I. High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF)

1. In 2019, two meetings of the High-level Political Forum will be convened: the annual HLPF under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) from 9-18 July 2019, and the SDG Summit at the level of Heads of State and Government under the auspices of the General Assembly from 24-25 September 2019.

2. The ECOSOC HLPF will continue to provide for an inclusive and participatory format. The HLPF Secretariat at the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) works with the Major Groups and other Stakeholders HLPF Coordination Mechanism, a self-organized structure, to implement the considerable participation rights granted to stakeholders by the General Assembly.1 In 2019, Major Groups and other Stakeholders are invited to submit inputs through an e-consultation2 on the six Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 4, 8, 10, 13, 16 and 17) under in-depth review at the 2019 HLPF. Preparatory Webinars for Major Groups and other Stakeholders on various aspects of the HLPF are also being organized.

3. All NGOs that have accreditation with ECOSOC or that are part of the Commission for Sustainable Development roster can register participants to the HLPF. Since 2016, the HLPF features one official session on multi-stakeholder engagement. The session is organized in close collaboration with Major Groups and other Stakeholders. In 2019, the session on “Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality – Perspectives of society” will take place on Thursday, 11 July 2019 from 9–11 a.m.

4. Through coordination with their organizing partners, Major Groups and other Stakeholders can intervene from the floor during the HLPF. That includes interactive dialogues during the thematic review sessions and Q&A sessions after presentations of Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs). Regarding the latter, the objective is that Major Groups and other Stakeholders deliver at least one collaborative statement at each VNR session, despite time constraints. Major Groups and other Stakeholders also serve as panelists and lead discussants in the HLPF thematic review segment and can organize side events within the UN premises during the HLPF.

5. In line with the established practices, the Major Groups and other Stakeholders will also play an important role in the SDG Summit to be held in September 2019. While the format and organization of the SDG Summit will be determined by the President of the General Assembly following a consultative process, stakeholders are invited to share their comments and suggestions on both the modalities of the SDG Summit

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1 See in particular General Assembly resolution A/RES/67/290 on “Format and organizational aspects of the high-level political forum on sustainable development”, paragraph 15.
II. Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (RFSD)

1. At the regional level, the Regional Forums on Sustainable Development are the key platforms for the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. For the UNECE Region, the Regional Forum is of intergovernmental character, with a well-established practice for non-governmental actors to widely contribute to and participate in the meeting.

2. The third stand-alone Regional Forum on Sustainable Development for the UNECE Region took place in Geneva from 21-22 March 2019. It consisted of a High-level Policy Segment on “Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality in the UNECE region” that included a dialogue on Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) as drivers of SDG implementation. Focus events on technology and SDG data and statistics took place in the morning of the second day. In parallel, the Peer Learning Segment promoted voluntary and more in-depth peer learning and practical exchange of experiences in SDG implementation in two sets of five parallel Round Tables centered around five SDGs under in-depth review at the 2019 HLPF (SDGs 4, 8, 10, 13, and 16). The Regional Forum concluded with a plenary session on “Connecting the Dots” to explore interlinkages between these goals and how to operationalize them in policy-making.

3. Civil society organizations coordinated their inputs and participation in the Regional forum through a dedicated Regional Civil Society Engagement Mechanism (RCEM). The Regional Forum was preceded by a one-day self-organized civil society consultation on 20 March 2019, followed by a concluding session on 21 March. Within the civil society regional engagement mechanism, civil society groups working on SDGs in the region participated in a consultative process leading up to the Regional Forum, with due representation from all parts of the region and from NGOs working at the national and local level.

4. The outcomes of the civil society consultation were presented by one civil society speaker in the High-level Policy Segment. Civil society representatives selected by civil society also made substantive interventions in the peer learning round tables, the session on “Connecting the Dots” as well as in the closing of the Regional Forum. Limited funding was available from the meeting budget to support travel of several civil society representatives.

5. The Regional Forum 2019 also encouraged strong youth participation. A half-day youth pre-meeting was held on 21 March 2019, co-organized by the European Youth Forum, the UN Major Group for Children and Youth, the regional UN Issue-based Coalition on Adolescents and Youth, and UNECE. The key messages from youth were presented in the “Connecting the Dots” session, and youth representatives also intervened in the round table discussions.

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3 See https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgs/summit#eng.
4 See www.unece.org/RFSD2019.html
5 See https://unece-rcem.eu/
6 See http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/RCM_Website/Youth_Pre-meeting.pdf