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Discussion papers on the theme of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, submitted by major groups and other stakeholders

Note by the Secretariat**

Summary

The present document is a compilation of the executive summaries of the position papers on the theme of the high-level political forum **"Building back better from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development".** submitted by the various major groups and other relevant stakeholders that have autonomously established and maintained effective coordination mechanisms for participation in the high-level political forum on sustainable development, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 67/290. The full reports are posted on the website of the forum: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/2022.

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* E/HLPF/2022/1.

** The present document is a compilation of the executive summaries of the thematic papers submitted to the high-level political forum by the major groups and other stakeholders and does not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations.

Please recycle

I. Women

1. By the end of this Decade of Action for the Sustainable Development Goals, the Women's Major Group hopes to look reflect back on this moment as the time when we rebuilt from COVID-19 by abandoning austerity, competition and extractive, exploitative, and patriarchal systems and replaced them with feminist decolonial ethics of care and abundance.

2. By 2030, we have a vision in which we all celebrate, protect, and honor the full diversity of human life and the planet with a special focus on fulfilling the human rights of women, girls, and gender-diverse people.

3. We see a world that protects, defends, and funds environmental and women human rights defenders—a landscape of flourishing feminist movements. We envision robust space for civil society to engage, decide, participate, and demand justice and accountability in open, democratic processes.

4. We have a vision of a world that recognizes and guarantees our bodily autonomy, freedom from violence, and sexual and reproductive health as human rights—a world in which our bodies are our own.

5. We see a world in which girls excel in quality, inclusive, and affordable education and training systems, where they receive comprehensive sexuality, anti-colonial, climate justice and human rights education, and in which educational opportunities are lifelong.

6. We have a vision of a new global economic paradigm that centers human rights, care, and redistribution over unbridled growth. Where we have fully-funded, universal, gender-transformative social protection systems; living wages and decent work for all; quality care, health, education, water, sanitation, and energy as public services; and where women workers—no matter in the formal or informal economy—have their rights to work and at work respected.

7. We see a world in which we have rejected false solutions to the climate crisis: a world of climate justice with funding for grassroots gender-just climate solutions and loss and damage, and climate reparations for the most affected communities. We see women, girls, gender-diverse people, and Indigenous Peoples' with sovereignty over their land, water, bodies, and food systems.

8. We have a vision of a world where all countries have the fiscal space to guarantee public services rather than servicing excessive debt. We see a world that has eliminated illicit financial flows, enacted progressive tax systems and corporate regulation, and created trade agreements centered on the fulfillment of human rights rather than the exploitation and expropriation of resources and the prioritization of profit for the few.

9. We see a world at peace—where the resources that used to sustain militarism have been diverted to support the fulfillment and enjoyment of human rights.

10. We envision a multilateralism centered on global solidarity and cooperation that welcomes the people, especially the most marginalized, into halls of power and decision-making.

11. We continue to participate in this space because we see this just world so clearly and trust our public partnerships and cross-movement building to make this vision a reality.

"Another world is not only possible, she is on her way." — *Arundhati Roy*

II. Non-governmental organizations

12. In 2022, we exist in a world of duality. There are countries where many are vaccinated and COVID-19 no longer disrupts daily life; others lack access to vaccines, and the pandemic remains a dominant concern. Some enjoy peace and prosperity; others experience ongoing violence and instability. The High-Level Political Forum enables us to address inequities and injustices, fostering cooperation inspired by what benefits us all. The NGO Major Group is calling for global commitment to meaningful action, supported by engagement with Civil Society, evidence-based reporting, and steadfast political will.

13. Sadly, we note the groups identified in our 2021 Position Paper – Women, Youth, Older Persons, Indigenous Peoples, and those living with disabilities – remain the most at risk of being left behind. Significant concerns include the exploitation of women and girls, animals and the environment, regressive action on human rights, conflicts, and threats to biodiversity.

14. COVID-19 necessitated creation of online spaces for civil society, which should be maintained and expanded, as they increased accessibility and participation in decision-making processes. However, virtual spaces are not a replacement for meaningful in-person participation and dialogue. Digital divides between rich and poor countries and rural or remote communities became more apparent during the pandemic.

15. We urge States to adopt broad inputs to Voluntary National Reviews as a source of good practice and opportunity for collaboration. Civil society, universities, and local governments are well positioned to facilitate scalable interventions with citizen participation and feedback.

16. We invite States to address the following circumstances that negatively impact the progress of realization of Agenda 2030:

   ● Vaccine inequity:

      o We need a global vaccine strategy that includes a system of intellectual-property management, manufacturing, and distribution; ensuring vaccines are equitably and globally available.

   ● Conflict and geo-political instability:

      o Call for the cessation of hostilities; ensure political will and global commitment to securing high quality, formal and informal education for all ages.

   ● Gender discrimination and violence

      o Call for the adoption and implementation of policies and, where appropriate, special measures aimed at eliminating gender-based discrimination and violence, including recognition of sexual and reproductive health and rights for women in all their diversity.

   ● Accelerating climate impacts:

- o   Building resilience and adaptation must be a high priority, with meaningful policy and financial commitment to the objectives of the Paris Agreement; particularly in coastal communities, small island developing States and remote communities, including through nature-based solutions that address multiple goals.

- ● Unequal access to green technologies

  - o   Ensure global equity of access to technologies that impact health, education, employment, loss of biodiversity, and sustainable development, recognising that protectionist policies inevitably limit the access of those most in need. Bridge the global North/South divide, and address the historic, colonialist, and systemic separation of donor/recipient nation.

17. Sustainable development must employ inclusive, systematic processes to overcome systemic inequalities, persistent poverty, and support the newly-recognised right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment. We call on Member States to use 2022 to achieve genuine, meaningful progress, and ensure no one is left behind.

III.   Local authorities

18. In the midst of current interconnected crises, the importance of local and regional governments as providers and protectors of their communities has never been clearer. Essential services like health and education should be strengthened, through local and regional sustainable policymaking, to guarantee a world for all.

19. The role of local and regional governments in education as hubs of learning and innovation is critical to accessible, safe and supporting environments which foster equality and opportunity.

