Economic and Social Council

Advanced Unedited Version

High-level political forum on sustainable development
Convened under the auspices of the Economic and
Social Council
9 - 18 July 2018
Agenda item 2

Discussion papers on the theme of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, submitted by major groups and other stakeholders

Note by the Secretariat

The present document is a compilation of the executive summaries of the position papers on the theme of the high-level political forum, "Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies", submitted by the various major groups and other relevant stakeholders that have autonomously established and maintained effective coordination mechanisms for participation in the high-level political forum on sustainable development, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 67/290. The full reports are posted on the HLPF website https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/2018.

I.   Women

1.   The complexity of women's lives and realities is reflected in the intersectional nature of the sustainable development goals. While 8 of the 17 goals explicitly integrate commitments to women and girls, the achievement of targets across the agenda has implications for women's and girls' human rights. The six goals under review at the 2018 High Level Political Forum, on water and sanitation, energy, safe and sustainable cities, protecting biodiversity, addressing unsustainable consumption and production and ensuring the means of implementation to achieve the SDGs are as important for gender equality as they are critical for sustainable development.

2.   The Women's Major Group submission offers a detailed gender analysis of the six goals, demonstrates how women and girls are differently impacted by development failures and provides specific recommendations for future action.

3.   As governments take forward implementation of these SDGs, the Women's Major Group provides the following cross-cutting recommendations:

4.   **Actively support the meaningful participation of women in decision-making**. From increasing access to safe drinking water and ensuring that women and girls have the information and means necessary to practice menstrual health, to protecting forests, biodiversity and sustainable agriculture, to addressing safety and security within cities, women offer particular expertise and must be at decision-making tables. Governments should create formal opportunities to ensure that the most marginalised groups of women and women most affected by policies and programs under consideration have a say in their development.

5.   **Invest in the collection of gender data**. The lack of data disaggregated by sex, age, location, ethnicity, migration status and other factors sets back development efforts by failing to give adequate information about who is being left behind. Investing in efforts to close the massive gender data gap is essential for effective budgeting and policymaking.

6.   **Address gender-discriminatory norms, stereotypes and gender-based violence** that hold women and girls back. Stigma surrounding menstrual hygiene, stereotypes about women's roles that prevents their participation in the sustainable energy sector, and harassment in the streets of cities all limit women's ability to participate in public life and achieve equality. Strategies to address gender discriminatory norms and violence must be integrated into policies and programs to address each of the SDGs.

7.   **Value women's time and prioritize the reduction and redistribution of women's unpaid work**. Whether it is through additional time women spend collecting safe drinking water, fuel wood, or nutritious food, or on public transportation in cities to complete their care work, women and girls bear the burden of development failures in hours of unpaid work, which in turn affects their prospects for education and employment. Investing in gender-responsive infrastructure, social protection programs and care services to reduce and redistribute women's and girls' disproportionate burden of unpaid work must be a priority.

8.   **Use gender budgeting to ensure investments in women and girls**. The failure to account for gender in budget allocations hinders the effectiveness of sustainable development programs. Governments must analyse the gender differentiated impacts of budgets and allocate money towards achieving clearly defined gender equality targets.

9.   **Protect women's rights to own and control land, energy and other productive resources**. Eliminating discriminatory laws and putting in place proactive policies to guarantee women's rights to own and control land and other productive resources is essential across each of the SDGs under consideration.

10. **Commit to accountability from the local level to the global**. None of the SDGs will be achieved without addressing closing spaces for civil society at all levels; protecting women human rights defenders, including environmental defenders; ensuring that women's and feminist groups are at accountability tables, and ensuring rigorous and transparent review at all levels, including at the HLPF.

II.   Children and Youth

11. The trajectory towards sustainable development remains far from desirable. Transgression of planetary boundaries and historically accumulated inequalities are undermining sustainability and resilience. The current wave of anti-collectivism and globalism is further catalysing these adverse effects. The lost sentiment of Agenda 21 to confront historical injustice hinders the decolonising struggle at HLPF.

12. Displacement of states, neoliberalism, growth obsession, militarisation of economies, and the rise in power of transnational corporations (TNCs) have further exhausted the planet's regenerative biocapacity, dimensionalised the colonial divide, and created unparalleled wealth inequality between ultra-rich and everyone else across countries in different stages of development. These trends are undermining the future of young people.

13. The UN, in its growing need for funding, is leaning towards private sector without any accountability mechanisms. We are at a critical turning-point to re-examine the pre-analytical view of our society in an ecocidal neo-colonial context.

14. In order to align our global architecture to achieve this Agenda, the UNMGCY emphasizes the following:

15. Water and sanitation is a human right. The rampant privatisation of this global common is the primary structural barrier to its access. It results in sharp price hikes, and obscures responsibility for provision while violating indigenous sovereignty in some cases.

16. Decarbonisation of the economy faces barriers: constructed high-cost of renewable energy system, false assumptions of nuclear power, stalled divestments from fossil fuels and perverse subsidies, and a lack of access to energy-storage-technologies.

