



COMMENTS ON ZERO DRAFT POLITICAL DECLARATION TO BE ADOPTED AT THE 2023 SDG SUMMIT

General comments:

As members of those likely to be left behind (older persons), we are wondering how this Declaration will convince “those left furthest behind” that finally something urgent will happen, other than the commitments made in the 2030 Agenda. What specific actions will be taken to “commit”, “recommit”, “continue increasing”, take steps”, “pledge to take action”, “ensure”, “support”, “reiterate”? What can each person around the world see as something that will directly change their lives for the better as a matter of urgency? What specific action?

The bulk of the Declaration mainly reflects much of what is already in the 2030 Agenda. It can be shortened to permit more focus on future specific concrete actions necessary to address the most urgent issues in order to steer the course back on track.

Proposals are at such a high level that most individuals will have no idea what specific actions are being promised and what will impact them directly. What are examples of a “systemic shift”, “measures”, “to build”, “actions”, “steps”, “efforts”, “increasing”, “to expand”?

Member States have already made specific recommendations for action, as reflected in the Synthesis of submissions by functional commissions of ECOSOC and other intergovernmental bodies and forums, submitted to the 2023 HLPF. Over 60 intergovernmental bodies have provided action-oriented proposals. Furthermore, the Secretary-General, in his annual progress report (Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals: towards a rescue plan for people and planet), has also provided proposals for specific action. If Member States are serious about turbo-charging the SDGs, they must propose specifics and use recommendations they have made at other intergovernmental bodies and fora.

It would appear that all SDGs have been referenced in one way or another, except for **SDG 11** – inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities and human settlements (see below for suggested text).

Section I: Our Shared Resolve

- Much of the content has already been articulated in the 2030 Agenda.
- **Para. 2:** insert “all” before “people” (reference to “all human beings” in the 2030 Agenda preamble).
- **Paras. 11, 12** “**the empowerment of all women and girls**– we have been talking about this for decades. Nothing more ? Other intergovernmental bodies (abovementioned synthesis report to the 2023 HLPF) have recommended “**closing gender gaps in employment, achieving equal pay and promoting women’s entry and retention in strategic, male-dominated sectors, including ICT and energy sectors, through tax incentives, training and improvements of working conditions for**

women. Such actions would demonstrate Member States' commitment to fully implementing the SDGs."

- **Para. 18:** youth should not be the only "vulnerable group" that is singled out. Either list all the groups or not list at all, since all other groups have contributed to achieving the 2030 Agenda.

Section II: Our Changed world – progress and remaining gaps and challenges

There is useful analysis of the current situation since the Summit in 2019 and since the COVID-19 pandemic. May we take this opportunity to remind Member States that the majority of COVID-19 related deaths, directly or indirectly, were older persons. The constant lack of acknowledgement of this fact implies for us, older persons, that our lives are considered insignificant and of less value.

As mentioned above, recommendations by Member States at other intergovernmental bodies, and recommendations of the Secretary-General's progress report should be used as examples of specific actions that should be taken to address the numerous crises hampering the achievement of SDGs.

Para. 25: This sentence implies that there is nothing that needs to be done to improve the lives of migrants, some of whom suffer from constant discrimination, violence and abuse.

Paras. 31-33: we appreciate acknowledgement of the work of all the stakeholders in implementing the SDGs, and yet, we are not on track. Where are the additional urgent actions needed from those listed?

Para. 35: last line, insert "expanding" before the words "social protection....."

Section III: Call to action - turning our world towards 2030

Para. 36(a) - empowerment of women, see comments above.

There needs to be **a paragraph related to SDG 11:** "We recommend the strengthening of preparedness and resilience of cities to future shocks and disasters, through high-quality infrastructure that integrates universal access to sustainably managed water and energy services, waste disposal, transport systems and social services that are crucial in the recovery phase and in the ability to respond to future crises, with local and regional governments positioned at the center, taking fully into account the impact on all people of all ages living in those communities [Reference: Synthesis of submissions by functional commissions of ECOSOC and other intergovernmental bodies and forums].

Again, action-oriented recommendations are necessary, not just "recommitting", "supporting", "recognizing", "reiterating", "recognizing", etc. etc.

Para. 41: Insert after the words "for the world we" the words "need and" before the word "want". **The problem is not a lack of political will, the problem is a lack of common human decency, morality, compassion and respect for humankind.**

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