

A Review of Recent United Nations and Civil Society Documents and their Alignment with the 1995 Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development



INTRODUCTION

In 1995, the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen produced a historic Declaration and Programme of Action, where 117 heads of state and government made ten core commitments to advance social development. These commitments focused on eradicating poverty, achieving full employment, and fostering inclusive, rights-based societies. Thirty years later, these goals remain urgent and unfinished.

This second volume of Bridging Vision to Action builds on the assessments and recommendations from Volume 1, which provided a retrospective review of progress since 1995. Volume 1 analysed how each of the ten commitments has been carried forward through the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), identified persistent gaps in implementation, and proposed strategic actions to close them. It offered a baseline for understanding global efforts to align social development with sustainability and justice.



Volume 2 shifts focus from retrospective assessment to current alignment. It examines key documents released between 2024 and 2025 that shape the global conversation on social development today:



- **Pact for the Future** – A landmark agreement adopted by world leaders at the Summit of the Future in September 2024 aimed at revitalizing multilateral cooperation and accelerating progress on global challenges. It includes two annexes: the **Global Digital Compact**, which addresses digital inclusion, governance, and rights; and the **Declaration on Future Generations**, which calls for long-term thinking and safeguards for intergenerational well-being.
- **Resolutions of the 62nd and 63rd Sessions of the Commission for Social Development** – A reaffirmation of the UN's commitment to poverty eradication, employment, and inclusive development. This commitment is reflected in four key resolutions: **Social Development and Justice (E/CN.5/2024/L.4)**, **Promoting Care and Support Systems for Social Development (E/CN.5/2024/5)**, **Solidarity and Social Cohesion (E/CN.5/2025/L.4)**, and the **Social Dimensions of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (E/CN.5/2025/L.5)**.



- **WSSD2 Food for Thought Paper** – A framing document guiding preparations for the Second World Summit for Social Development (WSSD2), offering ideas to strengthen social development architecture.
- **The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2024**
 - The UN's annual progress review on the 2030 Agenda, highlighting achievements, persistent inequalities, and areas of concern.
- **A Complement to the 10 Commitments** – A civil society response from the NGO Committee for Social Development, highlighting emerging issues and calling for bold, justice-oriented action rooted in the original Copenhagen Declaration vision.

Since 2020, the global landscape has undergone significant reshaping due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which has exacerbated inequality, brought global ageing into sharp focus, intensified

climate disruption, and heightened geopolitical instability. In response, the United Nations has launched some new frameworks and initiatives aimed at revitalising multilateral cooperation and promoting inclusive and sustainable development. Civil society, meanwhile, has emphasised the need for inclusion, participation, bolder structural reforms and genuine accountability.

This publication reviews these recent developments in light of the original 1995 Copenhagen Declaration Commitments. It asks: where and how do recent declarations reflect the spirit and substance of the Copenhagen vision? Where do they fall short? And what structural changes are now required to deliver on promises made three decades ago? Drawing on official UN documents, civil society advocacy, and the latest SDG data, this volume analyses alignment, identifies gaps, and offers a roadmap for action ahead of the Second World Summit for Social Development.



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FOREWORD

The NGO Committee for Social Development was formed in 1998 following the first World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen in 1995 to work together towards the achievement of the Copenhagen Declaration and continue reviewing UN progress toward those goals. We are a globally diverse representation of civil society based in New York, and work all year round to promote people-centered development policies and initiatives at the global level.

In 2023, the NGO Committee for Social Development undertook a comprehensive review of the implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration, side by side with the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. The outcome was a publication titled “Bridging Vision to Action: From the Copenhagen Declaration of 1995 to the SDGs,” which was released in January 2024. The publication made a series of recommendations to drive progress on the 10 Commitments of the Copenhagen Declaration as expressed through the SDGs, and pointed to the need for a second World Social Summit to be held in 2025.

Today, with only six months until the second World Summit for Social Development is set to take place in Doha, Qatar, we are called not only to remember the promises of the Copenhagen Declaration but also to renew them with urgency, clarity, and solidarity. As such, the NGO CSocD set out to create a timely resource for civil society, Member States, UN agencies, and all stakeholders committed to advancing the promises made in Copenhagen and translating them into action for today’s global context. Building on the foundations of Volume 1, this second volume examines key UN and civil society documents released in 2024 and 2025,

assessing how recent efforts align with the spirit and substance of the 1995 Declaration. It challenges us to move beyond rhetoric to the implementation of the three pillars of social development: poverty eradication, decent work, and social inclusion.



Liana Almony

Actualizing these commitments and goals requires meaningful, intentional multi-stakeholder collaboration, and the inclusion of civil society and those with lived experience at the decision-making table. We hope that the insights shared in this publication will contribute to a unified multi-stakeholder strategy to ensure the 2025 Summit is impactful and inclusive in order to truly accelerate action on the commitments of the Copenhagen Declaration and the 2030 Agenda.

On behalf of the NGO Committee for Social Development, thank you to the Publication Taskforce for dedicating their time, knowledge, and expertise to this project. At this critical moment for reflection, this publication is more than a review - it is a roadmap for action and a call to collective responsibility. The framework for how to address today’s global challenges has already been developed, we just need the political will and effective multilateral collaboration to implement that framework and fill the gaps. The decisions made in Doha must reflect the realities of today and pave the path towards the more sustainable, equitable, and just future that the UN has long promised to create and uphold.

Liana Almony
Chair, NGO Committee for Social Development
April 2025

Reviewing the 1995 Commitments in Light of Recent Developments





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Commitment

1

Creating an economic, political, social, cultural, and legal environment that will enable people to achieve social development

Pact for the Future

Under the Copenhagen Declaration, governments committed to ensuring equality before the law, transparent governance, participatory decision-making, and accessible public institutions. The 2024 Pact for the Future takes this further in several key actions. Action 7 commits to building peaceful, just, and inclusive societies that ensure access to justice for all, support strong institutions, and uphold human rights and fundamental freedoms. It mirrors the Copenhagen Declaration's call for good governance with a clear emphasis on inclusivity and transparency. Action 38 expands on this by pledging to transform global governance. It emphasises making the UN and multilateral institutions more effective, democratic, inclusive, and financially stable to meet modern challenges.

The Declaration on Future Generations emphasises the importance of governance systems that promote intergenerational justice, democratic participation, and accountability. It recognises that sustainable societies require institutions that not only address current needs and rights but also safeguard the rights of future generations, including their right to a healthy environment.

The Global Digital Compact (GDC) complements this vision in the digital sphere. It promotes inclusive, safe, and rights-respecting digital spaces, emphasising the importance of public participation, transparency, and accountability in digital governance (GDC, Objectives 3 & 4).

Together, these documents reinforce and modernise Commitment 1, embedding it within a multilevel, future-focused, and digital-aware governance framework.

62nd and 63rd CSocD Resolutions

Resolution on Social Development and Justice

The resolution reminds Member States of their legally binding international human rights obligations, particularly under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), which recognises, among other rights, the right to an adequate standard of living, the right to work, the right to social security, and the right to education. It underscores the relevance of these rights in shaping social policies, including family-oriented social protection measures.

The resolution links social development to the concept of a just transition, as outlined in the International Labour Organization's (ILO) Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work. It urges Member States to place social considerations at the centre of development strategies by strengthening the integration of social, economic, and environmental policies and encouraging cross-sectoral collaboration.

Finally, it encourages Member States to promote the social and solidarity economy (SSE) as a potential model for sustainable economic and social development.

“Digital inclusion and justice,

with investments in infrastructure, affordability, digital literacy, and accessible technology, ensuring participation of and protection for all, especially those marginalised by age, gender, ethnicity, class, disability, or geographical location.



Resolution on Promoting Care

The care resolution urges States to create enabling environments that promote care and support systems and implement all necessary measures to ensure the well-being and rights of care recipients and caregivers. Unpaid caregiving continues to be invisible and undervalued, unaccounted for in national statistics and is a driver of persistent gender inequality. The resolution calls for the fostering of the right to care in which care and support are shared more equitably among men and women, as well as among families, communities, the private sector, and Member States.

It also acknowledges the upward trend of population ageing and its impact on social development.

Resolution on Solidarity and Social Cohesion

The resolution echoes Commitment 1 by underscoring human rights and adherence to international law. It emphasises the importance of inclusive, equitable economic growth and social justice, driven by policies that promote and uphold human dignity. It also calls for the development of legal frameworks and improved access to financial services for social and solidarity economy entities, while encouraging their active participation in policymaking.

International cooperation is addressed in the resolution, highlighting the need for financial support and capacity-building to achieve sustainable and social development. It also calls for policies that promote accountability and that strengthen civil society.

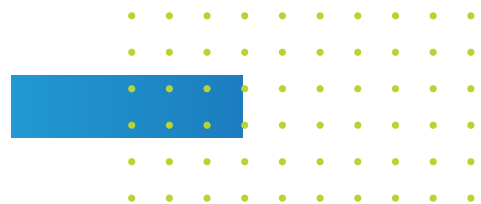
However, the resolution has gaps. References to civil society are weak with a vague 'multi-stakeholder' approach. It also overlooks the role of cultural initiatives in social development. It does not propose measures to protect refugee rights, despite the global refugee population reaching 43.7 million by mid-2024, more than double the figure in 1995.

WSSD2 Food for Thought Paper

The Food for Thought Paper reflects and reinforces Commitment 1 of the Copenhagen Declaration by emphasising policy coherence, multi-stakeholder engagement, and integrated governance—key components of the people-centred approach. In response to today's complex global challenges, including climate change, social inequalities, and geopolitical instability, the Paper calls for renewed international cooperation and inclusive governance to build more resilient societies.

Aligned with the Copenhagen Declaration's call for equitable access to development and the inclusion of marginalised groups, the Paper emphasises the need to scale up investment in social protection systems and Social Protection Floors (SPFs) to ensure universal coverage across the life course and to reach all communities affected by climate-induced displacement and economic shocks. It pledges to respond to demographic changes, such as longer life expectancy (ageing populations) and falling fertility rates, highlighting the need for adaptive policies that protect social cohesion and stability across the life course.

The Paper's call for a unified, people-centred vision mirrors the Declaration's focus on human dignity and participation. It promotes the creation of enabling environments, compliance with the international human rights framework, the removal of structural barriers, and universal access to essential public services, affirming the need for inclusive, rights-based policies. With over a billion people still living in poverty, the Paper urges coordinated global action, sustained investment, and international solidarity, echoing the vision of the Copenhagen Declaration that social justice is the foundation for sustainable development.



The SDG Report 2024

The SDG Report 2024 highlights significant progress toward Commitment 1, including reductions in extreme poverty between 1995 and 2020, the expansion of social protection programmes, and increased access to basic services. Progress noted is that nearly 300 million more people gained access to electricity between 2015 and 2022, while access to clean water and the internet improved. International legal frameworks have also been strengthened, particularly in environmental protection, hazardous waste management, chemicals, and biodiversity conservation, demonstrating global efforts to create enabling conditions for social development. Nonetheless, notable data gaps persist in measuring meaningful progress.

However, persistent disparities threaten to undermine these gains. The 75 poorest and most vulnerable economies continue to experience slower growth compared to other countries, thereby widening global inequality. Informal employment continues to rise, with 2 billion workers without social protection, particularly in low-income countries, sub-Saharan Africa, and Central and South Asia. More than half of the world's population still lacks access to social protection and essential healthcare services, a problem exacerbated by severe shortages in the health workforce.

Meanwhile, the climate crisis has escalated economic and social costs worldwide. As of May 2024, armed conflicts have forcibly displaced 120 million people, undermining community stability and threatening the foundation of social development. Education systems remain under strain due to inadequate infrastructure, teacher shortages, and rising inequality in access to and quality of education, putting future generations at risk. In addition to this, financing gaps remain a significant barrier: developing countries face a \$4 trillion annual shortfall in SDG investments, exacerbated by unsustainable debt servicing.

Without urgent action, these systemic challenges will reverse progress and undermine the vision of equitable social development outlined in Commitment 1.

