

H.E. Inga Rhonda King

President of ECOSOC

With reference to the letter dated 2 July from the President of the General Assembly declaring the culmination of the silence period on the draft political declaration of the High-level Political Forum (HLPF), the Major Groups and other Stakeholders (MGoS) would like to congratulate the President and co-facilitators for their efforts.

Over the past two weeks, we have demonstrated our commitment to work side-by-side with Member States and the UN system to accelerate progress on the 2030 Agenda. Nevertheless, we would like to highlight our concern with the lack of review on SDGs 4, 8, 10, 13, 16, and 17 in the adopted Political Declaration, given that the focus is broadly on the next 10 years of implementation, as will be discussed at the SDGs Summit. To complement the adopted Political Declaration, we hereby share a “Major Groups and other Stakeholders” outcome document reflecting some of the priority concerns and recommendations to address these SDGs under review.

As established in A/RES/67/290, the MGoS maintain an important role as part of this process. The upcoming HLPF under the auspices of the General Assembly (SDGs Summit) is regarded by all MGoS as centrally important to the implementation of the SDGs. We remain ready in our roles as rights holders and critical segments of society to work alongside duty bearers. We look forward continuing the discussion in a constructive way and with ambitious commitments for reform ahead of the second cycle of the HLPF.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of our highest consideration.

Steering Group of the Major Groups and other Stakeholders Mechanism

Major Groups and other Stakeholders: Outcome of the 2019 High Level Political Forum

The Major Groups and other Stakeholders (MGoS), mandated to participate in sustainable development processes through, inter alia, A/RES/67/290, are deeply concerned that the 2019 High Level Political Forum (HLPF) under the auspices of ECOSOC lacks a negotiated outcome. The prematurely agreed Political Declaration of the 2019 HLPF under the UNGA fails to recognize the urgency and scope of challenges faced, ignores the root causes and systemic determinants hindering progress, and conveys insufficient ambition and recognition of the responses required by Member States. We offer the following assessment of progress towards the SDGs under review at the 2019 HLPF and the overall status of the 2030 Agenda, four years into its supposed implementation.

SDG 4: The persistence of barriers to the right to education through the life course and the insufficient progress and public investment in equity, inclusion and quality of education systems, put us squarely off-track to meet SDG4, while reproducing patterns of inequality and marginalisation. Noting that education is a fundamental human right and a public good, its centrality to achieving all other SDGs, and its role as a catalytic tool for social justice and democracy, we call upon governments to adopt a whole-sector and life-long learning approach to SDG4, including early childhood, adult, non-formal, and technical and vocational education and training. Progress on SDG4 depends on structural transformation and the safe and gender-sensitive learning environments, well-supported and qualified teachers, a curriculum devoted to the full development of the human-being, including education for sustainable development and climate justice, human rights and equality, and peace, also within the context of the digital revolution. We call on governments to respect, protect, and fulfil the right to education for all by investing the maximum of resources available in quality public inclusive education, ending austerity, abolishing direct and indirect costs of education, delivering on tax justice and aid commitments, refraining from unsustainable borrowing, while stopping privatization and commercialization of education.

SDG 8: We underline that violations of fundamental workers' rights, widespread unemployment and informal employment, wage stagnation, age-disability-and-gender discrimination in the work place, poor social protection coverage, occupational health and safety issues on the rise, hinder progress towards decent work under SDG8 and widen inequalities. We call for a labour protection floor for all workers, in accordance with the Decent Work Agenda, taking into account: respect for labour fundamental rights; an adequate minimum wage; maximum limits on working time; and safety and health at work. We call on governments to put in place and finance universal social protection coverage systems, noting that social protection is an investment, and not a cost, in particular if we want to support women in the labour market and tackle issues related to unpaid domestic and care work. We recognize social dialogue as a governance tool to implement SDGs. We call for urgent collective action towards a just transition to environmentally and socially responsible economies in the face of climate change technological shifts, and widespread land and resource grabs. SDG8 calls for sustainable business models based on 'due diligence' in global supply chains - as prescribed by the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the ILO Tripartite Declaration of Principles on Multinational Enterprises and social policy - and contribution to income generation at country level, including taxes

and social contributions. Gross domestic product is an inadequate measure of progress that prioritizes profit over people and the planet, highlighting the need for better indicators of well-being.

SDG 10: Reducing inequalities within and among countries, between rich and poor, and between men and women is fundamental to the realization of the 2030 Agenda, yet global income and wealth inequality has reached its highest peak. We call on governments to urgently reform macroeconomic structures and unfair trade rules, stop illicit financial flows and unsustainable and illegitimate debt, and the undermining by international financial institutions of developing countries' right to development. At the national level, governments must ensure policy coherence; strengthen the public sector and implement universal social protection; ensure equal opportunities for all regardless of their race, gender, disability, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, sex characteristics or other status. We call on governments to remove legal barriers and discriminatory laws, including those that criminalize and marginalize groups of people, and introduce legislation grounded in human rights principles to prevent and redress stigma, violence and discrimination. The people who are most affected by inequalities and systemic discrimination must be at the centre of efforts ensuring that no one is left behind.

