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Informal meeting by the Chair of the Third Committee of the General Assembly with civil society – concept note

1. Background

The Sustainable Development Goals recognize multi-stakeholder partnerships as important vehicles for mobilizing and sharing knowledge and expertise to support the achievement of the goals and further seeks to encourage and promote partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of all stakeholders.

In 2020, Member States adopted the Declaration on the commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations (Resolution 75/1) in which they noted the need to make the United Nations more inclusive and engage with all relevant stakeholders, including civil society, to ensure an effective response to our common challenges.

The Secretary-General, in his “Call to Action for Human Rights” as well as more recently in his report “Our Common Agenda”, has stressed the importance of engaging and involving civil society across the work of the organization and has called for the protection and promotion of civic space.

The informal meeting will leverage its broad consultative format to focus on the importance of equality in the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the world’s most vulnerable populations through lost lives, health, jobs, incomes, assets, and education. It has intensified inequalities between higher-income and lower-income countries, between men and women, and between different socioeconomic groups. While the initial impacts of the pandemic reinforced preexisting inequalities, attention must now be given to the risks of an uneven economic recovery and the long-term threat it poses to social protection and inequality.

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2. Objective

The event will provide an opportunity for Member States and civil society representatives in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council to share thoughts on the outcomes of the 76th session of the Third Committee as well as insights into a specific issue the importance, namely equality in the recovery from COVID-19.

3. Format

The meeting will be held in a “hybrid” format with the option of participating in-person or through a virtual platform.

The proposed scenario is to hold a panel discussion followed by interventions from the floor:

1. The Chair of the Third Committee, H.E. Mr. Mohamed Siad Doualeh, introduces and moderates the discussion and presents a brief summary of the work of the recent Third Committee session.
2. As keynote speaker, the President of the General Assembly, H.E. Mr. Abdullah Shahid, will present some thoughts and reflections on the subject at hand, including on the potential of further engaging with civil society in this context.
3. A CSO representative will provide comments on the outcomes of the recently concluded Third Committee session.
- 4 A CSO representative will provide comments on the importance of equality in the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Chair of the Third Committee will then take two rounds of interventions from the floor as follows:

- The floor will be opened for a first round of general interventions from Member States and civil society aimed at creating a shared and constructive discussion of the Third Committee's successes and challenges during the session; Where has the Third Committee made progress and what opportunities are there to build on in the future? Are there

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additional issues that the Third Committee should focus its attention on? What could be done differently in order to strengthen the outcome of the Third Committee's work? What could be done in particular to enhance the engagement with civil society during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic?

- During the second round, interventions should very specifically relate to the importance of equality in the COVID-19 recovery, including in relation to the right to an adequate standard of living, the right to health and the right to development.

In order to promote an interactive discussion, interventions by Member States and civil society speakers in consultative status with ECOSOC will be interspersed. Interventions from the floor should be brief and not exceed 3 minutes.

4. Participants

Participants in the informal meeting will be representatives from Member States, Observers, representatives of UN entities, as well as civil society representatives in consultative status with ECOSOC, with particular encouragement to those who engage actively with the Third Committee.

5. Time and venue

The informal meeting will be held on 16 February 2022 from 3 to 5 p.m. in in the General Assembly Hall, UN headquarters in New York, and through a virtual platform.