WSSD2 Civil Society Agenda

Thirty years after the Copenhagen Declaration, the promise to create an enabling environment for social development remains unmet in many parts of the world. While Commitment 1 called for structural conditions—legal, economic, cultural—to empower people, today's realities demand more profound transformation. The NGO Committee for Social Development's 2025 document, "A Complement to the 10 Commitments," expands this vision with urgency and specificity, focusing on what must be done to empower communities.

From Principles on Paper to Lived Realities

Commitment 1 emphasised transparent governance, equity, and access to justice. The Complement challenges us to ask: How meaningful is this when billions are still denied basic housing, income security, and protection from discrimination? It explicitly addresses systemic exclusions that obstruct an enabling environment, including homelessness, social protection, digital divides, and climate collapse—all of which are missing from the 1995 framing but are essential today.

For example, the Complement identifies homelessness as a "critical social development challenge" that was ignored at Copenhagen and remains largely absent in UN processes. It demands that homelessness be recognised as both a standalone issue and a symptom of broader systemic failures—poverty, housing unaffordability, social exclusion—and calls for its inclusion in the policy recommendations of the Second

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Commitment to ending homelessness by 2030 through inclusive, community-driven solutions.

World Summit for Social Development. The Complement calls for safeguarding the human right to adequate housing and structural interventions, including investment in increased public housing, inclusive policy-making on housing that involves people experiencing homelessness, and stronger data systems to track and address housing exclusion.

Overall recommendations for Commitment 1: Creating an enabling environment for social development

- Recognise homelessness as a critical social development issue by including it in the global agenda and investing in inclusive, affordable public housing.
- Affirm and put in place universal Social Protection Floors (SPFs) for income security and healthcare across the life course, as a prerequisite for education, nutrition, and care services.
- Establish a solidarity-based Global Fund for Social Protection to provide financing and technical support for SPFs in all countries, including those with lower incomes.
- Redefine development away from GDP growth-driven models towards systems that prioritise and reward wellbeing, equity, and sustainability.
- Ensure progress is measured using citizen-generated data and multidimensional indicators, including those in the Human Development Index (HDI), the Multidimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI), the Genuine Progress Indicator (GPI), and other wellbeing-centred frameworks.
- Recognise and institutionalise civil society as co-architects, not just stakeholders, in governance.

Social Protection Floors as a Structural Foundation

Social protection is a human right embedded in the charter and essential to ensure human dignity. The Complement highlights Social Protection Floors (SPFs - ILO Recommendation 202 and target 3 of SDG 1) as the essential building block for achieving Commitment 1. Without basic income security in old age, at times of disability, of unemployment, when expecting a baby and in childhood, together with access to healthcare (the components of SPFs), it is difficult to access education, nutrition, housing and care. People across the life course will be, and are, excluded from the enabling environment. At the time of writing, according to the ILO, 47.6% of the world's population remains unprotected, lacking access to social protection. That's not a policy failure—it's a moral one.



It calls for a Global Fund for Social Protection, built on solidarity and matched by national investment, along with binding Summit commitments to establish SPFs in all countries within set, monitorable timeframes. This is a direct escalation of the Copenhagen Declaration's call for economic and social protection, turning abstract aspiration into grounded, monitorable obligations rooted in the human rights framework.

Redefining Development, Restoring Trust

Finally, the Complement makes it clear that no enabling environment is possible under a development model centred on GDP growth and profit over people. It calls for a redefinition of development and progress that prioritises human well-being, inclusivity, sustainability, and equity, with multidimensional indicators beyond GDP, which cannot measure justice, care, inclusion and equality.

In a world fractured by rising inequality, polycrisis, and declining trust, the enabling environment we need must be built on a foundation of solidarity, rights-based policy, participation and inclusive governance. Civil society is not merely a stakeholder to be consulted after decisions are made, but must be co-architects of policy. The Complement demands a stronger civil society presence and voice, from local to global levels, to anchor policy in lived realities.

Gaps and Renewed Vision

The NGO CSocD's 2025 document, "A Complement to the 10 Commitments," exposes the gaps between intention and implementation in Commitment 1 and offers concrete pathways to close them. It stresses that enabling environments aren't created by declarations alone. They are built through redistributive policies, economic and social support throughout the life course, institutional reform, solidarity, participation and social inclusion. For the UN and its Member States to renew the commitments outlined in the Copenhagen Declaration, they must act on this updated vision—and they must act now.

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Key Component of Implementation:
Integration of social development targets into national laws, development plans, and international economic agreements to ensure enforceable, coordinated action.





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Commitment

2

Eradicating poverty in the world through decisive national actions and international cooperation as an ethical, social, political, and economic imperative of humankind

Pact for the Future

The Pact for the Future reaffirms the urgency of poverty eradication. Action 2 commits to placing poverty eradication at the centre of global efforts, recognising poverty in all its forms as the greatest global challenge. It further ties poverty reduction to sustainable development, emphasising inclusiveness and resilience.

Action 6 of the Pact reinforces this by calling for investment in people to build trust and social cohesion, which directly echoes the Copenhagen Declaration's emphasis on empowerment and participatory development.

The Declaration on Future Generations supports this by stating that no future can be sustainable if large portions of the global population are deprived of basic needs and rights. Poverty is presented not only as a present crisis but also as a threat to the potential of future generations.

The Global Digital Compact introduces a new dimension, acknowledging digital inequality as a form of economic marginalisation. It calls for closing digital divides to support inclusive development and expand access to economic and social opportunities (GDC, Objective 1).

These renewed commitments demonstrate a more integrated, rights-based, and digitally aware framework for achieving the long-standing goal of eradicating poverty.



62nd and 63rd CSocD Resolutions

Resolution on Social Development and Justice

The resolution highlights the slow progress in poverty eradication, with over 1 billion people still living in multidimensional poverty, half of whom are children. It notes that inequality in income, wealth, and opportunities remains high and increasing.

It recognises the multidimensional nature of poverty, and suggests poverty eradication policies include monitorable access to income security, quality education, lifelong learning, employment, decent work, healthcare, and adequate housing. Cognizant of the heavy poverty burden on informal workers and those living in poverty, the resolution calls for their participation and empowerment.

It also calls for the establishment of nationally appropriate universal social protection systems to address poverty and inequality, as well as the creation of Social Protection Floors. It frames social protection as an investment, urging Member States to adopt a long-term, inclusive, and prevention-oriented approach. Social protection investments encompass social services, infrastructure, healthcare, safe drinking water, sanitation, affordable housing, decent employment opportunities, and digital technology. The resolution recommends combining contributory and non-contributory schemes to ensure everyone has access to social protection, including unpaid caregivers and informal workers.

Resolution on Promoting Care

The care resolution recognises that the inequitable distribution of unpaid domestic and care work contributes to the feminisation of poverty. It also calls for building social protection systems that account for periods of unpaid work over the life course, which is essential to help address the gender gap.

Resolution on Solidarity and Social Cohesion

The resolution reaffirms that poverty in all its forms is the greatest global challenge, and its eradication must be at the core of sustainable development.

The resolution acknowledges that poverty has multiple dimensions and emphasises the need to expand social protection systems for all, particularly to reach older people, women and girls. Furthermore, in alignment with the second commitment, the resolution acknowledges the need for increased financial and technical support to help all countries achieve their social protection commitments and thereby make progress in eradicating poverty.

Nonetheless, the Resolutions do not suggest timelines within which specific targets towards eradicating poverty can be achieved.

WSSD2 Food for Thought Paper

The Food for Thought Paper highlights that over one billion people still live in acute multidimensional poverty, underscoring the urgent need for action at the upcoming Second World Summit for Social Development. It calls for holistic poverty eradication strategies, including increased investment in social protection and alternative measures beyond GDP to assess well-being and resilience.

Building on Commitment 2, the Paper advocates for a multidimensional approach to address the root causes of poverty and strengthen resilience against the crises of pandemics, conflicts, and

climate change. Poverty reduction, it argues, should go beyond lifting people above the poverty line, aiming instead for long-term stability through comprehensive social protection systems that span the life course.

Both the Paper and the Declaration emphasise the need to scale up Social Protection Floors as a foundation for inclusion, transition to formal employment, and the development of resilient communities. They call for multidimensional poverty measurements for human well-being, sustainability, inclusion, and equity.

Finally, the Paper echoes the Declaration's call for sustainable and predictable financing to support national and international efforts aimed at eradicating poverty, particularly in developing countries.

The SDG Report 2024

The SDG Report 2024 shows partial progress toward Commitment 2 on poverty eradication. While there were significant reductions in poverty before the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a regression, and emerging challenges now threaten to undermine the 2030 targets.

Before the pandemic, many countries established specific, measurable goals aligned with SDG 1 in their national development plans. Gains included the expansion of social protection programmes and improved digital financial inclusion. Global internet access reached 67%—a 69% increase since 2015. This digital expansion enabled broader use of mobile banking and digital payments, especially for those without bank accounts.

The Report highlights the importance of an integrated approach to poverty reduction, combining social protection, inclusive economic policies, human capital investments, and measures to reduce inequality. It states that “ending poverty requires a wide-ranging approach.”

However, the pandemic has set progress back by roughly three years, and current projections suggest that 590 million people may still live in

extreme poverty by 2030 if trends continue. Alarming, about one-third of the 75 most vulnerable countries are now poorer on average than before the pandemic. At the current pace, fewer than 3 in 10 countries will achieve the goal of halving national poverty by 2030.

Since 1995, new challenges have emerged with greater urgency. Climate change has become a major obstacle to progress, with disasters trapping millions in cycles of poverty. This has made it essential to include climate resilience in all anti-poverty strategies.

Together, these developments underscore the urgent need for renewed, integrated solutions that address both the long-standing drivers of poverty and the impacts of climate change.

WSSD2 Civil Society Agenda

The 1995 Declaration was clear that poverty is not just an economic issue—it is a violation of human dignity. But thirty years on, poverty persists, mutates, and deepens across borders. What has changed? The drivers are more complex, the gaps are wider, and the failures are systemic. “A Complement to the 10 Commitments” makes it clear: eradicating poverty demands not just better programmes—it demands a bold restructuring of social, economic, and political systems.

Ending Poverty Means Ending Homelessness

The original Declaration never mentioned homelessness. Today, the Complement fills that void, stating unequivocally, “Ending homelessness is essential to ending poverty.”

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Agreed national implementation plans for universal social protection floors, to be implemented at regular intervals, with clear timelines, monitoring mechanisms, and support from a solidarity-based Global Fund for Social Protection to ensure coverage in all countries.



This is more than semantics. Homelessness is both a consequence and a cause of multidimensional poverty, impacting health, employment, education, and personal safety.

The Complement calls for immediate inclusion of homelessness in the core agenda and recommendations for action of the Second World Summit for Social Development. It reminds us that adequate housing is not a market commodity but a human right, and positions adequate, permanent housing as a non-negotiable prerequisite of poverty eradication.

Social Protection Floors: The Basic Minimum

Commitment 2 promised social protection. But as the Complement highlights, promises don't pay rent or buy food. While globally, just over half the world's people have access to at least one social protection benefit, the figure drops to 19% for Africa. This is not a capacity issue. It's a political choice.

The Complement calls for the establishment of universal Social Protection Floors (SPFs) in every country, grounded in the human right to social security (UDHR Articles 22 and 25) and ILO Recommendation 202. Components of SPFs are :

- Basic income security in old age, at times of disability, of unemployment, of maternity and for children.
- Universal healthcare.

Without floors in place, access to essential rights, including education, food, housing, and care, is compromised.

These are not “nice-to-haves”—they are non-negotiables for well-being and secure societies.

It calls for an international financing mechanism—the solidarity-based Global Fund for Social Protection—to support all countries, including those with lower incomes, in establishing these systems. It requires political will and the end of

fiscal excuses that would delay implementation. As the Complement bluntly states: “Most countries already have the potential fiscal capacity for SPFs, if they choose to mobilise it”.



Beyond Income: Tackling Structural Inequality

The Complement goes further than 1995 by identifying inequality as a primary driver of poverty and calling out the systems that perpetuate it. The problem isn't just that people lack income. It's that systems are structurally designed to extract wealth upwards, enriching the few while denying millions access to basic income, decent wages, healthcare, education, and safe housing.

