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Synthesis of voluntary submissions by functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council and other intergovernmental bodies and forums

Note by the Secretariat

The present document provides a synthesis of the voluntary submissions prepared by functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council and other intergovernmental bodies and forums. Contributions were provided in response to an invitation by the President of the Council, contained in her letter to the Chairs of those bodies dated 30 October 2018, for them to offer substantive inputs to the high-level political forum on sustainable development, highlighting their contributions towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.¹ The integral texts of the submissions received for the present synthesis report are available on the forum's website.²

¹ The present document has benefited from contributions by *ECOSOC Functional Commissions and Expert Bodies*: Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, Commission on Narcotic Drugs, Commission on Population and Development, Commission on Science and Technology for Development, Commission on the Status of Women, Committee for Development Policy, Committee of Experts on Public Administration, Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, UN Forum on Forests, UN Group of Experts on Geographical Names, the UN Statistical Commission; *Regional Commissions*: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific; *UN intergovernmental and related bodies*: Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal, Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Committee on Enforced Disappearances, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, Committee on the Rights of the Child, Committee on World Food Security, Convention on Biological Diversity, Human Rights Council, Industrial Development Board of the UN Industrial Development Organization, International Civil Aviation Organization, International Labour Organization, International Organization for Migration, International Renewable Energy Agency, International Telecommunication Union Administrative Council, Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development, Peacebuilding Commission, Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade, Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer and its Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, UN Capital Development Fund, UN Environment Assembly, UNESCO International Hydrological Programme, UNESCO SDG Education 2030 Steering Committee, Food and Agricultural Organization and its technical and intergovernmental bodies, UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, UN Group on the Information Society, UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, UN System Standing Committee on Nutrition, UN Volunteers, World Bank Group, World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, World Heritage Committee, World Intellectual Property Organization, World Trade Organization; *Other intergovernmental bodies*: Central European Initiative, Global Forum on Migration and Development, Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation, Inter-Parliamentary Union, International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity, Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent, International Union for Conservation of Nature, Islamic Development Bank Group, League of Arab States, Universal Postal Union, World Water Council.

² <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/inputs/>

I. Introduction

1. The High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development has a central role in overseeing a network of follow-up and review processes at the global level. In line with paragraph 82 of General Assembly resolution 70/1, entitled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, the Forum facilitates sharing of experiences, including successes, challenges and lessons learned. It also provides political leadership, guidance and recommendations for follow-up, and promotes system-wide coherence and coordination of sustainable development policies.

2. Paragraph 85 of the 2030 Agenda further calls for thematic reviews of progress on the Sustainable Development Goals, including cross-cutting issues, to take place at the HLPF. In accordance with existing mandates, the forum’s review of progress, global achievements and challenges is supported by the reviews of functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council and other intergovernmental bodies and forums, which should reflect the integrated nature of the SDGs as well as the interlinkages between them.

3. The President of the Council, therefore, invited contributions from the ECOSOC functional commissions and expert bodies and other intergovernmental bodies and forums, including global platforms and intergovernmental organization-driven mechanisms which contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The letter of the President dated 30 October 2018³, encourages recipients to share relevant inputs and deliberations on the 2019 high-level political forum theme, “Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality” and the SDGs under review.

4. The present document synthesizes the 62 voluntary submissions received by 23 April 2019⁴ and does not suggest a formal reporting link to the forum or modify any entity’s mandate or governance. It reflects how the intergovernmental bodies are responding to the theme of the 2019 HLPF, including the lessons learned, gaps and challenges and emerging issues identified as well as the recommendations developed by these entities.

II. Assessment of the situation regarding the principle of “ensuring that no one is left behind”

1. While the principle of leaving no one behind is widely referred to, five main areas have been identified as crucial to empower those being left behind:

Economic vulnerability

2. In a significant share of the least developed countries, economic vulnerability has risen in recent years. People are being pushed further behind by a variety of forces, including globalization, technological developments, the absence of adequate social protection, gender inequality, climate change and environmental degradation leading to loss of access to land, livelihoods and jobs.

3. The income gap between the richest and poorest countries remains large. LDCs remain far behind, with per capita income of 4% of developed countries' average. Though data is limited, there are significant inequalities in access to and control over renewable natural resources.

4. Ensuring that no one is left behind requires not only strong social policies but integrating the principle in the formulation of macroeconomic and fiscal, industrial and technological policies and of strategies in other relevant areas. An inclusive economy and equitable fiscal policy can mitigate economic and social disparities and empower people.

5. The extremely poor suffer from a range of constraints that limit their capacity to benefit from the gains from trade. Farmers and firms in rural areas face high transport costs and delays when shipping to international and national markets.

³https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/22586Letter_of_ECOSOC_President_to_IG_bodies_contribution_to_2019_HLPF_rev.pdf

⁴ Contributions received after that date are available at: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/inputs/>

Globally, more than 80% of rural smallholders operate in local and domestic markets, with limited capacity to contribute to household income and national economic growth.

6. Many millions more employment opportunities need to be created with effective access to rights and the application of standards. Working poverty has been falling but remains widespread in some regions. Those working in the informal sector face greater risks than those in formal activities and have limited access to finance to smooth over short-term economic fluctuations. As the poor are disproportionately employed in less secure jobs, deregulation and technological progress tends to dampen their income share. Regulatory agencies are sometimes dominated by the interests they regulate, rather than the public's interest, while corporate taxation may result in uneven division of burden.

7. The space for collective bargaining of workers, farmers, indigenous peoples and communities continues to contract. While the benefits of economic activity are increasingly concentrated in a few hands, its social and environmental costs are borne by the most vulnerable.

8. Rural, poor, ethnolinguistic minorities and other disadvantaged populations are furthest behind in terms of quality education access and outcomes. Discrimination in education policies, practices and resource allocation exacerbates socioeconomic inequalities.

Conflicts, disasters and inequality

9. Although there are promising initiatives to empower people, current trends point rather at disempowerment and increasing inequality. Social security is declining, externalities of globalization are inadequately regulated. Large and intensive conflicts persist.

10. At least half of the world's poor may be living in fragile and conflict-affected settings by 2030. If conflict and fragility are not addressed through interdimensional political-administrative models, they are likely to spill over, jeopardizing institutional and policy initiatives for leaving no one behind.

11. When migration occurs involuntarily or irregularly, it can increase vulnerability to violence, abuse and exploitation. Migrants can find themselves in difficult situations with lack of assistance or partial access to basic services and too often at risk of being marginalized within society.

12. The negative consequences of disasters, climate change, and conflict are often mutually reinforcing. Disasters amplify the risk of being left behind of people who are ill-equipped to prevent, respond to and recover from disasters. Accessible support services are required for all persons with disabilities, particularly in post-disaster reconstruction efforts.