20. Fostering gender equality and the participation of local feminist women leaders in decision-making is core to the democratic process and to enabling governance with empathy, responding to communities' diverse needs and aspirations. Involving vulnerable groups in governance, in particular older persons, migrants and persons with disabilities, will contribute to territories that work for all.

21. Achieving the SDGs depends on localization processes that consider big and intermediary cities, towns, and regions and territories, which are essential to alternative models of production and consumption and achieving a green, resilient and inclusive world.

22. Climate action must be reinforced by changes in relationship with our ecosystems: through a change in economic models based on circular economy principles and a shift towards caring systems, through culture as our motor for social cohesion and sustainable development.

23. City and region diplomacy is the transformative diplomacy that local and regional governments bring to the table in times of crisis. Decentralized cooperation is integral to enhance our ability to achieve the SDGs and transform our systems.

24. The issues that the New Urban Agenda addresses are as necessary as they were in 2016 and should be at the heart of our efforts. Housing, healthcare, and public services are the work of local and regional governments, and critical to achieving the New Urban Agenda as an accelerator of other universal development agendas.

25. Local and regional governments reiterate their commitment to fostering the development of Voluntary Local Reviews (VLR) and Voluntary Subnational Reviews (VSR) with full support

of local and regional governments and their associations, promoting ownership, increasing local and regional government participation in national coordination mechanisms, and the achievement of the SDGs.

26. Ahead of the review of SDG14 and the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development 2021-2030, we highlight the crucial role of multi-level governance and multi-stakeholder collaboration to strengthen science-policy interface, and the need to strengthen capacities of local and regional governments in building sustainable management models.

27. To secure adequate financing and revenue streams for better planning and investment to achieve the SDGs, fiscal architecture needs to be rethought to empower local and regional governments.

28. We call for a renewed, more inclusive, multilateral system based on ownership, co-creation, strategic partnerships in priority sectors, and peace in which local and regional governments are fully engaged. We call for a strong international community and updated UN system that reflects current contexts, engaging local and regional governments and their associations in all stages of decision-making processes to achieve the global agendas and increase transparency and accountability.

IV. Workers and trade unions

TRADE UNIONS CALL FOR A NEW SOCIAL CONTRACT

29. The human cost of the Covid-19 pandemic is staggering. The world has lost the equivalent of 255 million full-time jobs in 2020; an additional 130 million jobs were lost or at risk in 2021, and global unemployment is projected to stand at 207 million in 2022.[1] Violations of labour rights are increasing worldwide[2] while more than half of the world still lacks any social protection coverage, and some two billion informal workers struggle daily to survive.

30. In this context, trade unions are calling for a **New Social Contract** globally, rooted in a gender-transformative agenda, based on:

- **Jobs:** investment in decent and climate-friendly jobs with just transition.
- **Rights:** the promise of the ILO Centenary Declaration of rights and protections for all workers, irrespective of employment arrangements and including occupational health and safety.
- **Wages:** minimum living wages and equal pay, established through statutory processes or collective bargaining.
- **Social protection** for all, with a Global Social Protection Fund for the poorest countries.
- **Equality** of income, gender, and race, including a world of work free from gender-based violence and harassment.
- **Inclusion:** a rights-based development model realised through the SDGs and multilateral reform.

Key asks on the SDGs under review at the HLPF 2022 are the following:

SDG 4:

31. SDG 4: Recognise the universal entitlement to **lifelong learning** in order to leave no one behind in digital and climate transitions.
32. Invest in resilient **quality public education** and lifelong learning systems, including quality climate change education, and ensure **teachers** are trained, qualified and supported.

SDG 5:

33. Invest in the **care economy** (which has a great potential for climate-friendly job creation and helps women regain their place in the labour force).
34. End the **gender pay gap**.
35. End discrimination, **gender-based violence** and harassment in the world of work.

SDG 14 and 15:

36. Invest in **decent and climate-friendly jobs** that are able to decouple economic growth from environmental degradation and that are based on gender-responsive just transition measures.
SDG 17:

37. Build a renewed multilateralism based on **social dialogue** to redress the uneven distribution of power and wealth at international level.

CENTRALITY OF SDG 8 IN BUILDING FORWARD BETTER

38. SDG 8 on decent work and economic growth is key for a human-centred recovery. Indeed, with its targets on jobs, workers' rights, decent work, social protection, inclusive growth and environmental preservation, SDG 8 provides strong leverage for other goals, including goals under review in HLPF 2022. For example, good performance in relation to SDG 8 is positively correlated with a higher female share of employment in managerial positions (SDG 5.5.2) and with higher secondary-education enrolment (SDG 4.1.1)[3] :

SDG 8 and Gender Parity	*SDG 8 and Education*
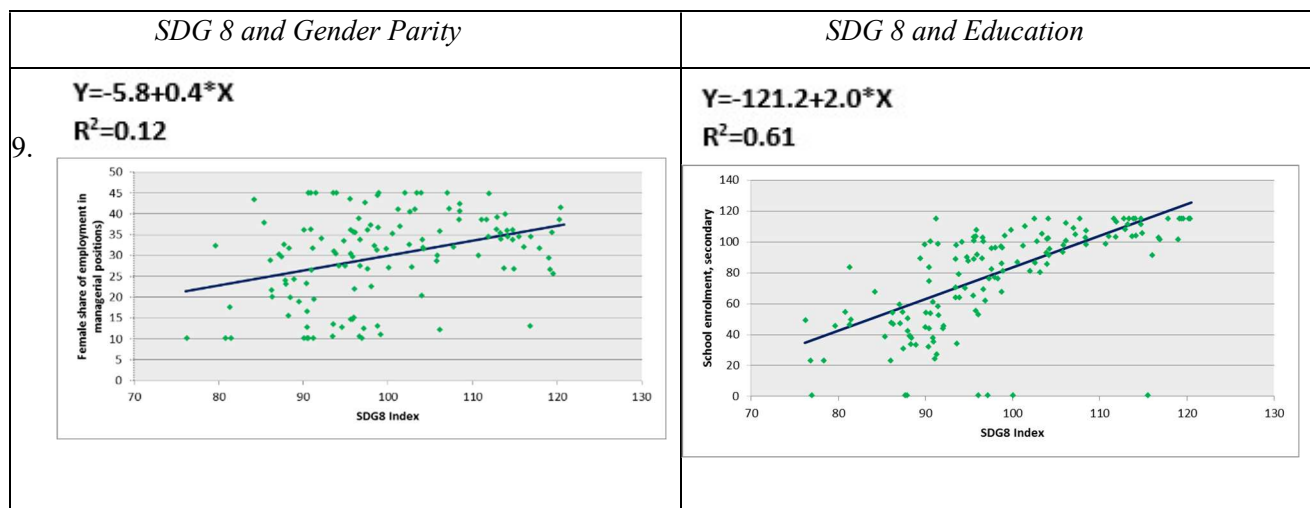
39. That is why trade unions call for **SDG-8-driven recovery and resilience** and why they support UN- related processes, such as the UN **Global Accelerator** for Jobs and Social Protection. The SDGs chart a needed pathway, which can only be realised with full employment and decent work.

