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#### **High-level political forum on sustainable development**

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Economic and Social Council  
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Agenda item 2 of the provisional agenda\*

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

##### Summary

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, affecting progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals and reversing gains achieved in areas of poverty eradication, food security, health, economic development, and reduction of inequalities. The crisis has revealed underlying weaknesses in economic and social systems, underscored the important interlinkages between biodiversity and human health, highlighted the importance of gender equality and women's empowerment for progress across all the Goals, and prompted calls for an equitable and inclusive recovery that can bridge digital divides and support a more sustainable and resilient future for all.

## 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 to contribute to the thematic review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by the high-level political forum on sustainable development (HLPF). Contributions were provided in response to the invitation of the President of the Council contained in his letter dated 18 November 2020<sup>1</sup> addressed to the Chairs of those bodies, in which he requested that they offer substantive input to the high-level political forum on sustainable development, highlighting their contributions towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.<sup>2</sup> The integral texts of the submissions received for the present synthesis report are available on the forum's website.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/27075ECOSOC\\_President\\_Letter\\_18\\_11\\_20.pdf](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/27075ECOSOC_President_Letter_18_11_20.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> The present document has benefited from contributions received from: (a) functional commissions and expert bodies of the Economic and Social Council: Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, Commission on Narcotic Drugs, Commission on Science and Technology for Development, Commission for Social Development, Commission on the Status of Women, Committee for Development Policy, Committee of Experts on Public Administration, Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology, and Innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals, United Nations Forum on Forests, United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management, United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names, and United Nations Statistical Commission; (b) regional commissions: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, and Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (see also reports of the regional forums on sustainable development convened by the UN regional commissions and presented as official documents to the forum); (c) United Nations intergovernmental and related bodies: Human Rights Council, United Nations Environment Assembly, Committee on Enforced Disappearances, Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, Committee on World Food Security, Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, Committee on Commodity Problems, Committee on Agriculture, Committee on Fisheries, Committee on Forestry, Food and Agriculture Organization, Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, International Atomic Energy Agency, International Plant Protection Convention, International Organization for Migration, International Telecommunication Union, International Trade Centre, International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food Agriculture, Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development, Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, UN System Staff College, UNESCO SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee, UNESCO World Heritage Centre, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, Codex Alimentarius Commission, United Nations Group on the Information Society, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, United Nations Human Rights Treaty Bodies, United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute, United Nations Industrial Development Organization, United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, United Nations Population Fund, United Nations University, Vienna Convention on the Protection of the Ozone Layer and the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control and the Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products, World Health Organization, World Meteorological Organization, World Summit on the Information Society Forum, World Tourism Organization, and World Trade Organization; (d) other intergovernmental bodies: Convention on Biological Diversity, United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, Global Forum on Migration and Development, Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, International Development Law Organization, International Renewable Energy Agency, International Union for Conservation of Nature, Pacific Islands Forum.

<sup>3</sup> See <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/inputs/>.

## **I. Introduction**

1. The high-level political forum on sustainable development provides a central platform for follow-up and review at the global level of progress towards the implementation of “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”.<sup>4</sup> In line with paragraph 82 of the 2030 Agenda, the forum facilitates the sharing of experiences, including successes, challenges and lessons learned. It also provides political leadership, guidance and recommendations for follow-up and promotes the system-wide coherence and coordination of sustainable development policies.
2. In paragraph 85 of the Agenda, the General Assembly called for thematic reviews of progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals, including with regard to cross-cutting issues, to take place at the high-level political forum. In accordance with existing mandates, the forum’s review of progress, global achievements and challenges is supported by the “reviews of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council and other intergovernmental bodies and forums, which should reflect the integrated nature of the Goals and the interlinkages between them”.
3. The President of the Council therefore invited the functional commissions and expert bodies of the Council and other intergovernmental bodies and forums, including global platforms and intergovernmental organization-driven mechanisms that contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, to share relevant input and deliberations as to how they address the Goals under review from the perspective of the theme of the 2021 high-level political forum. The 2021 theme is “Sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic that promotes the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development: building an inclusive and effective path for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda in the context of the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development”. The forum will review progress in Goals 1 on no poverty, 2 on zero hunger, 3 on good health and well-being, 8 on decent work and economic growth, 10 on reduced inequalities, 12 on responsible consumption and production, 13 on climate action, 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions, and 17 on partnerships. The review will also consider the integrated, indivisible and interlinked nature of the Goals. The intergovernmental bodies’ contributions do not suggest a formal reporting link to the forum or modify any entity’s mandate or governance.
4. The present document is based on a synthesis of the voluntary submissions received as of 31 March 2021<sup>5</sup>. It provides a brief analysis of how the intergovernmental bodies are responding to the theme of the 2021 high-level political forum and the Goals under review, including key recommendations, based on their work, of actions to accelerate a sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **II. Impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals under review in 2021**

5. The COVID-19 pandemic has affected all the Goals under review this year, and has reversed progress on Sustainable Development Goals 1, 2, 3, 8 and 10. Inputs submitted to the forum

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<sup>4</sup> General Assembly resolution 70/1.

<sup>5</sup> Contributions received after 31 March and all other submissions are available at <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/inputs/>.

assessed a wide range of cross-cutting impacts to interlinked Goals and targets stemming from the health and economic crises that have affected progress more broadly. .

***Sustainable Development Goal 1: end poverty in all its forms everywhere<sup>6</sup>***

6. After nearly twenty-five years of consistent poverty reduction, the pandemic is expected to reverse that global trend for the first time since 1996. It has significantly increased the risk of living in poverty, especially for women, mainly due to their over-representation in precarious and informal employment. The economic downturn caused by the pandemic will also push those already in extreme poverty into deeper destitution. In LDCs, the aggregate poverty incidence is expected to have increased by 2.4 percentage points, to almost 39 per cent, in 2020. The prospects of eradicating extreme poverty by 2030 are therefore even slimmer than before the pandemic.
7. While millions of families have been pushed into poverty by loss of income, already poor households were far more likely to suffer the losses, especially those working in the informal economy for whom lockdowns crippled livelihoods. Measures adopted to “flatten the curve” have particularly affected migrants, as well as their families and communities of origin, transit and destination. The situation is having life-altering consequences for children, and is harming them disproportionately due to their age-based vulnerabilities.
8. The multifaceted impacts of the pandemic have deepened economic and social insecurity and inequality, particularly due to unemployment as people in specific professions, such as service professions, have lost employment, often without adequate social security nets. Workers in precarious positions, including in the informal sector, the gig economy, independent workers, domestic workers, and migrant workers, including undocumented migrant workers, have either lost or risk losing their employment, often without social protections. Workers placed on partial unemployment have not always had access to social protection. For some in employment, such as health workers and workers in other key positions to combat the virus, health and safety have been put at risk.

