



## United Nations Major Group for Children and Youth

### Sectoral position paper to the 2019 UN High Level Political Forum

#### Theme: Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality

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## Introduction

In accordance with General Assembly resolution 67/290, major groups and other stakeholders are invited to submit their coordinated sectoral position papers related to the theme of the High-Level Political Forum. This theme of this year's Forum is "empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality". As part of the session, the Forum will also review SDGs 4, 8, 10, 13 and 16 in addition to goal 17.

This paper details contributions from the United Nations Major Group for Children and Youth (UN MGCY). It addresses challenges, obstacles, and opportunities as well as policy recommendation for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other sustainable development frameworks at various levels, highlighting young people's priorities. This report also takes note of protracted and emerging issues.

The theme of the Forum - empowered, inclusive and equal - highlights a core component needed to accelerate progress towards a more sustainable and equitable future. Given the integrated nature of the 2030 Agenda and interconnectedness of countries and communities, inclusion of all people is needed to collectively move towards the world we want while leaving no one behind. Doing so will require transformations in our economy, social structures, financial systems, and political institutions. People across the globe have voiced resounding calls to shift away from the status quo, from the business as usual that perpetuates inequalities and structural barriers that marginalize many groups within society. Feeling empowered in the context of sustainable development exists across all levels - individual, local, national, regional, and global. Mechanisms and resources are needed to ensure that people are actively engaged in decision-making processes and in the implementation, monitoring, follow-up and review of such decisions.

At the global level, universal, equitable platforms that provide a space for people from various rights-holder groups and critical segments of society to join together need to be strengthened. Critical debate is needed to better understand the systemic barriers that prevent inclusion and equality from taking shape and to devise recommendations that can make it a reality. This includes recognising and addressing inherent tradeoffs apparent when integrating social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. Looking at the SDGs under review at the 2019 HLPF in particular, an example can be seen by the divergent trajectories of economic growth outlined in SDG8, reducing inequalities outlined in SDG10, and climate action covered in SDG13. Putting society on a trajectory that is consistent with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and aspirations outlined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development will depend on the ability for institutions, governments, corporations, and other groups to integrate principles that ensure people are empowered, inclusive and equal - while recognizing the existential link with the environmental dimension and that staying within planetary boundaries is required to uphold human rights, ensure security, promote peace, and strive towards a more equal world.

## 2030 Agenda: SDGs Under Review

The following sections provide analysis of trends, reflections from the youth constituency, and recommendations for the different SDGs under review at the 2019 High-Level Political Forum. While it is not comprehensive, it seeks to highlight some of the main priorities that have emerged from consultations, both online and offline.

### Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

Education is key for progress towards the achievement of all of the SDGs. It is a fundamental right and the basis of progress in every country. SDG4 recognises education as a catalyst for development, thus, it cuts across 10 targets encompassing different aspects of education from early childhood education to TVET (Technical and Vocational Education and Training) and decent jobs, including education for sustainable development and global citizenship. SDG4 also provides three means of achieving these targets which includes: effective learning environments, scholarships and investment in teachers and educators.

#### *Status of Implementation of the Goal*

Leave no one behind: In assessing the situation regarding the principle of “ensuring that no one is left behind” at the global level, current trends shows that the world is not on track to achieve the SDG4 goal and targets, with the potential to leave hundreds of millions of children, young people and adults behind on every continent in 2030. For example, participation in organised learning (one year before the official primary entry age) remains far from being universal. In 2017, two out of every three children (69%) globally participated in such learning but participation is uneven across regions. The enrolment rate is 95% in Latin America and the Caribbean, and in Europe and Northern America. On the other hand, fewer than half of all children participate in these type of learning programmes in sub-Saharan Africa (42%), Least Developed Countries (43%), and Landlocked Developing Countries (46%).

Out-of-school children, adolescents and youth: Despite progress on access to and participation in quality education over the past years, 262 million children, adolescents, and youth of age 6 to 17 were still out of school in 2017, representing nearly one- fifth of the global population of this age group. Of this number, 64 million are children of primary school age (about 6 to 11 years), 61 million are adolescent of lower secondary school age (12 to 14 years), and 138 million are youth of upper secondary school age (15 to 17 years). Moreover, while the Asia-Pacific region’s net enrolment rates remain decent for primary education, inequalities emerge at the secondary level, with varied access and outcomes related to national and household income, sex, dis/ability and geographic location (among other variables). Geographically, across Asia and the Pacific, net secondary school enrollment rates range from a low of 38% in Pakistan, to more than 90% in such countries as

New Zealand and the Republic of Korea. In the region, and for countries for which data are available, of the students' enrolled in secondary schools, approximately half are female and half male. The exceptions are Afghanistan and Pakistan, where there are significantly fewer girls than boys (UNESCO, 2012).

Participation of youth and adults in formal and non-formal education, TVET, and higher education: Participation of 15- to 24-year-olds in technical-vocational programmes is relatively low. According to data from 2017, the participation rate was 4% at the global level. By region, the participation rate was 14% in Central Asia, 13% in Oceania, 10% in Europe and Northern America, 6% in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2% in Eastern and South-Eastern Asia, and 1% in sub-Saharan Africa and in Southern Asia. No region has achieved gender parity. Female participation rates in technical-vocational programmes are lower than male participation rates in all regions, except Latin America and the Caribbean, where male participation rates are lower.

Skills for employment: The proportions of youth and adults with specific ICT skills vary considerably across countries and with the complexity level of the skill. For example, the proportion of youth and adults who have "copied or moved a file or folder" ranges from 4% to 95%, with a median of 56%, while for "wrote a computer program using a specialised programming language" skill the proportion ranges from 0% to 24%, with a median of 5%.

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics Database, September 2018.

Currently, people from the SOGIESC (Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, and Sex Characteristics) stakeholder group are discriminated against with the lack of opportunities available to them. Furthermore, there is a gap that exists between the market and educational institutions. Each year young people are entering the job market with unmatched skills. There is a need to develop technical skills but the desire for white collar jobs makes it harder to increase acceptability for technical skills. Additionally, market-driven skills do not always align with those needed to fill gaps in achieving sustainable development. There is a need to better align education to both meet changing market needs and promote sustainable livelihoods. There are pronounced gender-related disparities in relation to employment opportunities. According to a recent study by the Asian Development Bank, women in Asia are on average 70% less likely than men to be in the labor force, with the country-to-country percentage varying anywhere from 3% to 80%. This gender gap persists despite economic growth, decreasing fertility rates, and increasing education (ADB, 2015). According to estimates in South Asia, more women are not in participating in employment, education, or training (NEET) (ILO, 2015).

### *Progress on Monitoring*

In the efforts to track the progress of education, The Global Education Meeting was held in Brussels, Belgium from 3 to 5 December 2018 to review progress towards the global education targets and commitments in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It brought the global community together including youth experts to take stock of progress and identify strategic priority areas requiring political guidance and intervention for the

effective achievement of the global Education 2030 Agenda. Drawing on data from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, the GEM explored key questions around policy implementation and outcomes.

