



## *Together 2030 Sectoral Paper* *High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) 2021*

The 2021 HLPF theme *"Sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic that promotes the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development: building an inclusive and effective path for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda in the context of the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development"* will represent a decisive and critical effort to reposition the world in the path to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by the year 2030. **The COVID-19 crisis not only revealed the vulnerabilities, but also exposed the scale and depth of structural inequalities within and between countries** while at the same time magnifying gender inequalities and the crisis of care.

A just and inclusive COVID-19 recovery should be the stepping stone towards a rights-based human development approach to the Decade of Action and Delivery of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development. **There is a need for a strong multilateralism that puts human rights first over any other national or international obligations**, firmly grounded in the principles of transparency, justice, peace, solidarity, and accountability to the peoples. This should create new global public goods for public health and solidarity, enable an equitable transition to a decarbonized economy, enact proactive environmental protection measures, and rebuild a gender just society.

The COVID-19 pandemic has made evident the global fragility and the need for cooperation and solidarity, already established in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and later renewed by the commitments made in 2019 by Head of States and governments for a Decade of Action and Delivery. To ensure a sustainable and resilient recovery, **multilateralism must be at the core of any subsequent efforts geared towards an inclusive implementation of the 2030 Agenda**. Countries should more than ever work on addressing increased social inequalities in alignment with the human rights agenda and the people-centered principle of the 2030 Agenda. They must also work on aligning health crises measures through global policies, and strengthening, as well as adapting data collection systems that could help with adequate responses to vulnerable and marginalized populations who suffer more acutely and disproportionately in any given crises. More importantly, **cooperation should harness lessons from the pandemic, making sure that best practices, resources, innovations, and findings are shared altruistically and in solidarity to build a stronger global response in future crises**.

Clearly spelt out policies and measures should include debt cancelation for enhanced fiscal space for public healthcare, ensuring universal access to health treatment and medicine by suspending patents and trade rules restricting access to medicines and medical technologies, establishing participatory mechanisms for assessing technological solutions, providing adequate social protection, decent work and living wages for all workers, and protecting state policy space to address the crises, as well as relevant stimulus/recovery packages.

## Meaningful participation, VNRs and the HLPF

Stakeholders' engagement in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda has generally been limited and challenging. The latest edition of the report *PROGRESSING NATIONAL SDGs IMPLEMENTATION: An independent assessment of the voluntary national review reports submitted to the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in 2020*, has noted that reporting on multi-stakeholder engagement outside governance arrangements experienced some backslides and highlights that VNR reports were silent on closing civic space globally, noting that the COVID-19 pandemic had often been used as an excuse by some governments to further close civic space<sup>1</sup>.

**Meaningful participation at the HLPF has become more urgent in the context of a global response to the pandemic.** It is known that marginalized groups are left further behind in virtual consultations and remote participation. Similarly, data collection is challenged by the context and therefore poses questions of reliability and evidence-based decision-making.

### Specific action recommendations regarding SDGs under review:

<p><i>Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere</i></p>	<p>In the past year, the global challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic has caused multidimensional crisis leading to increasing inequality felt sharply through access to basic needs, paid work, education, healthcare, and the lack of universal social protection which aggravates the situation of millions of people, in particular, vulnerable and marginalized groups.</p> <p><b>Efforts should be made to reform and transform social protection measures.</b> It is critical for marginalized groups, especially for those with insecure/informal/unorganized incomes to have access to pensions, disability cover, unemployment and disaster cover and health care should be priority.</p> <p>Similarly, <b>targeted livelihood recovery programmes to social enterprises, MSMEs and informal sectors where there are many low-income workers, women entrepreneurs and workers should be promoted and prioritized.</b> This should include aspects such as debt relief, loan schemes but also support for structural aspects for the enterprise, reskilling and training and conditions of employment for employers.</p> <p><b>Governments more than ever should ensure inclusive, universal coverage of all marginalized communities under existing national security schemes</b> particularly those for livelihood and income support, preventive and curative healthcare, food and nutrition security, on an urgent and priority basis.</p> <p><b>Economic packages (cash and in-kind assistance) oriented towards marginalized groups should be put in place or maintained in case of their existence</b> and should also allow for flexibility in access to these packages. This can be accompanied by conducting a thorough data disaggregation by ethnicity and disability for a more targeted COVID-19 planning and intervention for those belonging to the marginalized and vulnerable sectors.</p>
<p><i>Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and</i></p>	<p>Among the sectors worst hit by the impacts of the COVID-19 global pandemic is the food system in all its components. Small and marginalized landless farmers, including women, have been acutely affected and the responses to</p>

