

**Written Statement of the NGO Major Group for the General Debate  
of the 2020 High-level Political Forum/ High-level Segment of ECOSOC, 17 July 2020**

***Accelerated action and transformative pathways: realizing the decade of action and delivery  
for sustainable development***

Thank you for the opportunity to share a few thoughts on behalf of the NGO Major Group. We would first like to recognize the challenges associated with this year's High-Level Political Forum and we are hopeful that we will not have to face them again in the future. However, we would like to advocate that certain lessons learned from this HLPF - both in terms of process and substance - be carried over into the future.

In terms of process: ensuring that the HLPF is accessible to all is a vital component that has been enhanced this year with all the fora taking place online - though more work needs to be done in terms of meaningful participation. One suggestion for the future might be to not conceive of this gathering purely as a New York only engagement, but it could better utilize the United Nations' regional Offices and even Resident Coordinators to ensure that voices from those regions are also able to participate, perhaps at times more convenient for them. This can enhance local participation, engagement, and ownership.

In terms of substance, there are two matters which we would like to highlight: the first is on the nature of crisis. So long as we are treating the symptom as the crisis, we will be unable to solve it. Hazards will occur long into the future; they only reach crisis proportions if we are unprepared. The crisis is not the hazard, it is our lack of preparation. COVID has not caused this crisis and this, we are hopeful, will be a lesson we take forward.

The second is on the dual notions of building back better and transformation. These words are only meaningful so long as there is a noteworthy change in the trajectory of our efforts rather than a continuation on an already existing path. In order to be effective, building back better will require conviction and sacrifice: some industries, individuals, and even nations who have made great progress will need to make modifications to their behaviors in order to allow similar progress from others. Likewise, in order for true transformation to occur, local, national, and global communities will need to engage in a process of learning to understand better what we are transforming to - we can describe the world we want to see, but the path to get there is still not fully known. This means our posture must be one of collective exploration.

As always, NGOs stand at the ready to work alongside trustworthy partners in the genuine pursuit of the betterment of lives around the world. If we do not take these steps together, in true partnership based on mutual respect, then no agenda or plan will be fully realized.

We look forward to taking the necessary strides to ensure this Decade of Action to deliver the Global Goals has meaning, especially for individuals and communities who are in greatest need during this time of crisis.

We thank you.