17. Integrated territorial development is indispensable to localise this global agenda. It addresses inequalities between different types of human settlements across the spatial continuum that result from incumbent power structures and planning paradigms. It addresses underlying factors of urban-rural migrations and territorial social inequalities. Systematic human rights violations of the urban poor embedded in exclusionary urban development policies remain a barrier. Principle of build back better and enhancing risk-informed policy should be mainstreamed.

18. Building on work of UNEA, agreeing on a universal protocol on plastics is needed. Forests should be given status as protected global commons.

19. The economy is a subset of society and the environment. Policy approaches should align macroeconomic frameworks with the three dimensions of sustainable development. Concrete initiatives like UNEP's E-

RISC[1] and ETR[2] should be universally applied. The issue of stranded assets and transition from fractional to full reserve banking are inevitable to operationalise this paradigm.

20. Achieving universal access to basic services requires delinking them from any migratory status. Role of the private sector in benefiting from undocumented migrants and abusive practices should be highlighted.

21. Gender oppression and inequalities remain significant. Essential to overcoming structural barriers that limit agency of girls and young women is the inclusion of their voices in all decision-making spaces.

22. Evidence from various disciplines and sources (formal, informal, traditional, indigenous, etc.) must form the foundation of each stage of the policy cycle. Appropriate application of technology is essential, with the need for anticipatory governance frameworks that ensure technology justice.

23. The HLPF should convene discussions on emerging issues, such as mega/shrinking cities, rights of nature, public ownership of global commons, ecocide as a crime against humanity, degrowth, and global regulation on business in line with the discussion at the intergovernmental working group on TNCs and other business enterprises with respect to human rights at UNHRC.[3]

24. The success of the Agenda requires greater integration and coherence of the various global frameworks and inputs from ECOSOC's subsidiary bodies and forums, such as SFDRR,[4] GCM,[5] NUA,[6] 10YFP-4-SCP,[7] SPF,[8] Paris Agreement, CSW,[9] ECOSOC Youth Forum, and others.

25. To ensure rights-based participation modalities that provide protected spaces for critical segments of society, the HLPF reform process should engage major groups and other stakeholders, building on the modalities in A/RES/67/290.

III. Non-Governmental Organisations

26. For the 2030 Agenda to be truly transformative, urgent action is required to reorient and restructure global systems towards equity and justice. This includes the meaningful and active participation of stakeholders at all stages of the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Therefore, the NGO Major Group calls for a new development paradigm that prioritizes the flourishing of humans, nature, and animals. Our proposals specific to the SDGs under consideration at the 2018 High Level Political Forum follow below.

27. Recognizing the importance of water, sanitation and hygiene in ensuring human rights, gender equality, and peace, we call for a rights-based approach to SDG6 that prevents the commodification and privatisation of water sources and that ensures transparent, accountable, and fair distribution of services; increases domestic resources and aid for water, sanitation, and hygiene services to ensure equitable and affordable access; protects environmental ecosystems that secure water systems; and strengthens community-based water resource management.

----

[1] Ecological Risk Integration into Sovereign Credit
[2] Ecological Tax Reform
[3] United Nations Human Rights Council
[4] Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction
[5] Global Compact on Migration,
[6] New Urban Agenda
[7] 10 Year Framework of Programme on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns,
[8] Strategic Plan for Forests 2017–2030
[9] Commission on the Status of Women

28. To achieve SDG7 and ensure sustainable energy for all, we call for inclusive, multi-stakeholder collaborations in designing and delivering sustainable energy solutions that protect the environment, cultural heritage, and human rights. This includes upscaling investment in renewable energy, through innovative approaches to reach energy-poor communities through end-user-oriented energy services that are truly affordable, reliable, safe, and sustainable.

29. Recognizing the right of humanity to safe, decent, culturally adequate, and resilient living environments, we call for the implementation of SDG11 through inclusive approaches that bring together local, national, and international actors, including women and marginalised groups, in urban planning, expansion of technologies, and disaster risk management. Age-, gender-, and disability-sensitive and participatory budgeting and planning are key in urban planning and integrated territorial governance.

30. We call for increased political will and action to achieve SDG12, particularly through regulation of corporate activity and waste, consumer education, and environmental stewardship. Governments have a fundamental role in regulating the private sector and ensuring all-of-society action towards changing consumption and production patterns, moving from an excessive focus on profit and growth to a planet- and people-centred economy.

31. In the context of the ongoing degradation of our planet's ecosystem, we call for the involvement of civil society, indigenous peoples, women, and local communities in coordinated action to achieve SDG15, in line with biodiversity-related intergovernmental frameworks and targets. States must implement policies and effective enforcement systems to hold extractive and polluting industries accountable, prevent further deterioration, conserve and protect biodiversity, and work towards restoration of past damages.