Resource use

13. The continued loss of biodiversity and the degradation of healthy ecosystems will have negative effects on inclusiveness and equality at various levels, leaving vulnerable populations even further behind. Indigenous communities represent about 5% of the world's population but make up 15% of the world's extreme poor. Conserving the integrity and diversity of nature is predicated upon the recognition of and ability to address the inequalities that drive unsustainable practices.

14. Some three billion family farmers, fishers, foresters, pastoralists and indigenous peoples produce three-quarters of the world's food, are the stewards of natural resources and manage 85% of the planet's food biodiversity. Yet, they make up 80% of the global poor and are the ones most affected by climate change, conflict, disease and market shocks.

15. Globally, two out of every five people lack access to controlled waste disposal facilities, being exposed to environmental and associated health risks. Measures for more effective adaptation to ecosystems degradation are required.

16. Forests and trees provide around 20% of income for rural households in developing countries. These populations tend to be marginally integrated in value chains, limiting their potential contributions to the economy. Secure land and forest tenure rights provide a critical foundation to ensure that no one is left behind.

17. The conservation and wise management of cultural and natural heritage can address many challenges facing the poorest and more vulnerable, providing shelter, access to food, water and other means of livelihood and decent employment. Well-preserved heritage is an essential component of the dignity and resilience of disadvantaged communities. Yet, most countries have not yet developed policies to integrate a sustainable development perspective into their heritage management strategies.

Improving social integration

18. Systemic discrimination might arise because of legal rules, policies or practices, or from predominant cultural attitudes and customary practices that create relative disadvantages for some groups and privileges for others. Social integration is closely linked to the level of cultural growth, civic sense and to diversity management capacities.

19. Children continue to disproportionately suffer from the effects of poverty and social isolation. Evidence also shows that the discrimination and stigma, prejudice, preconceived notions, superstition, lack of knowledge, lack of awareness, unequal opportunities and institutional, physical, communication, legal and attitudinal barriers that persons with disabilities encounter worldwide leave them among those left behind.

20. The impact of climate change and shrinking access to natural resources push indigenous people into the informal economy. Leveraging indigenous peoples' traditional occupations and knowledge to sustain livelihoods and create green jobs at the local level can directly contribute to tackling inequality, climate change mitigation and adaptation.

21. All countries have populations that experience multiple forms of malnutrition. The degree of malnutrition, however, depends largely upon gender, age, income, ethnicity and geographic location. Overweight and obesity have increased in all countries, regardless of income levels.

22. The poorest and most marginalized are more likely to consume tobacco and at younger ages. Tobacco use is rising rapidly in many low- and middle-income countries, and disadvantaged groups face difficulties accessing essential health services and information. The lack of disaggregated data makes it harder to identify the most vulnerable.

Empowering women and girls

23. Issues that continue to require urgent attention include, inter alia, feminization of poverty, gender gaps in education, violence against women and girls, unequal sharing of unpaid care and domestic work, resource gaps, and lack of gender-responsive data collection. Economic inequalities continue to short-change women. Women and girls continue to face structural barriers owing to the persistence of historical and structural unequal power relations between women and men, poverty and persisting inequalities.

24. There are intersecting and multiple forms of discrimination hindering full participation in decision-making processes, access to employment and credit facilities, property ownership, educational and vocational training opportunities. Women and young people are disproportionately underrepresented in national parliaments. Efforts should be made to accelerate legal and policy interventions through a holistic approach that targets not only those fields where women and girls are disadvantaged but also education where discriminatory gender stereotypes abound.

25. Women continue to experience numerous difficulties in accessing justice legal complaint mechanisms which has political, economic, and cultural ramifications that curtail women's role as actors and beneficiaries of development. Discriminatory personal status laws continue to impede equality in marriage, divorce and inheritance matters. Women and girls also continue to be subjected to gender-based violence, including domestic violence and enforced disappearances.

26. Progress has been made in women's and girls' access to social protection, public services and sustainable infrastructure, particularly in the areas of health and education. However, significant challenges and gender gaps remain, and, in some contexts, progress could be undermined by budget cuts and austerity measures.

III. Gaps and challenges likely to affect inclusiveness and equality, and achieving SDGs

27. In the fourth year of implementation of the 2030 Agenda, progress is insufficient. High rates of inequalities are part of a self-reinforcing system and persist in multiple dimensions at all levels. In many cases, policies, legislation and investments fail to consider the potential trade-offs with and impacts on other sectors, groups of people and countries, as well as future generations.

28. With silo-thinking being prevalent, many public sector organizations lack resources, skills and awareness of the SDGs and a holistic approach to their implementation. Even where adequate plans are in place, their application may be lagging or missing. The gaps and challenges likely to affect the achievement of the 2030 Agenda are thus similar to previous years, suggesting that enhanced efforts are required to overcome systemic issues impeding the transformation towards sustainable development that benefits all.

A. Cross-cutting and emerging issues

Food insecurity

29. Evidence signals a rise in world hunger and a reversal of trends after a prolonged decline. In addition to persistent inequalities, climate change is undermining all dimensions of food security. If equal access to nutritious and adequate diets is to be ensured, the interlinked challenges must be tackled simultaneously and the interdependence of rural and urban areas for food and basic services needs to be understood.

30. Food insecurity contributes to undernutrition, as well as overweight and obesity, and high rates of these forms of malnutrition coexist in many countries. The higher cost of nutritious foods, the stress of living with food insecurity and physiological adaptation to food restriction help explain why food insecure families may have a higher risk of overweight and obesity, increasing the risk of noncommunicable diseases. Awareness raising activities are required to help people understand the health and environmental impacts of their diets. Food systems need to move toward mostly plant-based dietary patterns, dramatically reduce food losses and waste, and improve food production practices.

Disaster risk

31. Climate change threatens to push more than 100 million people back into poverty by 2030. Urgent action to halt climate change, while building countries' resilience to its adverse effects, is integral to achieving the SDGs. This interlinked relationship also provides the biggest opportunity for positive, systemic change.

32. Climate change is expected to increase disaster displacement, particularly in developing countries, due to lack of early warning systems and poor construction of homes. Further work is needed to integrate disaster risk considerations into sectoral laws, building codes, policies and plans. Displacement prevention actions need to be integrated in national and local disaster risk reduction and development strategies as well as in humanitarian contingency planning.

33. Economic losses to disasters increasingly undermine the financing available for sustainable development. Current approaches to disaster risk financing that focus on risk transfer and contingency funds rarely cover frequent losses from small-scale disasters, which increasingly erode the resilience of the poorest.

