

## Talking points for the May 20 Interactive Dialogue with Major Groups

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Many thanks Mr. Co-Facilitators. Let me contribute with three concrete set of suggestions:

**Firstly, citizen’s agency and participation at all levels are the soul of follow-up and review processes** and should therefore be the driving principle of their design. The process so far has rightly placed significant emphasis on data. While civil society has historically championed its use to review development outcomes and advocate for policy change, it is essential to recognize that data is not the only path to knowledge. No matter how essential and pivotal, it can only complement but never substitute the knowledge brought by the direct participation of citizens, particularly those most affected by development challenges. Hence, our recommendation that every country adopts, through a truly inclusive participatory process, a National Sustainable Development Strategy, and defines a public, inclusive and participatory national review and accountability mechanism, led by a National Council for Sustainable Development, with adequate representation of all constituencies, particularly those of the most affected. These will be the essential pillars to build regional and global mechanisms based on participatory national ownership.

**Secondly, we continue to be deeply concerned with the abuse and misuse of the “stakeholder” language** and its pretence to domesticate and reconcile the difference between private and public interests. It is essential to recognize the profound distinction between the participation of civil society – one that helps bridging democratic deficits – and that of the private sector, and provide separate and different avenues for the two. Clarifying the natural tension between private and public interests is the pre-condition to ensure the necessary limitations and safeguards are established to properly assess PPPs and other “so-called” multistakeholder partnerships and reaffirm the centrality of public action, particularly though not exclusively, when it comes to inclusion and essential services, but even more when it comes to ensuring equity. We therefore urge that accountability and follow-up processes respond to right-holders rather than stakeholders, and the public policy space be protected by robust safeguards against conflict of interest and stringent *ex-ante* criteria to establish the legitimacy of any private-interest driven actors to participate.

**Lastly, despite the high ambition, the just concluded FfD consultations exposed limited political will to generate the means to bridge rhetoric and reality.** This highlights the critical importance of a follow-up process aimed at removing the structural barriers to the socio-economic transformation of developing countries through a development-led reform of the economic, trade, monetary and financial systems. It is therefore essential to support the HLPF-centred monitoring and accountability frameworks with a complementary intergovernmental FfD follow-up mechanism that can advance the normative process that such a re-architecture of economic governance requires.

Thank you