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## High-level political forum on sustainable development

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**Sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic that promotes the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development: building an inclusive and effective path for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda in the context of the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development**

## **Synthesis of voluntary submissions by functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council and other intergovernmental bodies and forums**

### **Note by the Secretariat**

The present document provides a synthesis of the voluntary submissions prepared by functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council and other intergovernmental bodies and forums to contribute to the thematic review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by the high-level political forum on sustainable development. Contributions were provided in response to the invitation of the President of the Council contained in his letter dated 18 November 2020<sup>1</sup> addressed to the Chairs of those bodies, in which he requested that they offer substantive input to the high-level political forum, highlighting their contributions towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.<sup>2</sup> The integral texts of

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<sup>1</sup> Available at [https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/27075ECOSOC\\_President\\_Letter\\_18\\_11\\_20.pdf](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/27075ECOSOC_President_Letter_18_11_20.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> The present document has benefited from contributions received from: (a) functional commissions and expert bodies of the Economic and Social Council: Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, Commission on Narcotic Drugs, Commission on Science and Technology for Development, Commission for Social Development, Commission on the Status of Women, Committee for Development Policy, Committee of Experts on Public Administration, multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals, United Nations Forum on Forests, United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management, United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names and United Nations Statistical Commission; (b) regional commissions: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (see also reports of the regional forums on sustainable development convened by the regional commissions and presented as documents to the forum); (c) United Nations intergovernmental and related bodies: Human Rights Council, United Nations Environment Assembly, Committee on Enforced Disappearances, Broadband Commission for



the submissions received for the present synthesis report are available on the forum's website.<sup>3</sup>

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Sustainable Development, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, Committee on World Food Security, Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, Committee on Commodity Problems, Committee on Agriculture, Committee on Fisheries, Committee on Forestry, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, International Atomic Energy Agency, secretariat of the International Plant Protection Convention, International Organization for Migration, International Telecommunication Union, International Trade Centre, secretariat of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development, Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, United Nations System Staff College, Sustainable Development Goal Education 2030 Steering Committee of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, World Heritage Centre, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, Codex Alimentarius Commission, United Nations Group on the Information Society, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, United Nations human rights treaty bodies, United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute, United Nations Industrial Development Organization, United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, United Nations Population Fund, United Nations University, secretariats of the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer and the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, secretariat of the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control and the Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products, World Health Organization, World Meteorological Organization, World Summit on the Information Society Forum, World Tourism Organization and World Trade Organization; (d) other intergovernmental bodies: secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, Global Forum on Migration and Development, Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, International Development Law Organization, International Renewable Energy Agency, International Union for Conservation of Nature and Pacific Islands Forum.

<sup>3</sup> See <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/inputs/>.

## I. Introduction

1. The high-level political forum on sustainable development provides a central platform for follow-up and review at the global level of progress towards the implementation of General Assembly resolution 70/1, entitled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”. In line with paragraph 82 of the 2030 Agenda, the forum facilitates the sharing of experiences, including successes, challenges and lessons learned. It also provides political leadership, guidance and recommendations for follow-up and promotes the system-wide coherence and coordination of sustainable development policies.

2. In paragraph 85 of the 2030 Agenda, the General Assembly called for thematic reviews of progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals, including with regard to cross-cutting issues, to take place at the high-level political forum. In accordance with existing mandates, the forum’s review of progress, global achievements and challenges is supported by reviews by the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council and other intergovernmental bodies and forums, which should reflect the integrated nature of the Goals and the interlinkages between them.

3. The President of the Council therefore invited the functional commissions and expert bodies of the Council and other intergovernmental bodies and forums, including global platforms and intergovernmental organization-driven mechanisms that contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, to share relevant input and deliberations as to how they address the Goals under review from the perspective of the theme of the 2021 high-level political forum, “Sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic that promotes the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development: building an inclusive and effective path for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda in the context of the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development”. The forum will review progress towards Goal 1, on ending poverty, Goal 2, on ending hunger, Goal 3, on ensuring good health and well-being, Goal 8, on promoting decent work and economic growth, Goal 10, on reducing inequalities, Goal 12, on ensuring responsible consumption and production, Goal 13, on taking urgent climate action, Goal 16, on promoting peace, justice and strong institutions, and Goal 17, on strengthening partnerships. The review will also serve to consider the integrated, indivisible and interlinked nature of the Goals. The contributions of the intergovernmental bodies do not suggest a formal reporting link to the forum or modify the mandate or governance of any entity.

4. The present document is based on a synthesis of the voluntary submissions received as at 31 March 2021.<sup>4</sup> It provides a brief analysis of how the intergovernmental bodies are responding to the theme of the 2021 high-level political forum and the Goals under review, including key recommendations, based on their work, and of actions to accelerate a sustainable and resilient recovery from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

## II. Impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals under review in 2021

5. The COVID-19 pandemic has affected all of the Goals under review this year and led to a reversal in the progress made on Goals 1, 2, 3, 8 and 10. Inputs submitted to the forum were used to assess a wide range of cross-cutting impacts to interlinked

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<sup>4</sup> Contributions received after 31 March and all other submissions are available at <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/inputs/>.

Goals and targets stemming from the health and economic crises that have affected progress more broadly.

### **Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere<sup>5</sup>**

6. After nearly 25 years of consistent poverty reduction, the pandemic is expected to result in the reversal of that global trend for the first time since 1996. It has significantly increased the risk of living in poverty, especially for women, mainly owing to their overrepresentation in precarious and informal employment. The economic downturn caused by the pandemic will also push those already in extreme poverty into deeper destitution. In the least developed countries, the aggregate poverty incidence is expected to have increased by 2.4 percentage points to almost 39 per cent in 2020. The prospects of eradicating extreme poverty by 2030 are therefore even slimmer than before the pandemic.

7. While millions of families have been pushed into poverty by a loss of income, already poor households were far more likely to suffer such losses, especially those working in the informal economy whose livelihoods were crippled by lockdowns. Measures adopted to flatten the curve have particularly affected migrants, as well as their families and communities of origin, transit and destination. The situation is having life-altering consequences for children and harming them disproportionately because of their age-based vulnerabilities.

8. The multifaceted impacts of the pandemic have deepened economic and social insecurity and inequality, in particular as a result of unemployment, as people in specific professions, such as service professions, have lost their jobs, often without adequate social security nets. Workers in precarious positions, including those in the informal sector and the gig economy, independent workers, domestic workers and migrant workers, regardless of migration status, have lost or risk losing their employment, often without social protections. Workers placed on partial unemployment have not always had access to social protections. The health and safety of health workers and workers in other crucial positions for combating the virus have been put at risk.

