



## DEVELOPMENT AND 2030 AGENDA WORKING GROUP

### A CIVIL 20 POSITION AT THE ONSET OF THE CONVERSATION

25 February 2020

#### GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- Sustainable Development as an overarching and shared responsibility of all countries, to be pursued within a framework of PCSD, both in national policy making and within legitimate multilateral fora, within the context of the global pandemic
- G20 Countries have a very important role in demonstrating in practice their commitment in a new path of sustainability. In this they have to fully support the processes that develop at UN level, and 2030 agenda for sustainable development represents a key convergence of the global community towards this joint effort. This implies to look at the policies we lead and develop within our own countries; an attention to systemic/structural issues; at the interactions between the different levels.
- Thus, the question is: are we doing well in order to fulfill these commitments? How seriously do we tackle the challenges of the future? Is our effort adequate to the risk we are facing in this time of pandemics, which overlaps with a much longer trend of social and climatic crisis, that touches all our societies, and those of the whole world?
- There is a first level of answer: improving our capacity of collecting data and assessing the way the different SDGs and Targets are pursued. Indicators can be a very useful ground to establish and develop fruitful policy dialogues. On this, there is work to be done; however we should avoid looking at the SDGs 'per se', in a disconnected way. How do we work towards a system of indicators that really 'count what counts'?
- Actually SDGs without principles are blind. The 2030 Agenda is based on its guiding principles, starting from the overarching aims, epitomized by the five interconnected Ps (People, Planet, Prosperity Peace, Partnership); deeply rooted in the respect for human rights, and in the principle 'leave no one behind', with a special concern not only to poverty (and the impact on it of the pandemics); but also and more specifically on inequality, also increasing as part of a much longer trend, its systemic causes and consequences. It looks at gender inequality as at one of the key obstacles to human dignity and to the achievement of the sustainable development. How do we ensure that these principles remain as an inescapable reference of whatever process, and do not disappear behind a forest of numbers and quantitative references?
- However 2030 Agenda cannot be pursued if all the social actors are fully involved and protagonist: the *stakeholders* as it is common to say in these days; but even more the *rightholders*, those without a voice clearly audible, those who have suffered most of the current COVID-19 pandemic. How able are we to hear the voice coming from the poorest and most vulnerable sections of our societies, and to elaborate effective answers to the root causes of their poverty and vulnerability? How effective are we in defending the intermediary spaces where societies identify collective horizons for action? Recent research from CIVICUS<sup>1</sup> confirms however an ongoing trend of compression and shrinking of the civil liberties that worsened during the past year, as part of a longer term decline.
- We feel that these three elements (a wise attention to the interaction of SDGs and targets; a firm rooting into the 2030 Agenda principles; a steady look at the need of fostering the contribution of civil society and other non state actors) should be constantly part of the dialogue towards an improved Coherence of Policies for Sustainable Development

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<sup>1</sup> CIVICUS is a global alliance of civil society organisations and activists dedicated to strengthening citizen action and civil society throughout the world. <https://www.civicus.org>