V. Education and Academia Stakeholder Group

Quality education and lifelong learning for all – a sustainable respond to crises

40. Armed conflicts, climate change and the ongoing pandemic has caused the huge interruption of educational process around the globe, with insurmountable scale of loss to children's schooling, leaving also millions of various groups of learners outside of the processes of formal and non-

formal education. Individual, social and economic consequences are dramatic, and some of them are yet to be seen. New report published by the World Bank, UNESCO, and UNICEF states that this generation of students now risks losing $17 trillion in lifetime earnings in present value, or about 14 percent of today's global GDP, as a result of COVID-19 pandemic-related school closures.

41. Pandemic has also exposed deep-rooted vulnerabilities and structural problems that exacerbated the consequences of pandemic, especially affecting vulnerable groups depriving them in their right to education. Women and girls belong to the most affected group, whose losses in education had detrimental effects on other areas of life and work; but also older people, people living in poverty, etc. Increasing privatization and the weakening of education financing are aspects that continue to aggravate the full realization of the right to education of these communities, added to the onslaught of public debt and the absence, in many countries, of tax justice.

42. Schools reopening is therefore not enough for sustainable recovery and for the development of individual and social resilience when facing future crises. A new social contract for transformative education is needed that can repair injustices while transforming the future (as defined in the UNESCO report *Reimagining our futures together: A new social contract for education*). It must be grounded in the understanding of education as a human right, as public and common good, whereby governments remain the main duty-bearer for the provision of education, either by securing education for the most marginalised, or by coordinating and regulating participation of other actors in education. Sustainable recovery requires focus both on schools and other educational institutions, as well as on lifelong learning opportunities at every age. It is necessary to create inclusive policies, tackle urgent problems and develop long-term strategies and increase investments in education and lifelong learning.

43. Further on, sustainable recovery requires not only adaptive education and learning, helping people to keep up with the changes in the environment, but transformative one, including critical thinking and developing values like autonomy, emancipation, freedom, democracy, and the agency of learners. Furthermore, although vocational education remains very important, illiteracy is still one of the biggest problems humankinds is facing, so curricula for the changing world have to be based on literacy, and include global active citizenship, peace education, education for sustainable development, etc.

44. We strongly argue for actions built upon inclusive and equitable quality learning opportunities and outcomes, across the lifespan. It includes adult learning in all its many and creative manifestations, in work and life, formal, non-formal and informal. Therefore SDG 4 should be implemented in its all-embracing character, having in mind that adult education is the longest phase in lifelong learning process, but also because of the demographic changes, as well as the urgency around climate crises, that requires immediate educational actions.

45. During pandemic, technology helped to bridge the learning gap and reduce new "learning poverty", introducing significant changes in the ways teaching and learning is organised, requiring new, digital skills. While technology can be a driver of progress in education, it can also create new barriers to access, make social or collective learning more challenging, widen existing social divides and create new ones. Therefore, inscribing access to digital as a new "human right" bears the risk of neglecting numerous groups of learners, as well as areas of learning that require other methodologies. The problems of our world are not technological, but pedagogical, therefore the challenges that education sector has to meet cannot be solve by digital tools, learning e-platforms and artificial intelligence. Right to education must not be replaced by the right to connectivity.

VI. Business and Industry Group

46. The Business and Industry Major Group (B&I MG) to the UN in New York condemn in the strongest possible terms the illegal invasion of Ukraine. This war is causing catastrophic loss of life and trauma and has given rise to the displacement of millions of people. In addition to the tragic consequences for Ukrainians, the conflict and sanctions have disrupted global commerce, caused turbulence in energy access and security, and continue to impact commodities, supply chains and jobs. The B&I MG stands with the people of Ukraine and appeals for peace as soon as possible. We recall how SDG16 on peace and security fundamentally underpins all sustainable development progress.

47. B&I MG recognizes and celebrates the strong united response by the UN community, from UNGA resolutions to humanitarian actions across the organization, and is inspired by how businesses of all sectors and sizes are stepping forward to assist affected people who have fled the war and to support those who remain.

48. The theme for the HLPF 2022 is "Building back better from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development." Yet, alongside the continued pandemic crisis, the conflict and its fallout now pose further complications in prioritizing SDG action when progress towards 2030 and 2050 objectives was already not on track.

49. These recent and ongoing tragic developments give particular urgency to this year's HLPF. Yet as daunting as these multiple crises appear today, the B&I Major Group remain resolved to advance the SDGs, and calls on the international community to renew its resolve to advance on SDGs with:

    i. Special attention to those areas where setbacks in efforts to leave no-one behind have been encountered and aggravated by the war in Ukraine and its impacts on social, environmental and economic levels;
    ii. A committed dedication to inclusive multilateralism that engages business and every societal partner working side by side with governments, and with one another.

50. B&I Major Group welcomes the UN Secretary General's recent report, "Our Common Agenda," both as an accelerator of SDG action by governments and all societal partners, as well as for its vision of innovation in activities and inclusiveness of business and other stakeholders. We see Our Common Agenda as a valuable addition to the global commitment to the practical inclusive multilateralism that is so essential to delivering on the SDGs.