### **Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture**

9. Even before the pandemic, almost 690 million people were undernourished worldwide, signifying an increase in hunger since 2014. Some 2 billion people did not have regular access to safe, nutritious and sufficient food, and 3 billion people could not afford healthy diets. The complex dynamics triggered by the lockdowns intended to contain the disease are creating conditions for a major disruption to food systems and giving rise to a dramatic increase in hunger. The most recent estimates of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations indicate that between 83 and 132 million additional people will experience food insecurity as a direct result of the pandemic. At least 25 countries are at risk of a significant deterioration in food security because of the secondary socioeconomic impacts of the pandemic. In Latin America, the number of people requiring food assistance almost tripled in 2020.

10. Food systems directly employ more than 1 billion people and provide livelihoods for another 3.5 billion people. COVID-19 mitigation and control measures and the emerging recession are having a profound economic impact, putting the jobs and livelihoods of millions at risk and potentially disrupting incomes and, by extension, food access. Without interventions to save lives and restore livelihoods,

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<sup>5</sup> See also the 2021 report of the Secretary-General on progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals ([E/2021/58](#)).

the number of hungry people could rise even further, especially with the pandemic extending well into 2021. Smallholder farmers, their families, and food workers in all sectors are particularly vulnerable. The challenge of food security continues to be one of access to, rather than availability of, food.

11. The pandemic is also adversely affecting agrifood systems and the functioning of food and agricultural markets and supply chains around the world. Food markets continue to face uncertainties because of the prospects of weak economic growth and unstable energy and currency markets. While agricultural trade has proved more resilient than trade in other goods owing to the essential nature of food products, additional disruptions to supply chains could start to undermine this resilience, with damaging consequences for global food security.

12. Food productivity could also be affected in the future, especially if the virus is not contained and the lockdown measures continue. Both consumers and producers of food crops rely on plant genetic resources and seeds for food, nutrition, agriculture and livelihoods, and food systems depend on the availability of diverse seeds. The pandemic has significantly affected the level of access to seeds and the global and regional processes related to fisheries and aquaculture.

### **Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages**

13. The pandemic has dramatically exposed existing vulnerabilities in the health systems of all countries, including limited capacity to adapt and respond efficiently to a surge in new patients while maintaining continuity of care, resource gaps such as shortages in the health workforce and in medical equipment and supplies, and inadequate investments in infrastructure. A reliance on employment-based health insurance and social protection schemes, as well as burdensome medical fees at a time when the economy is constrained and many people are facing financial insecurity, has also affected many people.

14. Furthermore, life during the lockdowns has been highly stressful for many people. Schools have closed and socialization has been significantly limited, affecting the social and emotional well-being of families and children and precipitating a rise in substance abuse and domestic violence in some households. Increased stress at home has also exacerbated previously unstable relationships, with implications for children's well-being.

15. Aside from the direct impacts of the pandemic on disease and mortality, the failure to fully sustain essential health services has also increased the rate of morbidity and mortality from preventable health threats, including communicable and non-communicable diseases, negatively affected the health and survival of women and newborns, and compromised the provision of routine inoculations. Many countries were forced to discontinue preventive programmes and interventions, which slowed the rate of progress in comparison with the past. Responding to the pandemic requires extensive access to a wide array of medical products and other technologies, including protective equipment, contact tracing software, medicines, diagnostics, vaccines and treatments, which are often scarce, especially in poor countries. The response has also increased medical waste as a result of practices including the haphazard use and disposal of disinfectants, masks and gloves.

16. During the pandemic, science, technology and innovation have been key enablers in the response to the health, economic and social disruptions. Tools from the fields of science, technology, innovation and information and communications technology (ICT) are being used to support the development and deployment of diagnostics, community testing and self-testing, and digital contact tracing. Ongoing scientific collaboration and knowledge-sharing are also essential for the development, testing and roll-out of an effective vaccine.

17. Digital platforms and solutions are essential for maintaining continuity of services and providing support and advice to populations and communities that are difficult to reach by conventional means. Such technologies can be used to ensure social, educational and business continuity, disseminate timely and verified warning information and support adherence to safety measures such as quarantines. Data aggregation systems provide epidemiological insights and play an important role in COVID-19 surveillance. This approach has provided an impetus for some digitization efforts that could have a positive longer-term impact and has resulted in a recognition that countries must focus more on elevating science, technology and innovation in both policy and practical terms while ensuring that the development benefits of science, technology and innovation and ICT accrue to all people equally.

18. The pandemic has also prompted calls for a new relationship with nature in order to reduce the risk of future zoonotic spillovers. Drivers of zoonotic disease emergence are a complex mix of habitat and biodiversity loss, increases in human population densities, changes in food systems, land conversion and deforestation for intensive agriculture, globalized trade and travel practices, climate change and other factors. Biodiversity loss, deforestation and forest fragmentation increase the risk that infectious diseases may emerge. The illegal trading of wildlife is also a factor in the spread of zoonotic diseases.

**Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all**

19. The pandemic has had an adverse impact on national economies, rolling back decades of growth and development and triggering job losses, reduced incomes and decreased health outcomes that have directly affected Goal 8 and subsequently affected Goals 1 and 10, as well as multiple other Goals and targets. As a result of border closures and physical distancing measures, most Governments have faced large contractions in economic activity, recessions, and budgetary shortfalls, while populations have faced reduced access to income, employment and food. Subsequent macroeconomic constraints have significantly worsened the capacity of Governments to build capable, effective and resilient institutions.

20. The pandemic occurred at a time when the multilateral trading system was experiencing pre-existing stress. Persistent trade tensions and a drastic increase in trade restrictions from 2017 had resulted in slow global merchandise trade growth from 2017 to 2019. In 2020, world merchandise trade fell further, by an estimated 5.3 per cent. This was, however, a substantial improvement on earlier forecasts of a 12.9 per cent decline and was largely the result of strong fiscal and monetary stimulus policies by Governments around the world. A restrained approach to trade protectionism and the introduction of liberalizing measures over the course of 2020, as well as the shift to remote work and business innovation in many places, also contributed to the relatively small decline.

21. The effects of the declines in trade have varied across countries, within national populations and by sector. Micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises have been much more adversely affected by the pandemic than large companies. Of such enterprises, those operating in the services sector have been most affected, with the biggest impact reported by those in accommodation and food services. The non-food manufacturing, travel and transport, retail and wholesale sectors, where micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises have been overrepresented and much informal income is generated, were also affected. In some African and Asian countries, small informal businesses account for 90 per cent of all companies, and their struggle to cope with the impact of the pandemic is having extensive economic and human repercussions. During shutdowns, informal companies have struggled to pay their employees, who often depend on daily wages for basic needs.

