

## EU statement

### 2025 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development

#### First informal consultation – inter-governmental negotiations on the Ministerial Declaration

Thanks to the co-chairs. I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

1. As we approach the tenth anniversary of our adoption of the **2030 Agenda**, and as we pursue the actions set out in the Pact for the Future and its annexes, the EU and its Member States reaffirm our determination and full commitment to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.
2. The 2030 Agenda remains our universal, indivisible, inclusive, integrated roadmap to a peaceful, healthy and secure life for current and future generations, respecting our planet and **leaving no one behind**. We stand by this agenda and support ambitious, just and transformative actions to rebuild trust, reinvigorate the rules-based multilateral system and accelerate achievement of the SDGs.
3. With just five years remaining, we must overcome significant global challenges and setbacks: war, pandemics, the triple planetary crisis of climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss, as we continue our work to tackle inequalities, eliminate hunger and eradicate poverty in all forms, including extreme poverty, affecting developing countries first and foremost. In the Pact for the Future we re-affirmed our course for these crucial remaining years. We must now find the political will and solidarity to see this through.
4. As we prepare for critical rendezvous this year on all three dimensions of sustainable development – the Third UN Oceans Conference, the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development or the World Social Summit – we should recall that all our efforts and commitments are interlinked, with responsibility falling firstly on the Member States of the UN.
5. The EU remains particularly attentive to the interlinked and **cross-cutting critical issues** for sustainable development, in particular the promotion of gender equality and a human rights-based approach. We are committed to enhancing policy coherence for sustainable development (PCSD) across internal and external policies, recalling the interlinkages between SDGs and the impact or spill-over effects of domestic action in every region of the world.

6. Among cross-cutting issues, **SDG localisation** presents opportunities for review of territorial priorities and needs, strengthening local development. We must also focus on global **climate action**, which has been insufficient. The EU is fully committed to the Paris Agreement, its long-term goals and multilateral cooperation based on mutual respect. We are ready to work with partners worldwide to drive real progress.
7. As we are also approaching the 80th anniversary of the signing of the UN Charter – and in line with our Pact for the Future commitments – the EU and its Member States recall there can be no sustainable development without **peace** and no peace without sustainable development. We condemn all forms of aggression and call for respect of international law and its principles as enshrined in the Charter. International humanitarian law must be respected. Global backsliding on peace, democracy and rule of law is a particular threat to sustainable development. Achieving the SDGs requires effective, accountable, transparent, inclusive and democratic institutions, coordinated efforts to combat corruption and equal access to justice for all.
8. The theme of this year's HLPF points to the crucial role of **science, technology and innovation**, as well as **data and evidence-based solutions**, in accelerating realisation of the SDGs. Life-long learning and emerging data-driven technologies, including artificial intelligence (AI) and earth observation systems, play a significant role as enablers of sustainable development. The **Global Digital Compact** is a framework to leverage the transformative potential of data and science, ensuring they drive progress without deepening divides, and paves the way for an inclusive, multi-stakeholder digital governance.

\*

9. Colleagues, we should aim for a concise Ministerial Declaration this year, bearing in mind the various UN negotiations underway in parallel, with appropriate focus on the SDGs under review and follow-up points on inter-connected commitments.

*[SDG 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages]*

10. **Ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all** is a major priority for the EU. Guided by our Global Health Strategy, we support equitable access to universal health coverage including sexual and reproductive health-care, disease prevention, occupational safety and health, clean water, sanitation and hygiene and promoting healthy and sustainable lifestyles.
11. As **public health is a global good**, we support partnership and social participation initiatives to promote health and well-being in low- and middle-income countries and access to health services, vaccinations and comprehensive health education,

along with innovation in medicine and cooperation for health manufacturing and universal health coverage, in alignment with WHO, Lusaka agenda and Global Health Initiatives.

12. We will pay particular attention this year to the prevention and treatment of **non-communicable diseases** ahead of the high-level meeting to be convened in September. By fostering the **One Health approach**, the EU and its Member States aim to create resilient societies, thriving economies and sustainable development for future generations. We see interlinkages between health and environmental pollution, climate change and biodiversity loss. We will also continue work on setting up supportive structures for integrated policies and actions to support **mental health**, especially online.

*[SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls]*

13. **Gender equality**, the empowerment of all women and girls, their protection and their full and equal enjoyment of human rights are core values of the EU. The EU and its Member States are committed to supporting full enjoyment of all human rights by women and girls, ensuring women's political, social and economic participation, equal pay for work of equal value, universal social protection and inclusion. And we must eradicate all forms of sexual and gender-based violence.
14. Achieving full human potential and sustainable development is impossible if women and girls are denied **full and equal opportunities**. We also call for the elimination of technology, resources and services discrimination, ensuring transformative approaches to address the root causes of gender-based discrimination.
15. The EU and its Member States consider the **30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Beijing Declaration** and Platform for Action and the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of UN Women as a key moment for the acceleration of progress at the global level. Delivering SDG5 is necessary to achieve all the SDGs.