It connects poverty to global tax injustice, debt traps, austerity, and unjust trade rules, calling for systemic reform. It points to progressive taxation, debt cancellation, and domestic resource mobilisation as key tools for change and wealth redistribution.

Including Voices of the Excluded

Most powerfully, the Complement insists that poverty policy must be shaped with—not just for—the people it impacts, making anti-poverty strategies relevant and accountable.

That includes:

- People experiencing homelessness
- Children
- Migrants
- Workers in the informal economy
- People with disabilities
- Older people
- Assylum Seeker
- Youth
- LGBTQIA+ people
- Those marginalised by work and descent
- Women and girls shouldering the majority of unpaid care work
- Grassroots organisations, often ignored in global summits



Overall recommendations for Commitment 2: Eradicating poverty

- Make ending homelessness a formal goal in poverty eradication strategies.
- Ensure universal access to social protection floors (SPFs), including basic income and healthcare, as well as access to education for all.
- Establish the Global Fund for Social Protection to support the universal implementation of social protection.
- Address structural inequality through progressive taxation, debt cancellation, and fair trade.
- Implement a multidimensional approach to data gathering and analysis that includes timelines for achieving specific targets aimed at eradicating poverty.
- Elevate lived experiences—empower individuals previously or currently experiencing poverty to participate in policy making and shape policy directly.

A Call to Action

The original commitment to eradicate poverty remains valid. However, the Complement demands that we identify and confront the systems that generate poverty, build universal social protection systems, and treat housing, healthcare, education, and dignity as rights, not privileges.

If the Second World Summit is to matter, it must adopt the Complement's unapologetic call to action. The time for tinkering is over. The time for justice is now.



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Commitment

3

Full employment as a basic priority of our economic and social policies and to enabling all men and women to attain secure and sustainable livelihoods through freely chosen productive employment and work.

Pact for the Future

The Pact for the Future reflects the goals in Commitment 3 most clearly in Action 6, which prioritises investing in people to enhance social cohesion and end poverty. It promotes decent work, inclusion, and economic resilience, recognising these as foundational to social stability and development.

Additionally, Action 34 focuses on the social and economic development of children and young people to ensure they can reach their full potential. It addresses intergenerational employment challenges, which include the potential of a growing older workforce, in many cases still excluded from meaningful work opportunities. It envisages a global workforce prepared for future economic needs.

The Global Digital Compact acknowledges the transformational impact of the digital economy on employment. It commits to expanding digital skills and inclusion in the digital labour force to ensure that all people, especially those in digitally underserved regions, can benefit from emerging job markets.

The Declaration on Future Generations supports a labour environment that adapts to future needs, emphasising skills development, lifelong learning, and inclusive labour markets as cornerstones of sustainability.

These initiatives show a progression from the 1995 employment agenda to one that is inclusive of digital transitions, women, youth, older persons, and the future of work.

62nd and 63rd CSocD Resolutions

Resolution on Social Development and Justice

The resolution emphasises policies to support decent work, equal opportunities, and reduce labour market inequalities and discrimination. It calls on governments to ensure adequate remuneration through minimum wages and equal pay for equal work, along with employment protection and labour rights, such as collective bargaining. It further notes entrepreneurship as a job creation strategy.

It stresses the need to create more decent work opportunities and promote the transition to formal work and also calls for improved working conditions for workers with family responsibilities, including flexible working arrangements, expanded leave arrangements (such as maternity and paternity leave), and adequate social security benefits. It promotes equal sharing of care responsibilities between men and women.

The resolution emphatically urges policies targeting excluded groups such as women, youth, persons with disabilities, older persons, Indigenous Peoples, migrants, minorities, and people living with HIV.

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Tackling structural inequality—
economic, racial, gendered, and geographic—as central to all poverty eradication strategies.

Resolution on Promoting Care

The care resolution links the disproportionate share of unpaid care work undertaken by women to their lower rates of labour force participation and shorter formal working careers. It also frames care workers as essential workers, and it calls for the reduction of occupational segregation in the care sector, the improvement of working conditions for care workers, including wages, the reduction of precarious employment, and the prevention of violence and harassment in the care sector.

The resolution encourages States 'to consider the multiplier effects of the care economy in terms of increasing labour participation, facilitating the transition from informal to formal work and decent working conditions in the care sector, investing in social infrastructure and strengthening social protection, as well as the returns on the investments in care policies and systems'.

Resolution on Solidarity and Social Cohesion

The Resolution acknowledges that productive employment and decent work are essential for breaking the cycles of poverty and exclusion. It calls for a transition from the informal economy to the formal economy. Additionally, it urges the government to support the formalisation and growth of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises.

Furthermore, the Resolution focuses on women's issues by urging states to ensure that women have access to decent work, training, and financial services, thereby enhancing their inclusion and economic empowerment.

However, gaps remain evident, as the Resolutions and the Declaration lack specific proposals for policies and laws to establish a minimum wage. Additionally, the resolution does not emphasise the need to develop targeted policies to promote growth in rural and informal sectors.

WSSD2 Food for Thought Paper

The Food for Thought Paper reaffirms that employment is central to social and economic development, and one of the three pillars of social progress. Despite a global unemployment rate of only 5.1% in 2023, youth unemployment remains high. Additionally, 160 million children are working, and 2 billion people – almost 60% of the world's workers – are informal workers.

In line with Commitment 3 of the Copenhagen Declaration, the Paper highlights the potential of digital economies and remote work to expand job opportunities, especially for women, older persons, and persons with disabilities. It calls for macroeconomic policies that prioritise job creation and a dynamic private sector that fosters inclusive growth.



The Paper emphasises support for entrepreneurship and MSMEs, particularly benefiting women and youth, and advocates for lifelong learning and skills development in the digital and green economies to adapt to changing labour markets.

It also calls for stronger labour institutions, fair wages, and the protection of workers' rights, while urging efforts to formalise informal employment in the context of technological and energy transitions.

Finally, the Paper promotes investment in social protection and just transitions, reinforcing Commitment 3's focus on decent, inclusive, and sustainable work rooted in human dignity.

The SDG Report 2024

The SDG Report 2024 indicates measurable progress toward Commitment 3 on full employment and decent work, though major challenges remain in ensuring equitable access to secure and sustainable livelihoods. Global unemployment dropped to a historic low of 5.1% in 2023, marking clear gains. The broader economic rebound is reflected in stabilised global GDP per capita. At the same time, the air transport industry, despite its well-known negative environmental impact, was nonetheless highlighted as a key part of the post-pandemic recovery story in the SDG Report 2024, due to its role in restoring connectivity and generating employment.

However, these improvements mask deep-rooted inequalities. Women and youth continue to face disproportionately high unemployment, while informal employment dominates in Least Developed Countries (LDCs), sub-Saharan Africa, and Central/Southern Asia, accounting for nearly 90% of workers. More than 20% of youth globally are NEETs (not in education, employment, or training), highlighting systemic exclusion from decent work. The report also highlights weaker labour protections in many regions and a concerning decline in labour's share of GDP, suggesting that workers are not benefiting equitably from economic growth.

Overall, while headline indicators suggest some recovery, the core aims of Commitment 3—dignified, productive, and inclusive employment for all—require urgent attention to gender equity, youth inclusion, and the enforcement of labour rights. Persistent disparities in access to decent work across the life course confirm that quality employment remains out of reach for many.

WSSD2 Civil Society Agenda

In 1995, full employment was declared a cornerstone of the global social development agenda. But decades later, we are in the middle of a global employment crisis—fueled by inequality, digital disruption, austerity, climate change, and corporate consolidation. The promise of secure, freely chosen, decently

remunerated and dignified work has been shredded for millions. The Complement to the 10 Commitments forces us to confront what must change now and why.

From Employment to Livelihood Justice

The 1995 Declaration placed a strong emphasis on job creation. That's important. However, as the Complement makes clear, jobs alone are insufficient if they're exploitative, unstable, or inaccessible to entire communities.

Today's challenges require rethinking what "employment" means, especially as gig work, informal economies, and automation reshape labour worldwide. The Complement doesn't frame employment narrowly through labour markets. It links employment to social protection, climate resilience, and care work—all of which determine whether work is dignified, equitable, and empowering.



It highlights Social Protection Floors (SPFs) framework as essential to employment justice, stating:

"Universal access to healthcare and basic income underpin wellbeing... Social Protection Floors... should themselves be universal, representing the basic minimum for all across the life-course to support wellbeing, social cohesion and to advance decent work opportunities."

Every person deserves fair and equal access to decent work—work that respects and upholds human dignity, not merely measures productivity. No job, no matter how 'productive,' can be considered dignified if it fails to provide access to healthcare, care, or housing.

Overall recommendations for Commitment 3: Full employment and decent work.

- Shift from job quantity to employment justice, ensuring dignity, fairness, and protection for all across the life course.
- Recognise, redistribute, and invest in supporting unpaid care work as essential economic labour.
- Promote green jobs and a just transition for climate-impacted sectors.
- Establish a minimum wage that is cognizant of the costs of living.
- Ensure digital inclusion and bridge all digital divides—encompassing internet access, digital literacy, and adaptive technologies—for all at all ages.
- Expand universal SPFs to guarantee a dignified livelihood even outside formal employment.

Unpaid Care Work: The Hidden Labour Market

The Complement is unflinching in its analysis of gendered labour exploitation, especially through unpaid domestic and care work. Women worldwide do 3 times more unpaid care work than men, which is both a barrier to employment and an unacknowledged form of essential work.

The 1995 Declaration acknowledged women’s unequal share of care work, but didn’t tackle care as a structural issue. The Complement does. It calls for investment in care infrastructure, redistribution of care labour, and transformation of the patriarchal norms that define caregiving as “women’s work”.

Care work is work, valuable and essential work. And without recognising it, “full employment” is a fantasy, especially for women.



Green Jobs and Just Transition

What kind of jobs are we advocating for in an era of climate crisis? The Complement offers a clear answer: employment policy must be rooted in climate justice. It calls for a transition toward green jobs anchored in a “just transition” framework that puts workers at the centre, especially those in fossil fuel-dependent industries and frontline communities—those who are most exposed to the impacts of climate change and environmental degradation, including low-income populations, Indigenous peoples, and communities of colour.

Climate action is not a threat to employment—it is an opportunity to redefine work around the values of equity, sustainability, and human dignity, fostering harmony between people and the planet. But without deliberate and inclusive policies, the most vulnerable will once again be left behind.

Digital Inclusion as Employment Infrastructure

The digital divide is another frontier of exclusion. In today's world, no employment agenda is complete without digital access. From job applications to online services and training, digital infrastructure now determines who gets hired and who doesn't.

The Complement insists on equitable digital access, digital literacy for all ages, and inclusion-by-design to support people with disabilities, older persons, and all those excluded by poverty.

Redefining the Commitment

The 1995 Declaration envisioned full employment as a pathway to address poverty and promote dignity. But today's labour systems are stratified, racialised, gendered, ageist, and increasingly insecure and exploitative. The Complement doesn't just update Commitment 3—it redefines it. It demands that work be just, care be recognised, digital and green transitions be equitable, and protection be universal. The ILO has developed standards and recommendations for decent work, facilitating the transition from the informal to the formal economy, promoting social dialogue, and ensuring social protection. The question for the UN and Member States is: Are they adhering to these standards? It is not “Are there enough jobs?”, but “Are they just? Are they inclusive? Are they secure? Will they deliver a sustainable future?”

Until the answer is yes, the work is not done.





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Commitment

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Promoting social integration by fostering societies that are stable, safe, and just and that are based on the promotion and protection of all human rights, as well as on non-discrimination, tolerance, respect for diversity, equality of opportunity, solidarity, security, and participation of all people, including disadvantaged and vulnerable groups and persons.

Pact for the Future

This commitment is echoed in Action 7 of the Pact for the Future, which aims to build inclusive societies and uphold human rights for all. It reinforces the importance of strong institutions that are representative, accountable, and responsive to diverse populations.

Actions 35 and 36 further support social integration through youth engagement. They commit to protecting the rights of young people and fostering meaningful youth participation at the national level. This reflects a key principle of the Copenhagen Declaration—that youth are vital to the development of inclusive societies.

