



## **General Statement**

**On behalf of the European Union and its Member States**

On the occasion of the

**2021 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development**

organised under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

(6-15 July 2021)

The COVID-19 pandemic, its economic and social fallout, as well as intertwined global challenges such as climate change, environmental degradation, continuing biodiversity loss and growing inequalities, remind us that the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda is crucial to build back better and greener after the crisis, to strengthen resilience and prepare the world for future shocks. Providing a comprehensive response to the COVID-19 pandemic remains our top priority, both within the EU and through international cooperation and multilateral action. The **global recovery must be sustainable, green, digital, circular, inclusive and just**. The pandemic has put us further behind on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and we should step up our efforts during this crucial Decade of Action.

The 2030 Agenda continues to guide our global action as a shared blueprint for achieving sustainable development and a better recovery. **The EU and its Member States are fully committed to accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda** and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda to ensure effective delivery and achievement of the SDGs by 2030. This requires **effective multilateralism, with a reformed UN at its core**, and increased support for the rules-based international order, which defends universal values, promotes shared public goods and delivers benefits for all. Human rights, democracy and the rule of law will remain at the heart of the EU's response to and recovery from COVID-19 pandemic.

Global cooperation and solidarity are paramount to fight the pandemic. **Safe and effective vaccines**, as well as diagnostics and treatment, must be made easily accessible to all across the globe, in a fast and sustainable way and without any form of discrimination.

The EU has played a central role in the multilateral response to ensure equitable access to safe and effective vaccines for all, including by supporting the rapid development and production of vaccines. In May 2020, the **Coronavirus Global Response** raised pledges of nearly EUR 16 billion for universal access to affordable vaccination, treatment and testing. The EU and its Member States have announced contributions of over EUR 3 billion to the **COVAX Facility** making the EU one of the leading contributors to global vaccine access. In addition, the EU has committed EUR 100 million to support preparedness for vaccination campaigns in Africa and delivered vaccines for the Western Balkans.

Through our **'Team Europe' approach**, we have mobilised around EUR 40.5 billion in the fight against the pandemic with immediate humanitarian needs (in health, water, sanitation and food security and nutrition) as well as tackling the immediate socio-economic consequences. Our long-term response

focuses on the COVID-19 recovery efforts, including the strengthening of health systems and increase of local manufacturing capacity in partner countries. **Advancing global health** and strengthening international preparedness and response remains a top priority, including through promoting universal health coverage, reforming the World Health Organization as well as working towards an international treaty on pandemics within the framework of the WHO.

Global solidarity also entails **addressing the severe socio-economic crisis** the pandemic has triggered. That is why the EU has proposed a **Global Recovery Initiative** linking investment and debt relief to the SDGs to secure green and inclusive recovery and a truly transformative, post-COVID-19 path. Open and rules-based trade also plays a central role.

Within the EU, beyond the short-term response to COVID-19, the EU has put forward measures to bolster the recovery, to stimulate smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and high-quality jobs, supporting green and digital transitions. A new temporary recovery instrument has been set in motion, **Next Generation EU**, which forms the largest stimulus package ever financed through the EU budget. The European Green Deal's ambitions will be strongly reflected in the budget as well. Overall, the EU budget for 2021-2027 mainstreams climate action in all policies and programmes with an overall climate spending target of 30%. It will help reboot the economy and boost renewables, sustainable transport, energy-efficient buildings, and much more. We will create jobs in a modernised, circular and sustainable economy that can last for decades to come

Signalling the importance attached to the 2030 Agenda, and reflecting the European Green Deal as Europe's sustainable growth strategy, the EU is integrating relevant SDGs into the **European Semester**, the framework for economic, employment and fiscal policies across the EU. In line with the objectives of the Recovery and Resilience Facility, the EU Member States' national reform and investment measures will also help achieve the implementation of the SDGs.

The EU is committed to a binding target of a net domestic **reduction of at least 55% in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030** compared to 1990. The Climate Law turns the political commitment of the EU's climate neutrality by 2050 into a legal obligation and will be accompanied by a package of sectorial legislative measures and actions for a just transition.

Tackling global poverty, inequalities, climate change, biodiversity-loss and environmental degradation as well as bridging the digital divide are an integral part of recovery and avoiding future shocks as well

as ensuring better preparedness. This year the UN Climate Change Conference (COP26), the UN Biodiversity Conference (COP15) and the UN Food Systems Summit provide **unique opportunities to accelerate the collective implementation of the 2030 Agenda** in an integrated manner.

Recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic and delivering on the 2030 Agenda requires scale and ambition. It also requires a **whole of society approach**, through continuous and strong involvement of all branches and levels of government and of stakeholders, including all national, sub-national, regional and local authorities, national Parliaments, the private sector, social partners, academia and civil society. Mobilising the private sector is a key policy route to achieving the 2030 goals and development actors need to work harder to achieve this.

Reflecting the importance of stepping up cooperation on migration with partner countries, a comprehensive approach is needed, including tackling root causes, supporting refugees and displaced persons in the region, building capacity for migration management, eradicating smuggling and trafficking, reinforcing border control, cooperating on search and rescue, addressing legal migration while respecting national competences, as well as ensuring return, readmission and sustainable reintegration. An increased coherence between migration and development cooperation policies is important to effectively support partner countries and to create life prospects for people on the ground.

We must join forces to accelerate the implementation of the SDGs to achieve a transformative shift by 2030 that leaves no one behind. The EU and its Member States are firmly behind the 2030 Agenda and committed to do their share.