

**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Israel
for the First Informal Meeting on the 2024 HLPF**

As delivered

We thank the co-facilitators for the opportunity to provide Israel's initial input to the HLPF declaration. Of the SDGs in the spotlight this year, it's sobering that there are more Goals with a stark lack of progress than there are those with any on-track targets.

With regard to overall tone and structure, the declaration should not sugar-coat the dreadful state we are in. If we are to renew a sense of urgency – and a renewal is clearly in order – then we must be clear-eyed about the hard work that lies ahead.

At the same time, we should focus on the Goals, themselves, and not politicize what should be a universal document: ambitious, yet supported by the entire membership.

In format and structure, we should aim for a concise document – one that highlights specifically what we need to address, but without the detail of substantive resolutions: we already have targeted resolutions that speak to *how* we want to achieve these goals; to create a readable, and thus meaningful document, we should focus on *what* we want to achieve.

In this spirit, we should also try to limit references to past documents, however relevant they may be, and focus only on the main foundational ones. Again, we should try to create a readable outcome that reflects priorities and political will, rather than a checklist of recurring references that, by force of habit, we feel we cannot do without.

With regard to the SDGs under consideration, we see little of the needed progress toward SDG-1, ending poverty. So much more could be done if we were to more effectively address extreme

inequality, which is SDG-10. The World Bank has shown that a reduction in inequality has a strong effect on reducing poverty. The declaration should therefore clearly express our concern with growing inequality, including within countries. We should also implement and strengthen social safety nets. Finally, and in line with the mutually supporting nature of the Goals, we should stress the importance of universal quality education – equally for girls as for boys – because this will be an important tool for fighting poverty in the next generation.

SDG-2, ending hunger, is mostly off-track at its midpoint, and it seems likely that the goal will not be met. Climate change is expected to put ever-increasing pressure on both food production and livelihoods, so quickly closing the climate ambition gap is an existential need for many people and countries. Agricultural technology promises to play a large part in increasing production and the nutritional value of foods, lowering the inputs of land, water and nutrients, and reducing loss and waste. We should highlight the value of research and investments in this area. Finally, we should note the high level of inputs of water and land required for livestock production compared to crop production, as well as livestock's outsized contribution to greenhouse gas emissions.

Continuing on to SDG-13, climate change remains the greatest persistent danger to the planet. There is an expression – to kick the can down the road – and it's likely that the language of every delegation in this room has an expression that means to postpone until later, action that needs to be taken now. We are destroying our climate, we are causing sea-levels to rise, we are causing species to go extinct, and we are harming livelihoods. We have barely begun to feel the effects of the dynamic events we've set in motion. There is little to say on this matter except that we are condemning future generations to a very different world *we* have known, and condemning much of the natural world to oblivion. The declaration should plainly identify the consequences of our current course of action. We must recognize the need for climate finance, but ultimately, we will not be able to adapt our way through these events: the most vulnerable of the SIDS already know this. We should not use the promise of adaptation alone to avoid the difficult but necessary steps toward mitigation.

SDG-16 – on Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions – is another Goal whose targets are simply not being met. We are living in a time in which, once again, un-democratic and anti-democratic forces are probing the will of open, free democratic societies to defend their values. The document must recognize the inherent value of democracy, the rule of law, and of open and strong institutions answerable to the people. Its clear declaration on these points must not be degraded by caveats and exceptions. Thank you