The Declaration on Future Generations recognises social inclusion and cultural diversity as critical to peace and sustainability. It promotes frameworks that embrace pluralism and prevent marginalisation across generations.

The Global Digital Compact addresses digital inclusion and calls for the creation of safe and accessible online spaces for all, including marginalised groups. This contributes to social integration in a modern context where digital participation is increasingly essential.

The continued and expanded commitment to social integration emphasises cross-cutting strategies that address both offline and online inclusion, ensuring equitable participation across all sectors of society.

62nd and 63rd CSocD Resolutions

Resolution on Social Development and Justice

The resolution reaffirms that social justice is essential for overcoming inequalities. It acknowledges that Peace, security, and respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms are preconditions for social development and justice and calls for addressing social exclusion in its multidimensional aspects.

The role of the family and the importance of inclusive and equitable quality education, lifelong learning, health, and well-being at all ages, as well as social security for social integration, are also highlighted. It calls for policies that foster child development.

Resolution on Promoting Care

The care resolution also calls on strengthening intergenerational relations to advance social integration and solidarity among generations, by investing in family-oriented policies and programmes that enhance strong intergenerational interactions and by supporting intergenerational living arrangements.

It acknowledges the rights of Indigenous Peoples and the importance of respecting and protecting their traditional and ancestral knowledge, including in the context of community care and support systems.

Resolution on Solidarity and Social Cohesion

The Resolution promotes the development of intercultural understanding, mutual respect, and tolerance to enhance social cohesion and inclusion. It also acknowledges the challenges faced by women, Indigenous Peoples, refugees, and other vulnerable groups, calling on states to uphold their obligations under International Human Rights Law.

Additionally, the Resolution highlights the importance of intergenerational relations and cooperation in achieving social cohesion.

Despite recognising the challenges faced by women and vulnerable groups, the resolution does not sufficiently address the issue of discrimination, nor does it suggest political representation of indigenous people and the marginalised.

WSSD2 Food for Thought Paper

The Food for Thought Paper emphasises social integration as a key pillar of sustainable development, focusing on marginalised groups including refugees, people in poverty, youth, women, older persons, persons with disabilities, and Indigenous Peoples. It calls for inclusive environments where all individuals can participate fully in social, economic, and political life, echoing Commitment 4 of the Copenhagen Declaration, which calls for the protection of human rights and the elimination of discrimination.

The Paper stresses the need to reduce inequalities through fair income distribution and improved access to basic services, including healthcare for older persons and education, and employment for youth. It promotes the integration of vulnerable groups into mainstream policies, recognising their right to contribute as active participants in society. These efforts reflect the Copenhagen Declaration's vision of equal opportunity and social cohesion.

Additionally, the Paper highlights the importance of cultural inclusion, solidarity, and respect for diversity, reinforcing the Declaration's call to eliminate racism, ageism, and discrimination. Both documents affirm that inclusive, people-centred strategies are essential to upholding human dignity and ensuring that no one is left behind.

The SDG Report 2024

The SDG Report 2024 highlights meaningful but uneven progress toward building stable, safe, and inclusive societies, as outlined in Commitment 4. Positive trends include a continued decline in child marriage, with fewer girls marrying before age 18 over the past three decades. Social assistance programs have helped reduce the number of people

living below half the median income, and urban sustainability initiatives are increasingly focused on inclusive infrastructure. Anti-discrimination efforts are gaining momentum, although developing nations continue to lack adequate representation in global economic governance structures.

However, escalating crises threaten to reverse these gains. Displacement has reached a record high, affecting 120 million people globally, including 7 million internally displaced individuals in Ituri, North Kivu, South Kivu, and Tanganyika, the eastern provinces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Civilian casualties from armed conflicts surged by 72% in 2023, signalling

growing insecurity. Inequality remains deeply entrenched: gender parity in management is estimated to be 176 years away, and one in four urban residents still lives in slums.

Governance issues are also stark; 1 in 5 people globally report being asked to pay or having paid a bribe, and 33% of prisoners worldwide remain unsentenced. One-third of IDA countries are now poorer than before the pandemic, and migration systems are collapsing, with 8,177 documented migrant deaths in 2023, the deadliest year on record.

Rising geopolitical tensions and declining international cooperation further hinder efforts to close financial gaps and promote sustainable development, leaving vulnerable countries without the means to confront these intertwined crises.

Together, these setbacks underscore how global instability is eroding the vision of equitable and inclusive societies enshrined in the Copenhagen Declaration.

WSSD2 Civil Society Agenda

Social integration was one of the three pillars of the Copenhagen Declaration, but 30 years later, it remains the most underdeveloped and underfunded. The NGO CSocD's Complement to the 10 Commitments doesn't just revive this pillar—it demands that we centre it, elevate it, and operationalise it through the lenses of human rights, participatory governance, and a culture of care.

From Token Inclusion to Structural Belonging

The Declaration's vision of “safe and just societies” risks being hollow if we reduce social integration to mere tolerance or surface-level representation. The Complement challenges the international community to go further, toward systemic inclusion of the left behind, which will change who holds power, who sets the agenda, and who benefits from development.

It warns that too often, economic and employment initiatives reinforce the very inequalities they are meant to reduce, because they are built on competitive, market-first frameworks that prioritise profit and undermine solidarity. Integration, it argues, can't coexist with systems rooted in profit over people.

This is not a philosophical critique—it's a strategic reality. Social cohesion is impossible in societies where trust is collapsing, inequality is rampant, and civic space is shrinking.

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Commitment to building a “Care Society”

grounded in solidarity and dignity, prioritising mental health, intergenerational well-being, and full inclusion—economic, civil, and cultural—across all sectors.

Overall recommendations for Commitment 4: Social integration.

- Transition from tokenistic inclusion to systemic belonging that transforms power structures.
- Centre civil society as co-architects in shaping policy from local to global levels.
- Build a “care society” grounded in human rights, dignity, healing, and solidarity, not competition.
- Prioritise mental health, migration rights, and digital access as pillars of inclusion.
- Actively dismantle structural ageism, racism, ableism, sexism, and class barriers.



Putting Civil Society and Community Voice at the Centre

A key demand of the Complement is the call for civil society not to be sidelined as fringe advocates or “stakeholders” to be consulted at the end, but as meaningful participants in policy making and co-creators of public policy. Page 19 emphasises the urgency for civil society to contribute to shaping decision-making from local to global levels.

This includes people living in poverty, women, migrants, people with disabilities, older persons, Indigenous communities, and youth. True integration means these groups are not just “included”—they are resourced, respected, and heard.

The Complement calls out the gap between rhetoric and practice:

“Many poverty and employment schemes are founded on assumptions of unbridled competition, so contradictory to the goal of integration.”

It urges a fundamental shift toward cooperative, care-based systems that prioritise human dignity over market dominance.

Building a “Care Society”

Perhaps the most visionary contribution is the Complement’s proposal for a “care society.” This isn’t just about expanding social services. It’s a call to rewire our social, political, and economic priorities around collective well-being. A “care society” is, by definition, inclusive, as it seeks to ensure the needs of people requiring care are met, while recognising unpaid, unprotected, and underpaid care work as critical issues to be addressed in order to achieve healthy, integrated societies.

The care society model demands policies that ensure dignity across the life course, recognising unpaid, unprotected, and underpaid care work as critical issues to be addressed to ensure mental health supports (p. 24), intergenerational solidarity, and systems that focus on healing, not punishment.

Mental Health, Migration, and Belonging

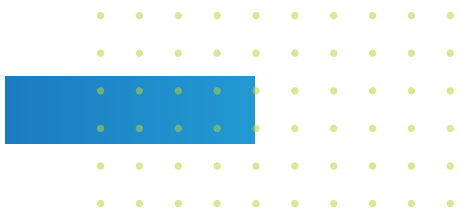
The Complement connects social integration with themes ignored in 1995 but unavoidable today:

- Mental health as a public good and a prerequisite for participation in society.
- Human mobility—encompassing refugees, migrants, and displaced people — must be welcomed within rights-based frameworks that uphold dignity and prevent exclusion.
- Digital inclusion—access to technology is now a condition of participation in social, civic, and economic life.

Each of these dimensions must be integrated into a modern framework for inclusion, one that actively dismantles structural ageism, racism, ableism, sexism, and class barriers.

Focus on Social Integration

Commitment 4 called for inclusive societies. The Complement shows us what that must look like in the 21st century: rooted in care, co-governed with civil society, centred on dignity, inclusion, and powered by solidarity, not competition. The Second World Summit must focus on social integration as the thread that binds our shared social development agenda together.





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Commitment

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Promoting full respect for human dignity and achieving equality and equity between women and men, and recognising and enhancing the participation and leadership roles of women in political, civil, economic, social, and cultural life and development.

Pact for the Future

The Pact for the Future strengthens the agenda of achieving gender equality and lifting all barriers that women face. Action 8 specifically commits to achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls. It reaffirms the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, focusing on eliminating gender-based violence, addressing unpaid care work, closing the gender pay gap, and increasing women's participation in leadership and decision-making (Pact for the Future, Action 8).

The Global Digital Compact furthers this by ensuring that women and girls have equal access to digital technologies and opportunities in the digital economy. It recognises the digital gender divide as a barrier to progress and commits to closing it (GDC, Objective 2 & Action 31).

The Declaration on Future Generations recognises that gender equality is essential for sustainable development and equitable societies. It highlights the intergenerational impacts of inequality and commits to dismantling systemic discrimination that hinders the rights of women and girls.

Across all three instruments, gender equality is upheld as both a standalone objective and a necessary condition for broader development, echoing and expanding the Copenhagen Declaration's call for transformative change.

62nd and 63rd CSocD Resolutions Resolution on Social Development and Justice

The resolution emphasises the need to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. It recognises the feminisation of poverty and identifies barriers such as gender stereotypes, violence, discriminatory laws and practices, and the unfair division of unpaid care work, and calls on Member States to recognise, reduce, and redistribute women's and girls' disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work. The resolution goes on to identify poverty eradication

measures, labour policies, public services, and gender-responsive social protection programs as means to address this issue. It strongly urges Member States to implement policies that ensure women's economic empowerment, take a life-course approach, and mainstream gender in policy and law-making.

The resolution recognises intersecting forms of discrimination and barriers that lead to poverty, including those based on gender, age, disability, race, ethnicity, migratory status, and urban vs. rural environment. It highlights the need to recognise the contributions and knowledge of rural women, including indigenous women.

It also stresses the importance of digital and financial literacy and inclusion for women, calling for their equal access to formal financial services and resources.

However, the resolution fails to refer to the Beijing Platform for Action or CEDAW as useful tools to advance commitment 5. In addition, while it recognises the contributions of rural women, it fails to acknowledge the specific challenges they face.

Although it recognises stereotypes as well as gender-based violence—and more generally violence and harassment—as barriers to advancing gender equality, in particular on the labour market, it does not suggest actions to combat them.

Lastly, while acknowledging intersecting forms of discrimination, it fails to recognise maternity-related discrimination.



Resolution on Promoting Care

The resolution emphasises that gender equality is intrinsically linked to care.

Resolution on Solidarity and Social Cohesion

The Resolution acknowledges that gender inequality persists and emphasises the need for collective transformative action to advance women's rights and empower all women and girls. Additionally, it calls for specific programmes designed to facilitate women's full and equal participation in the labour market, ensuring decent work for women in the spirit of the Copenhagen Declaration Commitment 5.

The resolution further encourages states to implement policies that guarantee equal pay for women and provide necessary benefits, such as maternity protection and other social security provisions.

Although strong on gender equality, the resolution fails to call for the elimination of gender-based violence, nor does it suggest affirmative action to close gender gaps and ensure that no woman is left behind.

WSSD2 Food for Thought Paper

In alignment with Commitment 5 of the Copenhagen Declaration, the Food for Thought Paper places gender equality at the heart of its analysis, especially in the areas of poverty, employment, and social protection. It emphasises the need for equal access to economic opportunities, healthcare, and education, core goals of the Copenhagen Declaration agenda.

