



Written statement by Denmark and the Danish UN Youth Delegates to the General Debate of the High Level Political Forum 2020

Excellences, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Heeding the global call for action by the United Nations, civil society organizations and Member States, Denmark has provided two COVID-response packages of more than 170 million USD.

The response packages address both immediate humanitarian and health needs as well as the medium-term socio-economic effects of the crisis such as hunger, poverty, disruption of vaccination campaigns and education, rising levels of mental health and psychosocial issues, human rights violations and shrinking space for civil society, increased inequalities, reduced access to sexual and reproductive health services, and increased levels of sexual and gender-based violence.

The COVID-19 crisis calls for a strong, coordinated global response helping the most vulnerable countries and people, including refugees and irregular migrants who should receive more and better protection in the regions of origin and along migratory routes. Denmark firmly believes that the United Nations plays a pivotal role in coordinating and responding to the crisis, including in assisting developing countries in building back better and greener. Similarly, Denmark works through and with the EU on a strong and substantial ‘Team Europe’ response globally and in partner countries.

The COVID-19-pandemic is both a health, human rights and a socio-economic crisis. Women and girls’ sexual and reproductive health and rights are in particular under increased pressure during the pandemic. Now is the time to build on lessons learned and protect decades of development investments and results. Working through a humanitarian-development-peace nexus-approach is key in this respect. It is critical that we integrate long-term sustainability in our early responses, including by addressing consequences of climate change and promoting green solutions. We must also uphold and reinforce good governance, democracy and respect for human rights, and in particular pay attention to the rights of women and girls, who are in an extra vulnerable situation during crises such as COVID-19.

The 2030 Agenda, the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement remain our common compass for a more just, equal, inclusive and sustainable future for all. The COVID-19 crisis has exposed and exacerbated existing inequalities, and risks jeopardizing hard won progress on the 2030 Agenda. However, even before the COVID-19 crisis, the world was not on track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. We must redouble our combined efforts to achieve the promises of the 2030 Agenda and make sure that we leave no one behind. With the declared decade of action, we need to ensure that building back better and greener means not

only continued but also accelerated and more efficient implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. These ambitions can only be achieved through strong multilateral cooperation and a truly dedicated approach to building more resilient, fair, equal, inclusive, and sustainable societies. We must keep our promises for people and planet. Denmark remains committed to this aim.

Due to a strong principle and tradition of meaningful youth participation, part of this statement is shared with the Danish Youth Delegates to the United Nations.

By the Danish UN Youth Delegates

Young people are suffering the consequences of worldwide lockdowns, but it seems our voices are not recognized when the world builds back better and greener after the pandemic.

The past months have changed the lives of every person in our global community, but it is the poor and most vulnerable that have truly suffered the hardest consequences of the lockdowns. In particular women, minorities and young people.

Looking back at the past months of lockdowns, numbers from ILO showed that young people not employed or engaged in education or training was higher than during the 2008 financial crisis. During the COVID19-crisis, approximately one in every six young person has lost their job, and those remaining in work experienced a 23% reduction in their work time. This clearly shows that the socioeconomic consequences of this crisis already negatively affect young people and will continue to do so for years to come, if no measures are taken.

At the same time, young people have shown that we are willing and able to work for change. Across Denmark, as well as globally, young people are essential actors in working towards achieving the 2030 agenda, and are taking a great responsibility in combating COVID-19. In the Danish youth organization, International Medical Cooperation Committee, young people are working together with Ethiopian youth in eliminating unwanted pregnancies, unsafe abortions and other health challenges among Ethiopian youth. Similarly, the Danish youth organization SILBA – Initiative for Dialogue and Democracy - is cooperating with young people from Eastern Europe in furthering democratic and political knowledge. These are examples from Denmark, but young people all over the world are reacting to the fact that the world is not how they want it to be. This is expressed in the fights for climate action and racial justice, where young people are at the forefront of the movements leading and demanding change.

Young people are among those groups of people that will suffer the most from the socioeconomic consequences of the pandemic. Young people are equal partners, and the United Nations and Member States owe it to the younger generation to recognize us as such and to invite us at the table to take part in creating the world we want. We cannot and will not accept young people

losing their jobs, but we do not have a say in how our countries and the global community recover from this crisis. We will not be silenced in the fight for a faster transition from informal jobs to formal, decent jobs including at entry level.

We, the biggest youth generation in history, a generation of change makers, are already creating sustainable solutions for a sustainable world. We are ready to deliver on our common goals as we build back better and greener after the pandemic, but we must have more seats at the table.

Are you ready to do what is long overdue and include us?

Thank you.