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Reinforcing the 2030 Agenda and eradicating poverty in times of multiple crises:
the effective delivery of sustainable, resilient and innovative solutions

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 2024 high-level political forum on sustainable development, “Reinforcing the 2030 Agenda and eradicating poverty in times of multiple crises: the effective delivery of sustainable, resilient and innovative solutions”, 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, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 67/290. The full reports are posted on the website of the forum: hlpf.un.org/2024.

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** 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.
I. Women

1. As 2024 begins, countries and populations across the globe are grappling with multiple and interlinked crises, pushing us even farther from realizing the Agenda 2030. Our rights, our bodies and our planet are in peril, and the most structurally marginalized are bearing the brunt as these crises exacerbate pre-existing inequalities.

2. The rise in militarism and warfare, fueled by the interests of those holding the most power and their transnational allies, has led to widespread human rights violations and the dismantling of essential social services for basic human needs, creating new layers of vulnerability, especially for women, girls and gender-diverse people. We demand an urgent redirection of military expenditures towards social spending and accelerating efforts towards peace, disarmament, and feminist change. We call on governments to end imperialist occupation and uphold people’s right to justice, self-determination and sustainable development. Governments must do more to uphold international laws and commitments created to protect our human rights including sexual and reproductive health and rights, other species and the Planet.

3. The world can no longer afford to ignore the flawed systems of neoliberal capitalist development and unlimited growth that prioritize private profit over people and the planet, exacerbating the catastrophic impact of the triple planetary crisis for Global South populations. As feminist activists and human rights defenders, we urge governments of the Global South to show bold ambition, reject false solutions and demand reparative and adequate climate finance for the ecological crisis wrought by capitalist greed.

4. As the world recovers from the COVID-19-created economic recession, we as members of WMG urge member states to rethink and reform the international financial architecture to ensure full and sustainable socio-economic recovery in fragile countries. We demand gender transformative and pro-poor policies, equitable state and civil society participation, gender-based tax justice and an end to debt and conditionalities. The 2030 Agenda cannot be achieved if half of the world’s population is not resourced to partner in creating, managing, and caring for our world.

5. We are living through an increasingly polarized world, with racism, gender discrimination, and xenophobia on the rise everywhere, undermining progress and holding our rights and equality hostage.

6. Governments must recognize the vital work of feminist and human rights groups and make concerted efforts to shift power and decision-making to the people to lead the change they seek. We call on governments to boldly support feminist organizing by increasing social development budgets, implementing accessible, flexible, multi-year, core funding policies, and creating mechanisms to safeguard and protect activists and groups.

7. WMG’s 2024 submission to HLPF will review all 17 SDGs through an intersectional lens underscoring the importance of urgent and transformative action and the need to overhaul our systems and structures to create a more equal world and halt the damage to our planet. As we urge governments and global institutions to renew their commitment towards the 2030 Agenda, we
will inspire hope through stories of change, bearing witness to how the most marginalized and impacted people persevere, innovate and organise in the face of unrelenting backlash.

II. Non-Governmental Organizations

8. The 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are at breaking point due to lack of political will in the face of overlapping, multidimensional crises fueled by misdirected and short-term decision-making. Misguided economic approaches have increased debt and inflation; deepened social inequalities; and fueled violence, conflict, and displacement. Our environment has been severely degraded and exploited, resulting in devastating climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. COVID-19’s persistent impacts include socioeconomic ramifications and constrictions in civic and democratic space globally, while inaction to address underlying causes of zoonotic diseases risks future disease outbreaks and pandemics.

9. This confluence of crises is driving us further from solutions to achieve the 2030 Agenda’s commitments, and opportunities for reversing this trajectory have narrowed. Without urgent, transformative, and bold policy action, human, animal and environmental health and wellbeing face a catastrophic future.

10. Against these immense and persistent challenges, civil society plays a key role in the implementation, monitoring, follow-up, and review of the 2030 Agenda, not only in multilateral spaces but also at national, regional, and local levels. Civil society is a consistent partner in meeting the ambitions of the 2030 Agenda and delivering transformation.

11. In this context, we call for the following:

- SDG1: Reduce extreme and multidimensional poverty through bold economic reforms, increasing investment in universal social protection, and building community resilience to economic, environmental, health and other shocks through participatory approaches.

- SDG2: Adopt “whole-of-food-systems” approaches supporting youth, smallholders, Indigenous People and rural women to address nutrition security; food waste and loss; agroecology; healthy, sustainable diets; human rights; animal welfare; and urban-rural equity.

- SDG13: Transition to renewable energy; restoring land; expanding climate finance and education; building sustainable, resilient infrastructure; engaging Indigenous and local communities; and implementing traditional knowledge and practices to foster resilience.

- SDG16: Fully implement international law, including human rights and humanitarian law; taking concrete measures to reduce all forms of violence, and strengthening institutional accountability by improving democratic participation in decision-making at all levels.

- SDG17: Transform resource mobilization and financing by reforming the international financial architecture and upholding commitments, and strengthening multilateralism and cooperation across stakeholders, fostering trust, social cohesion, and equity.

12. Recommendations for HLPF and related policy moments include:
Commitment to combat racism; all forms of discrimination; xenophobia and related intolerance; stigmatization; and hate speech through cooperation, partnerships, inclusion, and respect for diversity.

Effective and meaningful civil society participation.

Delivery of financing commitments to ensure implementation of the 2030 Agenda, with a clear prioritization of funds to be allocated to local community action.

Prioritization of multilingualism as a core value of the UN.

Recognition of the interconnectedness of humans, animals and the environment to support the health, wellbeing and flourishing of all.

