

HLPF 2020

General Debate

Excellencies, honourable delegates,

- Our world today is dealing with a crisis of monumental proportions. The coronavirus is wreaking havoc across the globe, upending lives and livelihoods of millions, and exacerbating already existing vulnerabilities.
- The cost of the pandemic in terms of loss of human lives is painful, but the effects on the global economy and inclusive development, in which no one is left behind, are also matters of deep concern.
- Like the 2030 Agenda, the pandemic is global. Unlike the 2030 Agenda and its drive for inclusive and fair growth, Covid-19 has forced the world into a negative spiral – not yet having reached its lowest point.
- Containing and defeating the virus are monumental tasks – calling us into action: About 4 billion people lack the privileges of a social safety net. About 3 billion lack access to simple facilities for regular hand wash with soap.
- We know that the number of extreme poor people will increase dramatically. Food insecurity is on the rise. Remittances are shrinking, possibly with up to 20 percent. This strikes individual families the hardest. A new debt-crisis is looming.
- No wonder, the pandemic is changing us, both the way we commute and how we communicate.

- However, despair will take us nowhere. Let us rather join forces with civil society partners, academia, private sector and the unions. Together we must explore the opportunities these challenges offer. How can they help us build a more resilient and inclusive society?
- The crisis invites us understand what the game changers are. How can they strengthen our resolve to build inclusive health services, education, justice and equity for all, without compromising the environmental boundaries of the planet?
- The Covid-19 poses a substantive threat to regional and global security and stability. It is therefore of utmost importance that we forcefully apply the values of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in this crisis. For this is what the SDGs are all about.
- What is acutely needed now, is enhanced political will and commitment to build back better and greener. We know what to do, and together we have the capacity to fill the gaps. If we are ambitious enough, together we can muster the resources needed for sustainable transformation.
- Through bilateral and multilateral channels, Norway is offering support to cushion the fiscal and financial burden many countries are facing due to the pandemic. The Covid-19 fund is one such significant measure.
- So let us put the 2030 Agenda back on the front burner. That will both accelerate and deepen our commitment to this Decade of Action and Delivery. That is the most potent prescription for a safer, more fair and prosperous world.

Thank you.