<sup>1</sup> Progressing national SDGs Implementation: An independent assessment of the voluntary national review reports submitted to the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in 2020, Fifth edition. p. 2

<p><i>promote sustainable agriculture</i></p>	<p>COVID-19 have resulted in severely disrupting the agricultural supply chain, affecting the movement of produce from the farms to the markets and cutting off farmers from consumers. Similarly, cash transfer schemes for the poorest households that are dependent on school attendance of children have also been adversely impacted.</p> <p><b>Governments need to ensure that measures and programs needed to respond to the impacts of Covid-19 are complemented by strategic policies that address the root causes of food insecurity and malnutrition.</b> Some of these measures must include ensuring security of land tenure, genuine agrarian reforms, ban on conversion of agricultural land for other purposes, prohibition on hazardous pesticides, and protection of small farmers and their products from predatory trade practices and dumping etc.</p> <p><b>Farmers, food producers and rural population must be afforded with social protection.</b> Access to decent health care and quality education that go together with programs and policies that equip farmers and rural population with skills and opportunities to develop their potentials and enable informed choices will contribute to the achievement of food sovereignty and enhancing household nutrition.</p> <p>It is critical to put in place more aggressive measures and policies that genuinely recognize the status, contribution, and rights of women farmers. Strengthened mechanisms to enhance food security and nutritional values of diets must give special attention to the requirements of women and children, especially in rural and indigenous communities. Segregation of data on food and nutrition based on gender, age and disability is key to designing gender-responsive policies with the active participation of women, elderly and persons with disability.</p>
<p><b>Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages</b></p>	<p>The COVID-19 pandemic has severely tested healthcare systems globally. It has caused serious disruptions in healthcare services and routine vaccination for children, which has resulted in an increase of deaths from other causes. The second World Health Organization “Pulse Survey” from March 2021 notes that around 3.3 million of people have died in 2020<sup>2</sup>. This evidently hinders the achievement of the global goals related to health and well-being, particularly of children</p> <p><b>Efforts to provide universal and free access to health treatment and pharmaceuticals are now more urgent than ever.</b> Governments are obliged to ensure the right of everyone “to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its applications” as stated in the article 15 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Similarly, <b>all research, data, samples relating to COVID-19 need to remain in the public domain -freely available and replicable as a generic vaccine in all countries.</b></p> <p><b>Increase investments in and ensure that commitments to universal health coverage (UHC) contained in the 2019 Political Declaration on UHC<sup>3</sup> are upheld,</b> hence contributing to achieving resilient health systems through ensuring accessibility and non-discrimination for marginalized groups.</p> <p><b>Services and resources available and accessible for victims and/or survivors of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) especially for children must be guaranteed especially due to COVID-19 impact in violence.</b></p>

<sup>2</sup> Second round of the National pulse survey on continuity of essential health services during the COVID-19 pandemic. See <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/WHO-2019-nCoV-EHS-continuity-survey-2021.1>

<sup>3</sup> Political Declaration of the High-level Meeting on Universal Health Coverage-“Universal health coverage: moving together to build a healthier world” see <https://www.un.org/pga/73/wp-content/uploads/sites/53/2019/07/FINAL-draft-UHC-Political-Declaration.pdf>