22. There is evidence that women are more negatively affected because of their overrepresentation in the food service, retail, textile and apparel manufacturing, and informal employment sectors. Informal, women-led and youth-led firms have been extremely affected. According to a recent survey, 61 per cent of women-led firms reported that their business operations had been significantly affected by the crisis, compared with 53 per cent of companies led by men; 27 per cent of youth-led firms were at risk of closing permanently within three months, compared with 18 per cent of non-youth-led firms; and 30 per cent of informal firms were at risk of closing permanently within three months, compared with 18 per cent of formal firms.

23. Although the least developed countries have not been particularly hard hit by COVID-19 itself, the socioeconomic fallout from the pandemic has been severe. Limited export diversification has heightened the vulnerability of the least developed countries to the impact of the pandemic on global trade. Global trade in forest products, for example, declined by about 8 per cent because of the pandemic, and forest workers with minimal social support, such as casual workers, owners of micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises, small-scale farmers, and women, have been among those most affected.

24. The economic crisis has underscored the importance of tenure security and resource rights, as those with tenure or other forms of security in using and managing resources have been less affected, while those who have no property rights or access to land resources, such as women and farm workers, have been more significantly affected. It is not yet clear whether a continued economic downturn will trigger the widespread dispossession of land, creating social upheaval or resulting in more informal tenure arrangements and unplanned slum formations. For some rural communities living near forests, the exploitation of those resources has become one of the most accessible alternatives for providing immediate incomes and basic needs, leading to additional forest loss and degradation.

25. International tourism remains at a standstill one year into the crisis, with severe impacts on employment in many least developed countries. The level of manufacturing exports has increased recently, but it is still too early to determine the durability of that rebound. Unstable demand for and falling prices of commodities such as oil and gas have led to balance-of-payments problems and other adverse impacts in several least developed countries.

26. While digital technologies have helped to enable economic systems to continue functioning, at least partially, the acceleration of the digitalization of the economy has introduced new risks, in particular for women. The gendered effects of new and emerging technologies and concepts, such as artificial intelligence, the Internet of things, big data, gene editing and blockchain, are not fully understood. These fast-changing and wide-ranging technological innovations have implications for many facets of societies and economies. Women tend to be underrepresented in science, technology, engineering and mathematics careers, and there is growing concern that new technologies may lead to a reversal in gains achieved before the pandemic in gender equality and the empowerment of women as a result of adverse effects on women's employment and labour force participation, as well as on economic and livelihoods opportunities.

#### **Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries**

27. The pandemic has revealed ethically and politically unacceptable inequalities in access to treatments, vaccines and health-related technologies. Strengthening international cooperation and committing to global solidarity are critical for ensuring that all countries have access to those products and services and have the requisite

technological capabilities and productive capacities to produce the requisite health supplies for current and future health emergencies.

28. The pandemic has also affected the promotion and protection of human rights and has disproportionately affected women and girls as a result of pre-existing gender inequalities, deep-rooted and often systemic discrimination and a lack of gender-balanced leadership. Gender-based violence against women is closely linked to gender inequalities. Since the emergence of the pandemic, statistical data and numerous reports have indicated that all forms of gender-based violence have intensified, triggering a “shadow pandemic” in which one out of three women has suffered physical or sexual violence predominantly perpetrated by an intimate partner or family member.

29. The restrictions imposed to counter the pandemic may result in new forms of discrimination and gender-based violence against women, especially for women belonging to disadvantaged groups and women at the lower end of the economic scale. In least developed countries, women and girls have been more affected by the economic and social fallout of the pandemic, as they rely more on the informal sector and are burdened by an increase in unpaid care work. The impacts are not just economic. Health services in least developed countries are significantly disrupted, potentially leading to a reversal in progress on combating diseases and malnutrition and reducing mortality rates. The shifting of funds to pandemic responses is hampering women’s access to sexual and reproductive health care.

30. The pandemic has also highlighted the lack of equality in digital access, connectivity, affordability and digital literacy and resources, which has contributed to inequalities in social and economic welfare. People with access to ICTs and those with jobs that rely on their use have been better placed to overcome some of the difficulties caused by the pandemic than people without such access. Those who lack affordable connectivity have been disadvantaged in comparison with those who have such connectivity. Manual and casual workers have been less able to work online than others.

31. The inequities in access to technologies required for remote learning and digital education disproportionately affect poorer communities, illustrating the vital importance of broadband networks and services in driving robust, resilient and well-functioning societies and economies. It has also underscored humanity’s growing reliance on digital connectivity for business continuity, employment, education, commerce, banking, health care and a whole host of other essential services. Children without access to computers and connectivity are educationally disadvantaged.

32. The globally accelerated response has centred on improving telecommunications and ICT infrastructure and access to services. Much progress has been made over the past 10 years in expanding access to and adoption of broadband infrastructure and services. However, digital inequalities, including uneven access to and adoption of the Internet, remain prevalent between and within countries. While these inequalities existed before the current COVID-19 crisis, the pandemic has further highlighted the disparities in access to high-speed connectivity and has brought Internet safety issues to the forefront as many people shifted to working, learning and communicating online. Even with increased ICT use in various sectors during the pandemic, 3.7 billion people remain offline. A lack of affordability, constrained access to infrastructure and devices, poor connectivity, weak digital skills and the absence of relevant content mean that billions of people are unable to leverage the power of digital transformation in a way that could catalyse seismic shifts in development outcomes.

**Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns**

33. Production and consumption were scaled back globally because of the pandemic, affecting global trade through a complex network of shocks to both supply and demand. On the supply side, the physical distancing measures and border closures adopted globally to restrict the spread of COVID-19 have reduced air freight capacity, halted industrial production, limited port activities and restricted the ability of businesses to operate. Consequently, both production and export capacities were severely restricted. The inability to source production inputs resulted in the breakdown of several global value chains. The shock to demand caused by the pandemic was no less damaging. The world's largest importing economies experienced sharp drops in aggregate demand owing not only to physical distancing measures that affected the ability to purchase but also to the loss of jobs and incomes in those countries.

34. There is increasing focus on and demand for sustainability reporting by companies as a means of providing stakeholders with important data on the performance of companies in the environmental, social and governance areas, which is also a critical factor in a resilient, green and inclusive recovery, the transition to a low-carbon and circular economy and the mitigation of risks related to climate change. Rising volumes of medical waste resulting from the pandemic are relevant to this Goal and have been identified as a problem that requires more attention.