Concerted collaboration at all levels among Member States, civil society, academia and the UN to address and overcome key challenges in SDG implementation, monitoring and review during the 2024 HLPF, the Summit of the Future, the 2025 World Summit for Social Development, and the 4th International Conference on Financing for Development.

III. Local Authorities

13. Local and regional governments (LRGs) are crucial in ensuring universal, equitable access to public services that have direct impacts on populations’ capabilities to prosper. Being closest to communities, they innovate public-community partnerships that strengthen the capacities of local services to redistribute prosperity opportunities, building trust, fostering culture, and leveraging proximity and local democracy towards the fight against poverty.

14. Addressing inequalities means revitalizing rights-based public service provision with care as the basis of a new social contract. Caring cities and regions advance a feminist agenda that guarantees equal rights, empowers local communities, supports local economic development and puts the wellbeing of people and planet as the highest priority.

15. Ending hunger and malnutrition requires local government involvement in food policy promoting sustainable food systems and supply chains rooted in proximity, and strengthen local public service provision as well as multilevel governance.

16. Fighting poverty means focusing on population, development, and sexual health, prioritizing equality in human rights and dignity, redefining health as a local and global common, accompanying a new paradigm on the demographic trends shaping the urban-rural continuum, urbanization, and ecology.

17. Facing growing global crises, local and regional governments are central actors in addressing refugee and migrant inclusion and protection. We will only deliver global impact by investing in local action and safe and regular pathways through an approach to migration based on human rights, inclusiveness and dignity.

18. LRGs must be recognised as part of the governance of the planetary response to climate change given the urgent need to level up ambition to reach the Paris agreement, including them in the decision-making mechanisms such as the Loss and Damage.

19. LRGs have a critical role in securing water supply and sanitation and must be included in water governance to ensure it is managed as a common good, protecting aquatic ecosystems and biodiversity.
20. LRGs understand peace as a global public good that needs to be cared for among all spheres of government, addressing its roots and developing a renewed social contract with civil society, young people and marginalised groups as part of peacebuilding strategies. Local democracy will need to be a pillar, promoting transparency, accountability, open governance and fighting against corruption.

21. Achieving the SDGs requires revisiting the financial architecture, enabling local and regional governments to leverage various sources of finance, unlocking flexible and tailored revenue streams with the support of multilateral and subnational development banks, increasing resiliency to emergencies.

22. Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) and Voluntary Subnational Reviews (VSRs) foster transformative change in the governance of the SDGs, impacting the improvement of multilevel governance relations and service provision. Enhanced recognition is required at the HLPF and beyond to leverage these processes to achieve the SDGs.

23. Renewing the multilateral system making it more inclusive and networked is a prerequisite to achieve the 2030 Agenda and the global agendas. We issue a call to action to define a special, formal and permanent status for the self-organized constituency of LRGs before the UN’s policymaking bodies.

IV. Workers and Trade Unions

24. Multiple crises are turning decent work into an illusion for the majority of workers and derailing progress on the SDGs, while democracies and the rule of law are increasingly under attack.

25. In this context, trade unions call for a New Social Contract based on six key demands: 1) the creation of decent and climate-friendly jobs with Just Transitions; 2) rights for all workers; 3) minimum living wages and equal pay; 4) universal social protection; 5) equality and 6) inclusion.

26. DEMANDS ON THE SDGS UNDER REVIEW AT HLPF 2024

• SDG 1
  • Invest in decent and climate-friendly jobs as a key method for tackling poverty.
  • Achieve universal social protection in line with ILO standards.
  • Support developing countries by 1) allocating at least 7 per cent of ODA to social protection, and 2) setting up a Global Social Protection Fund.
  • Respect workers’ rights and minimum living wages with equal pay.
  • Advance gender equality to elevate women out of poverty.
  • Establish social dialogue on poverty eradication policies.
  • Reform international tax architecture and support progressive taxation.

• SDG 2

• Recognise the right to food as a human right.
• Ensure decent work, lifelong learning and minimum living wages for workers in agriculture and throughout the food supply chains, including for migrant workers.
• Implement Just Transition policies based on social dialogue in sustainable agriculture.
• Support Indigenous communities’ land rights in line with ILO Convention No. 169.

• SDG 13
  • Introduce Just Transition measures based on social dialogue in the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).
  • Implement the Work Programme on Just Transition Pathways adopted at COP28.
  • Deliver on adaptation needs through robust social protection plans.
  • Step up international climate finance for developing countries, with accountability mechanisms for sustainable and green investments.
  • Promote social dialogue to align the New Collective Quantified Goal with Just Transition principles.

• SDG 16
  • Uphold labour rights and social dialogue as pillars to peace and democratic processes.
  • Engage social partners in all sustainable development policy-making processes.
  • Advocate for labour courts and access to legal aid on labour matters.
  • Set a 50 per cent goal for women’s participation at all levels of international peace and security initiatives.
  • Enhance international law on disarmament, arms control, non-proliferation, and the arms trade.

• SDG 17: Build a renewed multilateralism based on social dialogue and democracy to promote social justice.

27. CENTRALITY OF SDG 8 TO RESCUE THE SDGS

HLPF 2024 should be the place to:
• Put Decent Work at the heart of UN development processes, including the Summit of the Future and the 2025 World Summit on Social Development.
• Support the UN Global Accelerator for Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions.
• Uphold social dialogue and democracy as key governance tools for the SDGs.
• Adopt clear commitments to finance SDGs and to reform the international financial architecture.

