



MGoS Coordination Mechanism

MGOS STATEMENT ON THE 2021 MINISTERIAL DECLARATION

UNITED NATIONS HIGH LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM FAILS TO RESPOND TO THE CALL OF PEOPLES IN TIMES OF CRISES! ITS MINISTERIAL DECLARATION DOES NOT RISE TO THE OCCASION FOR BOLD AND TRANSFORMATIVE ACTION.

The United Nations High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) carries on its shoulder the responsibility to help the current highly unsustainable world navigate its way to eradicate poverty and hunger, tackle climate change, eliminate inequalities and ensure ecological balance within the next 10 years.

This year's HLPF has failed to come up with bold and transformative recommendations for action in a time when approximately 4 million people have perished due to the COVID-19 pandemic, close to 190 million have become sick, over 250 million have lost their jobs, over 1.6 million had their education disrupted and hundreds of millions more have already fallen into acute hunger and extreme poverty. It is inexcusable that during this world crisis Member States failed to agree on a strong, human-rights centered, transformative, action oriented Ministerial Declaration.

Adding to the existing crises of inequality, sustainability, climate change, rapid biodiversity loss, decent work deficit and poverty traps for low and middle income countries, the **COVID-19 pandemic has not only dealt a devastating blow to the economies and societies , but also undermined the little progress that was being made towards achieving the SDGs.**

This moment in time presents the HLPF with an acid test for inclusive multilateralism, political ambition and courage. HLPF must take a step forward from the usual intergovernmental rigamarole to make good on the promises of the 2030 Agenda.

We thank the hard work and the commitment of the co-facilitators of the Ministerial Declaration (MD) and we welcome the MD's call to accelerated progress towards implementation of the 2030 Agenda. However, **we are deeply saddened by the lack of ambition** to respond to the crises that the world is currently facing. Reaffirming old commitments (which were patently insufficient before the pandemic) is **not an adequate response to the pandemic.** We are extremely concerned with the **consistent refusal to address the root causes and systemic barriers to achieve a world where no one is left behind** (continued reliance on fossil fuel power sources, seeking infinite growth from extractivist economies, unequal power relations engendering unsustainable debt and illicit financial flows, patriarchy as a political tool, corporate capture of governance, development and sustainability agenda and its implications for the fulfilment and respect for human rights, to name a few).

Our particular concerns:

- While we appreciate efforts of the high income countries to distribute 1 billion doses of vaccines to developing countries, these efforts should not replace the urgent need for making **equitable universal free access to COVID-19 vaccines and treatment, including an immediate patent waiver for transfer of vaccine technology.**



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- **We must not renege on eradicating poverty and hunger, without using the pandemic as an excuse.**
- **Agenda 2030 cannot be achieved without effective means of implementation** – adequate aid, finance, trade, technology transfer, progressive taxation, capacity building. Systemic barriers must be removed.
- **Lack of genuine and sincere response to the climate crisis** – the HLPF should provide an additional impetus to the UNFCCC process to bring countries together on progressive ideas, real solutions and seek common ground, through just transition measures.
- **Universal social protection** is a key tool for COVID-19 recovery and resilience. Still the Ministerial Declaration missed the opportunity to explicitly commit to it and it only refers to extend social protection coverage. Social protection must be scaled up to reach universal coverage, also by establishing a Social Protection Fund for the least wealthy countries.
- **Science, technology and innovation is not a private sector preserve alone** – knowledge systems developed on centuries of experience by indigenous populations, women, farmers must be included. STI should work for all and be guided by inclusion with respect to its need, utility, conflict of interests and its usefulness for long-term ecological sustainability.
- **Leaving no one behind means absolutely no one is excluded** – all people of all ages, in all their diversity, everywhere, no matter their economic or social condition must have equal rights.
- **Recognize human rights and gender equality as central** to Agenda 2030 and COVID-19 response. The systemic mainstreaming of gender is needed if we want to fulfill the SDGs and not only end the pandemic but build back better, fairer, just and transformatively.
- Ensure that COVID-19 measures do not become **excuses to limit civil society participation , to discriminate against marginalized groups and violate workers’ rights**. As CSOs and other stakeholders we believe it’s necessary to strengthen civic participation and respect for democratic governance during this moment of intersecting crises. The shrinking of civic participation observed in most countries, as well as the autocratic responses under the excuse of the prevention measures for COVID-19 pandemic, needs to be eliminated.
- We urge member states to respect **civil society and other stakeholders**, their voices and opinions should be expressed in all of the sustainable development related processes at national, regional and global levels.

We urge Member States to restore faith in multilateralism for achievement of the SDGs.

Human rights, gender equality and ecological balance must be central to all recovery and restoration efforts.