



NGO MAJOR GROUP STATEMENT AT THE 2021 HIGH LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM

“Building Resilience Against Future Shocks through Structural Changes and Investment in Sustainable Infrastructure”

Tuesday 6th July 2021, 3:00 PM - 5:00 PM EDT

Delivered by Jessica Bridgers, World Federation for Animals

At the beginning of the pandemic there was a focus on building back better, and taking transformative actions which restructure our systems to be more resilient, equitable and sustainable. However, as we lumber toward the hopeful end to the pandemic, it is unfortunate to see that in many cases, business as usual has only become more firmly entrenched.

For example, hundreds of millions in recovery spending have been funneled toward industrialised food system infrastructure in developing countries which marginalises and outcompetes smallholders, destabilizes rural communities, gives rise to increased poverty and inequality. It is also a major contributor to climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution, and breeds and raises massive numbers of animals in dense and unhygienic systems which are in fact perfect breeding grounds for the next pandemic.

We must prioritise prevention, not reaction, when striving for resiliency. When we prioritise responding over preventing, we are conceding that it's okay to lose some lives at the start of a crisis, as long as it means we don't have to change the status quo too much and can mount a quick response. This mentality is incompatible with the ethos of leaving no one behind.

If policy and financing cannot be transformed to support resilient systems, then there is no hope of weathering the next global shock better than we have weathered COVID-19.

Yet it is clear that there are many win-win solutions across sectors. Resilient health infrastructure must include the One Health approach and genuinely sustainable food systems. We must increase social protection measures with a particular focus on gender equality and supporting the care economy.

It is essential that Environment and Social Standards of multilateral banks are future-proofed, ensuring that these massive funding flows are not creating new future risks. While the private sector plays a critical role, we know from experience that the timescales of change that the private sector typically voluntarily commits to are far too long for the crises we currently face.

For this reason, it is essential that governments take up the task of creating policies which encourage a more rapid transformation across sectors, from farming to energy and beyond.





NGO MAJOR GROUP STATEMENT AT THE 2021 HIGH LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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





Emeline Siale ILOLAHIA, NGO MG Regional Partner for the Pacific Region Lead Discussant on behalf of the NGO MG “Coming together to help Small Island Developing States to get on a path to realize the SDGs” Friday, 9th July 2021, 9:00 am – 11:00 am EDT

The ambition of SIDS to highlight their vulnerability through developing a Multidimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI) is grounded on Inherent vulnerabilities of SIDS specifically on two areas:

1. Economic Vulnerability
2. Ecological Vulnerability

The collective NGO Major Group Position Paper clearly articulated that the global Covid-19 pandemic intensifies the need for accelerating, united action. This urgency is amplified by the overwhelming toll the pandemic has taken on global health, social and environmental security, and meaningful progress on Agenda 2030 and leaving no one behind.

This should be the core criteria for economic vulnerability especially ‘leaving no one behind’, not GDP or income variations of our SIDS economic situation.

SIDS Ecological vulnerability related to Climate Change, biodiversity, our ecosystem and our oceans. Perspectives from the Pacific Civil Society as we agree with the thinking of MVI, we need to relook at our resilience of our people which is grounded on our relationship with our environment our ecology. There has to be a balance because some of our indigenous natural resources, our cultural identify our oceans can not be valued in monetary terms so indicators can only be relevant if identified by indigenous, women who are in most of our communities are guardians of traditional knowledge and the experience of people with disability in living in such vulnerable situation.

Developing these indicators and ecological and community data should be using the multi-stakeholders’ platform that Agenda 2030 had promoted in our National Countries including SIDS.



THE GLOBAL GOALS



NGO MAJOR GROUP STATEMENT AT THE 2021 HIGH LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM

“Mobilizing Science, Technology and Innovation and
strengthening the science-policy interface”

Friday 9th July 2021, 11:15 AM - 1:15 PM EDT

Delivered by Raphaël Podselver, ProVeg International

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen it is an honor to join you today on behalf of the NGO Major Group.

As the NGO Major Group noted in the introduction to the HLPF Position Paper from 2020, the global COVID-19 pandemic intensifies the need for accelerated, united action. One year later this emergency is amplified by the overwhelming toll the pandemic has taken on almost all regions and sectors.

In addition to fighting COVID-19, we must challenge the underlying social, economic, environmental, and political factors that are exacerbating the effects of the pandemic. This includes economic inequality, environmental degradation, poverty, lack of representation and gender-based violence. Economic growth without ethical social development is self-defeating. We have to invest in empowering marginalized groups to leave no one behind and build forward.

