

ECE-RCEM SDG 17 STATEMENT FOR EXPERT GROUP MEETING

- **What is the current status of the Goal or target, in terms of actual measured progress and trends?**

In the context of the pandemic, a frozen problem is being activated, namely the lack of active partnership between the Private Sector, Governments and civil society. The panic gripped the world at the beginning of the pandemic and still revealed many flaws in the global partnership system in the fields of economy, social policy, the international political system, the system of regulation and balancing of relations between all stakeholders.

- **What has changed since the last time this goal was reviewed in the HLPF?**

The poor become poorer, the rich a richer. At the same time, the still lack of regulatory mechanisms to monitor compliance with international treaties in entire sectors of international relations, such as corporate control, control of conflict regions around the world in a pandemic, has boosted ambition and led to activation of military action. Corporate interests have taken over in poorer countries, the principle of paying or losing a chance to deal with the situation has put even poorer countries at a disadvantage, some of which a year and a half after the start of the pandemic still cannot afford to take adequate countermeasures and limiting Covid 19. The complexity is not in the reluctance or that they do not meet criteria, they are simply left behind. The driving force in the partnership is unfortunately the expression of interest in an area, be it political or economical. Some were simply abandoned in a pandemic.

- o **Any deviations from expectations (including due to Covid19)**

We have witnessed how panic has taken away the opportunity for an adequate response from all stakeholders. Instead of stepping up dialogue and active partnership to address key issues, opposition has intensified, following the principle that there is a reallocation of resources in times of crisis. There have been cases where corporations have blackmailed governments. States suspended supplies to other countries with vital consumables, safety equipment.

The aggravation of the international relations between certain subjects as a projection is observed and raises the question of the access to medical services and life-saving technologies. This is an old problem with a new face. But we have seen more clearly than ever how the political mechanisms used to

extract resources to provide their own health systems from the stronger countries, at the expense of the weaker ones. The struggle for vaccines, medical equipment has led to oversaturation of some countries at the expense of others. There were similar cases in Europe!

o Additional barriers or opportunities in implementation, including through interconnections with other objectives and links with related processes?

Reducing the effects of the pandemic requires strong cooperation between governments, the private sector and civil society. The UN and the relevant institutions need to step up their role as regulators of this relationship. It is noted that there is a need to create a new, more binding and respectful mechanism for control over the actions and activities of the participants in the negotiation and implementation processes.

o New / promising openings to track progress, including from additional data sources?

We should first ask ourselves the extent to which the terms and principles of the Charter of the United Nations have been violated and seek accountability for those governments that have violated or failed to comply in particular with Chapter IX INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COOPERATION during the to analyze the causes and avoid this in the future. The same applies to other areas such as SDG 16. The principles set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights have been virtually frozen in some countries. Censorship and a number of other restrictions were imposed that had no direct bearing on the preservation of human health and safety. The pandemic situation has been used for political purposes in many countries.

In many of the reports that are presented, the use of an indicator system is not noticed. If this is missing, we lose the basis for a realistic assessment. As repeatedly stated in government reporting, often the sources in these reports are not reliable enough.

Recommendations: To strengthen and support the role of the civil society as an objective independent source of information for the preparation of official reports. To be set as a condition in a future binding international document that will legitimize the activities of CSOs in front of local governments. In its experience with RCEM, there are cases in which official authorities put pressure on the preparation of parallel -“shadow” reports. The legitimation of the civil is necessary as a principle of equality between stakeholders. Governments have the political, the judiciary, the executive. Corporations have

virtually unlimited resource opportunities. Civil society still remains insecure in terms of security, guarantees of independence and freedom of action.

• What are the promising strategies to accelerate action (by the UN and partners) and to mobilize other stakeholders to accelerate implementation?