51. SDG 4 - Education: The Business community needs talent, and a skilled workforce is a prerequisite in creating more decent jobs. Therefore, business remains committed to engaging and building partnerships with the UN and ILO on skills, upskilling and reskilling programs. Public-private partnerships are key in this area as educational systems and programs need input from all partners: employers, educational institutions, government, and workers. Many companies and employer federations are engaged and have set numerous partnerships so that young and older workers are trained for the jobs of the future.

52. SDG 5 - Gender Equality: For businesses, ensuring gender equality and a diverse workforce leads to positive effects across an organization including to the bottom line. To do this successfully, a concerted effort from business owners and leaders needs to be made to break down historic and cultural barriers including unconscious biases. Businesses are embracing new policies and procedures that ensure a diverse and inclusive workforce. Businesses remain engaged in the various UN entities in engaging in projects and programs that promote gender equality and inclusive diverse workforces.

53. SDGs 14 & 15 – Biodiversity on Land and Water: The private sector has a critical role in advancing the biodiversity agenda in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Companies are already taking action to integrate biodiversity considerations into their strategies, operations, innovations, and investments, but much more needs to be done to leverage and amplify the energy, capabilities and expertise of the business community and scale up its actions as a driver for positive change. The UN Convention on Biological Diversity and the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) should encourage businesses to build upon their experience and expertise and incentivize even more businesses to embed biodiversity values into their decision-making processes and products.

54. SDG 17 - Partnerships: As stated at this year's ECOSOC Partnership Forum, business encourages the strengthening and upscaling of the enabling frameworks and institutional architecture needed to advance multistakeholder partnerships involving business. It will be critical to co-create effective partnerships and strive for measurable positive outcomes via those partnerships to advance a sustainable recovery that leaves no-one behind. The B&I Major Group welcomes the OCA's findings that recovering sustainably requires a stronger than ever commitment to multi-stakeholder engagement and partnership in inclusive intergovernmental deliberations.

55. The science-policy-business and society interface is vital to cooperation on R&D, tracking of progress and impact, and the development and deployment of innovation. In particular, the private sector must be a meaningful partner in building back better – contributing not just funding, but innovation, expertise, technology, fresh ideas, and diverse perspectives of business and employers, particularly SMEs, who are so crucial to economic growth at the local level. The B&I Major Group look forward to this year's UN STI Forum, where we will hold two side events to highlight the essential role of private sector innovation in advancing the SDGs as well as opportunities proposed in the OCA.

56. We urge Member States and the UN Development System to substantively engage representative business groups and employer federations in the preparation of Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs). Doing so would ensure that programming more effectively reflects the reality on the ground and leverages the valuable perspectives and contributions of the private sector, including SMEs, to tackle the most pressing issues.

57. We recommend that the 2022 High Level Political Forum prioritize and support:

   - Cross-sectoral partnership and cooperation with business, including at national (through Resident Coordinators and working closely with national governments) and regional levels, not only in relation to investment and finance, but across the entire gamut of the SDGs.

   - As public health circumstances permit: a return to in-person meetings, look for ways to conduct meetings that truly enhance substantive engagement of business and other stakeholders, and that recognize the distinct role of business.

   - New and concrete engagement mechanisms, institutional infrastructure and opportunities for the UN system, governments, businesses, and other stakeholders to come together on achieving the SDGs.

58. We look forward to engaging with Member States, the UN system, and all other stakeholders at the 2022 HLPF at this critical time. While there are substantial challenges ahead and the uncertainty is real, we should all maintain a focus on advancing solutions through inclusive multilateralism – including at this year's climate and biodiversity COP's, the WTO MC12, the UN Education Summit, and next year at the re-scheduled LDC5 Conference.

59. Strengthening international cooperation and collective effort towards the SDGs, despite current stresses on the multilateral system, requires unwavering political will and institutional innovation, building on the recommendations of the OCA. We stand ready to do our part.

VII. Persons with disabilities

60. The Stakeholder Group of Persons with Disabilities (SGPwD) recommends the following to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals for persons with disabilities, recognizing the important interaction with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (the CRPD). The COVID-19 pandemic has disproportionately affected persons with disabilities. Governments and the United Nations system should act to ensure the rights and participation of persons with disabilities in COVID-19 response and recovery. Throughout the road to 2030, progress on accessibility and inclusion should continue to be advanced.

61. **Inclusive Education:** Persons with disabilities continue to be denied their right to education as a result of complex and interlinking barriers. The SGPwD recommends the creation of national policies and legal systems in some places, and the strengthening of these systems in others to ensure access to quality and inclusive education for all learners, with particular attention to learners with disabilities.[1] The principles of Universal Design for Learning should be upheld throughout education systems by adapting teaching methods and learning environments to the diversity of learners with disabilities through assistive technologies and devices that are accessible and inclusive to all learners.[2]

62. **Gender Equality:** The lack of inclusion and limited access to equal opportunities results in the marginalization of women and girls with disabilities. They are also left behind and excluded by inadequate services and support systems.[3] Governments should promote gender and disability awareness-raising and adequately train health workers and other service providers to provide non-discriminatory, gender-responsive services, respecting personal autonomy.[4]

63. **Life on Land:** Persons with disabilities are among the most impacted by climate change, natural disasters, and environmental degradation because of pre-existing marginalization, discrimination, and barriers to emergency information, relief services, transport, shelter, and more.[5] Governments and UN Systems should ensure the participation and inclusion of persons with disabilities in Disaster Risk Reduction[6] and Climate Change Adaptation as part of longer-term sustainable development.

64. **Partnerships**: Governments should support multi-stakeholder partnerships working with persons with disabilities following the human rights model to increase the participation and inclusion of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations.[7] International cooperation must align its objectives with the CRPD. Statisticians must start collecting disability data and inform policymakers, who, in collaboration with organizations of persons with disabilities and in line with the CRPD, must enact new evidence- based regulations and laws to ensure the inclusion and equal participation of persons with disabilities in society.

VIII. Volunteer groups

65.   Building Back Better from the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) through Volunteering while Advancing with Volunteers the Full Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

66.   As recognized in the 2020 Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, **"volunteerism can be a powerful and cross-cutting means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development."** More than one billion people annually take the time to volunteer, and the past year has seen the continued implementation of the Call to Action for Volunteering in the Decade for Action and, through UNGA Resolution, the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the United Nations Volunteers programme and the 20th anniversary of the International Year of Volunteers.