34. Disaster risk financing plays a key role in protecting fiscal balances and financing recovery and reconstruction. Tailored financing instruments are needed to implement disaster risk reduction strategies and to create the fiscal space to enable countries to invest in resilience. It is vital that integrated national financing frameworks and pipelines of investable projects for the achievement of the SDGs are risk-informed and accompanied by disaster risk reduction financing instruments.

Ecosystems degradation

35. Currently, land degradation through human activities is negatively impacting the well-being of at least 3.2 billion people, pushing the planet towards a sixth mass species extinction, and costing more than 10% of the annual global gross product in loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services. While the rate of deforestation has slowed down in many regions, tree cover loss has steadily been rising in the tropics since 2000 due to human and natural causes.

36. Conserving, restoring, and sustainably managing the planet's ecosystems can provide practical and effective nature-

based solutions for climate action and livelihood support, contributing to disaster risk reduction and peacebuilding strategies. Benefits of biodiversity are especially important to poor and vulnerable groups for which the goods and services derived from biodiversity constitute social safety nets.

37. Contributions of biodiversity to sustainable development continue to be underestimated in policy planning and economic activities, as well as official economic data and statistics in many countries. Valuation of biodiversity must avoid, however, the commodification of those contributions of nature to people related to culture and identity, respecting the diverse holders of cultural values that do not see their cultures as appropriate for commerce and value-based trade-off analyses.

38. Societal transformation and behavioural change are required if the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity are to be achieved. Indigenous peoples hold and manage a significant part of the Earth's most biodiverse regions and play a vital role in conserving ecosystems. There is a significant amount of traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples and local communities that is relevant to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

39. While future trade-offs between certain of nature's contributions to people may be inevitable, the severity of the trade-offs may be mitigated by timely, progressive and proactive policy interventions and environmental safeguards based on evidence, and by mainstreaming environmental issues into all socio-economic sectors. Analysis of different scenarios can help policymakers make better decisions on the most plausible futures for biodiversity.

40. Biodiversity-related official development assistance has steadily increased yet will likely only ever cover a small percentage of the investment needed. Current investments in biodiversity take place primarily in developed countries, when the largest loss is now in developing countries. Suitable risk mitigation, appropriate metrics and practical tools to assess the impact, deal scaling, legal and policy approaches must be deployed to mobilize private sector investment in nature conservation.

Unsustainable resource use

41. Wetlands are indispensable for the ecosystem services that they provide, particularly regarding water, food and energy security. As water cuts across many sectors, it has a critical role to play in climate change mitigation and adaptation. This interlinkage is often under-recognized with limited access to climate finance for water related projects, despite opportunities for resource recovery and greenhouse gas emission reductions.

42. Capacity building in the water sector is a critical cross-cutting topic, as is the participation of stakeholders in water-related decision-making processes. Investments in water infrastructure rarely include a pre-defined percentage for capacity building. Building on traditional knowledge is also crucial to ensure sustainable water and sanitation services.

43. Existing water assessments are often inadequate or incomplete for sound decision-making in balancing the different water uses and adapting to increasing climatic variability. These gaps need to be filled to further strengthen policies and strategies in the water domain at all levels. Adequate technologies are available for water resources management but often unknown by all actors and end-users. While technological progress enables developing countries to leapfrog into modernity more quickly, its benefits are unequally shared.

44. Affordable wastewater treatment technologies are currently not available to remove antibiotic residues. Antibiotic resistant infections are projected to become one of the main causes of death worldwide by 2050. Investments in new technologies could have huge benefits, yet conscious efforts should be made to ensure that these technologies are accessible to all.

45. Given the increase of hazardous and household waste generated worldwide, environmentally sound management of hazardous wastes and their disposal is required. Burning of waste is considered the main sources of unintentional persistent organic pollutants. Many countries also lack infrastructures and the capacity to assess and manage the risks posed by widely produced and traded hazardous chemicals.

46. Moreover, marine plastic litter and microplastics require urgent global action. Inadequate and inefficient waste management practices are commonplace, compounded by a lack of viable and effective recycling techniques and strategies. Resource efficiency and sustainability of plastics need to be improved in the context of a circular economy.

47. Exposure to environmental health risks is unequally distributed, often related to socioeconomic characteristics. It is estimated that excessive exposure to and inappropriate use of hazardous pesticides contribute to poisoning a minimum of three million people annually, especially impoverished rural workers.

Migration dynamics

48. Climate change, environmental degradation and migration are deeply intertwined. Twice as many people are displaced annually by natural disasters as by conflict and violence. This phenomenon is expected to grow as climate risks continue to intensify. Migration dynamics are an aggregation of thousands of individual, context-specific decisions that are often poorly understood. Unravelling how macro-developments affect micro-movements, and vice versa, will be key to ensuring that policies can remain effective, supportive and globally coherent.

49. The ability to move is not equally shared. While the skilled, middle class and Global North will find it easy to remain mobile, opportunities may further diminish for those with few skills, accessible channels, or financial means. The world in which people move is also rapidly changing. Technology has created new opportunities to connect populations, and to identify them more efficiently. However, the management of data security and privacy will need to be carefully addressed.

50. Women and girls are subjected to various human rights violations as they migrate. Migrant smuggling routes affect every part of the world and expose migrants to a range of risks. Providing safe humanitarian spaces and supporting basic services for irregular migrants is necessary to avoid this group falling into high risk contexts. Improvements in ethical recruitment practices and elimination of recruitment fees would help address issues like human trafficking, debt bondage and forced labour. As many migrants work in informal or hidden sectors, measures are required to address vulnerabilities, abuses and exploitation.

51. Inequality is a common driver of migration. At the same time, migrants are particularly affected by inequality. Migrants can contribute to overcoming inequality and be agents of sustainable development in countries of origin and destination. Consistent, accessible education and training activities are a key component of larger programming that encompasses integration, reintegration, stabilization and social cohesion of migrants and communities.

Rapid urbanization

52. Available rural employment opportunities are often precarious, poorly remunerated and even hazardous. This can trap workers and their families in a vicious cycle of hunger and poverty and push rural populations to migrate.

53. Cities are growing at a rapid pace, placing huge demands on infrastructure, services, job creation, and the environment. Urban growth is not limited to capital cities but is also having a profound impact on secondary cities and towns. With the majority of international migrants and displaced populations concentrating in cities, the pressure on local authorities and resources is mounting. Rapidly expanding cities are fragile ecosystems, the challenges of which may be exacerbated when job growth does not keep pace with population growth or environmental change threatens livelihoods.

54. Local and regional authorities play an essential role in delivering the SDGs. However, they remain ill-equipped in terms of capacities and financial resources. Decentralized levels of governance need to be empowered to carry forward the 2030 Agenda in ways that are responsive to their local context.