The final outcome statement of the meeting sets the course for the next four years, providing key messages and priorities for collective focused attention and action.

### *Policy Recommendations*

- Reaffirm the right to inclusive quality education and the fundamental role of education, training, lifelong learning, higher education and research as key drivers for sustainable development, including for climate change adaptation and mitigation, and call for strengthened collective action on SDG4 within the 2030 Agenda.
- Commit to eradicate illiteracy through formal and non-formal education and training.
- Commit to instituting and strengthening legislation, policy measures and strategic approaches to make education and training systems more equitable and inclusive “leaving no one behind”, including in contexts of protracted crises and humanitarian emergencies.
- Call for a commitment to include migrants, displaced persons and refugees in our education and training systems and to facilitate the recognition of their qualifications, skills, and competencies, in line with national legislation and international agreements.
- Commit to guaranteeing 12 years of free, safe, quality education for all girls, and ensures gender-responsive education and training to achieve the empowerment of all women and girls and tackle limiting gender stereotypes
- Commit to strengthening education for global citizenship and for sustainable development to promote values of respect for life, dignity and cultural diversity and contribute to social cohesion, democracy, peace and social justice and to improving the accountability of education as a public good.
- Commit to policy level integration of rights based, age-appropriate, contextualized and evidence informed comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) within formal and informal education systems and other community based platforms which are accessible, relevant and affordable for young people with diverse sexual and gender identities, people living with HIV and people with disabilities and other marginalized groups.
- Commit to open, flexible and responsive education and training systems that support the development of a broader range of knowledge, skills and competencies, from early childhood to adulthood, to contribute to sustainable, peaceful, inclusive and just societies, and to engage in decent work in rapidly changing labor markets.
- Call for ensuring publicly funded, relevant initial and continuous professional development, and appropriate recruitment processes, decent working conditions, professional autonomy and career pathways for teachers, educators, trainers and school leaders.

- Call for strengthened domestic resource mobilization and increased international cooperation, solidarity and aid to improve education quality, equity and inclusion, while prioritizing resources to those most in need, including in contexts of protracted crises.
- Call for the creation of Youth Commissions or Youth Advisory Boards that ensures policies and programmes around education and CSE are youth-centric and involve young people meaningfully at every stage.

## Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

While all SDGs are interlinked, there are unique and complex tradeoffs that arise when considering SDG8. Poverty alleviation is the reasoning behind promoting growth, poor health is a major deterrent from labor, quality education is crucial to preparing people for employment, and so on.

But SDG 8 also houses a fundamental contradiction: why are countries striving for growth when they are also supposed to achieve sustainable consumption and production? Unjust, inequitable, and uncontrolled growth are accelerating climate change and environmental degradation. This will rend all of our “progress” null; we must switch to economic paradigms that are people-centered and planet-sensitive, not profit-hoarding.

“Decent work” is necessary, but insufficient. The four pillars of decent work – rights and standards at work, full and productive employment, social dialogue, and social protection – are not well known, and the concepts are abstract to young people. Connected with growth, many rights are being ignored in favor of wages. Around the world, this is contributing to mentally and physically unhealthy young people. Furthermore, productivity gains reaped by new technologies, amongst other factors, are not equally shared. Social protection systems continue to be inadequate and human rights violated across numerous formal and informal sectors, especially jobs in hazardous and fragile contexts.

As politicians are talking about youth's transitions from school to work, young people are calling for transitions from an economic paradigm causing a global existential crisis to one that grows well-being and decent livelihoods for people and planet.

### *Progress on Monitoring*

Even the annual Report of the Secretary-General shows that progress towards SDG 8 is slow or backwards. The OECD's Measuring Distance to the SDG Targets Study reports that the targets relating to the economy and jobs are among those that are “the greatest distance” from being achieved.

Progress on monitoring economic growth is much more advanced than that of monitoring decent work, but the measurements are key. There is a rising debate on which indicators should be used to monitor progress. One of those includes the Beyond GDP movement,

while others focus on the apparent myth of decoupling. Financial means must be allocated to ensure a fast, comprehensive and just transition to a net zero carbon economy and to renewable energy. Institutions must end harmful subsidies for fossil fuels and divest from fossil fuel companies. We need to shift from our current linear economic model towards a circular economy. Beyond this, a larger shift to a critique of extractivism and the growing consumer culture is needed, while promoting a lifestyle of sufficiency. Alternative economic models that are not based on GDP growth are needed. This includes moving towards alternative measures of progress that reflect the real wellbeing of people and the health of our planet. Tools like the Youth Progress Index, one of the first instruments developed to give the full story of what life is like for a young person today, independent of economic indicators, provide a meaningful example.

The SDG 8 indicators for decent work are reduced to wages and unemployment rates, which mostly misses the four pillars. Further complicating the matter is that in extensive consultations, consistent asks have been made to go beyond just “decent work” but also “quality” jobs and jobs that are “fulfilling” or have “meaning,” which are much harder to measure. It appears as if the international community has given up on trying to measure the things that matter most, but despite their difficulty it should not deter from finding innovative and meaningful ways of assessing progress. Youth employment initiatives, such as the Youth Guarantee in the EU context, often fail to reach those who are socially excluded. This is due to many factors: lack of available and understandable information, lack of holistic approach and inter-sectoral cooperation, and lack of involvement of youth organisations and young people in the design, implementation and monitoring of measures targeting youth.

### *Policy Recommendations*

- Initiate a fundamental debate on what progress means and how society can be structured towards the achievement of collective wellbeing;
- Adopt alternative measures of ‘growth’ based on sustainable development and the real wellbeing of people and planet;
- Adapt economic models to ones which value qualitative issues such as human-growth over GDP-growth, and integrate this into basic curricula;
- Strengthen campaigns to ensure that everyone is aware of and actively using their right to decent work, but also ensure that people are being paid appropriately for their work and are happy at their job;
- Ensure equal work is met with equal pay for all, focusing on marginalized groups including, but not limited to: gender identity and sexual orientation, age and experience, physical and mental ability, nationality, ethnic, racial, and religious group;
- Full employment through Universal Basic Income and/or Universal Job Guarantee;
- Social protection for young people which encourages intellectual risk-taking to promote innovation;
- Social dialogue in the form of meaningful intergenerational dialogue to prevent constrictive social hierarchies which hinder innovation;
- Stop the promotion of “decoupling,” which evidence is showing is ineffective;

- Deemphasize market-driven solutions to economic problems and promote more community-based solutions;
- Quality, affordable, and equitable early-childhood, primary, secondary, tertiary, higher, and vocational education for all across the life course;
- Young people must be included in the decision-making process in a fair and meaningful way, especially for targets 8.6, 8.8, and 8.B. Trust in institutions is on the decline, and this can only be fixed by working with young people to fix governance structures;
- Judicial mechanisms should also be established in order to permit complaints on the right to work, including just and safe working conditions, investigated and adjudicated by the national human rights institution, or other mechanisms like ILO procedures, trade unions, etc.