67.   Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic has emphasized how volunteers as agents of change provide practical action that builds hope and resilience, improves lives, and strengthens communities' ownership of their own development. During the past two years, volunteers have innovated to engage individuals online to meet community needs and to exercise leadership roles on the frontline in national responses and recovery, playing critical roles in addressing the consequences of COVID-19 and mitigating its socioeconomic impacts.

68.   Member States must fulfill their commitments, made under the plan of action on volunteering for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 2021 HLPF Ministerial Declaration, to the meaningful participation and involvement of volunteers in partnerships and to the encouragement in the QCPR to **"promote the conducive environment for volunteerism and volunteers to enhance the sustainability of development results."**

Recommendations

NATIONAL STRATEGIES

69.   Volunteers build bridges by brokering relationships between communities and state authorities and other development stakeholders. We ask Member States to:

- Integrate volunteering in policies and national development strategies and in their Voluntary National Reviews at HLPF to create a more enabling environment for volunteering
- Engage as partners and advocates for policies supporting an enabling environment for volunteering
- Explore national and global partnerships and collaborations to leverage efforts towards supporting and promoting volunteering
- Build coalitions and networks for learning and shared action on developing and enabling environment for volunteering

INCLUSIVE DIVERSITY

70.   Volunteering offers diverse paths to civic participation, but gaps in volunteer practices and aspirations across countries and regions remain. We ask Member States to:

- Build on experiences of promoting volunteering among youth and extend these opportunities to all demographic groups, especially through virtual and hybrid volunteer opportunities
- Recognise, work with, and support community-led volunteering systems and informal volunteers, involving them as equal partners in the volunteering space
- Address barriers to volunteering faced by marginalised groups, ensuring that all volunteers are valued and supported as partners in social change
- Address gender-related volunteering disparities and inequalities, as the disproportionate burden of care falls on women around the world

MEASURING SUCCESS

71. Volunteering enables people of all walks of life to shape and own the development in their communities. We ask Member States to:

- Invest in volunteer data, research, and measurement on the scope of volunteer work for the SDGs by accelerating investment in measuring the scale of volunteering
- Increase support for collection of evidence and statistics on volunteer work and the economic and social contributions of volunteers, in addition to the stories about the impact of volunteers and the transformational process on their own lives
- Support a wider range of evidence-based, quality volunteering practices; knowledge sharing; and scaling up ways to address barriers to volunteering for marginalised groups

IX.   Ageing

72. As the global population of older persons grows dramatically, so does ageism and age discrimination; the COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated this. While some older persons require specialized care, most are active and are vital contributors -to their families, communities and society. The socio-economic and political contributions of women and men over the age of 60 have not yet been, but must be, fully recognized and included in 'building back better" from the global pandemic while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

73. Essential for this is a fully age inclusive path for recovery and SDGs; universally applied age-inclusive legislation and policies; an international human rights legal instrument to protect the rights of older persons; and policies that support a just society for all people of all ages, everywhere.

Key messages

74. The following key messages can be made:

- Access to education and life-long learning with a life course perspective and that includes those beyond the age of 60 to ensure national economic growth, inclusion, healthy ageing and independence;

- Priority should be given to the intersection of gender and age discrimination, to ensure gender equality;

- Urgent action and legal remedies are needed to end and prevent gender-based violence/abuse for all people across the life course;

- We call for the comprehensive collection and use of age-related data and age disaggregated analysis on older age, lack of which impedes SDG achievement;

- There is a need for policy actions and public/private partnerships for an age-inclusive society, leaving no one behind.

Recommendations for Member States:

75. **Put in place** education policies and programmes that:
    - Guarantee affordable access and opportunities for lifelong learning for all beyond retirement age who depend on employment to survive, and for those who lack basic literacy;
    - Provide digital, financial and vocational training and re-training for older persons to assure both opportunities for socio-**economic development** and autonomy and **independence** in older age;
    - Expand affordable internet coverage for all to increase access to lifelong learning for older persons through partnerships with industry, and civil society;
    - Put in place non-digital education for older people to manage their health, upgrade work skills, and meaningful participation in civic and cultural life.

76. **Invest i**n gender equality by:
    - Recognizing the life-long impacts of structural gendered and age discrimination, which deprives older women of employment, a secure income, ownership of property, access to appropriate health services, the right to social protection and to independence.
    - Ensuring policies and awareness campaigns on elder abuse integrate a gender perspective.
    - Using and collecting life course data on abuse, neglect, financial exploitation and femicides and report on risk factors involving older women in all settings, including in care homes.
    - Acknowledging and acting on how COVID -19 has exposed disregard for the rights of older persons and particularly its impact on older women, who represent the majority of the world's old and oldest-old persons.

77. **Address** systemic issues to:
    - Ensure timely and reliable age data disaggregated beyond the age of 49, through age 100+ as the bedrock of SDG policy
    - Encourage multi-stakeholder and age-inclusive engagement everywhere to implement the SDGs.

X. Asia-Pacific regional civil society organization engagement

78. Asia Pacific CSOs believe that we are still amidst major global crises and unless structural reasons and systemic barriers are addressed, building back better from the pandemic will be a pipedream. Inequality, emissions and hunger has been rising consistently; civic space, democratic freedoms and participation of the CSOs has been declining since we signed the 2030 Agenda. Rate of poverty reduction has been declining. Efforts towards a sustainable recovery

have failed people, and more than 1/3rd of the humanity is yet to first shot of the vaccine. The pandemic has made stark the structural fault lines of our economy, governance and society. The circumstances demand an unprecedented response for recovery from the pandemic and expediting implementation of the SDGs through stronger, inclusive and cooperative multilateralism, and national efforts.

79. Asia Pacific report on the progress of the SDGs released by UNESCAP recently shows that SDGS will not be achieved in the region before 2072 at the current pace. No sub region or no country is in the position to achieve the SDGs by 2030 at the current pace. There is continued regression on the Sustainable Consumption and production (SDG 12) and climate action (SDG13); however, many more goals show a trend of regression or lack of progress. Agenda 2030 is a failed promise for girls in the rural areas, women, refugees, people with disability and race, caste and ethnic groups who are at the bottom of the pyramid.

