insight into the real lives of people and put forward solutions.

More than 500 representatives of non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council participated in preparations for the session and in related events of the Commission. The Commission received more than 60 written statements from non-governmental organizations and held over 50 side events, organized by Member States, United Nations entities and non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Council.

The Commission decided that the priority theme for the sixtieth session would be “Inclusive and resilient recovery from COVID-19 for sustainable livelihoods, well-being and dignity for all: eradicating poverty and hunger in all its forms and dimensions to achieve the 2030 Agenda”. The Commission adopted four draft resolutions, on the future organization and methods of work of the Commission for Social Development; social dimensions of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development; a socially just transition towards sustainable development: the role of digital technologies on social development and well-being of all; and policies and programmes involving youth. The first three of those resolutions were recommended for adoption by the Economic and Social Council

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Chapter I

Matters calling for action by the Economic and Social Council or brought to its attention

A. Draft resolutions for adoption by the Council

1. The Commission for Social Development recommends to the Economic and Social Council the adoption of the following draft resolutions:

Draft resolution I

Future organization and methods of work of the Commission for Social Development

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling its resolutions 2005/11 of 21 July 2005, 2006/18 of 26 July 2006, 2008/19 of 24 July 2008, 2010/10 of 22 July 2010, [2012/7](#) of 26 July 2012, [2014/3](#) of 12 June 2014, [2016/6](#) of 2 June 2016, [2018/3](#) of 17 April 2018 and [2019/4](#) of 6 June 2019 on the future organization and methods of work of the Commission for Social Development,

Recalling also General Assembly resolution [50/161](#) of 22 December 1995 on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development, the outcome of the World Summit¹ and the outcome of the twenty-fourth special session of the Assembly,²

Recalling further General Assembly resolution [70/1](#) of 25 September 2015, entitled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, and stressing the importance of the implementation of this ambitious new Agenda,

Recalling General Assembly resolution [68/1](#) of 20 September 2013, entitled “Review of the implementation of General Assembly resolution [61/16](#) on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council”, as well as its follow-up resolution [72/305](#) of 23 July 2018,

Recalling also its resolution 1996/7 of 22 July 1996, by which it decided that the Commission, in fulfilling its mandate, should assist the Council in monitoring, reviewing and appraising the progress achieved and problems encountered in the implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development and should advise the Council thereon,

Recalling further General Assembly resolution [75/151](#) of 16 December 2020, in which the Assembly called upon the Commission to continue to address, as part of its mandate, inequality in all its dimensions, in the context of the implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and the Programme of Action, as well as the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and invited the Commission to emphasize the increased exchange of national, regional and international experiences, the focused and interactive dialogues among experts and practitioners and the sharing of best practices and lessons learned,

¹ *Report of the World Summit for Social Development, Copenhagen, 6–12 March 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No.E.96.IV.8), chap. I, resolution 1, annexes I and II.

² General Assembly resolution [S-24/2](#), annex.

Recognizing that the implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and the Programme of Action, the outcome of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly, the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002,³ and the World Programme of Action for Youth,⁴ the objectives of the International Year of the Family and their follow-up processes and the outcome document of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the realization of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities: the way forward, a disability-inclusive development agenda towards 2015 and beyond,⁵ as well as the fulfilment of the obligations of States parties under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities⁶ and other relevant key instruments, as well as the social dimensions of the 2030 Agenda, are mutually reinforcing to the advancement of social development for all,

Recognizing also the importance of the role of non-governmental organizations, as well as other civil society actors, in advancing the implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and the Programme of Action and, in this respect, the work of the Commission,

Recalling that the Council needs to consider and take steps towards the rationalization of its agenda, with a view to eliminating duplication and overlap and promoting complementarity in the consideration and negotiation of similar or related issues,

1. *Reaffirms* that the Commission for Social Development, as a functional commission of the Economic and Social Council, serving as the main United Nations forum for an intensified global dialogue on social development issues and in promoting the integrated treatment of social development issues in the United Nations system, continues to have the primary responsibility to review, on a periodic basis, issues related to the follow-up and implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development and the outcome of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly, in a manner consistent with the functions and contributions of the relevant organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, and shall advise the Council thereon;

2. *Also reaffirms* that the Commission will contribute to the follow-up to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,⁷ within its existing mandate, by supporting the thematic reviews of the high-level political forum on sustainable development on progress in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, including cross-cutting issues, reflecting the integrated nature of the Goals as well as the interlinkages between them, while engaging all relevant stakeholders and feeding into and being aligned with the cycle of the high-level political forum, according to the organizational arrangements established by the General Assembly and the Council;

3. *Recalls* General Assembly resolution [72/305](#), in which the Assembly stipulated that, inter alia, the subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council shall adopt their own respective themes, aligned with the main theme of the high-level political forum on sustainable development under the auspices of the Council, while continuing to address issues or a theme necessary to discharge their other functions;

³ *Report of the Second World Assembly on Ageing, Madrid, 8–12 April 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.02.IV.4), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

⁴ General Assembly resolution [50/81](#), annex, and resolution [62/126](#), annex.

⁵ General Assembly resolution [68/3](#).

⁶ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2515, No. 44910.

⁷ General Assembly resolution [70/1](#).

4. *Also recalls* that the Commission considers one priority theme at each session on the basis of the follow-up to and review of the World Summit and its linkages to the social dimensions of the 2030 Agenda, proposing an action-oriented resolution with recommendations to the Council in order to contribute to its work;

5. *Reaffirms* its decision that, in selecting its priority themes, the Commission shall consider, in addition to the follow-up to and review of the World Summit and the outcome of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly, as well as the 2030 Agenda, the programme of work of the Council and the main theme of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, so as to build synergies and contribute to the work of the Council;

6. *Requests* the Commission to adopt a multi-year programme of work, subsequent to the review of General Assembly resolution 70/299 of 29 July 2016, when considering the future organization and methods of work of the Commission at its sixty-first session, to allow for predictability and adequate time for preparation;

7. *Decides* that the priority theme for the sixtieth session of the Commission, which shall allow it to contribute to the work of the Council, will be “Inclusive and resilient recovery from COVID-19 for sustainable livelihoods, well-being and dignity for all: eradicating poverty and hunger in all its forms and dimensions to achieve the 2030 Agenda”;

8. *Also decides* that the Commission shall adopt a decision at its sixtieth session to establish the priority theme for its sixty-first session, in accordance with the provisions of the present resolution;

9. *Invites* the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, the relevant specialized agencies, regional commissions, funds and programmes of the United Nations system and the international financial institutions to present their relevant activities and reports, which may contribute to the advancement of the priority theme, including by participating in interactive dialogues with Member States and relevant stakeholders;

10. *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;

11. *Reaffirms* its decision to promote efficiency in its work through the biennialization of the resolutions of the Commission, with a view to strengthening the resolution on the priority theme, eliminating duplication and overlap and promoting complementarity in the consideration and negotiation of similar or related issues between the Council and the General Assembly;

12. *Encourages* non-governmental organizations, as well as other civil society actors, to participate, to the maximum extent possible, in line with Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996, in the work of the Commission and in the monitoring and implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and the Programme of Action of the World Summit and the outcome of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly;

13. *Decides* that the Commission shall keep its methods of work under review, including as related to the timing and number of working days of its sessions, at its sixty-first session in order to adjust, as appropriate, to the work of the Council, in line with the outcome of the General Assembly review of the strengthening of the Council and the process of repositioning the United Nations development system.

Draft resolution II

Social dimensions of the New Partnership for Africa's Development

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling the outcomes of the World Summit for Social Development, held in Copenhagen from 6 to 12 March 1995,¹ and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly, entitled “World Summit for Social Development and beyond: achieving social development for all in a globalizing world”, held in Geneva from 26 June to 1 July 2000,² the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,³ and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development,⁴ and reaffirming the United Nations Declaration on the New Partnership for Africa's Development of 16 September 2002,⁵

Recognizing the commitments made at the 2005 World Summit with regard to meeting the special needs of Africa⁶ and reaffirmed in the political declaration on Africa's development needs adopted at the high-level meeting held at United Nations Headquarters on 22 September 2008,⁷ and noting the relevant decisions of African Union summits related to the New Partnership for Africa's Development,⁸

Reaffirming General Assembly resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015, entitled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, in which the Assembly adopted a comprehensive, far-reaching and people-centred set of universal and transformative Sustainable Development Goals and targets and affirmed its commitment to working tirelessly for the full implementation of the Agenda by 2030, its recognition that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development, its commitment to achieving sustainable development in its three dimensions – economic, social and environmental – in a balanced and integrated manner, and to building upon the achievements of the Millennium Development Goals and seeking to address their unfinished business,

Reaffirming also General Assembly resolution 69/313 of 27 July 2015, containing the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, which is an integral part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,

Reaffirming further Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, adopted by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union at its twenty-fourth ordinary session, held in Addis Ababa on 30 and 31 January 2015, and the first 10-year implementation plan (2014–2023) of Agenda 2063, in which flagship projects, priority areas and policy measures to support the implementation of the continental development framework were outlined and form the strategic framework for Africa's inclusive growth and sustainable development and optimization of the use of the continent's resources for the benefit of all its people,

¹ *Report of the World Summit for Social Development, Copenhagen, 6–12 March 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.8), chap. I, resolution I, annexes I and II.

² General Assembly resolution S-24/2, annex.

³ General Assembly resolution 70/1.

⁴ General Assembly resolution 69/313, annex.

⁵ General Assembly resolution 57/2.

⁶ General Assembly resolution 60/1, para. 68.

⁷ General Assembly resolution 63/1.

⁸ A/57/304, annex.

Recalling the fourth session of the African Union Conference of Ministers of Social Development, on the theme “Strengthening the African family for inclusive development in Africa”, held in Addis Ababa from 26 to 30 May 2014, and the first session of the Specialized Technical Committee on Social Development, Labour and Employment, on the theme “Social protection for inclusive development”, held in Addis Ababa from 20 to 24 April 2015, recalling in this regard the African Common Position on Social Integration and the Social Policy Framework for Africa, which were endorsed by the Heads of State and Government of the African Union in February 2009, as well as the African Common Position on Good Practices in Family Policy Development and Implementation for the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family (2014) and the renewed Continental Plan of Action on the African Decade of Persons with Disabilities (2010–2019), which were endorsed by the Heads of State and Government of the African Union in January 2013, and noting the adoption of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the Rights of Older Persons in Africa in January 2016,

Acknowledging the importance of supporting Agenda 2063 and the programme of the New Partnership, both of which are integral to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to achieving an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the international arena, and underscoring in this regard the importance of a coherent and coordinated implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda,

Reaffirming General Assembly resolution [71/254](#) of 23 December 2016, entitled “Framework for a Renewed United Nations-African Union Partnership on Africa’s Integration and Development Agenda 2017–2027”, and welcoming in this regard the signing on 27 January 2018 of the African Union-United Nations Framework for the Implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to promote the integrated and coordinated implementation and monitoring of and reporting on both Agendas through joint activities and programmes,

Acknowledging that the attainment of the seven aspirations of Agenda 2063 is critical to ensuring a high standard of living, quality of life and well-being for all citizens of Africa through income security, jobs and decent work, poverty and hunger eradication, inequality reduction, social security and protection floors, particularly for persons with disabilities, modern, affordable and liveable habitats and quality basic services, healthy and nourished citizens with access to health care, environmentally sustainable and climate-resilient economies and communities, full gender equality in all spheres of life and engaged and empowered youth and children,

Recalling the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa adopted by the African Union, which calls for the creation of an enabling environment for adequate investments and the adoption of the sector reforms aimed at promoting economic and social development and reducing poverty on the continent through the implementation of integrated regional infrastructure networks,

Recalling also the convening of the third session of the African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Social Development, Labour and Employment, in Addis Ababa from 1 to 5 April 2019, during which ministers tasked the African Union Commission with drafting a Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the Rights of Citizens to Social Protection and Social Security, as well as a Social Agenda 2063,

Noting with concern the continued high prevalence of child, early and forced marriage, as well as violence and other harmful practices against children, including female genital mutilation, and reaffirming in this regard the Africa-wide campaign to end child marriage in Africa, launched at the fourth session of the African Union Conference of Ministers of Social Development, held in Addis Ababa from