Drug use

55. Both the range of drugs and drug markets are expanding and diversifying as never before. By threatening the rule of law and governance in general, the illicit drug economy is undermining efforts to achieve SDG 16. A record high manufacturing and trafficking of opiates and cocaine also increase global illicit financial flows related to drugs and violence in producing and consuming countries. The development of viable economic alternatives is key to address illicit drug-related activities.

56. Poverty, unemployment, poor education, domestic violence and social disadvantage are vulnerabilities linked to social development that can be conducive to drug and tobacco use. Global coverage of treatment for drug use disorder remains at low level. The prevention, early intervention and treatment, care, recovery and rehabilitation of substance abuse needs to be strengthened. Access of many people worldwide to controlled medicines, narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances remains limited.

Future of work

57. The world of work is undergoing major and increasing transformational changes. To address the latter, education and training systems need to become more flexible and diversified in terms of learning options and pathways. Today, 40 percent of employers globally are finding it difficult to recruit young people with the skills they need. The skills mismatch should be addressed by bringing education and training institutions closer to labour market needs. Enhanced social dialogue at various levels is required to strengthen investment in training and policies, including work-based skills development schemes. The investments governments make today in their human capital, including migrant groups, will determine their success in the future.

58. Unemployment is particularly critical among youth, undermining their prospects for on-the-job skills acquisition, employability and future earnings. Stronger alignment between inclusive employment and inclusive education and skills policies is required. Failure to provide good jobs for the youth cohort not only risks squandering the demographic dividend, but raises significant social risks, potentially contributing to fragility and to large-scale migration in search of better opportunities.

59. The terms of employment are becoming ever more flexible, in some cases precariously so. To succeed, citizens across the world will have to become more adaptable, resilient and ready to take on several careers. How to learn will become as important as what to learn.

Insufficient statistical capacity

60. Insufficient statistical capacity remains one of the key challenges for achieving the 2030 Agenda. The lack of comprehensive, reliable data and statistics is an underlying challenge in many areas, including demographic data. Responsive national statistical programmes and the provision of necessary data in a timely manner are required. An urgent update is needed to address the economic, social and environmental nexus in order to truly depict and attain the 2030 Agenda.

61. More and better statistics on access to and use of ICT can inform policies to reduce the digital divide. Gender-disaggregated ICT statistics, e-waste statistics, statistics on use of ICT by disabled and marginalized communities, on the use of ICT by government for access to information and services, and statistics on ICT in education and health all require further development to adequately monitor progress.

62. To supplement national statistical systems, countries will need to leverage new data sources and the private sector, including data generated by machines, artificial intelligence, data flows and the Internet of things, to ensure that relevant information on ICT indicators included in the SDGs is produced and made available.

63. The use of big data will also entail addressing data protection, privacy and security, as well as protocols for data-sharing between private sources and national statisticians. Balancing the protection of confidentiality and openness of data is critical, as well as to carefully address societal challenges of trust, ethics, privacy, confidentiality and security of data. Biased big data may produce unintended and sometimes discriminatory results. There are also critical questions about data ownership and access regarding agriculture, particularly in developing countries.

B. SDGs in focus

64. While all SDGs are examined through the lens of the 2019 HLPF theme, some entities focused their contributions on the specific set of goals under review this year.

SDG 4: Quality education and lifelong learning

65. Societal inequality shapes education inequality. Many children are excluded from schooling despite a promising pattern of schooling expansion over the past decade, with gender parity being far from realized. Out-of-school rates have almost stagnated in recent years or increased in most marginalized or conflict zones, and tend to be significantly higher in rural than urban households. In low and middle-income countries, half of the estimated 65 million primary and lower secondary school-aged children with disabilities are out-of-school.

66. For far too many children, schooling does not equal learning. Education systems universally face significant quality challenges, and often replicate or exacerbate existing inequalities. Many countries do not assess learning outcomes systematically, and the information that is available is rarely used to inform policy and practice.

67. In many countries, access to education, and the quality thereof, is strongly linked to financial resources, both from governments and from households. Progressive universalism means expanding provision of quality education for everyone while prioritizing the needs of the poor and disadvantaged. There have been improvements in terms of reading and writing skills and a steady reduction in gender gaps over the past decades. However, literacy rates are lowest in sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia and inter-generational disparities remain.

68. Across regions, sub-Saharan Africa faces the biggest challenge with the lowest percentages of trained teachers. Since national teacher education programmes differ widely in terms of content, duration and qualification levels, national minimum teacher qualifications and training standards also vary.

69. Participation in early childhood education is an integral part of the right to education of children, and key to achieving their full potential and holistic development. It also facilitates children's readiness for subsequent stages of school and their future learning experience. Participation in organised learning, however, remains far from being universal.

70. There are also large differences between regions in participation of youth and adults in formal and non-formal education, technical and vocational education and training, and higher education. Participation of 15- to 24-year-olds in technical-vocational programmes is relatively low. Globally, the gross enrolment ratio for tertiary education is at 38% but participation varies considerably by region.

71. ICTs are powering a revolution in digital learning which can help break down economic barriers, divides between rural and urban, as well as the gender divide. An international framework on quality assurance and accreditation of degrees would enhance the potential of ICT services. Enhanced trade in education services may help increase capacity in providing quality education. Many countries place high tariff rates on teaching material, which represent one of the largest expenses on education by households.

72. Education should aim at increasing awareness of youth and consumers on their possible contribution to the achievement of sustainable development. Nearly all countries report that the principles of Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship Education are fully or partially reflected in their education policies and in school curricula. However, insufficient teacher training is an obstacle.

73. Holistic approaches in youth crime prevention, including in education, are crucial to mainstream crime prevention in socioeconomic policies and programmes. Attacks on students, personnel and institutions threaten education in many parts of the world. Zero-tolerance nationally led systems for sexual harassment within schools, and policies to address gender-based violence inside and in the vicinity of schools, as well as community-based responses to preserve or improve the safety of schools are required.

74. Education in emergencies is an important challenge worldwide. Countries affected by armed conflict record the highest out-of-school rates globally. Education risks to be underfunded to the detriment of children caught in protracted crisis situations.

SDG 8: Decent work and sustainable growth

75. A lack of education puts at risk people's chances of getting decent work that respects fundamental human and labour rights. Recognizing that the skills needed for access to decent work are not clearly established, those with more education generally enjoy better labour conditions. Empowerment through skills and training can be an essential element in economic

diversification particularly when it enables youth, women and Micro-, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises to engage in international trade.

76. Science, technology and innovation drive economic growth and diversification that can create employment opportunities and increase real incomes. They can also give voice to people, connect them and extend access to education and other basic services, including for the most vulnerable. Economic diversification is a gateway for economic empowerment.

