

Delivered by Keziah Therese Gerosano

Greetings and thank you for this opportunity to address the HLPF.

Growing up in a small island in the Philippines frequented by yearly tropical cyclones, I have witnessed how natural disasters affects small islands and vulnerable communities. For many families in my community, its hard to build back better when your house is flooded yearly, laid off work because of COVID, children forced out of school due to digital inaccessibility, and domestic violence among women and girls.

Climate change, the COVID Pandemic, economic recessions, and international conflict are only a few components of the equation that make it hard for vulnerable communities to get back up postCOVID. The impact of these shocks to economic and human development targets women and children.

Over the pandemic, around 47million women and girls are pushed to extreme poverty. Because of school closures and extreme poverty from COVID19, 13 million child marriages are expected globally by 2030.

To build back better, We must accelerate local-based capacity and skill-building initiatives focused on women and youth:

Women- increased representation in decision making, financial access and literacy, investing in women's health

Youth- accessible technology for education, envision young people to not only be nation builders but also nation runners; give youth a seat to engage!

The same environment that gives us life, is also the same environment that takes away lives; but the latter is human-made. The climate crisis, no doubt, is one of the biggest global crisis we are facing. Stakeholders gather each year at COP but we are at risk of not achieving our 2030 climate targets, especially to net zero and finance for climate adaptation and mitigation... and for SIDS, who are at the frontline, this is a huge risk. Although it consists of less than 1% of the global population, SIDS are becoming a model in building climate resilience.

I'd also like to reiterate a point from Prime Minister Browne, "The old way of measuring development is not linear. We need to restructure old ways and outdated measurements keeping in mind vulnerable communities... "

As in every disaster is an opportunity to pivot and better existing paradigms. Let's capture this moment to rethink our definitions and measurements to accelerate the 2030 targets.

To end this intervention I would like to request each and every one of us in this room to look around and give a smile to the person next to us because every advocacy, initiative, gathering needs a light of hope- hoping coming from one another thank you.