26 to 30 May 2014, the Southern African Development Community Model Law on Eradicating Child Marriage and Protecting Children Already in Marriage and the endorsement by the Pan-African Parliament in August 2016 of a ban on female genital mutilation,

Recognizing that, after the latest global financial crisis, the global economy is still facing difficult macroeconomic conditions, low commodity prices, subdued trade growth and volatile capital flows, that, notwithstanding the impact of the financial crisis, financial flows and the share of developing countries in world trade have continued to increase, that these advances have contributed to a substantial reduction in the number of people living in extreme poverty, and that, despite these gains, many countries, particularly developing countries, still face considerable challenges and some have fallen further behind, emphasizing that the African Union and the regional economic communities have a critical role to play in the implementation of the New Partnership programme, and in this regard encouraging African countries, with the assistance of their development partners, to increase and coordinate effectively their support for enhancing the capacities of these institutions and to promote regional cooperation and social and economic integration in Africa,

Recognizing also that investments in people, especially in their social protection, health-inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all, are essential to enhancing productivity in all sectors, including agriculture, and thereby key to sustainable and equitable growth and poverty reduction, through increasing decent job creation and employability opportunities for all, especially for women and youth, improving food security and nutrition and building resilience,

Recalling the outcome of the high-level meeting of the seventy-fourth session of the General Assembly on universal health coverage, and reaffirming its political declaration, entitled “Universal health coverage: moving together to build a healthier world”,⁹ in which it reiterated, inter alia, the importance of scaling up the global effort to leave no one behind and to build a healthier world for all, as well as accelerating efforts towards the achievement of universal health coverage by 2030 to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all throughout the life course,

Recognizing that gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, and the enjoyment of all human rights, will make a crucial contribution to progress across all of the Sustainable Development Goals and targets and that the systematic mainstreaming of a gender perspective in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is crucial, and in this regard recalling the adoption, at the second ordinary session of the Assembly of the African Union, of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, in Maputo on 11 July 2003, and the African Women’s Decade (2010–2020), commending the adoption of the African Union Strategy for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment at the third session of the Specialized Technical Committee on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment, held in Addis Ababa from 7 to 11 May 2018, and commending also the adoption of the New African Women’s Decade (2020–2030) as the Decade of Women’s Financial and Economic Inclusion at the thirty-third ordinary session of the Assembly of the African Union in Addis Ababa on 10 February 2020,

Recognizing also that the lack of access to safe drinking water and proper sanitation contributes to slow progress in reducing Africa’s disease burden, particularly among the poorest populations, in both rural and urban areas, and conscious of the impact of the lack of sanitation on people’s health, poverty reduction

⁹ General Assembly resolution 74/2.

efforts, economic and social development and the environment, in particular water resources,

Reiterating the importance of strengthening policy and programmatic linkages between public health, pollution control, climate action, biodiversity conservation, ecosystem integrity, socioeconomic equity, inclusiveness and prosperity as one of the most effective strategies for Africa's post-COVID-19 recovery,

Noting with appreciation that the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative and its advancement, the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative, and bilateral donors have provided substantial full debt relief to 30 African countries that have reached the completion point under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative, which has considerably reduced their public debt, improved their debt management, boosted their social spending and reduced their poverty level,

Bearing in mind that African countries have primary responsibility for their own economic and social development and that the role of national policies and development strategies cannot be overemphasized, bearing in mind also the need for their development efforts to be supported by the international community and an enabling international economic environment, reiterating the need for the international community to implement all commitments regarding the economic and social development of Africa, and in this regard recalling the support given by the International Conferences on Financing for Development to the New Partnership,¹⁰

Underscoring that, for all countries, public policies and the mobilization and effective use of domestic resources, underscored by the principle of national ownership, are central to the common pursuit of sustainable development, including achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, and recognizing that domestic resources are first and foremost generated by economic growth, supported by an enabling environment at all levels,

Concerned that the current COVID-19 crisis is likely to reverse decades of progress in social development, leaving more people behind and that it has also had a negative impact on the abilities of Governments to realize the 2030 Agenda and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, stressing that at this critical moment in the decade of action to deliver the Goals by 2030 the visions, principles and commitments made at the World Summit for Social Development remain valid and are central to addressing emerging global challenges, and recalling that social policies have a key role to play in addressing the immediate effects of crises,

Deeply concerned that the COVID-19 pandemic, owing to its severe disruptions to societies, economies, employment, global trade, supply chains and travel, and agricultural, industrial and commercial systems, is having a devastating impact on sustainable development and humanitarian needs, including on poverty eradication, livelihoods, ending hunger, food security and nutrition, education, environmentally sound waste management and access to health care, especially for the poor and people in vulnerable situations and in countries in special situations and those countries most affected, and is making the prospect of achieving all Sustainable Development Goals more difficult, including eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions by 2030, ending hunger and achieving food security and improved nutrition,

Determined to address the COVID-19 pandemic through a global response based on unity, solidarity and renewed multilateral cooperation among States, peoples

¹⁰ See *Report of the International Conference on Financing for Development, Monterrey, Mexico, 18–22 March 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.02.II.A.7), chap. I, resolution 1, annex; and General Assembly resolution 63/239, annex, and resolution 69/313, annex.

and generations that enhances the ability and resolve of States and other relevant stakeholders to fully implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General;¹¹
2. *Welcomes* the progress made by African Governments in fulfilling their commitments in the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development to deepen democracy, human rights, good governance and sound economic management, and encouraging them, with the participation of stakeholders, including civil society and the private sector, to intensify their efforts in this regard by developing and strengthening institutions for governance and creating an environment conducive to attracting foreign direct investment for the development of the region;
3. *Takes note* of the strengthening of the African Peer Review Mechanism through the decision of the Assembly of the African Union to make the Mechanism an organ of the African Union in line with article 5, paragraph 2, of its Constitutive Act,¹² and welcomes the progress that has been achieved in implementing the Mechanism;
4. *Reaffirms* the importance of supporting Agenda 2063 of the African Union, as well as its first 10-year implementation plan, as a strategic framework for ensuring a positive socioeconomic transformation in Africa and its continental programme embedded in the resolutions of the General Assembly on the New Partnership and regional initiatives, such as the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme;
5. *Takes note* of the development of the monitoring and evaluation framework for the first 10-year implementation plan of Agenda 2063 by Africa's regional economic communities, the Planning and Coordinating Agency of the New Partnership, the Economic Commission for Africa, the African Development Bank and the African Symposium on Statistical Development, as well as the Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa, both of which have fostered convergence in the monitoring and evaluation of the first 10-year implementation plan and the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as a unified implementation and monitoring plan for Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and notes the incorporation of the first 10-year implementation plan into national planning frameworks by 42 countries;
6. *Welcomes* the adoption of the governance structures of the African Union Development Agency, the implementing mechanism for the African Union Agenda 2063 development strategy, during the thirty-fifth ordinary session of the Executive Council of the African Union, held in Niamey on 4 and 5 July 2019, and whose mission is to foster the development of the continent through effective and integrated planning, coordination and implementation of Agenda 2063 with Member States, regional economic communities and pan-African institutions by leveraging partnerships and technical cooperation;
7. *Also welcomes* the efforts made by African countries and regional and subregional organizations, including the African Union, to mainstream a gender perspective and the empowerment of all women and girls in the implementation of the New Partnership, including the implementation of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa;
8. *Takes note with appreciation* of the efforts of the African Union Commission, which have resulted in the launch of national campaigns to end child, early and forced marriage in 24 countries, the adoption of the African Common

¹¹ E/CN.5/2021/2.

¹² United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2158, No. 37733.

Position on the African Union Campaign to End Child Marriage in Africa and its extension for a five-year period from 2019 to 2023, and the endorsement by the Assembly of the African Union in Addis Ababa in February 2019 of the continental initiative to be known as “Saleema: African Union Initiative on Eliminating Female Genital Mutilation”, in partnership with the United Nations;

9. *Also takes note with appreciation* of the launch, on 24 August 2018 in Addis Ababa, by the African Union Commission, in collaboration with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and the International Telecommunication Union, of the African Girls Can Code Initiative (2018–2022), which is aimed at enhancing the mastering of information and communications technology for girls and women and, therefore, increasing their contribution to Africa’s innovation in that sector;

10. *Recognizes* the progress that has been made in the implementation of the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa in support of regional and continental integration with a focus on the movement of people and goods (the Move Africa initiative), through the “traffic light system”, which has been operationalized at four pilot “one-stop border posts”;

11. *Acknowledges* the progress made towards ensuring free movement of persons as well as goods and services in Africa, and in this regard welcomes with appreciation the entry into force on 30 May 2019 of the agreement on the African Continental Free Trade Area, which aims to boost intra-African trade and continental integration and which has, to date, gathered 54 signatures and 35 ratifications from member States;

12. *Recalls* the African Union Road Map on Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through Investments in Youth and the first five-year priority programme on employment, poverty eradication and inclusive development 2017, and welcomes the declaration by the African Union of the period from 2018 to 2027 as the African Decade for Technical, Professional and Entrepreneurial Training and Youth Employment, with a focus on the creation of decent jobs for youth and women, aimed at achieving more inclusive growth and sustainable poverty eradication;

13. *Notes* the decision of the Heads of State and Government at the thirty-third ordinary session of the Assembly of the African Union to declare 2021 as the Year of the Arts, Culture and Heritage;

14. *Urges* all countries that have not yet done so to ratify or accede to the United Nations Convention against Corruption,¹³ encourages States parties to review its implementation, committing to making the Convention an effective instrument for deterring, detecting, preventing and countering corruption and bribery, prosecuting those involved in corrupt activities and recovering and returning stolen assets to their country of origin, as appropriate, encourages the international community to develop good practices on asset return, expresses support for the Stolen Asset Recovery Initiative of the United Nations and the World Bank and other international initiatives that support the recovery of stolen assets, urges the updating and ratification of regional conventions against corruption, and strives to eliminate safe havens that create incentives for the transfer abroad of stolen assets and illicit financial flows;

15. *Calls upon* African Governments to ratify the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Africa and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the Rights of Older Persons in Africa, to demonstrate the commitment of Member States

¹³ Ibid., vol. 2349, No. 42146.

to the dignity, empowerment and rights of persons with disabilities and older persons across the continent;

16. *Notes* that health is a precondition, an indicator and an outcome of sustainable development and that, as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, robust efforts are needed to integrate additional health issues into a broad health and development agenda, and therefore takes note of the declaration of the Assembly of the Heads of State and Government of the African Union, at its thirty-second ordinary session, in which it committed to supporting and enhancing the reform of the health sector through adopting the health in all policies approach in order to achieve universal health coverage and curb the outbreak of major diseases in Africa and to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals;

17. *Takes note with appreciation* of the revised Africa Health Strategy for the period 2016–2030, which was endorsed by the Assembly of the African Union in 2016, with the main objectives of strengthening health systems, improving performance, increasing investments in health, improving equity, addressing social determinants of health to reduce priority disease burdens by 2030 and helping member States to more effectively manage the risks of disasters in a more systematic manner;

18. *Urges* African Governments to fast-track the implementation of the revised Africa Health Strategy, which provides umbrella guidance for the development of the African Regional Nutrition Strategy, the Maputo Plan of Action 2016–2030 for the Operationalization of the Continental Policy Framework for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, the Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Plan for Africa and the Catalytic Framework to End AIDS and Tuberculosis and Eliminate Malaria in Africa by 2030, welcomes the Declaration on Universal Access to Immunization as a Cornerstone for Health and Development in Africa adopted by African Ministers of Health in 2016, and the 2017 declaration on committing to accelerate implementation of the International Health Regulations (2005),¹⁴ and also urges African Governments to achieve ambitious targets, a business case and strategic priorities to end the three diseases as a public health threat by 2030;

19. *Stresses* the importance of improving maternal and child health, and in this regard recalls the declaration of the African Union summit on maternal, infant and child health and development, welcomes the fact that 52 African countries have since integrated the objectives of the Campaign on Accelerated Reduction of Maternal, Newborn and Child Mortality in Africa into their national strategies, notes the decision of the African Union to restrengthen the Campaign during the period 2021–2030, and urges the pursuit and implementation of commitments to improve maternal and child health;

20. *Takes note* of the declaration of the special summit of the African Union on HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, held in Abuja from 12 to 16 July 2013, on the progress made in implementing the Abuja actions towards the elimination of HIV and AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria in Africa by 2030, also takes note of the Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS: On the Fast Track to Accelerating the Fight against HIV and to Ending the AIDS Epidemic by 2030, adopted on 8 June 2016 at the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on HIV/AIDS,¹⁵ and reaffirms the resolve to provide assistance for prevention, treatment and care, with the aim of ensuring an Africa free of HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis, by addressing the needs of all, in particular those of women, children and young people, and the urgent need to significantly scale up efforts towards achieving the goal of universal access to comprehensive HIV/AIDS prevention programmes, treatment, care and support in

¹⁴ World Health Organization, document WHA58/2005/REC/1, resolution 58.3, annex.