77. Addressing the needs of rural and urban populations together through territorial development approaches answers the SDGs' call for transformation. Societies that are well connected from field to city can stimulate entrepreneurship and empower women, create decent and diverse jobs for rural youth, and provide fresh and nutritious food to cities.

78. Targeted investments in pro-poor growth and social protection measures are needed to stimulate entrepreneurship in rural areas and create jobs beyond agriculture. Investments, sustainable value chains and enabling frameworks need to be created or strengthened to unlock agriculture contributions to enhancing economic growth and decent employment.

79. More efforts are needed to provide persons with disabilities with decent work opportunities. The latter requires policies at all levels seeking to provide equal access to decent employment, ensuring reasonable accommodation and accessibility in the work place.

80. Economic development that does not consider effects on ecosystem services may decrease the quality of life of vulnerable populations. Advances in science have opened up opportunities to work with rather than against nature in providing for societies' needs and support sustainable growth.

81. Renewable energy employment worldwide continues to grow and results in socio-economic benefits in an increasing number of countries. Other sectors, including agriculture, buildings, forestry and transport are predicted to see job growth as a result of a transition to a more resource-efficient, low-carbon economy.

82. Capital markets that are liquid and well-regulated do better at providing the longer-term financing and risk capital that are indispensable for resilient and sustainable economic growth. By connecting local issuers to a broader base of investors, they improve funding for vital infrastructure.

SDG 10: Reduced inequalities

83. Although more wealth is being produced than ever before, it is increasingly concentrated in the hands of a few. The eradication of poverty will not be achieved in the context of widening gulfs between rich and poor both within and among countries. Tax havens and bank secrecy laws hamper the collection of revenue from corporate income tax that is vital for the funding of crucial services such as education, health and employment. Due to such practices, many countries encounter substantial revenue losses that directly hinder their capacity to collect adequate resources to achieve the SDGs.

84. Current trade tensions and trade restrictive measures are increasing economic uncertainty. Recurrent and deepening economic crises exacerbate persistent inequalities. Wage inequality is a significant contributor to the overall income inequality trend worldwide. In many low-income countries, households depend on earnings from self-employment generated by low-productivity activities and in conditions of vulnerability.

85. Reducing inequalities requires legal frameworks that recognize and secure rights of access to productive resources and services for smallholders, family farmers, foresters, and local communities. Policies are required to incentivise private sector engagement in sustainable market activity conducive to increased participation of rural actors. Efforts to increase the productivity of smallholders and family farmers will have limited impact if linkages to markets and value chains are not strengthened simultaneously. Small family farmers can also benefit from increased market transparency and better access to market information.

SDG 13: Climate action

86. Stresses created by climate change can create conflict or intensify tension along existing societal fault lines. Climate change places an additional burden on the resources of the poorest governments, further restricting their capacity to achieve the SDGs. Countries could benefit from collaborating to strengthen long-term contingency planning, identify effective steps to reduce the mounting risks for infrastructure and networks underpinning global value chains, and to step up efforts towards economic diversification and a just transition of the workforce.

87. Bold climate action could deliver at least US\$26 trillion in economic benefits through 2030. Miscommunication between the scientific community and decision makers is a growing concern. A major risk is the under-prioritization of investment at scale in protecting and engaging poor and vulnerable citizens in the adaptation and resilience necessary to cope in climate crisis events.

88. Significant greenhouse gas emission reductions will only be possible through an unprecedented transformation of industrial systems and new industrial development pathways. Economic diversification along with a just transition of the work force and creation of decent work and quality jobs will be crucial. Adequate and predictable finance from public and private sources is key in this regard. Governments could de-risk investments to enable wider dissemination and use of clean, innovative technologies that, in turn, create education opportunities and reduce unemployment. Facilitation of the flow of international finance is needed to fund green investments.

89. International trade can speed up the diffusion of environmentally sound goods and services and help stimulate local productive capacity for such goods. A larger, competitive and integrated global market reduces costs, making it easier for countries to replace outdated, polluting technologies with environmentally sound ones.

90. Action is needed to strengthen LDCs capacity to seize trade opportunities in emerging green sectors. Advisory support and capacity building are also needed to ensure that countries can effectively harness trade and trade policy to implement international environmental commitments and the SDGs. This also includes employing an inclusive, gender-sensitive approach in pursuing opportunities for more sustainable trade.

91. As the demand for mobility is growing at a fast pace, sustainable transport attracts significant investments. If not planned well this can result in negative climate externalities or urban congestion. Poor asset management, insufficient provision of public transport in cities, or low levels of rural access have yet to be addressed.

92. Despite the cost reduction and expanded deployment of renewables and improvements in efficiency, without further stringent measures, energy-related greenhouse gas emissions will exceed the Paris Agreement temperature targets. Accurately reflecting renewable energy sector developments in Nationally Determined Contributions is considered key for attracting investors.

93. The design, implementation and monitoring of ecosystem-based approaches to climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction should ensure the participation of all stakeholders, as well as recognize and support the governance, management and conservation of the territories and areas of indigenous peoples and local communities.

94. Evidence indicates that maladaptation to climate change can be avoided by evaluating all costs and benefits for all groups in society, including future generations, and by being explicit about who the winners and losers will be, and how the burdens could be better shared. Involving stakeholders in climate actions is a priority to both accelerate climate actions and reduce inequalities.

95. Migration should be recognized as an integral component in climate change policies. Strengthening resilience and the capacity to make climate risk informed decisions as well as improving early warning and awareness could help to reduce disaster-related displacement.

SDG 16: Peaceful societies, justice and strong institutions

96. The number and scale of protracted crisis and displacement is on the rise with growing humanitarian needs globally. Addressing the root causes of conflict through an inclusive approach to build and sustain peace is therefore essential to achieve sustainable development for all.

97. Conflicts over natural resources, environmental degradation and contamination can lead to social insecurity and violence. Sustainable management of resources requires governance institutions and processes that strengthen the rights of communities over natural resources management, combating illegal exploitation and corruption, and ensuring transparent decision-making on social and environmental issues. It is also critical to build capacity and guide processes to integrate social dimensions and inclusive governance into conservation programs and initiatives.

98. Armed violence exacerbates the discrimination and exclusion faced by children. Particularly those vulnerable to recruitment or use in hostilities continue engaging in conflicts. Children also continue to be victims of attacks, with the use of indiscriminate, disproportionate or unlawful weapons, such as the use of siege tactics. Measures to address the root causes of violence against children include long-term programmes and adequate resources at all levels, including effective remedies and necessary support to child victims and their families.