32. The "means of implementation" of the 2030 Agenda, encapsulated in SDG17, must ensure the policy space required for governments to enact regulation, enforcement, and fiscal measures to advance their democratically-owned and rights-based development agendas. We demand the overdue introduction of a financial transactions tax and the establishment of an intergovernmental tax body for international tax cooperation at UN level. Trade must be organized along principles that support policy space and the rights-based implementation of the SDGs, and the global North must provide at least 0.7 percent of GDP in ODA, particularly for least developed countries.

33. Noting the "interlinked and indivisible" nature of the 2030 Agenda, we call for a holistic, coherent, multi-sectoral, and multi-stakeholder approach to SDG implementation. Partnerships between governments, intergovernmental institutions, research and academic institutions, and civil society are critical to gaining the comprehensive perspectives, expertise and resources necessary to fully implement the 2030 Agenda, as well as to ensure monitoring, review and accountability. Crosscutting issues must be addressed through a collaborative approach, to enable our collective success in furthering the well-being of humans, nature, and animals and ensuring transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies for all.

IV. Local Authorities

34. The global development agendas, 2030 Agenda, Paris Agreement, New Urban Agenda (NUA) and Sendai Framework, along with UNEA resolutions, offer an unprecedented opportunity for Local and Regional Governments (LRG) to contribute to global sustainability. The LRGs constituency reaffirms our commitment to these agendas and our political will to turn the global goals into localized objectives, through key alliances with the UN System and civil society. As the ultimate level of government responsible for delivering concrete action on the ground, LRGs have a unique role to play.

35. Localizing the SDGs relates to how LRGs can support the achievement of the 2030 Agenda through bottom-up action and how the SDGs provide a framework for local and urban development policy.

36. The Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments (GTF) is the main mechanism to facilitate engagement of LRGs in these international processes. The GTF convened the World Assembly of LRGs, a fundamental moment in the definition of the NUA, which is closely interlinked with the achievement of the SDGs. The localisation of the global agendas is a powerful driver of sustainable inclusive territories and cities that can unite efforts and improve delivery of the SDGs nationally and globally.

37. GTF members, such as UCLG and nrg4SD, are developing reports to be launched at the HLPF 2018, on the implementation of the SDGs from the LRGs' perspective.

Assessing the status of the localisation of the SDGs

38. Raising-awareness: International and national networks' efforts have succeeded in promoting the LRGs' engagement towards the 2030 Agenda. Nevertheless, additional tasks remain towards mainstreaming SDGs across LRGs' work.

39. Alignment of ongoing plans: LRGs were already working on many of the SDGs range of topics, thus understanding how to integrate existing actions is crucial.

40. Strengthening a territorial approach: Capacities need to be improved to address the interconnected effects of the SDGs in an integrated manner, over urban and rural areas, strengthening linkages between territories.

41. NUA as key enabler of the 2030 Agenda: The urban and territorial dimension can accelerate SDGs' achievement by focusing on key dimensions such as integrated planning, housing, mobility, pollution and climate change, resilience, and culture.

42. Multilevel governance and monitoring framework: National governments must conduct open processes to define priorities with LRGs. Inclusive dialogue mechanisms can ensure coordination and proper monitoring frameworks, including comprehensive data analysis and collection. This should feed the VNRs, ensuring the LRGs' involvement in their preparation.

43. Financing and means of implementation: Adding new modalities requires unlocking funding opportunities for LRGs. It is urgent to create an enabling environment through adequate regulatory frameworks and policies to promote LRGs empowerment, develop programs and organize capacity-building for LRGs to deliver this ambitious agenda.

44. International cooperation: Particularly in less developed countries and to facilitate decentralized peer-to-peer experience exchange among territories, supporting the localisation of aid and investments at local level.

Local and Regional Governments' Forum

45. The HLPF 2018 is ground-breaking for our involvement. The localisation of all goals and targets is fundamental to ensure the 2030 Agenda becomes a reality by linking the SDG 11 with the urban and territorial dimension of the other goals.

46. GTF, UNDESA and UN-Habitat are organizing the first-ever Local and Regional Governments' Forum within the HLPF – a long-time request of our constituency. This opportunity will bring LRGs' high-level representatives to report on the progress of the SDGs in their cities and regions, and share messages to improve the implementation locally and sub-nationally.

47. The Forum should be recognized as a regular mechanism for our involvement in the monitoring and reporting process globally and regionally. The LRGs' efforts to organize, collaborate and deliver informed inputs must be acknowledged as part of the HLPF monitoring and reporting institutional processes.

V. Workers and Trade Unions

Trade Unions' vision on Sustainable Development Goals

48. The 2030 Agenda is premised on the recognition of a mutual dependence of environmental, economic and social sustainability. Together with the Paris Climate Agreement and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, it provides the framework for achieving sustainable and resilient societies. The perspective of workers and trade unions is aligned with this holistic vision. A rights-based approach is a requisite for achieving sustainable development. Labour standards must be guaranteed for all. Upholding freedom of association and collective bargaining rights and supporting social dialogue (between workers and employers' representative organisations and governments) as a governance instrument not only deliver progress for working people and societies at large but is also a pillar of functional democracies.