The Paper highlights that women's empowerment is essential to reducing poverty and achieving social integration. It calls for fair wages, recognition of care work, and action against gender-based violence, aligning with the Copenhagen Declaration's view that gender equality is both a prerequisite and a goal of sustainable development. It also advocates for comprehensive social policies that reflect women's realities and enable full participation in public and private life.

Furthermore, the Paper promotes women-led development and stresses the importance of empowering women as decision-makers in responding to global challenges. Together, the Food for Thought Paper and the Copenhagen Declaration reaffirm that gender equality and women's leadership are vital to building inclusive and sustainable societies.

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Recognition and valuing of Care Work, including investment in universal childcare and care for and by older people, support for unpaid caregivers, equitable distribution of care responsibilities between men and women and across and society, and efforts to challenge gender norms that undervalue caregiving.

The SDG Report 2024

The SDG Report 2024 highlights progress in increasing awareness, commitment, and recognition of women's dignity and gender equality, although systemic barriers persist to threaten full parity. Many countries have adopted concrete targets aligned with SDG 5 in their national development plans, signalling increased political will. Between 2019 and 2023, 120 countries repealed 56 discriminatory laws; however, critical gaps remain, particularly in areas such as land rights. Global dialogue around harmful practices and biased norms has intensified, while women's access to education and health services continues to improve gradually. Importantly, the report highlights growing policy recognition of unpaid care work, noting that women still spend 3 times more hours daily on these tasks than men—an imbalance largely unacknowledged in 1995.

Despite progress, transformative change remains a considerable distance away. Leadership parity is progressing at a painfully slow pace—achieving equality in management roles is 176 years away. Women with disabilities face higher risks of violence, widowhood is stigmatised, with widows discriminated against, and many still lack control over key reproductive health decisions. Harmful practices persist: one in five girls is married before 18, widowhood is stigmatised, widows are discriminated against, and 230 million women and girls have undergone female genital mutilation. Economically, women are overrepresented in informal work and continue to shoulder the majority of unpaid care, reinforcing gender inequality. This gap between gradual gains and deep-rooted barriers highlights the urgent need to realise the Copenhagen Declaration's vision for gender equality.

Gender equality was rightly recognised in 1995 as fundamental to social development. However, global progress has been too slow, uneven, and fragile. Gender inequality remains embedded in the structures of our economies, our laws, our cultures, and our homes. The Complement to the 10 Commitments demands more than progress—it calls for bold transformation.

It calls for an urgent move from rhetoric to real change: policy, funding, power.

From Formal Equality to Systemic Change

In 1995, the focus was on removing legal barriers and securing formal equality. That work is still essential—but the Complement makes clear it's not enough. Laws without enforcement, representation without real power, and empowerment without redistribution won't deliver substantive equality.

The Complement calls for tackling the root causes of gender inequality: structural patriarchy, chronic underinvestment in care, exploitative labour systems, and entrenched social norms.



Overall recommendations for Commitment 5: Gender equality.

- Move beyond formal equality to substantive equality by dismantling patriarchal structures, addressing the undervaluation and inequitable distribution of care work, and tackling exploitative labour practices that disproportionately affect women.
- Prioritise public investment in care systems and services, recognising, reducing, and redistributing unpaid care work.
- Design and implement policies that reflect the intersecting impacts of gender, age, race and ethnicity, disability, migration status, maternity, and sexual orientation.
- Ensure that budgeting processes and policy implementation are age- and gender-responsive, transparent, and informed by disaggregated data.
- Support the full implementation and enforcement of gender equality laws and frameworks, with adequate resourcing and political commitment.



It states plainly: “Gender equality acts as a cross-cutting imperative, amplifying the impact of all other commitments.”

We can’t end poverty, achieve full employment, or build cohesive societies while unjust systems hold back half the population. Gender justice isn’t a side issue—it’s the foundation for transformative change.

Unpaid Care Work: The Global Subsidy by Women

One of the boldest interventions in the Complement is its focus on unpaid domestic and care work. Around the world, women spend an average of three hours more per day on unpaid care than men. That is not just a personal or cultural issue—it’s a structural, unpaid subsidy to global economies.

The Complement calls for:

- Recognising care work as essential to the economy and humanity.
- Supporting care work through public investment in care infrastructure.
- Redistributing care work between genders and across society.
- Challenging social norms that undervalue caregiving.

This goes beyond inclusion. It is about valuing essential labour, rewriting priorities, and reclaiming time.

Intersectionality: One Size Doesn’t Fit All

The Complement brings an intersectional lens to gender equality that was largely absent in 1995. It acknowledges that race, class, disability, age, and migration status all shape how gender inequality is lived.

One in five girls is still married before age 18. Gender-based violence persists across every society. Widows and LGBTQIA+ people continue to face discrimination, harmful traditional practices (HTP), criminalisation, and stigma in many regions.

Policies must be tailored to context, informed by survivors, and grounded in lived experience. That requires sustained investment in community-based organisations, especially grassroots women's groups and those led by marginalised communities.

Data, Funding, Accountability

Too often, the gender agenda suffers from a lack of data and underfunding.

The Complement calls for:

- Disaggregated, age- and gender-sensitive data collection.
- Dedicated gender-responsive budgeting.
- Monitoring and enforcement mechanisms that centre women's voices.

This is especially critical in times of crisis, when gender equality is often the first item on the agenda to be cut and the last to be restored.

A Major Shift

Commitment 5 remains a global promise yet to be fulfilled. The Complement demands a major shift: from surface reforms to structural justice. It places care at the centre of gender equality, insists on intersectionality, and calls out the systems that exploit women's labour and silence their voices.

The Second World Summit must commit to a feminist future, where equality is not just a goal but a guiding principle across all policy, budgeting, and governance.





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Commitment

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Promoting and attaining universal and equitable access to education and primary health care.

Pact for the Future

The Pact for the Future aligns with this Commitment through Action 6, which emphasises investing in people to strengthen trust, social cohesion, and development outcomes. This includes equitable access to quality education, health services, and social protection.

Action 34 also commits to the development of children and youth, providing access to education, health, nutrition, and protection services to ensure they reach their full potential. The action is grounded in the belief that healthy and educated youth are the drivers of sustainable futures.

The Global Digital Compact contributes by prioritising digital literacy, access to online education, and the use of technology to expand healthcare delivery, especially in underserved regions (GDC, Objective 1).

The Declaration on Future Generations calls for building resilient education and health systems that are adaptable to future challenges such as pandemics and climate change. It also ties education to civic engagement and lifelong learning.

Together, these documents significantly broaden the scope of the Copenhagen Declaration's commitment, embedding access to education and health in a framework of rights, equity, and technological inclusion.

62nd and 63rd CSocD Resolutions

Resolution on Social Development and Justice

The resolution reaffirms the essential role of health and education in eradicating poverty. It emphasises the human right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health and calls for equitable national health systems. It highlights high healthcare costs as a driver of poverty, disproportionately affecting women and girls.

On education, the resolution underscores the importance of quality education and lifelong learning, particularly early childhood education, as tools for poverty reduction. It expresses concern over slow progress, citing school-related costs, a shortage of qualified teachers, outdated curricula, and inadequate infrastructure as major barriers.

Governments are encouraged to integrate digital literacy, entrepreneurship, and soft skills into formal education and lifelong learning to better prepare the youth and older persons for future labour markets. Additionally, the resolution recognises sport as a catalyst for social development, enhancing access to education, promoting health, and fostering social cohesion and inclusion.

The resolution, however, fails to frame Early Childhood Care and Education as a game changer. It also fails to acknowledge the mental health crisis identified by the UN Special Rapporteur on poverty in his 2024 report to the UN GA, disproportionately affecting people living in poverty.

Resolution on Promoting Care

Acknowledging the global trend of ageing, the care resolution invites States to support older persons and promote active and healthy ageing for all across the life course.



Resolution on Solidarity and Social Cohesion

The resolution acknowledges that access to inclusive and equitable quality education is essential for overcoming poverty and vulnerability. It highlights the importance of having qualified teachers, as well as adequate equipment and infrastructure.

Additionally, it encourages states to create policies that promote equitable access to universal health coverage.

Furthermore, the resolution calls on member states to take action to bridge the digital divide and enhance digital literacy, essential for expanding social protection systems.

The resolution's emphasis on equitable access for all to quality health and education notwithstanding, it does not specifically emphasise a commitment to increasing public spending for education and healthcare.

Food for Thought Paper

The Food for Thought Paper emphasises the centrality of human rights and rights-based approaches in tackling global challenges such as poverty and inequality. It advocates for the protection of human rights through access to essential services, particularly education and healthcare, reinforcing the Copenhagen Declaration's vision of social development rooted in human dignity and inclusion. A key aspect of this connection is the promotion of universal health coverage, including access to both physical and mental health services, which aligns with Commitment 6's call for equitable access to the highest attainable standard of health.

The Paper also explores the transformative role of digital technologies, including AI, online platforms, and telemedicine, in improving healthcare access,

especially for underserved communities. These innovations are viewed as crucial for addressing global health priorities, including non-communicable diseases (NCDs), mental health, and maternal and child health, which are shared concerns of both the Paper and the Copenhagen Declaration.

Moreover, the Paper calls for the strengthening of resilient, universal health systems that can effectively respond to emergencies, including pandemics. It emphasises building local and regional capacities, including the production of medicines and vaccines, to ensure resilience and sustainable access to healthcare. The Paper advances the Copenhagen Declaration's commitment to providing quality health services for all, particularly to reach those who are most left behind, thereby advancing the goal of inclusive and equitable development.

The SDG Report 2024

The SDG Report 2024 highlights progress in expanding educational access and tackling global health challenges, though major gaps remain. Digital technologies have broadened learning opportunities, and global efforts have achieved significant milestones, including a record low in under-5 mortality (2022) and enhanced responses to infectious diseases, which have saved millions of lives. Early childhood education is gaining momentum, with goals to enrol 1.4 million more children annually. These developments reflect growing alignment between SDG 4 and the Copenhagen Declaration Commitment, as more countries set specific education and health benchmarks for 2030.





Yet, systemic failures persist in hindering progress in education and health. As of 2019, only 58% of students worldwide met the minimum reading proficiency standard, and recent declines in math and reading scores indicate a worsening in education quality. Infrastructure gaps—including teacher shortages, poor facilities, and limited training—disproportionately affect marginalised communities, while digital solutions risk deepening inequality.

In health, over half the global population still lacks essential services, and maternal mortality remains three times higher than the targets set. There is a rapidly ageing health workforce, and childhood malnutrition persists: 148 million children were stunted in 2022, and projections show that without intervention, 1 in 5 children could be stunted by 2030, with 35 million not surviving to age five. The report also underscores the neglect of mental health, highlighting a major gap in current health frameworks. Together, these disparities demand urgent, targeted action to fulfil the vision of universal, quality education and healthcare.

WSSD2 Civil Society Agenda

Education and health aren't privileges to be earned—they're inalienable rights and the foundation of a dignified life. The 1995 commitment made that clear, but by 2025, deep disparities persist.

The Complement renews this promise with a sharper understanding: access alone isn't enough—quality and affordability matter as well. Inclusion must be structural, not symbolic. Rights are only real when systems deliver for everyone, not just those who can navigate or afford them.

Social Protection as a Path to Health Equity

The Complement links healthcare access to the broader framework of Social Protection Floors. Universal healthcare is not viable without sustainable and accessible public systems, rooted in solidarity and national ownership. The document advocates for comprehensive healthcare coverage for all, including women, children, the unemployed, older persons, and people with disabilities, as outlined in ILO Recommendation No. 202 on Social Protection Floors (SPFs), which is embedded in national law and funded through progressive taxation and international solidarity.

Mental health, in particular, is of key concern as it is neglected. The Complement calls for mental health to be integrated as a core component of public health systems, rather than a luxury service or an emergency response. Mental health issues intersect with poverty, displacement, war, maternity, fear, and exclusion, and are major handicaps in both personal and working lives. Political will is needed for its prioritisation in the agenda of the future.

Reimagining Education Access in the Digital Age

While the 1995 Declaration focused on traditional education systems, the Complement expands the conversation to include digital inclusion. In a world where access to learning increasingly depends on technology, the digital divide is a new form of educational exclusion.