	<p>SGBV services should be included in the ‘essential services’ category, such as food, hygiene and other health services.</p> <p><b>Governments should put in place system approaches that recognize the systemic interlinkages between nature and human society as a new form of governance</b> in the age of disruptions. Practically this can mean that human and environmental health needs to become a performance indicator for ministries of health, finance and environment alike.</p>
<p><i>Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all</i></p>	<p>According to the International Labour Organizations, new annual estimates confirm that labour markets around the world were disrupted in 2020 on a historically unprecedented scale due to the COVID-19 pandemic<sup>4</sup>. In 2020, 8.8 percent of global working hours were lost relative to the fourth quarter of 2019, equivalent to 255 million full-time jobs<sup>5</sup>. The crisis has had particularly devastating effects on many vulnerable population groups including young people, women and the low-paid and low-skilled workers who have less potential to achieve recovery quickly, and the risk of long-term scarring and detachment from the labour market.</p> <p><b>Governments must establish policy measures that include targeted strategies designed and implemented to assist vulnerable populations, particularly children, women and youth severely affected to ensure inclusiveness as well as their recovery.</b></p> <p><b>Efforts should be made to enable persons with disabilities and their families to have income security in times of crisis and beyond</b> by ensuring non-discriminatory policies and legislation that are effectively implemented to have a real impact in increasing labour market participation of persons with disabilities.</p> <p><b>Develop, amend, and maintain laws that protect rights of workers, including temporary migrant workers, especially migrant domestic workers, caregivers, fishermen and seafarers, agricultural workers, seasonal workers and those in the informal sector. Similarly, implement and enforce statutory minimum wages that guarantee dignity for all workers and their families. Ensure collective bargaining rights everywhere and promote collective agreements with sectoral coverage.</b></p> <p><b>Availability and comparability of statistical data (especially for less-developed countries) should be improved</b> in order to allow more comprehensive, robust and precise analyses of progress made on the SDGs, including SDG 8.</p>
<p><i>Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries</i></p>	<p><b>Government must rapidly expand their revenue base to recover from COVID-19 crisis.</b> Minimum global tax rate needs to be implemented, and to create a global and regional tax body to reform the taxation architecture and synergize regional cooperation on taxation.</p> <p><b>Representation of communities in local government must be ensured</b> in order to allow their voices to be heard and that necessary relief is afforded to the community members.</p> <p><b>Anti-discrimination laws and prevention of atrocity laws must be enacted and implemented properly to ensure the safety and protection of those who are most vulnerable to exploitation, violence and discrimination.</b> Laws must also ensure the accountability of the States administrative mechanisms.</p>

4 ILO Monitor: COVID-19 and the world of work. Seventh edition. See [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/documents/briefingnote/wcms\\_767028.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/documents/briefingnote/wcms_767028.pdf)

5 ILO Monitor: COVID-19 and the world of work. Seventh edition. See [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/documents/briefingnote/wcms\\_767028.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/documents/briefingnote/wcms_767028.pdf)