We must leverage and scale science, technology and innovation in ways that provide win-win benefits to everyone and implement coherent policy at all levels to support their development.

For example, as we approach the UN Food Systems Summit, it is urgently needed to invest in the fields of plant-based innovation and alternative proteins. Less resource intensive and more plant-rich diets are crucial in mitigating the impact of our food systems on climate change and environmental degradation while providing many co-benefits, especially from a human health perspective.

Mobilizing science, technology and innovation can be one of the most impactful ways to tackle the challenges we are currently facing. It is imperative for all stakeholders to design strategies based on existing science and acknowledge that these tools have to benefit most vulnerable communities.

Thank you very much for your attention.



THE GLOBAL GOALS



NGO MAJOR GROUP STATEMENT AT THE 2021 HIGH LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM

“Vision and priorities of civil society, the private sector and other major groups and stakeholders: realizing the SDGs during the COVID-19 recovery”

Friday 9th July 2021, 3:00 PM - 5:00 PM EDT

Delivered by Oli Henman, Action for Sustainable Development

Thank you to Madam moderator, Ambassador Sandoval, UN DESA, distinguished delegates and colleagues.

My name is Oli Henman and I am glad to offer a few words on behalf of the NGO Major Group, I would like to reinforce the observations of my colleagues who have already spoken and to add some recommendations.

The process of engagement of civil society relies on trust and ensuring the voices of all parts of society can truly be heard, this must start from the local and community level in order to ensure that the insights and wisdom of those who are most directly affected by growing inequalities and climate change can be heard. Many volunteers and community organisations have played a key role in responding to the pandemic.

The UN processes may often seem distant from the lived experience of many people, so it is essential that processes are open and inclusive, to build joint ownership. As mentioned by USG Liu, the Voluntary National Reviews can play a central role to enable civil society voices to be heard, however from our own experience, we know that the process of the VNRs are still highly variable.

We appreciate that many governments do state that they wish to leave no one behind but their actions still limit the possibility for meaningful engagement and in some cases actively push people behind. In a number of cases governments are directly closing down the right to association and assembly and implementing legislation which slashes environmental protections and crushes fundamental rights to land and livelihoods.

So what can be done?

In order to build trust and ensure more meaningful participation here are 3 suggestions:

- In terms of the VNRs, we call once more for the formal inclusion of independent parallel reports and the guaranteed rights to include the inputs and evidence of civil society into the official reviews
- Secondly it is essential to strengthen participation by bridging the digital divide, putting in place infrastructure to gather much broader inputs online to ensure broad inclusion
- Finally on civic space, one clear step must be to ensure more regular reviews of Goal 16 and to link the SDG review process with the Human Rights review processes so that we ensure a truly rights-based approach to the 2030 Agenda

Look forward to continuing this dialogue over coming days, thank you!





NGO MAJOR GROUP STATEMENT AT THE 2021 HIGH LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM

“Investing in the SDGs”

Monday 12th July 2021, 9:00 AM - 11:30 AM EDT

Delivered by Kate Donald, Center for Economic and
Social Rights

First, let me remind us all that the 2030 Agenda is explicitly anchored in human rights.

It's not just the way the Agenda is implemented that needs to take into account human rights.

In addition, the way sustainable development and COVID recovery is financed also needs to respect and protect human rights.

This has implications at the national and international level.

At the national level, we need major and sustainable public investments in social protection, public services, housing, and supporting the care economy. This has to be done through progressive domestic resource mobilization – especially progressive taxation. Movement towards wealth taxes and excess profits taxes in several contexts are encouraging in this respect.

However many countries, especially in the Global South, are hindered from taking these kinds of actions thanks to global systems, policies, and institutions.

This brings me to the international level, where we need major reforms and shifts in power to ensure all countries have the fiscal space to resource the 2030 Agenda and their HR obligations. Here we need to focus particularly on the responsibilities of Global North countries and International Financial Institutions – especially around cancelling, relieving and restructuring sovereign debt and putting in place a truly just international tax system and really cracking down on corporate tax abuses. To the question of how the private sector can best contribute to the 2030 Agenda, I'd like to suggest the best thing they can do is pay their fair share of taxes in the places where they operate.

In conclusion, As the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights said recently, we need a “human rights economy”, or what we at CESR call a “rights-based economy” – that puts people and planet before profit. This may seem like a far-off dream - financing and economic policy are often seen as a rights-free zone. But without concrete steps in this direction, we won't achieve the 2030 Agenda. As the NGOMG, we urge real action in this direction.

