

2025 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development

Second informal consultation – inter-governmental negotiations on the Ministerial Declaration

Statement on behalf of the EU and its Member States
to be delivered by the EU Delegation to the UN

Thanks to the co-chairs. I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

1. We thank the Co-facilitators for their work on the elements paper, which we see as a good basis to proceed with the preparation of a zero draft Ministerial Declaration.
2. We welcome the inclusion of many key elements that the EU and its Member States see as critical to the declaration this year, as well as the proposal to aim for a concise declaration, bearing in mind the various UN negotiations underway in parallel, with appropriate focus on the SDGs under review. Elements on synergies will need to be considered carefully. We would also welcome the inclusion of follow-up points on inter-connected commitments with focus on the overarching principles of the 2030 Agenda.

["Main trends, challenges and their impacts on accelerating implementation of the SDGs"]

3. We support the proposed elements in the first section of the paper on the **significant and interconnected challenges** facing us today and the need to strengthen multilateralism, global solidarity and policy coherence. We must overcome war, pandemics, the triple planetary crisis of climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss, as we continue our work to promote and defend the universality of human rights, tackle inequalities, eliminate hunger and eradicate poverty in all forms, including extreme poverty, leaving no one behind.
4. We also recall the urgent need to build resilience to crises and challenges that are derailing progress on the SDGs, particularly in the most fragile contexts.
5. The EU and its Member States reaffirm our determination and commitment to the full and timely implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals, with due attention to interlinked and **cross-cutting critical issues**, including the promotion of gender equality and a human rights-based approach. The Ministerial Declaration should also contain an explicit reference to the Pact for the Future, where we re-affirmed our course for these crucial remaining years, as well as the Declaration on Future Generations.

6. As we are approaching the 80th anniversary of the signing of the UN Charter, we must **condemn all forms of aggression** and call for respect of international law and its principles as enshrined in the Charter, stressing the interconnectedness of the UN's three pillars. We would stress equally that the full achievement of the SDGs requires effective, accountable, transparent, democratic and inclusive institutions.
7. The theme of this year's HLPF should be evident in this first part of the declaration, pointing to the crucial role of **science, technology and innovation**, as well as **data and evidence-based solutions** – and their communication in independent and free media – in ensuring realisation of the SDGs. A reference to the findings and recommendations of the Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR) should be included. We welcome the proposed reference to the **Global Digital Compact**, as this is a framework to leverage the transformative potential of data and science, ensuring they drive progress without deepening divides, and paves the way for an inclusive, multi-stakeholder and science-based AI and digital governance.
8. The EU supports reaffirming clearly the centrality of the Agenda 2030 as a global compass of our multilateral action, along with the indivisible nature of the SDGs.

[Priority actions for advancing sustainable, inclusive, science- and evidence-based solutions for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals for leaving no one behind]

9. Among cross-cutting issues, we would propose the inclusion of more substantive elements on **SDG localisation**, as this presents opportunities for review of territorial priorities and needs, strengthening local ownership, multi-stakeholder engagement and development. The declaration should reflect the critical role of local and regional authorities, which are responsible for the provision of essential public services such as health, education and urban planning and in achieving all of the SDGs.
10. More specific elements on stronger integration of science-based evidence in UN and multilateral action should be considered here. A reference to the QCPR and HLPF reform would also be welcome, as well as further reference to close interlinkages such as between SDGS 3, 5, 8 and 14.
11. We welcome the reference to the Paris Agreement and would propose recalling 1.5C **climate** targets, calling for ambitious Nationally Determined Contributions this year, along with effective implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global **Biodiversity** Framework. A reference to the plastic treaty as well as to **food**

security and nutrition should also be considered, as critical to the achievement of many SDGs.

[SDG 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages]

12. Under SDG3, the EU and its Member States would propose recalling the obligation of States to respect, protect and fulfil the human right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental **health**, which encompasses the rights to water and sanitation.
13. We support the proposed reference to the One Health approach recognising the growing threat to health security posed by climate change, biodiversity loss and anti-microbial resistance. We emphasise the continuing need to invest in pandemic prevention and preparedness.
14. We would like to stress prevention and treatment of **non-communicable diseases** ahead of the high-level meeting to be convened in September, along with the need to continue work on setting up supportive structures for integrated policies and actions to support **mental health**, especially in online contexts, for example to prevent digital addiction.
15. We underline the importance of a robust, efficient, well-resourced and well-governed global health architecture with the World Health Organisation front and centre.
16. Noting the need to achieve Universal Health Coverage, we welcome the inclusion of support for partnership and social protection initiatives to promote health and well-being in developing countries to accelerate access to health services, vaccinations and comprehensive health education. We would also propose this include a reference to the need for **sexual and reproductive health-care services**.

[SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls]

17. The EU and its Member States would recall that SDG 5, **gender equality and** the empowerment of all women and girls, is a catalyst for establishing peaceful, more equitable, productive, inclusive and resilient societies that harness human potential and sustainable development, which is instrumental to achieving all the SDGs.
18. The EU remains committed to the promotion, protection and fulfilment of all human rights and to the full and effective implementation of the **Beijing Platform for Action** and the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and the outcomes of their review conferences and remains committed to **sexual and reproductive health and rights** (SRHR), in this

context. Having that in mind, the EU reaffirms its commitment to the promotion, protection and fulfilment of the right of every individual to have full control over and decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexuality and sexual and reproductive health, free from discrimination, coercion and violence. The EU further stresses the need for universal access to quality and affordable comprehensive sexual and reproductive health information, education, including comprehensive sexuality education, and health-care services.