99. Women and girls are disproportionately affected by armed conflict and adversely targeted by the use of sexual violence. The full participation of women in peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction process is key to rebuild a society but is often not realized. Women also face barriers in gaining access to justice, particularly in conflict and post-conflict situations. Transitional justice mechanisms in some countries have failed to fully address gender aspects of the impact of conflict. Most pervasive gender-based violations perpetrated during conflict often remain unpunished.

100. Armed conflicts and natural disasters heighten the risks faced by persons with disabilities as they seek assistance, support and protection. Where services exist, inaccessible communication strategies often exclude persons with disabilities from identifying and utilizing them. Scant data, poor identification, registration, and lack of provision of reasonable accommodation compound the exclusion of persons with disabilities in crisis needs-assessments.

101. The absence of peace systematically generates new displacements and prolongs the protracted nature of displacement. In fragile and crisis contexts, migration drivers and decision-making are shaped by a constantly evolving range of factors that define the landscape of risk and opportunity for potential migrants, including the displaced.

102. Illicit trade in tobacco products undermines global prevention and control efforts. Tax evasion associated with the illegal tobacco market reduces government tax revenue. The relationship between illicit tobacco trade, public safety and governance must be addressed as illegal networks both thrive in and contribute to weak governance contexts.

103. ICTs can play an important role in crisis management, humanitarian aid and peacebuilding, and have proven to be a powerful aid in areas such as electoral monitoring. The growing use of open data by governments increases transparency, empowers citizens, and helps to drive economic growth. ICTs are also essential in terms of record-keeping and tracking government data and local demographics.

104. Education is key in promoting tolerance and trust. Societies can only be sustainable if citizens feel they have a stake in shaping them. A key objective is to instil in young and old alike the competences required to develop a culture of democracy, human rights, and participation. Education can empower vulnerable people to overcome discrimination that prevents them from getting a fair share of the fruits of overall progress.

105. At times of crisis, access to and care for heritage may help vulnerable people recover a sense of identity, dignity and empowerment. In conflict and post-conflict situations, the acknowledgment and conservation of heritage may foster mutual recognition, tolerance and respect among different communities.

SDG 17: Means of implementation and global partnership

106. Global economic inequalities can be reduced through a continuous engagement of governments, civil society organisations and the private sector in facilitating donor assistance, debt cancellation, and the transfer of remittances and the benefits of technological advancement. There is a need for effective engagement of the private sector in development cooperation to create sustainable solutions that leave no one behind.

107. Multi-stakeholder partnerships are critical at all levels to multiply the effect of individual initiatives and to create synergies. Key areas for partnerships include migration, combating malnutrition, biodiversity and technology. It is important to design processes with interlinkages for collaboration and cooperation as early as possible rather than as an afterthought to avoid the risk of duplication which dilutes rather than reinforces global dialogue. Integrated policies are needed that combine efforts of multiple sectors and actors.

108. Progress has been made in terms of country ownership and results orientation towards the SDGs. While most countries have a mutual accountability framework in place, less than half track its implementation. Timely, relevant and accurate data on development cooperation is critical for country ownership, ensuring alignment with national priorities and reducing fragmentation.

109. International investment policies, agreements and dispute settlement provisions should be revised to safeguard the policy space necessary for the realization of human rights. Structural adjustment, austerity measures or related policies should also be designed in a way to respect the policy space for complying with international human rights standards.

IV. Lessons learned on empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality

110. Contributions received highlight that empowerment and inclusion are integral to the transformations needed to address deep-rooted inequalities and vulnerabilities spanning across the three dimensions of sustainable development.

Empowerment strategies

111. Empowerment is a context-specific, multi-dimensional construct, comprising both (i) a process of increasing people's voice and (ii) institutions that enable people to exercise their rights. It can be broadly defined as expansions of an individual's freedom of choice and action to increase control over resources and decisions that affect one's life.

Individual empowerment

112. Progress in including disadvantaged groups and reducing inequality requires education systems that adopt an inclusive approach. In multi-cultural societies, addressing diversity and multiple identities should be at the heart of education strategies and curricula. The provision of education for refugees and forced migrants cannot be confined to the international humanitarian sector, often within a parallel system. Refugees should be fully included in national education systems and teachers should be trained to support this inclusion.

113. Technical and vocational education and training that promotes decent work is key to help empower people. Questions of affordability need to focus on the extent to which government policy helps address inequality in access to and outcomes of such training. Governments have a range of policy tools at their disposal, including grants, fee exemptions, loans, allowances and subsidies.

114. Efforts have been observed to provide women and girls access to ICT and incentives to remain in schools. Challenges remain, however, regarding sexual harassment and violence in schools. Some countries have devised measures to ensure the re-entry into school of young mothers.

Public institutions

115. While promoting the rule of law should be at the centre of attention in policy-making and institution-building, there is no general blueprint for reforming the public sector towards empowering people and promoting inclusive societies. Each

country must build on its own governance structures, political, socioeconomic realities, local strengths and needs. Peer-to-peer learning may be useful to support learning from success or failure.

116. Local governments understand the needs of communities best and are central to global efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda. Promoting administrative and financial empowerment in tandem with building local government capacity can be helpful, with a focus on newly emerging skillsets for the public sector workforce. SDGs should be part of the curricula of national schools of public administration. Performance-based grants channelled through existing fiscal transfer systems to local governments can be an effective instrument for national governments to achieve climate change adaptation targets. This work can be further mainstreamed through direct access to climate funds.

117. There is growing political interest in the SDGs but not enough will or capacities to translate this interest into concerted action carrying forward the 17 goals as an integrated framework. With their core legislative, oversight, budgetary and representation functions, parliaments are key to ensuring the implementation of commitments.

118. While the SDGs are considered an opportunity to foster inter-parliamentary dialogue and cooperation, parliamentary ownership of the goals remains a challenge. Parliaments seem to be weakly associated with the elaboration of specific SDG plans at the governmental level. Some parliaments have moved to establish SDG committees, but have realized that the goals cannot be covered by one committee alone and cut across many existing committees. In many countries, it also remains unclear whether parliament should be represented on the government's SDG coordination body, in cases in which the latter exists, or whether it should monitor the work of these bodies and hold them to account.

Whole-of-society approach

119. It is critical to increase coherent, whole-of-government approaches as well as regional cooperation across multiple areas. Beyond government, the participation of civil society organisations, the private sector and other stakeholders in all phases of sustainable development policy-making, planning and implementation creates ownership and helps to ensure that resources, technology and knowledge are maximised and used effectively. Such participatory governance should not only include state and society but also markets to foster an inclusive economy.

120. Increased public participation and voice lead to more sustainable decisions, improved service delivery, greater trust in government and a more informed and capacitated citizenry. Lessons learned on public participation in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda underline the need to focus on the quality of stakeholder engagement.