Overall recommendations for Commitment 6: Universal access to education and health.

- Embed and finance universal healthcare and education in national law, increase public funding for high-quality healthcare and education to scale up access for all in all countries.
- Treat mental health as public health, fully integrated into public systems targeting vulnerable youth.
- Close the digital divide—ensure infrastructure, literacy, and inclusion for marginalised communities.
- Promote culturally responsive education and healthcare, including Indigenous knowledge.
- Prioritise inclusive curricula and pedagogy that reflect diverse lived experiences.
- Extend free education to pre-primary and secondary education.
- Enhance sexual and reproductive health education and services.
- Support research to harness technological innovation, enhancing access to education and healthcare.



The Complement calls for:

- Infrastructure investment in rural and underserved areas
- Digital literacy for all generations.
- Inclusive design for people with disabilities
- Bridging access for the displaced and homeless youth

Without digital equity, there can be no educational equity.

Care, Culture, and Inclusion in Education and Health

The Complement emphasises that both sectors must be grounded in care, inclusion, and culturally relevant approaches. Indigenous knowledge, age and gender-responsive pedagogy, and inclusive curricula must be prioritised. In healthcare, that means recognising traditional practices alongside clinical care, especially in Indigenous and rural communities.





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Commitment

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Accelerating the economic, social, and human resource development of Africa and the Least Developed Countries (LDCs).

Pact for the Future

The Pact for the Future reflects the commitment 7 in Action 3, which pledges to end hunger and eliminate food insecurity and malnutrition. It also promotes sustainable food systems as essential to both health and planetary stability. Action 10 emphasises environmental sustainability as a crucial element in ensuring access to natural resources, including clean air and water, which are directly linked to basic service delivery.

Action 15 addresses humanitarian response and emphasises delivering critical services to people affected by emergencies, including displaced populations, thereby reinforcing the Copenhagen Declaration's call to protect vulnerable communities.

The Declaration on Future Generations links access to basic services with human rights and sustainable development, framing these services as non-negotiable for the well-being of current and future generations.

The Global Digital Compact emphasises the role of digital innovation in enhancing the delivery and monitoring of basic services, particularly in remote or underserved areas, through the use of technology and data systems (GDC, Objective 1).

This expanded approach frames basic services within the broader agendas of rights, sustainability, and digital inclusion, updating the Copenhagen Declaration's vision to reflect modern capacities and risks.

62nd and 63rd CSocD Resolutions

Resolution on Social Development and Justice

Similar to the ensuing resolutions under this section, the resolution notes that eradicating poverty remains the world's greatest challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development, particularly in Africa and the least

developed countries (LDCs). It urges the promotion of sustainable, inclusive, and equitable economic growth as a pathway to poverty eradication.

By acknowledging the risks associated with external and domestic debt in developing countries, the resolution emphasises the importance of debt sustainability. It also reminds developed countries to meet their long-standing commitments to spend 0.7% of their gross national income on official development assistance and 0.15-0.20% for developing countries.



However, although the resolution refers to the African Union's Agenda 2063, including its first 10-year implementation plan and relevant UN General Assembly resolutions, it does not address the specific challenges faced by Africa and LDCs in a meaningful manner.

Critically, the resolution does not mention the key global health threats of HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis, and other communicable diseases —issues that remain pressing, particularly in the context of climate change.

It also fails to acknowledge the reality that many countries allocate more resources to debt repayment than to essential health and education services. This imbalance is not adequately addressed; the resolution avoids recognising the debt crisis and limits its scope to reviewing debt,

suspending payments, restructuring, and preventing future unsustainable debt without confronting its deeper systemic causes.

Furthermore, the resolution does not challenge the prevailing economic model centred on GDP growth and short-term profits, a model widely seen as a driver of today's environmental, economic, and social crises, which particularly impact Africa and LDCs.

Resolution on Solidarity and Social Cohesion

Similar to the resolution on Social Development and Justice, the Solidarity and Social Cohesion resolution emphasises the significance of supporting the African Union's Agenda 2063 and also encourages nations to honour their commitment to allocate 0.7% of their gross national income to official development assistance, in paragraph 71.

However, the Resolution does not propose measures to prevent the exploitation of Africa through unfair trade policies, debt servicing and historic, systemic inequalities.

Resolution on the Social Dimensions of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)

In line with Commitment 7, NEPAD emphasises intensifying the development and strengthening of institutions for governance, creating an environment conducive to attracting foreign direct investment, and further encouraging the participation of civil society and the private sector, as outlined in paragraph 1. It further recognises health as a social development priority and welcomes the aspects of the African Continental Free Trade Area (ACFTA) that aim to boost good health.

Additionally, it notes that health should be an indicator, outcome, and priority for sustainable development to be adopted in all policies. It calls for the fast-tracking of the Africa Health Strategy, the elimination of AIDS and Tuberculosis, and the implementation of International Health Regulations, further aligning with paragraph g of Commitment 7.

The resolution emphasises that countries should fulfil their commitment to allocate 0.7% of their gross national income for official development assistance to the least developed countries (LDCs). It also recognises that the international community should

support resolving challenges faced by LDCs, including those in Africa, consistent with paragraphs b and d of Commitment 7.

The Resolution additionally recognises education as a cornerstone for Africa's development and emphasises both employment and social integration for inclusive social development, as well as the inclusion of women in economic initiatives.

Gaps, however, exist to the extent that the NEPAD does not fully emphasise International cooperation in its framework, unlike Commitment 7 of the Copenhagen Declaration Commitments. Furthermore, it does not suggest robust mechanisms to track progress and fails to emphasise the alignment of local policies with regional and international goals.



Overall recommendations for Commitment 7: Development of Africa and LDCs

- Cancel unsustainable debt, provide climate finance, and ensure fair international taxation.
- Honour the 0.7 commitment.
- Make sure that social development indicators are included in the 'Beyond GDP' discussions and that economic and social systems prioritise the well-being of people and the planet.
- Shift from donor-recipient models to equal partnerships led by African and LDCs civil society.
- End extractive global practices—ensure fair trade and just access to resources.
- Ensure development aligns with local priorities, resilience, and social protection systems.
- Install mechanisms to measure accountability and transparency between parties.

Food for Thought Paper

The Food for Thought Paper aligns closely with Commitment 7, focusing on strengthening food security, enhancing health systems, and improving access to quality education in developing countries. It emphasises the importance of inclusive and resilient agriculture, particularly by supporting small-scale farmers and ensuring equitable access to resources, key factors in advancing Africa's economic development and that of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs).

The Paper also emphasises universal health coverage and quality education as being critical to building human capital. It highlights the role of digital technologies in transforming education and healthcare, helping Africa and LDCs overcome systemic challenges and drive sustainable growth.

Finally, by calling for strengthened global efforts, such as the Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty, the Paper underscores the importance of international cooperation in achieving long-term, equitable development in LDCs and African nations.



The SDG Report 2024

The report highlights both progress and persistent challenges in economic development, social protection, and global financial partnerships, particularly for Africa and Least Developed Countries (LDCs).

On the positive side, global unemployment fell to a historic low of 5.1% in 2023, signalling labour market resilience in the aftermath of the pandemic and hinting at broader opportunities for social and economic inclusion. Social protection systems have also expanded, especially in developing countries. Social assistance programs have helped reduce the share of people living on less than half the median income, thereby reinforcing more inclusive safety nets, particularly in Africa and LDCs, and reflecting a growing commitment to reducing poverty and inequality.

In terms of financing, the UN Secretary-General's proposal of the SDG Stimulus—a \$500 billion annual initiative—aims to mobilise international investment and support for developing countries. This represents a proactive global effort to tackle economic disparities and promote sustainable development.

However, the report also underscores deep and ongoing challenges. By 2022, extreme poverty had returned to pre-pandemic levels in most countries and remained stubbornly high in low-income nations, where recovery has stalled. Without course correction, an estimated 590 million people could still be living in extreme poverty by 2030, jeopardising global development targets.

Economic inequality is growing, with wages lagging behind productivity and labour's share of GDP continuing its long-term decline. Informal employment remains pervasive—nearly 9 in 10 workers in LDCs, sub-Saharan Africa, and Central and South Asia are informally employed, indicating a lack of quality jobs and ongoing economic insecurity for large populations.

Finally, infrastructure gaps—particularly in finance—are a critical barrier for small businesses in sub-Saharan Africa and LDCs. Only 17% of small enterprises in these regions have access to loans or credit, which restricts entrepreneurship, stifles economic diversification, and limits sustainable growth.

WSSD2 Civil Society Agenda

This commitment has not been met. Despite the rhetoric, Africa and LDCs remain disproportionately burdened by poverty, debt, climate vulnerability, and exclusion from global decision-making.

The Complement calls this out, urging a rebalancing of international cooperation. It supports debt cancellation, climate finance, fair taxation, and international support for SPFs as moral and political imperatives, not charity.

It proposes that social development efforts shift from donor-recipient models to solidarity-based partnerships, with African and LDCs civil society leading policy development. Without this shift, progress will continue to be performative rather than transformative.

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Redistribution of power and resources through fair taxation, debt cancellation, equitable access to public services and infrastructure, along with predictable and sustainable funding from international financial institutions, donor governments, and progressive global taxation.



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Commitment

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Ensuring that when structural adjustment programs are agreed to, they include social development goals, in particular, eradicating poverty, promoting full and productive employment, and enhancing social integration.

Pact for the Future

Commitment 8 focuses on integrating social development into economic policy. It emphasises protecting vulnerable groups and basic social programs from budget cuts, assessing the social impact of reforms, and integrating social objectives into the transformation processes of countries in transition.

The Pact for the Future reflects Commitment 8 through its strong emphasis on people-centred development. It affirms that people are at the heart of sustainable development, echoing the Copenhagen Declaration's focus on meeting human needs, ensuring participation, and advancing social justice. The Pact reiterates the central importance of sustainable development across economic, social, and environmental dimensions, and commits to transformative actions that "leave no one behind."

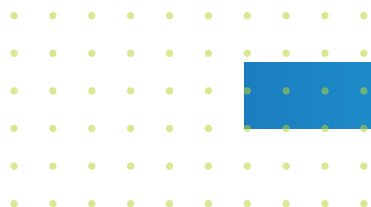
The Pact also reflects Commitment 8's intent by insisting that economic strategies support inclusive outcomes. It promotes inclusive and sustainable industrialisation, strengthening of public institutions, and specific support for vulnerable and transitioning countries. Although it does not explicitly reference structural adjustment programs, it addresses the same issues through broader commitments to equity, social protection, and inclusive policymaking.

Finally, the Pact reinforces the Copenhagen Declaration's call for accountability and protection of the vulnerable by prioritising human rights, gender equality, and responsive governance. In essence, it updates and expands Commitment 8 by embedding its core principles within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals and today's multilateral development agenda.

62nd and 63rd CSocD Resolutions Resolution on Social Development and Justice

The resolution recognises the importance of addressing new and emerging challenges and vulnerabilities related to the external and domestic debt sustainability of developing countries, as well as the need for improved international debt mechanisms to support debt reviews, debt payment suspensions, and debt restructuring.

However, it says nothing about structural adjustment programmes; in particular, it does not mention austerity policies and their multiple negative impacts, which disproportionately affect women and girls, whose unpaid care and domestic work have to make up for the reduction in public services and social spending.



Overall recommendations for Commitment 8: Social development in economic reforms.

- Embed binding social and human rights benchmarks into all economic and fiscal policy agreements, including structural adjustments.

- Reject austerity that undermines social protection, healthcare, education, or labour rights, and increases women's unpaid care work, exacerbating gender inequality.

- Conduct a systematic gender impact assessment of all economic agreements.

- Highlight specific tax reforms to underwrite/fund social programs.

- Guarantee civil society oversight in all reform design and implementation.

Centre social rights in debt, trade, and structural adjustment negotiations.



Resolution on Solidarity and Social Cohesion

The resolution recognises the importance of debt review and debt payment suspension, international financial assistance, and debt relief for developing countries.

It further highlights the paramount importance of combating unnecessary bureaucracy and corruption, as well as illicit financial flows, and enhancing access to credit.

