

CSO closing statement

UNECE Regional Forum on Sustainable Development 2018

Geneva, 3 March 2018

Thank you Chair.

Chair, Distinguished Delegates, UN representatives and friends from civil society,

My name is Pat Clarke and I am the Vice-President of the European Disability Forum, a pan European pan Disability organisation representing 80 million person with disabilities across the EU. I am here today to speak as a representative of civil society, as part of the UN ECE Regional CSO Engagement Mechanism.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development calls for strong follow-up and review mechanisms at national and regional levels. We, as civil society organisations, have a crucial role to play in sharing policy guidance, best practices and contributing to monitoring the implementation of the SDGs.

There are a number of recommendations we would like to make to improve the quality of future forums, which we will share in writing - but one as an example is key for our stakeholder group: accessibility! Please invest in captioning, international sign language interpreters and ramps for instance so everyone can truly participate in the forum.

There are various key points we would like to share from a CSO's perspective.

For instance, when it comes to SDG 6, we are calling that you apply human rights based approaches to ensure everyone has access to safe drinking water and sanitation.

Relative to SDG 7, we would like to stress that nuclear energy is not an alternative. We need to pioneer and develop new approaches to energy generation, with new investments and innovations. The investment in the development of sustainable energy are vital.

When it comes to SDG 11, we believe that smart, sustainable and egalitarian cities and human settlements cannot happen without informed, empowered and engaged citizens of all ages and with a particular focus on including vulnerable groups. All must actively participate in planning and development of their habitat, using universal design principles, and CSOs are ready to be involved.

To achieve SDG 12, we would like to stress that systemic change is required beyond technical solutions: this forum must discuss policy options for the transition to a post-growth society that ensure the well-being for all within the carrying capacity of the planet.

Concerning SDG 15, it is critical to integrate biodiversity and ecosystem services into non-environmental policies and sectors and promote nature-based solutions. Consumption should not lead to destruction of forests and wildlife globally and local and indigenous

communities need to be involved. UNECE Member States should send a strong message to the HLPF about the essential role of biodiversity for our survival.

Finally, we call for effective accountability on processes on means of implementation in our countries and our region. We need a continued focus on data which needs to be disaggregated, with a concerted effort to ensure that the needs and situation of all groups can be reflected.

We, as civil society organisations, can and will support Member States and the UN ECE in building an inclusive, sustainable, and prosperous world, with the ultimate goal to end poverty, protect our planet include persons with disabilities and leave no one behind. We are ready to actively participate in SDGs implementation in collaboration with the UN ECE. Thank you!