¹⁵ General Assembly resolution 70/266, annex.

African countries, to accelerate and intensify efforts to expand access to affordable and quality medicines in Africa, including antiretroviral drugs, by encouraging pharmaceutical companies to make drugs available, and to ensure strengthened global partnership and increased bilateral and multilateral assistance, where possible on a grant basis, to combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and other infectious diseases in Africa through the strengthening of health systems;

21. *Also takes note* of the decision of the African Union to extend the African Union Road Map on Shared Responsibility and Global Solidarity for AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria Response in Africa from 2016 to 2020 and to use the year 2021, which marks the twentieth anniversary of the Abuja Declaration on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Other Related Infectious Diseases, as an opportunity to undertake a critical review of the situation and the consequences of these diseases in Africa, notes the revitalization of AIDS Watch Africa as an African high-level platform from which to advocate action, accountability and resource mobilization for the response to HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria in Africa, and requests, as appropriate, and in line with relevant international obligations, development partners and the United Nations system to support the efforts of African countries and organizations to reach the main objectives put forward in the Road Map, including achieving diversified sustainable financing, strengthening regulatory harmonization and local pharmaceutical manufacturing capacity and enhancing leadership and governance of the responses;

22. *Invites* development partners to continue to assist African countries in their efforts to strengthen national health systems, including by providing skilled health personnel, reliable health information and data, research infrastructure and laboratory capacity, and to expand surveillance systems in the health sector, including by providing support for the efforts to prevent, protect against and combat outbreaks of disease, including outbreaks of neglected tropical diseases, and in this context reiterates its support for the Kampala Declaration and Agenda for Global Action and follow-up conferences to respond to the serious health workforce crisis in Africa;

23. *Encourages* Member States to continue to provide international cooperation and capacity-building support to developing countries, particularly African countries, in water- and sanitation-related activities and programmes, including water harvesting, desalination, water efficiency, wastewater treatment, recycling and reuse technologies, and notes the strategy of the African Ministers' Council on Water for the period 2018–2030, launched for the achievement of the African Water Vision 2025, Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals;

24. *Emphasizes* that progress in the implementation of the New Partnership depends also on a favourable national and international environment for Africa's growth and development, including measures to promote a policy environment conducive to private sector development and entrepreneurship and to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals;

25. *Also emphasizes* that democracy, respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development, transparent and accountable governance and administration in all sectors of society and effective participation by civil society, including non-governmental and community-based organizations, and the private sector are among the indispensable foundations for the realization of social and people-centred sustainable development;

26. *Further emphasizes* that the poverty, inequality and social exclusion faced by most African countries require a comprehensive approach to the development and implementation of social and economic policies, inter alia, to reduce poverty, to promote economic activity, growth and sustainable development in order to ensure productive employment creation and decent work for all, to promote quality

education, health and social protection and to enhance equality, social inclusion, political stability, democracy and good governance at all levels and the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms;

27. *Emphasizes* that identifying and removing barriers to opportunity, as well as ensuring access to basic social protection and social services, are necessary to break the cycle of poverty, inequality and social exclusion;

28. *Encourages* African countries to continue to prioritize structural transformation, modernize smallholder agriculture, add value to primary commodities, improve public and private institutions of economic and political governance and invest in major public infrastructure projects and in inclusive, equitable and quality education and health in order to promote inclusive growth, generate full and productive employment and decent work for all and reduce poverty;

29. *Emphasizes* that economic development, including employment-intensive resource-based industrial development, with due regard to the sustainable management and use of natural resources, infrastructural development and structural transformation, in particular in the rural economy, based on pragmatic and targeted policies to enhance productive capacities in Africa that are consistent with national development priorities and international commitments, can generate employment and income for all African men and women, including the poor, and therefore be an engine for poverty eradication and for achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including the Sustainable Development Goals;

30. *Encourages* African countries to continue to foster political stability, promote peace and security and strengthen the governance, policy and institutional environment in order to enhance the prospects for inclusive and sustainable development, and to develop an enabling environment for the private sector to contribute to sustainable economic transformation and the creation of productive employment and decent work for all;

31. *Stresses* that the achievement of sustainable development and the eradication of poverty hinge on the ability and readiness of countries to effectively mobilize domestic resources, attract foreign direct investment, fulfil official development assistance commitments and use such assistance effectively and facilitate the transfer of technology, on mutually agreed terms, to developing countries, and also stresses that the resolution of unsustainable debt situations is critical for heavily indebted poor countries, while remittances have become a significant source of income and finance for receiving economies and their contribution to the achievement of sustainable development;

32. *Notes* that preliminary data in 2019 show a slight increase of 1.3 per cent in real terms compared to 2018 of the net bilateral aid flows from member countries of the Development Assistance Committee to Africa;

33. *Reiterates* that the fulfilment of all official development assistance commitments remains crucial, including the commitment by many developed countries to achieve the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national income for official development assistance and 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of gross national income for official development assistance to the least developed countries, is encouraged by those few countries that have met or surpassed their commitment to 0.7 per cent of gross national income for official development assistance and the target of 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of gross national income for official development assistance to the least developed countries, and urges all others to step up efforts to increase their official development assistance and to make additional concrete efforts towards official development assistance targets;

34. *Recognizes* that middle-income countries still face significant challenges in achieving sustainable development and that, in order to ensure that achievements made to date are sustained, efforts to address ongoing challenges should be strengthened through the exchange of experiences, improved coordination and better and focused support of the United Nations development system, the international financial institutions, regional organizations and other stakeholders, and therefore requests those stakeholders to ensure that the diverse and specific development needs of middle-income countries are appropriately considered and addressed, in a tailored fashion, in their relevant strategies and policies, with a view to promoting a coherent and comprehensive approach towards individual countries, while also acknowledging that official development assistance and other concessional finance is still important for a number of these countries and has a role to play for targeted results, taking into account the specific needs of these countries;

35. *Also recognizes* that, while social development is primarily the responsibility of Governments, international cooperation and assistance are essential for the full achievement of that goal, and calls upon the international community to continue to support the resolution of challenges faced by developing countries, especially the least developed countries, including in Africa, to independently achieving sustainable development;

36. *Further recognizes* the contribution made by Member States to the implementation of the New Partnership in the context of South-South cooperation, and encourages the international community, including the international financial institutions, to support the efforts of African countries, including through trilateral cooperation;

37. *Welcomes* the efforts of the United Nations and the African Union to realign the clusters of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa to deal with the major themes of both Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and invites development partners, including the United Nations system, to continue to support the Mechanism in achieving its objectives, including through the allocation of the financing necessary to support the implementation of its activities;

38. *Encourages* African countries to intensify their efforts to strengthen the capacity of subnational and national statistical systems in order to produce reliable and timely statistics and indicators for the monitoring of national development policies and strategies and of the implementation of commitments for the achievement of all Sustainable Development Goals at the local, national, regional and international levels, and in this regard urges donor countries and organizations, including the United Nations system, and the international and regional statistical communities to support African countries in strengthening statistical capacity in support of development;

39. *Takes note* of the Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa 2024, which aims to have an impact across critical sectors such as agriculture, energy, environment, health, infrastructure development, mining, security and water;

40. *Underlines* the importance for African Governments to build the productive capacity of sustainable agriculture, as a top priority, in order to increase rural incomes and ensure access to food for net food buyers, and stresses that greater efforts should be made to promote and implement sustainable agriculture, increase the access of smallholder farmers, in particular women, to necessary agricultural resources, including productive assets, and improve access to infrastructure, information and markets, and that, furthermore, efforts should be made to promote rural-urban linkages through small and medium-sized enterprises that contribute to job growth and increase incomes along the agricultural value stream;

41. *Urges* African Governments, within the framework of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme, to expand investment financing to agriculture to at least 10 per cent of the annual budget of the national public sector while at the same time ensuring necessary action in policy and institutional reforms for enhanced performance of the agriculture industry and systems;

42. *Recognizes* the need for Africa's development partners that are supporting agriculture, food security and nutrition in Africa to align their efforts more specifically towards supporting the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme, using the Programme's investment plans for the alignment of external funding;

43. *Welcomes* progress made in addressing issues such as food security through the adoption of a resolution on the development of a model law on food security and nutrition in Africa in October 2018 by the Pan-African Parliament, and the development of a technical cooperation project to incorporate indigenous crops into the African nutritious food basket for improved food security and nutrition, and notes the Initiative for Food and Nutrition Security in Africa;

44. *Reaffirms* that among the objectives of the Third United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2018–2027), proclaimed by the General Assembly in its resolution [72/233](#) of 20 December 2017, are maintenance of the momentum generated by the implementation of the Second Decade and support, in an efficient and coordinated manner, for the internationally agreed development goals related to poverty eradication, including the Sustainable Development Goals and their objective of leaving no one behind;

45. *Urges* African countries to pay close attention to inclusive, equitable and sustainable growth capable of being employment-intensive, including through employment-intensive investment programmes, aimed at reducing inequalities, increasing productive employment, generating decent work for all, particularly those who are vulnerable, including women and young people, and improving real per capita incomes in both rural and urban areas;

46. *Emphasizes* the need, in particular for African countries, to enhance capacity-building for sustainable development, and in this regard calls for the strengthening of technical and scientific cooperation, including North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation, and reiterates the importance of adequate human resources development, including through training, the exchange of experience and expertise, knowledge transfer and technical assistance for capacity-building, which involves strengthening institutional capacity, including policy coherence, coordination and implementation, as well as planning, management and monitoring capacities;

47. *Also emphasizes* the importance of increasing international cooperation to improve the quality of and access to education, including efforts to realize girls' right to education, in particular for African countries, including through building and strengthening education-related infrastructure and increasing investment in education, and takes note of continental initiatives such as the African Union International Centre for Girls' and Women's Education in Africa, which implemented activities in line with its strategic plan for the period 2018–2020 and officially launched the Africa Educates Her campaign on 11 September 2020, a rallying call to get girls back to school;

48. *Urges* African countries and development partners to meet the needs of young people and empower them, in particular by tackling the high levels of youth unemployment through the development of quality education, skills training and entrepreneurship programmes that address illiteracy, enhance the employability and capabilities of young people, facilitate school-to-work transitions and expand

guaranteed employment schemes, where appropriate, with particular attention to disadvantaged young people in both rural and urban areas, and in this regard takes note of the launch at the Pan African Youth Forum on the theme “Africa unite for youth: bridging the gap and reaching African youth”, held in Addis Ababa from 24 to 27 April 2019, of the African Union 1 million by 2021 initiative, which targets direct investments in millions of African youth on four key elements, namely employment, entrepreneurship, education and engagement, through leveraging partnerships and private sector opportunities;

49. *Reaffirms* the commitment of the General Assembly to bridging digital and knowledge divides, recognizes that its approach must be multidimensional and include an evolving understanding of what constitutes access, emphasizing the quality of that access, and acknowledges that speed, stability, affordability, language, local content and accessibility for persons with disabilities are now core elements of the quality of such access and that high-speed broadband is already an essential enabler of sustainable development;

50. *Recognizes* that improving access to school for all girls and boys, especially the poorest and most vulnerable and marginalized, and their ability to receive a quality education, and improving the quality of education beyond primary school can have a positive impact in terms of empowerment and on social, economic and political participation and thus on the fight against poverty and hunger and can contribute directly to achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including the Sustainable Development Goals;

51. *Also recognizes* that Africa’s youthful population creates significant opportunities for the continent’s development, and underlines in this regard the importance of African countries creating appropriate policy environments, in collaboration with the United Nations system, in order to realize a demographic dividend, while adopting an inclusive results-based approach to development planning and implementation in accordance with national priorities and legislation;

52. *Encourages* Governments, international organizations, other relevant institutions and stakeholders, as appropriate, to provide relevant skills training for youth, high-quality health-care services and dynamic labour markets to employ a growing population;