***Sustainable Development Goal 2: end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture***

9. Even before the pandemic, almost 690 million people were undernourished worldwide, showing an increase in hunger since 2014. Two billion people did not have regular access to safe, nutritious and sufficient food; and three billion people could not afford healthy diets. The complex dynamics triggered by the lockdowns intended to contain the disease are creating conditions for a major disruption to food systems, giving rise to a dramatic increase in hunger. The most recent FAO estimates indicate that between 83 and 132 million additional people will experience food insecurity as a direct result of the pandemic. At least 25 countries are at risk of significant food security deterioration because of the secondary socio-economic impacts of the pandemic. In Latin America, the number of people requiring food assistance has almost tripled in 2020.
10. Food systems directly employ over one billion people and provide livelihoods to another 3.5 billion. COVID-19 mitigation and control measures and the emerging recession are having a profound economic impact, putting the jobs and livelihoods of millions at risk, and could disrupt incomes and, by extension, food access. Without interventions to save lives and restore livelihoods, the number of hungry people could grow even further, especially with the pandemic expanding well into 2021. Smallholder farmers and their families, and food

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<sup>6</sup> See also the 2021 report of the Secretary-General on Progress Toward the Sustainable Development Goals.

workers in all sectors, are particularly vulnerable. The challenge of food security continues to be one of access to food, rather than availability of food.

11. The pandemic is also adversely impacting agri-food systems and the functioning of food and agricultural markets and supply chains around the world. Food markets continue to face uncertainties due to prospects of weak economic growth and unstable energy and currency markets. While agricultural trade has proven more resilient than trade in other goods owing to the essential nature of food products, additional disruptions to supply chains could start to undermine this resilience, with damaging consequences for global food security.
12. Food productivity could also be affected in the future, especially if the virus is not contained and the lockdown measures continue. Both consumers and producers of food crops rely on plant genetic resources and seeds for food, nutrition, agriculture and livelihoods, and food systems depend on the availability of diverse seeds. The pandemic has significantly impacted the level of access to seeds and affected global and regional processes related to fisheries and aquaculture.

***Sustainable Development Goal 3: ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages***

13. The pandemic has dramatically exposed existing vulnerabilities in the health systems of all countries, including limited capacity to adapt and respond efficiently to a surge of new patients while maintaining continuity of care; resource gaps such as shortages in the health workforce, medical equipment and supplies; and inadequate investments in infrastructure. Reliance on employment-based health insurance and social protection schemes, as well as burdensome medical fees during a time when the economy is constrained and many people are facing financial insecurity, have also impacted many people.
14. Furthermore, life during lockdowns has been highly stressful for many people. Schools have closed and socialization has been significantly limited, impacting the social and emotional well-being of families and children, and precipitating a rise in substance abuse and domestic violence in some households. Increased stress at home has also exacerbated previously unstable relationships, with implications for children's well-being.
15. Aside from the pandemic's direct impacts on disease and mortality, the failure to fully sustain essential health services has also increased the rate of morbidity and mortality from preventable health threats, including communicable and non-communicable diseases; negatively impacted women's and newborns' health and survival; and compromised the provision of routine inoculations. Many countries had to discontinue preventive programmes and interventions, slowing the rates of progress achieved in the past. The response to the pandemic demands wide access to an extensive array of medical products and other technologies, including protective equipment, contact tracing software, medicines, diagnostics, vaccines and treatments, which are often scarce, especially in poor countries; it has also increased medical waste, including haphazard use and disposal of disinfectants, masks, and gloves.
16. During the pandemic, science, technology and innovation (STI) have been key enablers in the response to the health, economic, and social disruptions. STI and information and communication technology (ICT) tools are supporting the development and deployment of diagnostics, community- and self-testing, and digital contact tracing. Ongoing scientific collaboration and knowledge sharing also is essential for the development, testing, and rollout of an effective vaccine.

17. Digital platforms and solutions are essential for maintaining continuity of services and providing support and advice to populations and communities difficult to reach with conventional means. They can ensure social, educational and business continuity; spread timely and verified warning information; and support adherence to safety measures (e.g. quarantine). Data aggregation systems provide epidemiological insights and play an important role in COVID-19 surveillance. This has provided an impetus for some digitization efforts that could have positive longer-term impact, and a recognition that countries must focus more on elevating STI in both policy and practical terms, while also ensuring that the development benefits of STI and ICT benefit all people equally.
18. The pandemic has also prompted calls for a new relationship with nature in order to reduce the risk of future zoonotic spillovers. Drivers of zoonotic disease emergence are a complex mix of habitat and biodiversity loss, rising human population densities, changing food systems, land conversion and deforestation for intensive agriculture, globalized trade and travel, climate change, and other factors. Biodiversity loss, deforestation and forest fragmentation increase the risk that infectious diseases may emerge. Illegal wildlife trade is also a factor in the spread of zoonotic diseases.

***Sustainable Development Goal 8: promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all***

19. The pandemic has had an adverse impact on national economies, rolling back decades of growth and development and triggering job losses, reduced income, and decreased health outcomes that have directly impacted Goal 8 and subsequently negatively affected Goals 1 and 10, as well as multiple other Goals and targets. As a result of border closures and social distancing measures, most governments have faced large contractions in economic activity, recessions, and budgetary shortfalls, while populations have faced reduced access to income, employment and food. Subsequent macroeconomic constraints have significantly worsened the capacity of governments to build capable, effective and resilient institutions.
20. The pandemic occurred at a point where the multilateral trading system was experiencing pre-existing stress. Persistent trade tensions and a drastic increase in trade restrictions from 2017 had resulted in slow global merchandise trade growth from 2017 to 2019. In 2020, world merchandise trade fell further, by an estimated 5.3 per cent. This was however a substantial improvement from earlier forecasts of a 12.9 per cent decline and was largely the result of strong fiscal and monetary stimulus policies by governments around the world. A restrained approach to trade protectionism and introduction of liberalizing measures over the course of 2020, as well as the shift to remote work and business innovation in many places, also contributed to the relatively small decline.
21. The effects of these declines in trade have varied across countries, within national populations, and by sector. Micro, small and medium-sized businesses (MSMEs) have been much more adversely impacted by the pandemic than large companies. Of these, companies operating in services have been most affected, with the biggest impact reported by those in accommodation and food services. Non-food manufacturing, travel and transport, retail and wholesale sectors, where MSMEs have been overrepresented and in which much informal income, is generated were also impacted. In some African and Asian countries, small informal businesses account for 90 per cent of all companies, and their struggle to cope with the impact of the pandemic is having extensive economic and human repercussions. During shutdowns, informal companies have struggled to pay their employees, who often depend on daily wages for basic needs.