35. In addition, the pandemic highlighted the need for further efforts towards the harmonization and comparability of sustainability reporting to ensure its usefulness in decision-making, including with regard to financial aid to support a post-COVID-19 resurgence in the private sector, in particular for micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises. In this regard, the pandemic led to accelerated efforts to consolidate different international sustainability reporting frameworks and transition to a new governance system in order to develop a set of robust international standards on sustainability reporting aligned with key principles of financial reporting.

**Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts**

36. Lockdown measures, travel restrictions and the slowdown in economic activity may have positively affected the environment and biodiversity through reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, air and water pollution, noise and tourism. However, despite the estimated reduction in annual global emissions of between 4.2 and 7.5 per cent in 2020, record levels of greenhouse gases continue to trap heat in the atmosphere, increasing temperatures and driving more extreme weather, ice melt, sea level rise and ocean acidification. Women and girls, in particular those belonging to disadvantaged groups such as rural women, internally displaced, refugee and migrant women, and indigenous women and girls, continue to face disproportionate risks from and impacts of climate change and natural disasters for their health, safety and livelihoods.

37. Increasingly complex and concurrent risks cut across sectors and national boundaries. In addition, the pandemic, the climate crisis and the crisis of inequalities have shown that disasters can have far-reaching ramifications, such as the interruption of global supply chains, the curtailment of global trade and travel, damage to ecosystems, harm to health and well-being or the displacement of persons across national borders. Issues related to preparedness for increasingly complex, interconnected and concurrent risks in a context of uncertainty require the improvement of foresight and diagnostics for long-term planning, scenario-building and early warning and response capacities, including investment in human resources, and the ability to connect those efforts across different realms of disaster, climate,

biological, health, technological and conflict risks. A greater understanding of the interrelations among the Goals is critical to supporting adequate policy responses.

38. The focus on measures for responding to the pandemic should not overshadow the urgency of measures for combating climate change. Instead, climate action should be pursued as an integral part of the response to the pandemic. Particular attention must be given to investments in the energy sector, for example. With over two thirds of global greenhouse gas emissions coming from that sector, a transition to cleaner forms of energy is essential for achieving emissions reduction targets. The rapid uptake of renewables, coupled with energy efficiency, can help to achieve around 90 per cent of the energy-related emission reductions needed by 2050. Countries can also use renewable energy to contribute to adaptation efforts by promoting the diversification of the power supply and building resilience through improved energy access.

**Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels**

39. Economic shocks resulting from the pandemic have further intensified the vulnerabilities of countries in conflict and post-conflict situations. Progress towards peace, security and conflict management is being set back by the pandemic, as strained social and economic conditions have exacerbated the vulnerabilities of the most disadvantaged groups, and lockdowns have provided opportunities for new illicit markets to thrive while disrupting other markets. Prison settings have been particularly affected.

40. Governments around the world have responded to the pandemic with fiscal stimulus measures and emergency rescue packages, disbursing them at a speed that made them vulnerable to corrupt practices such as embezzlement, bribes, price gouging and the manipulation of procurement processes. Anti-corruption safeguards are frequently eased in such emergency frameworks, limiting opportunities for oversight and accountability.

41. With attention focused on the immediate economic impacts, lax law enforcement has facilitated large-scale illegal activities and fraudulent practices, and livelihoods based on legal activities have sometimes been sacrificed in favour of quick economic gains in numerous sectors. An overall rise in unemployment rates in origin countries as a result of the pandemic may increase the number of people willing to take risks for better economic opportunities, thereby increasing their vulnerability to trafficking.

42. The pandemic has increased the need for concerted government action at the subnational, national and international levels, global cooperation under the banner of peace and solidarity, the de-escalation of violence and the fostering of development under the principles of the rule of law and of leaving no one behind.

**Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development**

43. Health challenges, budgetary and administrative restrictions, closed borders and restrictions on movement are affecting international solidarity and partnerships, aggravating poverty and inequality and leading to setbacks in the advancement of women.

44. Since the second quarter of 2020, hundreds of millions of dollars in development assistance have been repurposed in an admirable spirit of solidarity and often in dramatic circumstances. Much of this assistance built on nascent social protection systems that were strengthened using official development assistance (ODA) in the

aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis and are now being used to channel COVID-related assistance. However, alignment with national systems has suffered. It is urgent that development partners refocus their action and support on national efforts and leadership to achieve the Goals.

45. The financial situation in the least developed countries has become more challenging, with a fall in foreign direct investment and remittances, and almost half of such countries at high risk of or already in debt distress. As a result of limited fiscal space, the fiscal response of most of the least developed countries to the pandemic was inadequate. The Debt Service Suspension Initiative of the Group of 20 has alleviated financial pressures in some of these countries but is clearly insufficient. In their fiscal responses to date, developed economies have spent nearly 580 times more per capita than the least developed countries. Nearly all least developed countries will experience weaker medium-term growth than was projected before the pandemic, leading to a setback in living standards.

46. The pandemic has highlighted the fact that partnerships, such as those between technologists and experts in the fields of education, health and the environment, are essential if technology is to help in meeting unmet needs in these areas.

47. The sudden and dramatic impact of the pandemic means that there is reduced scope for development partners to focus on reporting on multi-stakeholder development effectiveness efforts, at a time when effective multi-stakeholder partnerships are more important than ever to ensure an inclusive and sustainable economic recovery and protect the most vulnerable.

48. Preparing for multidimensional and systemic risks in today's interconnected world requires multilateralism to drive strengthened international cooperation with a strong anticipatory function.

### **III. Areas requiring urgent attention**

49. Inputs from intergovernmental bodies detailed a variety of urgent actions that are currently being taken, or must be accelerated, in a number of key areas. Some of the most critical areas are highlighted below.

50. Most importantly, fair, broad and fast access to safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines and treatments without discrimination on any basis, including nationality and migrant status, and free of charge, at least for those on low incomes and those living in poverty, is vital to saving lives and strengthening the global economic recovery and should be guaranteed. Financial commitments to vaccination operations are expected to reach \$4 billion in 50 countries by mid-2021.

51. Equally urgent is the need to address the threat of the pandemic for compounding existing crises such as conflict, natural disasters, climate change, pests and plagues that are already stressing food systems and triggering food insecurity.

52. Measures to enable the provision of sufficient and healthy food to all people are essential. Efforts to conserve and sustainably use plant genetic resources for food and agriculture must be further strengthened, as they are the backbones of global food security and sustainable agriculture. Building preparedness and maintaining crop diversity within seed systems is more urgent than ever, given the number of emergency situations and adverse events from the pandemic and natural disasters that pose threats to certain germplasm collections. Managing and deploying plant genetic diversity measures is essential for supporting vulnerable farmers in their efforts to increase resilience and secure their food security and livelihoods.