We can assess the EU strategy for dealing with the pandemic and the socio-economic approach as the most effective so far. Of course, there is always much to be desired in the field of socio-economic measures. European Commission is coordinating a common European response to the coronavirus outbreak. Have been taking resolute action to reinforce our public health sectors and mitigate the socio-economic impact in the European Union. Mobilizing all means at our disposal to help our Member States coordinate their national responses and are providing objective information about the spread of the virus and effective efforts to contain it. For the EU as a whole, the total amount of the Multiannual Financial Framework for the next 7 years will be EUR 1 trillion and 74 billion, and the total amount of the Next Generation EU Package will be EUR 750 billion. Thus, in the next 7 years, the EU will be able to mobilize a total of 1 trillion 824 billion euros. The Commission must repay the debt it borrows on coronavirus recovery aid by 2058. The Commission has proposed that debt settlement not start until 2028.

What we learned during the pandemic? Experience during the pandemic has shown us that international treaties or regulations cannot fulfill the role and goals set out in them and it can be increasingly difficult to have a positive impact on participants in times of difficulty. Given the focus on the issue that is on the agenda, the Covid 19 pandemic. Other significant issues are left in the background, such as those set out in the SDG 1,2,3,8,10,12,13,16 and other areas that do not fall into today's discussion. Another aspect of difficulties is provoked by the unequal distribution of resources and expert capacity.

The unsuccessful attempt by RIO 1992 to impose a regulatory mechanism on the activities of Transnational Companies has been replaced by an investment incentive mechanism. It's time for this to be changing.

SDG statistics:

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/about/annual-report>

<https://stats.oecd.org/#>

According to statistics from the OECD and the World Bank, the decline in 2020 at the beginning of the global GDP pandemic will remain a trend for developing countries, especially those outside Europe, North America and some Asian countries. High-tech and strong economies for the most part report positive

data on all indicators for 2021. The real problem is that many countries still remain outside the objective statistics which puts them at a disadvantage, especially from regions such as Africa, Latin America, the Middle East. East, Asia. Indicators of weaker economies in areas such as employment, education, and social care have fallen sharply. There are negative trends in areas such as ecology. It is a natural reaction for resources from some sectors to be redirected to others, such as healthcare, adaptation to the new conditions imposed by the pandemic, the need for digitalization. In this kind of chaos caused by the pandemic, the most profitable were the corporations due to the nature of their structure and the opportunities they have and influence. The prices of many basic necessities have risen unreasonably. There is also a trend of rising food prices around the world. There is a high probability of strong inflation, especially in weaker economies that already have such an indication. The already reduced purchasing power of the population given the unemployment rate and the limited ability of governments to counteract these trends and the rather long period of the pandemic will lead to greater poverty and access to basic human needs. There is also the challenge of dealing with inflation. We express the need for close and strategic cooperation between governments, the civil sector and the private sector. Of course, we should not focus solely on the pandemic because we risk reducing the results achieved in the last few years. Other issues on the sustainable development plan are still on the agenda.

Recomendations:

<https://www.oecd.org/development/effectiveness/busanpartnership.htm>

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=400&nr=2051&menu=35>

By SDGs:

SDG1:

1. Covid is the disease of the disadvantaged and of the poor, and gets entrenched in poorer communities. We have seen this evidenced by the communities and people represented by the RCEM who report unequal access to health services; to social protection; to food; to safety in the workplace; to information; to jobs; to vaccinations. Lack of readily available disaggregated data makes those left out of services and social protection invisible to policy makers.

2. Poverty and income inequality, both deepening with the pandemic, have obvious effects on people's freedom to make healthy choices generally, and links closely with issues of mental health, physical health, and wellbeing .

SDG2: food

3. There was no preventive strategy for combating hunger and reducing the impact of epidemic measures for the most vulnerable social groups.

New, extensive lists of the needy were created in almost all settlements.

4. The pandemic has shed light on and exacerbated the existing inequalities in our region, including the deep and significant inequalities that exist around access to nutritious and affordable foods (as we have heard some examples of today).

5. The most marginalized in our communities are having to make very hard choices based on affordability, accessibility, and not on nutrition and health

6. The share of people at risk of poverty and social exclusion was high even before the crisis (especially for example children, women, people with disabilities, LGBTQI, and Roma - to mention some) income inequalities remain high in many of our countries, while tax systems, and underfunded or weakened social assistance and protection programs, are having have very little impact on reducing those disparities

7. The drastic measures taken by governments to combat COVID-19 have affected refugees as well. Restrictions on freedom of movement, frozen administrative procedures in many countries, restrictions on business have severely affected displaced communities

8. The pandemic and all the challenges it has brought has pushed many more into acute poverty and hunger- hunger has become a daily challenge and reality for many in our countries.