19. We welcome the proposed inclusion of elements on addressing all forms of violence, **including gender-based violence**, online and offline. This should also include a reference to sexual violence. We would also propose the reference to discrimination against women and girls and plead for their full, equal and meaningful participation in all aspects of society.

20. We welcome the proposed elements on ensuring women's political, social and economic **participation**, equal pay for work of equal value, universal social protection and inclusion. This could also refer to strengthening partnerships with women-led organisations.

21. A reference to climate change may also be merited under SDG 5, as its effects are disproportionately felt by women, girls and marginalised communities.

22. We also welcome the proposed reference to the care-economy and would suggest strengthening this, specifying improvement of working conditions in the care sector and recognising and valuing unpaid care work.

[SDG 8: Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all]

23. The EU and its Member States support a reference to the **World Social Summit**, as an opportunity to renew the social contract through a comprehensive approach based on human rights, social cohesion, solidarity and inclusive growth.

24. We welcome the proposal on strengthening support for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs).

25. "**Promoting international labour standards, social protection and income security for all**" as proposed will not suffice. We must respect, promote and realise international labour standards, in particular fundamental principles and rights at work; adequate rights-based social protection for all, which ensures income security, and decent living and working conditions, together with effective social dialogue.

26. The EU and its Member States advocate an explicit reference to elimination of **child labour**, which is missing from the elements paper. We must take immediate

and effective measures to secure its prohibition and elimination in all its forms.

27. Social and solidarity economy can not only “create new green industries” – as can SUSTAINABLE bioeconomy and circular economy – but can also be a driver to developing sustainable production and consumption models as well as localising and promoting joint ownership of SDGs across sectors.

28. The EU and its Member States would also propose consideration of additional elements on:

- i. Adequate, rights-based social protection for all and income security for all;
- ii. Recognising the central role of the International Labour Organization (ILO) in promoting social justice and decent work for all;
- iii. Recognising the role of effective social dialogue in promoting socio-economic development;
- iv. Paying special attention to youth employment and entrepreneurship;
- v. Recognising the role the Alliance 8.7 plays in ending child labour;
- vi. Noting the effects of digitalisation on the world of work and considering ways to address these effects;
- vii. Ensuring adequate living income and wages;
- viii. Including non-standard forms of work, such as self-employment, informal and platform work in the promotion of international labour standards, social protection and income security for all;
- ix. Specifying investment in equitable and inclusive quality education, vocational education and training.

[SDG 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development]

29. Colleagues, under SDG 14 we welcome the elements proposed for the zero-draft of the Ministerial Declaration, including on momentum and commitments stemming from the Third UN Ocean Conference in Nice, France this June.

30. We also support the inclusion of sustainable fisheries, the sustainable ocean-based economy and the precautionary principle, as well as on the need to swiftly conclude the negotiations on a legally binding instrument on plastics.

31. We recall that a **healthy ocean** and conservation and sustainable use of marine resources are critical to achieving the 2030 Agenda.

32. The EU would propose to include a call for the swift ratification and entry into force of the BBNJ Agreement (*on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction, under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea*) and its full and effective implementation, including the 30x30 protection and restoration targets under the Global Biodiversity Framework.

[SDG 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development]

33. The EU and its Member States look forward to a successful **fourth International Conference on Financing for Development** in Sevilla, Spain. We have called for and continue to push for high ambition, concrete action and effective follow up and accountability. We should be attentive to consistency with its outcome in this declaration.

34. We would recall that to end poverty and hunger we must target **inequalities**, within and between countries, including gender and between different segments of society, with action benchmarked against measurable impact. This should be reflected clearly.

35. The EU also remains committed to **International Financial Architecture** reform ongoing, including of Multilateral Development Banks, to better address global challenges. The EU recognises the need to enhance the representation of developing countries, where important steps are already underway. **These elements should also reflect significant reforms underway.**

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36. Dear colleagues, as stated by the EU and its Member States previously, we also call for **strengthened multi-stakeholder engagement** in the HLPF, ensuring that national and local authorities, the private sector, academia, social partners and civil society including youth organisations can participate actively in shaping and implementing SDG strategies.

37. We recall that strengthened **multi-stakeholder engagement** in the HLPF is critical for its success, reinforcing a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach to the pursuit of the 2030 Agenda.

38. The peer-learning character, participatory nature, accountability and harmonisation of VNRs should be strengthened. We would also highlight in this sense the importance of Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) to assess how the SDGs are being implemented locally.

39. We would reaffirm, finally, that the HLPF is a platform to ensure and enhance accountability for the implementation of the SDGs. We would emphasise the importance of a more responsive and impactful HLPF, to strengthen this mandate.

40. We look forward to continuing constructive engagement in this edition of the HLPF and these negotiations on the Ministerial Declaration.

I thank you.