V. Business and industry

28. The Business and Industry Group (BIMG) is a diverse global constituency, with micro- and small enterprises to employers federations all over the world as well as large companies across every sector in developed and developing countries. We are invested in successful and inclusive outcomes of this year’s HLPF leading to the UN Summit of the Future (SOTF).
29. In many ways, BIMG are the “means of implementation” working with governments and stakeholders to deliver investments and innovations to action the 2030 Agenda. Innovative technologies are already being mobilized to create new jobs and opportunities, through business to business efforts, in partnerships with employers, business groups, governments, across the UN and with UN Resident Coordinators. Business is leaning in on investment and innovation to deliver all of the 2030 Agenda on this year’s priority SDGs, including zero hunger and climate change, and as catalysts for others.

30. BIMG regards this year’s HLPF as critical to reinforce multilateralism for sustainability, and to address an array of challenges facing the global community.

31. Conflict and war threatens people and societies, exacerbating poverty and displacement for the already vulnerable. Labor markets are not future-proofed and employers need to become dynamic and innovative in expanding job opportunities, particularly for marginalized groups. Skill-building systems have not kept up with evolutions in the world of work and changing labor market needs, failing to adequately equip job seekers with skills to enter the labor market and meet the skills needs of businesses. Many micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in developing and emerging economies continue to face challenges –– including barriers impeding conducive business environments – that hinder their ability to reach a level of productivity to be competitive and create sustainable jobs.

32. To recover sustainably from the pandemic’s impacts, alongside dealing with conflict, climate change and economic inequality, requires an even stronger commitment to multi-stakeholder engagement and partnership through inclusive multilateralism that is practical, effective, and transparent. Over the next 2 years and beyond, all UN meetings should contribute to creating and advancing coherent and concerted efforts to take action to implement what has been discussed, agreed and ratified across intergovernmental fora to take on these challenges.

33. The HLPF and Summit for Future must be opportunities to recognize and empower the private sector to be a meaningful partner – contributing funding, innovation, expertise, technology, fresh ideas, and diverse perspectives.

34. BIMG representatives call for greater inclusivity of business and stronger, more formal and strategic cooperation between the private and public sectors. BIMG members believe that the private sector's potential and engagement with governments and the international community to build a prosperous and sustainable global economy and deliver solutions to sustainability challenges is indispensable.

35. There is too much at stake in the 2030 Agenda not to “think outside the box”. All stakeholders need to join with governments in redoubled collaborative action. This year’s HLPF should set the stage for a post-2030 approach to international cooperation with renewed dedication and focus on societies that are peaceful, resilient, and responsive to people’s needs and aspirations.

VI. Scientific and technological community

36. The window for achieving the SDGs by 2030 is rapidly narrowing, revealing a concerning lack of progress on individual SDGs and a broader misunderstanding of their implications for the whole agenda. Targets related to ending extreme poverty and reducing inequality
(SDG1), ensuring food security (SDG2), and addressing climate change (SDG13) are deteriorating amid recent shocks from pandemics, wars, and economic crises. Without a reversal of current trends and accelerated action, we are at risk of facing prolonged periods of crisis.

37. **It is becoming increasingly evident that the future holds transformative shifts in economic and natural systems, with profound implications for our civilization.** The key question is whether we passively observe these changes or actively engage to steer them towards positive outcomes. Sustained collaboration between scientists, decision-makers and stakeholders is essential, including through employing scenario and foresight exercises and Earth system boundaries, to better understand the risks and costs associated with failure to attain the SDGs and identify viable pathways to a safe and just future.

38. **The SDGs, as an indivisible agenda, are an integral part of other global agendas, including the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, amongst others.** Their implementation requires a joined, sustainable investment and cohesive roadmaps on a longer time-horizon to 2050 for scaling up impactful and synergistic interventions and achieving their collective ambitions.

39. **Urgent action requires centring science, both natural and social, on informing action on key transformation points and pathways for accelerated SDG progress, while adapting the SDG framework to national and subnational contexts.** Successful SDG implementation requires evidence-based, context-specific prioritization, grounded in an understanding of SDGs synergies and trade-offs, including negative environmental and social spillovers between countries and regions. Efforts must be concentrated on identifying and overcoming systemic barriers to SDG implementation. The HLPF should serve as the primary platform for enabling sustained exchanges between policy, scientific communities, and other sectors, inspiring a concerted global effort to stay within safe and just Earth system boundaries.

40. **Rethinking and reorienting the role of technology in supporting the effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda is key.** The UN should explore leveraging AI technologies for accelerated SDG progress, ensuring alignment with the SDGs. Additionally, the UN should facilitate inclusive and collective dialogues on emerging technologies, including geoengineering solutions for climate change mitigation. These dialogues should be guided by comprehensive risk assessments and actively involve scientific and engineering communities.

41. **Strengthening science-policy-society interfaces at all levels will be crucial for policy-makers and other stakeholders to access the latest scientific knowledge.** Governments need to take concrete actions to better leverage science and engineering for accelerated SDG implementation. This includes enhancing capacities in knowledge generation, synthesis, evidence collection, and the effective translation of scientific observations, data and information into actionable knowledge and solutions. Additionally, to build greater trust in science, it is essential to forge stronger connections with policy communities and its constituent publics through more deliberative engagement.

42. **Governments and science funders should make mission-oriented science for sustainability a priority in pursuing the SDGs.** The ISC’s Global Commission on Science Mission for Sustainability presented a new model for science missions, with the aim to facilitate systemic
collaboration between scientists, engineers, policy-makers, funders, local and Indigenous communities, and other stakeholders to co-produce actionable knowledge and solutions advancing long-term sustainability.

VII. Ageing

43. Accomplishing HLPF’s 2024 theme requires the active contribution of older women and men, in line with the 17 SDGS and the 2030 Agenda call for ‘societies for all ages’.