22. There is evidence that women are more negatively affected due to their over-representation in the food service, retail, textile and apparel manufacturing, and informal employment; informal, women-led and youth-led firms have been extremely affected. One recent survey found that 61 per cent of women-led firms declared their business operations were strongly affected by the crisis, compared with 53 per cent for companies led by men; 27 per cent of youth-led firms risked shutting down permanently within three months, compared with 18 per cent for non-youth-led firms; and 30 per cent of informal firms risked shutting down permanently within three months, compared with 18 per cent for formal firms.
23. Although LDCs have not been particularly hard-hit by COVID-19 itself, the socio-economic fallout of the pandemic has been severe. Limited export diversification has heightened the vulnerability of LDCs to the impact of the pandemic on global trade. Global trade in forest products, for example, declined by about eight per cent due to the pandemic, and forest workers with minimal social support—such as casual workers, MSMEs, small-scale farmers, and women—have been among the most affected.
24. The economic crisis has underscored the importance of tenure security and resource rights, as those with tenure or other forms of security in using and managing resources have been less affected, while those who have no property rights or access to land resources, such as women and farm workers, have been more significantly impacted. It is yet unclear if a continued economic downturn will trigger widespread dispossession of land, creating social upheaval or resulting in more informal tenure arrangements and unplanned slum formations. For some rural communities living near forests, the exploitation of these resources has become one of the most accessible alternatives to provide immediate incomes and basic needs, leading to additional forest loss and degradation.
25. International tourism remains at a standstill one year into the crisis, with severe impacts on employment in many LDCs. Manufacturing exports have improved recently, but it is still too early to understand the resilience of the rebound. Unstable demand for, and falling prices of commodities such as oil and gas have led to balance of payments problems and other adverse impacts in several LDCs.
26. While digital technologies have contributed to enabling economic systems to continue to operate, at least partially, the acceleration of the digitalization of the economy has introduced new risks, particularly for women. The gendered effects of new and emerging technologies (such as artificial intelligence, Internet of things, big data, gene editing, blockchain) are not fully understood. These fast-changing and wide-ranging technological changes have implications for many facets of societies and economies. Women tend to be underrepresented in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) careers, and there is a growing concern that new technologies may reverse gains achieved prior to the pandemic in gender equality and empowerment, through adverse effects on women's employment and labor force participation, as well as economic and livelihoods opportunities.

***Sustainable Development Goal 10: reduce inequalities within and among countries***

27. The pandemic has revealed ethically and politically unacceptable inequalities in access to treatments, vaccines, and health-related technologies. Strengthening international cooperation and a commitment to global solidarity are critical for ensuring that all countries have access to those products and have the requisite technological capabilities and productive capacities to produce requisite health supplies for current and future health emergencies.

28. The pandemic has also impacted the promotion and protection of human rights, and has disproportionately affected women and girls, due to pre-existing gender inequalities, deep-rooted and often systemic discrimination, and lack of gender-balanced leadership. Gender-based violence against women is closely linked to gender inequalities. Since the emergence of the pandemic, statistical data and numerous reports have indicated that all forms of gender-based violence have intensified, triggering a “shadow pandemic”, whereby one out of three women have suffered physical or sexual violence predominantly perpetrated by intimate partners or family members.
29. The restrictions imposed to counter the pandemic may result in new forms of discrimination and gender-based violence against women, especially for women belonging to disadvantaged groups and women at the lower end of the economic scale. In LDCs, women and girls have been more affected by the economic and social fallout of the pandemic, as they rely more on the informal sector and are burdened by an increase in unpaid care work. The impacts are not just economic. Health services in LDCs are significantly disrupted, potentially reversing progress in combating diseases, malnutrition, and in reducing mortality rates. The shift of funds to pandemic response is hampering women’s access to sexual and reproductive health.
30. The pandemic has also highlighted the lack of equality in digital access, connectivity, affordability and digital literacy and resources, which has contributed to inequalities in social and economic welfare. Those with access to ICTs and those with jobs that rely on their use have been better placed to overcome some of the difficulties caused by the pandemic than those without such access. Those who lack affordable connectivity have been disadvantaged in comparison with those that have such connectivity. Manual and casual workers have been less able to work online than others.
31. The inequities in access to technologies that are required for remote learning and digital education disproportionately impact poorer communities. This has illustrated the vital importance of broadband networks and services in driving robust, resilient and well-functioning societies and economies. It has also underscored humanity’s growing reliance on digital connectivity for business continuity, employment, education, commerce, banking, healthcare, and a whole host of other essential services. Children without access to computers and connectivity are educationally disadvantaged.
32. A globally accelerated response has centered on improving telecommunication/ICT infrastructure and access to services. Much progress has been made over the past ten years in expanding access to, and adoption of, broadband infrastructure and services. However, digital inequalities—including uneven access to and adoption of the Internet—remain prevalent between and within countries. While these inequalities existed before the current COVID-19 crisis, the pandemic has further highlighted the disparities in access to high-speed connectivity and also brought to the forefront online safety issues as many people shifted to work, learn, and communicate online. Even with the increased use of ICTs in various sectors during the pandemic, 3.7 billion people remain offline. Lack of affordability, constrained access to infrastructure and devices, poor connectivity, weak digital skills and/or the absence of relevant content mean that billions of people are unable to leverage the power of digital transformation in a way that could catalyze seismic shifts in development outcomes.

***Sustainable Development Goal 12: ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns***

33. Production and consumption were scaled back globally due to the pandemic, affecting global trade through a complex network of both supply and demand shocks. On the supply side, the



social distancing measures and border closures that were adopted globally in order to restrict the spread of COVID-19 have reduced air freight capacity, halted industrial production, and limited port activities, and restricted the ability of businesses to operate. Consequently, both production and export capacities were severely restricted. In the case of global value chains, the inability to source production inputs resulted in a breakdown of several global value chains. The COVID-19 induced demand shock was no less damaging. The world's largest importing economies displayed sharp drops in aggregate demand due not only to social distancing measures affecting ability to purchase, but due also to loss of jobs and incomes in these countries.