SDG3: Good health

9. Despite health and economic recovery programmes put in place to respond to Covid the evidence is that pandemic increased inequalities across region, and these inequalities are likely to increase after the emergency phase of covid turns into longer term recovery.

10. Increase in poverty rates with COVID-19 has posed major challenges to all our health care systems, limited public funding, limited health insurance coverage, acute shortages of nurses and uneven regional distribution of health professionals.

SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth

11. The future of work needs to take into consideration changes to the economy based on the pandemic but also the climate emergency. COVID has exacerbated the diseases our societies are plagued with and put a spotlight of the urgency to protect our planet and living things. . We are calling for a more sustainable economic model - new social contract, based on just transition, human

rights and social justice: resilience and recovery must not be the return to austerity and business as usual.

12. Full, productive and freely chosen employment and decent work for all shall be at the centre of macro-economic policies. Fair financing of recovery, universal social protection according to ILO recommendation 202 and tax justice are the keys to provide resources for inclusive development. Lack of international financial regulations and control over supply chains has only accelerated health and climate crises. It is an imperative to implement the UN Treaty on Business and Human Rights and to achieve binding due diligence.

13. More than 1 of 6 of people under the age of 24 stopped working during the pandemic, and more than 90 percent of students were affected by closed schools, universities and educational centres.

14. Due to the lack of electronic devices in poor households, they failed to include their children in the changed environment and distance learning in time. "The COVID-19 pandemic has systematic, profound and disproportionate effects on young people.

SDG 10: Inequalities

15. Lack of funding and transparent and welcoming partnerships with civil society can translate into poor collaboration between government and civil society. RCEM represents the diversity of people and groups across the region and sees some groups have more chances for funding than others.

16. Important to prioritise and embed social protection funding so that the systems are permanently in place and we do not revert to partial, non universal measures which are the hallmark of austerity policies. These will not do as they do not reach the poorest and the most disadvantaged, but the opposite, are known to fail

17. Unsustainable food systems, food insecurity and unsustainable production and consumption, go hand in hand with rising inequalities. The transformation of food systems is an economic and environmental issue, but also one of gender equality.

SDG 12: Responsible consumption

18. food insecurity; lack of food choices, lack of nutrition, lack of food caused by poverty can threaten women's and marginalized communities health, and in turn their families and communities, and their access to healthcare as a whole, we are seeing this esp. The case during the pandemic

19. the essential work women also do in our food production chain for example, cannot be ignored.

20. women and girls access to land rights and property in parts of our region is very limited, bringing inequalities that affect food security, nutrition and health

21. As European citizens, we cannot ignore the ways in which our consumption and production, and the actions of big corporations impact communities in the South- destroy the local environment with chemical fertilizers, loss of land or inaccessible and unaffordable digital farming techniques for small farmers, and forcing of farmers to plant cash crops instead of food crops, the locals lose their choices on fresh, and nutritious food as a result, impacting health, livelihoods and communities - whilst this discussion today focuses on our region, we cannot ignore our role in food and nutrition and the global community in the context of the SDGs.

SDG 13: Climate

22. For our planet, the climate crisis is a result of unsustainable production & consumption systems, policies and practices. During the pandemic we could see cases of changing the law in favor of investors, sudden approval of controversial environmental projects, illegal construction of polluting plants, illegal logging. We could see plastic pollution increasing significantly, lowering environmental standards and persecution of activists.

23. The future of work needs to take into consideration changes to the economy based on the pandemic but also the climate emergency. COVID has exacerbated the diseases our societies are plagued with and put a spotlight of the urgency to protect our planet and living things.

24. Support to just transition and green economies, renewable energy – including locally owned - projects that can be self-sufficiently maintained, ecological enterprises that provide goods and services such as food and clean water to ensure self-determined prosperity for rural areas that allows food security for all in the core of regional development.