53. *Recognizes* the need for Governments and the international community to continue to make efforts to increase the flow of new and additional resources for financing for sustainable development from all sources, public and private, domestic and foreign, to support the development of African countries, and welcomes the various important initiatives established between African countries and their development partners in this regard;

54. *Acknowledges* the activities of the Bretton Woods institutions and the African Development Bank in African countries, and invites those institutions to continue their support for the implementation of the priorities and objectives of the New Partnership;

55. *Encourages* African countries and their development partners to place people at the centre of government development action, to secure core investment spending in health, education and social protection and to give particular consideration to universal access to basic social security systems, recognizing that social protection floors can provide a basis from which to address poverty and vulnerability, and in this regard takes note of the Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202), adopted by the International Labour Conference at its 101st session, on 14 June 2012, which can serve as a guideline for social investment;

56. *Notes* the growing collaboration among the entities of the United Nations system in support of the African Union and its New Partnership, and requests the Secretary-General to continue to promote greater coherence in the work of the United Nations system in support of the New Partnership, on the basis of the agreed clusters of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa;

57. *Emphasizes* the importance for the cluster working on advocacy and communication to continue to muster international support for the New Partnership, and urges the United Nations system to demonstrate more evidence of cross-sectoral synergies to promote a comprehensive approach with regard to successive phases of planning and implementation of social development programmes in Africa;

58. *Requests* the Commission for Social Development to continue to discuss in its annual programme of work those regional programmes that promote social development so as to enable all regions to share experiences and best practices, with the agreement of concerned countries, and in this regard requests that the work programmes of the Commission include social dimensions of the New Partnership, as appropriate;

59. *Decides* that the Commission for Social Development should continue to give prominence to and raise awareness of the social dimensions of the New Partnership and give due consideration to Agenda 2063 of the African Union at its sixtieth session;

60. *Requests* the Secretary-General, in collaboration with the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa and the Economic Commission for Africa, taking into consideration General Assembly resolution [74/301](#) of 3 September 2020, entitled “New Partnership for Africa’s Development: progress in implementation and international support”, to submit to the Commission for Social Development, for its consideration at its sixtieth session, an action-oriented report with recommendations on how to improve the effectiveness of the work of United Nations bodies in regard to the social dimensions of the New Partnership, Agenda 2063 and its links with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, taking into account current processes related to social development in Africa.

Draft resolution III

Socially just transition towards sustainable development: the role of digital technologies on social development and well-being of all

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling its decision 2020/212 of 18 June 2020, in which it decided that the priority theme of the 2021 session of the Commission for Social Development would be “Socially just transition towards sustainable development: the role of digital technologies on social development and well-being of all”,

Recalling also the outcomes of the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly,

Reaffirming that the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development¹ and the further initiatives for social development adopted by the General Assembly at its twenty-fourth special session² constitute the basic framework for the promotion of social development for all at the national and international levels, and encouraging the continued global dialogue on social development issues,

Welcoming the progress made towards the full implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and the Programme of Action through concerted action at the national, regional and global levels, and expressing deep concern that, more than 20 years after the convening of the World Summit for Social Development, progress has been slow and uneven, and major gaps remain, and further welcoming the convening of the joint informal high-level meeting of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council to commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the World Summit for Social Development, on 1 December 2020,

Recalling General Assembly resolution [70/1](#) of 25 September 2015, entitled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, in which the Assembly adopted a comprehensive, far-reaching and people-centred set of universal and transformative Sustainable Development Goals and targets and affirmed its commitment to working tirelessly for the full implementation of the Agenda by 2030 with a view to leave no one behind and reach the furthest behind first, and its recognition that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development,

Welcoming the adoption of General Assembly resolutions [74/270](#) of 2 April 2020 on global solidarity to fight the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), [74/274](#) of 20 April 2020 on international cooperation to ensure global access to medicines, vaccines and medical equipment to face COVID-19, [74/306](#) of 11 September 2020, entitled “Comprehensive and coordinated response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic”, and [74/307](#) of 11 September 2020, entitled “United response against global health threats: combating COVID-19”,

Recalling General Assembly resolution [69/313](#) of 27 July 2015 on the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, which is an integral part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,

¹ *Report of the World Summit for Social Development, Copenhagen, 6–12 March 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.8), chap. I, resolution 1, annexes I and II.

² General Assembly resolution [S-24/2](#), annex.

Recalling also General Assembly resolution [74/4](#) of 15 October 2019, entitled “Political declaration of the high-level political forum on sustainable development convened under the auspices of the General Assembly”,

Recalling further the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,³ which, inter alia, recognizes the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for himself or herself and his or her family, the right to work, the right to social security and the right to education, and noting the relevance of these provisions to the formulation of social policies, including family-oriented social protection policies and measures,

Noting the important work undertaken by the Statistical Commission pertaining to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which has led to the formulation of global indicators, including on social protection,

Recognizing the particular relevance of the International Labour Organization Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work⁴ for a socially just transition towards sustainable development, and recalling General Assembly resolution [73/327](#) of 25 July 2019, by which the Assembly decided to declare 2021 the International Year for the Elimination of Child Labour,

Reaffirming that the spread of information and communications technology and global interconnectedness has great potential to accelerate human progress, to bridge the digital divide and to develop knowledge societies, as does scientific and technological innovation across areas,

Reaffirming also the importance of supporting Agenda 2063 of the African Union, as well as its first 10-year implementation plan, as a strategic framework for ensuring a positive socioeconomic transformation in Africa within the next 50 years, and its continental programme embedded in the resolutions of the General Assembly on the New Partnership for Africa’s Development⁵ and regional initiatives, such as the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme,

Recalling the guiding principles on extreme poverty and human rights⁶ adopted by the Human Rights Council in its resolution [21/11](#),⁷ as a useful tool for States in the formulation and implementation of poverty reduction and eradication policies, as appropriate, and encouraging States to implement the guiding principles,

Recognizing that the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic is one of the greatest global challenges in the history of the United Nations, and noting with deep concern its impact on physical and mental health and the loss of life and well-being, as well as the negative impact on global humanitarian needs, the enjoyment of human rights and across all spheres of society, including on livelihoods, food security and nutrition, and education, the exacerbation of poverty and hunger, disruption to economies, trade, societies and environments, and the exacerbation of economic and social inequalities within and among countries, which is reversing hard-won development gains and hampering progress towards achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and all its Goals and targets, and recognizing also that the COVID-19 pandemic requires a global response based on unity, solidarity and renewed multilateral cooperation,

Stressing that at this critical moment in the decade of action to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 the visions, principles and commitments

³ See General Assembly resolution [2200 A \(XXI\)](#), annex.

⁴ [A/73/918](#), annex.

⁵ [A/57/304](#), annex.

⁶ [A/HRC/21/39](#).

⁷ See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 53A (A/67/53/Add.1)*, chap. II.

made at the World Summit for Social Development remain valid and are central to addressing emerging global challenges, and recalling that social policies have a key role to play in addressing the immediate effects of socioeconomic crises and in the design of recovery strategies,

Taking note of the report of the High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation, entitled “The age of digital interdependence”, submitted to the Secretary-General on 10 June 2019, and further taking note of the report of the Secretary-General entitled “Road map for digital cooperation”, presented on 11 June 2020,

Recognizing that information and communications technologies present new opportunities and challenges and that there is a pressing need to address the major impediments that developing countries face in accessing new technologies, stressing the need to address prevailing challenges to bridge the digital divides, including both between and within countries, the rural-urban digital divide, the gender digital divide, and between youth and older persons, and to harness information and communications technologies for development, and recalling the need to emphasize quality of access to bridge digital and knowledge divides, using a multidimensional approach that includes speed, stability, affordability, language, training, capacity-building, local content and accessibility for all, including for persons with disabilities,

Stressing the urgent need to close digital divides, including with regard to such issues as the affordability of information and communications technologies and the Internet, and to ensure that the benefits of information and communications technologies, including new technologies, are available to all,

Recalling the commitment to significantly increasing access to information and communications technologies and striving to provide universal and affordable access to the Internet in the least developed countries, and noting the many efforts to help to bridge digital divides and expand access, including the Connect 2030 Agenda for Global Telecommunication/Information and Communication Technology, including Broadband, for Sustainable Development,

Noting with grave concern that almost half of the world’s population, especially women and girls and people in vulnerable situations, as well as more than four in five people in the least developed countries, do not have access to the Internet, and noting that the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbates inequalities caused by the digital divides, since the poorest and the most vulnerable who are the hardest hit are also those who lag behind the most in access to information and communications technologies,

Recognizing that digital technologies have profoundly transformed society, promote innovation and offer unprecedented opportunities and that they have the potential to accelerate the realization of the 2030 Agenda and advancing social development by ensuring access to lifelong quality education, health-care services, decent work, affordable housing, social protection, especially for those who are vulnerable or in vulnerable situations, as well as fostering gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, and recognizing also the potential of digital technologies in the practice of sport and physical activity,

Noting with concern that the people left behind in accessing technologies are typically those who can least afford it, and recognizing that a rural-urban digital divide is present across all regions, with approximately 60 per cent of the world’s population without access to the Internet living in rural areas, and that already those who are vulnerable or in vulnerable situations are overrepresented in this population,

Recognizing the importance of digital technologies in designing, implementing and monitoring social policies, including family-oriented policies, especially in the

areas of poverty eradication, full employment, decent work, work-family balance, social integration and intergenerational solidarity,

Noting with great concern the fact that a gender digital divide persists in women's and girls' access to and use of information and communications technologies, including in education, employment for women and other areas of economic and social development, and in this regard taking note of the many initiatives that focus on access, skills and leadership to promote the equal participation of women and girls in the digital age,

Recognizing that new technologies increase the demand for digital skills and competencies and that is why investment in lifelong education, digital literacy and digital skills is required, including for boosting the employability of young people and fostering the social inclusion of older persons in our societies,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General;⁸
2. *Acknowledges* the urgent need to accelerate action on all levels and by all stakeholders to fulfil the vision and Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,⁹ and emphasizes that the international community, through the outcome documents of the major United Nations conferences and summits adopted by the General Assembly, has reinforced, inter alia, the urgency of eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, combating inequality within and among countries, protecting the environment, creating sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth and fostering social inclusion within the United Nations development agenda, including the outcomes of the World Summit for Social Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development,¹⁰ the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030¹¹ and the New Urban Agenda;¹²
3. *Reaffirms* the commitment to implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development for all by ensuring that no one would be left behind and reaching the furthest behind first, and by recognizing human rights and that the dignity of the human person is fundamental;
4. *Calls upon* Member States to ensure the promotion and protection of all human rights, in accordance with their obligations under international human rights law;
5. *Recognizes* that the current trajectory of economic development has led not to shared prosperity for all, but to high and rising inequalities within and among countries, in particular in least developed and developing countries, aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as environmental degradation, adverse effects of climate change, extreme weather events, including natural disasters, drought, desertification, biodiversity loss, food shortages, water scarcity, wildfires, sea level rise and depletion of the oceans, and unsustainable consumption and production patterns;
6. *Also recognizes* that those consequences have taken a toll on social development and on people's well-being, especially those who are vulnerable or in vulnerable situations, such as all children, youth, persons with disabilities, people living with HIV/AIDS, older persons, indigenous peoples, refugees and internally displaced persons and migrants;
7. *Encourages* Member States to promote affordable and equitable access to basic services, in particular quality formal and non-formal education, at all levels,

⁸ E/CN.5/2021/3.

⁹ General Assembly resolution 70/1.

¹⁰ General Assembly resolution 69/313, annex.

¹¹ General Assembly resolution 69/283, annex II.