Freedom of assembly and good governance: Strong labour unions are a crucial instrument to achieve decent working conditions and full employment. In countries with labour markets highly regulated by law, good governance is a necessity to keep going towards better working conditions and higher employment rates.

Collective agreements and tripartite negotiations: We are stronger together. Leaving negotiations to the individual will always favor the employer. When employees stick together in labour unions, their conditions are negotiated far better. A strong system of collective agreements and tripartite negotiations including unions, employer organizations and state make a stronger labour market with better conditions for workers as well as a efficient and satisfied workforce for the employers creating value for the state.

Security of employment: Insecure employment leads to social dumping and employers paying employees against each other in the fight for a job or more hours. All employees should have the right to a contract which states working hours, working conditions, the right to vacation, pension and rules on how to terminate the employment.

Social security and unemployment insurance: Unemployment should never leave you without an income. Strong universal social security including free education creates safer people and more flexible labour markets. It is a win-win. As a supplement to universal social security a well-functioning system of unemployment insurance leaves employees with less fear of losing their jobs giving them higher negotiating power in times of economic growth and securing them financially in times of layoffs.

Active labour market policy and educational programs: No market can regulate itself and companies will always take the easy way out no matter what it is. Strong labour market policies and programs ensuring to requalify the unemployed and match companies and potential employees is the last step towards full employment together with strong educational policies making sure that everybody has adequate skills.

### *Barriers and Emerging Issues*



- The degrowth movement and a rising number of non-neoclassical/neoliberal economic paradigms are challenging the framing and appropriateness of targets 8.1 and 8.2 based on their use of GDP;
- Decoupling appears to be a myth, as net emissions and net material usage are on the rise globally, potentially preventing the success of 8.4;
- Targets 8.6 and 8.B use quantitative indicators that are easy to create without much guarantee of quality or decency of work, perpetuating basic statistical bias;
- Similarly, 8.6 and 8.7 lack a fundamental understanding of the underlying causes of these phenomena, and will not be adequately addressed;
- Finally, current economic models (see targets 8.1 and 8.2) incentive companies to break labor laws, which will ensure that target 8.8 will never be achieved.

## Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries

The challenge of reducing inequalities is highlighted across the report, as it is pertinent with each of the goals under review. In addition to the comments made with regards to the importance of addressing inequalities for the different SDGs under review, a few additional remarks will be added here:

There needs to be greater effort in ensuring participation from local communities and groups that are marginalized (e.g. migrants, indigenous peoples community). A barrier hindering the implementation of many SDGs is that the most vulnerable and voiceless are often unable to contribute to policies that advance these goals. For example, with respect to SDG16, it is often times policymakers at the top that are determining the course of action. Strong institutions and peaceful societies are built by inclusive and participatory approaches that involve and empower individuals on the ground. To realize SDG16, there is urgent need to leverage best practices from community-based conflict-prevention and peace-building mechanisms and pay closer attention to the local realities in order to ensure that no one is left behind.

Austerity measures as a reaction to the economic and financial crisis often result in cuts to social spending and social protection programmes. Austerity has had an impact on the quality and accessibility of education, particularly for vulnerable groups of young people. Transitions from education to employment often lack quality. Precarious employment, low wages, no job security, has an impact on a person's ability to build their future. In the European context, young people can face age-based discrimination in accessing social protection. Access to affordable housing is often denied to young people. Young people are being priced out of the city housing market and are increasingly distanced from home ownership. Healthcare services are still too far from young people's needs and everyday reality.

The lack of legal frameworks prohibiting discrimination on the grounds of age in all areas of life (employment, education, social protection) pose a significant barrier to fighting discrimination. Furthermore, age limits constitute a form of structural discrimination against young people as they are usually employed as a mechanism to discriminate against people,

for example in employment, legal capacity or voting. Moreover, EU anti-discrimination legislation does not explicitly provide for the consideration of multiple grounds of discrimination to reflect the lived experiences of discrimination that some young people face.

International trade is generally considered as a way for reduce economic gap between countries, contribute to the development of countries and to the reducing of poverty. However, on one hand, the global trade and investment regime has a profound impact on human rights, given that the promotion of economic growth in itself may not lead to inclusive, sustainable or equitable development outcomes but to a higher unequal society. Obligations faced by governments under trade/investment law/agreements may impact on their ability to fulfil their human rights duties.

Our current economic system based on private ownership, largely unregulated competition in a free market, and the pursuit of short-term profit maximisation has led to a huge increase in economic, environmental and social challenges. A major reason for the highly unequal distribution of wealth is the way our economic system prioritises returns to shareholders over everything else. The pressure to create short-term profits has led corporations to pursue activities regardless of severe adverse consequences for our environment. This growth-centric economic paradigm puts profit over the well-being of people and planet.

The commodification of almost every aspect of social life in a pursuit of efficiency raises questions. For instance, money can often determine access to basic necessities such as healthcare, education, housing or food. Many feel they have lost control over their lives and are now being left behind by changes in the economy. The current system is based on myths derived from broken traditional economic models. Two of these myths are that wealth will trickle down and pollution will eventually be reduced as economies mature. Both these stories are flawed as inequality is rising in modern economies and emissions are merely outsourced to developing countries. Our current economic thinking needs to be replaced by new models for cooperation that are not based on narrow interests but on the destiny of humanity as a whole.

Furthermore, inequality is built into our economic system and preserved over generations due to the inheritance of wealth. As wealth is an important source of power, economic inequality is both a cause and consequence of political inequality. Political and corporate capture of the decision-making process can lead to a perpetuation of economic inequality. Privileged groups use their access to decision-makers to reinforce their own advantage, through sweetheart taxes, for example. Conversely, these groups will use their economic power to increase their political influence in many ways, from lobbying to campaign finance, from funding research to owning media (capture of ideas), and from nepotism to revolving doors between civil service and industry (regulatory capture). None of these factors are natural or beyond human control. Inequality is created and perpetuated through the way we shape, regulate, and enforce economic system and policies.

### *Policy recommendations*

- Equal access to social welfare to ensure decent and sustainable livelihoods for all. To achieve this, end discrimination in access to unemployment and other benefits or minimum income schemes. Also, promote maximum caps on income.
- Governments should support attempts at independent living through housing allowances or rent deposit schemes that can help young people access rental accommodation by guaranteeing their rental deposit.
- Young people's political participation is crucial to their interests and needs represented by policymakers. Countries should lower the voting age.
- Ensure universal health care coverage through the elimination of out of pocket payments, investing in prevention, and by creating more tailored services, especially for trans and intersex people, as well as refugees and migrants (particularly undocumented migrants).
- Enact legislation prohibiting discrimination on the grounds of age in all areas of life.

### Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

There has been a lot of momentum over the last few years on this goal towards Climate Action. SDG 13, coming under review during the High-Level Political Summit, happens to be a special goal as negotiations on the global response to climate change have been assigned under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), recognized as the primary intergovernmental forum with this mandate.

#### *Key Milestones*

With the adoption of the Paris Agreement Work Program (PAWP) in Katowice, Poland, there has been increased pressure on governments to increase ambition and deliver on their submitted Nationally Determined Indicators (NDCs). For developing countries, focus is on scaling up implementation of National Adaptation Plans since they are the hardest hit by the impacts of climate change. An emphasis on mitigation measures like the REDD+ program are also being adopted with developed partners taking into account the role of grassroots stakeholders.

The principle of "*the polluter pays*" is still in force to finance funding mechanism where developed countries have already pledged to contribute towards the Adaptation Fund and the Green Climate Fund. Multilateralism as a concept and the operationalization of multilateral finance was adopted under article 9.5 and 9.7 in the Paris Work Program which will serve to increase funding from financial institutions to meet the USD 100 billion dollar target by 2020 needed to address climate change.

#### *Progress on Monitoring*

Since the going into force of Paris Agreement and development of NDCs by Parties, process of monitoring or tracking the implementation of NDCs by non-party stakeholders has been elusive. Generally, parties report and track themselves which is unhealthy and too

non-inclusive for a process that is crucial for the planet. The IPCC 1.5 report which clearly spelled out the lack of time in action should mean no room for exclusionary actions.

However, very few parties include non-party stakeholders in their VNRs for climate action making it very hard for CSOs to obtain accurate information from the government or even build helpful collaborations.

According to the Inter-agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators that convened in March 2019, out of the eight indicators, only one has been classified under tier I, two indicators have been classified under tier II, with the rest still classified under tier III. This means that there still remains significant work to be done in order to achieve the set targets by 2030 and to promote implementation on a global and regional level.

### *Barriers and Emerging Issues*

During the COP 24, annex I parties pushed to have reduced focus or less substantive text on Loss and Damage which suffered massive pushback from annex II parties. Countries of the Global South are pushing for more than the current 20% commitment on adaptation against the 80% focus on mitigation championed by developed countries who prefer to mitigate their massive emissions against adaptation of developing countries who do not emit much but suffer the consequences of Climate Change. The mild compromise at the end is not satisfactory enough for the goals of the Paris Agreement.

### *Policy recommendations*

- Account for the reality that the reason climate change is a concern is because of its impact on human lives; social and political drivers cannot be separated from the climate change question, and should be included in all policy moving forward;
- Hold the protection of human dignity as a top priority in climate change policy;
- Include multi-generational ramifications in impact plans for development and when calculating the pollution impact of new sites;
- Reduce knowledge gaps related to the social dimensions of climate change, value indigenous and local knowledge in addition to scientific knowledge systems and promote research in a broader range of disciplines, including those within the social sciences, on climate-related issues;
- Engage young people every step of the way, to ensure that actions moving forward account for intergenerational equity;
- Invest in education, recognizing that inputs will yield results in the next two decades as the ramifications of climate change unfold;
- Encourage social entrepreneurship where enterprises help address the economic and social inequities that climate change will exacerbate;
- Promote the visibility of climate disasters as they occur and ensure global media outlets connect relevant environmental catastrophes to climate change;
- Implore member nations to recognize and provide resources to activists and NGO organizations that are furthering projects on climate change and sustainable development on local, regional, national and international levels;

- Invest in sustainable development and climate mitigation research programs that are scientific and replicable to similar regions in order to transfer learned knowledge rather than repeat mistakes at the cost of human well-being;
- Integrate local and regionally determined contributions (LDCs or RDCs) on a state by state, and community by community level to ensure policies are equitable, representative and realistic with the needs of granular regions and indigenous communities;
- Create a plan to address the imminent influx of persons who will in the future be displaced by the impacts of climate change (who might be considered as “climate refugees”), recognizing the prediction for having 200 million such persons by 2050.

**Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels**

SDG16 is a relatively broad goal that often articulates with many of the other SDGs. It is in many ways, a means to achieve the 2030 Agenda. An emerging issue is that progress among many of the SDGs are not being mainstreamed or institutionalised. In order to become truly sustainable and transformative, development practitioners need to work with national and local governments to ensure the implementation and mainstreaming of best practices and lessons learned and involve a broad range of stakeholders.

For SDG16, there needs to be concrete and locally-driven grievance mechanisms, victims support and transitional justice. There also needs to be more rigorous protections for institutions such as the press and journalism. Human trafficking must also be addressed by further integrating it into local law enforcement, including transfer of knowledge on how to appropriately deal with women and children so that victims are not criminalized. This can be done by supporting training of law enforcement, the distribution of awareness material to counter stigma within institutions and the public, and having more women in law enforcement. Lack of civic education among citizens means that many people are not aware of their rights. The citizens are misused by the political leadership for their own personal gains and to maintain power. At the same time, institutional corruption has been on rise in most of the countries. Thus the trust of young people in government, judiciary and media has declined. Youth mainly are used as dependents of the political system. Through civic education, people will be able to more effectively engage in political discourse and help shape a more inclusive and peaceful society.

To achieve SDG 16.2 to eliminate violence against children and specifically indicator 16.2.1, to reduce the prevalence of violence punishment of children, we need a clear and comprehensive message to be sent through the explicit prohibition of corporal punishment in law as a first step. Currently, 54 countries worldwide have taken this step and passed comprehensive law. A recent regional study has been conducted by the Council of Baltic Sea states into the challenges and successes in their region where most states have fully prohibited corporal punishment, in accordance with SDG 16.2. The study concluded with a comprehensive series of guidance on how to implement prohibition of corporal punishment. It showed that law reform should be universal and comprehensive, including

the domestic/private setting and be accompanied by public education and communications strategies, parenting support, professional/front line training, and monitoring and evaluation of progress.

As per Asia and the Pacific SDG progress report 2017, published by the UN ESCAP, SDG 10 and 16 are the only two goals where the region has not made any progress but also regressed, in comparison to 2015. Hence there is an immediate need to address existing shortfalls for promoting peaceful and resilient societies. In 2016, an estimated 408 million youth (aged 15-29) reside in settings affected by armed conflict or organized violence which means that at least 1 in 4 young people are affected by violence or armed conflict. Young people are affected by a number of long-running conflicts and humanitarian crises. Still, across the globe, young people are demonstrating their leadership in preventing violence, post-conflict peacebuilding, sustaining peace as well as building resilience in humanitarian contexts. In many places, they have unique access to their peers, families, and other community members. During outbreaks of violence, they are often the first responders who are able to reach areas that international actors cannot. Young people bridge the silos of development, human rights, humanitarian and peace and security. Thus, it is crucial to recognize their pivotal role and open avenues for young people's participation at all levels. But the Peace and Security Funding Index estimates that only 0.012% of global foundation giving goes to peace and security work with children and youth. Needless to say that it is insufficient.

