



## High Level Political Forum 2020

### Statement of Ireland

Thank you Mr/Madam President

This year's HLPF takes place in the midst of a global pandemic that has reversed hard-won progress on the Sustainable Development Goals, threatening health systems and deepening existing structural inequalities – especially in more vulnerable regions and countries.

As we enter the decade of action on Agenda 2030, Ireland remains committed to playing its part in achieving the SDGs. It should be even clearer now that the Goals agreed in 2015 are interlinked and interdependent. Success in one Goal can only be assured when all Goals are achieved. For example, we are increasingly seeing the impacts of environmental degradation on human health.

Achieving the SDGs requires partnership among all stakeholders, and Ireland has consistently highlighted the critical role played by civil society in particular. A recurring theme of this year's HLPF is how we must break out of our silos and partner across government, including local governments, financial and private sectors, and with civil society.

Ireland's **National Implementation Plan for the 2030 Agenda** places stakeholder engagement and civil society at the centre of our efforts. Our adoption of a whole-of-Government and whole-of-society approach to implementing the SDGs is premised on the conviction that the Goals belong to everyone.

Our **National SDG Stakeholder Forum** and **National SDG Champions Programme** both aim raise awareness of and engagement with the Goals across Irish society.

Ireland's **2019 Climate Action Plan** marked a significant step on our pathway to becoming a truly sustainable nation and the recent **Programme for Government** has increased Ireland's ambition once again, committing to achieving an average 7% per annum fall in emissions to 2030.

Tackling climate change is also a central dimension of our foreign policy. Our partnerships with Africa, where the effects of climate change are being deeply felt, are important in that regard. We are also aware of the situation of Small Island Developing States, which are amongst those most-affected by Climate Change. We have committed to work with these States, to amplify their voice on the global stage and ensure their needs and concerns are heard and understood. Our preparations for membership of the UN Security Council are taking this commitment into account and we will ensure issues around Climate Change, including those related to Climate and Security, feature on the Council's agenda. SIDS are important partners for Ireland, as are our partnerships in Africa, and we will continue to build on these relationships.

Inclusion of civil society, in particular women-led, organisations, is an essential part of strengthened governance, a pillar of Ireland's foreign policy and of crucial importance in fragile and conflict-affected states. A focus of Ireland's term on the Security Council beginning in 2021 will be on building peace – making sure the peace we foster is inclusive, not just involving governments and conflict parties but embracing civil society, young people and women from the very beginning and throughout the process.

In the anniversary year of the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action, Ireland highlights the central role of gender equality and women's empowerment in achievement of the SDGs. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought into sharper relief the need for action on gender-based violence. It has also made clear the enormous contribution of women health workers. We must ensure equal gender representation in decision-making in the health and other sectors.

Ireland will continue to focus its SDG efforts on supporting the furthest behind first, to ensure that we leave no one behind. This calls for strengthening inclusive forms of development and, building transparency and accountability, to help tackle the root causes of poverty and inequality.

The COVID-19 crisis has also shown us that multilateral action is essential to respond to challenges that know no borders. As we mark the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the UN Charter, we

must respond to demands for solidarity and international cooperation to build back better and greener.

Ireland continues to believe that the SDGs form the roadmap to the future we all want to reach by 2030.

**Ends**