

2022 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development

Save the Children International Intervention at the Plenary Session: *“Vision of civil society:*

Systemic reforms to leave no one behind”

Tuesday, 12 July 2022 (9:00am – 11:00am)

Delivered by Wang Le, UN Representative, Save the Children International

- Chair, Panelists, Delegates, and esteemed colleagues, I am speaking on behalf of Save the Children.
- Only seven years remain to fulfil the global vision set out in the Agenda 2030. Yet today we are further behind in reaching those ambitions than we were just a few years ago, with the future of an entire generation of children in jeopardy due to the triple threat of COVID-19, conflict, and climate change.
- These interlinked and intersecting crises have exacerbated pre-existing inequalities and exposed fundamental systemic failures at the national and global level, contributing to the reversal of two decades of progress on human development around the world.
- Tragically, had greater progress been achieved in the implementation of the SDGs prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the world would have been significantly more prepared to respond to the health crisis and mitigate its socio-economic impacts.
- Save the Children strongly supports the comprehensive, universal and transformative vision of the 2030 Agenda, and through our programmes and advocacy is actively in support of its success with governments, partners and local communities.

- However, it is clear that to achieve the promise of the SDGs and the pledge to leave no one behind, it is essential that the global community **urgently shifts away from business as usual.**
- We cannot ‘build back better’ by re-assembling the building blocks of economies and public services that have failed the most vulnerable, safety nets that have allowed those in need to fall through the cracks, and industries that continue to harm our planet and people. As **Ms. Paula Caballero** urged in last Wednesday’s plenary meeting on the 2023 SDG summit, we must be disruptive.
- I would like to highlight three key areas requiring governments, the financial and business sector and other stakeholders to take a disruptive approach to deliver our mutual goals:
- **First**, it is essential that we move away from short-termism and invest now in building strong and resilient public systems necessary for children’s wellbeing and development, including health, education, social and child protection. These systems must be strengthened to anticipate, prepare for, and respond to shocks, whether they be health, economic, climate, or conflict-related, and prioritise reaching those furthest behind first.
- **Second**, immediate action is needed to rewire our economic systems so that they stop fuelling the climate and inequality crisis and start working for children instead. Governments, financial institutions, and the private sector must rapidly shift towards green and just economic pathways, to ensure a future in which all children’s rights are upheld, and in which catastrophic climate change has been averted.
- **Finally**, power must be radically shifted to children and communities, including local organizations, who have historically been excluded from decision-making processes but are best placed to speak to the challenges they face and inform solutions. Many child and youth-

led movements have been key in achieving positive change and their right to full and equal participation must be enabled and guaranteed.

These shifts are critical to the full achievement of the 2030 Agenda and ensuring children's present and future wellbeing, upholding their rights, and contributing to just, peaceful, and stable societies.

Thank you.