80. Majority of the countries in the region have witnessed unsustainable mounting sovereign debts and increased illicit financial flow and shrinking ODA and access to trade thereby losing fiscal and policy space and are struggling for recovery. The onerous trade agreements with provisions like ISDS are further bleeding states with impunity. The crisis has induced increased corporatization and hegemonization of natural resources through slew of neoliberal policies, dilution of environmental and social safeguards; social protection has further weakened and women's unpaid care work has increased manifolds. Scarce jobs have further consolidated exploitation of labour. For many millions the advent of decade of action signals a false dawn.

81. The region is also at the receiving end of runaway climate crisis and disasters, rapid biodiversity loss and air pollution as well as plastic pollution. Asia accounts for one-third of the weather, climate, water related disasters, accounting for nearly half of the deaths and one-third of economic losses during 1970-2019. A large majority of the population in the region is dependent on climate sensitive sectors. Asia Pacific is the richest region in biodiversity, however, according to recent projections, 42% of biodiversity in the South East Asia may be lost by end of the century and at least half of them will be global extinction. East Asia and Pacific and South Asia are the most polluted sub regions accounting for 2 million deaths in each every year. SIDS and especially pacific countries also bear the brunt of plastic pollution even though they contribute negligibly through altered marine ecosystems and economy, reduced income from oceans and micro plastic pollution. We are dismayed that these regional priorities never figure in the global thematic discussions in the HLPF and there are no commensurate efforts in the Agenda 2030 to address these urgent concerns.

82. While the resources are scare for making a sustainable and resilient comeback from the crisis the region also witnessing increased militarization and ever looming threat of war. Many countries are in perpetually militarized state and engage in wanton violation of human rights, rights of indigenous peoples and marginalized populations as well as deploying patriarchy as a political tool. The aggression of Russia on Ukraine has effect of legitimizing possession of nuclear weapon as deterrence and the presence of eight nuclear powers in the region, with extremely low thresholds for use of nuclear weapons, does not bode well for peace. Countries in the region association with rival imperialist groups and increased geo-political tensions put dark shadows over achievement of lasting peace, eradication of poverty and hunger, and sustainability in the region. Establishment of peace remains a sine qua non for achieving the Agenda 2030 in the region.

83. The VNR process needs to go beyond the capitals and needs to be more inclusive with participation of broad range of stakeholders including the affected and marginalized populations. The HLPF needs to ensure that member states understand the importance of having national and regional processes. Despite the fact that majority of countries have already presented their VNRs, the "peer learning function" of the VNR is unfulfilled as countries only discuss their best efforts, glossing over critical challenges, failure and policy gaps. As we are moving towards third cycle of the VNRs "National" character of the VNR needs to take centrestage.

84. The Ministerial Declaration have largely failed the aspirations of the people by being traditional rather than calling for transformative changes, lack of ambition and outcomes-oriented actions. The member states have questioned settled concepts and agreed language on fundamental issues of human rights, child rights, gender empowerment, and have been seen divided when more ambitious efforts are called for.

XI. Africa Regional Mechanism for major groups and other stakeholders

92. As the world struggles to recover from a complex crisis exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, Africa has got the opportunity to better identify the challenges that hinder its real development in a more and more changing global situation. Climate, geo-strategic, economic, political, social and mental changes are of an avoidable reality that calls for a different continental environment, with a change of paradigm in many areas of life if not all, as a gage for a successful pan Africanism.

93. The way to build forward better, while maintaining a green, inclusive and resilient Africa with a view to achieving the 2030 Agenda and more importantly the African Agenda 2063, after reflexion, should go beyond mere discussions and embrace concrete and urgent actions, as follow-up to a serious review of all our achievements and failures.

94. Faring in the "Decade of Action and Delivery on Sustainable Development" (2021 to 2030) must, hence, be done through a clear unequivocal pan African rational, beginning with this first stop in 2022, when we engage in an in-depth assessment of how far we have gone with: education, gender equality, conservation of marine resources, forest and biodiversity protection and the global partnership for sustainable finance for development.

95. Africa should focused on identifying ambitious strategies and policy actions not just to build back better from the COVID-19 pandemic and dramatically scale up implementation of the SDGs and Agenda 2063 in 2021-2030, but above all to find and pave is own path toward development, relying on its intrinsic values and potentials. The Continent should have enough resources to investment in sustainable development as a vision through Identifying Sustainable Development challenges for Africa; Mapping African resources and assets (natural and human), with clear identification of the comparative advantage of each nation; Redefining African interest in global cooperation based on the expectations of African citizens; Assessing African achievements in a view to sorting and choosing progressive factors that stand beyond traditional beliefs, after acknowledging all related weaknesses such as : (i) *Agenda 2063; (ii) ACFTA*; (iii) *Financial and monetary reserves that exist in many African countries while other lack the minimum necessary resources*; (iv) *Human resource capital (Diaspora, Veterans, Elders) that has been built for years and need just to be well allocated*; (v) Nurturing African participation in global spaces based on well profiled African interest; and (vi) Taking reasonable risks for the future based on self-reliance.

96. Moreover; issues such as (i) Engaging in a new style of international financing cooperation based on alignment with Africans' needs and expectations and positive capitalization on African natural resources to strengthen the Continent's negotiation position and (ii) Developing a new collaboration paradigm between the Civil Society, the Private Sector and Governments to advance the national interest in all countries should be given the utmost attention.

XII. Communities Discriminated by Work and Descent

97. Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent (CDWD), over 260 million are among the most marginalised and excluded in terms of political, social, cultural and economic development. Referred to, among other names, as Dalits, Haratines, Malinke, Roma, Sinti, Gypsies, and Quilombola communitiesl, the CDWD face high poverty and intergenerational discrimination

and violence. This precludes them from enjoying their rights and entitlements as well as meaningful participation in public life.

98. A disproportionately large proportion of CDWD–are landless, or small and marginal landholders, earning their livelihoods in the informal/unorganised sector. They are agricultural labourers, sanitation workers, plantation workers, factory workers, domestic help, sweepers, waste collectors, street vendors, etc. Many lost their jobs during the Pandemic and the ensuing lockdowns.