The Just Transition to achieve environmentally, socially and economically sustainable energy and production patterns (Goals 7 and 12)

49. The "Just Transition" is premised on an inclusive approach that brings together workers, communities, employers and governments in social dialogue to drive the concrete plans, policies and investments needed for a fast and fair transformation towards a low carbon economy. It adopts a rights-based approach to build social protection systems, provide skills training, redeployment, labour market policies and community development. Governments must strengthen their capacity to deliver just transition measures.

Responsible and sustainable investments – quality public services and resource mobilisation (Goals 6 and 11)

50. Trade unions highlight the risks associated to the privatisation of common goods and public services. In particular, the challenges that public-private partnerships raise with regards to transparency and the limits they impose on people's access to the goods and services needed to ensure that they are not left behind, raise major questions about their capacity to realise the Sustainable Development Goals.

51. Taxes are the most important source of public financing. It is important to note that central governments have a key role to play in ensuring that local governments have sufficient public revenues to provide quality water and sanitation services. As such, sustainable publicly financed water and sanitation systems rely heavily on strong commitments from central governments.

Responsible and sustainable investments – private finance for public sustainability (Goals 12 and 15)

52. Governments must ensure business accountability and transparency in investments and due diligence throughout global supply chains as well as address problems associated with the operations of offshore finance and tax havens. Corporations must respect human rights, contribute to the formalisation of the informal economy, uphold the ILO's core labour standards and practice the 'due diligence' prescribed by the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the ILO Tripartite Declaration of Principles Concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy.

53. To do so, Governments should:

(a) Ensure implementation of labour rights, including freedom of association and the right to bargain collectively, decent wages and social protection;

(b)　　Commit to support social dialogue as a means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda and implement National Just Transition Plans, together with social partners;

(c)　　Empower local governments to implement just transition measures that can adequately adapt labour market policies to local needs;

(d)　　Guarantee affordable and quality public services for public transport, energy and water saving arrangements, healthcare and sanitary provision and quality education;

(e)　　Implement progressive taxation systems able to support the financing of public services;

(f) Ensure business accountability and transparency in investments and 'due diligence' in global supply chains as prescribed by the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the Tripartite declaration of principles concerning multinational enterprises and social policy;

(g)　　Address problems associated with offshore finance and tax havens;

(h)　　Include labour and environmental clauses in all public procurement and ensure public contract transparency and disclosure.

VI.　Business and Industry

54. The Business and Industry Major Group (BIMG) reiterates its commitment to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and acknowledges the critical role it must continue to play in accelerating progress towards sustainable development. As a key partner to governments and other stakeholders in driving inclusive economic growth, the private sector continues to make investments towards achieving the SDGs – including in building human and institutional capacities, project development, and accessible and sustainable innovation and deployment.

55. The unprecedented participation of the private sector as well as governments and civil society organisations at the 2017 SDG Business Forum sent a clear message to the world about the level of engagement by the private sector to accelerate SDG implementation – and our commitment to play a key role in driving sustainability, eradicating poverty and creating decent and productive work for all.

56. The private sector is committed to mobilizing its resources and expertise to ensure that policy frameworks and partnerships support the vision of an inclusive, sustainable and prosperous world that is embodied in the 2030 Agenda. To this end, we hope that HLPF 2018 will provide a platform for constructive and inclusive dialogue between business and governments on the SDGs reviewed in depth this year.

57. The private sector reiterates its intention to engage in the HLPF 2018 as an active partner in sustainability through knowledge sharing, providing expertise in policy formation and implementation, as well as in partnerships with lasting impact.

58. BIMG, as ever, is committed to private sector implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and stands ready to work with the private sector, government and all stakeholders to deliver on this commitment.

VII.　Scientific and Technological Community

59. Implementing the SDGs as an integrated set, taking full account of the interdependencies between them, creates opportunities to reframe development, promote policy coherence, create efficiencies, target investments, and promote stronger buy-in. Achieving the SDGs together as an "indivisible whole" is not only possible, but the only way of achieving the SDGs.

60. There is a special urgency for acting now on SDG interactions, as current decisions are locking-in unsustainable pathways. Wider coordinated efforts are needed to understand the long-term pathways to achieve the SDGs and the potential spill overs across policy domains, and across time and geographical boundaries.

61. Achieving sustainable development requires better integration, more coordination, and cooperation at an unprecedented scale, including between scientists, policy-makers, civil society and the private sector.

62. The scientific and technology community has a crucial role to play in providing the evidence, expertise and data to inform, measure and monitor the implementation of the SDGs.

63. Alongside technology, governance, societal norms and values, and behavioural change have a huge role in achieving the SDGs. Our governance systems need to be changed to better manage complex multidimensional challenges.

64. The HLPF offers an opportunity to reflect not only on successes but importantly, on challenges in the implementation of the SDGs. This would allow for better learning process, and more effective engagement of scientists and stakeholders.

65. Access to safe water for all requires balancing demands from many socio-economic actors, protecting the sources of water, and rainfall, and enhancing the transparent governance of natural resource management. Water (and sanitation) systems require integrated and multi-scalar management that take into account changing environmental and social pressures. Access to sanitation is a social and political issue as well as a technical issue, with small-scale community dynamics affecting access.