*[SDG 8: Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all]*

16. The **World Social Summit** offers us an opportunity to renew the social contract through a comprehensive approach based on human rights, social cohesion, solidarity and inclusive growth. Social justice and social development are possible only through adequate income and **decent work for all**, creating an enabling environment for full, productive and freely chosen employment, including for sustainable enterprises. We must respect, promote and realise international

labour standards, in particular the fundamental principles and rights at work; **adequate rights-based social protection for all**, which ensures income security, and decent living and working conditions, together with effective social dialogue.

17. Investments in education, vocational education and training, lifelong learning opportunities and skills-development must be aligned so that workers' competencies respond to labour market needs and opportunities and support the sustainable, green and just transition of our economies.
18. We must take immediate and effective measures to secure the prohibition of and ensure the **elimination of child labour** in all its forms. Adequate **social protection** can ensure demographic, ecological and digital transitions are managed in a just and equitable manner, an important tool in poverty eradication. The bio and **circular economy**, as well as the social and solidarity economy, can also be drivers to develop new and green industries, localising and promoting joint ownership of the SDGs across sectors.

*[SDG 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development]*

19. Colleagues, a **healthy ocean** and its conservation and sustainable use, including of marine resources, are critical to achieving the 2030 Agenda. We must take urgent action to strengthen marine ecosystems conservation and restoration, and we must apply the precautionary principle to new and emerging interests. Investments in **climate resilience** in marine and coastal areas are also paramount to minimise the adverse impact of climate change, including displacement of people.
20. The EU and its Member States look forward to the third **UN Ocean Conference**, co-hosted by France and Costa Rica this June in Nice. We call for swift ratification and entry into force of the BBNJ Agreement (*on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction, under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea*) and its full and effective implementation, including the 30x30 target under the Global Bio Diversity Framework.
21. The EU calls for accelerated efforts to **end marine pollution of all kinds, including plastic pollution**, and in particular for the swift and ambitious conclusion of the crucial negotiations on a legally binding instrument on plastics.

*[SDG 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development]*

22. Recalling the theme of this year's HLPF, the EU and its Member States recognise opportunities to enhance North-South, South-South, triangular and regional cooperation on **access to science, technology and innovation**, as well as enhanced knowledge-sharing.
23. Through the Global Gateway and other initiatives, the EU and its Member States support partner countries promoting their own strategic autonomy, accelerating social, digital and green transitions. This can provide **investment pathways** addressing interlinkages, through partnerships and transformative projects in support of the SDGs. We advocate **sustainable finance frameworks** and private investments consistent with the SDGs, supported through guarantees.
24. The EU and its Member States look forward to a successful **fourth International Conference on Financing for Development** in Sevilla, Spain. We have called for and continue to push for high ambition, concrete action and effective follow up and accountability. The global context is challenging, but we remain fully committed to this process and building trust in multilateral cooperation.
25. We must be more coherent, more inclusive, effective and efficient with the resources that are available, mobilising **public, private, domestic and international resources**, improving and building on existing structures, ongoing work and processes. To end poverty and hunger we must target **inequalities**, within and between countries, between men and women and different segments of society, with action benchmarked against measurable impact.
26. The EU and its Member States advocate the catalytic potential of **Official Development Assistance (ODA)** to mobilise additional financing streams for the SDGs. The EU and its Member States are the largest ODA provider, accounting for over 40% globally in recent years. **Domestic resource mobilisation** – such as through fair and efficient tax systems and effective public finance management – remains the most sustainable source of financing for development and is crucial for resilience to external shocks.
27. The EU and its Member States remain committed to **International Financial Architecture** reform, including Multilateral Development Banks, to better address global challenges. The EU recognises the need to enhance the representation of developing countries, where important steps are already underway.

28. As the EU has stated in the latest Review of ECOSOC and the HLPF, we support this key **inclusive platform** for review of our progress towards the SDGs and accelerating this. We also call for **strengthened multi-stakeholder engagement** in the HLPF, ensuring that national and local governments, the private sector, academia and civil society including youth organisations can participate actively in shaping and implementing SDG strategies.
29. **Voluntary national reviews** provide for enhanced multi-governance approaches and stakeholder engagement in pursuit of the SDGs, as the EU has experienced through its own Voluntary Review. Five EU MS will present VNRs this year [BG, CZ, FI, DE, MT]. The peer-learning character, participatory nature, accountability and harmonisation of VNRs should be strengthened.
30. Colleagues, we look forward to engaging constructively once again in this edition of the High-level Political Forum. In these negotiations on the Ministerial Declaration, the EU will remain a fair and determined advocate for universal values and principles, leaving no one behind.

I thank you.