

**Input for the 2025 High-level Political Forum**  
**United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD)**

**Your assessment of the impacts of the multiple and interconnected crises on the implementation of SDGs 3, 5, 8, 14 and 17.**

**Rising Inequality (SDG 3, 5, 8, 17)**

Global inequality has surged, with wealth concentrated among the top 1%, while the global South falls behind.

- Healthcare access remains unequal, pushing millions into poverty.
- Economic precarity worsens for informal workers facing instability and rising costs.
- Democratic backsliding undermines racial and gender justice.

**Strained Healthcare and Social Protection (SDG 3, 5, 8)**

- The Covid-19 pandemic exposed fragile healthcare systems weakened by austerity and privatization.
- Essential medicines remain inaccessible due to supply chain disruptions, economic sanctions and monopolistic practices.
- Women and informal workers lack protections despite bearing economic burdens.

**Gendered Economic and Social Disruptions (SDG 5, 8, 17)**

Crises have reversed gender equality gains.

- Unpaid care work has increased, limiting women's financial independence and equal enjoyment of rights.
- Informal jobs, mostly held by women and marginalized workers, were first to be cut.
- Gender-based violence has surged amid economic stress.
- Anti-rights movements are eroding protections for women's and LGBTQI+ rights.

**Climate Inequality and Crises (SDG 14, 17)**

The climate crisis deepens inequalities, impacting low-income countries most.

- Climate disasters are increasing in frequency and severity, displacing millions and worsening food and water insecurity.
- Developing countries face rising debt while wealthy countries fail on climate finance.
- Deforestation, extraction and pollution are depleting resources and fueling conflicts.
- The green transition risks excluding marginalized communities.

**Democratic Backsliding and Weakening Multilateralism (SDG 17)**

- Multilateral institutions are increasingly shaped by corporate interests.
- Nationalist policies undermine cooperation on climate, health and economy.
- Anti-rights movements threaten gender, racial and environmental justice.
- Rising debt forces the global South to cut social protection.

**Three key areas where sustainable, inclusive, science-and evidence-based solutions for achieving the SDGs and leaving no one behind are being effectively delivered, especially related to the cluster of SDGs under review in 2025, also bearing in mind the three dimensions of sustainable development and the interlinkages across the Goals and targets.**

#### **Strengthening social protection and labour rights (SDG 3, 5, 8, 17)**

Universal, rights-based social protection is essential for mitigating crises, fostering resilience and reducing inequality.

- Universal healthcare and income security reduce poverty and gender disparities, strengthening public trust.
- Living wages, informal worker protections and collective bargaining promote decent work and economic security.
- Integrated social protection systems enhance livelihoods and resilience.
- Simplified taxation and social insurance schemes expand social security for micro-enterprises and self-employed workers.

#### **Using digital technologies for equitable healthcare and social services (SDG 3, 5, 17)**

Digital healthcare, AI-assisted diagnostics and telemedicine improve health access, particularly in underserved areas. However, regulations, good governance and protection of data privacy are essential to ensure that advancements in AI and digitalization contribute to global health in a safe, ethical and equitable manner.

- AI-driven diagnostics and mobile health apps enhance early disease detection and reproductive healthcare, benefiting women and marginalized groups.
- Vaccine and medicine distribution frameworks, like COVAX and WHO's Digital Health Strategy, strengthen global health cooperation.
- Digitalized social protection systems enable more efficient delivery of benefits and increase access.

#### **Resilience-building through holistic approaches (SDG 3, 5, 8, 17)**

The UNRISD project Roots of African Resilience (RoAR) integrates local knowledge, scientific insights and policy frameworks to strengthen crisis response and resilience.

- RoAR identifies key resilience drivers, providing a flexible framework for crisis mitigation.
- The model highlights interlinkages between risks, development and resilience, offering evidence-based solutions.
- By integrating care systems, gender policies and social protection, RoAR fosters sustainable, inclusive development.

**Three examples of measures to accelerate progress towards SDGs through well-coordinated actions**

**in key transitions to bring progress to scale (food security, energy access and affordability, digital connectivity, education, jobs and social protection, climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution), building on interlinkages between SDGs to ensure cohesive progress.**

#### **Invest in care systems (SDG 3, 5, 8, 17)**

Care work is the foundation of resilient societies but remains undervalued and underfunded. Recognizing, reducing and redistributing unpaid care work is key to gender equality, economic stability and sustainable development.