53. Governments must do more to ensure that social protection and health systems are reinforced and strengthened so that future crises can be averted to the extent possible. The benefits of building stronger social protection floors will undoubtedly outweigh the costs to countries in the long term; universal health care could be contemplated as one means of strengthening resilience to future shocks and possible pandemics. International cooperation for mobilizing the financial resources necessary to support the recovery and address the debt crisis in developing and least developed countries is now of primary importance. The recovery from the pandemic is an opportunity to build back better and should be used, through global solidarity and political will, to harness positive momentum for future outcomes that contribute to achieving the Goals.

54. The pandemic has also served to underline the importance of connectivity and the need to reduce digital inequalities as many adults and children have shifted towards remote work, learning and communication. At the same time, the pandemic is highlighting inequality among and within countries between those with online access and those without, necessitating urgent action at the national and international levels.

55. There is a critical need for international cooperation and coordination on science, technology and innovation that extends beyond the immediate urgency of the pandemic. It is crucial to enabling all countries, especially developing and least developed countries, to pursue science, technology and innovation capabilities and become more able to respond to and build resilience against natural disasters, climate change and public health emergencies in the medium and long term.

56. Countries need to continue to create an enabling environment for research, capacity-building, innovation and technologies that is complemented by coherent policies that integrate science, technology and innovation into all policy areas focusing on issues such as health, education, food systems, energy, urbanization, employment and the economy. Individually, but also through concerted international efforts, countries must also guide the development and deployment of new and emerging technologies so that they support sustainable development and leave no one behind. This measure is too critical to be left to the operations of markets alone.

57. To address the needs of health systems in developing countries, international collaboration on scientific research can play a critical role in improving health, equity and sustainable development. It can provide an important contribution where diseases are disproportionately prevalent in developing countries but research capacity may be limited. To enable their success, collaborative arrangements must be aimed at fostering equitable relations between the collaborating parties through partnerships geared towards a common goal, including the possibility of the joint ownership of intellectual property rights. The Council for Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights is considering proposals for a waiver from certain provisions of the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS Agreement) for preventing, containing and treating COVID-19. The arrangements are urgently needed, both in the context of the current pandemic and for allowing the necessary policy space for countries to prepare against predicted threats of novel zoonotic diseases.

58. The use of and trade in wildlife must be regulated and managed so that they are safe (from a human health perspective), legal and sustainable. Achieving this may involve, for example, reducing the trade in, or removing from trade, wildlife species that are of high risk for disease emergence, improving biosecurity and sanitation in markets and conducting disease surveillance of wildlife, wildlife hunters, farmers and traders, as well enhancing the enforcement of laws on all aspects of the illegal wildlife trade. There is also a need to enhance and review regulations on bushmeat, wet

markets and livestock production practices, including through the implementation of hygienic practices, while refraining from total bans, which would negatively affect communities that depend on wild animals and potentially open the door to illegal trade practices.

#### **IV. Ensuring that no one is left behind**

59. The COVID-19 pandemic and related crises have exposed and exacerbated vulnerabilities and inequalities in both developing and developed countries, deepening poverty and exclusion and leaving the most vulnerable even further behind. The pandemic is disproportionately affecting those who are already in vulnerable situations, such as migrants, displaced persons, older persons and ethnic minorities, including indigenous peoples, who often fall outside of social safety nets and lack access to basic services. They are also among those most exposed to the risk of contracting the virus, and if they contract it, they are generally at significantly higher risk of dying because of pre-existing systemic inequalities in access to quality health care.

60. Rural and indigenous populations, migrants and displaced persons were already at a disadvantage in terms of access to health care, including prevention and treatment protocols. In certain contexts, where populations live in overcrowded conditions, such as refugee camps, immigration detention centres and prisons, the lack of basic sanitary conditions and medical personnel often prevents physical distancing and proper hygiene, increasing the risk of contracting and spreading the virus.

61. In their voluntary national reviews, some countries have reported to the forum on national methods using evidence-based and human rights-based approaches for identifying the groups most vulnerable to being left behind in their particular country contexts, which will enable them to better direct policy action. However, more must be done to operationalize the concept of reaching the furthest behind first and define measures in order to avoid leaving people even further behind. The concept of leaving no one behind must be linked to transformative, cross-cutting policy areas that would significantly and sustainably enable social protection, generate employment and provide resources. Such policies should be pursued as an integral part of the COVID-19 response.

62. The global community and individual national Governments must address the deeper causes of poverty and exclusion systemically, through institution-building and development policies focused on the long term rather than through palliative measures. Youth-oriented programmes that are inclusive and not limited to academia or young professionals but extended to young farmers and entrepreneurs and indigenous and vulnerable groups, such as young people with disabilities, can also reach those at risk. Projects aimed at maintaining a level playing field between micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises and other economic actors in developing economies are now important.

63. Countries in conflict and post-conflict situations need redoubled development partnership efforts to recover from the ravages of the pandemic. A special focus on development partnerships in those countries must accompany post-conflict reconstruction and development measures and efforts to establish peace and security.

64. Levels of stigma, xenophobia and racism that have risen in many places since the onset of the pandemic further intensify situations of vulnerability. Putting the principle of leaving no one behind into action depends on deliberate steps being taken to address exclusion, through practical inclusivity policies that systemically address all segments of society and their respective needs. The full involvement of all

stakeholders, including women, children according to their evolving capacities, young people, elderly persons, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and local communities, is indispensable.

65. The global health crisis is also testing the commitment and adherence to the principles of gender equality, non-discrimination and solidarity at both the national and the international levels. Women represent 70 per cent of the workforce on the front lines of health care but remain significantly underrepresented in leadership positions and decision-making processes in the health sector. Women's participation in decision-making processes and their leadership at the subnational and national levels in elaborating plans, policies and programmes with an inclusive perspective, both for tackling inequalities and for leading recovery from future emergencies, is imperative.

66. Safeguarding the food security and livelihoods of small-scale farmers, who are more vulnerable to the impact of the pandemic and related restrictions, is important for preventing disruptions to local seed production and the supply of quality seeds. Strengthened biodiversity policies, as part of a global pandemic prevention strategy, will have important implications for the design and implementation of sustainable wildlife management and trade policies. Those policies must be pro-poor and should be implemented with the involvement and consent of indigenous peoples and local communities.