Food for Thought Paper

The Food for Thought Paper does not directly address structural adjustment programs. Instead, it acknowledges the need to advance the reform of the international financial architecture to enhance the participation of developing countries and address external debt challenges.

However, the Resolution does not specify any particular tax reforms to fund social programmes.

More generally, it emphasises the need to integrate social development goals into economic policies, particularly in areas such as poverty eradication, full employment, and social integration. This supports Commitment 8, which calls for structural adjustment programs to embed social priorities at their core.

The Paper addresses key issues, including income inequality, the expansion of social protection, and equitable access to healthcare, education, and other essential services. These are not peripheral concerns—they are structural requirements for sustainable progress in many developing countries.

The SDG Report 2024

Commitment 8 urged countries and international institutions to mitigate the negative social impacts of structural adjustment, particularly on vulnerable populations, and to reinforce policies that ensure equitable access to income and resources. It also emphasised that women should not disproportionately bear the burden of economic transitions.

The SDG Report 2024 shows significant issues in global progress towards fulfilling Commitment 8, highlighting the need for action on unsustainable debt and their impact across multiple sustainable development dimensions, to ensure that lending does not affect the implementation of those SDGs which are most relevant for social development (including Goals 1, 8, 11, 16, and 17).

Unfortunately, according to the report, developing countries are facing severe debt challenges, with external debt levels remaining extremely high despite a slight decline in 2022. Around 60% of low-income nations are at high risk of or already experiencing debt distress. Rising borrowing costs are worsening the situation, diverting funds from essential public services like health and education, and development goals like poverty reduction and climate action.

The report also reminds that the global economic system also disadvantages developing countries, limiting their influence in international financial institutions and decision-making. Meanwhile, half of the most vulnerable nations are falling further behind wealthy countries in income growth, and extreme poverty remains widespread, particularly in countries eligible for concessional World Bank lending.

WSSD2 Civil Society Agenda

This commitment remains urgent as austerity, privatisation, and deregulation continue to dominate economic policy, often imposed by international financial institutions. The Complement is clear: economic reforms must centre social rights, not sideline them.

It calls for:

- Binding social development benchmarks in all economic agreements.
- Rejection of austerity measures that undermine healthcare, education, or labour rights.
- Civil society oversight in programme design and monitoring.

Without structural reform of global economic governance, this commitment is hollow.

Labour protections are weakening. Since 2020, labour rights have deteriorated in 33% of ILO member states. Union formation and collective bargaining—pillars of social justice—are increasingly restricted.

Additionally, wages continue to lag behind productivity, and labour's share of GDP is declining, undermining the equitable development objectives set in the Copenhagen Declaration.

In short, while some indicators, such as headline unemployment in the formal sector, suggest progress, structural inequalities and deficits in decent work reveal significant shortcomings in implementing the spirit and goals of Commitment 8. The SDG 2024 report underscores that without renewed investment in social development within economic policies, the Copenhagen Declaration's vision remains largely unfulfilled.



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Commitment

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Increasing significantly and/or utilising more efficiently the resources allocated to social development to achieve the goals of the Summit through national action and regional and international cooperation.

Pact for the Future

The Pact for the Future introduces a comprehensive framework for reforming the international financial architecture. Actions 47 through 52 lay out systemic reforms to better mobilise financing for development, improve access to capital for developing countries, and ensure fair representation in global financial institutions.

Action 4 also aims to close the Sustainable Development Goal financing gap through enhanced development assistance and investment. These efforts aim to direct more predictable, equitable, and responsive funding to where it is most needed.

The Declaration on Future Generations supports redirecting financial flows toward long-term sustainability and equity. It emphasises the moral and practical imperative of financing the future, especially in education, health, climate action, and technological infrastructure.

The Global Digital Compact identifies funding gaps in digital infrastructure and calls for partnerships to mobilise resources for universal connectivity and digital inclusion (GDC, Objectives 1 & 2).

This commitment has evolved from a general call for aid to a detailed agenda for financial system reform that targets the root drivers of global inequality.

62nd and 63rd CSocD Resolutions

Resolution on Social Development and Justice

The resolution reaffirms that domestic public finance remains the primary source of financing for social spending; however, in many countries, this is insufficient to meet the needs. It calls upon governments to broaden the tax base, implement and increase progressive taxation, and strengthen national tax services.

It reaffirms the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and recognises the need to significantly increase the mobilisation of financial resources from all sources. It calls for combating illicit financial flows and strengthening international best practices on asset return. Member States are encouraged to explore innovative financing options, including public-private partnerships, to support sustainable development.

Importantly, the resolution frames social development as an investment, particularly emphasising that educating women and girls contributes to reducing poverty, food insecurity, malnutrition, and inequalities, as well as improving the health and well-being of children and families.

While it recognises climate change as a major threat to social development, the resolution fails to rally member states to mobilise resources and action to address it.

Resolution on Solidarity and Social Cohesion

The resolution promotes collaboration among states to achieve social development goals, while requesting financial and technical support for low-income countries.



Overall recommendations for Commitment 9: Financing social development.

- Establish a Global Fund for Social Protection to finance rights-based social protection systems.
- Adopt fair taxation systems at both the national and international levels to redistribute global resources more effectively.
- Promote debt and climate justice: consider debt-climate swaps as an alternative to debt restructuring and structural adjustment programs.
- Reallocate funds from fossil fuel subsidies to human development.
- Rally member states to mobilise resources and action to address climate change.
- Mandate transparent, participatory budgeting processes at the national level.
- Ensure international aid supports public systems, not privatisation.

Food for Thought Paper

The Food for Thought Paper supports Commitment 9 by advocating for increased investment in social development and more efficient use of resources to achieve global social goals. It emphasises the need to strengthen resilient health systems and expand access to education, particularly in digital literacy and vocational training, which can be enhanced through smarter resource allocation.

The Paper also highlights the urgency of investing in technology-driven solutions to close service gaps between rural, urban, and remote areas, ensuring that no one is left behind. This approach is reinforced by its call for enhanced international cooperation and financing to implement social policies that reduce poverty, promote education, and guarantee access to affordable healthcare, food, and clean water.



The SDG Report 2024

At the national level, Commitment 9 urges governments to mobilise domestic resources, improve access to credit (especially for the disadvantaged), implement fair taxation, and prioritise basic social services. At the international level, it calls upon states to mobilise predictable and adequate financial flows, facilitate technology and knowledge transfer, support debt relief, and expand official development assistance (ODA), especially to least developed and low-income countries.

The SDG Report 2024 reveals significant gaps in the implementation of this commitment.

A massive financing shortfall persists. Developing countries face an estimated \$4 trillion annual investment gap to achieve the SDGs. This represents a 60% increase from 2019, driven by shortfalls since 2015 and compounded by crises such as COVID-19, climate shocks, and inflation. More than half of this gap relates to the energy transition.

ODA is rising, but unevenly distributed across regions. In 2023, ODA reached a record \$223.7 billion, yet it accounted for only 0.37% of donor countries' gross national income, still far from the UN target of 0.7%. Increases have been driven by humanitarian aid, support for Ukraine, and contributions to international organisations, while only modest growth was directed toward Africa (up 2%) and LDCs (up 3%).

Private finance remains volatile. Foreign direct investment (FDI) to developing countries fell by 7% in 2023, and global FDI flows remain below pre-pandemic levels. While remittances have been more resilient, their impact is limited by high transaction costs, averaging 6.4%, more than double the SDG target of 3%.

Rising debt burdens are siphoning development resources. Public debt service hit a record \$444 billion, and about 60% of low-income countries are now in or near debt distress. This severely constrains fiscal space for essential investments in social development, undermining the goals of Commitment 9.

In summary, the SDG Report 2024 shows that while some financial commitments have improved on paper, the global financing system still falls short of the scale and equity needed to honour the vision of Commitment 9. Deepening investment gaps, inadequate ODA allocation, declining FDI, and rising debt are all significant obstacles to financing inclusive, sustainable social development.

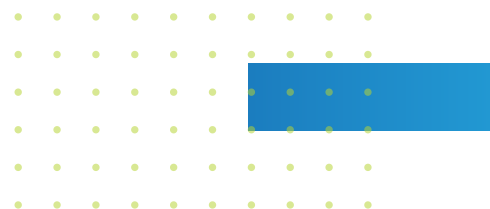
WSSD2 Civil Society Agenda

There is no shortage of wealth—only a shortage of political will to allocate it justly. The Complement calls for a global redistribution of resources through fair taxation, debt justice, and international financing for social protection.

It supports proposals for:

- A Global Fund for Social Protection.
- Transparent, participatory budgeting at the national level.
- Ending fossil fuel subsidies and reallocating funds to human development.

The Complement is clear: social development must be financed through solidarity, not scarcity.





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Commitment

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Improved and strengthened framework for international, regional, and subregional cooperation for social development in a spirit of partnership through the United Nations and other multilateral institutions.

Pact for the Future

The long-term goal of the Pact for the Future is to establish a new global governance framework. Action 38 commits to transforming global governance to better respond to contemporary challenges. Actions 39–45 provide specific reform pathways for the Security Council, General Assembly, ECOSOC, and the broader UN system.

Action 55 emphasises the importance of partnerships and international cooperation in delivering on commitments and addressing new challenges. This directly supports the Copenhagen Declaration’s call for shared responsibility among all actors—governments, civil society, and international organisations.

The Declaration on Future Generations views international cooperation as essential to achieving a just, peaceful, and sustainable future. It urges the strengthening of institutions to work not only for current populations but for generations to come.

While the Copenhagen Declaration was shaped in the post-Cold War era, today’s Pact for the Future acknowledges geopolitical tensions, climate risks, and digital transformations as new imperatives for cooperation.

This new global agenda reflects a more integrated, inclusive, and reform-oriented vision of international collaboration, fully aligned with and expanding upon Commitment 10 of the Copenhagen Declaration.

62nd and 63rd CSocD Resolutions

Resolution on Social Development and Justice

The resolution reaffirms the crucial role of international cooperation in supporting developing countries in enhancing their human, institutional, and technological capacities. It calls upon the international community, including the private sector and civil society, to support national human resources development through financial resources, capacity-building, technical assistance, and technology transfer.

It recognises the opportunities and challenges of technology, including information technology and AI, for social development, emphasising the need to close digital divides, such as those between countries, as well as rural-urban, youth-older persons, and gender gaps. States are encouraged to leverage digital technology to strengthen social protection systems.

The resolution promotes South-South and triangular cooperation as a complement to North-South cooperation, highlighting the UN system’s role in facilitating international cooperation. It also calls for strengthening cooperation for safe, orderly, and regular migration.

The resolution emphasises the relevance of the 2030 Agenda for implementing the commitments of the WSSD, particularly SDG 1 on eradicating poverty, SDG 8 on sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth and decent work for all, and SDG 10 on reducing inequality. However, the resolution lacks specific accountability mechanisms, such as mandatory regular progress reports or independent oversight bodies.

Resolution on Solidarity and Social Cohesion

The Resolution stresses the importance of establishing statistical capacities to track poverty and inequality.

The Resolution does not specify clear accountability mechanisms, such as mandatory progress reports or independent oversight bodies, nor does it outline mechanisms to strengthen civil society participation in decision-making processes.

Food for Thought Paper

The Food for Thought Paper emphasises the critical role of international and regional cooperation, particularly through multilateral institutions, including the institutions of the

United Nations, in advancing global social development goals. This directly supports Commitment 10, aligning with the Paper's call for global partnerships to address shared challenges such as hunger, poverty, and climate change.

It highlights the need to strengthen the rights of small-scale farmers and build climate resilience in developing regions—efforts that require cross-border collaboration for a lasting impact. The Paper also underscores the importance of sharing knowledge and technology, especially in the areas of digital health and education, to help developing countries achieve their goals. Ultimately, it underscores the importance of North-South, South-South, and triangular cooperation in addressing complex issues such as climate adaptation and migration, aligning with the Copenhagen Declaration's call for stronger, more inclusive multilateralism.