66. Access to modern energy is fundamental to human development. However, not everyone has enjoyed the benefits of modern energy. Energy extraction, conversion and consumption has major impacts on other sectors. Urban policy-makers need to tackle simultaneously energy security, sustainability and affordability. There is a need for a long-term approach to science and technology development to scale up low-carbon technologies especially in developing countries, and address any potential negative impacts on energy prices.

67. By 2030, 60% of the world's population will live in cities. Whilst cities have administrative boundaries, their sustainability is dependent on a much wider area which supply cities with food, water, energy, and consumer goods. The design, density, efficiency, and size of cities governs their consumption of natural resources, their ability to provide secure and healthy lives for their inhabitants, and their impact on the natural environment surrounding them. A systems-approach to urban planning is key to achieving sustainable development.

VIII. Education and academia stakeholder group

68. Free, quality education is crucial for breaking cycles of poverty and transforming societies, placing SDG4 at the heart of the Sustainable Development Agenda. The SDGs reviewed by the HLPF 2018 rely on education for their realisation and are at the same time determinant to the realisation of Goal 4; cross-sectoral relationships and interrelated policymaking are necessary — in line with Goal 17. Civil Society organisations that work to promote the right to education have recognized this; networks have broadened, and cross-sectoral dialogues are achieving positive change.

69. Progress has been witnessed in the implementation of the SDGs, in particular of SDG4, in some countries, along with efforts to align targets with national policies and legislations. We have seen the development of follow-up and

monitoring mechanisms take shape at the national level, as well as at the global level, as can be exemplified by the work of the Global Education Monitoring Report and the establishment of accountability mechanisms, including the SDG4-Education 2030 Steering Committee.

70. The financing of the SDGs has proven challenging. To deliver SDG4, domestic budgets remain insufficient, and in some cases, have even decreased, and reductions in official development assistance have not helped. At the same time, proposals to close the financing gap through loans have been put forward, pointing to a worrying and unfitting return of the debt motif. A combination of increased domestic resources, particularly through mechanisms of tax justice at the national and international levels, and increased international cooperation are necessary to make the implementation of the agenda fully viable. Lack of sufficient resource allocation to SDG4 by governments, has given rise to increasing privatisation in some countries, with reports of for-profit actors taking advantage of gaps in public provision, undermining the responsibility of the State as the duty bearer for the 2030 Agenda.

71. Despite the participatory climate in which the SDGs were developed, often the doors have since closed to civil society and we have seen cases of rising criminalization of social protest. Citizens must have their perspective considered in decision-making and monitoring processes.

72. A further challenge lies in the measurement and accountability processes. Civil society can contribute by actively engaging in the debate on indicators and data production, as well as in the debate on data transparency and publication, and in some cases with data collection, including by mobilizing the academia. Furthermore, we are seeing a predominance of attention attributed to several global education indicators that reduce the agenda to measures of testing, which fails the ambition of SDG4 to deliver quality education, and of the full set of SDGs to ensure a fulfilling life for all.

73. Bottlenecks related to education policy making have been identified, including: insufficient attention to gender equality; the persistence of violence, conflict and situations of emergencies; a narrowing of the broad SDG4 agenda with neglect to youth and adult education, and insufficient attention to the conditions and status of teachers.

74. The recommendations of the EASG include:

(a)   Credible road maps must be developed for each SDG; for SDG4, these must explicitly provide for education that is of quality, equitable, inclusive and free;

(b)   States must deliver their responsibility to finance the Goals; for SDG4, this should be as detailed within the Education 2030 Framework for Action;

(c)   Education systems must be supported to respond to the challenges of the future; human rights, sustainable development and global citizenship should be mainstreamed across curricula, teaching and learning methods and materials, assessment, and teacher training and support measures;

(d)   Citizen participation in accountability at all levels must be enabled;

(e)   Voluntary national reviews should include formal space for reporting by representative national civil society.

IX.   Persons with disabilities

75. To truly make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable, we must ensure that all people are included, diversity is celebrated, and all have support to live and be included in cities and human settlements. Resilience is essential for realising sustainable development, and to achieve this, the furthest behind must be meaningfully included, such as persons with disabilities. The 2030 Agenda embodies a commitment to include those furthest behind and to reduce their risks to economic, social and

environmental shocks. The Sustainable Development Goals can only be realized for persons with disabilities if the implementation is guided by the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

76. Globally, persons with disabilities make up 15 percent of the world's population, 80 percent of whom lives in poverty. Nearly 36 percent of the global population lacks access to sanitation and 884 million people lack access to clean drinking water, which more often affects the poorest communities. Thus, approximately 177 million persons with disabilities are adversely affected and without access to clean water and sanitation.[10] Additionally, more than half of all persons with disabilities lives in towns and cities that are rarely accessible, and this number is estimated to grow to between 750,000 and 1 billion by 2030.[11] Linked to this, the global population of people forcibly displaced reached a record 66 million in 2016, with as many as 10 million being persons with disabilities.[12]