34. There is increasing focus on, and demand for, sustainability reporting by companies as means to provide stakeholders with important data on companies' performance in the environmental, social and governance areas, which is also a critical factor for a resilient, green and inclusive recovery, transition to a low-carbon and circular economy, and mitigation of climate change related risks. Rising volumes of medical waste due to the pandemic are relevant to this Goal, and have been identified as a problem that requires more attention.
35. Additionally, the pandemic highlighted the need for further efforts towards harmonization and comparability of sustainability reporting to ensure its usefulness for decision making, including with regard to financial aid for post COVID-19 resurgence in the private sector, particularly for MSMEs. In this regard, it further facilitated efforts towards convergence of different international sustainability reporting frameworks, and transition to a new governance system to develop a set of robust international standards on sustainability reporting aligned with key principles of financial reporting.

***Sustainable Development Goal 13: take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts***

36. Lockdown measures, travel restrictions and the slowdown of economic activities may have positively impacted the environment and biodiversity through reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, air and water pollution, noise, and tourism. However, despite the estimated reduction in annual global emissions of between 4.2 per cent and 7.5 per cent for 2020, record levels of greenhouse gases continue to trap heat in the atmosphere, increasing temperatures and driving more extreme weather, ice melt, sea-level rise and ocean acidification. Women and girls, particularly those belonging to disadvantaged groups, such as rural women, internally displaced, refugee and migrant women, and indigenous women and girls, continue to face disproportionate risks and impacts of climate change and natural disasters on their health, safety, and livelihoods.
37. Increasingly complex and concurrent risks cut across sectors and national boundaries and, as evidenced by the pandemic, the climate crisis and the crisis of inequalities, disasters can have far-reaching ramifications such as interrupting global supply chains, curtailing global trade and travel, damaging ecosystems, harming health and well-being, or displacing persons across national borders. Issues related to preparedness for increasingly complex, interconnected and concurrent risks in a context of uncertainty require strengthening foresight and diagnostics for long-term planning, scenario building and early warning and response capacities, including investment in human resources, and the ability to connect these efforts across different realms of disaster, climate, biological, health, technological and conflict risks. Understanding better the interrelations among the Goals is critical to support adequate policy responses.

38. The focus on measures to respond to the pandemic should not overshadow the urgency of measures to combat climate change. Instead, climate action should be pursued as an integral part of the response to the pandemic. Particular attention must be placed on investments in the energy sector for example. With over two-thirds of global greenhouse gas emissions coming from the energy sector, a transition to cleaner forms of energy is essential for fulfilling the Paris Agreement target. Rapid uptake of renewables, coupled with energy efficiency, can achieve around 90 per cent of the energy-related emission reductions needed by 2050. Renewable energy can also contribute to adaptation efforts, by promoting the diversification of the power supply and by building resilience through improved energy access.

***Sustainable Development Goal 16: promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels***

39. Economic shocks as a result of the pandemic have further intensified the vulnerabilities of countries in conflict and post-conflict situations. Progress toward peace, security and conflict management is being set back by the pandemic, as strained social and economic conditions have exacerbated the vulnerabilities of the most disadvantaged groups, and lockdowns have offered opportunities for new illicit markets to thrive, while others have been disrupted. Prison settings have been particularly affected.
40. Governments around the world have responded to the pandemic with fiscal stimulus measures and emergency rescue packages and disbursed them at a speed that made them vulnerable to corrupt practices such as embezzlement, bribes and price gouging and the manipulation of procurement processes. Anti-corruption safeguards are frequently eased in such emergency frameworks, limiting opportunities for oversight and accountability.
41. With attention focused on immediate economic impacts, lax law enforcement has enabled large-scale illegal activities and fraudulent practices, and livelihoods based on legal activities have sometimes been sacrificed in favor of quick economic gains in numerous sectors. An overall rise in unemployment rates in origin countries as a result of the pandemic may increase the number of people willing to take risks for better economic opportunities, thereby increasing their vulnerability to trafficking.
42. The pandemic has increased the need for concerted government action at the subnational, national and international levels, global cooperation under the banner of peace and solidarity, the de-escalation of violence and the fostering of development under the principles of the rule of law and of leaving no one behind.

***Sustainable Development Goal 17: strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development***

43. Health challenges, budgetary and administrative restrictions, closed borders, and restricted movement are affecting international solidarity and partnerships, aggravating poverty and inequality, and leading to setbacks in the advancement of women.
44. Since spring 2020, hundreds of millions of dollars of development assistance have been re-purposed in an admirable spirit of solidarity and often under dramatic circumstances. Much of this assistance built on nascent social protection systems, strengthened by ODA in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis, and now being used to channel COVID-related assistance. However, alignment with and visibility for national systems has suffered. It is

urgent that development partners re-focus their action and support on the national efforts and leadership to achieve the Goals.

45. The financial situation in LDCs has become more challenging, with a fall in foreign direct investment and remittances, and almost half of LDCs at high risk of, or already in, debt distress. Limited fiscal space meant the fiscal response to the pandemic of most LDCs was inadequate. The G20 Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI) has alleviated financial pressures in some LDCs but is clearly insufficient. In their fiscal responses to date, developed economies have spent in per capita terms nearly 580 times more than LDCs. Nearly all LDCs will experience a weaker medium-term growth than projected before the pandemic, leading to a setback in living standards.
46. The pandemic has demonstrated how partnerships, for example between technologists and experts in education, health and the environment, are essential if technology is to help meet unmet needs in these areas.
47. The sudden and dramatic impact of the pandemic means less scope for development partners to focus on reporting on multi-stakeholder development effectiveness efforts, at a time when effective multi-stakeholder partnerships are more important than ever to ensure an inclusive and sustainable economic recovery and protecting the most vulnerable.
48. Preparing for multi-dimensional and systemic risks in today's interconnected world requires multilateralism to drive strengthened international cooperation with a strong anticipatory function.

