

## **HIGH LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM, 8-17 July 2024**

### **Perspectives from the MGOS:**

#### **Partnerships for transformative and urgent actions**

**12 July 2024**

#### **Statement by Frances Zainoeddin, Stakeholder Group on Ageing**

32 years ago the UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio adopted Agenda 21 which declared that “One of the fundamental prerequisites for the achievement of sustainable development is broad public participation in decision-making.”

This basic principle gave birth to the establishment of the 9 Major Groups—representing women, children and youth, indigenous peoples, local authorities, workers and trade unions, business and industry, scientific and technological community, farmers, and NGOs to address the means for moving towards real social partnership in support of common efforts for sustainable development.

The 9 Major Groups expanded into Major Groups and Other Stakeholders (MGOS) following subsequent decisions taken by the General Assembly, including resolution 66/288 in 2012, referring to the Rio+20 Outcome document “The Future We Want”, which listed specific additional stakeholders - local communities, volunteer groups and foundations, migrants and families, older persons and persons with disabilities. GA resolution 67/290 of 9 July 2013, which established the High Level Political Forum, decided on the participation of the MGOS, referencing philanthropic organizations and educational and academic entities as specific additional stakeholders.

The MGOS, as an official entity, have since expanded to 21 constituency groups, which now include regional mechanisms in Africa, Asia and Europe, the Civil Society Financing for Development Mechanism, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction Mechanism, Together 2030, LGBTI and Communities Discriminated by Work and Descent. The breadth of MGOS membership and partnership brings to the regional and global levels the voices and concerns of a wide-ranging, diverse and intersectional group of people around the world. We know a thing or two about leaving no one behind.

The MGOS collaborate officially through its Coordination Mechanism, in accordance with basic principles for engagement, with official terms of reference, membership requirements and defined procedures for participation of their constituencies in the HLPF and other sustainable development processes.

MGOS participation in intergovernmental deliberations is coordinated with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, according to established procedures.

Given their combined expertise, experience, knowledge, innovative skills, delivery capacity and dedication, the MGOS have made significant contributions to transformative change. Executive summaries of MGOS position papers on the SDGs are presented as an official document to the HLPF every year, highlighting achievements as well as challenges, including recommendations for much needed action by governments. Many reports from civil society are also available, pursuant to para. 89 of Agenda 2030. Have Member States paid any attention?

Issuing invitations to contribute to drafting key outcome documents, declarations, pacts, programmes of action etc. is not the same as having a seat at the table when decisions are made. Attendance at meetings is not the same as participation in negotiations.

I thank Member States who acknowledge the work of civil society in implementing the SDGs and who support the participation of civil society in deliberations and decision-making negotiations. Such support reflects not only Article 71 of the United Nations Charter but also many General Assembly and ECOSOC resolutions over the years, including Agenda 2030. Member States must abide by those resolutions that call for collaboration and partnership.

The future belongs to all of us. Not just the young, or the unborn. We all have a stake in our future, irrespective of our social or economic situation, whether that future comprises only days, years or decades. Government legislation, policies and programmes have an impact on all our lives, **until the day we die**. There should be no question about our participation in decisions that affect our lives. This is what we work for, we fight for and some of our colleagues have even died for – our human rights, our dignity, gender equality, to be free from discrimination, violence, abuse and neglect, to be visible and to be heard. These are some of the principles of MGOS engagement.

Failure to achieve the SDGs is not just a lack of political will. It is a lack of common human decency, morality, compassion and respect for humankind. We are all in it together. There is no time to lose.

\* \* \* \* \*

666 words