

Strengthening ECOSOC at its 75th anniversary for sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 and advancing the 2030 Agenda

Statement by the Commonwealth Medical Trust, Friday, 16 July, 10:30 AM - 1:00 PM EDT

1)

Thank you, Chair / Mr President
Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen

I speak on behalf of the Commonwealth Medical Trust (and 'x' other organizations in consultative status)

Civil society actors are crucial in ECOSOC's activities to support the peoples of the world in peace, dignity and equality.

Through its consultative status with NGOs, ECOSOC has engaged civil society in its workings since the beginning.

The mechanisms for civil society engagement in the 2030 Agenda processes, however, are even more inclusive and flexible to allow greater consultation and practical collaboration. The benefits to this are clear and have been demonstrated during the HLPF process.

The 2030 Agenda is built on three pillars. The weakness of its growth from Rio+20 is that there is still a greater focus on its environment and development pillars, to the detriment of the social pillar. (If it was a three-legged stool, it would fall over.) COVID-19 has made clear how civil society actors can and do help in implementing the social pillar. The familiar cry from this session of the HLPF has been 'need to'. CSOs are ready to move matters into 'are doing'.

The following actions that could be taken by the Council to increase CSO involvement:

- Ensuring greater inclusion of CSOs by including marginalized groups and young people on national delegations
- Holding dialogues between Chairs and CSOs in advance of sessions of the Council, its commissions and committees, as in the case this year of the Commission on Population and Development
- Increasing opportunities to provide 'on the ground' experiences in the preparation of the Secretary-General's background documents and in thematic sessions

We appreciate our consultative status, and are willing to do even more in strengthening the role of ECOSOC, given the opportunity

Thank you

2)

Statement to be submitted for inclusion in documentation

Scenarios and possible medium and long-term trends related to the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and the achievement of SDGs

Thank you Mr President / Chair

Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen

The Commonwealth Medical Trust (and 'x' other organizations in consultative status listed below) in referring to lessons learned from the COVID-19 response during the decade for action and delivery of sustainable development wishes to emphasise that COVID-19 flourishes wherever there is disadvantage. It has highlighted the importance of universal social protection across the life course. Therefore the response must tackle this.

As stated in the Secretary-General's report (E/2021/62), the response must address gender equality for all.

It must also address the social economic and cultural rights and respond to all who are marginalized , especially those 'hardest to reach.'

COVID-19 not only exacerbated existing inequalities, deepened poverty and showed up gaps in health access and to social protection it resulted in untimely deaths of many older people, and demonstrated the neglect and violence suffered in later life especially of older women..

Persons with disabilities are mentioned once only in the report, and evidence is that migrants, refugees, ethnic minorities and the homeless have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic.

Young people are being referred to as the lost generation. Not only have they missed out on schooling, but also job opportunities and their access to services for family planning and maternity have diminished.

All voices must be heard for the response and civic space must be guaranteed for this.

In building forward transformatively for a better future, we must remember that the preamble of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development puts 'people' first. They must remain at the top of the agenda in the recovery from COVID-19 and the achievement of the SDGs, especially the marginalized and vulnerable, ensuring that "no one is left behind".