Despite the UNSCR 2250 and UNSCR 2419, young people are still not systematically involved in programmes for peace and security. The urgency associated with programmes related to security or to countering violent extremism still sees the majority of resources invested on traditional law enforcement and security-oriented programmes. The consequence is the exclusion of youth organisations from political recognition and financial support to build peaceful societies. Therefore, it is necessary to support the active role of young people in a proactive and preventive approach on societal conflicts rather than only reacting when violence or societal conflicts occurs. Prevention work in the context of building peaceful societies is long-term effort based on improvements to civic and political participation, social and economic opportunities. It is essential for institutions to take this long-term approach, including through identifying and trying to resolve phenomena that could lead to mistrust, unrest and violence in societies, rather than only reacting to conflicts when they arise.

Governments and multilateral organisations must commit to partnerships based on trust with diverse civil society partners working on peace and security, including youth organisations. These changes demand the transformation of deeply entrenched attitudes and practices. It is therefore imperative to build on the foundation offered by UNSCR 2250 in shifting from reactive and remedial security responses to a more proactive approach to support positive resilience.

#### *Policy recommendations*

- Political inclusion: meaningful political inclusion in spaces for political engagement;

- Quality education (both formal and non-formal), as it is an indispensable to building peace and preventing violent conflict;
- Addressing violations of human rights and ensure a safe environment for right-holders groups when undertaking peace work;
- Investing in young people's capacities, and leadership;
- Transforming systems that reinforce exclusion: to address structural barriers limiting stakeholder participation in peace and security;
- Inclusion and recognition: collecting data on young people's impact on sustaining peace and preventing violence;
- Build youth-friendly financial support and mechanisms that enable youth contribution to peace and security
- Synchronize UNSCR 2250 and The Missing Peace report recommendations with existing regional and national peace and security policies and structures such as Africa's Agenda 2063. Develop national action plan for the implementation of the UNSCR 2250.

## Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

### Finance

A good repartition of the public budget and the involvement of the population in the definition of the budget are ways to make the States accountable and effective the different human rights behind SDGs like the rights to participation in political affairs, non-discrimination, to work and to education for all. Indeed, budgets are the principal instrument for a State to mobilize, allocate and spend resources for development or governance (e.g the justice, education, reduce inequalities, public institutions). Budget is a mean to create and support entitlements in implementing a State's human rights obligations. At the same time, as a policy instrument a budget serves other interrelated objectives, which potentially makes it a vital tool for turning treaty obligations -like international human rights treaty- into a national program of action.

In our current system, finance, trade and other means of implementation are certainly part of the solution but contribute significantly to the problem as well. There are systemic issues around tax evasion and illicit financial flows that limit contributions to development efforts, while the global economy is unstable and many countries are in debt. Sustainable development has become an overly politicized agenda, with continued need for the redistribution of power and resources at its core. This will require breaking policy silos, while finding and nurturing new models that are coherent with the overarching aspirations of the 2030 Agenda. There is need for youth participation in governance and accountability, as well as greater transparency. This could be done through participatory budgeting, public audits, and other mechanisms that promote accountability.

### Science, Technology & Innovation

### *Intergenerational lens & capacity building*

The recent A/Res/72/242 and A/Res/73/17 on the Impact of rapid technological change on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals emphasizes the potential intended and unintended consequences emerging from exponential and frontier technologies. Rapid technological change has consequences that are often only realized in hindsight. Anticipatory, transdisciplinary, multistakeholder and intergenerational approaches are needed to ensure technologies serve the aspirations of the 2030 Agenda. To achieve this, effective information sharing across all stakeholders is key, ensuring broad societal participation in technology risk assessment efforts and governance with regards to rapidly changing and emerging technologies. No one will be immune to the impact of frontier technologies, so engaging people across the lifecycle (children to elders) will be of priority.

Over the past few years, science and innovation diplomacy is slowly making a strong in-road in the space of foreign policy predominantly driven by the agenda of trade and strategic advantage. Many countries are slowly realizing that they, alone, cannot address the global challenges of inequitable healthcare, environmental degradation, water scarcity, energy crisis among many others. As the globe becomes more interconnected, STI policy decisions have implications beyond borders. Furthermore, the time scale of decisions is particularly important, as it is especially key for long-term sustainable development agendas not to be overlooked at the expense of the short-term security and political priorities. There is a growing need to develop consensus-based bilateral and multilateral approaches, especially in regards to STI capacity building, technology assessments and transfer. Close cooperation in capacity building for joint development and deployment of technologies for achieving SDGs will further efforts to foster peace, harmony and shared prosperity.

Capacity building, through both skills development and access to knowledge, can serve as an engine for innovation in technology policy, financing, and other means of implementing the 2030 Agenda. This should be at the individual level, national level (especially through well-established national science and technology roadmaps) and global level through south-south, north-south, and triangular cooperation. In 2015, all UN Funds and Programmes endorsed the Principles for Digital Development. One of the principles is "Design With the User", which means that successful digital initiatives are rooted in an understanding of user characteristics, needs and challenges.

### *Impacts of technologies*

Living in an increasingly sociotechnical world, context-appropriate applications of STI are crucial in maintaining development efforts. Determining the impact of technology depends on the targets used to measure it, highlighting the importance of avoiding misappropriating technological advance as social or economic progress.

Technology shapes behaviors by influencing perception and action, making it important for all stakeholders to actively engage in defining gaps for which technologies are appropriate solutions and the eventual design, development, and use of such objects.



Below are recurring themes and recommendations that have emerged:

- Viewing technology justice as an integral part of development justice, addressing inequalities is of priority;
- Embedded in the discussion will always be a dimension of uncertainty, much of which can be influenced by the way information is perceived, collected, analysed, and communicated. Narratives around the implications of technology change, albeit with global trends, are locally and context-dependent as the realities of technology use and access are not uniform across space/time;
- Risk reduction frameworks and technology governance is central to mitigating unwanted hazards and maximizing benefits, while recognizing the integrated nature of systems. Decisions made today have implications on capacities for accelerating progress towards the SDGs in the future, so policy responses should be carefully considered to avoid technology lock-in and path-dependence;
- Moving away from a "one size fit all" mentality, national frameworks should promote innovation that integrates traditional knowledge and reflects local contexts;
- Promoting open science, democratizing software/hardware, and enhancing the role of citizen - data is key to enable conducive environments for knowledge transfer, capacity building, and reproducibility;
- Perform ex ante and ex poste community-driven technology assessments through design, development, deployment, scaling, use, and discard;
- Develop frameworks to track the positive and negative, primary and secondary, short-term and long-term, intended and unintended effects of technologies.

