

C4UN Experts Dialogue (7 Feb 2022)

GA #2 Thematic Cluster: economic and social inequalities

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## INTRO

- Thank you Dan and María Fernanda for inviting CdM to participate in this discussion. My name is Agustina. I am Coordinator for Outreach and Development at the CdM and it will be a pleasure to share with you all the work we are doing towards the OCA process, cluster 1 and specifically towards the recommendation for a World Social Summit by 2025 that we presented to the SG in November 2020.
- The CdM is the largest forum of former democratic heads of state and government that use their experience and expertise to promote democratic value and practice around the globe by identifying and sharing recommendations for stronger policy making at the national, regional and global level.
- We have a working area on multilateralism and global governance with a focus on reinvigorating the United Nations to make it fit for purpose in the 21st century. We were invited by UNSG to contribute towards the UN75 process, later the OCA process and we are now engaging in the consultations convened by the PGA and will seek to continue to be engaged in the rest of the implementation process.
- My presentation will focus on 4 main buckets to underline our vision in terms of substance and implementation:

## WHY? (will help us to think on priorities) 4

- To reinforce Agenda 2030. We are now living a triple crisis: a financial, health and climate crisis which is putting states capacity to react to the test everywhere, causing serious disruptions in the delivery of social services and resulting in increasing social polarization and rising nationalism at a time when the challenges we face are more transnational than ever.
- Data shows that COVID has caused a 5 year set back in the attainment of the SDGs according to available data. It has increased inequality in access to social services and has particularly increased the vulnerability of women, youth and minority groups
- All this at a time when the world's richest have continued to see how their wealth increases, as illustrated in Oxfam's latest report.
- If we want to achieve the SDGs we need to take stock of the lesson learnt from COVID:

Some facts on the effects of COVID on SDG's:

→ 119-124 million people have been pushed into poverty

→ There has been disruption in essential health services in 90% of countries

→ 86% of primary school children in developing countries are deprived of education and 32.7 million children are at risk of never returning to school

→ 400 million jobs have been lost; there has been a 60% income reduction for informal workers; and 4 billion people have had to cope without access to social protection

- The pace of digitalization has brought technology to the center of many debates. Digitalization can serve as a catalyst to attain the SDGs by increasing access to essential social services, but this requires tackling the digital gap otherwise, it can turn into yet another factor exacerbating inequalities.

- Therefore, if we want to deliver on the SDGs, put an end to further backsliding in development and prevent socio-economic tensions resulting in further political unravelling we must act now.

### **BASED ON THIS BACKGROUND, WHAT SHOULD THE SUMMIT ACCOMPLISH:**

A WSS should 1. support the UN in accelerating the SDGs, fulfilling its commitment to the SDGs and building back better and 2. help us all work together towards more resilient societies.

To do so it should focus on solutions and deliver in:

- Driving a reinvigorated approach to accelerating and scaling up the SDGs;
- Putting forward new instruments for the design, financing and implementation of inclusive policies and programmes to improve access to nutrition, health, education, decent work and social protection for all;
- Help national governments hone their strategies for post-COVID recovery whilst increasing resilience towards future emergencies.
- Launching new alliances and partnerships to make it all possible.

### **WHAT PRIORITIES SHOULD IT TACKLE:**

- Believe the WSS should be held under the broader umbrella of “leaving no one behind” with key priorities at its core such as equity, inclusion and access. This has led us to consider “human dignity” and “Decent Work” as core concepts and later “social sustainability” as main element to gear the Summit. Ultimately, what we are talking about is putting Rights and Jobs as the core priority of the WSS in terms of substance.
- And ask special attention be placed including women, youth and minorities as matter of rights and dignity and to unleash the full potential of society.
- Under this umbrella 4 main thematic areas have been identified in our work to date (please bear in mind this is of course work in progress):
- → Decent work: It is important to promote formal work and to maybe shift mind sets from economic growth to job creation (echo to Oxfam’s report on wealth creation during COVID).
  - Universal safety nets: To secure access to basic rights such as health, education, housing or even pensions that are an essential element of human security. Large regions of the world count on staggering percentages of informal employment which automatically leaves millions of people without a right to social security networks. In Latin America for example 40% of the population has no access to social security and in Afghanistan only 10% of the population has access. Different measures should be explored from closing out national budget percentages for this purpose, to crating global funds to decoupling social protection from employment status.
  - Equity: To ensure equal playing fields there should be greater policy coherence and cooperation at the global level on tax policies. This leads to the consideration of
  - The work and mandate of IFIS and the role of the global financial architecture: In times of austerity, debt crisis and decreasing development aid flows it is hard to envisage where financing can come from. CdM has long called for IFIs to include human rights to their mandates to ensure the effects of their policies is properly considered.

## **NEXT STEPS FOR IMPLEMENTATION:**

The CdM aims to follow a 3 pronged process consisting of:

- Accompanying the intergovernmental process (supporting EOUN, PGA, and the agency that is ultimately given the responsibility of carrying this through).
- Mobilizing member states so as to muster political will and national champions.
- Harnessing the vision and mission of civil society.
- Engaging the private sector

There are important obstacles ahead. Never before has the need for global cooperation to address global challenges been more evident but COVID has shown serious short fallings that we should all learn from coupled with increasing political polarization and the deterioration of democracy.

For CdM this Summit is a must. We are committed to supporting the UN system but do not think we should be straight jacketed by it. Civil society must be active in contributing to content and should a UN led WSS fall through, given the importance of the matter, think a civil society WSS should be seriously considered regardless.