77. Due to barriers in accessing the built environment, information, and communication, persons with disabilities are denied access to basic urban services, including housing, roads, public spaces, transportation, sanitation and water, health, education, emergency and disaster response. Yet, it is generally feasible to meet accessibility requirements at one percent of the total cost. The reality is that retrofitting for accessibility is more expensive costing up to 20 percent of the original cost compared to integrating accessibility and universal design principles into new buildings.[13] Furthermore, few supports and services exist to enable persons with disabilities and their families to realize their right to live and be included in the community. Where services exist, too often they continue to be segregated, medicalized and based on congregate care. Inclusive societies reflect the interdependence of our rights and that to be fully and meaningfully included, one must also have access to inclusive education, affordable housing, the right to make decisions, employment and other areas.

78. Inclusive, safe, sustainable and resilient societies cannot be defined only by bricks and mortar and inclusive societies are not defined only by physical access. Inclusive societies must be built on the principles secured in CRPD Article 3 by respect for inherent dignity, individual autonomy including the freedom to make one's own choices, and independence of persons; non-discrimination; full and effective participation and inclusion in society; respect for differences and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity; equality of opportunity; accessibility; equality between men and women; respect for the evolving capacities of children with disabilities and respect for the right of children with disabilities to preserve their identities.

79. To realize this inclusion for persons with disabilities, policy makers must be informed by collecting evidence-based data that are disaggregated by disability using the short set of questions developed by the Washington Group and by properly consulting persons with disabilities and their representative organizations on the design, implementation and monitoring of SDG plans.

X.   Volunteer groups

80. Volunteers and volunteer effort are essential to the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The aim of eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity will not be realised without the contributions of millions of properly supported and enabled volunteers.

----

[10] See http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/MDG_FS_7_EN.pdf

[11] Utilizing 5 billion urban dwellers, we calculated that 15 to 20% of these would-be persons with disabilities. Data sources used: WHO and World Bank (2011). "World Report on Disability", and http://www.unfpa.org/urbanization.

[12] See http://www.unhcr.org/5943e8a34.pdf

[13] WHO and World Bank (2011)

81. Volunteers extend the reach SDG-related services, facilitating access to services in health, education and many other areas to some of the poorest, most marginalised or most vulnerable communities, ensuring that no one is left behind.

82. For poor and marginalised people, including minority indigenous peoples, refugees, those with disabilities, and others who are all too often on the edges of society, the opportunity to volunteer is a chance to move from being a passive recipient to being actively engaged in development processes.

83. Volunteerism is a universal phenomenon, but it does not occur at uniform rates, nor is it uniformly effective. It is strongest when it is recognised and supported.

84. Citizen-led monitoring offers opportunities to not only collect data at a level that is closer to poor and marginalised people, but when combined with participatory processes it has the potential to empower people in realising their rights as citizens.

Goal 6

85. Volunteers are active in ensuring water sources are clean by testing samples and clearing waterways of refuse around the world. Volunteers also educate whole communities on proper sanitation practices.

Goal 7

86. Volunteers are installing and maintaining solar panels, repairing infrastructure post disaster, contributing to Bottom of the Pyramid (BoP) renewable energy improvement projects, and are even developing hydro-electric power schemes to make renewable energy accessible.[141516]

Goal 11

87. Sustainable cities are active cities filled with volunteer driven NGOs and volunteers. Millions are involved with environmental volunteering, farming, building new and inclusive technology, actively educating each other, advocating and lobbying local and national governments and more. Furthermore, millions of volunteers are first responders during natural and other disasters, working to safeguard neighbours and bounce back quickly.

Goal 12

88. Volunteers are consumers, workers, and concerned contributors. Volunteers are crucial in efforts to lobby companies to improve production practices, and are at the fore of educating consumers about how the goods they purchase are sourced and produced to ensure our scarce resources are not squandered.

Goal 15

89. Volunteers are crucial to ensuring our natural environment is well cared for. India set a world record in 2017 by planting 66 million trees on one day, made possible through the work of 1.5 million volunteers.[17]

---

[14] See https://www.thenational.ae/uae/environment/dubai-youth-volunteers-clean-hatta-s-solar-panels-1.694822
[15] See https://www.unv.org/news/partnership-yamaha-motor-first-partnership-private-sector-japan
[16] See https://volunteer2030.org/2015/06/26/cooperating-with-cooperatives-in-vanuatu/
[17] See https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2017/02/india-plants-trees-breaks-world-record/

90. In Lebanon, a unique collaboration between the United Nations, local government, the private sector and volunteers resulted in 2,000 volunteers planting 5,000 cedar trees, part of a plan to where volunteers will be instrumental in planting 40 million trees by 2030.[18]

91. Volunteer groups' Recommendations to the HLPF:

(a)   Formally recognise the contribution of volunteering to the implementation of the SDGs in the Member States' voluntary national reviews at the HLPF;

(b)   Ensure that Volunteer Groups are fully recognised and supported in the national plans and strategies for implementing the 2030 Agenda;

(c)   Note the commitment of volunteer groups to sharing in the accountability for the successful delivery of the SDGs;

(d)   Follow the lead of Member States by affirming their full support for the implementation of A/RES/67/290, which supports the participation of non-governmental actors;

(e)   Ensure the data for monitoring the SDGs is captured through participatory processes and includes the perspectives of the most marginalised voices, as well as the volunteers that work closest to them;

(f) Ensure the accountability, transparency and review framework for the SDGs involves community consultation at all levels, including representation of the most marginalised voices, as well as the volunteers that work closest to them.

