



National Association of Professional Social Workers in India

Reg. No. 53647 of 2005 (Societies Registration Act XXI of 1860)

**SECRETARIAT: C/o. BPHE'S Centre for Studies in Rural Development-
Institute of Social Work and Research (CSR-D-ISWR), Station Road,
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Statement by National Association of Professional Social Workers of India (NAPSWI)

By Prof. Sanjai Bhatt, Department of Social Work, University of Delhi, India

Dear Chair,

I Sanjai Bhatt, present this statement on behalf of NAPSWI which is a national level non political organisation working for societal well being.

We reckon that the theme of the HLPF “Accelerated Action and Transformative Pathways; Realising the Decade of Action and Delivery of Sustainable Development” could not have been more appropriate for the time. With the COVID-19 raging all over the world, it has shaken us all to that realise that an organ of the width of 1/1000th of an eyelash has brought world to a standstill. This underlines the danger of breaching boundaries of nature. Such pandemics have the tendency to reverse whatever gains we have made on the sustainable development in last few years.

We already know that more than 70% of the deadly viruses since 1940s have had zoometric origin. Climate change has the potential of bringing several such scourges back to our living systems. In 2014, some scientists in lab revived a virus frozen for more than 30,000 years in Siberian permafrost, and found that to be potent. By referring to this experiment, I just want to underline the urgency to prevent run away climate change, which is the biggest impediment in achieving sustainable development. COVID-19 pandemic has given us a sense of how could an emergency of global scale look like. Not paying heed to unmistakable reports from the cutting edge science, we cannot keep these pandemics farther. 2019 was the second warmest year on record in last 140 years since temperature records began to be maintained. January and February 2020 were the warmest January and February on record. WMO tells us that given the trends, the warmest year on record, 2016 could be topped soon.

Respected Chair, with regard to sustainable development goals, reports after reports are showing that not only the progress towards achieving the goals are awfully inadequate and huge regional variations; we are also regressing on several goals important among them SDG8, SDG9, SDG10, and all SDGs related to climate change (SDG12,13, 14, 15, and 16). It is extremely disappointing that even developed economies which could have inspired meaningful action by providing leadership, finance and technology to emerging economies and developing countries (EMDEs) are performing equally poorly. Equally worrisome is that there are no certain trend on SDG 16, which anchors human rights in the Agenda 2030. On the contrary, evidences point to the fact that space for democratic debate, freedom of expression and press freedom as declined while the CSOs, environmental defenders and human rights defenders face increasing clamp down and repression. Here it is also important to remind all of us that even though environmental footprint seems to be down during the COVID pandemic as more than 100 countries have responded, and rightly so, with containment and lockdown measures; the impending economic crisis and financial constraints

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heavily weigh on the countries capacity, ability and ambitions to take action against climate change in particular, and on moving towards the transformational Agenda 2030, in general. The EMDEs have already sought an financial assistance to the tune of \$2.5 Trillion, which IMF reportedly seems incapable of providing. We earnestly request the UN to request developed economies to step in to address this urgent demand lest our gains on Agenda 2030 is neutralised and reverse.

We are also cognizant of the Global Sustainable Development Report 2019, highlight the need to mobilize action around six entry points, (i) human well being and capabilities, (ii) sustainable and just economies, (iii) sustainable food systems and healthy nutrition, (iv) energy decarbonisation with universal access, (v) urban and peri-urban development, and (vi) global environmental commons across four levers of (i) governance, (ii) economy and finance, (iii) individual and collective action, and (iv) Science and technology.

Respected Chair, while we welcome the report and appreciate critical insights to galvanise synergies and interdependence across goals, we suggest concrete action on the followings;

(i) UN urgently needs to restore countries and global society's confidence in multilateralism, which has dangerously dwindled during this pandemic by helping developing countries.

(ii) There is an urgent need to strengthen social protection floors, universal basic income, food security, and temporary work programmes for the poor, in the short and medium term.

(iii) Ease customs barrier for free flow of essential goods, services and drugs, at regional levels.

(iv) Put on hold geopolitical ambitions of the countries and invest more in human capital, enhance public health systems and access to quality health care.

(v) Create strong and dynamic partnership with CSOs and other stakeholders, many of whom have responded to the social and national calls during this pandemic.

We, as professional social workers, believe that life will not be same ever again, and therefore, we need to revisit how we look at international cooperation and sustainability. We request the UN Secretary General to call a Global Conference to create consensus on how we move ahead on Agenda 2030 post COVID and hope we will create a real consensus and actual collaboration which have eluded us for so long.

Thank You

Sincerely

SANJAI BHATT President, NAPSWI

26th April, 2020

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