### **III. Areas requiring urgent attention**

49. Inputs from intergovernmental bodies described a variety of urgent actions that are currently being undertaken, or must be accelerated, in a number of key areas. A few of the most critical are highlighted below.
50. Most importantly, fair, broad, and fast access to effective and safe COVID-19 vaccines and treatments, without discrimination on any basis, including nationality and migrant status, and free of charge, at least for low-income people and those living in poverty, is vital to save lives and strengthen global economic recovery and should be guaranteed. Commitments to vaccination operations are expected to reach \$4 billion in 50 countries by mid-2021.
51. Equally urgent is the need to address the compounding threat of the pandemic on existing crises such as conflict, natural disasters, climate change, pests, and plagues that are already stressing food systems and triggering food insecurity.
52. Measures to enable provision of sufficient and healthy food to all people are essential. Efforts to conserve and sustainably use plant genetic resources for food and agriculture must be further strengthened, as they are the backbones of global food security and sustainable agriculture. Building preparedness and maintaining crop diversity within seed systems is more urgent than ever, given the number of emergency situations and adverse events posing threats to certain germplasm collections, from the pandemic and from natural disasters. Managing and deploying plant genetic diversity is essential to vulnerable farmers in their efforts to increase resilience and secure their food security and livelihoods.
53. Governments must do more to ensure that social protection and health systems are reinforced and strengthened, such that future crises can be averted as much as possible. The benefits of building stronger social protection floors will undoubtedly outweigh the costs to countries in

the long term; universal health care could be considered as a path to strengthening resilience to future shocks and possible pandemics. International cooperation for mobilizing the financial resources necessary to support the recovery, and to also address the debt crisis in developing and least developed countries, is of primary importance now. Recovery from the pandemic is an opportunity to “build back better”, and should be availed through global solidarity and political will to harness positive momentum for future outcomes toward achieving the Goals.

54. The pandemic has also simultaneously underlined the importance of connectivity and need to reduce digital inequalities, as many adults and children have shifted towards remote work, learning, and communication. At the same time, the pandemic is highlighting inequality among and within countries along a contour line between those with access and those without, calling for urgent action at international and national level.
55. There is a critical need for international cooperation and coordination in STI that extends beyond the immediate urgency of the pandemic. It is key to enable all countries, especially developing and least developed countries, to pursue STI capabilities and become more able to respond to and build resilience against natural disasters, climate change, and public health emergencies in the medium- and long-term.
56. Countries need to continue to create an enabling environment for research, capacity-building, innovation, and technologies complemented by coherent policies that integrate STI in all policy areas focusing on issues such as health, education, food systems, energy, urbanization, employment and the economy. Countries individually, but also through concerted international efforts, must also guide the development and deployment of new and emerging technologies so that they support sustainable development and leave no one behind. This is too critical to be left to the operations of markets on their own.
57. To address the needs of health systems in developing countries, international collaboration in scientific research can play a critical role in improving health, equity, and sustainable development. It can make an important contribution in the context of diseases that are disproportionately prevalent in developing countries, but where research capacity may be limited. To enable their success, collaborative arrangements must seek to foster equitable relations between the collaborating parties through partnerships towards a common goal including the possibility of joint ownership of intellectual property rights. The WTO TRIPS Council is considering proposals for a waiver from certain provisions of the TRIPS Agreement for the prevention, containment and treatment of COVID-19. These arrangements are urgently needed both in the context of the current pandemic, and to allow the necessary policy space for countries to prepare against future predicted threats of novel zoonotic diseases.
58. The use of, and trade in, wildlife must be regulated and managed such that it is safe (from a human health perspective), legal and sustainable. This may involve, for example, reducing or removing species in wildlife trade that are high-risk for disease emergence, improving biosecurity and sanitation in markets and conducting disease surveillance of wildlife, and of wildlife hunters, farmers, and traders, as well enhancing law enforcement on all aspects of the illegal wildlife trade. There is also a need to enhance and review regulations on bushmeat, wet markets, and livestock production practices including through the implementation of hygienic practices, while refraining from total bans, which would negatively affect communities that depend on wild animals and potentially open the door to illegal trade practices.

#### **IV. Ensuring that no one is left behind**

59. The COVID-19 pandemic and related crises have exposed and exacerbated vulnerabilities and inequalities in both developing and developed countries, deepening poverty and exclusion, and pushing the most vulnerable even further behind. The pandemic is disproportionately impacting those who are already in vulnerable situations, including migrants, displaced persons, older persons, and ethnic minorities including indigenous peoples who often fall outside of social safety nets and lack access to basic services. They are also among the most exposed to the risk of contracting the virus and, once they do, generally have a significantly higher risk of dying due to pre-existing systemic inequalities in access to quality health care.
60. Rural and indigenous populations, migrants, and displaced persons were already at a disadvantage in terms of access to health care, including prevention and treatment protocols. In certain contexts, where populations live in overcrowded conditions (e.g. refugee camps, immigration detention centers, and prisons), the lack of basic sanitary conditions and medical personnel often prevents physical distancing and proper hygiene, increasing the risk of contracting and spreading the virus.
61. Some countries have reported to the forum in their voluntary national reviews on national methods for identifying the groups most vulnerable to being left behind in their particular country contexts, through evidence-based and human rights-based approaches, which will enable them to better direct policy action. Yet more must be done to operationalize of the concept of “reaching the furthest behind first” and to define measures to avoid pushing people even further behind. The concept of leaving no one behind must be linked to transformative, cross-cutting policy areas that would significantly and sustainably enable social protection, generate employment, and provide resources. Such policies should be pursued as an integral part of the response to COVID-19.
62. The global community and individual national governments must systemically address the deeper causes of poverty and exclusion not through palliatives but through institution-building and development policies focused on the long term. Youth-oriented programmes that are inclusive and not limited to academia or young professionals, but extended to young farmers and entrepreneurs, indigenous and vulnerable groups, such as young people with disabilities, can also reach those at risk. Projects that aim to maintain a level playing field in developing economies between MSMEs and other economic actors are important now.
63. Countries in conflict and post-conflict countries need redoubled development partnership efforts to recover from the ravages of the pandemic. A special focus on development partnerships in those countries must go hand in hand with post-conflict reconstruction and development, and with efforts to establish peace and security.
64. Increased levels of stigma, xenophobia, and racism that have risen in many places since the onset of the pandemic further intensify situations of vulnerability. Putting the principle of leaving no one behind into action depends on deliberate steps being taken to address exclusion, through practical inclusivity policies that systemically address all segments of society and their respective needs. The full involvement of all stakeholders, including women, children according to their evolving capacities, young people, elderly persons, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and local communities, is indispensable.
65. The global health crisis is also testing the commitment and adherence to principles of gender equality, non-discrimination and solidarity at both the national and international levels. Women represent 70 per cent of the health workforce on the front lines of health care, but unfortunately remain significantly under-represented in leadership positions and decision-

making processes in the health sector. Women's participation in decision-making processes and their leadership at the subnational and national levels in elaborating plans, policies and programmes with an inclusive perspective, both for tackling inequalities and for leading recovery from future emergencies is imperative.