XI.   Older persons

92. In 2015, 58% of the world's people aged 60 and over resided in urban areas, up from 50% in 2000. Over half the ageing population, 289 million, lives in low- and middle-income countries, and is increasingly concentrated in urban areas. Older persons are the fastest growing population group globally, reaching 22% by 2050 (UNDESA 2017), and their numbers in cities are set to increase.

93. Implementing 'Age Friendly Cities' is central to Sustainable Development Goal 11's aim to make cities and human settlements "inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable". Older age can increase risk of vulnerability in urban areas (WHO 2016 Global Report on Urban Health). The 'Age Friendly Cities' approach optimises 'opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age." (WHO 2007 Age Friendly Cities Guide).

94. Such an approach aligns with the New Urban Agenda, which calls for age, gender, and disability-sensitive strategies and to the pledge of governments to leave no one behind as they implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

95. This pledge requires UN member states to take a rights-based, life course, approach to urban planning that solicits the active participation of all, including older persons.

96. Challenges facing ageing populations in rapidly urbanising environments include, but are not limited to, inadequate food and shelter, lack of access to water and sanitation, higher risk for infectious and chronic diseases, income insecurity, poverty, and social exclusion.

97. Age-related physical and mental health issues, including impaired vision and vision loss, hearing, and other

---

[18] See http://www.lri-lb.org/en/news.php?page=2&t=17&i=270#news&panel1-1

functional impairments, present unique challenges for older urban dwellers in housing design. These can inhibit their use of public transportation and public spaces, limit opportunities for social and economic contributions and are factors for social exclusion and isolation.

98. Significant barriers to the realization of older urban-dwellers' rights to health, participation, and social inclusion include income insecurity, inadequate access to age-appropriate health and care services, and greater gender inequality in older age. The impact of chronic diseases and air pollution on health and mortality in urban areas, disproportionately affects the very old and the very young.

99. Inadequate age- and gender-disaggregated data is a significant challenge to the implementation of all the SDGs, including Goal 11. The recently created Titchfield Group on ageing-related statistics and age-disaggregated data must take account of different experiences of ageing in urban and rural environments.

100. 'Inclusive Design' models, such as intergenerational innovations in living arrangements and the use of Universal Design in building, benefit all generations, respect the rights, and enhance the unique contributions of older persons.

101. Appropriate urban development can address risk factors of ageing in cities and support the contributions of older persons to civic life by enhancing their participation and recognising their roles as voters, workers, taxpayers, citizens, and immigrants. Older persons who are actively involved in their communities play unique roles in maintaining the social cohesion of families and neighbourhoods. They are employees, caregivers, and volunteers, bearers of historical memory who transmit wisdom, traditions and culture to future generations. Older women especially provide vital (unpaid) care and support for spouses, children, grandchildren and other, often older, relatives, especially those with disabilities and dementia.

102. City and municipal-level governments can play key roles in harnessing the energy of the collective action and potential of older urban populations to lead policy changes that support national governments' achievement of Goal 11 targets.

103. Progress on Goal 11 is linked to progress on Goals 1, 3, 5. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 13 16, and 17.

XII. Asia-Pacific Regional CSO Engagement Mechanism (AP-RCEM)

104. Three years since the adoption of SDGs, there is still a growing gap between aspiration of 2030 Agenda and reality — wealth inequality is growing, more people are pushed near or below poverty threshold by dispossession of land, productive resources, livelihoods and natural resources; more women, human rights and environmental defenders face oppression, intimidation, threats and marginalization across the globe.

105. On this year's HLPF theme "Transformations towards sustainable and resilient societies", there is an urgent need to redefine resilience on the backdrop of development justice:

(a) Resilience must be redefined in the light of increased vulnerability of rural and urban communities due to poverty and human rights violations by state and non-state actors and in light of women, indigenous peoples and local and poor communities dependent on natural resources who are witnessing complete erosion of their livelihoods and habitat and violation of their rights to their lands and territories. Resilience of migrants is celebrated but denies the reality that this resilience is actually forcing migrants to endure conditions of exploitation;

(b) Resilience needs to take into consideration unequal power structures at the global and regional levels in aid and trade policies, which increasingly favour powerful countries and multinational corporations at the expense of the peoples;

(c)   Resilience depends also on polycentric governance to ensure broader participation of stakeholders and rights-holders with real consultation and participation of peoples and acknowledging the complex systems that accepts the importance of both scientific as well as traditional and local knowledge — of indigenous peoples and local communities, including women and other marginalised groups who are also agents of change;

(d)   Increasing resilience requires integration of women's rights and human rights and must provide space for environmental defenders many of whom are being targeted for their exemplary commitments to the people and the planet.