¹² General Assembly resolution 71/256, annex.

including programmes that promote equality and inclusion through the affirmation of the fundamental dignity of the human person, and health-care services, including through the acceleration of the transition towards equitable access to universal health coverage, as well as access to affordable housing, nutrition and food, and access to employment and decent work, information and communications technology and infrastructure, through advancing gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls;

8. *Stresses* the importance of developing policies to expand work opportunities and productivity in both rural and urban sectors by achieving and recovering economic growth, investing in human resource development, promoting technologies that generate productive employment, and encouraging self-employment, entrepreneurship and small and medium-sized enterprises;

9. *Invites* Member States to consider adopting labour market policies that strengthen institutions and provide adequate labour protection to all workers, including through social dialogue, especially the most disadvantaged, including through minimum wage policies, while taking into account the role of workers' and employers' organizations, as applicable, as part of policies to boost income growth for the vast majority of workers, taking into consideration the specific circumstances of each country;

10. *Stresses* the need to address challenges faced by those working in informal or vulnerable jobs, by investing in the creation of more decent work opportunities, including providing access to decent jobs in the formal sector;

11. *Encourages* Member States to implement policies that ensure women's economic empowerment by supporting the full and productive participation of women in the labour market, including women with disabilities and those living in poverty and female heads of household, and to promote equal pay for equal work or work of equal value, the equal sharing of responsibilities between parents, access to childcare facilities, work-family balance, including, inter alia, while caring for children, older persons, persons with disabilities, and by promoting their meaningful participation in the economy and in decision-making processes at all levels;

12. *Invites* Member States to support the digital entrepreneurship of women, including in e-commerce, including for micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises, to develop local solutions and relevant content and promote innovation and decent job creation;

13. *Encourages* all Member States and other relevant stakeholders to promote inclusive economic transformation in rural areas that increases productivity while ensuring productive employment and decent work, access to quality public services, reliable and appropriate social protection systems, quality and resilient infrastructure, roads and telecommunications, as well as preparedness planning for crises, and reiterates that the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the important role of digital connectivity and access;

14. *Recognizes* that nationally appropriate social protection systems for all address multiple, often interrelated and complex causes of poverty and inequality by easing the burden of certain expenditure during periods of unemployment, contributing to health-related goals, gender equality and decent work, and facilitating the full inclusion of persons with disabilities;

15. *Also recognizes* that nationally appropriate social protection systems make a critical contribution to the realization of human rights for all, in particular for those who are trapped in poverty and homelessness, and that promoting universal access to social services and providing nationally appropriate social protection floors can contribute to reducing inequality and poverty, addressing social exclusion and

promoting inclusive economic growth, and in this regard takes note of the Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202), of the International Labour Organization;

16. *Encourages* States, when designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating social protection programmes for social development, to ensure gender mainstreaming throughout this process;

17. *Recognizes* the important role that families can play in combating social exclusion, and highlights the importance of investing in inclusive and responsive family-oriented policies and programmes in areas such as education, training, decent work, work-family balance, health-care services, social services, intergenerational relationships and solidarity and targeted cash transfers for vulnerable families, in order to reduce inequality and promote the well-being of all persons of all ages, as well as to contribute to better outcomes for children and other vulnerable family members in vulnerable situations and help to break the intergenerational transfer of poverty;

18. *Encourages* Member States to provide universal age-, disability-, gender-responsive and family-oriented social protection systems, which are key to ensuring poverty reduction, including, as appropriate, targeted cash transfers for people and families in vulnerable situations, such as when headed by a single parent, in particular those headed by women, and which are most effective in reducing poverty when accompanied by other measures, such as providing access to essential services, high-quality education and health-care services;

19. *Stresses* the need to better coordinate social protection policies and measures with poverty reduction programmes and other social policies to avoid excluding people in informal or precarious jobs;

20. *Invites* Member States, in the context of their national sustainable development frameworks and the associated integrated financing frameworks, to formulate and implement national strategies to extend social security and essential social services to all, that are responsive to shocks, sustainable in the long run and with a focus on those furthest below the poverty line and negatively affected by climate change and natural and human-made disasters, within their economic and fiscal capacities;

21. *Recognizes* that information and communications technologies have the potential to provide new solutions to development challenges, particularly in the context of globalization and the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, and can foster sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth and sustainable development, competitiveness, access to information and knowledge, trade and development, poverty eradication and social inclusion, accordingly reaffirms its commitment to bridging the digital divide, and calls upon Member States to implement policies and to accelerate their efforts to close the digital divide, as a measure to attain the social inclusion of all, with a focus on children, youth, women, persons with disabilities and older persons, without any discrimination;

22. *Urges* Member States, in collaboration with other stakeholders, to close the digital divides and promote digital inclusion, by taking into account national and regional contexts and addressing the challenges associated with access, affordability, digital literacy and digital skills, and awareness and by ensuring that the benefits of new technologies are available to all, taking into account the needs of those who are vulnerable or in vulnerable situations;

23. *Also urges* Member States, in collaboration with other stakeholders, to promote digital inclusion, by implementing inclusive policies and measures that aim to tackle the challenges associated with equal access, in particular, the lack of

affordability, including by, where appropriate, considering providing targeted subsidies, proportionate taxation or the provision of a basic digital basket, as well as engage in multi-stakeholder cooperation, national and regional broadband strategies, and facilitate public-private partnerships in order to significantly increase access to information and communications technology, address specific barriers to inclusion by promoting the availability and supply of information and communications technology, and strive to provide universal and affordable access to the Internet, and also notes the potential of relevant regional and international initiatives to achieve this goal;

24. *Encourages* Member States, in collaboration with other stakeholders, to address the lack of efficient, affordable and accessible digital technology infrastructure, especially in rural and remote areas, and engaging the private sector as a relevant partner to enhance infrastructure finance and network deployment;

25. *Also encourages* Member States, in collaboration with other stakeholders, to seek to achieve universal connectivity to ensure that every person has affordable access to quality broadband Internet by 2030, including by catalysing essential partnerships, as well to apply an age-, disability-, gender-responsive and family-oriented approach to all interventions on digital technologies;

26. *Invites* Member States, in collaboration with the international community and United Nations entities, to develop, as appropriate, a holistic approach and targeted strategies and policies to address specific barriers to digital inclusion and close the digital divides, also in collaboration with other stakeholders, including the private sector, academia, science and civil society organizations, including representatives of those who face barriers to digital inclusion;

27. *Encourages* Member States, in collaboration with other stakeholders, to harness scientific research and expertise and realize the potential of technology and of rapid technological change to focus on, inter alia, the individual, social, educational and health implications of ageing, in particular in developing countries;

28. *Also encourages* Member States, in collaboration with other stakeholders, to increase access of all women and girls to digital technologies to foster their education and training to enhance their digital skills and competences, as well as the productivity and mobility of women in the labour market; enhance efficiency, accountability and transparency of social protection systems, public services and sustainable infrastructure through enhanced use of information and communications technologies for the benefit of all women and girls, including for those hardest to reach and who face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, and work towards closing the gender digital divide and promoting equal access to information and communications technologies and to the Internet for women and girls, explore appropriate ways to address any potential negative impact of new technologies on gender equality; and ensure that programmes, services and infrastructure are adaptable and suited to technological barriers, including literacy, and reaffirms the commitment to ensuring women's full participation in decision-making processes related to information and communications technologies;

29. *Further encourages* Member States to, by 2030, reduce to less than 3 per cent the transaction costs of migrant remittances and eliminate corridors with costs higher than 5 per cent, including through the use of digital technologies;

30. *Recognizes* that information and communications technologies present new opportunities and challenges and that there is a pressing need to address the major impediments that developing countries face in engaging with and accessing new technologies, such as an appropriate enabling environment, sufficient resources, infrastructure, education, capacity, investment and connectivity, as well as issues related to technology ownership, setting standards and technology flows, and in this

regard urges all stakeholders to consider ensuring appropriate financing of digital development and adequate means of implementation, including strengthened capacity-building of developing countries, particularly the least developed countries, towards a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy;

31. *Also recognizes* that domestic resources mobilization, underscored by the principle of national ownership and supplemented by international assistance, as appropriate, will be critical to realizing sustainable development and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals;

32. *Reaffirms* the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, and recognizes the need to take steps to significantly increase investment to close resource gaps, including through the mobilization of financial resources from all sources, including public, private, domestic and international resource mobilization and allocation;

33. *Also reaffirms* that international cooperation has an essential role in assisting developing countries, including highly indebted poor countries, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States and middle-income countries, in strengthening their human, institutional and technological capacity;

34. *Encourages* developed countries to implement their official development assistance commitments, including the commitment by many developed countries to achieve the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national income for official development assistance to developing countries and 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of gross national income for official development assistance to the least developed countries;

35. *Welcomes* the contributions of South-South cooperation to poverty eradication and sustainable development, and reaffirms that South-South cooperation is an important element of international cooperation for development as a complement to, not a substitute for, North-South cooperation, and commits itself to strengthening South-South and triangular cooperation as a means of bringing relevant experience and expertise to bear in development cooperation;

36. *Stresses* the essential role that official development assistance plays in complementing, leveraging and sustaining financing for development efforts in developing countries and in facilitating the achievement of development objectives, including the internationally agreed development goals, in particular the Sustainable Development Goals, and welcomes steps to improve the effectiveness and quality of aid based on the fundamental principles of national ownership, alignment, harmonization, managing for results and mutual accountability;

37. *Encourages* the international community to intensify development cooperation, including through South-South, North-South and triangular cooperation, as well as multi-stakeholder partnerships, to support countries, especially developing countries, upon their request, in building their national capacity for science, technology and innovation for social development, as well as to support research networks that reach across borders, institutions and disciplines;

38. *Invites* all relevant stakeholders, including the United Nations system and civil society organizations, to continue to promote the exchange of information and good practices on programmes, policies and measures that successfully reduce inequality in all its dimensions;

39. *Invites* the United Nations system to continue to support Member States in their pursuit of socially just transitions towards sustainable development and facilitate international cooperation in the field of digital technologies for developing countries, upon their request, with the aim of achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development for the common future of present and coming generations.

B. Draft decision for adoption by the Council

2. The Commission for Social Development recommends to the Economic and Social Council the adoption of the following draft decision:

Report of the Commission for Social Development on its fifty-ninth session and provisional agenda and documentation for the sixtieth session

The Economic and Social Council:

- (a) Takes note of the report of the Commission for Social Development on its fifty-ninth session;¹
- (b) Approves the provisional agenda and documentation for the sixtieth session of the Commission as set out below:

Provisional agenda and documentation for the sixtieth session of the Commission

- 1. Election of officers.
- 2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
- 3. Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly:

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General on the social dimensions of the New Partnership for Africa's Development

- (a) Priority theme: Inclusive and resilient recovery from COVID-19 for sustainable livelihoods, well-being and dignity for all: eradicating poverty and hunger in all its forms and dimensions to achieve the 2030 Agenda

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General on the priority theme

- (b) Review of relevant United Nations plans and programmes of action pertaining to the situation of social groups:
 - (i) Outcome document of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the realization of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities: the way forward, a disability-inclusive development agenda towards 2015 and beyond;²
 - (ii) World Programme of Action for Youth;
 - (iii) Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002;
 - (iv) Family issues, policies and programmes;

¹ *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2021, Supplement No. 6 (E/2021/26).*

² General Assembly resolution 68/3.

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the objectives of the International Year of the Family and its follow-up processes

Report of the Secretary-General on a preliminary assessment of the fourth review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002

(c) Emerging issues: (to be determined).

Documentation

Note by the Secretary-General on emerging issues

4. Programme questions and other matters.

Documentation

Note by the Secretariat on the proposed programme plan for 2023

5. Provisional agenda for the sixty-first session of the Commission.
6. Adoption of the report of the Commission on its sixtieth session.

C. Decisions calling for action by the Council

3. Pursuant to the following decision, adopted by the Commission, the Economic and Social Council is requested to confirm the nomination of two candidates to the Board of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development:

Decision 59/101

Nomination of members of the Board of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development

4. The Commission decided to nominate Olivier De Schutter and Graziella Moraes Silva to the Board of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development for a four-year term beginning after confirmation by the Economic and Social Council and on a date no sooner than on 1 July 2021 and expiring on 30 June 2025.

Decision 59/102

Statute of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development

5. The Commission decided to recommend a draft decision on a statute of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development to the Economic and Social Council for adoption (see chap. IV.B, paras. 5 and 6).