44. The present and future include people of all ages. Projections of population ageing reflect increased longevity, especially amongst women, with the percentage of the global population aged 65 and above expected to rise from 10% in 2022 to 16% in 2050.

45. An intergenerational, life-course approach is needed that promotes the rights of older people and includes their voice and agency. Social Protection Floors (SPFs) have proven impact on intergenerational poverty and are essential for younger generations now and in the future.

46. The pursuit and advancement of the principle of intergenerational solidarity would ensure that the rights of people of all ages are protected and promoted at all times to secure a life of dignity across the broad diversity of the world’s population. This would further ensure that older people are recognized as rights holders, including the Right to Development (Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing), and realize the transformative promise of the 2030 Agenda to Leave No One Behind (LNOB).

47. However, progress on the HLPF 2024 focus SDGs does not inspire confidence towards poverty eradication:

(a) SDG 1 is seriously off track. Inequalities of income, education, and opportunity in earlier years result in extreme poverty in older ages, worsened by lack of social protection systems and failure to implement SPFs.

(b) SDG 2 specifies ending malnutrition amongst older persons. However, reports including from HelpAge International in 2023, indicate that older people globally risk starvation and extreme poverty due to rising costs of food and farming.

(c) Under SDG 13, older people with disabilities and older women are especially affected by climate-related disasters but are often not included in climate responses, preparedness, and prevention. Ageism, poverty, neglect, abuse, and social exclusion ignore the experience and resilience of older people, pushing them to the periphery.

(d) The peace, justice and strong institutions envisaged in SDG16 fade against unpunished violence against older people including killing older women on false accusations of witchcraft in parts of Africa.

(e) The SDG 17 commitment of age as a cross-cutting issue in the implementation of all goals and targets remains largely unattained despite ongoing efforts of the Titchfield Group on Ageing.

48. RECOMMENDATIONS TO MEMBER STATES:

i. Include sex-, age- and disability-disaggregated data (SADDD) to identify gaps and propose solutions on issues related to ageing.

ii. Include the voice and agency of older people in the development agenda.
iii. Urgently establish financial and technical measures to deliver Goal 1 Target 3.
iv. Ensure institutions promoting peace, justice, and equality address ongoing violence against
older people particularly women.
v. End malnutrition and food insecurity in old age with targeted agricultural incentives, secure
pensions and intergenerational skill sharing using a life course approach.
vi. Ensure participation, inclusion, and leadership of older people in climate action, resilience,
adaptation and response.
vii. Invest in age-disaggregated data covering the diversity across all age groups.

VIII. Persons with disabilities

49. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the recovery thus far may have just put a pause on
disability inclusion in SDG implementation and significantly heightened the risk of going back
on progress made. Given this backdrop, the Stakeholder Group of Persons with Disabilities
recommends the following:

50. End poverty in all its forms
There is a vicious cycle of poverty and disability that feeds from lack of access to education,
employment, accessibility, healthcare compounded by the lack of adequate social protection that
addresses the additional cost of disability. Only 33.5% of persons with disabilities worldwide
are covered by at least one social protection benefit. Implementation of social protection
schemes across the life span of persons with disabilities, not tied to ‘ability to work’, is
therefore critical.

51. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition
On one hand, food insecurity and malnutrition can lead to disability; on the other hand, disability
can lead to food insecurity and poverty. Children with disabilities are three times as likely to be
maltreated as children without disabilities and twice as likely to die from malnutrition during
childhood. States must ensure that all nutrition and food security plans are accessible, and
targeted programs for persons with disabilities are put in place with adequate investment.

52. Urgent action to combat climate change
Persons with disabilities continue to be invisible in national strategies to combat climate crisis.
80% per cent of Parties to the Paris Agreement do not include a single mention of persons with
disabilities in their Nationally Determined Contributions. It is critical that States and other
actors protect the human rights of persons with disabilities and include them in the contexts
of both climate adaptation and climate mitigation.

53. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development

future
4 IDA/ILO (2019): Joint Statement. Towards inclusive social protection systems supporting the full and effective
participation of persons with disabilities
5 IDA (2018): Disability and Food Security – an unfinished policy agenda
6 Kuper, H., & Heydt, P. 2019. The Missing Billion: Access to health services for 1 billion people with disabilities
7 IDA & IDDC (2023): Persons with disabilities and climate action
States must ensure that persons with disabilities are able to exercise their agency and autonomy, as reiterated in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) through, inclusive and accessible humanitarian assistance; assistive technologies; transportation; housing; infrastructure and services; and participation in political life; among others. States must strengthen implementation of UN Security Council resolution 2475 on the protection of persons with disabilities in conflict.

54. **Strengthen the means of implementation**

Steps must be taken to ensure the increased and meaningful participation of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations. International cooperation must “do no harm” by ensuring that investments do not fund exclusion or segregation. States must ensure disability-specific collection and disaggregation of data using recognized approaches; and ensure greater investment in disability inclusive development.

IX. **Education and academia**

**FROM CRISIS TO OPPORTUNITY: EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING IN THE PURSUIT OF THE 2030 AGENDA**

**Introduction**

55. The world is currently grappling with crises of unprecedented magnitude, including the COVID-19 pandemic consequences, wars and armed conflicts. These challenges necessitate a reevaluation of our approach to achieving the SDGs. The disruptions caused by these crises have not only affected global education systems, impacting learners across all age groups, but have also exacerbated existing inequalities, disproportionately affecting vulnerable populations. A comprehensive, transformative approach is imperative to restore and enhance educational frameworks, facilitating the recovery process and advancing comprehensive SDG achievement.

