

EU statement

First informal consultations on the ministerial declaration of the high-level segment of the 2024 session of the Economic and Social Council and the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development

Wednesday, 27 March 2024, 3:00 pm, Conference Room 4

Thanks to the co-chairs. I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

1. The EU and its Member States look forward to engaging constructively in this particularly important edition of the HLPF. We see this first HLPF and ministerial declaration following the SDG Summit – and in the lead up to Summit of the Future – as a chance to underline our commitment to **following-up on the SDG Summit Political Declaration** and accelerating our implementation of the 2030 Agenda.
2. The **2030 Agenda** remains our universal, indivisible, inclusive, integrated roadmap to a peaceful, healthy and secure life for current and future generations, respecting our planet and leaving no one behind. We support the call for renewed impetus and accelerated actions to reach the SDGs and, to this end, full implementation of the collective commitment reflected in the SDG Summit Political Declaration.
3. Unfortunately, **implementation** of the Agenda has fallen behind, held back by the pandemic, wars, economic and social crises and the triple planetary crisis of climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss. These events have reversed decades of progress in the fight against inequalities, hunger and poverty in all forms, including extreme poverty, affecting developing countries first and foremost. We are past the Agenda's halfway mark and our efforts globally are clearly insufficient.
4. The EU and its Member States are attentive to **key cross-cutting issues** for sustainable development, in particular the promotion of gender equality and a human rights-based approach. We are committed to enhancing policy coherence for sustainable development (PCSD) across all internal and external policies, with attention to the interlinkages between the SDGs, as well as the impact and spillover effects of domestic action in every region of the world.
5. Among cross-cutting issues, **SDG localisation** can open opportunities for review of territorial priorities and needs, strengthening local development dynamics.
6. Through the Global Gateway, and beyond our Member States' individual initiatives, the EU and its Member States support partner countries promoting their own

strategic autonomy and accelerating digital and green transitions. *[To answer the co-facilitators' second question]* This is an example of the **investment pathways** we need, addressing interlinkages and investing in transformative projects, through partnerships in support of the SDGs.

7. We see the **HLPF as the key, inclusive platform** for follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda and building interlinkages between the SDGs. As the EU has stated in the current Review of ECOSOC and the HLPF, we continue to support the HLPF's central role in the review of our progress and accelerating on the SDGs.
8. **Voluntary national reviews** provide an opportunity for enhanced multi-governance approach and multi-stakeholder engagement in 2030 Agenda implementation, as the EU has experienced through its own Voluntary Review last year. The peer-learning character, inclusiveness, accountability and harmonisation for better comparability of VNRs should be strengthened. We call for honest, evidence-based, and forward looking, action-oriented reviews in a highly participatory process involving all stakeholders.
9. The SDGs under review by the HLPF this year also seem most pertinent. In light of significant UN negotiations underway such as on the Pact for the Future and FFD Forum outcome, we should aim for a concise Ministerial Declaration, with appropriate focus on the SDGs under review and a well-planned follow up process on the commitments reflected in the SDG Summit Political Declaration.

[SDG 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere]

10. As stated in the SDG Summit political declaration, **eradicating poverty** in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. Poverty reduction through job creation, trade and growth is essential. The Multidimensional Poverty Index can help us provide an integrated view of variables that affect an individual or family, such as education, health care or quality of life.
11. Despite the expansion of short-term **social protection** during the pandemic, more than four billion people around the world are unprotected. We support universal, comprehensive and sustainable social protection. A triple social, green and digital transition remains fundamental. Social justice, equality and the eradication of poverty are key inter-connected priorities for the EU, including in the Global Gateway investment portfolio, which includes actions in social protection, education, training or health.

[SDG2: End hunger, achieve food security, improved nutrition, promote sustainable agriculture]

12. The EU supports increased global action for **food security, zero hunger, nutrition and sustainable agriculture** in line with SDG2, the outcomes of last year's UN

Food Systems Summit+2 in Rome and the Secretary General's call to action. Major shocks have been eroding the capacity of agriculture and food systems to ensure diverse, safe, nutritious, affordable diets for all. According to projections, 600 million people will still face hunger in 2030.

13. The EU has stepped up support along a four-pronged approach – **solidarity, production, trade and multilateralism** – to help those most affected by the devastating effects of rising food insecurity and malnutrition globally and help to reverse this negative trend. Since 2021 the EU and its MS have supported our partners worldwide with EUR 18 billion for food security, including more resilient and sustainable food systems.

[SDG 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts]

14. At COP28 last December, we took important **commitments to galvanise climate action**, which should be reflected in the HLPF Ministerial Declaration. In particular, transitioning away from fossil fuels in energy systems in a just, orderly and equitable manner, tripling renewable energy capacity globally and doubling energy efficiency by 2030. We also recognised the importance of food security in the context of the climate and security nexus. The risks posed by climate change, environmental degradation and water scarcity to peace and security, as well as the cost of non-action to sustainable development, are clear.

15. We see an urgent need to **strengthen the global response** to the climate emergency with a significant acceleration of global greenhouse emission reductions, adaptation, climate finance and nature restoration, implementing the outcome of the Global Stocktake. We look forward to a new round of more ambitious NDCs. The EU is fully committed to decarbonising the global economy by 2050. The EU will continue to play its part also through Team Europe Initiatives contributing directly to SDG13.

[SDG 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]

16. Colleagues, global backsliding on peace, justice, rule of law, institutions and democracy, including through recent unconstitutional changes of government, is a particular issue of concern for the EU and its Member States. The 2030 Agenda, including **SDG 16**, together with the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, holds responses to root causes of conflict. We consider SDG16 as a prerequisite for sustainable development and stability.

17. We look forward to the SDG 16 High Level Conference in New York on 6 May, to contribute further to this review. We are determined to support policies that put people at the centre and meaningful, transparent and **inclusive** decision-making processes as an enabler of the SDGs. The Agendas on Women, Peace and Security, Youth Peace and Security, and Children and Armed Conflict need to be

implemented fully.

[SDG 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development]

18. At the SDG Summit and High-Level Dialogue on **Financing for Development**, we agreed that in addition to ODA, more private and public resources need to be mobilised for developing countries to pull people out of poverty, improve health, reduce inequalities, take climate action and transition to more sustainable development. The Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development will be a unique opportunity to address the mobilisation of untapped resources.
19. The EU and its Member States are committed to provide **ODA** based on the standards set by OECD DAC, and remain the world's largest provider of **ODA**. Least Developed Countries will continue to focus our attention, while others in special situations – fragile and conflict-affected States, Small Island Developing States and Landlocked Developing Countries – shall also remain central to our efforts to build partnerships for sustainable development. The forthcoming SIDS and LLDC conferences are a further opportunity to review sustainable development progress and propose new solutions for resilient prosperity.
20. Partnerships include **South-South and triangular cooperation** as important means of implementing SDG17.
21. In line with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, we support enhanced **domestic revenue mobilisation**, as the essential means of financing public service delivery and scaling up sustainable finance among partner countries. We also advocate sustainable finance frameworks and private investments consistent with the SDGs, supported through guarantees as in the Global Gateway strategy.
22. Colleagues, through our engagement in HLPF 2024, like in the Summit of the Future, the SIDS and LLDC conferences or the FFD Forum, the EU will strive to act as a fair, constructive and ambitious advocate for universal values and principles. And in pursuit of the SDGs, leaving no one behind.

I thank you.