#### *Promoting inclusion/equity (including gender lens)*

With the growing importance of digital tools and facilities to access the internet, websites have an important place in the life of citizens around the world in general and youth citizens especially. The use of digital tools by youth represent a strategic importance for the society as a whole in order to make the institutions more inclusive. However, challenges of access, protection, human rights and privacy arise. The enjoyment of the right to information without age discrimination or infrastructure bias, through websites and e-consultations should contribute to accelerate the transparency and accountability of public affairs and thus the concern and participation of young people in public affairs. A digital democracy is needed, overcoming censorship and other tools that limit or inhibit expression and collective action through the internet. Such tools have often been used to limit democratic input into public affairs, manipulate public perceptions, and limit accountability and social/political movements from spreading.

It is crucial to continue engaging women in substantive discussions around STI policy, reducing gender gaps across the education path and in STI-related sectors. However, aiming for gender parity is not enough to address underlying drivers of inequalities. This requires a fundamental paradigm shift - it is no longer about simply 'empowering women', there needs to be a change within the institutional structures that ensures that women are no longer treated like outsiders in a field they rightfully deserve to practice in. At the global and national level, assessment of the cultural and structural barriers that perpetuate gender

gaps in STI, especially at the institutional level, are needed. This includes understanding the underlying factors that inhibit attracting, and most importantly, retaining women in STEM fields. According to UNESCO, young girls, when surveyed in primary school, express an interest and aptitude in science and math on par with their male peers, but by the time we reach the workforce, only 30% of scientists worldwide are women. To address the multidimensional barriers preventing gender equity, we need to develop better metrics beyond simply wage gap and representation rates. Failure to identify and understand these trends results in the continued under-representation of women in professional fields that are an increasing share of the economy.

Finally, STI policies should promote inclusive design throughout the design, development, use, and discard of technologies. There is need to further explore conscious and unconscious bias in the design of technologies. Risks emerge from viewing technological systems as being unbiased decision aids and social equalizers, because any system that is created by humans is inherently affected by the bias of the humans that designed it. Examples of this are discriminatory design are machines that have been designed to fit and be operated by men, therefore excluding women from the workforce. An additional example is algorithmic bias in the context of machine learning, as has been recently addressed in the EU's GDPR. Discriminatory design and algorithmic bias are two of the most salient and important topics of that risk jeopardizing inclusive STI for SDGs.

## Data & Monitoring

Data has also become a central feature of the development agenda that requires a purpose-driven data revolution in order to turn “big data” into impactful and relevant bits. Data, nevertheless, remains a powerful tool with the potential to provide unique insights into complex systems. To fully reap the benefits of data below are several recommendations:

- Establish best practices for the appropriate collection, interpretation, and reporting of data to minimize bias;
- Promote transparency and openness to allow users to assess the saliency, legitimacy, and credibility of the process and tools used for collecting data, as well as designing technically-informed policy recommendations;
- Complement data from various sources, including citizen-generated data, and that from different knowledge streams, including traditional indigenous and non-formal knowledge systems, including both quantitative and qualitative variables;
- Validate the source of data to screen for conflicts of interest and potential bias;
- Enhance the statistical capacity at all levels.

## Emerging Issues

Various emerging issues are highlighted throughout the document, especially barriers that have the potential to jeopardize progress with the different SDGs under review. Additionally, below are some emerging issues that have implications on sustainable development progress more broadly:

- Poor framework for evaluating and addressing emerging issues before they become protracted problems or emergencies;
- Deliberate political, social, economic, legal, and cultural exclusion of groups that further entrench inequalities;
- Slow progress with the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, with much time and effort spent on discussing issues rather than evaluating the potential contributions of different solutions;
- Communication barriers between the governments and non-state actors;
- Politicizing of a large number of targets and turning them into political platforms.

## Coherence with other Sustainable Development Frameworks

### CSW/Gender

In this current global climate, hard-won women's rights, as well as equality and inclusion laws, are increasingly under threat. It is therefore essential that the empowerment of women and girls is not overlooked at the HLPF during sessions where Goal 5 is not under review.

Women, girls, trans and non-binary youth are hardest hit by poverty and all its structural disadvantages. Gender equality is essential for the successful implementation of all of the SDGs and a failure to recognise and respond to its cross-cutting relevance threatens the success of Agenda 2030. Reductive gender stereotypes and harmful social norms limit women and girls from achieving their rights, realising their potential or experiencing equal and unbiased access to public services and support. When their voices are not respected, they are not heard. Data-driven development must prioritise the most marginalized through gender-focused monitoring and evaluation. As legitimate development actors, women and girls' agency must be recognised by all stakeholders as experts in their own lives who should be consulted on issues that affect them.

Women represent half the world's population, but this is not reflected in their share of seats in parliament. In a very large majority of countries women remain seriously underrepresented at all levels of government.

In some countries, women cannot register to vote for lack of a birth certificate or identity papers, which are issued only to men. Political party quotas, legislative quotas and reserved seats may boost women's participation in political life, however, these measures when adopted in isolation are not enough to ensure equality. Indeed, in a number of countries, quotas are only as effective as their implementation regime. Where quota provisions are ignored, and sanctions are not applied or strictly enforced, women are not elected in large numbers. Through legislative tools, women in their ordinary life and as members of parliaments should be protected from sexism, harassment and violence. However, a 2016 study by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), based on in-depth interviews with 55 women members of national parliaments from 39 countries covering five regions of the world

reveals that these compartmental behaviors are global problems that impede gender equality and undermine the foundations of democracy.

The social and cultural representations of women should be positively improved at all the levels because the positive impact of increasing women's representation in public and political life will not be felt if the women who gain access are not also empowered to actively participate in the discussions and exercise influence in decision-making.

## Environmental Commissions

### *Convention on Biologic Diversity*

Biodiversity is the infrastructure that supports all life as we know it- but has yet to be adequately recognized as a key element of economic and social stability. The Convention on Biodiversity's current Strategic Plan 2010-2020—while comprehensive and ambitious, we have seen a poor implementation of the Aichi Targets in this framework. This framework does not also adequately address the full scale of the biodiversity crisis.

The new post-2020 framework must drive the conservation and recovery of biodiversity through more effective implementation at the global, national, local, and sectoral level.

Regarding the structure of the post-2020 biodiversity framework, we recommend the following:

- Reorganizing and refining the content of the current framework into a clear, logical, structure, that clarifies the relationship between targets and maps a pathway to transformational change. These targets could be clustered under enabling conditions, actions, and conservation outcomes, underpinning a simple overarching apex goal that conveys the fundamental importance of nature.
- Ensuring the targets are clear, concise and measurable, to clarify the actions needed and enable progress to be measured. All of us must clearly communicate the importance of biodiversity for people's well-being and the foundational role of nature in everyday life.

In developing the post-2020 framework, we urge the establishment of an Open-Ended Working Group open to multiple all stakeholders, and the organization of ministerial and heads of state-level meetings to discuss and raise the political relevance of this agenda. We look forward to continued discussions with Parties on these issues and to exploring the development of targets and indicators, to ensure the development and implementation of an ambitious and effective post-2020 biodiversity framework—the very future of our planet depends on it.