99. COVID-19 pandemic placed an additional layer of discrimination on the pre-existing social hierarchies. The multi-dimensional impact of COVID-19 ranges from poverty, hunger, unemployment, denial, and limitations to access healthcare services, increased incidents of violence against women and girls and stigmatization, and much more. Restricted transportation, limited supply chains and impeded access to rations and discrimination in food distribution, restricted access to water, hygiene products and sanitation facilities were among the many issues that affected CDWD. Healthcare was denied along with other services and goods with the rationale of being vectors of the Coronavirus.

100. With education facilities remaining closed and most teaching occurring online, those living in remote areas with limited or no access to internet facilities suffered irrevocably. Furthermore, investing in phones and laptops during this time has been impossible with prohibitive prices.

101. While it is not possible to fully gauge the long-term effects of the Pandemic, one can say that it has reversed a few years of progress on SDGs in many countries. As countries begin to rebuild, the motto of 'Leave No One Behind' must be looked at in all earnest. As for the CDWDs, without the targeted long-term recovery initiatives, their social-political-economic position is likely to deteriorate.

RECOMMENDATIONS

102. Governments must recognize and record the population of DWD communities disaggregated by gender, age, disability and income status.

103. Governments must collect and report in disaggregated fashion on COVID-19 cases–hospitalisations, recovery, deaths and vaccinations among the CDWD, as modelled by the US 'Racial Data Transparency', to document public health challenges for different groups towards tailored policy measures.

104. Enhance financial commitments to ensure women's health, education, long-term recovery plans for income generation and security for informal sector workers, and social protection of CDWD in low-income and lower-middle-income countries.

105. Policy and legislation to address exclusion, discrimination and violence against CDWD during disasters – including epidemics and pandemics – must be enacted.

106. Governments must support the strengthening of labour organizations and associations (trade unions) that monitor labour standards and wages– especially in countries where labour laws are relaxed after lockdowns or where there is insufficient legal protection for (women) workers.

XIII. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons

107. The implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was already falling behind when the COVID-19 pandemic hit. Those furthest left behind, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) populations, saw their vulnerabilities being amplified and the lack of protection of their human rights being unveiled in this crisis. While harmful to all, COVID-19 has been especially taxing on marginalized populations. As the world ambitions to build back better, it is critical that they are at the center of all decision-making, implementation, and evaluation processes.

108. Around the globe, LGBTI populations experience stigma, discrimination, violence, and other human rights violations based on sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC) and face high barriers in accessing development opportunities and services. LGBTI populations who face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination due to their gender, age, race, ethnicity, ability, class, caste, socioeconomic status, migration status, and other factors that drive exclusion are even more marginalized.

109. Numerous pandemic responses undermined the rule of law, violated human rights, fundamental freedoms, and democratic principles, or were even discriminatory. This has increased social and political inequalities and reinforced barriers in access to education, employment, healthcare, food, and shelter, aggravating already existing vulnerabilities and human rights violations faced by LGBTI populations.

110. LGBTI populations must be centralized in the implementation and revision of all Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially within the crosscutting issue of SDG 5, to achieve gender equality as there is no gender equality without the full inclusion of LGBTI populations.

111. Punitive laws and policies which exacerbate inequalities continue to exist. These include those laws that criminalize consensual same-sex behavior between adults, diverse gender expression, HIV non-disclosure, exposure, or transmission, and which inhibit access to comprehensive sexuality education that includes SOGIESC.

112. Urgent responses are required from States and other stakeholders to end criminalization and pathologization of LGBTI populations, to ban sexual orientation and gender identity change efforts, to decrease barriers to accessing human development, and to create and implement public policies, laws, and programs that include and address the needs of LGBTI populations and guarantee they are not left behind. Further, laws that limit the ability of LGBTI civil society organizations to legally register and exercise the freedom of association and expression, and laws that penalize LGBTI human rights defenders, should be amended.

113. This year's HLPF theme, "Building back better from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development," gives Member States and all stakeholders the opportunity to include LGBTI populations and end heterocisnormative patriarchal structures in their rebuilding and development initiatives. The LGBTI Stakeholder Group calls on all stakeholders to collect disaggregated, safe and secure data on SOGIESC and use it to guide their efforts to achieve an inclusive fulfillment of the Agenda 2030. We call for Member States to guarantee that all are free from violence and discrimination and can equally exercise their rights in order to promote a sustainable and resilient recovery and build back better.

XIV. Financing for Development (FfD)

114. The humanitarian and economic crisis triggered by the pandemic has magnified inequalities within and between countries have been magnified, with unpaid domestic and care work

subsidizing the global economy. We urgently call for the following systemic solutions to address the broken global economic architecture:

115. Organising the next **UN Summit on Financing for Development/Monterrey + 20:** There is an urgent necessity to democratically establish a New Global Economic Architecture that works for Peoples and Planet through such a new UN FfD Conference.

116. **Debt cancellations and the establishment of a sovereign debt workout mechanism at the United Nations to address unsustainable and illegitimate debt**. It is evident that current ad-hoc international initiatives to address the debt resolution are insufficient and systemic solutions are vital to avoid devastating impacts, especially on developing countries.

117. **A United Nations tax convention** to address tax havens, tax abuse by multinational corporations and other illicit financial flows, to be developed through a universal, intergovernmental process at the United Nations. Unless the failures of the international tax system are urgently addressed, countries around the world will continue to lose billions of dollars because of illicit financial flows.

118. **A moratorium on Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) cases**, the removal of all investor-State dispute settlement provisions from bilateral investment treaties and trade agreements, and non-implementation of current trade and investment commitments, including intellectual property rights rules under the Agreement on Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights and "TRIPS-plus agreements" wherever those are in conflict with public policy objectives, during the pandemic.

