



# NGO MAJOR GROUP STATEMENT AT THE 2021 HIGH LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM

“SDGs in focus: SDGs 3, 10, 16, 17 and Interlinkages  
among those goals and with other SDGs”

Thursday 8th July 2021, 9:00 AM - 12:15 PM EDT  
Delivered by Sarah Baird, Let There Be Light International

My name is Sarah Baird. I am the Executive Director of Let There Be Light International, an NGO working to achieve SDG7. I am honored to be representing the NGO Major Group.

The NGO Major Group recognizes international solidarity and collaboration as vital for the success of the 2030 Agenda. This includes a stronger global commitment to respecting nature and fostering international, interdisciplinary, intersectoral dialogues and partnerships.

As has been noted, COVID-19 has intensified the need for accelerated, united action in light of the devastating toll the pandemic is taking on global health, social and environmental security, and progress on Agenda 2030. Interlinked challenges such as COVID-19, climate change, diminished biodiversity, and continuing crises rooted in economic, judicial, and human rights inequalities inform our call for accelerated action.

Indeed, inequality is interwoven into all of the goals. While some people have access to healthcare, medicines and vaccines, too many suffer without recourse. While some countries, communities, and people wield power in the form of money, military might, and prestige over others, many remain marginalized, vulnerable, left behind. While human rights abuses go unpunished and access to justice remains the domain of the few, societies will not know peace and inclusion. These are well worn truths.

But civil society plays a pivotal role in advocating for healthy lives and wellbeing, reversing widening inequality, and promoting a peaceful, inclusive world through partnerships and working across siloes.

Cooperation is the only path to success of the 2030 Agenda. Developed countries must fulfil their longstanding and still unmet ODA commitments (0.7% of GDP for contributions) and expand the G20's Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI) in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

We call on governments and world leaders to “reach the furthest first,” implementing equitable human rights-based and people-centered approaches to eliminating inequalities.

