

## **Statement at First Informal consultation on the Political Declaration for the SDG Summit 2023**

**Oli Henman, NGO Major Group**

Thank you Ambassador for the opportunity to share our thoughts with you on the initial priorities for the Political Declaration.

We welcome the opportunity to continue the practice of online participation. This helps ensure a wider range of groups can join your deliberations. The principle of participation of the Major Groups and Other Stakeholders is embedded in the 2030 Agenda; it is clear that in order to deliver the SDGs all parts of society must play their part and that policy decisions are enriched and enhanced by hearing from diverse perspectives.

In addition to the speakers, we urge you to continue the practice of the last few years to keep open the online participation for at least one representative from each of the Major Groups and other Stakeholders to also join as observers at the upcoming sessions.

Considering your first question-

Since the last SDG Summit the situation has become even more challenging around the world with millions of people facing life threatening challenges including the COVID-19 pandemic, falling into poverty, the increase in climate related disasters, world economic stagnation and the rise in armed conflict and humanitarian crisis.

The world is facing multiple and interlocking crises, so on our part we urge you to move beyond re-affirmations, we encourage you in your dialogues to set out bold steps for social and economic well-being and demonstrate leadership at this critical time.

The Political Declaration for this year's SDG Summit must highlight the need for real and urgent action, and must set out practical steps and resources to enable the full realization of the 2030 Agenda. The timing of the SDG Summit in September could also provide an opportunity to ensure that the delivery of the SDGs is closely tied with other key frameworks including human rights, climate, environment and financing agreements.

We are strongly committed to multilateral approaches and we call for strengthened coordination through UN bodies and high-level convenings with the SDGs at their core, rather than fragmented political groupings in different regions of the world.

In terms of the second question-

We call on you to raise the ambition on the pledge to Leave No One Behind. As we have already stated, the multiple interlocking crises have led to many populations being pushed further behind, from Indigenous Peoples in the Amazon to refugees in the MENA region and those fleeing conflict in Ukraine and many other parts of the world. It is essential that targeted action is taken to support those who are most affected. Preventing future pandemics, utilizing a One Health approach, is also essential to Leaving No One Behind, as prevention of pandemics is the only way to equitably manage health crises which in turn threaten the achievement of Agenda 2030.

We urge you to include clear commitments in terms of guaranteeing human rights, protecting civil liberties, unlocking funding for community-led initiatives and a renewed pledge to reach those furthest behind first on the basis of firsthand evidence.

The funding gap has been highlighted many times over recent years. However inequalities have grown at unprecedented rates, so we recommend that you consider new ways to release funding, including reforms of global tax, debt and financial systems, to reduce the debt burden on less developed and establishing clear steps to deliver the commitment to 0.7% ODA from donor countries.

Furthermore, pledges for new funds must be guaranteed in such a way that truly reaches frontline communities. We call for specific funding commitments to establish pooled funds to be allocated directly to those who are being left behind.

In terms of your third question-

We will be very glad to share a wide range of inputs from all 21 stakeholder groups represented through the Major Groups & Other Stakeholders to inform your deliberations. We look forward to meaningfully engaging with the co-facilitators on ways to provide timely inputs from our diverse memberships on the key issues to be covered in the drafting process.

On your final question-

The coming 4 year cycle is critical for achievement of the 2030 Agenda. We must move forward with practical action. From now until 2027 we look forward to Member States stepping forward with clear implementation plans and priorities and assurance of funds for local action.

Finally, we look forward to Member States delivering on what they included as priorities at each of their VNRs. We welcome commitments made at the VNRs. Knowing that most countries have delivered at least one VNR, we expect to see progress and hear about outstanding challenges, so in the next VNRs we look forward to higher quality reports which measure clear progress since the last VNR. We are now at SDG implementation mid-point, if it is not happening now, then when? We commit ourselves to stand ready with clear partnerships at country level in order to Leave No One Behind in the VNR process.

We believe in the multilateral system with the UN at its center, and the power of governments for transformative change. We therefore urge all governments to come forward with the ambition and resources to reach the SDGs by 2030 and not leave anyone or any group behind in the process!