



**STATEMENT BY MR. SAAD ALFARARGI,
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High-Level Political Forum

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Ensuring that no one is left behind

**How do we protect the poorest and most vulnerable from the crisis and
empower them to realize the SDGs?**



Mr. Chairperson, distinguished delegates, representatives of the United Nations, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honoured to be with you today in my capacity as United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to development.

There is no doubt that the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a serious setback for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The pandemic has created an unprecedented global public health and economic crisis of inestimable proportions. With much of the world economy and human society in suspension for more than a year, every nation is experiencing distress. This has created sharp contractions and mass unemployment in manufacturing, trade, tourism, travel, retail and commerce. For the first time since 1998, the global poverty is on the rise.

At the same time, those who have been denied the benefits of past development efforts continue to remain marginalised, disempowered and excluded. Women, minorities and indigenous peoples, remote or rural communities, internally displaced people, migrants, people with disabilities and the poor frequently bear the brunt of this marginalisation. Unless we address the inequalities, exclusion and entrenched discrimination these communities face, durable and inclusive development for all will remain elusive and the recovery from the crisis will be slow and inefficient.

As we are gathered today, governments around the world are working on elaborating their national post COVID-19 economic recovery plans. The recovery is a massive challenge for each and every country- but it is also an opportunity to ensure that these plans are in line with the actual development priorities and can deliver on the promise to leave no one behind. To achieve sustainable results, the development priorities must be set by the people who development should benefit most. Communities must set their own development agendas, budgets and processes.

To ensure that the whole of society benefits from development, it is therefore essential to remove visible and invisible barriers that hinder community participation, such as lack of legal identity, high financial cost or social restrictions, and the shrinking of civic space. In other words, States need to **institute and budget for planning processes and monitoring mechanisms that enable everyone to participate**. Governments should consult with civil society on economic planning and reforms, and ensure their participation in monitoring the implementation of development policies and programmes.

I also want to point out that while developed countries have injected trillions of dollars into COVID-19 health, social safety net and economic stimulus responses, many developing countries severely lack the fiscal space to take similar measures. These constraints are exacerbated by high debt-to-GDP levels, high fiscal deficits, high costs of borrowing and the depreciation of many currencies against the euro and the dollar.

To address the immediate health response and economic support needs in developing countries, increased financial support and low-cost liquidity will be required. To build back better, I would recommend, among others, sustained increases in the rapid disbursement of budget support by international organizations, including the World Bank and IMF, to developing countries. Fiscal stimulus, in the form of unconditional grants, is also necessary to address the urgent health-care needs of developing countries, provide a safety net for the most vulnerable, protect jobs and support economic activity where possible.

Ladies and gentlemen, I hope that today's discussion will contribute to meeting the global commitment to leave no one behind and **I thank you for your kind attention**.