**The impact of crises on education worldwide**

56. The COVID-19 pandemic has led to unprecedented educational interruptions, affecting over 1.6 billion learners globally. The sudden transition to alternative learning methods, compounded by issues of access and quality, has underscored the depth of the educational divide. Concurrently, conflicts and wars in several regions have denied further millions of individuals their basic right to education, exacerbating inequalities and threatening long-term socio-economic development.

**Education as a catalyst for recovery and sustainable development**

57. Literacy and education are not only fundamental human rights but also a cornerstones of sustainable development. They empower individuals, drive economic growth, and are essential for achieving gender equality, poverty reduction, and fostering innovation and resilient societies. Therefore, revitalizing the education sector is crucial for sustainable progress across all areas of the 2030 Agenda. This demands a focus on inclusivity, equity, and quality, from early childhood to adult education.

58. **Strategies for enhancing education and lifelong learning**

   (a) Prioritizing inclusivity and equity: Efforts must be intensified to reach marginalized and vulnerable groups, addressing barriers such as economic hardships, security concerns, geographical isolation, and social stigmatization.
Strengthening lifelong learning and a holistic approach: LLL and adult education programs can equip learners with the necessary knowledge and skills for a rapidly evolving world. This includes promoting soft skills, literacy, vocational training, and emphasizing peace education, intercultural dialogue, critical thinking, and media literacy.

Promoting community and non-formal education initiatives: Non-traditional learning environments and community-based educational programs can effectively reach underserved populations, offering flexible and relevant learning opportunities while fostering social cohesion and community development.

Reinforcing teacher support and training: Empowering educators is central to educational revitalization. Ensuring they receive comprehensive training, adequate resources, social recognition, and fair compensation, even in resource-constrained settings, is essential.

Education should not only meet present needs but also address the underlying causes of crises, systemic issues, and structural inequalities, fostering sustainable solutions through a transformative approach.

Conclusion

The recovery from current crises and the pursuit of the 2030 Agenda are intricately linked, with education serving as a vital bridge between the two. By adopting a holistic approach, we can transform the education system into a potent tool for sustainable development. It is also crucial to recognize the indispensable role of science and research in shaping educational policies and practices, enhancing evidence-based decision-making and continuous improvement, and fostering innovation in educational technologies, learning methodologies, and solutions for addressing educational disparities.

Investing in education is not only a moral imperative but also a strategic necessity for building a more sustainable, inclusive, and equitable future for all.

X. Asia-Pacific regional civil society organization engagement mechanism

Almost a decade into the implementation of SDGs, the progress remains alarmingly slow with most of the targets still out of reach throughout the world. The absence of emphasis on addressing systemic barriers entrenched within the social, economic and political structures impedes the full realization of the 2030 Agenda. There are widening inequalities and poverty exacerbated by debt conditionalities, free trade regimes, regressive tax systems and illicit financial flows, liberalization of trade and agriculture, and denial of peoples’ access to resources and services, amid the stark manifestations of the triple planetary crisis of biodiversity loss, pollution and climate change, in the backdrop of deepening cost of living crisis, resource grabbing, occupation and genocide, patriarchy and fundamentalisms, human rights violations, militarism, increasing corporate capture and shrinking democratic spaces. Beneath these atrocities lies a structurally flawed, neoliberal model of development that prioritizes profits over the well-being of both people and the planet.

Asia and the Pacific faces a myriad of such crises, reflective of the UNESCAP’s Asia and the Pacific SDGs Progress Report 2024 testifying that out of the 116 measurable targets, only 11% are on track to be achieved by 2030 while the region is likely to miss on the remaining 89% of the targets. Beyond the halfway mark, the report underscores a dismal rate of progress at merely 17% in the region, fraught with stagnation and regressions, with the estimated achievement not in sight until 2062. The projection’s basis on 52% of the available data, situates the region in the
precarious unknown of the missing 48%, much similar for the rest of the regions of the world with lackluster progress. The limited scope of ‘goals under review’ mechanism fails to capture realities on the ground while offering very little insight on beyond goals under review or on vertical governance at regional and global levels to redress the challenges beyond jurisdictional capacities of individual governments. Yet, the Chair’s Summary - outcome document of the regional forum on Sustainable Development - finds little to no recognition to inform the decision making at the global levels.

63. The convergence of crises underscores the urgent need for fundamental, structural, transformative reforms. The SDG Summit’s Political Declaration 2023 acknowledged the urgency but fell short of mobilizing consensus over critical priorities. The recent focus on Summit of the Future (SotF), proposed as a measure to accelerate the SDGs, and the promise for critical reforms in the Pact for the Future (PfF) must deliver on its ambition to mobilize political will and leadership necessary to avoid the cliche of business-as-usual. However, its emphasis on ‘networked multilateralism’ risks cementing corporate capture of our policy processes while diverting the political will away from the 2030 Agenda.

64. We refuse to accept the neoliberal model of development and call on the governments to prioritize people and the planet over profits by upholding the principles of right to development, policy coherence and non-regression, LNOB, CBDRRC, and self-determination, curbing unilateral coercive measures, to promote a holistic, people-centered, and rights-based approach to development for all.

XI. Economic Commission for Europe Regional Civil Society Engagement Mechanism

65. Six years remain in which to implement the 2030 Agenda. Only with cooperation between Member States is progress possible in the ECE region. The negative impacts of the rise of right-wing populism and xenophobia must end. ‘Shrinking civic space’ undermines Member States’ human rights obligations and imperils the Agenda.

66. In the UNECE region, national gender and anti-discrimination plans must be informed by fully disaggregated data, strengthened by civil society, and must address global inequalities, integrate asylum seekers, refugees, and migrants, and uphold International Humanitarian Law.

