



**MINISTÈRE  
DE L'EUROPE  
ET DES AFFAIRES  
ÉTRANGÈRES**

*Liberté  
Égalité  
Fraternité*

## **General Statement**

### **France**

On the occasion of the

**2020 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development**  
organised under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)  
(7-17 July 2020)

The COVID-19 crisis deepens the global challenges that the international community was already facing to reach the SDGs and bears the risk to erase the development gains of the last decades. It comes at a time when we were already off track to deliver on the 2030 Agenda, and even back track on certain issues, including hunger, inequalities, climate change, and biodiversity.

International solidarity is essential to provide the most vulnerable populations, in particular in Africa, with the support they need to address this unprecedented crisis. It is also in our shared interest: only together can we meet these challenges in a sustainable way. This is a test for our collective credibility, for our common future.

Today more than ever, the implementation of the 2030 Agenda requires effective multilateralism. Global challenges know no borders and require an international coordinated response. In this perspective and in line with multilateral efforts, the global response to the COVID-19 crisis of the EU and its Member States was based on a Team Europe approach. Strengthened partnerships and cooperation of local, regional and national governments with international and regional organizations, international financial institutions, civil society, local governments, the private sector, youth, academia and other actors are equally important to accelerate action and deliver results on the ground.

France supports the leading role played by the WHO in response to the health crisis, while working on strengthening the effectiveness of multilateral action, particularly in global health. This is the goal of the Access to Covid-19 Tools Accelerator (ACT-A) initiative that was launched to accelerate research, development and equitable access to vaccines, treatments and diagnostics related to COVID-19, and to strengthen health systems. Further international coordination will be key to make vaccines a global public good and thus effectively provide access to treatments and vaccines to the most vulnerable, and combat the pandemic.

Emergency actions to address the health crisis must be articulated with a long-term gender-responsive response that will enable us to meet today's challenges and to embark on fairer, greener, more inclusive and more sustainable trajectories. To this end, the fight against inequalities within and between countries and the protection of

global public goods (health, but also climate and biodiversity, gender equality, education, and food security and nutrition) must be at the heart of our international action. We must also collectively recognize the decisive contribution of women to respond to this pandemic, whilst they have been absent and even, in some cases, left behind, from the main decision-making processes. In short, we need to leverage this moment of crisis to build back better.

We should use the Decade of Action to reinvigorate the momentum for action to deliver the SDGs by 2030 ensuring a green, sustainable, and inclusive post COVID-19 recovery, based on an gender-responsive integrated approach to address the interlinkages between global challenges, such as health, gender equality, climate change and biodiversity. We are convinced that the realization of gender equality and full enjoyment by all women and girls of their human rights will be instrumental to achieve all the Sustainable Development Goals and targets.

Our common efforts to build back better must aim at building low-carbon, resilient and biodiversity-compatible societies, ensuring equity and the protection of the most vulnerable, in particular in Africa, against climate change and environmental shocks. We must aim at building inclusive societies and tackle the persistency of systemic inequalities by increasing access to social protection, quality education and health services, including sexual and reproductive health services, and universal health coverage, advancing gender equality and building on women's contribution to recovery pursuing the ultimate objective of leaving no one behind. We must support economically-resilient societies, supporting inclusive growth and decent jobs, especially for young people, investing in resilient infrastructures, strengthening sustainable value chains and food systems. We must finally aim at building transparent and accountable societies by strengthening good governance, fighting corruption and making sure that citizens are at the heart of financing strategies.

Lastly, building back better after the COVID-19 crisis and realizing the 2030 Agenda require mobilizing all sources of financing, public and private, international and domestic. Promoting better financing is a primary condition to build low-emissions, inclusive and resilient societies. We need to work together towards aligning both public and private finance with the SDGs and the Paris Agreement, promoting

sustainable and inclusive investments and shifting finance away from fossil fuels, investing in the protection and restoration of biodiversity and natural ecosystems, and strengthening regional and local supply chains while reducing their environmental and climate footprint.

France is determined to take its full part in efforts to build back better, by ensuring that particular attention is paid to developing countries, particularly in Africa, promoting effective multilateralism, and mobilizing SDG-, climate- and biodiversity-compatible finance.