D. Resolution and decision brought to the attention of the Council

6. The following resolution adopted by the Commission is brought to the attention of the Council:

Resolution 59/1 Policies and programmes involving youth

The Commission for Social Development,

Recalling General Assembly resolution [50/81](#) of 14 December 1995 and resolution [62/126](#) of 18 December 2007, by which the Assembly adopted the World Programme of Action for Youth, as contained in the annexes thereto, and acknowledging that the Programme of Action provides Member States with a useful policy framework and practical guidelines for improving the situation of youth,

Recalling also the outcomes of the World Summit for Social Development, held in Copenhagen from 6 to 12 March 1995, and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly, entitled “World Summit for Social Development and beyond: achieving social development for all in a globalizing world”, held in Geneva from 26 June to 1 July 2000,

Recalling further the Lisbon Declaration on Youth Policies and Programmes, adopted at the World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth in 1998,¹ and in this context welcoming the World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth 2019 and Youth Forum Lisboa+21, held on 22 and 23 June 2019, and noting the Declaration on Youth Policies and Programmes,²

Noting the inputs from recent relevant conferences, forums and global initiatives relating to youth at the international, regional and subregional levels, inter alia, the first, the second and the third World Youth Forum, held in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, in November 2017, November 2018 and December 2019,

Recalling General Assembly resolution [70/1](#) of 25 September 2015, entitled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, in which for the first time the Assembly recognized children and youth as agents of change,

Emphasizing the important role that the Envoy of the Secretary-General on Youth has played in addressing the needs of youth, as well as, inter alia, acting as a harmonizer with different United Nations entities, Governments, civil society, youth organizations, academia and media towards enhancing, empowering and strengthening the position of young people within and outside of the United Nations system,

Reiterating that all 15 priority areas of the World Programme of Action for Youth are interrelated and mutually reinforcing,

Stressing that the implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth and the achievement of all of the internationally agreed development goals, in particular the Sustainable Development Goals, require the full and effective participation of youth, youth-led and youth-focused organizations and other civil society organizations at the local, national, regional and international levels,

Recalling the proposed set of indicators for the World Programme of Action for Youth, contained in the report of the Secretary-General,³ to assist Member States in

¹ [A/53/378](#), annex I.

² [A/73/949](#), annex.

³ [E/CN.5/2013/8](#).

assessing the implementation of the World Programme of Action and thus the evolution of the situation of youth,

Noting the launch by the Secretary-General, in September 2018, of Youth 2030: The United Nations Youth Strategy, to address the needs of youth and to fulfil their potential as agents of change, as well as of the Generation Unlimited global partnership, which is aimed at ensuring that, by 2030, every young person has the opportunity to be in education, learning, training or employment,

Acknowledging the important contributions made by the youth forum of the Economic and Social Council, held annually, to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and recognizing that the youth forum serves as a platform for young people to share their vision and contribute to, inter alia, the high-level political forum on sustainable development,

Acknowledging also the positive contribution of youth, as agents and beneficiaries of development, to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as well as to the general well-being, progress and diversity of society, as a way of contributing to a progressively fairer distribution of opportunities for youth, which will constitute a step forward to economic development, social justice, social integration and equity,

Recognizing that while young people represent almost one quarter of the online population, they often lack job-relevant digital skills and knowledge to ensure their access to the labour market, and that building the digital skills of young people is crucial to boosting their future employability and social inclusion, by providing them, including young women and girls, access to educational resources online and necessary digital tools,

Stressing that policies that enhance digital and technical skills and opportunities for young people are an important area of investment for Governments, and that the inclusive and effective engagement of youth, including through volunteerism and participation in relevant decision-making processes, is critical in tailoring the most effective response, according to the specific needs of all young people, and recognizing that multisectoral investments in young people could yield a triple dividend ensuring health, well-being and resilience through their life course,

Stressing also that high rates of youth unemployment persist, as do high rates of underemployment, vulnerable employment and informal employment, leaving many young people in situations of working poverty or in jobs that have limited access to social protection and that do not provide adequate labour standards,

Emphasizing that education, both formal and non-formal, and training promote equity and social inclusion, and recalling in that sense the need to substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship and to help ensure, by 2030, that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy, as well as to substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training,

Recognizing that the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted youth, including young women and girls, youth with disabilities and those who are in vulnerable situations, and has also accelerated digital transformation, which risks widening the digital divides, further exacerbating existing inequalities in learning opportunities and access to education, as well as polarizing the labour market,

Recognizing further that the use of technology, specifically digital platforms, can mitigate the loss of education and learning opportunities caused by school closures, while expressing concern that the poorest and most vulnerable children and

young people are least likely to live in a suitable home-learning environment with an adequate Internet connection and learning support,

Acknowledging that the recovery from the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic is an opportunity to design strategies out of the crisis to accelerate progress towards the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda and to foster economic growth, build back better, including by promoting a socially just transition to sustainable development and recognizing that digital technologies can facilitate that transition and create a more inclusive, equitable, resilient and sustainable society for all and by supporting inclusive, multisectoral and coordinated approach toward youth well-being,

Recognizing the heroic efforts of young health-care workers, first responders and essential workers, paid or volunteer, and commending them for their outstanding selfless service during the COVID-19 pandemic and also their efforts to mitigate its overall economic, social, educational and psychological impact,

Taking note of the Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth,

Acknowledging the important link between migration and development, recognizing that migration brings both opportunities and challenges to countries of origin, transit and destination, to migrants and to the global community, and recognizing the responsibility of States to promote and protect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all migrants effectively, regardless of their migration status, especially those of women, young people and children,

Recognizing the important and positive contribution of youth in efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security,

Stressing that increased coordination and collaboration among United Nations entities and with other regional and international organizations working on youth contribute to making the youth-related work of the United Nations system more effective,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General;⁴
2. *Calls upon* Member States to realize the opportunity afforded by the demographic dividend of the largest number of young people ever in the history of humankind, reiterates that the primary responsibility for implementing the World Programme of Action for Youth⁵ lies with Member States, and urges Governments, in consultation with youth, youth-led and youth-focused organizations and other relevant stakeholders, to develop holistic and integrated youth policies, programmes and action plans, including for those who are poor, vulnerable or marginalized, and to address all aspects of youth development, in line with the World Programme of Action and all the internationally agreed development frameworks, in particular the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;⁶
3. *Also calls upon* Member States to continue the implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth, including its 15 interrelated priority areas, as a policy framework with practical guidelines for national action and international support to improve the situation of young people at the local, national, subregional, regional and international levels, while taking into account the views of youth and youth-led and youth-focused organizations as part of the effective participation of youth in society;

⁴ E/CN.5/2021/5.

⁵ General Assembly resolution 50/81, annex, and resolution 62/126, annex.

⁶ General Assembly resolution 70/1.

4. *Further calls upon* Member States to promote gender equality and the empowerment of young women and girls and the full realization of all human rights on an equal footing with young men and boys;

5. *Calls upon* Member States to consider, on a voluntary basis, the set of indicators proposed in the report of the Secretary-General⁷ for their selection and adaptation in monitoring and assessing the implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth, paying particular attention to young women and girls and those who are vulnerable or marginalized, including indigenous youth, youth in rural areas, youth with disabilities and young migrants, taking into account the national social and economic circumstances in each country;

6. *Also calls upon* Member States to collect, on a continuing and voluntary basis, reliable, comparable and relevant data, disaggregated by age and sex, to measure progress towards the implementation and monitoring of the World Programme of Action for Youth, and in this regard encourages Member States to engage youth and youth-led and youth-focused organizations in the collection, analysis and dissemination of data in the process of assessing progress and evaluating youth policies;

7. *Urges* Member States to ensure that youth issues are adequately addressed in the implementation, follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and underlines the importance of closely consulting with and actively involving youth and youth-led and youth-focused organizations in its implementation;

8. *Encourages* Member States to ensure a coherent and mutually reinforcing approach while implementing all relevant agreed frameworks related to youth, including the World Programme of Action for Youth and the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development,⁸ in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

9. *Urges* Member States to protect, promote and fulfil the realization and full enjoyment by all young people of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and relevant international human rights instruments, in the implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth;

10. *Encourages* Member States to consider including youth representatives in their delegations at all relevant discussions in the General Assembly, in the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary bodies and at relevant United Nations conferences, as appropriate, bearing in mind the principle of gender balance and non-discrimination, and, inter alia, to consider establishing a national youth delegate programme, and emphasizes that youth representatives should be selected through a transparent process that ensures that they have a suitable mandate to represent young people in their countries;

11. *Calls upon* Member States to encourage and promote youth-led and youth-focused organizations through financial, educational and technical support and promotion of their activities;

12. *Urges* Member States to promote the full and effective participation of young people and youth-led and youth-focused organizations in relevant decision-making processes at all levels, including in developing, implementing and monitoring policies, programmes and activities, including those related to the World Programme of Action for Youth and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

⁷ E/CN.5/2019/5.

⁸ *Report of the World Summit for Social Development, Copenhagen, 6–12 March 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.8), chap. I, resolution I, annexes I and II.

13. *Reaffirms* that the strengthening of international cooperation regarding youth, capacity-building, the enhancement of dialogue, mutual understanding and the active participation of young people are crucial elements in efforts towards achieving the eradication of poverty, full employment and social inclusion, and in this regard stresses the importance of promoting access to health-care services, nationally owned social protection and social services as an important instrument for empowering youth;

14. *Calls upon* Member States, in this context, to address the social aspects of youth development with the adoption and/or strengthening of appropriate policies, including fiscal, employment and labour-market policies, and to establish nationally appropriate social protection systems, including floors;

15. *Urges* Member States and all stakeholders to take concerted action to close the digital divides, including youth digital divide, promote digital inclusion and responsible use of information and communications technologies, prevent their use for criminal purposes and bridge the gender gap in digital access and competences, by taking into account national and regional context and addressing the challenges associated with access, affordability and skills, as well as support more comprehensively those countries that are trailing in the digital economy in order to reduce the digital divides, strengthen the international enabling environment for value creation and build capacities in both the private and public sectors;

16. *Calls upon* Member States to promote innovation among youth by ensuring that information and communications technologies are fully and appropriately integrated into education and training at all levels, including in the development of curricula, teacher training and institutional administration and management, and in support of the concept of lifelong learning;

17. *Recalls* that access to quality formal and non-formal education, at all levels, including, as appropriate, catch-up and literacy education, including in assessing information and in information and communications technologies for those who did not receive formal education, information and communications technologies, extracurricular activities and volunteerism are important factors that enable young people to acquire the relevant skills and to build their capacities, including for employability and entrepreneurial development, and to gain decent and productive work, and calls upon Member States to take the action necessary to ensure that young people have access to such services and opportunities;

18. *Recognizes* that substantial digital divides and data inequalities exist within and among countries and regions, and between developed and all developing countries, and that many developing countries lack affordable access to information and communications technologies, and urges Member States and other relevant stakeholders to accelerate the catalytic role that digital technologies play in reducing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on education, health, communication, commerce and business continuity and to take concerted action to further digital governance and economy, scientific research, emerging technologies and new data sources and to build resilient, inclusive and integrated data and statistical systems, under the leadership of national statistical offices, that can respond to the increased and urgent data demands in times of disaster and ensure a path towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals;

19. *Notes with appreciation* the increased collaboration among United Nations entities on youth through the Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development, calls upon United Nations entities to develop additional measures to support local, national, regional and international efforts in addressing challenges hindering youth development and well-being, and in this regard encourages close collaboration with Member States as well as other relevant stakeholders, including civil society, in particular youth-led and youth-focused organizations;

20. *Encourages* the Secretary-General to continue to bring the voices of young people to the United Nations system in the areas of participation, advocacy, partnerships and harmonization, inter alia by considering appointing special representatives, envoys or advisors, while working closely with Governments, United Nations entities, civil society, youth organizations, academia and the media, to empower and strengthen the position of young people within and outside of the United Nations system, including by conducting country visits, at the request of the Member States concerned;

21. *Calls upon* donors, including Member States and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, to actively contribute to the United Nations Youth Fund in order to facilitate the participation of youth representatives from developing countries in the activities of the United Nations, taking into account the need for greater geographical and gender balance of youth representation, as well as to accelerate the implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth, and in this regard requests the Secretary-General to take appropriate action to encourage contributions to the Fund;

22. *Encourages* the Envoy of the Secretary-General on Youth to continue to work closely with Governments, United Nations entities, civil society, youth organizations, academia and the media, as appropriate, by empowering and strengthening the position of young people within and outside of the United Nations system;

23. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the Commission for Social Development at its sixty-first session a comprehensive report on the implementation of the present resolution, including progress on the achievements and challenges in the implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth, including the linkages to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in consultation with Member States, as well as with the relevant specialized agencies, funds and programmes and the regional commissions, taking into account the work done by the United Nations system, including the youth forum of the Economic and Social Council, and encourages the Secretariat to consult, as appropriate, with youth-led and youth-focused organizations.

