

Check against delivery



**Statement by Mr Surya Deva  
United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to development**

*High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development*

New York

14 July 2023

Dear Madam President, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, esteemed panellists, ladies and gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to speak at the 2023 High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in my capacity as the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to development.

Madam Chair

With only 15% of the SDG targets on track, the picture looks very gloomy at the halfway mark of the 2030 Agenda. The COVID19 pandemic has definitely contributed to where we are today. But the pandemic merely exposed systemic flaws in our current economic order, which is geared to promoting cumulative economic growth, excluding voices of disadvantaged people and states, creating inequalities and disregarding the planetary boundaries.

To address the root causes that are derailing the realisation of the Sustainable Development Goals, the world needs a new model of “**planet-centered participatory development**”. I will be articulating this model in my reports presented to the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council later this year. States, international financial institutions, public development banks, businesses and civil society organisations should work together to move towards such a model.

In line with the vision of planet-centered participatory development, I will suggest the following measures to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda:

- ✓ First, centering the planet in the development process will be critical to ensure that the entire planetary eco-system (people, biodiversity and the environment) is protected. The goal of ‘leaving no one behind’ should include not merely people but also climate and biodiversity without which people cannot survive.
- ✓ Second, all policies and programmes aimed at implementing the Sustainable Development Goals should focus first on restoring the dignity of the most disadvantaged individuals and creating conditions for realising their right to development. As part of their duty to promote international solidarity and cooperation, developed states, wealthy individuals and large

companies should contribute the required financial and technological resources to achieve this objective.

- ✓ Third, all actors making decisions concerning the 2030 Agenda should ensure an active, free and meaningful participation of individuals and groups, especially those from a vulnerable or marginalised background. Creating and preserving civic space will be necessary to facilitate such participation.
- ✓ Fourth, as the ability of many individuals and groups to realise the right to development is undermined because of multiple layers of discrimination in society, states, businesses and other actors should adopt an intersectional approach in designing and implementing policies and programmes aimed at realising the Sustainable Development Goals.

Madama Chair

Time for tweaks is over. We need a fundamental shift in how the current economic order approaches governance, finance, investment, debt, trade, aid, taxation, migration, technology transfer and climate change. Changing irresponsible business models should also be part of this fundamental shift, because many companies treat migrant workers as a commodity to maximise profits, use corporate structures to evade the payment of taxes, or indulge in lobbying against phasing out of fossil fuel. Only then, we will be able to accomplish an inclusive, equitable and sustainable common future.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.