67. There is also a particular need to build the capacities of and engage with groups of skilled diaspora health professionals. In the immediate COVID-19 response, these skilled migrants are essential for rebuilding health-care systems during the recovery and for developing future preparedness plans and strengthening health systems.

68. Finally, affordable universal connectivity is essential for an inclusive and sustainable world and must be at the forefront of sustainable development efforts. Overall global Internet user penetration currently stands at 51.4 per cent, dropping to 44.4 per cent in developing countries and just 19.5 per cent in the least developed countries. Urgent action is needed to reverse the dramatic effects of the pandemic on education, in particular by addressing digital inequalities and taking full advantage of the opportunities provided by the experiences gained with expanded and enhanced digital education.

## **V. Sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic**

69. In responding to the impacts of the pandemic, every opportunity should be seized to adopt policies that trigger structural and other changes in order to create conditions that accelerate progress towards the Goals. An integrated and sustainable response to the pandemic therefore requires actions in numerous policy areas in the economic, social and environmental spheres. The pandemic has also highlighted the inadequacy of pursuing fragmented approaches to the management of global risks while also trying to transition towards sustainability. Building back better requires new perspectives, new thinking and new approaches that are bolstered by global solidarity and multilateralism.

70. The response should start with systems thinking to analyse complex systems. Policymaking should also become more integrated, coherent and inclusive. Overcoming a silo-based approach is a precondition for enhancing policy coherence on sustainable development. It requires leadership from the top and a change in organizational culture.

### **An integrated public health response**

71. Strong action is required as a matter of urgency to alleviate the pandemic, with rapid and equitable global access to vaccines, as well as an extensive array of medical products and other technologies. Collaboration and cooperation among health technology developers, governments and other stakeholders are therefore crucial to addressing the pandemic. Critical to the success of these efforts is an appropriately designed intellectual property rights regime that ensures equitable access to health technologies, especially COVID-19-related treatments, vaccines and diagnostics, while incentivizing research, innovation and collaboration. More broadly, the diffusion of technology is essential for the long-term economic growth of many developing countries, because it provides access to more advanced technological inputs, thereby increasing efficiency.

72. The public health response should accelerate universal vaccinations and equitable distribution that ensures that the most vulnerable countries are not left behind. The protection offered by universal vaccination, a global public good, requires not only financial support for the procurement of vaccines but new multilateral arrangements to mobilize global production and ensure equitable access to critical global goods such as vaccines, treatment and diagnostics, removing obstacles created by intellectual property rights, adopting measures to promote the sharing of technology, and mobilizing and expanding production capacities.

73. Fair and equitable access to and sharing of benefits derived from genetic resources, including pathogens, remain important, as do continued efforts to ensure the rapid sharing of microbial samples to facilitate the development of vaccines and therapeutics. This development is dependent on access to the diversity of organisms, molecules and genes found in nature, and vaccines and therapeutics are often derived using indigenous knowledge and traditional medicine.

74. The international intellectual property system, framed by the TRIPS Agreement, is a significant factor in facilitating equitable access to existing technologies and supporting the creation, manufacture and dissemination of new COVID-19 technologies. An integrated health, trade and intellectual property approach to capacity-building activities can serve to frame the pandemic response in terms of human rights considerations, strengthened national health systems, and the adaptation and implementation of regulatory mechanisms and competition policy.

### **Social protection floors and human rights**

75. A sustainable recovery also requires the strengthening of labour rights and social protection for all, with special consideration for informal sector workers, unpaid workers in the care economy, workers in the gig economy, the lowest paid and most vulnerable in global value chains and those unable to work. This would include the promotion of a global fund to ensure universal social protection floors. Multinational corporations have a responsibility to workers at all levels of their global production chains and must respect labour rights.

76. Human rights principles and standards must underpin the sustainable and resilient response to and recovery from the pandemic for the benefit of all, especially vulnerable populations and those at risk of being left behind, including women and girls, rural and indigenous communities, and persons with disabilities. Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, in particular the economic empowerment of women, are a key accelerator of inclusive and sustainable development. Countries must make a concerted effort to mainstream a gender perspective into COVID-19 response and recovery efforts.

77. Globalized macroeconomic and political factors, including the privatization of public goods, deregulated labour markets, the shrinking of the welfare State, and austerity measures as part of structural adjustment policies and as an aid conditionality, often exacerbate unemployment and poverty and produce economic injustices that have a disproportionate impact on women. Women's rights must be integrated and their empowerment supported in social and economic recovery frameworks through a holistic approach that ensures the ability of women to access productive resources, assets and digital communication tools, including their rights to land, housing, property, markets, economic value chains, inheritance and social protection.

78. Regional economic commissions can promote competition and consumer protection policies in developing countries and countries with economies in transition in order to contribute to their economic growth and development.

### **Inclusive and sustainable economic recovery measures**

79. A sustainable and resilient recovery from the pandemic requires economic systems to become more inclusive. Governments need to ensure that their policies for addressing the effects of the crisis on economic growth and employment have a long-term impact on the achievement of the Goals. The financial stimulus packages provided during the pandemic have been much larger in the developed world than in developing countries. The stimulus packages will affect the competitiveness of enterprises in developing countries and therefore their economic growth. The high prevalence of micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises as the economic backbone in developing countries highlights the need to promote competition policies that can foster sustainable economic growth and promote innovation without negatively affecting market access or competitiveness for those enterprises, in particular in the digital sector.

80. While it may be some months until stimulus plans aimed at aiding the economy to recover and decreasing unemployment are fully activated, now is the time to start thinking through the role of the health sector and health equity in all policies contained in these plans. Jobs can be provided by strengthening the health workforce, building more robust and resilient health systems to reinforce outbreak preparedness and scaling up action in disadvantaged communities.

81. The implementation of many Goals can also be bolstered by sustainable public procurement. By leveraging the purchasing power of public administration to guide products and services towards sustainability, governments can lead by example and stimulate the markets for sustainable products. Public procurement represents an average of 13 to 20 per cent of gross domestic product. It is important to create the legal conditions for sustainable public procurement and learn lessons from countries that are forerunners in that area.

82. Closer economic coordination and cooperation between countries on a regional or international basis will enhance the impact of trade-facilitating measures, the free movement of skilled workforces, government procurement strategies, convergent regulatory standards and competition policy.

### **Nature-based solutions**

83. In developing their recovery measures, countries should prioritize increased investment in nature-based solutions that can create jobs and support livelihoods while conserving biodiversity and tackling climate change and can potentially deliver many co-benefits simultaneously, including climate change adaptation and mitigation, enhanced biodiversity and improved hydrological regulation. Nature-based solutions, where appropriate in connection with traditional infrastructure, are

often cost-effective and can also improve resilience against pandemics, for example through the protection of vital wetland ecosystems that prevents the spread of zoonotic diseases.