### *Forests*

We call for an awakening to the reality that young people are valuable partners and agents of change in efforts to deliver sustainable forest management, particularly in facilitating collective action, building capacity, and sharing the message with everyday people.

- SDG 15 feeds into many others of the SDGs and it is crucial to foster cross-sectoral collaboration. Young people are natural innovators, able to contribute to this effort by taking on a holistic approach to landscape management and by using their networks to create lasting change.
- It is essential to share the Global Forest Goals and Sustainable Development Goals beyond our traditional audiences and engage them in our new direction. Equipped with trust in their abilities and the resources needed, young people will play a key role in making sure that these key messages leave conference halls and can be enacted by people on the ground.
- In order to achieve the ambitious goals set in the Agenda 2030 it is essential that we involve a diverse representation across gender, ethnicity and age. This is a basic requirement to achieving success and making sure no one is left behind.

## Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction

### *Brief status of implementation of the Sendai Framework*

Within the UN MGCY, the policy and advocacy strategy strives to facilitate a minimum of 3 consultations per region, and produce regional DRR position papers which feed into a global position paper. Following up on last year's commitments we now have working groups in all regions that have been taking active roles in preparation for the regional platforms and Global Platform. Our youth actions are being mapped and showcased in regional and global platforms, as well as social media.

Additionally, our capacity building strategy aims to disseminate the Seeds for a Safer Tomorrow Toolkit which was produced and presented in a webinar and at the GPDRR in 2017. Our knowledge stream helps disseminate data through open platforms. Since Sendai, we have been taking collective actions and reporting on their progress. Some of these are:

- The Young Scientist Roadmap launched at the Science and Technology Conference in January 2016. This was designed to further enhance and support the UNISDR Science and Technology Roadmap.
- The Youth Action Plan (YAP): This is the primary mechanism developed by UN MGCY in consultation with UNISDR to mobilize youth regionally and globally to meaningfully contribute to the Sendai Framework priority areas.

### *Policy recommendations*

- Promote the building of DRR culture by ensuring broader engagement and coordination of decision makers in bridging the gap between communities, practitioners, science and technology community, the private sector and civil society organisations;

- Organize consultations on the draft programme for the 2019 Global Platform to mobilize broader and more inclusive participation to find challenges and trends in DRR;
- Support the development/updating of sub-regional, national, and local DRR Strategy and plans in line with the Sendai Framework for Action and the PoA.

How can we ensure that the private sector aligns with the Sendai Framework and SDGs? Through sustainable consumer behavior and social pressure, the private sector can be influenced to align with the Sendai Framework. Working in a bottom-up approach, the people, with an adequate background in the capacities of the Sendai Framework, can start the discussion to put pressure on the private and public sectors around them to keep them safe when hazards arise.

### *Emerging issues*

The GPDRR will be more transformative if we systematically designated a space to discuss emerging issues in the context of a changing climate or anthropogenic hazards. The new trends in hazards can either hinder or enhance resilience. These emerging issues should be captured and integrated into national and local DRR strategies through an adaptive management approach.

Additionally, one of the greatest challenges for capacity building implementation is the recognition of needs and demands of people (or stakeholders), especially those considered a vulnerable community (e.g. children, women, elderly, indigenous, socio-economically disadvantaged, or people exposed to frequent hazards). There is a need to ensure that capacity building for DRR is coherent with other agendas/frameworks, and SDGs as well as stakeholders while also providing effective measures in a short time frame and in fragile contexts.

## Global Compact on Migration

### *Brief status of implementation of the Global Compact on Migration*

The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration (GCM) was adopted this past December by many (but not all) Member States, and it is now moving into the implementation phase. The UN MGCY Migration working group has been and will continue to be engaged in the consultation process in order to gather the priorities of youth around the world, provide a channel for them to shape policy, and help drive action at all levels of implementation. In particular, we conducted various consultations including a Youth Forum ahead of the ICM, attended by 150 young people from more than 50 countries. These consultations allowed to consolidate the following priorities in regards to the issue of migration and the implementation of the GCM.

### *Policy recommendations*

On this basis, we recommend that the following global priorities are included in the next phases of consultations and implementation:

- The creation of jobs for youth, and the ensurement of decent work;
- The promotion of quality education and transnational recognition of skills;
- The investment in the mitigation of drivers of forced migration, such as climate change and disaster risk reduction;
- Combating the exploitation of youth, such as human trafficking and child detention, that can occur throughout each phase of migration.

In terms of regionally specific priorities, we recommend that the following are included in the relevant action plans:

- Africa: Increase efforts to facilitate the integration of migrants in their host and origin communities, including through entrepreneurship and skills training.
- Americas: Mitigate economic drivers of migration by increasing local opportunities, and facilitating safe and orderly migration for migrants displaced as a result of conflict and emergency situations.
- Asia: Ensure further legal pathways for migration, with attention given to those displaced from such drivers of migration as climate change.
- Europe: Ensuring migrants' access to basic services, and combating misinformation on migrants and migration processes, policies, and impact.
- Middle East and North Africa: Ensure access to education and work protections for youth migrants.

### *Emerging issues*

Implementation of the GCM is the biggest challenge requiring effective national action, international collaboration, and mobilization of resources. A great obstacle is the reluctance of many member states to the GCM and act towards its objectives. This will require crucial and substantial advocacy, implementation and awareness raising work. Youth are in a great position to be able to contribute to this, and we are committed to do it. For this, we need the support of the UN System and relevant actors by:

Provide UN MGCY with a guaranteed seat at the table, at all levels in the implementation, follow-up, and review (iFUR) process of the Global Compact, including:

- An official platform for UNMGCY in the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD), including at the Mayoral Mechanism;
- Youth Forum as a fixed, official, funded part of International Migration Review Forum;
- An official platform for UNMGCY in the UN Migration Network, to be involved and serve as a decision-maker in the formation and execution of the network;
- An official platform at regional, national, and local levels of implementation.

Provide funding to enable youth engagement at all of the aforementioned platforms.

Collect data on migrants disaggregated by age, to know the number of youth impacted, and what kind of policies we need. As part of this, a chapter should be created to explicitly address youth in future reports on international migration.

## Humanitarian Affairs

The world has been experiencing humanitarian crises that are not only large in magnitude but also more complex due to socio-political factors. There is no safe human settlement without peace. Unsafe human settlements and humanitarian crises and emergencies are a huge threat to quality education, sustainable economic growth, reducing inequalities and sustaining peace. Further, the world must not become numb with the continuous violations in international laws and ruthless attacks to civilians and humanitarian workers. Member states must continue to promote harmonisation and maintain the humanitarian corridor in which all civilians and humanitarian workers are safe. On the other hand, various humanitarian organisations must be held accountable to all their interventions and the people they work with (beneficiaries), with technical and ethical standards, in accordance with the Humanitarian Principles, the Code of Conduct for NGOs and Humanitarian Actors, and the SPHERE guidelines.