106.   Without addressing the systemic barriers leading to conflicts and human rights violations — i.e land and resource grabbing, unjust trade and investment agreements, corporate hegemony, patriarchy and fundamentalism, militarism and conflict, as well as rising of patriarchal authoritarian governance — sustainable and resilient societies will never be achieved.

107.   The goals under review during the HLPF 2018 as well as all other SDGs are intrinsically interlinked and holistic approach should be taken. Governments should move away from narrow sectoral approaches, progressing towards full cross-sectoral coordination and cooperation; Governments must conduct proper policy coherence mapping and planning for institutional coherence.

108.   The unrestrained promotion of PPPs and blended finance poses threats to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and should be assessed against the genuine spirit of development. Governments should further their resolve and enforce a strong binding legal framework to regulate the private sector. Member states must also ensure that the private sector holds the highest standards of human rights, international labour standards, transparency, and accountability. Governments should engage more with small enterprises, as well as community and social enterprises, grass-root communities, under represented constituencies as well as groups at risk in all platforms related to SDG in national, regional and international advocacy.

109.   To strengthen implementation, we call developed countries to meet more than their full ODA commitments and we reiterate our call for SDGs compatibility impact assessment of all trade and investment agreements. We also call for an intergovernmental, transparent, accountable, adequately resourced tax body with universal membership that leads global deliberations on international tax cooperation under the auspices of the United Nations. To strengthen accountability, linkages between the 2030 Agenda and international human rights mechanisms should be strengthened. CSO reports, together with UN human rights documents, must be officially recognised by the HLPF. Governments should adopt people driven accountability frameworks including people centric data collection for ensuring effective and inclusive development.

XIII. Together 2030

110.   The diverse challenges and interlinked uncertainties of globalization and climate change demand societies to become more and more flexible to withstand crises, reinventing themselves in resilient, integrated, sustainable, multi-dimensional and inclusive ways. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes the importance of this approach and the theme of the 2018 HLPF is an opportunity to go beyond the identification of challenges, towards discussing concrete, collective and funded action that move societies to be more sustainable, inclusive and resilient.

111.   In order to achieve this, countries must cooperate to address the systemic and overlapping inequalities in wealth distribution, gender, income, disability, age and indigeneity or ethnicity, among others. National and local governments should adopt a human-rights based approach to implementing the SDGs, in particular, with respect to the SDGs under review this year at the HLPF.

112. However, Member States need to reaffirm that, as part of the 2030 Agenda, Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) of the SDGs should respect "their universal, integrated and interrelated nature and the three dimensions of sustainable development" (para 74). Accordingly, VNRs should reflect on the implementation of all goals and their interlinkages. The thematic reviews of a small set of SDGs, undertaken during the first segment of the HLPF, should not dictate or minimize the scope of the VNRs.

113. Moreover, VNRs are not a substitute for national processes. Instead, they should be viewed as opportunities to build national and sub-national dialogues and mechanisms on implementation and offer a learning space among all stakeholders. Stakeholder engagement in the VNR process should be encouraged before, during and after the HLPF – this needs to be through the appropriate, representative and self-organised civil society coordination mechanisms at the national level. In addition, national indicator frameworks should be developed in a way that reflects the whole agenda, especially the need to be inclusive of non-economic measures.

114. At the HLPF, we strongly recommend the allocation of additional time for MGoS interventions, especially from national CSO platforms and alliances from reporting countries, in order to allow for more inclusive and participatory engagement; to better listen to the experience of the poorest, most marginalised and disadvantaged from VNR countries; and for more meaningful exchanges with Member States. We also recommend the HLPF program include spaces for stakeholders to reflect and provide more detailed feedback on the VNRs presented by their countries and share their own contributions to the SDGs implementation, for example through parallel VNRs.

115. For the specific goals under review in 2018, there is a common need for a greater focus on the integration of policy agendas and cross-ministerial cooperation, as well as mechanisms to include the voices of the poorest and most marginalised in planning processes. In addition:

(a)   Goal 6: a greater focus needs to be placed on open and transparent financing, recognising the return on investment in WASH (every $1 invested returns $4 in economic benefit);

(b)   Goal 7 should be seen as an enabler for other development goals, especially gender equality and women's empowerment;

(c)   Goal 11: there is a need for a focus on the equal use of cities, with a rights-based approach to housing and services; as well as a greater recognition of the social and ecological function of land;

(d)   Goal 12: all countries should commit to the national adoption of ISO 20400: Sustainable Procurement, including the ISO as an implementation tool for best practice foreign aid;

(e)   Goal 15: ecosystem-based policy solutions should be based on the affirmation that the right to a safe, healthy and ecologically-balanced environment is a human right in itself.