	<p>States must create a database or disaggregated data of individuals to enhance identification of those who have not secured relief entitlements and to ensure that efforts can be made in future for more pointed relief for the most marginalized. Subsequently, ensure that those left behind are prioritized.</p> <p>Targeted awareness building campaigns on COVID-19, access to healthcare, access to economic packages, access to justice measures, etc. must be done by Governments even in the most remote areas. Support for these campaigns can be garnered by recruiting and mobilizing youth from the community.</p>
<p><b>Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns</b></p>	<p>Sustainable consumption and production must be driven not only by environmental protection but also those that do not exploit local communities, indigenous rights, and traditional occupations.</p> <p>Governments should promote and place importance to community-based and local and indigenous innovation systems and treat such innovative solutions as such.</p> <p>Given global slowdown, governments must ensure that recovery measures prioritize workers who have been worse affected and move them towards sustainable production processes.</p> <p>Encourage and demand political commitments from national governments, as well as consider rethinking themes that are long-term and have continuity; These commitments are necessary for forging a new normal.</p>
<p><b>Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts</b></p>	<p>It has been determined that during the COVID-19 pandemic, the disruption of ecosystems has caused the spread of illnesses. Climate change adaptation and mitigation measures should include conservation and rehabilitation of ecosystems since healthy ecosystems increase carbon sink and lessens vulnerability to climate change impacts.</p> <p>Governments must take into consideration just transition, while preparing and implementing nationally determined contributions (NDCs), national adaptation plans (NAPs) and national long-term low greenhouse gas emission development strategies in cooperation with social partners and CSOs.</p> <p>Community-led programs and initiatives must be supported, enhanced and provided to ensure local communities become resilient and can adapt to the impacts of climate change. There is a need for going beyond integrated climate change into the national plans especially for adaptation.</p> <p>Policies in protecting environmental defenders should also be put in place. This is urgently needed since they have contributed to stopping environmentally destructive projects that make countries more vulnerable to climate change impacts and reduce their capacities to adapt.</p>
<p><b>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</b></p>	<p>Governments need to address gender bias in justice delivery, expand the provision of legal aid, and increase the participation of women in justice delivery. Similarly, informal justice must be strengthened and anchored on human rights, gender justice, economic justice and development justice.</p> <p>Violence against children, including in the digital environment, child marriage, among others needs to be addressed if we are to achieve not only SDG 16 and Target 16.2 but the entire set of SDGs given the multidimensional nature of this issue affecting girls and boys.</p>

	<p>To address corruption and SDG 16.5 ensure <b>National Anti-Corruption Strategies and policies must be adopted and implemented through a participatory process</b> which includes civil society, youth, private sector, parliamentarians, media and other stakeholders.</p> <p><b>Governments must guarantee meaningful CSO participation in decision-making, creation, and implementation of public policies.</b> Similarly, they must strengthen the involvement of oversight bodies to balance the representation of lead authorities in an institution or government; in terms of decision-making process, policy making and budget implementation.</p> <p><b>Efforts to strengthen the role of National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) and CSOs</b> including women, young people, and LGBTIQ communities led organizations to reinforce institutions, exercise human rights and leave no one behind should be made.</p> <p><b>Strengthen, through financial and technical support, national statistical systems especially</b> in two specific areas relevant to Goal 16 - civil registration and vital statistics, and illicit financial flows, especially related to criminal, commercial and tax related activities, to inform policy response to COVID-19 crises and recovery and achievement of SDGs.</p> <p><b>Bottom-up approaches should be utilized in working with communities</b> to identify pressure points, root causes of violence and crime, and to realign federal, provincial/territorial, and municipal investment towards evidence-based prevention programs.</p>
<p><i>Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development</i></p>	<p>The current global situation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic compels a renewed commitment to multilateral support for accelerated progress towards the Agenda 2030 as the collective roadmap to Sustainable Development. The pandemic has pushed the limits widening inequalities of wealth, power and resources and has resulted in increased debt financing for many developing countries.</p> <p><b>ODA needs to be reformed and reviewed</b> for impact, as part of the formal mechanisms, with a key emphasis on commitment to uphold dignity and human rights for all beyond the politics of aid.</p> <p><b>Development cooperation needs to be enhanced through strong multilateral support,</b> carefully recognizing that South-South cooperation could at best complement but not substitute North-South cooperation.</p> <p><b>Policy emphasis on digitization and technological advancements must ensure a thorough review of the potential adverse effects</b> on livelihoods, the economy, environment, society, culture, and civil &amp; political rights of the people.</p>



## About this paper:

*This paper has been prepared by the Core Group and the Secretariat of Together 2030  
The process of drafting this paper was as follows:*

- *A set of questions were proposed for collection of inputs.*
- *The Together 2030 International Secretariat developed a first draft based on the inputs received.*
- *A first review was opened for comments and additional inputs followed by another review/editing of the text.*
- *A second round of comments was opened. The final edited version was submitted for the review of the Co-Chairs of Together 2030 Core Group.*



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