84. Nature-based solutions are also vital for ensuring food and water security, protecting against natural disasters and providing other goods and services that are crucial to human well-being and economic development. In turn, the widespread adoption of agricultural practices that conserve healthy ecosystems while supporting income generation and diversification helps to create resilient rural economies.

85. Significant increases in financial assistance and investments in climate adaptation and resilience-building measures, including local initiatives, are necessary to support the achievement of commitments by countries under the Paris Agreement that are commensurate with its goal of limiting global warming to below 2°C, and preferably to 1.5°C, above pre-industrial levels.

86. Relying only on the funds available from multilateral sources will not be enough to meet the challenges of climate adaptation, resilience-building and mitigation. Of paramount importance is the adoption of improved measures to de-risk institutional investment for green and climate-resilient infrastructure in a way that safeguards the mobilization of private equity funds that multiply the impact of the public funds invested. Such measures should also ensure that local communities, as well as both public and private sectors, share in the benefits of such investments.

#### **Digital connectivity for reducing inequalities**

87. Digital connectivity has emerged as an asset in combating COVID-19. The scalability and resilience of the broadband ecosystem in keeping health, education, economic and financial systems operating has been proven. However, the pandemic has also revealed how the lack of connectivity, especially in marginalized communities, is widening the gap between rich and poor and further increasing the digital divide.

88. To that end, efforts are under way to support resilient connectivity, affordable Internet access and the safe use of online services in order to foster informed and educated societies. Governments, industry, the international community and civil society are urged to take additional immediate actions to shore up digital networks, strengthen capacity at critical connectivity points, such as hospitals and transport hubs, and boost digital access and inclusion.

89. Directing science, technology and innovation towards the expansion of digital infrastructure and technologies is essential for building more resilient societies, making economies more adaptable to shocks, giving people a voice and increased agency and reducing impacts on the environment. Enhanced development cooperation, investment and knowledge-sharing are needed, in particular for the least developed countries, to strengthen technological learning and innovation capacities, which in turn helps to address complex hazards.

90. Support should be provided for the sustainable and inclusive transformation of the economies of the least developed countries, including through building productive capacities in the health and education sectors, investing in digital infrastructure, developing science, technology and innovation capabilities, designing and implementing green industrial policies, and diversifying economic and export structures.

#### **Finance and debt relief for the furthest behind**

91. In addition to building financial capacities, effective debt relief is needed for developing countries, in particular the least developed countries and those in debt

distress, beyond the suspension of debt servicing. This would require measures such as the compulsory participation of all relevant bilateral and private creditors in debt relief, as well as financial support from multilateral institutions to facilitate debt restructuring. Debt relief and restructuring should not come at the expense of credit ratings.

92. Support is also needed for initiatives to create dedicated funds for addressing the economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. More broadly, increased assistance on highly concessional terms is required from multilateral financial institutions to support sustainable development by enhancing the availability of resources and capitalizing all multilateral financial institutions. Efforts are needed to double the resources for emergency support from the International Monetary Fund, issue new special drawing rights and ensure that unused rights are channelled for the benefit of developing countries, in particular the least developed countries. It has never been more important to increase levels of ODA and ensure the fulfilment of the commitment by developed countries to provide the equivalent of 0.7 per cent of their gross national income in ODA. The expansion and promotion of South-South cooperation is also important.

93. Financial support for the least developed countries to address the pandemic should be provided mainly in the form of grants. For highly indebted least developed countries, resources should also be provided for multilateral debt relief. The least developed countries should be accorded access to vaccines at zero or minimal cost and given access to new global insurance mechanisms aimed at addressing the current pandemic, future pandemics and other global threats, in particular non-linear climate risks, at zero or minimal cost. ODA remains a critical source of finance for the least developed countries. Developed countries must therefore take urgent steps to provide 0.2 per cent of their gross national income as ODA to the least developed countries. Access to climate change financing needs to be scaled up and provided beyond possible graduations from the least developed country category. The pandemic also underscores the urgency of extending the transition period for least developed country members of the World Trade Organization under article 66 (1) of the TRIPS Agreement.

94. The transparent, accountable and participatory management of public finances is a crucial element of effective governance, and even more so during the COVID-19 pandemic, when Governments around the world face decreasing revenues and increasing expenditures.

## **VI. Selected recommendations for sustainable and resilient recovery in the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development**

95. The functional commissions and expert bodies of the Council and other intergovernmental bodies and forums have recommended a wide range of specific targeted actions addressing a multitude of issues. For the purposes of the present synthesis report, a curated summary of overarching recommendations is set out below.

96. The following actions are considered the most relevant and impactful for a sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic that promotes the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development and for building an inclusive and effective path for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda in the context of the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development:

(a) Take stock of the lessons learned from the shortcomings of the multilateral and regional responses to COVID-19 and, in line with the calls for an inclusive and

networked multilateralism, put in motion an open and transparent process to identify and implement the changes that will ensure that the system supports equitable, sustainable and resilient development through structural transformation;

(b) Ensure that all countries have equal access to the benefits of life-saving treatments, not only for the pandemic but also for future health emergencies and infectious disease outbreaks;

(c) Focus global and country-level recovery efforts on restoring macroeconomic stability, to ensure that Governments have the necessary resources to guarantee sustainability during the recovery;

(d) Implement more robust targeted social protection programmes to improve access to healthy and nutritious foods;

(e) Ensure better protections for vulnerable and marginalized food system workers and farmers, who are disproportionately affected by the crisis;

(f) Provide better protections for countries that depend on food imports;

(g) Strengthen and coordinate policy responses to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on food systems and food security and nutrition, including at the international level;

(h) Support more diverse and resilient distribution systems, including shorter supply chains and territorial markets;

(i) Support more resilient food production systems based on agroecology and other sustainable forms of food production;

(j) Reallocate a portion of discretionary stimulus spending to nature-enhancing recovery measures and support initiatives undertaken by indigenous communities on their lands;

(k) Ensure that the economic cost of pandemics is factored into consumption, production, and government policies and budgets;

(l) Enable changes to reduce the types of consumption, globalized agricultural expansion and trade that have led to pandemics, including through taxes, levies and other regulatory constraints;

(m) Strengthen the link between production structure and human development, as the production structure of a country is the strongest determinant of its level of income, the quality of employment, the quality of the environment, and its prospects for future growth and development;