It should also be noted that, as seen in such an example, climate change and environmental degradation may further threaten effective humanitarian response and cause even complex crisis. Everyone has a moral obligation and a role in ensuring the continuous mitigation of risks, thus building resilience together with local communities, as well as improvement of both local and international responses to emergencies/crises. The human potential of young people are often underused if they are only considered as a vulnerable population. UNMGCY applauds to the growing companionship with various international organisations to uphold the Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action, which recognises the needs, rights, priorities and responsibilities of the next generation at local, regional and global levels. This ensures meaningful youth inclusion and engagement in all spheres of humanitarian actions, at all levels.

There can never be development without peace; thus we call on all Member States to place it high on their agendas at all levels, and be obliged to promote social inclusion and the culture of non-violence and peace. UNMGCY recognizes the efforts of young people around the World, from Asia, Middle East to Eastern Europe, and from Africa to the Americas, youth are leading peace processes to making the World a better place for all. Therefore, we say 'peace is the ultimate need.'

## New Urban Agenda

The New Urban Agenda emphasizes the urban and territorial dimension of the Sustainable Development Goals, including SDG 11 to make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. It reaffirms a global commitment to sustainable urban development as a critical step in realizing sustainable development, in an integrated and coordinated manner at the global, regional, national, subnational and local levels, with the participation of all relevant



actors. Guaranteeing local community engagement in implementing global agendas is imperative but it requires overcoming languages, cultural, social, economic, and administrative barriers, as well as addressing digital skills gaps and shrinking civil society spaces, through providing political dimension to thematic issues; aid, data, urban space, and others being exclusive and presents the imbalance of powers.

### *Policy Recommendations*

- Expand the tax basis of local governments with due consideration of horizontal inequality between municipalities. It is often the case that the local governments have so much mandate with little finance. The municipality should have adequate resources to meet their mandatory delivery through transfers from national governments and allocate youth-led responsive budgeting;
- Promote horizontal and vertical integration of governance in order to address the territorial continuum as such, as opposed to rural and urban dichotomy. Multi-level governance is key to address different aspects of our lives. Without such a corporation, there is always a hall in delivering the social protection floor as well as tackling environmental degradations;
- The enabling environment for successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda and New Urban Agenda requires a shift in pre-analytical views; from growth-centric treating planet and people as incidental externalities to one that considers the economy is a subset of the society which is a subset of the environment. Sustainable urban development should primary respect human rights, ensure inclusion, long-term resilience, equitable societies, and respect of planetary boundaries and biologic carrying capacities;
- Achieve necessary financial resources as well as providing a flexible economy, such as through a minimum and maximum income ratio. This also tackles the perpetual dichotomy where the informal sector in urban areas is considered wrong while formalism is a fundamental solution. By providing a social protection floor, without formalising, it can provide the liveable space for all;
- Protect and promote child and human rights in urban policy. Amplify the voices and roles of young children especially young women and girls, as well as their solutions in strengthening sustainable urban development
- Promote inclusive public spaces, including through age-and-responsive policies.

## Science-Policy Interface

The Science-Policy Interface (SPI) has become an increasingly important component of sustainable development within the United Nations system. It provides the foundation for empirically-derived policies, facilitates the use of science as an enabler in policy implementation and review, and applies a unique and integral scientific lens to the monitoring of impact. The Rio+20 outcome document, The Future We Want, solidified the role of SPIs and sought to operationalize its place within all sustainable development processes. Additionally, resolution 67/290 that established the High-Level Political Forum seeks to strengthen the SPI.

The Science Policy Interface has become an integral tool for identifying emerging priorities, drawing links between the interconnected nature of thematic issues, and devising solutions to address challenges and barriers to progress. In order to mobilize young scientists, engineers, and practitioners in this discussion, the UN MGCY SPI Platform strengthens youth policy priorities and practice in sustainable development by equipping them with tools to drive empirically-informed, context-specific, and purposeful change through science, technology, innovation, and data.

This year the 2019 Global Sustainable Development Report will be released. As one of the two mandated reports in the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda, it serves as an 'assessment of assessments' to strengthen the science-policy interface and provide a strong evidence-informed instrument to support policymakers in promoting poverty eradication and sustainable development. An independent group of 15 scientists has been working with the UN, representing a variety of backgrounds, scientific disciplines and institutions, ensuring geographical and gender balance. They have facilitated dialogue amongst stakeholders in the scientific community, sought inputs from stakeholders through an open form, and strived to follow an inclusive and peer-accountable process. Below are some recommendations for the GSDR in 2019 and future editions of the quadrennial report:

- Continue and enhance meaningful participation of different stakeholders, including through Major Groups and Other Stakeholders, who are also responsible for contributing to the implementation, monitoring, follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
- Shifting to a quadrennial report might be more practical for various reasons, including better understanding trends over time, but changes can happen rapidly with need for policy action. GSDR should be accompanied by yearly briefs that highlight trends and synthesize latest knowledge on various issues.
- The GSDR, a static report, should be complemented with interactive tools (e.g. models, simulations) that highlight national and sub-national data/trends more accurately, as well as allow for stakeholders to test different scenarios to better inform policy design.
- The GSDR should strive to build on and highlight key messages from other key reports on sustainable development from across the UN system (e.g. Global Environmental Outlook) to avoid duplication of efforts.
- Promote spaces and provide concrete recommendations for enhancing the interaction across science, policy and society. For example, this might involve effective use of citizen science, science literacy in communities, participatory decision making and budgeting, establishing a common vocabulary/definitions to avoid divergence in interpreting knowledge, and more.

### *Diverse sources of knowledge*

There is wide recognition that the complex problems facing sustainable development are rooted within local systems; that these local systems are comprised of financial, institutional, social, cultural, technical, and environmental sub-systems; and that they are grounded by a diverse network of stakeholders that manage and rely on these sub-systems. These

stakeholders experience and operate within these systems daily and understand the nuanced, dynamic interactions that drive it to success and to failure. Leveraging local and indigenous knowledge is key to understanding how systems operate and what actions can be taken to strengthen them. Yet, local knowledge is not something to be taken and used as a commodity. Often, approaches to engage local stakeholders are extractive, in that local knowledge is harnessed and used without engaging stakeholders actively in the solutions. In addition, local knowledge is very often disregarded in favor of external (i.e. scientific and professional) knowledge, leading to developmental dimensions that lack sustainability and ownership at local levels.

At the same time, local and indigenous stakeholders carry non-extractable information that is embedded in the culture of a community. Prioritization and expansion of local stakeholder involvement is essential to retain nuanced understanding of each context. Furthermore, informing local and indigenous knowledge with external “formal” knowledge (scientific and professional) instead of the reverse, supports local and indigenous sovereignty and capacity to innovate. Further discussion is needed on the next steps, including tools to harness local knowledge, engaging local stakeholders in developing and implementing solutions, and assessing approaches that attempt to do so.