**Blog for the 2018 High Level Forum on "Sustainable Development"**

**"Transformation towards sustainable and Resilient Societies”**

**Human Diversity as a key factor for the implementation of SDG's**

Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies in the 21st century must consider human diversity as a key factor, whose differences are not only socio-economic. Otherwise we could face the risk of a 2030 Agenda showing very remarkable results, but with a sustainable development that does not reach all.

We must bear in mind that **more than one billion persons in the world, a 15% of the  world's population**, present one  or more types of physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments in the long term, which, when interacting with different barriers or obstacles, may hinder their full and effective participation in society.  I am specifically referring to the persons with disabilities (UN-CRPD, 2006).

On the other hand, the advance demographic transition reveals that in the year 2017, there are 962 million persons who are 60 years of age or older, which correspond to 13 % of the world population,  with an annual  growth rate of 3%. It is estimated that, by the year 2030 there will be 1400 million of older persons in the world.  With regard to those persons who are above 80 years old, it is estimated that it will triple in a little over 30 years (WHO, 2017).

Both sectors cannot continue to be qualified as "minorities". The latter concept is surpassed by the nomenclature of "diversity", which includes each and every one, without any kind of distinction.

Of course, both persons with disabilities as older persons, without considering their socio-economic situation, have often been only "spectators" of development.  These sectors aspire to acquire their individual autonomy and their social interaction with dignity, independence and freedom.

For this reason, there is great hope that the 2030 Agenda will ensure that cities and human settlements are inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable (SDG No.11). This does not translate only into access ramps or "special bathrooms". The challenge is greater in terms of understanding the needs of our diverse, dynamic, interacting and evolving humanity. Therefore, it is essential to make visible or highlight a goal which is not written in the Agenda, which is universal design and accessibility of cities and human settlements, not only with regard to physical space, but also in terms of information, communication, transport, technology, procedures, products and services. This also reaches out to inclusive and accessible reconstruction after a natural disaster.

Undoubtedly, the achievement of this objective is interrelated with the guarantee of access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all (SDG No.7). Today "smart" cities are projected, with ample technology, which feed on energy. Both for persons with disabilities, as well as for the older persons, these "achievements of modern times" should be a real horizon in their lives, which contribute to a concrete autonomy and independence, without becoming yet another barrier or obstacle for their full and effective **inclusion in society.**

**What is the key to the correct implementation of these SDG´s?**

Undoubtedly, the key will be planning, and participative and integrated management in all countries.  Effective participation as an essential component for the process of the SDG´s, providing a range of reasonable accommodation, support for decision making and other forms of support for persons with disabilities and for the older persons for said participation, will strengthen the individual and collective awareness, the solidity of contemporary democracies, and ultimately the true sustainability of development.

Therefore, in order to get from the macro level to that of the individual, a goal is established; to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely, reliable data (Goal 17.18), for which the consideration of human diversity must be very rigorous and precise, in order to truly capture the variety of needs of persons with disabilities as well as older persons, also assessing their subsequent level of satisfaction with the implementation of the SDG´s.

At the same time, we must highlight goal 17.19 which opens horizons in order to elaborate new indicators for measuring progress on sustainable development reaching persons with disabilities as well as older persons.

To this respect, the exam performed on the HLPF countries, should go deeper into the key axis of human diversity, measuring concrete actions of "planning and participative management" with availability of reasonable accommodation and support which the persons may require. This is the only way we can truly celebrate the fulfilment of the 2030 Agenda.