Chapter II

Organizational matters: future organization and methods of work of the Commission for Social Development

7. At its 3rd meeting, on 17 February 2021, the Commission considered the review of its methods of work under agenda item 2.

Action taken by the Commission

8. At its 3rd meeting, the Commission adopted draft resolution [E/CN.5/2021/L.4](#) and recommended it to the Economic and Social Council for its final adoption (see chap. I.A, draft resolution I).

9. Before the adoption of the draft resolution, a statement was made by the observer for Mexico.

Chapter III

Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly

10. The Commission considered agenda item 3 at its 2nd and 3rd meetings, on 8 and 17 February 2021. It had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the Secretary-General on the social dimensions of the New Partnership for Africa's Development ([E/CN.5/2021/2](#));

(b) Report of the Secretary-General on a socially just transition towards sustainable development: the role of digital technologies on social development and well-being of all ([E/CN.5/2021/3](#));

(c) Note by the Secretariat on emerging issues: social policy to promote a more inclusive, resilient and sustainable recovery: building back better post-COVID-19 for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda in the context of the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development ([E/CN.5/2021/4](#));

(d) Report of the Secretary-General on policies and programmes involving youth ([E/CN.5/2021/5](#));

(e) Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the objectives of the International Year of the Family and its follow-up processes ([A/76/61-E/2021/4](#));

(f) Statements submitted by non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council ([E/CN.5/2021/NGO/1–40](#)).

11. At the 2nd meeting, on 8 February, the Director of the Division for Inclusive Social Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs introduced the documentation under agenda item 3 as a whole.

Action taken by the Commission under agenda item 3 as a whole

Social dimensions of the New Partnership for Africa's Development

12. At the 3rd meeting, on 17 February, the observer for Guinea¹ (on behalf of the Group of 77 and China) introduced a revised draft resolution entitled "Social dimensions of the New Partnership for Africa's Development" ([E/CN.5/2021/L.3/Rev.1](#)). Subsequently, Turkey joined in sponsoring the draft resolution.

13. At the same meeting, the Commission adopted draft resolution [E/CN.5/2021/L.3/Rev.1](#) and recommended it to the Economic and Social Council for its final adoption (see chap. I.A, draft resolution II).

14. Before the adoption of the draft resolution, a statement was made by the representative of the United States of America; after the adoption, a statement was made by the representative of Portugal (on behalf of the States members of the European Union and Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, the Republic of Moldova, Serbia and Ukraine).

¹ In accordance with rule 69 of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council.

A. Priority theme: socially just transition towards sustainable development: the role of digital technologies on social development and well-being of all

15. The Commission considered sub-item 3 (a) at its 3rd meeting, on 17 February, and convened 12 virtual informal meetings to hold a general discussion on sub-item 3 (b) (Review of relevant United Nations plans and programmes of action pertaining to the situation of social groups) and interactive dialogues on sub-items 3 (a), (b) and (c) (Emerging issues). The proceedings of the virtual informal meetings are reflected in annex II to the present report.

Action taken by the Commission on agenda item 3 (a)

16. At its 3rd meeting, on 17 February, the Commission adopted a draft resolution entitled “Socially just transition towards sustainable development: the role of digital technologies on social development and the well-being of all” (E/CN.5/2021/L.6), submitted by the Chair (Argentina) on the basis of informal consultations, and recommended it to the Economic and Social Council for its final adoption (see chap. I.A, draft resolution III).

17. After the adoption of the draft resolution, statements were made by the representatives of the Russian Federation and the United States.

B. Review of relevant United Nations plans and programmes of action pertaining to the situation of social groups

18. The Commission considered sub-item 3 (b) at its 3rd meeting, on 17 February, and convened 12 virtual informal meetings to hold a general discussion on sub-item 3 (a) (Priority theme: socially just transition towards sustainable development: the role of digital technologies on social development and well-being of all) and interactive dialogues on sub-items 3 (a), (b) and (c) (Emerging issues). The proceedings of the virtual informal meetings are reflected in annex II to the present report.

Action taken by the Commission on agenda item 3 (b)

19. At its 3rd meeting, on 17 February, the representative of Portugal introduced a draft resolution entitled “Policies and programmes involving youth” (E/CN.5/2021/L.5), on behalf of Cabo Verde,² Egypt,² Germany,² Kazakhstan² and Senegal.² Subsequently, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d’Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Greece, Guinea, Iceland, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Mali, Malta, Monaco, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, the Netherlands, North Macedonia, the Philippines, Poland, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, Sao Tome and Principe, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Timor-

² In accordance with rule 69 of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council.

Leste, Togo, Turkey, Ukraine, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Zambia joined in sponsoring the draft resolution.

20. At the same meeting, the Commission adopted the draft resolution (see chap. I.D, resolution 59/1).

21. After the adoption of the draft resolution, statements were made by the representative of the United States and the observer for Hungary.

Chapter IV

Programme questions and other matters

22. The Commission considered agenda items 4 (a) and (b) at its 3rd meeting, on 17 February 2021.

A. Proposed programme plan for 2022

23. At the 2nd meeting, on 8 February, the Director of the Division for Inclusive Social Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs made a statement.

B. United Nations Research Institute for Social Development

24. At the 2nd meeting, on 8 February, the Director of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development made a statement and responded to questions posed and comments made.

Action taken by the Commission

Nomination of members of the Board of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development

25. At its 3rd meeting, on 17 February, with reference to [E/CN.5/2021/7](#), the Commission decided to nominate the following two candidates for a four-year term to begin after their confirmation by the Economic and Social Council and on a date no sooner than on 1 July 2021 and expiring on 30 June 2025: Olivier De Schutter and Graziella Moraes Silva (see chap. I.C, decision 59/101).

Statute of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development

26. At the same meeting, with regard to the note of the Secretary-General on a statute of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, as contained in document [E/CN.5/2021/6](#), and the informal consultations undertaken by the Bureau, the Commission was invited to recommend to the Economic and Social Council the adoption of a draft decision on a statute of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development.

27. The text of the draft decision to be recommended for adoption by the Economic and Social Council reads as follows:

“Statute of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development:

“The Economic and Social Council decides to authorize the Secretary-General to prepare, in consultation with the Board of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, a statute of the Institute and to promulgate it, and requests the Secretary-General to keep the Commission informed about the steps taken in this regard.”

28. At the same meeting, the Commission decided to recommend the draft decision on a statute of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development to the Economic and Social Council for adoption (see chap. I.C, decision 59/102).

Chapter V

Provisional agenda for the sixtieth session of the Commission

29. The Commission considered agenda item 5 at its 3rd meeting, on 17 February 2021. It had before it the provisional agenda and documentation for the sixtieth session of the Commission ([E/CN.5/2021/L.1](#)).

30. At the same meeting, the Commission adopted the provisional agenda and documentation for its sixtieth session (see chap. I. B, draft decision).

Chapter VI

Adoption of the report of the Commission on its fifty-ninth session

31. At the 3rd meeting, on 17 February 2021, the Vice-Chair-cum-Rapporteur of the Commission, Kouadjo Michel Kouakou (Côte d'Ivoire), introduced the draft report of the Commission on its fifty-ninth session, as contained in document [E/CN.5/2021/L.2](#).

32. At the same meeting, the Commission adopted the draft report and entrusted the Secretariat, in consultation with the Rapporteur, with its finalization.

Chapter VII

Organization of the session

A. Opening and duration of the session

33. The Commission for Social Development held its fifty-ninth session at Headquarters on 19 February 2020 and from 8 to 17 February 2021. The Commission held three meetings (1st to 3rd).

34. The Commission, pursuant to the organization of work adopted at its 2nd meeting, held on 8 February 2021, and taking into account the impact of the prevailing conditions relating to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic on the working arrangements for its fifty-ninth session and the available technological and procedural solutions for the interim period, convened 12 virtual informal meetings to hold a general discussion and interactive dialogues under agenda item 3. The proceedings of the virtual informal meetings are reflected in annex II to the present report.

35. At the 2nd meeting, on 8 February, the Vice-Chair, Sharifa Yousef Alnesf (Qatar), opened the regular session and presided over the election of the Chair of the Commission, María del Carmen Squeff (Argentina).

36. At the same meeting, the newly elected Chair made a statement and presided over the remainder of the meeting.

37. At the same meeting, the President of the General Assembly, the President of the Economic and Social Council and the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs addressed the Commission.

38. Statements were also made by representatives of civil society and youth.

B. Attendance

39. The session was attended by representatives of 38 States members of the Commission. Observers for other States Members of the United Nations, representatives of organizations of the United Nations system and observers for intergovernmental, non-governmental and other organizations also attended. The list of participants is contained in document [E/CN.5/2021/INF/1](#).

C. Election of officers

40. In its decision 2002/210, the Economic and Social Council decided that, immediately following the closure of a regular session, the Commission would hold the first meeting of its subsequent regular session for the sole purpose of electing the new Chair and other members of the Bureau.

41. At its 1st meeting, on 19 February 2020, the Commission elected by acclamation Martín García Moritán (Argentina) as Chair and Sharifa Yousef Alnesf (Qatar) as Vice-Chair of the Commission for its fifty-ninth session. At the same meeting, the Commission postponed the election of the members of the Bureau from African States, Eastern European States and Western European and other States to a later date, on the understanding that, upon nomination by their respective groups, candidates would be allowed to participate in the meetings of the Bureau held in preparation for the fifty-ninth session.

42. At its 2nd meeting, on 8 February 2021, the Commission elected, by acclamation, María del Carmen Squeff (Argentina) as Chair (following the departure of the Chair-

elect from the Permanent Mission of Argentina to the United Nations) and Julie Oppermann (Luxembourg), Kouadjo Michel Kouakou (Côte d'Ivoire) and Nikola Nenov (Bulgaria) as Vice-Chairs.

43. At the same meeting, the Commission designated Mr. Kouakou as Rapporteur.

44. The Bureau was thus composed as follows:

Chair:

María del Carmen Squeff (Argentina)

Vice-Chairs:

Sharifa Yousef Alnesf (Qatar)

Kouadjo Michel Kouakou (Côte d'Ivoire) (Rapporteur)

Julie Oppermann (Luxembourg)

Nikola Nenov (Bulgaria)

D. Agenda and organization of work

45. At its 2nd meeting, on 8 February, the Commission adopted the provisional agenda contained in document [E/CN.5/2021/1](#). The agenda read as follows:

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
3. Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly:
 - (a) Priority theme: socially just transition towards sustainable development: the role of digital technologies on social development and well-being of all;
 - (b) Review of relevant United Nations plans and programmes of action pertaining to the situation of social groups:
 - (i) Outcome document of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the realization of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities: the way forward, a disability-inclusive development agenda towards 2015 and beyond;
 - (ii) World Programme of Action for Youth;
 - (iii) Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002;
 - (iv) Family issues, policies and programmes;
 - (c) Emerging issues: social policy to promote a more inclusive, resilient and sustainable recovery: building back better post-COVID-19 for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda in the context of the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development.
4. Programme questions and other matters:
 - (a) Proposed programme plan for 2022;
 - (b) United Nations Research Institute for Social Development.
5. Provisional agenda for the sixtieth session of the Commission.
6. Adoption of the report of the Commission on its fifty-ninth session.

46. At the same meeting, the Commission approved its organization of work, as contained in document [E/CN.5/2021/1/Add.1](#) and as orally revised by the Chair to include the consideration of agenda item 4 (b) on the morning of 17 February.

E. Documentation

47. The list of documents before the Commission at its fifty-ninth session is contained in annex I to the present report.

