

Vision and priorities of civil society, the private sector and other major groups and stakeholders; realizing the SDGs during the COVID-19 recovery.

Jack Kupferman, July 9, 2021 3:00 – 5:00 PM EDT

My name is Jack Kupferman, speaking on behalf of the civil society mechanism of the ECE.

In many countries of our region we note with concern the closing of civil society space and repression of voices; increasingly authoritarian and intolerant leaders; gender violence; and failure to take account of the concerns of already marginalized constituencies.

Civil society calls for partnership and meaningful participation between governments and all citizens without distinction, so that all will benefit from full implementation of the SDGs.

COVID-19 has had a horrifying impact on older people - 8 out of 10 deaths were among older persons, leaving widows and broken families. There is the tragedy of neglect among those needing long term care. Their voices are not sought for progress in SDG implementation. Platitudes galore, but little action or even a stated commitment. This situation is emblematic of the problem facing most left behind civil society constituencies. Protection of human rights, health, legitimate participatory government, and social care are being sorely tested today.

Respect and space for civil society voices must be enhanced. All citizens, including those requiring social care and those considered “vulnerable”, must be included as equal partners in SDG planning, implementation, and monitoring. COVID-19 exposed inequities in every realm.

Building back transformatively, prioritizing health and well-being, must be inclusive, generous and equitable. We call for multi-year core operating support and funding which encourages collaboration rather than competition between organizations and movements. We should focus on people historically marginalized on the basis of age, gender identity, class, caste, sexual orientation, indigenous origin, race, ethnicity, disability or religion are needed.

Thank you.