- Expand universal, gender-responsive care policies to improve public health, economic productivity and gender justice.
- Increase investments in care infrastructure and services, ensuring equitable access to childcare, eldercare and healthcare.
- Strengthen labour protections for care workers, ensuring fair wages and job security.

#### **Strengthen integrated social protection systems (SDG 3, 5, 8, 17)**

Social protection must evolve into permanent, universal systems to combat inequality.

- Expand social protection to informal, care and migrant workers for healthcare, income security and labour protections.
- Integrate social protection with labour policies to support just economic outcomes.
- Prioritize state-driven public service delivery, reducing corporate influence over healthcare and social systems.

#### **Just transition for climate, care and economic justice (SDG 8, 13, 14, 17)**

The transition to low-carbon economies must be equitable, inclusive and people-centered.

- Ensure just transitions benefit workers and disadvantaged communities, not just green industries.
- Align climate finance with labour rights and social protections, providing retraining and job security programmes.
- Invest in Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) for a green, inclusive economic transformation.

#### **Countering anti-gender narratives and defending rights (SDG 3, 5, 8, 17)**

Anti-gender movements and democratic backsliding threaten gender equality, LGBTQI+ rights and inclusive governance.

- Expand funding for feminist and gender justice initiatives.
- Increase representation of women, LGBTQI+ communities and marginalized groups in leadership.
- Regulate misinformation that fuels gender discrimination and ensure rights-based discourse.

**Follow-up actions and measures being undertaken by your intergovernmental body or forum to support implementation of the 2023 SDG Summit Political Declaration and the outcomes of the 2024 Summit of the Future, to advance the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable**

## **Development.**

UNRISD is actively supporting the implementation of the 2023 SDG Summit Political Declaration and the outcomes of the 2024 Summit of the Future through research, policy engagement and multi-stakeholder collaboration. Our key follow-up actions for the year 2024 include:

1. Policy-Oriented Research – Produced 65 research outputs on social policies, inequalities and sustainability transitions to inform policy making and SDG implementation.
2. Knowledge sharing and advisory support – Co-organized over 30 interdisciplinary events and provided 228 advisory support initiatives to the UN, policy makers and other stakeholders to facilitate the integration of transformative policies aligned with the 2030 Agenda.
3. Strategic Partnerships – Engaged with a network of over 400 researchers, 45% of whom are from the global South, and engaged over 300 speakers from UN entities, governments, civil society and academia to showcase initiatives and share insights on innovative solutions for just transitions, financing for development, and inclusive social and gender policies.
4. Monitoring and Accountability – Developed and engaged over 1,000 economic entities in adopting the Sustainable Development Performance Indicators (SDPI), advancing methodologies and frameworks to assess SDG progress, with a focus on social justice, equity and sustainability. Additionally, the UNRISD-GEC convened Global Research and Action Network for a New Eco-Social Contract, comprising over 370 members from 79 countries, continues to monitor the outcomes and impact of the Pact for the Future and other key UN processes and agendas.

## **Recommendations and key messages to be considered for inclusion in the Ministerial Declaration of the 2025 HLPF.**

### **Invest in the Care Economy**

- Scale up gender-responsive care policies to promote health, economic growth and gender equality.
- Strengthen labour rights for care worker.
- Integrate support for care work into economic policies and universal social protection systems.

### **Counter Anti-Gender Movements**

- Support feminist and pro-democracy movements to counter backlash against gender equality and social justice.
- Ensure gender-inclusive policy making and representation across governance.

### **Expand and Universalize Social Protection**

- Implement rights-based universal social protection, prioritizing informal workers, rural populations, women and persons with disabilities.
- Fund expansion through progressive taxation and equitable fiscal policies.

- Link income transfers with quality social services and decent work.

#### **Strengthen Partnerships for Resilient Development**

- Reform global financial systems to reduce debt burdens on developing countries.
- Ensure fair representation of developing countries in international economic governance.
- Increase funding for gender equality, climate action and social protection.

#### **Prioritize Just and Inclusive Economic Policies**

- Ensure low-carbon transitions reduce inequality and create opportunities for marginalized communities.
- Hold polluters and wealthy countries accountable for financing climate action.
- Align climate finance, social protection and labour rights to support workers in transitioning industries.
- Promote alternative development models such as SSE.

#### **Reform Multilateralism for a Just and Equitable Global System**

- Amplify global South voices in governance through fairer voting rights and representation.
- Limit corporate influence in multilateral forums, prioritizing public interest and civil society.
- Establish global rules to ensure fair trade and responsible investment.
- Strengthen data collection, research and evidence-based policy making to support inclusive, rights-based development.