(n) Steer recovery packages and investments towards sustainable patterns of consumption and production, including but not limited to the circular economy, and reduce the vulnerability of global supply chains to disruptions in times of crisis to help in enhancing economic and social resilience;

(o) Reduce zoonotic disease risks in the international wildlife trade, enhance law enforcement in all aspects of the illegal wildlife trade and improve community education in disease hotspots about the health risks of wildlife trade;

(p) Recognize the full range of linkages between biodiversity and all aspects of human health and integrate biodiversity, genetic resource conservation and breeding considerations to address the common drivers of biodiversity loss, disease risk and ill health;

(q) Promote the One Health approach to realize healthy ecosystems, people and livelihoods;

(r) Support the post-2020 global biodiversity framework as the global policy framework for achieving accelerated action and transformative pathways for biodiversity in the coming decade;

(s) Value the engagement and knowledge of indigenous peoples and local communities in formulating and implementing pandemic prevention programmes, achieving greater food security and reducing the consumption of wildlife;

(t) Improve the understanding of the relationship between ecosystem degradation and restoration, landscape structure and the risk of disease emergence;

(u) Strengthen accountability and transparency to ensure gender-sensitive strategies for achieving the Goals;

(v) Mobilize public resources and strengthen public services in areas that support the achievement of gender equality and the promotion of the human rights of women and girls, with particular attention to inclusive schooling to meet the educational needs of girls with disabilities and girls belonging to ethnic, linguistic or religious minorities;

(w) Ensure social protection and socioeconomic support for women, including post-COVID-19 recovery programmes with stimulus packages, to ensure women's access to formal employment in both the private and the public sectors, as well as to entrepreneurial opportunities;

(x) Ensure women's access to health care, in particular sexual and reproductive health services, including for the most disadvantaged groups of women and girls;

(y) Ensure the development, adoption and effective implementation of national action plans to achieve gender parity by 2030;

(z) Strengthen the implementation of gender-sensitive policies and women's participation in decision-making processes, in cooperation with civil society and national human rights institutions, to forge synergies for progress and transformative change;

(aa) Commit to policies and actions that support and foster the participation of women in the economy, including public procurement commitments, capacity-building, the provision of social protection, access to finance and business networks, and the establishment of ownership rights;

(bb) Ensure the proper disposal and segregation of medical waste to avoid the contamination or pollution of ecosystems, while ensuring that such practices do not create a risk of disease transmission or jeopardize the safety of health workers and patients;

(cc) Support policies and actions in which the strengthening of the competitiveness and resilience of micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises, including women-owned enterprises and young entrepreneurs, is at the centre of COVID-19 recovery and sustainable development plans;

(dd) Increase access to finance targeted at micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises, supporting their integration into inclusive and sustainable value chains, and engage in green production and trade;

(ee) Incorporate sustainability and decarbonization objectives into economic response packages;

(ff) Combine, wherever feasible, debt relief for highly indebted countries with investments in nature and the climate through debt-for-nature and debt-for-climate swaps;

- (gg) Facilitate digital transformation through access to technologies and digital skills to accelerate progress towards sustainable development;
- (hh) Achieve global connectivity by creating sufficient ICT infrastructures and provide Internet access as a public good;
- (ii) Increase efforts towards learning, training, knowledge management and capacity development to achieve sustainable development;
- (jj) Build stronger national research capabilities in developing countries;
- (kk) Increase the participation of women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics and of young women in academic courses in those fields;
- (ll) Increase the effectiveness of science, technology and innovation policymaking, scale up the application of science, technology and innovation solutions and improve foresight and technological assessment to advance the understanding of risks, benefits and policy options in order to steer innovation in ways that leave no one behind;
- (mm) Implement strategic foresight and technological assessment initiatives to better understand the socioeconomic and environmental implications of new and innovative technologies;
- (nn) Integrate national and international gene banks into seed system restoration measures in emergency situations;
- (oo) Prioritize the availability, supply and distribution of quality seeds of locally adapted plant varieties and support local seed production interventions for vulnerable small-scale farmers;
- (pp) Accelerate the integration of digital solutions for farmers and field workers, such as agricultural research organizations, extension workers and gene bank curators;
- (qq) Reorganize national budgets so that they are based on programme performance budgeting systems, in order to enable the embedding of the Goals in the budgets and facilitate the monitoring of performance and progress towards their achievement;
- (rr) Close the digital divide, develop good-quality open educational resources and build digital commons as a complement to face-to-face learning, with a view to enabling inclusive and equitable technology-supported learning;
- (ss) Increase digital cooperation across borders and sectors and accelerate the development of digital societies;
- (tt) Mainstream crime prevention and criminal justice into recovery plans;
- (uu) Advance the rule of law at the national and international levels, including through crime prevention and criminal justice mechanisms, for sustained and inclusive economic growth and sustainable development;
- (vv) Strengthen international cooperation in criminal matters to effectively dismantle criminal networks and counter transnational organized crime;
- (ww) Adopt a whole-of-government, whole-of-society and gender-responsive approach to foster policies, practices and partnerships that promote safe, orderly and regular migration;
- (xx) Ensure migrant-inclusive approaches in the COVID-19 response and recovery efforts and facilitate the equitable access of migrants to information and basic services, including health services and vaccinations;

(yy) Counter racism, xenophobia and discrimination by promoting a more balanced, evidence-based narrative focused on the ways in which economies and societies benefit from migration;

(zz) Harness the contributions from diasporas and remittances to their countries of origin;

(aaa) Increase the level of ambition in domestic, public and private resource mobilization, strengthen the enabling environment for sustainable investments and deliver on commitments to effective and inclusive international development cooperation;

(bbb) Include sound competition and consumer protection policies in the policy mix adopted for an inclusive and sustainable economic recovery in order to make markets function better for consumers and businesses;

(ccc) Strengthen efforts towards the development of a global, coherent and sound set of standards on sustainability reporting that would provide high-quality and comparable data and ensure consistency and connectivity in financial and sustainability reporting;

(ddd) Strengthen the capacity of national statistical systems, especially for countries in vulnerable situations, to meet the data demands for implementing the 2030 Agenda and monitoring and reporting on the Goals and targets;

(eee) Finally, the United Nations, the World Trade Organization and other multilateral, bilateral and non-State development actors must continue to tackle the global challenges of climate change, migration, public health crises and international trade. The increased cooperation between the World Bank Group, the International Monetary Fund and the United Nations is encouraging. Multilateralism can provide solutions that individual States or actors cannot provide alone. Member States and other stakeholders are called upon to renew their commitment to a multilateralism that enables collaboration in the face of global challenges, rejects zealous nationalism and addresses the needs of the most vulnerable.

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