25. The roundtables failed to address our negative externalities on our environment. We are worried about the emphasis on investments and business solutions without recognition of civil society organisations as key partners in building forward. The fossil fuel and nuclear energy economy continue to dominate, dilute and compromise progress, including within the UN.

SDG 16: Peace Justice and Strong Institutions - MY PERSONAL POSITION

26. Equal access to justice, equal access to information, equal possibilities for development

Regarding the corruption environment in many countries, there is still no clear system for transparency and organization of anti-corruption measures. What can we say about the real civil sector which has not been delegated the right to include the right to perform actions in the fight against corruption in most national legislation. Often in their desire to counter the NGOs themselves have dealings on the edge of the law and often denied access to public information. Which automatically gives rise to resistance and application of repressive methods against them. We call upon the assistance and support to be more active inclusion of independent NGOs in the process of fighting corruption.

27. Equal access to SDG implementation on local level

CSO involvement is still lacking in governmental reporting processes. Must be created a mechanism for legalization with agencies that the CSO should be involved in the process of research and reporting in collaboration with national institutions.

28. National Monitoring and evaluation of the Agenda 2030

National institutions must be obligated to follow principles of accountability on each SDG17. Governments must be stimulated to create independent national mechanisms. In many countries, there is still a lack of independent unifying structures to monitor the conditions and indicator system of each SDG.

29. Reporting and administration of the resources

There are still many weaknesses in the preparation and objectivity of the reports as well as the mechanisms for gathering information on each SDG. Efforts need to be made to increase the capacity of state administrations to carry out quality control and monitoring according to the adopted UN international standards for the 2030 Agenda.

30. Frozen conflict zones and after war recovery processes

We have a number of frozen conflict zones. Must provide a special attention on these regions from view of our experience during the time of pandemic. There are new gaps and dangers in the relations between the warring parties which were not foreseen and there are no mechanisms for counteraction. International governmental organizations and institutions must build on strict mechanisms and regulations in international law guaranteeing the independent civil sector to be involved more actively in the implementation of international law in regions with armed conflicts, frozen conflicts and in the process of post-war development. Transparency of the activities of international and governmental organizations . I am raising the question of where and what level is commensurate compromise between national and international law, on the other hand, how and to what extent observe regulations on protection of human rights . I appeal for more space for civil society in decision making processes about the fate of these regions. Transparent access to information to all stakeholders.

31. Active conflict zones In the process of controlling human rights and freedoms, blackmail and sanctions have become the black letter of alphabet in international relations. With the call for protection of human rights, other goals are achieved: military, political, economic or otherwise. In addition, human victims are hypocritically called "collateral damage". About Sirya, Israel, Yemen, Libya, Ukraine and others need to it is necessary to establish a permanent council with the primacy of the Security Council of UN with the participation of all stakeholders in the region with equal representation. No conflict can be resolved by war, there are no winners.

32. CSO independence

The main reasons are the strong dependence of a large percentage of NGOs and civil society organizations from the state - national programs, equal access to resources, corrupt practices in the

allocation and delegation of individual organizations placed under the dependence of certain political economic circles and international companies. Political dependent NGOs - are common case of artificial creation of civil society organizations and unions by political parties in order to maintain influence in elections and allocation of international programs. Many corporations demonstrating concern and commitment to environmental and social issues, actually create their own NGOs which use to advance economic interests and exercising " public " pressure on government bodies to define and create guidelines directly or indirectly for adoption or amending laws often conflict with public interests.

SDG 17:

33. Recommendation is to track inequalities and access to services which all people across their life course have a right to via disaggregated data by age, gender, disability, social status, location, ethnicity and sexual orientation.

34. Finance universal measures reaching out to the furthest behind, in collaboration with civil society; do not leave out refugees, widowed women (as the virus kills more men than women), ethnic minorities who are historically disadvantaged, unsupported younger and older people, the unemployed, those in rural areas and the urban poor.