Annex I

List of documents before the Commission for Social Development at its fifty-ninth session

<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Agenda item</i>	<i>Title/description</i>
A/76/61-E/2021/4	3 (b)	Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the objectives of the International Year of the Family and its follow-up processes
E/CN.5/2021/1	2	Provisional annotated agenda and proposed organization of work
E/CN.5/2021/2	3	Report of the Secretary-General on the social dimensions of the New Partnership for Africa's Development
E/CN.5/2021/3	3 (a)	Report of the Secretary-General on socially just transition towards sustainable development: the role of digital technologies on social development and well-being of all
E/CN.5/2021/4	3 (c)	Note by the secretariat on social policy to promote a more inclusive, resilient and sustainable recovery: building back better post-COVID-19 for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda in the context of the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development
E/CN.5/2021/5	3 (b)	Report of the Secretary-General on policies and programmes involving youth
E/CN.5/2021/6	4 (b)	Note by the Secretary-General on the statute of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development
E/CN.5/2021/7	4	Note by the Secretary-General on the nomination of members of the Board of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development
E/CN.5/2021/8	4	Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Board of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development
E/CN.5/2021/L.1	5	Provisional agenda and documentation for the sixtieth session of the Commission for Social Development
E/CN.5/2021/L.2	6	Draft report of the Commission on its fifty-ninth session
E/CN.5/2021/L.3/Rev.1	3	Draft resolution on the social dimensions of the New Partnership for Africa's Development
E/CN.5/2021/L.4	2	Draft resolution on the future organization and methods of work of the Commission for Social Development

<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Agenda item</i>	<i>Title/description</i>
E/CN.5/2021/L.5	3 (b)	Draft resolution on the policies and programmes involving youth
E/CN.5/2021/L.6	3 (a)	Draft resolution on socially just transition towards sustainable development: the role of digital technologies on social development and well-being of all
E/CN.5/2021/NGO/1–40^a	3 (a) and 3 (b)	Statements by non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

^a Available at www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/united-nations-commission-for-social-development-csod-social-policy-and-development-division/csod59/csod59-ngos-written-statements.html.

Annex II

Virtual informal meetings to hold a general discussion on sub-items 3 (a) and (b) and interactive dialogues on item 3 and its sub-items (a) to (c)

1. At the virtual informal meeting of the Commission held on the afternoon of 8 February 2021, the Commission held a high-level panel discussion on the priority theme “Socially just transition towards sustainable development: the role of digital technologies on social development and well-being of all”.
2. At the same meeting, a keynote address was made by the Chair of the twenty-fourth session of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, Peter Major.
3. Also at the same meeting, the Chair of the Commission (Argentina) made a statement and introduced the panellists: the Minister for Information and Communication Technologies of Colombia, Karen Abudinen; the Head of the Labour Directorate at the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs of the Federal Department of Economics, Education and Research of Switzerland, Boris Zürcher; the Minister of Labour, Solidarity and Social Security of Portugal, Ana Mendes Godinho; the Minister of Development and Social Inclusion of Peru, Silvana Eugenia Vargas Winstanley; and the founder and Chief Executive Officer of Red Dot Foundation and President of Red Dot Foundation Global, Elsa Marie D’Silva. The panel discussion was moderated by the Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Maria-Francesca Spatolisano.
4. At the same meeting, the Deputy Minister of Digital Transformation at the Ministry of Information and Communication Technologies of Colombia, Germán Rueda, also made a statement.
5. Also at the same meeting, an interactive discussion ensued, during which statements were made by the representatives of Brazil, Cuba, Morocco, Argentina and China, as well as by the observers for Senegal and the Dominican Republic. The observer for the European Union also made a comment and posed a question. The representatives of the following non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council also participated in the discussion: International Federation of Social Workers and Maryknoll Sisters of St. Dominic.
6. At the virtual informal meeting of the Commission held on the morning of 9 February, the Commission held 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”.
7. At the same meeting, the Chair (Argentina) made a statement and introduced the panellists: the Minister of Social Development of Argentina, Daniel Fernando Arroyo; the Minister of Labour and Social Protection of Mongolia, Ariunzaya Ayush; the State Secretary of the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth of Germany, Juliane Seifert; and the Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Protection of Population of Azerbaijan, Anar Karimov.
8. Also at the same meeting, an interactive discussion ensued, during which statements were made by the representatives of China, Argentina, Cuba, Morocco, Malawi and Ethiopia, as well as by the observers for the Philippines, Burundi and the Dominican Republic. The observer for the European Union also made comments and posed a question.

9. At the virtual informal meeting of the Commission on the afternoon of 9 February, the Chair (Argentina) made a statement and the Commission began its general discussion on sub-items (a) and (b) of agenda item 3 and heard statements by the representatives of Portugal (also on behalf of the European Union), Côte d'Ivoire (on behalf of the Group of African States) and Argentina (pre-recorded).

10. At the same meeting, the Commission also heard statements by the observers for Saint Lucia (on behalf of the Caribbean Community), Finland (on behalf of the Nordic countries) (pre-recorded), Chile (on behalf of the Group of Friends of Older Persons) (pre-recorded), Malta (on behalf of the LGBTI Core Group), Egypt, Peru (pre-recorded), Kenya (pre-recorded), Guinea (on behalf of the Group of 77 and China) and Zimbabwe (pre-recorded).

11. At the virtual informal meeting of the Commission on the morning of 10 February, the Commission held a panel discussion on emerging issues entitled "Social policy to promote a more inclusive, resilient and sustainable recovery: building back better post-COVID-19 for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda in the context of the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development".

12. At the same meeting, the Chair (Argentina) made a statement and introduced the panellists: the Director of Labour Mobility and International Affairs at the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion of the European Commission, Jordi Curell Gotor; the Vice-President (for development finance, mobilization and partnership) of the Ogata Sadako Research Institute for Peace and Development of the Japan International Cooperation Agency, Megumi Muto; the Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Africa, Cristina Duarte; the Chief Consultant at the Danish Technological Institute, Jeremy Millard; the Director of the Centre for Environmental Management and Coordinator of the Institute for Sustainable Development at the University of the West Indies, Jamaica, David Smith; and the President of the National Council for the Coordination of Social Policies of Argentina, Victoria Tolosa Paz; as well as the lead discussant, the Director of the Employment Policy Department of the International Labour Organization, Sangheon Lee. The panel discussion was moderated by the Director of the Human Development Report Office of the United Nations Development Programme and lead author of the *Human Development Report*, Pedro Conceição.

13. Also at the same meeting, an interactive discussion ensued, during which statements were made by the representatives of Argentina, Cuba and Japan, as well as by the observers for the Philippines, the Dominican Republic and Senegal.

14. At the same meeting, the representatives of the following non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council also participated in the discussion: Imamia Medics International, Congregations of St. Joseph and Haiti Cholera Research Funding Foundation, Inc.

15. At the virtual informal meeting of the Commission held on the afternoon of 10 February, the Commission held an interactive dialogue with senior officials of the United Nations system on the priority theme.

16. At the same meeting, the Chair (Argentina) made a statement and introduced the panellists: the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, Alicia Bárcena Ibarra; the Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana (pre-recorded); the Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union, Houlin Zhao; the Assistant Secretary-General and Deputy Executive Director for Resource Management, Sustainability and Partnerships of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), Anita Bhatia; and the Special Rapporteur of the Human Rights Council on the rights of persons with

disabilities, Gerard Quinn. The panel discussion was moderated by the Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development and Chief Economist of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Elliott C. Harris.

17. Also at the same meeting, an interactive discussion ensued, during which statements were made by the representatives of China, Argentina and Cuba, as well as by the observer for Mexico.

18. At the virtual informal meeting of the Commission held on the morning of 11 February, the Commission heard a statement by the Chair (Argentina). The Commission held its general discussion on sub-items (a) and (b) of agenda item 3 and heard statements by the representatives of Austria (pre-recorded), Morocco (pre-recorded), Panama, Guatemala (pre-recorded), Ethiopia (pre-recorded), the Russian Federation (pre-recorded), Brazil (pre-recorded) and Ukraine (pre-recorded).

19. At the same meeting, statements were also made by the observers for Guyana (pre-recorded), Trinidad and Tobago (pre-recorded), the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (pre-recorded), Malaysia (pre-recorded), El Salvador (pre-recorded), Georgia (pre-recorded), the Philippines and the Plurinational State of Bolivia.

20. At its virtual informal meeting held on the afternoon of 11 February, the Commission held its general discussion of sub-items (a) and (b) of agenda item 3 and heard statements by the representatives of China, Luxembourg (pre-recorded), Switzerland (pre-recorded), Cuba, South Africa and Japan.

21. At the same meeting, the Commission also heard statements by the observers for Cameroon (pre-recorded), Spain (pre-recorded), Finland (on behalf of the Co-Chairs of the Group of Friends on Digital Technologies), Algeria, Poland (pre-recorded), Lebanon, Slovenia, Mexico, Ecuador, Kyrgyzstan, Namibia and Indonesia.

22. At its virtual informal meeting held on the afternoon of 12 February, the Commission held a multi-stakeholder forum on the priority theme.

23. At the same meeting, the Chair (Argentina) made a statement and the Minister of Social Affairs and Children of Iceland, Ásmundur Einar Daðason, gave a keynote address.

24. Also at the same meeting, the Chair introduced the panellists: the Special Adviser on International Affairs of the Ministry of Social Development of Argentina, Vanesa Wainstein; the Director of the Social Affairs Department of the Institute of Social Development of the Academy of Macroeconomic Research of the National Development and Reform Commission of China, Xing Wei (pre-recorded); the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Americas Society and Council of the Americas, Susan Segal; the co-founder of the International Parent Advocacy Network and of the Parents, Families and Allies Network, Taliah Drayak; and the founder and President of Copia, Komal Ahmad. The panel discussion was moderated by the President of Science, Technology, and Innovation Policy Analysis and Education, LLC, and founder and Chief Instructor of the Science and Technology Policy Academy, Deborah D. Stine.

25. At the same meeting, an interactive discussion ensued, during which statements were made by the representative of Argentina and the observers for Senegal and Saudi Arabia.

26. Also at the same meeting, the representatives of the following non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council participated in the discussion: Baha'i International Community, Soroptimist International and Red Dot Foundation Global.

27. At the virtual informal meeting of the Commission held on the morning of 15 February, the Vice-Chair (Qatar) made a statement. The Commission held its general discussion on sub-items (a) and (b) of agenda item 3 and heard statements by the representatives of Colombia (pre-recorded), the Sudan, Romania (pre-recorded), Israel, Turkey, Malawi, and India (pre-recorded).

28. At the same meeting, statements were also made by the observers for Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Jamaica, Cabo Verde, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Viet Nam, the United Arab Emirates (pre-recorded), Chile (pre-recorded), Saudi Arabia and Germany (pre-recorded).

29. At the virtual informal meeting of the Commission held on the afternoon of 15 February, the Vice-Chair (Bulgaria) made a statement. The Commission held its general discussion on sub-items (a) and (b) of agenda item 3 and heard statements by the representatives of Turkmenistan (pre-recorded), Bulgaria (pre-recorded), Qatar, Libya, the Republic of Korea, Paraguay, the United States of America, Iraq, Côte d'Ivoire and North Macedonia.

30. At the same meeting, statements were also made by the observers for the Dominican Republic, Senegal (pre-recorded), Italy (pre-recorded), Pakistan, Serbia, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Monaco, Thailand (pre-recorded) and Oman.

31. At the virtual informal meeting of the Commission held on the morning of 16 February, the Vice-Chair (Luxembourg) made a statement. The Commission held its general discussion on sub-items (a) and (b) of agenda item 3 and heard a statement by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

32. At the same meeting, statements were also made by the observers for the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Saint Kitts and Nevis and Fiji.

33. Also at the same meeting, a statement was made by the observer for the Holy See.

34. At the same meeting, statements were also made by the observers for the League of Arab States (pre-recorded) and the African Union (pre-recorded).

35. Also at the same meeting, statements were made by the representatives of the following non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council: International Federation for Family Development (pre-recorded), Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women (pre-recorded), Union of Ibero American Capitals (pre-recorded), VIVAT International (pre-recorded), Sense International, India (pre-recorded), International Federation of Medical Students' Associations, Baltic Sea Forum, Foundation for Preventing Youth Violence (pre-recorded), Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University (pre-recorded), Alliance Creative Community Project (pre-recorded), Creators Union of Arab (pre-recorded), Movendi International (pre-recorded) and the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

36. At the virtual informal meeting of the Commission held on the afternoon of 16 February, the Vice-Chair (Luxembourg) made a statement. The Commission held its general discussion on sub-items (a) and (b) of agenda item 3 and heard a statement by the representative of France.

37. At the same meeting, statements were also made by the representatives of the following non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council: International Movement ATD Fourth World, Irene Menakaya School Onitsha, Miss Caricom Int'l Foundation CIP Inc., C-Fam, International Longevity Center Global Alliance, UNESCO Association of Guwahati, World Organization for Early Childhood Education, UNANIMA International, Make Mothers Matter, Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, New Future Foundation and Baha'i International Community.

38. Also at the same meeting, the Commission concluded its general discussion on sub-items (a) and (b) of agenda item 3.