67. Our countries are ageing. The exclusion of widows, hardships of older women and unpaid care workers must be recognised and addressed with interconnected regional strategies.

Goals under review

68. **SDG1:** Key factors: climate crises, conflict; unemployment and working poverty; age and diversity discrimination in the workplace; regressive taxation; lack of investment in social protection and Social Protection Floors.

69. **SDG2:** Key factors: rampant inflation and inflationary food pricing; profiteering by food companies; the impacts of conflict and climate crises on food prices; unacceptable food waste; and poor reach of humanitarian programmes.
70. **SDG13**: Climate change causes increased inequality between and within countries, and most exposed are people from marginalised groups. There is increasing water scarcity; land degradation; polluting urbanisation; and poor air quality. Member States are not respecting existing laws and regulations, nor their historical responsibilities. National Adaptation Plans are not compliant with the Paris Agreement.

71. **SDG16**: This goal is endangered by: military spending increasing at the expense of social protection and public services, leaving more and more people behind: conflict, war and occupation; polarised societies: weakened democracies: rise of right-wing populism and increase of ‘hate speech’; increasing numbers of political prisoners: attacks on environmental activists, trade unionists and human rights defenders: lack of access to justice.

72. **SDG17**: Misuse of digital technology, surveillance, cyberattacks, and exclusion. Digital regulation threatens fundamental rights of association, restricting people's online freedoms and activities.

73. **RECOMMENDATIONS TO MEMBER STATES**

   (a) Enact age, disability and gender inclusive pro-poor policies based on social dialogue, basic income guarantees and fully funded universal social protection.

   (b) Uphold human rights obligations and tax policies which redistribute wealth between and within countries.

   (c) Promote decent work in all sectors, including statutory minimum wages and equal pay for work of equal value, and recognise and rectify unpaid care work.

   (d) Strengthen regulation in the food system; promote sustainable farming practices; support community actors working with those most left behind.

   (e) National Climate Change Adaptation plans to include civil society and representatives from marginalised groups as full participants.

   (f) Uphold International Humanitarian Law obligations; establish a Special Rapporteur investigating consequences of conflict.

   (g) Ensure freedom of association, collective bargaining and the right to strike; access to justice for those furthest left behind.

   (h) End political persecution for peaceful activities.

   (i) Immediate release of political prisoners; respect for the human rights of environmental defenders and trade unionists.

   (j) Integrate human rights principles, gender equality, and intersectionality into the conception, design, development and regulation of digital technologies.

**XII. Communities discriminated on work and descent**

74. Affecting over 270 million people worldwide, which would constitute the 5th largest country on earth, *Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent (CDWD)* face stigmatization related to notions of “impurity,” “uncleanness”, or “pollution”. This results in segregation, endogamy, limited access to public services and infrastructure, harassment and violence, including sexual violence against women and girls, and the risk of slavery or bonded labour.
75. CDWD face systemic marginalisation and includes communities such as the Roma in Europe, Dalits and Burakumin in Asia, Haratin in Africa, and Quilombola in Latin America and others. Their discrimination is based on caste or similar forms of inherited social status/descent and is often linked to stigmatised ancestral occupations or exploitative forms of labour.

76. The status of CDWD, in relation to the SDGs, reveals significant challenges, leaving them behind across the SDGs:

77. **SDG 1**: Discrimination, limited access to opportunities, economic exploitation, lack of social protection, limited mobility, lack of accessibility to education and landlessness deprives CDWD from accessing basic socio-economic rights.

78. The practice of manually cleaning excrement from private and public dry toilets and open drains persists in several parts of South Asia. Across much of India, consistent with centuries-old feudal and caste-based custom, women from communities that traditionally worked as “manual scavengers” still collect human waste on a daily basis, load it into cane baskets or metal troughs, and carry it away on their heads for disposal at the outskirts of the settlement. ⁸

79. In Africa, hereditary slavery continues to impact several countries in Africa. The Haratines are one such community, many dependent upon former “masters” because of limited skills and lack of alternative economic opportunities⁹. In many communities woman from CDWD face extreme poverty and social exclusion, and are forced to perform sexual labour in the form of ritualistic forms of sexual slavery and prostitution, for example the Devadasi and Trokosi system.

80. In Europe, four out of five Roma live at risk of poverty. On average, 80% of Roma in the surveyed countries were at risk of poverty, with very second Roma child (54%) living in a household in severe material deprivation. ¹⁰

81. **SDG 2**: Disruption of livelihood, limited access to food and barriers to healthcare and nutrition post Covid-19 have led to an increased food insecurity for CDWD across the globe. Nearly 56% of CDWD women in India are anaemic, while the country average is 53%. A 2022 study from Turkey shows that an estimated 2.5 to 5 million Roma people living in Turkey suffer from extreme levels of poverty and nutrition¹¹. Similarly, the prevalence of food insecurity is really high (86%) amongst Quilombola.

82. **SDG 13**: Climate change disproportionately affects CDWD, exacerbating existing social, economic, and environmental vulnerabilities. Displacement due to climate change impacts CDWD, often resulting in loss of livelihoods, poverty, access to health services, access to water

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¹⁰ Roma in 10 European countries. Main results - ROMA SURVEY 2021 (europa.eu)
and clean environment which often leads to forced labour\(^2\). In the presence of inequalities, discrimination, and marginalisation, communities exhibit lower resilience to external shocks resulting from climate change impacts. This heightened precariousness amplifies vulnerability to all forms of discrimination faced by CDWD.

