

ACTION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
A global civil society platform

Mission Statement
29 April 2016

Because we live in an era of mass poverty, exclusion, serious human rights violations and growing inequalities; in which billions of people suffer from poverty, hunger, conflict, indignities and climate impacted conditions;

Because our economic, financial and political systems are concentrating power and wealth in the hands of a few, favouring a limited number of individuals, countries and businesses;

Because environmental destruction, resource extraction and climate change are threatening the very basis of life on our planet;

Because in many parts of the world austerity undermines social protection and human rights that must be guaranteed by governments;

Because transforming production and consumption patterns together is one of the most urgent challenges facing humanity;

Because conflicts, occupations and displacements are causing untold and preventable hardships; restricting basic human security and undermining fundamental rights;

Because fundamental freedoms, including freedom of association and assembly are being lost and institutions are being weakened; the space for citizens to organise and mobilise is being threatened and shrinking;

We come together to take Action for Sustainable Development.

In 2015, world leaders adopted a series of agreements to begin critical shifts away from the current unsustainable and unjust development models to a more just, equal and sustainable model. But there is a real challenge to make this happen and to ensure meaningful transformative actions are delivered.

People around the world have called for urgent actions that place humanity and the planet at the centre of development. We must now influence this shift towards more sustainable patterns of production and consumption, trade and investment, wealth creation and fair distribution, use and preservation of natural resources and development resourcing.

We see the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change as opportunities to move towards such a transformation. If these commitments are met, we have a chance of saving the planet and delivering just outcomes for all people. This agenda is the responsibility of us all, not just those we put into political office. The sustainable development agenda is a social contract between the people and public authorities. Democratic and participatory processes where people are able to effectively contribute are critical to achieving this agenda.

We come together to inspire and to commit to actions that empower all peoples, especially those who have been marginalised, and in order to collectively tackle the root causes of inequalities,

injustice, human rights violations, poverty, environmental degradation and climate change. We want a world where social, environmental and development justice is assured and all people are able to live in a prosperous, healthy, secure and peaceful environment.

We urgently need a world where everyone is able to equally and freely participate and influence the decisions that affect their lives and hold governments, international institutions, private sector and other stakeholders to account. We want an inclusive society where everyone has the right to express themselves in a way that their voices are heard, respected and can directly shape the decision-making process. Our vision is a transformational shift that ensures gender justice and equality, enabling everyone to live their lives in dignity, free from hunger and from the fear of violence, oppression, discrimination or injustice – including due to gender identity or sexual orientation – in a way that protects the planetary systems required to sustain all life on earth. We want to see a world where a phrase like ‘leave no one behind’ actually delivers for those who are at risk of marginalisation. We will strive to combat inequalities of all forms, between and within countries. We commit to take actions that are accountable and responsive to local needs.

We want a new global approach where the economic and financial systems are an instrument to deliver wellbeing for all. This implies an economic model that is not based on debts; where trade is not an objective on its own, but a way to distribute goods and services equitably; where labour standards and limits of planetary boundaries are respected; where local and regional trade, small and medium social enterprises and cooperatives are supported to achieve sustainable consumption and production. An economic approach where the global trading system is just, people-responsive and where developing countries have the right to develop according to their own models. We further call for a holistic approach that recognises the balance of economic, natural and social rights, as set out by traditional and indigenous wisdoms.

We also need a financial system which supports and does not contradict sustainable development. Fair financial mechanisms and investments are crucial and we will push for robust implementation of commitments made, including the Financing for Sustainable Development process.

We come together to support each other in achieving this world we urgently need

The 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda is a broad policy agenda, so a shift in power relations around policy making is crucial. Our global civil society platform will help to create space and facilitate citizens and civil society organisations to organise, mobilise, advocate and act collectively in pursuit of sustainable development.

We will work to share information and strategies across civil society to find better ways to connect across issues, promote learning especially across development, environment and climate change, and to support citizens to widen and deepen their participation in shaping sustainable development institutions and processes.

We will strengthen the links between civil society around the world interested in and working on sustainable development, providing support, strengthening capacity and leveraging resources to enable those, particularly from the global South and those most affected by poverty, climate change and social and environmental injustice, to participate meaningfully.

Our platform will be globally constituted, but will be grounded in, complement and add value to local, national and regional activities of civil society, working in partnership with the existing citizens and civil society networks.

In the first few years, we will work on the following four areas:

1. **Policy & Advocacy.** We will analyse and ask tough questions where we see problems, risks and shortcomings; we will work in a coordinated way to push power-holders to deliver better outcomes for people and planet.
2. **Monitoring & Accountability.** We will actively monitor implementation of the agreed agenda and invest in the capacity and agency of civil society to monitor progress on sustainable development.
3. **Innovative solutions.** We will showcase examples of how civil society is itself delivering on the sustainable development agenda, not just to highlight best practice and innovation, but also to hold ourselves accountable. We will share inspiring ideas and resources to make sure that alternative solutions are grounded in local needs.
4. **Public mobilisation.** Recognising that this should be a People's Agenda, we will work to familiarise the public with sustainable development and the commitments made by governments, in order to promote people-powered accountability and support the mobilisation of people. We will organise solidarity actions with people working for sustainable development and cooperate with others to build a people's movement.

We come together in the spirit of partnership

We promise to treat each other with respect, to hold ourselves accountable according to our shared aims, and to work towards an equitable civil society with respect for all.

We will work hard not just to amplify the voices of those that have been marginalised and who protect the environment, but we will also work to strengthen local power. We will uphold the following principles:

1. **Joint ownership.** Through coordination and facilitation, we will tap into, channel and amplify the energy that already exists, enable communication between groups and initiatives and provide the light-touch logistical support needed for sharing good practices, building joint messages and movement building, allowing us to be greater than the sum of our parts.
2. **Radical inclusivity.** We commit to work with all organisations, networks, groups, movements and individuals. We will work hard collectively as broader civil society and cooperate with different actors, such as trade unions, constituency groups, environmental justice and climate change organisations and wider social movements.
3. **Open and open-source.** All materials, communications products, logos and sharable content will be open to all to use but no one will be obligated to use them (subject to brand guidelines). Engagement in the platform will not depend on the use of these joint creative products, but the hope is that they will be compelling to different audiences and used widely across the platform and beyond to amplify our collective voice
4. **Transparent and accountable.** Where collective decisions need to be made, the process will be transparent, open and communicated through the governance channels to all participants.
5. **Respect for and Sensitivity to Context:** We recognize that every country and every society has a historical background that informs what they do and how they do it. We recognize that some are still exploring this agenda while others have existing structures and processes that have guided civil society and public engagement. As much as possible we will be sensitive to these contexts in our engagement, as long as such respect and sensitivity does not result in abrogation of our duty to all citizens and society.
6. **Do no harm:** We will ensure that none of our actions directly or indirectly cause harm to planet or people.

7. **Ethical considerations:** we take responsibility to conduct due diligence to ensure that the partnerships carried out under this platform are based on clear ethical guidelines.

Our platform will evolve over the coming years to reflect the needs of citizens and civil society, and the care of the planet.

The testament of our success will be that concrete actions are taken, that promises are delivered, that local struggles are won, the inequality gap is closed, the environment is healthy and planetary boundaries are not surpassed.

We commit to work to make sure that civil society plays its rightful role at the centre of delivering a just and sustainable world to care for people and planet.