Inclusion strategies

121. Strategies for inclusive sustainable development will need to consider the opportunities and challenges associated with trends in fertility, mortality and migration, which will affect the size and age structure of future populations. While gaps remain in access to social protection, it is recognized that the latter can make a critical contribution to the fulfilment of human rights for all.

Rights-based approaches

122. Several inputs underscore a rights-based approach to foster sustainable development. Projects that have adopted rights-based approaches have been found to strengthen the social fabric in new ways, create networks of partnerships, strengthen accountability and reduce vulnerability as a structural issue rather than as a symptom of poverty. Empowering citizens through a constitutional guarantee of environmental rights is associated with improved environmental performance across the SDGs. Deforestation rates have been found lower in communities with legal rights to their forests and government support for enforcement and management.

123. Addressing the interlinkages of human rights and climate change by applying an empowerment and inclusion approach can counteract the multiplier effects of climate change and prevent conflict. It can accelerate climate action by hastening the transition to renewable energy, promoting climate-smart agricultural practices, creating climate resilient communities and removing some of the key obstacles to realizing green economy benefits.

Decent work, financial inclusion and trade

124. Decent work for all is critical to ensure inclusiveness. Comprehensive policies need to be based on social dialogue and be included in broader development frameworks, encompassing investment promotion, access to finance, employment formalization, infrastructure investment, and developing people's capabilities through skills development.

125. Labour market institutions are key for promoting inclusive societies and comprehensive employment policies based on tripartite dialogue and frameworks. National employment policies have shown the role of a holistic approach, including demand-side measures such as employment-friendly macroeconomic frameworks and sectoral policies to support structural transformation from low-productivity to higher productivity activities.

126. Building human and physical productive capacities, while steering structural transformation towards a greener economy, requires investment in people and in strategic physical capital in a context of social dialogue and attention to decent job creation. Access to credit for small and medium-sized enterprises is crucial for their sustainability and contribution to growth and employment, enabling them to invest in new capital, adopt new technologies and contribute to expanding workers' capabilities.

127. Financial inclusion is a critical enabler for poverty reduction and inclusive growth. There is great disparity in access to bank accounts between the poorest and richest population segments, compounded with a gender dimension. Several inputs highlight the contribution of the postal network to financial inclusion and literacy in rural communities, providing a more accessible remittance transfer service in many cases.

128. Global remittance flows are large and exceed traditional types of development financing. However, remittance transaction costs can be high, which lessens their impact, burdens migrants and can discourage the sending of remittances through formal channels.

129. Technological progress and trade have been key engines of global prosperity. At the same time, policy-makers need to ensure that benefits are spread more widely. Like other structural change, trade can create adjustment pressures for certain segments in society. Appropriate complementary policies should ensure that trade-related adjustment costs are mitigated. Early and comprehensive policy action to improve labour mobility across sectors, regions and skills, is critical.

130. Actions at the national level need to be accompanied by maximizing trade opportunities for the poor at the multilateral level, including addressing distortions in agriculture to improve market access and reduce food price volatility. Modern areas of the global economy such as services and e-commerce should also be addressed.

Integrated approaches

131. Integrated approaches are required to overcome silo-thinking and empower people. Systemic risk management across sectors and agendas, i.e. sustainable development, climate, displacement and migration, sustaining peace, and financing, leads to maximizing the use of resources. Rights mapping further provides a systematic understanding of how climate actions can create conflict between different rights holders and draws attention to long-standing structural inequities that may have been previously ignored.

132. Ecosystem-based adaptation, nature-based solutions, disaster risk reduction and sustainable forest, agriculture, fisheries and wildlife management, would provide multiple benefits and could foster synergies between the biodiversity, climate change and sustainable development agendas. Mainstreaming biodiversity in the sectors of energy and mining, infrastructure, manufacturing and processing is also essential.

Science, technology and innovation

133. Technology can support inclusion through solutions that enable financial inclusion, digital identity systems and land registration, among others. Pro-poor, inclusive and frugal approaches to innovation can incorporate marginalized and underrepresented communities as producers and beneficiaries of innovation processes in new production models that address social needs, stimulate pro-poor entrepreneurship and facilitate solidarity across groups.

134. The general upward trend in the access to and use of ICTs is critical. Improved ICT regulation and policy-making have played a pivotal role in creating the conditions for price reductions, ensuring that the efficiency gains of higher ICT adoption are partly passed on to customers. However, bridging the digital divides, including disparities in infrastructure, digital access and skills, remains key for achieving an inclusive global information society. Cooperation is required to achieve universal access and connectivity, to improve security and trust in ICTs, and to increase capacity-building.

135. The fast reduction in the costs of frontier technologies could enable developing countries to fast track their progress towards higher-wages and increasing return industries and to benefit more from global value chains. Economic diversification and transformation can be supported by policies involving smart specialization, platforms for economic discovery, and incubators, accelerators, and technology parks. At the same time, regulators need to keep pace with advances in technology and address new regulatory frontiers, including through best practice guidelines.

136. To empower persons with specific needs through ICT, activities must be developed and implemented based on their direct requirements and evolving needs. All relevant stakeholders, particularly the “end users”, need to be involved from design to implementation and evaluation of these activities.

137. With the help of low-cost open-source sensors, communities can assess and monitor the risk of climate related threats. Satellite technologies are critical for disaster preparedness and emergency response, and drones offer a low-cost approach to remote sensing with applications for land-use monitoring and rapid mapping in case of emergencies. During disasters, information is increasingly shared on social media, involving community members as first-line informants and responders. Data analytics and big data can also support emergency response. Citizen science uses new technologies to involve non-scientist ‘citizens’ in the generation of new scientific knowledge which contributes to build resilient societies.

V. Areas where political guidance by the high-level political forum is required

138. Progress towards the 2030 Agenda will not come on its own. The inputs received demonstrate the commitment of the various intergovernmental bodies, conventions and organisations to the shared goal of achieving sustainable development by 2030. The contributions highlight the need to seek synergies between the 2030 Agenda and the policy frameworks developed and pursued by these intergovernmental bodies. Policy dialogue will be key in this regard, focussing on the interlinkages among the various aspects of sustainable development and the contributions to the latter by a variety of stakeholders.

Policy coherence and synergies

139. Fostering an integrated approach to sustainable development, policy guidance emanating from the HLPF is expected to address issues that cut across the entire 2030 Agenda, including, among others, sustainable water management, mainstreaming chemicals and wastes management, and cultural heritage. Advancing global forest policy coherence within the UN system would also be required.

