

## **Input to the dialogue with the cofacilitators of the Ministerial Declaration**

### **Sylvia Beales, ECE RCEM: Gray Panthers, Constituency of Older persons**

18 March 2021

Coming straight out of the UNECE Regional Fora, I am very pleased to be able to present some points from the civil society interventions which were given in the plenaries of the official sessions.

The full text of the interventions given on the 17<sup>th</sup> March by Mark Wheatley on the themes of the Regional meeting, and by Nelya Rakhimova on the 18<sup>th</sup> March on VNRs and HLPF reform, are in the links below.

<https://unece-rcem.eu/plenary-session-intervention-rcem-mark-wheatley-17-03-2021/>

[https://unece-rcem.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/RCEM-intervention-plenary-session-Nelya-Rakhimova\\_18-Mar.pdf](https://unece-rcem.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/RCEM-intervention-plenary-session-Nelya-Rakhimova_18-Mar.pdf)

These statements reflect the outcome of the work we have done as the UNECE Regional Engagement Coordination Mechanism, or RCEM. The RCEM brings together 24 diverse constituencies and the different subregions of the UNECE. We held a civil society forum at the outset of the UNECE regional meeting to define our positions. This was very successful, and included a session with UN agencies and governments. Because of this we were able to prepare and present our collective positions in each roundtable and in each plenary.

I hope that you can consider the statements in full as input for the Ministerial Declaration. For the purposes of today I can highlight the following points:

- Vaccines are a public good and must be made available to all, to all ages and to all social groups, in all countries without discrimination.
- Covid should not prevent progress, or be an excuse for not reaching the SDGs by 2030. Covid should serve to accelerate our efforts with ambition, urgency and scale. We totally agree with 'More 2030 not less'.
- Economies must be people centred with flexible, inclusive employment according to ILO standards and deliver universal social services available for all.
- Building forward transformatively means strengthening and financing the social dimension of our policies to include mental health services, social protection and accessible and appropriate health care services for all.
- Underpinning recovery will be just institutions, as well as robust, reliable and disaggregated data by gender, age groups, disability type and other indicators as described in SDGs 16 and 17.
- We support the suggestion for an annual review of SDG 16 along with SDG 17. Building just and sustainable institutions based on an intersectional human rights approach is essential to end inequalities and build forward together in the wake of COVID-19.

- Women of all ages have the lion's share of household tasks and home schooling, juggling multitasking of remote work and family care. Long overdue is the recognition of womens' work and the ratification of ILO conventions, inclusive recruitment processes and life long education and training to tackle systemic inequality and discrimination.
- The hardest hit sectors by Corona are those occupied mostly by female and ecological workers. These should be the sectors to receive the most support from the EU recovery plans, contrary to the information we were given.
- Member States need to put in place an inclusive process for civil society in VNR preparation at all levels from local to national level, including through making available civil society shadow reports. There should be no closing of doors to civil society through, for example, applying the 'non objection basis.'
- Some governments of the region include civil society in their official HLPF delegations to report on SDG progress. We would like to see all governments of the region do this, including with financial support for diverse groups of civil society.
- Digital inclusion for all is a priority. Leaving No One Behind is also Leave No One Offline.
- Good, timely, age, gender and disability inclusive data and evidence for all people of all ages is needed for policies to be relevant and robust and meet the SDG targets. We call for civil society data, indicators, analysis and recommendations to be integrated into the official VNR reports and in all national implementation processes.

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