66. Safeguarding the food security and livelihoods of small-scale farmers, who are more vulnerable to the impact of the pandemic and related restrictions, is important with regard to preventing disruptions to local seed production and supply of quality seeds. Strengthened biodiversity policies, as part of a global pandemic prevention strategy, will have important implications for the design and implementation of sustainable wildlife management and trade policies. Those must be pro-poor and should be undertaken with the involvement and consent of indigenous peoples and local communities.
67. There is also a particular need to build capacities of and engage with groups of skilled diaspora health professionals. Migrants are essential to healthcare systems in the immediate COVID-19 response, in rebuilding healthcare systems during recovery and also in developing future preparedness plans and strengthening health systems.
68. Finally, affordable universal connectivity is essential for an inclusive and sustainable world, and must be at the forefront of sustainable development efforts. Overall global Internet user penetration currently stands at 51.4 per cent; that figure drops to 44.4 per cent in developing countries, and to just 19.5 per cent in the LDCs. Urgent action is needed to reverse the dramatic effects of the pandemic on education, notably by addressing digital inequalities, and taking full advantage of the opportunities provided by the experiences with expanded and enhanced digital education.

#### **V. Sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic**

69. The response to the impacts of the pandemic should seize every opportunity to adopt policies to trigger structural and other changes to create conditions that accelerate progress toward the Goals. An integrated and sustainable response to the pandemic thus requires actions in numerous policy areas in the economic, social, and environmental spheres. The pandemic has also highlighted the inadequacy of fragmented approaches to managing global risks while also trying to transition towards sustainability. "Building back better" requires new perspectives, new thinking and new approaches bolstered by global solidarity and multilateralism.
70. The response should start with systems thinking to analyze complex systems. Policymaking should also become more integrated, coherent and inclusive. Overcoming a silo-based approach is a precondition for enhancing policy coherence for sustainable development. It requires leadership from the top and a change in organizational culture.

#### ***An integrated public health response***

71. Strong action is required as a matter of urgency to alleviate the pandemic, with rapid and equitable global access to vaccines, as well as an extensive array of medical products and other technologies. This makes collaboration and cooperation among health technology developers, governments and other stakeholders key to addressing the pandemic. Critical to success is an appropriately designed intellectual property rights regime that ensures equitable access to health technologies, especially COVID-19 related treatments, vaccines, and diagnostics, while also incentivizing research, innovation and collaboration. More broadly, the diffusion of technology is essential for long-term economic growth of many developing

countries because it provides access to more advanced technological inputs, thereby increasing efficiency.

72. The public health response should speed universal vaccinations and equitable distribution that ensures the most vulnerable countries are not left behind. The protection enabled by universal vaccination, a global public good, demands not only financial support for procurement of vaccines but new multilateral arrangements to mobilize global production and ensure equitable access to critical global goods (vaccines, treatment, diagnostics), removing obstacles created by intellectual property rights, adopting measures to promote the sharing of technology, and mobilizing and expanding production capacities.
73. The fair and equitable access and benefit sharing derived from genetic resources, including pathogens, remains important, as do continued efforts to ensure rapid sharing of microbial samples to facilitate vaccine and therapeutic development. Vaccine and therapeutic development rely on access to the diversity of organisms, molecules, and genes found in nature, and are often derived from indigenous knowledge and traditional medicine.
74. The international intellectual property (IP) system, framed by the TRIPS Agreement, is a significant factor in facilitating equitable access to existing technologies and in supporting the creation, manufacturing and dissemination of new COVID-19 technologies. An integrated health, trade and IP approach to capacity building activities can frame the pandemic response in terms of human rights considerations, strengthened national health systems, and the adaptation and implementation of regulatory mechanisms and competition policy.

#### ***Social protection floors and human rights***

75. A sustainable recovery also demands the strengthening of labor rights and social protection for all, with special consideration of informal sector workers, unpaid workers in the care economy, workers in the gig economy, the lowest paid and most vulnerable in global value chains and those unable to work. This would include the promotion of a global fund to ensure universal social protection floors. Multinational corporations have a responsibility towards workers at all levels of their global production chains and must respect labor rights.
76. Human rights principles and standards must underpin the sustainable and resilient response and recovery from the pandemic for all, especially vulnerable populations and those at risk of being left behind, including women and girls, rural and indigenous communities, and persons with disabilities. Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, particularly the economic empowerment of women, is a key accelerator for inclusive and sustainable development. Countries must make a concerted effort to mainstream a gender perspective in COVID-19 response and recovery.
77. Globalized macroeconomic and political factors, including the privatization of public goods, deregulated labor markets, the shrinking of the welfare State, and austerity measures forming part of structural adjustment policies and as an aid conditionality, often exacerbate unemployment and poverty and produce economic injustices that have a disproportionate impact on women. Social and economic recovery frameworks must integrate women's rights and support their empowerment, through a holistic approach that ensures women's ability to access productive resources, assets and digital communication tools, including their rights to land, housing, property, markets, economic value chains, inheritance, and social protection.
78. Regional economic commissions can promote competition and consumer protection policies in developing countries and in countries with economies in transition, to contribute to their economic growth and development.

### *Inclusive and sustainable economic recovery measures*

79. A sustainable and resilient recovery from the pandemic requires economic systems to become more inclusive. Governments need to ensure that their policies to address the impacts of the crisis on economic growth and employment have a long-term impact on realizing the Goals. The financial stimulus packages provided during the pandemic have been much higher in the developed world compared to developing countries. The stimulus packages will affect the competitiveness of enterprises in developing countries and hence their economic growth. The high prevalence of MSMEs as the economic backbone in developing countries points to the need to promote competition policies that can foster sustainable economic growth and promote innovation without negatively impacting market access or competitiveness for MSMEs, particularly in the digital sector.
80. While it may be some months until stimulus plans to aid the economy to recover and decrease unemployment are fully activated, it is necessary to start now to think through the role of the health sector and health equity in all policies in these plans. Jobs can be provided by strengthening the health workforce, building more robust and resilient health systems to reinforce outbreak preparedness and scaling up action in disadvantaged communities.
81. The implementation of many Goals can also be bolstered by sustainable public procurement. By leveraging the purchasing power of public administration to guide products and services towards sustainability, governments can lead by example and stimulate the markets for sustainable products. Public procurement represents, on average, 13 to 20 per cent of GDP. It is important to create the legal conditions for sustainable public procurement, and learn lessons from countries that are forerunners.
82. Economically, closer coordination and cooperation between countries, whether on a regional or international basis, will enhance the impact of trade-facilitating measures, free movement of skilled workforces, government procurement strategies, convergent regulatory standards and competition policy.