83. **SDG 16:** COVID-19 exacerbated existing inequalities and vulnerabilities, magnifying the challenges faced by CDWD. Roma are often faced with investigators who refuse to investigate hate crimes and prosecutors who refuse to prosecute the cases for breach of constitutional rights. Atrocities against dalits have increased post Covid 19 pandemic in South Asia.

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

84. In an era of unprecedented global challenges, the LGBTI Stakeholder Group emphasizes the critical importance of delivering on the 2030 Agenda and eradicating poverty. Our collective commitment to sustainable development means approaching intersecting issues while fostering inclusivity and resilience to enable LGBTI people\(^3\) to participate to their full potential.

**Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere**

85. LGBTI persons are at a disproportionate risk of facing poverty due to systemic discrimination, marginalization, and a lack of social and legal protections. Policies must be designed to promote economic inclusion and social safety nets amongst persons encompassing diverse Sexual Orientations, Gender Identities, and Expressions, and Sex Characteristics (SOGIESC). Ensuring no one is left behind can only be achieved if LGTBI organizations, families and communities are actively included to tackle barriers to access employment, education, healthcare and housing.

**Goal 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture**

86. Access to adequate and nutritious food, a fundamental human right, is hindered by food insecurity which disproportionately affects LGBTI individuals, especially those who are also members of other marginalized communities, including youth, migrants, older persons, persons with disabilities, women and girls, Indigenous persons, LBQ and transgender people. Discrimination restricts their access to employment and social services, exacerbating hunger and malnutrition. To achieve SDG 2, targeted interventions must address the unique needs of LGBTI communities, ensuring access to food, agricultural resources, and inclusive livelihood opportunities.

**Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts**

87. Climate change poses significant loss and damage, exacerbating poverty and inequality globally. LGBTI people are vulnerable due to social stigma, displacement, and limited resource access.

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\(^2\) Situation of Roma and Beyond in Europe-Global Forum of Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent (https://globalforumcdwd.org/status-of-roma-in-europe-regional-report-summary/)

\(^3\) The term LGBTI is used in this document as a shorthand for persons of diverse Sexual Orientations, Gender Identities, and Expressions, and Sex Characteristics (SOGIESC), recognizing the many words used in different cultures and by persons to reflect who they are.
Effective climate action must be intersectional, integrating LGBTI perspectives into mitigation and adaptation strategies.

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

88. LGBTI persons face barriers to accessing justice due to criminalization, discrimination, and violence. Military conflicts and the abetting of violent dictatorships and occupations destabilise institutions responsible for service provision and drive the displacement of LGBTI individuals. Governments must repeal anti-LGBTI laws, enforce laws protecting the human rights of LGBTI people and enact hate crime legislation. Inclusive institutions and dialogue between governments and LGBTI civil society are essential to build a foundation for lasting peace and justice.

Goal 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development

89. LGBTI populations play a vital role in driving positive change and in the achievement of the SDGs. Meaningful engagement with LGBTI persons and all relevant stakeholders in sustainable development is necessary for the realisation of a sustainable future predicated on inclusive and equitable development justice for all.

90. In order to effectively address SDGs 1, 2, 13, 16 and 17, marginalised groups such as LGBTI populations, must be included in solutions that ensure a more resilient and prosperous world that leaves no one behind.

XIV. Civil society Financing for development mechanism

91. The Civil Society Financing for Development Mechanism welcomes the UNGA decision to convene the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD4) in 2025. FfD4 provides a critical opportunity to UN member states to address the following systemic solutions to address the broken global economic architecture:

(a) Establish a multilateral legal framework under the auspices of the UN that would comprehensively address unsustainable and illegitimate debt, including through extensive debt cancellation: Current ad-hoc international initiatives to address debt crises are insufficient and systemic solutions are vital to avoid devastating impacts, especially on developing countries. The UN, with the core mandate to address critical global issues and being neither debtor nor creditor itself, is the only inclusive multilateral and democratic space that has the legitimacy and competence to define a multilateral legal framework to prevent and address sovereign debt crises;

(b) Agree on a UN Framework Convention on International Tax Cooperation to comprehensively address tax havens, tax abuse by multinational corporations and other illicit financial flows: We welcome the historic UNGA decision to start intergovernmental negotiations towards a UN Framework Convention on International Tax Cooperation. We therefore call all member states to support and engage in the process;

(c) Agree on terminating Investor-State-Dispute-Settlement (ISDS) mechanisms: UN member states should elaborate a multilateral agreement for a coordinated and permanent termination of ISDS mechanisms that has empowered transnational corporations to sue governments in confidential tribunals on a range of issues including debt, tax and increasingly climate action;
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 provided a stark reminder of the importance of universal, timely, affordable, gender-responsive, high quality and accessible public services, as well as sustainable infrastructure;

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: It is vital that long-standing commitments on international development assistance are realised in addition to secure commitment for the shortfall in unfulfilled targets in the past years. Broader vulnerability indicators must also be considered beyond per capita income to include middle income countries in development financing programs;

Assess systemic risks posed by unregulated or inadequately regulated financial sector instruments and actors: Member States should assess the current financial "non-system" and undertake decisive steps towards financial regulation, including regulation and supervision of Credit Rating Agencies, a global regulatory framework for the asset management industry and a global agreement on capital account management;

Establish a global technology assessment mechanism at the UN: There is an urgent need for transparent and inclusive member state-led deliberations on the current and potential impacts of on digital and emerging technologies on the environment, labour market, tax policy, livelihoods and society;

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 illustrated the importance of ensuring adequate fiscal space to extend social protection systems and offer universal coverage with social protection floors in line with ILO standards.

XV.Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030

Over the past three years, the world has encountered unprecedented challenges, including the evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic and record-breaking temperatures worldwide. Closely related, communities have grappled with climate-related disasters, further underscoring the urgent need for developing appropriate policies and countermeasures at all levels.

