

EU/EUMS comments on zero draft of the SDG Summit Political Declaration

Informal consultations of Tuesday 16 May 2023

Horizontal comments on the Political Declaration

- Welcome the zero draft, which offers a very good basis for discussion and is, on many points, aligned with the comments of the EU and EUMS on the elements paper presented in March. We appreciate the efforts made by the co-facilitators in providing a balanced zero draft.
- Pleased to see a well-structured and **concise zero draft** and would urge all sides to consider the need to maintain a condensed and political text, fit for leaders, when proposing new language.
- Crucially important to recognize that business as usual will be insufficient to reach SDG goals and targets by 2030. In that regard, the **sense of urgency** and the magnitude of the multiple crises that world currently faces could be more strongly reflected in the text.
- We also note that the text does not include a reference to **targets that had a 2020 “expiry” date** and would consider essential to do so.
- We also note that some **specific SDGs** are referred to multiple times, while others are hardly mentioned or not at all (energy, oceans, cities, sustainable consumption and production, etc). The PD should reflect a more balanced approach towards the 17 SDGs.
- We look forward to engaging in the negotiations in a very constructive way to deliver a consensual, concise, operational and focused Political Declaration.

General comments on Section 1 - Our shared resolve

- Overall, the section is well drafted and captures the priorities of the EU. We mainly have elements that we would like to add to the text. This includes reference to the balancing between the three dimensions of sustainable development.
- On **human rights** we find the section well drafted, but regret the singling out of the right to development. We will be suggesting language to modify this reference as well as language to strengthen the links between the 2030 agenda and human rights.
- **Gender equality is a key priority of the EU and many other delegations. The EU remains committed to the promotion, protection and fulfilment of all human rights and to the full and effective implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the Programme of Action of the ICPD and the outcomes of their review conferences and remains committed to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), in this context. The realization of the 2030 Agenda is not possible without realizing gender equality for all, and without women’s and youth’s full, equal and meaningful participation, in all their diversity.** Climate change and biodiversity loss pose an existential risk for our time. We would like to see stronger language recognizing this risk in the text, as well as language addressing the **triple planetary crisis** of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution, as well as a reference to the One Health approach and strengthened language on water as a lever for sustainable development.
- The PD lacks substantial references to **social protection**. We will therefore add language on social protection also in this section.
- In line with the forward-looking nature of this section, and considering the impact of the current crises on **future generations**, we would want to see a stronger commitment to youth and future

generations, including by suggesting language to strengthen the role of youth in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, recognizing their critical role in advancing change.

General comments on Section 2 – Our changed world – Progress and remaining gaps and challenges:

- Note that this should be the most “factual” of all sections, so hopefully the one where delegations’ views will more easily converge.
- Recognize that this section is faithful to the sobering picture drawn in the SG’s Progress Report. We think it is particularly important to recognize the **multiple interlinked crises** of poverty, inequality, food, water, energy, but also the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity and pollution.
- At the same time, welcome that section 2 reflects the EU’s view that it should not be only negative or alarmist in tone, but focus more on strengthening **resilience, lessons learned, opportunities** and some examples of progress on which we can build to refocus on achieving the SDGs. Among these, we could add for instance that ODA reached its highest level in 2022.
- Reiterate that there needs to be a link between **peace, security, development and human rights**, as well as a stronger emphasis on peace, justice and accountable and transparent institutions as key enablers for sustainable development
- Welcome the language on **multistakeholder cooperation**, on the importance of **UNDS reform** for Agenda 2030 implementation, and on the importance of **VNRs**, which is a good basis and can be further strengthened.

General comments on Section 3 – Call to action – turning our world towards 2030

- We believe that the whole section would be more powerful if a more explicit link between the **root causes of the crises and concrete action pathways towards systemic change** are identified. An example of an action pathway is more focus on circular economy (SDG 12, sustainable consumption and production), also the importance of a just and inclusive transition is an important action oriented solution.
- We also believe that GSDR should be mentioned especially in this section where science and evidence need to be a base for our policy decisions.
- The aspect of the **reduction of inequalities** should be placed more prominently in the PD, including in this section “Transformative actions for the SDGs”. Its transformative character for the second half of the implementation, addressing cross-cutting issues simultaneously is not adequately reflected.
- There is also lack of substantial references to **social protection**. This section should include additional consideration encouraging countries to ensure universal access to comprehensive and sustainable social protection.
- It also lacks a focus on **decent work** and the aim to achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including facilitating women’s full and equal participation in the labour market, ensuring the equal access of women to decent work and quality jobs in all sectors and at all levels, the protection of labour rights, the eradication of forced labour and ending child labour in all its forms. Those are important elements in linking the SDG Summit and the 2025 World Social Summit.
- We would like to see a more balanced section “**Mobilizing resources, boosting investment, and building capacity**”, with additional reference to efforts on taxation, efficient budget

implementation and transparency, including on debt issues, as well as engagement of the private sector. We look forward to discussing this further, on the basis of the FfD outcome document and urge against reopening agreements from the outcome.

- We were also surprised to see the language **on climate** is reduced to financial matters only and that in an unbalanced way. We would like to see more general reference to mitigation and adaptation measures. We could also add a forward-looking language on the next COPs, including COP28, and emphasise the importance of raising ambition and the need to maintain 1.5 degrees, as this contributes to achieving the SDGs. It would be good to show synergies between the SDG goals and the deliverables of the COPs as we can no longer afford siloed approaches. It is time that the climate agenda and Agenda 2030 work not only in support of each other but are fully integrated at all levels and the UN needs to provide concrete assistance and specific advice to Member States in this respect.
- We consider the reference to the Kunming/Montreal Global **Biodiversity** framework too weak. The PD should express the commitment of HoS/HoG to swiftly and effectively implement the framework by 2030 and mobilise financing from all sources. We also believe promoting sustainable forest management and halting deforestation and forest degradation should be included.
- We regret that **sustainable consumption and production (SDG12)** is not referred to in the text. We recall our joint commitment to making fundamental changes in the way that societies produce and consume goods and services, and the importance of that objective to support effective and accelerated implementation of the entire 2030 Agenda.
- There is also very little mention of **SDG 16**, reaffirming it rather than providing recommendations how to achieve it and how to link it with other SDGs, so we would be looking at how to strengthen this reference.
- Transition to **sustainable food systems** is mentioned, but a stronger reference should be given to the transformation of food systems as a major effort to achieving the 2030 Agenda, including SDG 2, and by that the UN Food Systems Summit and its follow-up. Reference to the right to adequate food in this context is key.
- **Digitalization** paragraph defines very well the benefits of digitalization, and we support it. However, we also need to mention the need to see how to protect human rights in the digital space and how to develop long-term solutions for emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence. Additionally, the social, economic, development risks attached to the digital divide, including gender digital divide, deserve a more prominent place.
- We would also like to **strengthen the disaster risk paragraph** by welcoming progress of the Secretary-General's call to protect everyone through the universal coverage of early warning systems for all as well as preventive and anticipatory actions.
- We miss a reference to the role of **culture and the creative sector** in achieving the SDGs and meeting societal challenges in general.
- We would like to see stronger link to the **Summit of the Future**. Important that the PD signals that the **Summit of the future** tracks work to reinforce action on the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda. In this regard, we would like also to see language on space technology.
- Although the Elements paper presented by the co-facilitators explicitly proposed the topic of "Strengthening the **high-level political forum**", the zero draft includes no reference to it. We proposed to add a short reference to strengthen the role of the HLPF as central UN body for the overall coordination of all follow-up and review processes related to the implementation of the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda as a whole. Member States have already committed to this aspect in 2019.