### *Nature-based solutions*

83. Recovery should prioritize increased investment in nature-based solutions that can create jobs and support livelihoods while conserving biodiversity and tackling climate change, and potentially deliver many co-benefits simultaneously, including climate change adaptation and mitigation, enhanced biodiversity, and improved hydrological regulation. Nature-based solutions, where appropriate in connection with traditional infrastructure, are often cost-effective and can also improve resilience against pandemics, for example thorough protection of vital wetland ecosystems that prevents the spread of zoonotic diseases.
84. Nature-based solutions are also vital for ensuring food and water security, protecting against natural disasters, and providing other goods and services key to human well-being and economic development. In turn widespread adoption of agricultural practices that conserve healthy ecosystems while supporting income generation and diversification helps to create resilient rural economies.
85. Significant increases in financial assistance and investments in climate adaptation and resilience-building, including local initiatives, is necessary to support the delivery of commitments by countries under the Paris Agreement that are commensurate with the Agreement's ambition of limiting global warming to below 2, and preferably 1.5 degrees Celsius, compared to pre-industrial levels.



86. Relying only on the funds available from multilateral sources will not be enough to meet the challenges of climate adaptation, resilience building, and mitigation. Of paramount importance is the adoption of improved measures to de-risk institutional investment for green and climate-resilient infrastructure in a way that safeguards the mobilization of private equity funds that multiply the impact of the public funds invested. Such measures should also ensure that local communities, as well as both public and private sectors, share the benefits of such investments.

#### ***Digital connectivity for reducing inequalities***

87. Digital connectivity has emerged as an ally in the fight against COVID-19. The broadband ecosystem has proven its scalability and resilience to keep health, education, economic and financial systems operating. But the pandemic has also revealed how the lack of connectivity—especially among marginalized communities—is widening the gap between rich and poor, and further growing the digital divide.
88. To this end, efforts are currently underway to support resilient connectivity, affordable access, and safe use of online services for informed and educated societies. Governments, industry, the international community, and civil society are urged to take additional immediate actions to shore-up digital networks, strengthen capacity at critical connectivity points like hospitals and transport hubs, and boost digital access and inclusion.
89. Directing STI toward expanding digital infrastructure and technologies is both essential for building more resilient societies, making economies more adaptable to shocks, giving people a voice and increasing their agency, and reducing impacts on the environment. Enhanced development cooperation, investment and knowledge sharing are needed, particularly for LDCs, to strengthen technological learning and innovation capacities, which helps to address complex hazards.
90. Support should be provided for a sustainable and inclusive transformation of LDCs' economies, including through building productive capacities in the health and education sectors, investments in digital infrastructure, development of STI capabilities, designing and implementing green industrial policies, and in pursuit of diversifying economic and export structures.

#### ***Finance and debt relief for the furthest behind***

91. In addition to building financial capacities, effective debt relief is needed for developing countries, particularly LDCs and those in debt distress, beyond debt servicing suspension. This would require measures such as compulsory participation in debt relief by all relevant bilateral and private creditors, as well as financial support from multilateral institutions to facilitate debt restructuring. Debt relief and restructuring should not come at the expense of credit ratings.
92. Support is also needed for initiatives to create dedicated funds to address the economic consequences of COVID-19. More broadly, increased support is required from multilateral

financial institutions on highly concessional terms to support sustainable development, enhancing the availability of resources and capitalizing all multilateral financial institutions. Efforts are needed to double the resources for emergency support from the IMF, issue new Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) and ensure that unused SDRs are channeled for the benefit of developing countries, and LDCs in particular. It has never been more important to increase levels of ODA and ensure the fulfillment of the commitments by developed countries of providing the equivalent of 0.7 per cent of their GNI in ODA. The expansion and promotion of South-South cooperation is also important.

93. Financial support to LDCs to address the pandemic should be provided mainly in the form of grants. For highly indebted LDCs, resources should also be provided for multilateral debt relief. LDCs should be accorded access to vaccines at zero or minimal cost, and given access to new global insurance mechanisms addressing the current and future pandemics and other global threats, particularly non-linear climate risks, at zero or minimal cost. ODA remains a critical source of finance for LDCs, requiring urgent steps by developed countries to provide 0.2 per cent of their GNI as ODA to LDCs. Access to climate change financing needs to be scaled-up and provided beyond possible graduations from the LDC category. The pandemic also underscores the urgency of extending the transition period under TRIPS Article 66.1 for LDCs that are members of the WTO.
94. Transparent, accountable and participatory management of public finances is a key element of effective governance, even more so during the COVID-19 pandemic, when governments around the world face decreasing revenues and increasing expenditures.

#### **VI. Selected recommendations for sustainable and resilient recovery in the decade of action and delivery**

95. The functional commissions and expert bodies of the Council, and other intergovernmental bodies and forums, have recommended a wide range of specific targeted actions addressing a multitude of issues. For the purposes of this synthesis report, a curated summary of overarching recommendations is set out below.
96. The following actions are considered to be the most relevant and impactful for a sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic that promotes the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, and for building an inclusive and effective path for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda in the context of the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development:
  97. Take stock of the lessons learned from the shortcomings of the multilateral and regional responses to COVID-19 and, in line with the calls for an inclusive and networked multilateralism, put in motion an open and transparent process to identify and implement the changes that will ensure that the system supports equitable, sustainable and resilient development through structural transformation;
  98. Ensure that all countries have equal access to the benefits of life-saving treatments, not only for the pandemic but also for future health emergencies and infectious disease outbreaks;
  99. Focus global and country-level recovery efforts on restoring macroeconomic stability, to ensure that Governments have the necessary resources to guarantee sustainability during recovery;
  100. Implement more robust targeted social protection programmes to improve access to healthy and nutritious foods;