140. The relationship between the ambitions reflected in the 2030 Agenda and the international human rights framework is considered critical. Inputs underscore the multiple dimensions and intersectionality of inequality, particularly the link between economic and social exclusion and decision-making power. A gender-responsive implementation and follow-up to the 2030 Agenda is crucial, seeking synergies with respective international instruments on gender equality. Similarly, the Forum should ensure children’s meaningful participation as active agents of change.

141. Progress has been made in strengthening global policy coherence and translating the latter into integrated regional and national policies for disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation and sustainable development. However, in most countries, more efforts are required to design and implement coherent disaster risk-informed strategies, programmes or investments at national and local levels.

142. Particular attention should be paid to the biodiversity-related and other SDG targets that have endpoints of 2020, bearing in mind the preparatory process for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. HLPF guidance would also be required on how to leverage environmental policies to create more jobs, addressing youth unemployment and contributing to decent work.

143. Transformative change, in the sense of reconfiguration of basic social systems and structures, including their institutional framework, social practices, cultural norms and values, is necessary. New models of sustainability governance should ensure adequate investments in knowledge, and act on early signals from science and society to avoid unnecessary harm and costs.

144. Political guidance is needed in catalysing innovation while scaling up proven solutions to promote sustainable consumption and production patterns and applying precautionary approaches to mitigate potential risks of technological advancements.

The HLPF as a platform for partnerships

145. Many inputs point to the critical role of the HLPF in reinforcing dialogue between policy makers and the scientific community, including on climate impacts and vulnerability assessments. The Forum could also promote strong dialogue between the statistical and the political communities to ensure that data is relevant and disseminated to meet users' needs and to promote the use of data by policy makers.

146. All countries should be enabled to meet the data demands of the 2030 Agenda. The HLPF is thus expected to call for strengthened investment in national statistical systems, while also acknowledging data produced by civil society and academia. An equity lens requires access to reliable disaggregated data and strong analytical capacities to translate data into coherent, targeted strategies.

147. The HLPF is encouraged to strengthen its guidance on achieving the SDGs through partnerships within the UN system. Partnerships for closing capacity gaps should be long term and continuous collaborative projects. International cooperation and capacity building are key to address the interlinkages among the SDGs, as well as sharing knowledge on innovative technologies.

148. It is critical that technology and innovative ideas are disseminated in an inclusive way, without widening existing gaps or creating further divides. Cooperation needs to be strengthened in the areas of increased investments in digital development and skills, through increased support for leveraging ICTs and new technologies.

149. Inputs encourage countries to share their experiences in universal social protection, developing productive capacity and pre-, in- and post-market redistribution in their Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs). It is suggested that the effectiveness of the VNRs could be reinforced with greater space for the views of all stakeholders in the review processes at all levels. Some contributions highlight that the HLPF could explore synergies and recommendations by and outcomes of other international bodies and forums, including the International Migration Review Forum.

VI. Recommendations

A number of policy recommendations are put forward in the contributions received, including:

150. Addressing world inequality requires overturning development models and processes that disempower people and communities, exclude the most vulnerable, and concentrate wealth and power. This requires the redesign of the relationship between public and private spheres and coordinated policy, coupled with social and technological innovation, to redirect economic, social, environmental and technological trends, including production and consumption patterns, towards greater inclusiveness.

151. Existing inequalities interact with emerging challenges, particularly climate change, and create new vulnerabilities. These emerging vulnerabilities and vulnerable groups need to be identified through disaggregated data generation, context-specific research and constructive social dialogue.

152. Empowerment that benefits all can be achieved by, inter alia, ensuring non-discriminatory legislation and policy-making at all levels of administration coupled with equal access to justice and to quality public services, infusing transparency and accountability in public administration at all levels and by balancing long-term needs and short-term urgencies in public policy.

153. Empowerment without resources and skills will lead to ineffective policy implementation. Therefore, capacity-building should be accorded highest priority. Strengthening an enabling environment for volunteering, including through investment, can promote social inclusion.

154. In the design of quality education policies, the latter should not only be considered as an instrument for higher productivity and earnings but also for its potential to transform the lives of all, citizens and migrants, throughout the lifecycle and across multiple learning spaces, maintain peace, and protect the planet.

155. Inclusion in the productive system is fundamental. Productive systems should be based on an engagement of all stakeholders in the creation, management and sharing of value. Universal social policies, safeguards, accountability mechanisms and effective access to justice must be in place to ensure the empowerment of people and communities to defend their interests.

156. The meaningful participation and active consultation of children should be facilitated in the implementation, monitoring and follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda. Implementation efforts should also be gender-sensitive with a focus on infrastructure, strengthening access to social protection and public services as well as effective participation in the labour force and political sphere.

157. The rights of persons with disabilities must be mainstreamed in the implementation and monitoring of the agenda at all levels, through the development and consistent use of disability-inclusive indicators.

158. It is important to recognize and strengthen the customary rights and laws of indigenous peoples and local communities to access, use, govern and manage lands and natural resources.

159. Effective cross-sectoral collaboration and coordination are required to successfully address the root causes of hunger and poverty, to enhance resilience against shocks and the effects of climate change, to preserve and restore biodiversity, and to manage trade-offs between sectors. Strengthening collaboration on interlinkages requires strong political commitment.

160. Efforts to address the root causes of conflict and promoting the foundations of peace should be strengthened. Emphasis should be placed on longer-term development of institutions and capacities even if they are harder to quantify, and a focus on inclusiveness is required.

161. Securing the means of implementation for the SDGs is essential. Fiscal policies should be reviewed to ascertain whether the collection of taxes on basic goods and services negatively impacts those being left behind and to assess the extent to which tax policies advance or impede the interests of groups with different levels of resources. Revenues from carbon pricing initiatives or from tobacco taxes can be reinvested into disadvantaged communities.

162. Ensuring that macroeconomic and fiscal instruments work towards equitable, sustainable growth, job creation and the reduction of inequalities, will require effective action on international cooperation on tax, cross-border financial flows, migration and remittances, debt relief and trade. Deficits in policies and regulatory frameworks, including for technology, should be reviewed.

163. Policy coherence should be pursued with regard to industry, education, labour and investment to enable the creation of green jobs and empower the workforce with skills required for taking on these jobs. Education and training programmes that focus on digital skills should be inclusive and accessible to everyone.

164. Silo-thinking is hampering the holistic implementation of the SDGs and the cross-cutting challenge of empowering people, ensuring inclusiveness and equality. Overcoming these silos requires equal and accountable partnership arrangements between stakeholders, and in many cases, cultural change and institutional reform. Communication and awareness-raising on the SDGs must be emphasized.

165. Empowerment for collaboration is key. The transformations that are needed to implement the SDGs by 2030 call for bold decisions that can be carried through only when those who are governed feel included and understood by those who govern.
