



NGO MAJOR GROUP STATEMENT AT THE 2021 HIGH LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM

“Investing in the SDGs”

Monday 12th July 2021, 9:00 AM - 11:30 AM EDT

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Social Rights

First, let me remind us all that the 2030 Agenda is explicitly anchored in human rights.

It's not just the way the Agenda is implemented that needs to take into account human rights.

In addition, the way sustainable development and COVID recovery is financed also needs to respect and protect human rights.

This has implications at the national and international level.

At the national level, we need major and sustainable public investments in social protection, public services, housing, and supporting the care economy. This has to be done through progressive domestic resource mobilization – especially progressive taxation. Movement towards wealth taxes and excess profits taxes in several contexts are encouraging in this respect.

However many countries, especially in the Global South, are hindered from taking these kinds of actions thanks to global systems, policies, and institutions.

This brings me to the international level, where we need major reforms and shifts in power to ensure all countries have the fiscal space to resource the 2030 Agenda and their HR obligations. Here we need to focus particularly on the responsibilities of Global North countries and International Financial Institutions – especially around cancelling, relieving and restructuring sovereign debt and putting in place a truly just international tax system and really cracking down on corporate tax abuses. To the question of how the private sector can best contribute to the 2030 Agenda, I'd like to suggest the best thing they can do is pay their fair share of taxes in the places where they operate.

In conclusion, As the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights said recently, we need a “human rights economy”, or what we at CESR call a “rights-based economy” – that puts people and planet before profit. This may seem like a far-off dream - financing and economic policy are often seen as a rights-free zone. But without concrete steps in this direction, we won't achieve the 2030 Agenda. As the NGOMG, we urge real action in this direction.