SDG 13: Despite the climate emergency, action is insufficient. Anthropogenic climate change is occurring faster than anticipated. Accelerated mitigation and adaptation, including through traditional and local knowledge, is needed to stay within planetary boundaries. The impact of climate related disasters is threatening progress on SDGs by disproportionately increasing vulnerabilities in the most affected communities. Carbon emissions continue to rise, mainly due to the unsustainable burning of fossil fuels and of forests to expand agribusiness and livestock cultivation, resulting in unprecedented biodiversity loss. We call on governments to urgently halt their reliance on extractive industries, enable just transitions away from the use of fossil fuels towards sustainable renewable energy, accelerate nature- and culture, and community-based solutions, and democratize decision-making and empower all rights holders, especially those most marginalized and vulnerable . Unaccountable leaders guided by irrelevant ambitions are bringing irreparable consequences to our biosphere, population, and future generations. Agenda 2030 is the lighthouse to guide measures to limit global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees, ensuring ecosystem integrity while promoting people-and-planet centred and gender-responsive climate action.

SDG 16: The reality behind the data reveals decreasing security for the most vulnerable, including people experiencing discrimination on the basis of their gender, sexual orientation, age, (dis)ability, race, ethnicity, religion, or legal status. We call on governments to ensure safe schools, an end to violence against children and human trafficking, an acceleration of Women, Peace and Security commitments, accountability to human rights obligations, and a “whole of society approach” that meaningfully engages those impacted by conflict and violence. Ensuring freedom of speech and assembly, the protection of journalists, trade unionists, human rights as well as environmental defenders is needed to strengthen the rule of law. Governments at all levels must commit to addressing new weapons of war (e.g. rape and starvation) and the impacts of war through rights-based access to services for refugees and stateless persons. States must ensure extraterritorial accountability, including on flows

of small arms and light weapons. We call for an urgent shift from economies driven by military interests to ones guided by human rights, protection of the planet, social and humanitarian development, and peace and security for all.

SDG 17: Public and transparent investment, with its primary objective of contributing to the public good, presents the most appropriate instrument to design and implement the 2030 Agenda and its objectives. We call on governments to deliver on their responsibility for SDG implementation and enact the regulatory and policy frameworks required to fulfil human rights, within the context of progressive taxation under the remit of a global intergovernmental tax body. The long-standing commitment of developed countries to dedicate 0.7% of gross domestic income to ODA should be met urgently and unconditionally. Global economic, financial, trade, and monetary governance must shift from restricting developing countries' policy space to enable a global collective commitment to realize the human rights and sustainable development objectives of all. Partnerships need to benefit all involved, with clear guidelines and accountability tools, going beyond traditional public-private partnerships. To address the intended and unintended implications of existing, frontier, and emerging technologies, an anticipatory, inclusive and multi-stakeholder global technology assessment mechanism is needed to assess and address their social, economic, and environmental impact. Building on a strong science-policy-society interface, with input from diverse sources of knowledge, policy coherence must be ensured with other international frameworks, to leverage synergies and ensure effectiveness.

Towards the SDGs Summit and Reform: A rights-based approach to sustainable development is an obligation of all Member States, grounded in legally binding international human rights framework. They must strengthen the meaningful participation of all rights holders at all levels, with a focus on the most marginalized. Urgent actions are required to accelerate SDG implementation and accountability; governments must tackle structural barriers, such as patriarchy, militarism, neoliberal capitalism, fundamentalism, authoritarianism, and climate change, and ensure that efforts benefits those who are systematically excluded. We call on Member States to reform the HLPF and related follow-up and review mechanisms of the 2030 Agenda, increasing opportunities for constructive exchange on lessons, challenges and systemic obstacles, while facilitating meaningful participation of MGoS at all levels.

Suggestion to editors/authors: Whilst we understand that there a lot of different groups wanting to convey their issues, every session of HLPF we have attended has conveyed the jeopardy and injustices faced be people (and particularly women) in rural communities. Rural location is an interesting issue which compounds the list of protected characteristics you do select, so please, there must be at least one reference to rurality or location as a factor. We had suggested several places it could be inserted and believe in the power of a united Civil Society voice, but would urge you to reconsider this inclusion if at all possible. (Associated Country Women of the World)

I suggestion that an urgent program be put in place in the third world countries for the need to eradicate hunger, poverty and ignorance.

I and my organization see hunger, poverty and ignorance

A major threat to Third World countries

This is an excellent summary of issues. At the same time, all issues are interlinked and constantly interacting, as are all Earthsub systems. By treating them as wholes from global through local and individual levels we are dealing with all at the same time. Especially if we use Nature-inspired solutions, say, based on ecosystems: societies, businesses, ethics, even schools that are more focussed on the well-being of each individual through their interaction with other people and the whole; and the whole serving each individual.