



General Statement

On behalf of the European Union and its Member States

On the occasion of the

2020 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development

organised under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council
(ECOSOC)

(7-17 July 2020)

This year we celebrate the 75th anniversary of the UN in a context where the world is simultaneously confronted with major crises of global dimension such as climate change, environmental degradation and growing social inequality. The COVID-19 pandemic has further aggravated these existing global challenges and is causing severe impacts on our societies and economies. Today more than ever, we need to meet global challenges with a global response. The implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development requires effective multilateralism with the UN at its core and increased support for the rules-based international order, which defends universal values, promotes shared public goods and delivers benefits for all.

The COVID-19 pandemic needs a strong and coordinated multilateral response. The EU and its Member States are committed to meeting this challenge in a spirit of solidarity and partnership. We support the UN system in mobilising and coordinating the global response to the pandemic.

In line with the UN Secretary-General's call and under his leadership, we will work together to "build back better" and set the stage for a recovery that builds more sustainable, greener, inclusive and equitable societies guided by our global roadmap—the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The European Union and its Member States are fully committed to accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to ensure its timely delivery. The SDGs underpin our values and the international community's sustainable future. They are at the heart of the EU's policymaking on internal and external action across all sectors. The EU is putting in place key new policy initiatives and strategies that will directly contribute to accelerating the implementation of the SDGs and the Paris Agreement.

The European Green Deal, as proposed by the European Commission, is the EU's new growth strategy, with people and the planet at its core. It

provides a roadmap to transform the EU into a fair and prosperous society, with a modern, resource-efficient and competitive economy where there are no net emissions of greenhouse gases in 2050 and where economic growth is decoupled from resource use.

The full implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement is crucial to help better equip the world for future systemic shocks and strengthen resilience. Therefore, it is at the heart of the EU's strategy to achieve the 2030 Agenda and SDGs at home and abroad, through our external action policies and cooperation programmes.

We need to capitalise on the 2019 SDG Summit's Political Declaration and the 2019 Global Sustainable Development Report to advance further on eradicating poverty, reducing inequalities, promoting the respect for human rights, gender equality, women's and girls' empowerment, children's rights, democracy and the rule of law along with an increased focus on climate and

environment. We firmly support the UN Secretary-General's call to build a fair globalisation and are ready to play our part.

The COVID-19 crisis is a threat to the timely implementation of the 2030 Agenda. It is reversing progress towards the SDGs. We should therefore use the Decade of Action to reinvigorate the momentum for action to deliver the SDGs by 2030 leaving no one behind and ensuring a green, sustainable, digital and inclusive post COVID-19 recovery, including through international cooperation and multilateral action.

We stress the importance of maintaining the focus on SDGs, which is the most effective and fair global roadmap to recover from COVID-19 and build back better and greener after the crisis.

Building on the humanitarian-development-peace nexus and the human rights agenda as well as increasing the cross-pillar coherence of the UN's work is essential to ensure the holistic approach of the 2030 Agenda. In this regard, we reiterate our

continued support for the UN Development System reform. A more integrated, coherent, efficient and results-driven UN presence on the ground will play an important part in ensuring that countries recover better from the current crisis.

In line with multilateral efforts, the EU and its Member States have adopted their global response to the COVID-19 crisis based on a Team Europe approach to support partner countries, with a focus on those in vulnerable, fragile and conflict-affected situations, and special attention for Least Developed Countries, mostly in Africa. We will continue to promote global health as a public good for all in full support for the WHO's efforts. Through the EU-sponsored Coronavirus Global Response initiative, we will continue to support global efforts to accelerate research on treatments, diagnostics and vaccines ensuring that they are a global public good that is equitably accessible to all. The EU will continue working with partners to enhance global

solidarity and ensure better preparedness for future pandemics.

The EU will mobilise financial support to partner countries for a total of more than EUR 36 billion. Our response addresses short-term emergency needs as well as the longer-term structural impacts on societies and economies, thus reducing the risk of destabilisation. It focuses on addressing both the immediate health, food security and nutrition crises and resulting humanitarian needs, as well as long term actions such as strengthening partner countries' health, water and sanitation systems, promoting food security as well as their research and preparedness capacities to deal with the pandemic, and mitigate the socioeconomic impact with a strong focus on promoting and protecting human rights, democracy and good governance.

Beyond this, at the High Level Event on Financing for Development held on 28 May, President of the Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, called for a global recovery initiative linking investment and debt

relief to the implementation of the SDGs. The EU intends to take a leading role in following up to the High Level Event by working with partners to ensure that we can recover better for sustainability.

Within the EU, the European Commission has proposed to create a new financial instrument, Next Generation EU, to ensure that the recovery is sustainable, inclusive and fair. The recovery plan turns the immense challenge we face into an opportunity, not only by supporting the recovery but also by investing in our future: the European Green Deal and digitalisation are expected to boost jobs and growth, the resilience of our societies and the health of our environment.

Beyond the short-term response to the pandemic, the mid- and long-term policy response needs to encompass the features that lay at the foundation of the 2030 Agenda, integrating its economic, social and environmental dimensions and fully considering the interrelated nature of the present and future global challenges. The recovery should go hand in hand with the promotion of human rights, gender

equality, women's and girls' empowerment and their full enjoyment of all human rights, good governance and peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development.

Building back better is the first task of the Decade of Action. We have to join our forces to accelerate the implementation of the SDGs to achieve a transformative shift by 2030 that leaves no one behind. The post-COVID world will require more solidarity and cooperation to meet the promise of the 2030 Agenda. The EU and its Member States are committed to do their share.