35. Building forward transformatively means policies based on the right to ... Human rights approach must be the litmus test; all governments are signed up to deliver the human rights of citizens which is the bedrock also of agenda 2030, what is missing. Policy that implements the human rights of citizens will transform lives and deliver wellbeing.

36. We must not return to pre Covid problems of inequality and austerity. That way leads to disaster. Only able to respond effectively to Covid and even get rid of it by investing in and respecting and supporting human capacity in all its diversity – policy emphasis on gender equality, age and disability inclusiveness and ensuring intersectionality (avoiding silos is critical). Partnerships with civil society are needed to reach the furthest behind and roll back discrimination.

37. We can work together to achieve are universal social protection; greater priority to food security; resourcing mental health; support to carers; sexual and reproductive services; work to lessen the digital divide; nutrition especially for older people; less reliance on private cars and improving public infrastructure available to all including those with disabilities; vaccination programmes that are clear and transparent and inclusive; support given for vaccinations outside our region

38. We are calling for a more sustainable economic model - new social contract, based on just transition, human rights and social justice: resilience and recovery must not be the return to austerity and business as usual.

39. Lack of international financial regulations and control over supply chains has only accelerated health and climate crises. It is an imperative to implement the UN Treaty on Business and Human Rights and to achieve binding due diligence.

40. Quality public services should be strengthened, with sustained investments to ensure universal access to healthcare, social protection, water, sanitation, food, shelter, green transport and

education. Health and social workers are the heroes and should be honoured with better payment and better conditions, not only with applause. We face dilution of employment relations accelerated by digital means. Universal labour guarantees are the key for decent work: all workers, regardless of their employment status, must enjoy fundamental workers rights, adequate living wage, control over working time, safety and health at work and social protection. And lifelong learning opportunities, reskilling and requalification. It is time to establish a global social protection fund as a core element for achieving SDGs. All people should have access to social protection and public health policies.

41. Respect for workers' rights should be placed at the core of a strategy to inclusive and sustainable recovery recognizing the enabling nature of freedom of association. OSH is vital to building resilience. In countries with strong social dialog agreements were designed and followed: enterprises, entire sectors can work safely. Social dialogue is the means to develop policies and actions while collective bargaining can achieve workplace solutions.

42. COVID19 exacerbated inequalities and gaps. The crisis disproportionately impacted those already in precarious working conditions, many of whom are women, youth, domestic, platform, migrant workers, IDPs and refugees, people with disabilities, older people and others in vulnerable situations, who were excluded from mainstream solutions in many of the countries and prevented to receive support services.

43. Many risks exploitation and the fight against modern slavery is current as ever. . Child Labour has been on increase. Regardless of whether or not a person is working from home or working in a shared space in the future, the built environment must have reasonable access accommodations and an adequate standard of accessibility in line with the UN Convention On the Rights Of Persons With Disabilities (UNCPRD) (Art. 27).

44. Gender gaps increased, in terms of wages, access and adequacy of social protection. Women are most likely to continue working in frontlines at any circumstances, but also in households, facing multitasking of remote work and family care. Our region is ageing fast; evidence on ageing populations (held for example by UNFPA) should inform inclusive policy in line with human rights commitments and the principles of Agenda 2030 to leave no one behind. We know that the impact on women of all ages is disproportionately unfavourable, with increasing poverty and working poverty. Gender, age and disability sensitive labour legislation is needed now to guarantee women rights across the lifecourse: ensuring equal opportunities, health and safety and equal pay and living wage is an imperative.

45. Care and service sectors must become opportunities for more and high-quality employment. Decent wages and working conditions in health care and the wider care economy, recognition and qualification for unpaid care work are necessary, to allow women of all ages to be fully part of labour markets and social protection systems. Migrant, ethnically diverse communities and refugees that are supporting the economy must be given recognition and afforded health and social protection. Redistributing unpaid care and domestic work:

46. promote awareness and dialogue on gender norms and family responsibilities, and improve work / family / private life balance (e.g. paternal leave, affordable childcare...). Combating violence at work

and at home – which for many are also workplaces – have to be supported by legal frameworks that work in practice.

Five keys, that should drive the recovery and development: Decent jobs, rights, equality, social protection and inclusion.