101. Ensure better protections for vulnerable and marginalized food system workers and farmers who are disproportionately affected by the crisis;
102. Provide better protections for countries that depend on food imports;
103. Strengthen and coordinate policy responses to the COVID-19 pandemic impact on food systems and food security and nutrition, including at the international level;
104. Support more diverse and resilient distribution systems, including shorter supply chains and territorial markets;
105. Support more resilient food production systems based on agroecology and other sustainable forms of food production;
106. Reallocate of a portion of discretionary stimulus spending towards nature-enhancing recovery measures, and support initiatives undertaken by indigenous communities on their lands;
107. Ensure that the economic cost of pandemics is factored into consumption, production, and government policies and budgets;
108. Enable changes to reduce the types of consumption, globalized agricultural expansion and trade that have led to pandemics, including through taxes, levies, and other regulatory constraints;
109. Strengthen the link between production structure and human development, as a country's production structure is the strongest determinant of its level of income, the quality of employment, the quality of the environment, and its prospects for future growth and development;
110. Steer recovery packages and investments towards sustainable patterns of consumption and production, including but not limited to circular economy, and reduce the vulnerability of global supply chain to disruptions in times of crisis to help deepen economic and social resilience;
111. Reduce zoonotic disease risks in the international wildlife trade and enhance law enforcement in all aspects of the illegal wildlife trade, and improve community education in disease hotspots about the health risks of wildlife trade;
112. Recognize the full range of linkages between biodiversity and all aspects of human health, and integrate biodiversity, genetic resources conservation and breeding to address the common drivers of biodiversity loss, disease risk and ill health;
113. Promote the "One Health" approach to realize healthy ecosystems, people and livelihoods;
114. Support the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework as the global policy framework for achieving accelerated action and transformative pathways for biodiversity in the coming decade;
115. Value indigenous peoples and local communities' engagement and knowledge in pandemic prevention programs, achieving greater food security, and reducing consumption of wildlife;

116. Improve understanding of the relationship between ecosystem degradation and restoration, landscape structure and the risk of disease emergence;
117. Strengthen accountability and transparency to ensure gender-sensitive strategies for the achievement of the Goals;
118. Mobilize public resources and strengthen public services in areas that support the achievement of gender equality and the promotion of the human rights of women and girls, with particular attention to inclusive schooling to meet the educational needs of girls with disabilities and girls belonging to ethnic, linguistic or religious minorities;
119. Ensure social protection and socio-economic support to women, including post-COVID-19 recovery programmes with stimulus packages, to ensure women's access to formal employment in both the private and public sectors as well as to entrepreneurial opportunities;
120. Ensure women's access to healthcare, in particular sexual and reproductive health services, including for the most disadvantaged groups of women and girls;
121. Ensure the development, adoption and effective implementation of national action plans to achieve gender parity by 2030;
122. Strengthen the implementation of gender-sensitive policies and women's participation in decision-making processes, in cooperation with civil society and national human rights institutions to forge synergies for progress and transformative change;
123. Commit to policies and actions that support and foster the participation of women in the economy, including public procurement commitments, capacity-building, providing social protection, access to finance, access to business networks and ownership rights;
124. Ensure the proper disposal and segregation of medical waste to avoid contamination or pollution of ecosystems, while ensuring such practices do not create a risk for disease transmission or jeopardize health workers' and patients' safety;
125. Support policies and actions that place strengthening the competitiveness and resilience of MSMEs, including women-owned enterprises and young entrepreneurs, at the center of COVID-19 recovery and sustainable development plans;
126. Increase access to finance targeted at MSMEs, supporting their integration into inclusive and sustainable value chains and engage in green production and trade;
127. Incorporate sustainability and decarbonization objectives into economic response packages;
128. Combine, wherever feasible, debt relief for highly indebted countries with investments in nature and climate through debt-for-nature and debt-for-climate swaps;
129. Facilitate digital transformation through access to technologies and digital skills to accelerate progress toward sustainable development;
130. Achieve global connectivity through sufficient ICT infrastructures and provide Internet access as a public good;

131. Increase efforts towards learning, training, knowledge management and capacity development to achieve sustainable development;
132. Build stronger national research capabilities in developing countries;
133. Increase women's participation in STEM and young females in STEM courses;
134. Increase the effectiveness of STI policy making, scale-up the application of STI solutions, and improve foresight and technological assessment to advance understanding of risks and benefits and policy options to steer innovation in ways that leave no one behind;
135. Undertake strategic foresight and technological assessment initiatives to better the socio-economic and environmental implications of new and innovative technologies;
136. Integrate international and national genebanks into seed system restoration in emergency situations;
137. Prioritize availability, supply and distributions of quality seeds of locally adapted plant varieties, and support local seed production interventions for vulnerable small-scale farmers;
138. Accelerate the integration of digital solutions for farmers and field workers (e.g. agricultural research organizations, extension workers, genebank curators);
139. Reorganize national budgets so they are based on programme performance budgeting systems, to enable the Goals to become embedded in national budgets and facilitate monitoring of performance and progress towards their achievement;
140. Close the digital divide, develop quality open educational resources, and build digital commons as a complement to face-to-face learning, with a view to enabling inclusive and equitable technology-supported learning;
141. Increase digital cooperation across borders and sectors, and accelerate the development of digital societies;
142. Include sound competition and consumer protection policies in the policy mix adopted for an inclusive and sustainable economic recovery, to make markets work better for consumers and businesses;
143. Mainstream crime prevention and criminal justice into recovery plans;
144. Advance the rule of law at the national and international levels, including through crime prevention and criminal justice mechanisms, for sustained and inclusive economic growth and sustainable development;
145. Strengthen international cooperation in criminal matters to effectively dismantle criminal networks and counter transnational organized crime;
146. Adopt a whole-of-government, whole-of-society, and gender-responsive approach to foster policies, practices and partnerships that promote safe, orderly, and regular migration;
147. Ensure migrant-inclusive approaches in the COVID-19 response and recovery efforts and facilitate migrants' equitable access to information and basic services, including health services and vaccinations;

148. Counter racism, xenophobia and discrimination by promoting a more balanced, evidence-based narrative focused on how economies and societies benefit from migration;
149. Harness the contributions from diasporas and remittances to their countries of origin;
150. Increase the level of ambition in domestic, public and private resource mobilization, strengthen the enabling environment for sustainable investments and deliver on commitments to effective and inclusive international development cooperation;
151. Include sound competition and consumer protection policies in the policy mix adopted for an inclusive and sustainable economic recovery, to make markets work better for consumers and businesses;
152. Strengthen efforts towards development of a global, coherent, and sound set of standards on sustainability reporting that would provide high quality and comparable data and ensure consistency and connectivity of financial and sustainability reporting; and
153. Strengthen the capacity of national statistical systems, especially for countries in vulnerable situations, to meet the data demands for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and for monitoring and reporting on the Goals and targets.
154. Finally, the United Nations, the WTO, and other multilateral, bilateral and non-state development actors, must continue to tackle global challenges of climate change, migration, public health crises, and international trade. Increased cooperation between the World Bank Group, the IMF and the United Nations is encouraging. Multilateralism can provide solutions that individual states or actors cannot provide alone. Member States and other stakeholders are called upon to renew their commitment to a multilateralism that enables collaboration in the face of global challenges, rejects zealous nationalism, and addresses the needs of the most vulnerable.