The recommendations outlined in this document have been formulated by the Sendai Stakeholder Engagement Mechanism (SEM) and encompass the combined inputs of our seventeen stakeholder constituencies. By considering the viewpoints of various stakeholders, these recommendations aim to embody a comprehensive and inclusive approach to disaster risk reduction and the profound relation with Climate Change.

Full integration of Disaster Risk Reduction in the Climate Change agenda

Governments, the UN System, non-state actors, and other stakeholders ought to fully incorporate Disaster Risk Reduction as a crucial element in their climate strategies.

Vulnerability, as the social aspect of Disaster Risk, stems from inadequate management of the interaction between hazards and communities' exposure to them. Given that Climate Change implies the emergence, intensification, and more frequent occurrence of potential natural hazards, it's vital to strengthen strategies for building resilience and promote collaborative efforts through
a comprehensive, society-centered approach. This involves confronting uncertainty and urgency with robust prospective, preventive, reactive, and compensatory measures.

**Just Financing of Disaster Risk Management**

96. Allocating resources in Disaster Risk Management (DRM) offers a distinctive and cost-effective base to supporting Climate Change Adaptation and Climate Justice.

97. Sufficient public funding for Disaster Risk Management is vital to developing and deploying comprehensive, accessible, and life-saving tools aimed at reducing disaster risk. Investing in accessible Multi Hazard Early Warning Systems (MHEWS) and offering technical assistance to vulnerable and marginalized communities, particularly those in the Global South, will help address historical injustices and enhance resilience.

98. Furthermore, effective engagement of locally-led civil society organizations, representing vulnerable demographics is crucial - in other words, participation of including women, children, youth, persons with disabilities, migrants, displaced persons, indigenous peoples, and older persons is to be prioritized. Additionally, locally-driven initiatives play a significant role in bolstering resilience and ensuring that solutions align with specific needs and are effective in maximizing investments. Therefore, it is imperative that public financing, along with support from the private sector and multilateral entities, be directed towards empowering civil society, intersectional groups’ engagement in climate action and Disaster Risk Reduction efforts.

**Loss and Damage immediate operationalization**

99. Despite increased attention to leaving no one behind, efforts to address the vulnerabilities of communities and individuals most at risk remain inadequate. To avoid leaving anyone behind, it is essential to prioritise enhanced investments to address the vulnerability of persons who are most at risk. This includes but is not limited to providing flexible and accessible financing and resource allocation mechanisms that enable these populations to respond to emerging risks and prioritise shifting needs.

100. The timely operationalization of a dedicated Loss and Damage fund after COP28 to fulfill climate justice objectives and provide tangible assistance to communities cannot be underestimated and this process ought to be conducted independently, immediately, grant-based, predictable and adequate. Furthermore, the promotion of transparency and access to finance ought to be aimed at fulfilling obligations and providing tangible assistance to communities affected by climate change. This underscores the commitment to upholding climate justice and ensuring an equitable response. It is crucial that this operationalization is conducted immediately and in a transparent manner, without the introduction of new risks to any of the stakeholders and in full, comprehensive collaboration with the Santiago Network for Loss and Damage and the opportunities for technical assistance the Network offers.

**XVI. Together 2030**

101. The 2024 High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) needs to add to its yearly session one primary goal: To set the Summit of the Future (SOTF) ambition high.
102. Even when the SOTF and the SDGs follow-up and review are different processes, their links are strong and needs to be clearly established. It won’t be possible to accelerate and deliver on the SDGs without providing international multilateralism with the required tools to do so, a task that the SOTF should undertake.

103. Areas of particular interest aligned to the SDGs under in-depth review that can contribute to setting standards for the SOTF are:

104. On SDG 1: Besides the failure to reduce poverty globally, new forms of poverty are rising. Particularly worrying is the “digital poverty” that implies millions are not benefiting from digital technologies, leading to increased inequalities within and between countries. Vulnerable groups that Member States promised to prioritize in the 2030 Agenda will be the most affected, including children and people with disabilities.

105. On SDG 2: The current global hunger crises is alarming and malnutrition continues to underlie most children’s deaths. Despite commitments to address nutrition targets made by Member States, little progress has been made. The HLPF should send a sound message for the Summit of the Future to prioritize addressing the issue of hunger globally.

106. On SDG 13: It is critical to keep pushing for more decisive action against climate change and to create new financing lines to address its impacts. We must prioritize fighting climate change disinformation in our efforts to achieve the Paris Agreement goals. The HLPF should push for the SOTF to ensure that climate financing is at the center of the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development, to be held in 2025.

107. On SDG 16: There is a long overdue need to reform the multilateral institutions, including the International Financing Institutions. Without improved financing for development and climate change, it will be impossible to accelerate the implementation of the SDGs. At the same time, if the UN cannot face its own reform, it will be morally incapable of asking other institutions to do the same. The HLPF should state clearly that the UN would not deliver accelerated SDG results without changing its main bodies’ institutions and ways of work, a responsibility to be held by the SOTF.

108. On SDG 17: Civil Society faces increased obstacles to participate in Member States led processes, where conference rooms are closed to Civil Society. Member States should revert back to previous practices immediately. To accelerate the implementation of SDGs, we need more participation, transparency, and more defined stakeholder engagement mechanisms.

109. Finally, the HLPF should explore how to push for more solid statistical systems in developing countries because it will not be possible to accelerate SDGs’ progress without data, and how to deal with issues that were not considered in the 2030 Agenda and, nevertheless, have direct impact on SDGs’ achievement, such as Artificial Intelligence.