119. **Review development outcomes of public-private-partnerships, blended finance and other financing mechanisms established to promote a 'private finance first' approach to infrastructure and public services**. The COVID-19 pandemic has provided a stark reminder of the importance of universal, timely, affordable, gender-responsive, high quality and accessible public services, as well as sustainable infrastructure.;

120. **Accelerate the implementation of the official development assistance (ODA) commitments to fulfil and exceed the 0.7% target for ODA in the form of unconditional grants.** As the ambitions of the Agenda 2030 are further away, it is vital that the long-standing commitments to delivering international development assistance, including ensuring quality and effectiveness, are realised and secure commitment to make up for the shortfall in unfulfilled targets in the past years in addition to future targets for ODA flows.;

121. **Assess systemic risks posed by unregulated or inadequately regulated financial sector instruments and actors**: This includes regulation and supervision of Credit Rating Agencies, a global regulatory framework for the asset management industry and a global agreement on the importance of capital account management.;

122. **A global technology assessment mechanism at the United Nations**. As the United Nations, Governments and institutions grapple with the governance of digital technologies, there is an urgent need for transparent and inclusive deliberations on the current and potential impacts of those technologies on the environment, the labour market, tax policy, livelihoods and society;

123. **Ensure fiscal space and scale up international cooperation for decent jobs creation and universal social protection in line with SDGs and ILO standards**: The pandemic illustrates the importance of ensuring adequate fiscal space to support the extension of social protection systems and offer universal coverage with social protection floors in line with the standards of the International Labour Organization.

XV. Scientific and technological community

124. Two years into the COVID-19 pandemic, the world finds itself at an inflection point greater than at any time since the end of World War II, threatened not only by dangerous systemic risks due to climate change and other related environmental crises, but also by the harrowing impacts of the Russia-Ukraine war. At a time when international cooperation is essential to solve the most pressing problems of our interdependent societies, the ongoing conflict is threatening to derail all global efforts to tackle those problems and to achieve a resilient, just and sustainable world for everyone. The STC Major Group expresses its deep dismay and concerns regarding the military confrontation, which is something that no country and community in the world can afford.

120. Despite the pandemic being a systemic event, responses by most governments are still largely focused on health measures and offer insufficient measures to remedy the broader impacts on societies. While current policy measures are focused on addressing the immediate crisis and on the short-term consequences, decisions taken today will influence the long-term pandemic outcomes, and a longer-term perspective is crucial. The pandemic is first and foremost a global crisis, and well-thought-out national strategies to address COVID-19 must be accompanied by international collaboration and solidarity.

121. Despite a growing and shared concern about the convergence of environmental tipping points, environmental degradation is accelerating. The unprecedented mobilization of governments to respond to COVID-19 does not appear to have greatly served the cause of sustainability, despite repeated pledges on creating a green and sustainable recovery.

122. The impact of the systemic risk of COVID-19 also highlights the urgent need to better understand systemic risks to our ocean, and to prepare responses to future crises which threaten the stability of our climate. Major shifts in the state of the ocean will far exceed the social and economic consequences of the pandemic. In 2022 governments must urgently take significant, collective action to protect and revitalize the ocean.

123. Long-term recovery from COVID-19 must include the restoration of ecosystems and a transformation of our relationship to nature in ways that are just and sustainable. Scientific research on the dynamic and multi-faceted people-nature relationships should be placed at the centre of decision- and policy-making to inform restoration activities and alternative pathways for development in harmony with nature.

124. COVID-19 sparked a global learning crisis as almost all countries severely restricted in-person access to education in the course of the pandemic. The detrimental impacts on education are an enduring legacy of the pandemic. Successive entrants into the labour force will have an educational deficit which will, in turn, have significant negative impacts upon future productivity. Policies to mitigate the negative impacts of the pandemic on education should therefore be very high on the agenda of policy-makers everywhere.

125. With the pandemic still unfolding and extreme weather- and climate-related events increasing, a much stronger and more nimble partnership between science, policy and practitioners is required to address rapidly evolving situations with multiple drivers and varied impacts at national and local scales. There is an urgent need to commit to support the development of scientific capacities in all parts of the world, to advocate open science policies and practices, and to increase international, interdisciplinary scientific collaboration if we are to achieve the SDGs by 2030.

XVI.   Sendai Framework

126.   The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated that inherent vulnerabilities related to the social aspects of systemic risk are meant to be addressed thoughtfully within all-of-society approaches, in order to prevent further negative impacts in development – especially amongst marginalized groups. In this sense, the core concept of **resilience**, prioritized in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR), has become progressively transcendental to the timely compliance of the goals set by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

127.   Through four priorities and eight objectives, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction provides guidance to appropriately link Disaster Risk Reduction to the Sustainable Development Goals; therefore, the means of approach proposed in the SFDRR constitute valuable resources to build holistic resilience.

128.   As the dynamics posed by muli-hazard and systemic risk scenarios increase in complexity due to the global context of uncertainty created by the COVID-19 pandemic, current ongoing hazards and the international efforts to overcome the unprecedented challenges, risk-informed strategies are found to be crucial in the paradigm shift towards the building back better agenda. Therefore, as Sendai Stakeholders, we promote inclusive and cross-sectorial collaborations to reinforce the importance of DRR for Sustainable Development.

129.   Given that local socio-economic inequalities have a profound effect in the management of the materialization of risk, contextualized solutions that take into consideration constituencies in extreme situations of vulnerability are required to integrate multi-hazard disaster risk management public policies and strategies. Decentralization of resources allocation to act accordingly to the conditions and vulnerabilities present in a community is the main tested way to build resilience under the values of "Leaving no one behind" pledge and ensures the collective fulfillment of local needs.

130.   Recognized as the main United Nations platform on sustainable development, the High-Level Political Forum represents a key role in guaranteeing risk-informed advances in the recovery of the COVID-19 pandemic and implementation of Sustainable Development Goals. As a result of the consensus within the elements that conform the Sendai Stakeholders Mechanism, we propose the following overarching appeals to be prioritized in the High-Level Political Forum of 2022:

   a.   Recognition of systemic risk and risk-informed strategies as core elements to the implementation of the SDGs.
   b.   Following the four priorities of the SFDRR to establish resilient constituencies and drive the paradigm shift towards active systemic risk assessment.
   c.   Cross-sectorial multi-stakeholder collaboration to adequately address challenges ahead represented by systemic multi-hazard risks.
   d.   Decentralization of resources as means to provide vulnerability-based assistance.
   e.   Application of contextualized solutions that convey local needs in terms of socio-economic contexts and vulnerabilities.