The SDG Report 2024

The report indicates that, despite some progress in institutional frameworks and policies through international cooperation and multilateral partnerships, profound challenges persist due to resource constraints, governance deficits, and geopolitical tensions.

On the one hand, the report highlights collaborative global efforts in climate action and international environmental agreements. Countries collaborate on initiatives such as Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to address climate change and have committed to limiting global warming to 1.5°C. Regarding biodiversity conservation, the report notes that countries have collaborated to advance the implementation of access and benefit-sharing instruments and integrate biodiversity values into national accounting systems, demonstrating a growing global commitment to conservation.

Regarding water management, the report emphasises the importance of international cooperation in managing water resources. Among member states that share transboundary waters,

efforts have been made to develop cooperative arrangements for managing rivers, lakes, and aquifers, as well as addressing water scarcity.

On the other hand, the report notes that developing countries are underrepresented in international economic decision-making and have limited influence in the global economic system. In addition, a historic reversal could jeopardise progress in economic equality among countries. Regarding geopolitical tensions, the report emphasises repeatedly the negative impacts of rising tensions and international humanitarian crises on global economic development. Although collaboration is desperately needed, the current geopolitical climate makes meaningful, coordinated global action exceedingly challenging.

WSSD2 Civil Society Agenda

The multiple global crises of climate change, environmental degradation, biodiversity loss, armed conflicts, migration, and rising inequality demand unprecedented cooperation—but also accountability. The Complement demands a reimagined multilateralism rooted in human rights and participatory governance.

It calls for:

- Structural reform of the United Nations and International Financial Institutions to ensure the voices of civil society and the Global South are listened to and heard.
- Measurement of progress of social development in every UN summit and process, not just once every 30 years.
- Permanent accountability mechanisms to track progress on the Copenhagen Declaration Commitments.

The world needs action on the concrete implementation and enforcement of existing commitments, as well as unwavering global solidarity.

Overall recommendations for Commitment 10: Strengthening cooperation for social development.

- Reform global governance structures to amplify the voices of civil society and the Global South.
- Integrate social development into every major UN summit, not just once per generation.
- Establish permanent accountability mechanisms to track the commitments outlined in the Copenhagen Declaration.
- Rebuild multilateralism rooted in human rights, solidarity, and enforcement, not symbolism.

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Formal roles for civil society—especially organisations led by people in poverty, women, Indigenous communities, older persons, persons with disabilities, and youth—in shaping, monitoring, and evaluating policies at all levels. This includes the protection of civic space, mechanisms for grassroots participation in global decision-making, and the protection and promotion of human rights defenders.



CIVIL SOCIETY GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE SECOND WORLD SUMMIT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

As the international community prepares for the Second World Summit for Social Development (WSSD2), civil society organisations call for the Summit to move beyond reaffirming past commitments and deliver bold, enforceable outcomes rooted in justice, equity, and human rights. Drawing from A Complement to the 10 Commitments, civil society presents the following overarching recommendations:

Anchor Social Development in Law and Align with Global Commitments

- Commitments must go beyond voluntary declarations. WSSD2 should result in binding agreements and implementation frameworks that hold governments and international institutions accountable.
- Integrate social development targets into national laws, development plans, and international economic agreements to ensure effective implementation.
- Permanent accountability mechanisms to track progress on the Copenhagen Declaration Commitments.

The world needs action on the concrete implementation and enforcement of existing commitments, as well as unwavering global solidarity.

Centre Equity, Inclusion, and Redistribution

- Place structural inequality—economic, racial, gendered, and geographic—at the heart of all poverty eradication strategies.
- Redistribute power and resources through fair taxation, debt cancellation, and equitable access to public services and infrastructure.

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Clear timelines, benchmarks, and independent monitoring bodies to track progress on the Copenhagen Declaration Commitments, and establishment of a permanent follow-up mechanism within the UN system to review implementation every five years.

Adopt a Decisive Goal on Universal Social Protection Coverage Across the Life Course for All Countries

- Commit to launching and financing a solidarity-based Global Fund for Social Protection to support universal Social Protection Floors in low- and middle-income countries.
- Ensure predictable, sustainable funding from international financial institutions, donor governments, and progressive global taxation.
- Agree on national implementation plans for universal social protection floors, including time frames and monitoring arrangements, to be implemented at regular intervals.

Elevate Civil Society as Co-Creators, Not Observers

- Ensure that the Summit's program reflects the conviction that civil society and grassroots voices, in all their diversity, are necessary contributors to the search for solutions to implement our commitments, and that the Summit's setup aligns accordingly.
- Integrate civil society organisations and people from the grassroots into the design and planning leading up to the Summit and the Programme of the Summit.
- Provide designated spaces for civil society forums and opportunities for civil society to connect with government and other diverse stakeholders to ensure coordination between decision-makers and the local implementers, and to ensure that Summit outcomes are culturally and locally responsive.
- Guarantee civil society, especially organisations led by people in poverty, women, Indigenous communities, older persons, persons with disabilities, and youth, and other marginalised/vulnerable populations, a formal role in shaping, monitoring, and evaluating policies and the commensurate systems put in place to implement those policies, at all levels.
- Protect civic space and create mechanisms for grassroots accountability in global decision-making.
- Protect and promote human rights defenders in all their diversity.

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***Redefining
Development
“Beyond GDP”
by adopting
measures of
well-being,
equity, care,
human dignity,
environmental
health, and
inclusive
governance.***

Redefine Development 'Beyond GDP'

- Inquire deeper into our current conception of development to ensure it is not founded upon historical perceptions of hierarchies or prejudices, but rather asserts the dignity and equal capacity of every human being to contribute to the common good, and asserts that the flourishing and development of humanity as a whole relies on the development of every community therein. Such an inquiry must begin by ensuring that the underlying assumptions about how we relate to one another are based on justice and the oneness of humanity.
- Shift the global development paradigm away from GDP growth toward ensuring well-being, equity, sustainability, and care.
- Promote alternative indicators that consider human dignity, inequality, environmental health, and inclusive governance. Consult with globally diverse stakeholders to develop new indicators that measure development more holistically, beyond traditional economic measurements.
- Create spaces for discussion to better understand the role of a community as a vital societal entity with the capacity to cultivate conditions that nurture the social development of the collective.
- Ensure that the Political Declaration explicitly calls for a sustained commitment to exploring alternatives to our current development framework, supported by explicit follow-up mechanisms and inclusive processes.

Recognise and Revalue Care Work

- Reframe care as essential infrastructure. Publicly invest in universal childcare, care for and by older people, and support for unpaid caregivers.
- Redistribute unpaid care work more equitably between men and women and across society, and challenge gender norms that undervalue caregiving and frame it as women's work.

Confront Homelessness and Housing Injustice

- Recognise homelessness as a global social development failure and make its eradication a priority.
- Commit to ending homelessness by 2030 through inclusive, community-driven solutions.



Ensure Digital Inclusion and Justice

- Close all digital divides by investing in infrastructure, affordability, digital literacy, and accessible technology.
- Regulate digital platforms to protect the rights, dignity, and participation of individuals, particularly those marginalised by age, gender, ethnicity, class, disability, and geographical location.

Build a “Care Society”

- Reimagine the foundation of social development as a society organised around care, solidarity, and dignity.
- Prioritise mental health, intergenerational well-being, and cultural inclusion across all sectors.
- Draw on culturally diverse perspectives to learn from healthy systems of care that function in local communities.

Create Permanent Accountability Mechanisms

- Establish clear timelines, benchmarks, and independent monitoring bodies to track progress on the Copenhagen Declaration Commitments.
- Institutionalise a permanent follow-up mechanism within the UN system to review implementation every five years.
- Clarify the role of the Commission for Social Development in following up on the Summit each year, and ensure that such a linkage is clear in its revitalisation process.
- Ensure that the Summit results in a Political Declaration and a clear roadmap that describes how the outcomes resonate and apply to the twenty-first century.



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Civil society urges WSSD2 to be a turning point—not a symbolic gathering, but a decisive moment to rewrite the rules of development in favour of people and the planet. Justice cannot wait. The world has the resources and knowledge; what’s needed now is the political courage to act.

CONCLUSION

Thirty years after the Copenhagen Summit, its vision of eradicating poverty, securing decent work, advancing gender equality, and building inclusive societies remains unfinished. Yet, the vision remains as relevant today as it was then, as we confront overlapping crises: climate breakdown, conflict, digital exclusion, mass displacement, and widening inequality.

Bold action is required to tackle these issues.

Volume II of Bridging Vision to Action examined how five key UN and civil society documents are responding to this evolving landscape—and how they align with the original ten Copenhagen Declaration Commitments. The findings show a mixed picture. There has been some progress in areas like digital access, social protection, gender equality, poverty reduction, and job creation. However, in others—particularly in financing, accountability, human rights, and structural reform—progress has been minimal or inconsistent.

Civil society, in A Complement to the 10 Commitments, is clear: progress will not come from re-stating aspirations. It requires rebalancing power, embedding human rights, equality, and social justice into economic and environmental policies, and amplifying the voices and agency of those most excluded.

The Second World Summit for Social Development must be more than a commemoration. It must be a reckoning, a realignment, and a recommitment to the people's agenda for our common future. It must matter to we the peoples. It must not only bridge vision and action with intention and impact—it must reject empty rhetoric and deliver real justice and equality.

We now look to Member States to show the political will—and the courage—to act in the full spirit of the Copenhagen Declaration: updated, revitalised, and renewed for a world in crisis, and



in need of profound transformation. Civil society urges WSSD2 to be that turning point—not a symbolic gathering, but a decisive moment to rewrite the rules of development in favour of people and the planet.

Our five-point call to Member States:

- 1 Ensure social development embraces all, across the life course, is compliant with the human rights framework, is monitorable, is enforceable, and is fully financed.
- 2 Adopt a decisive goal for universal social protection coverage across the life course, accompanied by necessary financial arrangements that support all countries, implemented by all governments.
- 3 Adopt policies and approaches to include, protect and value civil society as essential partners in policy-making and as co-architects of policy.
- 4 Put in place coherent and interconnected policy frameworks that recognise and value the care economy, digital justice, and climate resilience as central pillars of human development.
- 5 Establish accountability mechanisms and data systems that are multidimensional and people-centred, measuring not only the promises made but also the results delivered.

For WSSD2 outcomes to go beyond rhetoric, they must affirm existing binding agreements and implementation frameworks that hold governments and international institutions accountable, with monitoring built in.

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WSSD2 Food for Thought Paper

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This review was prepared under the auspices of the **NGO Committee for Social Development** and is the result of the collective efforts of many individuals.

We wish to express our deepest appreciation to the NGO CSocD Publication Task Force, co-chaired by **Marides Santos**, UN Representative of VIVAT International, and **Alex Martin Musiime** of the Qatar Centre for Peace and Democracy. We further acknowledge the contributions of Task Force members: **Albert Barseghyan**, Sikh Human Rights Group; **Li Zou**, Center for Social Development, Washington University in St. Louis; **Sarah Benfarhat**, intern with the NGO CSocD; **Sylvia Beales Gelber**, Global Coalition for Social Protection Floors; and **Valerie Bichelmeier**, Make Mothers Matter. Their dedication and professionalism were instrumental in the completion of this publication.

We also recognize the many individuals who supported the review through draft revisions, substantive inputs, editorial work, and the finalization of the design. Their contributions significantly enhanced the quality and coherence of the report.

Our gratitude extends to the Executive Committee of the NGO Committee for Social Development: **Liana Almony**, Chair and UN Representative of UNANIMA International; **Maryann Broxton**, Vice-Chair and Main UN Representative of the International Movement ATD; **Johannes Butscher**, Secretary and UN Advocacy Officer of The Inclusivity Project; **Marides Santos**, Treasurer and UN Representative of VIVAT International; and Members-at-Large **Henry Ramirez Soler** of Fondazione Proclade Internazionale-Onlus, **Alexia Gaube** of Life Project 4 Youth, **Albert Barseghyan** of Sikh Human Rights Group, and **Cecilia Schirmeister** of the Baha'i International Community.

Finally, we extend our sincere thanks to our partners at the **United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs** for their collaboration and steadfast commitment to our shared mission. Together, we continue to uphold the spirit of the Copenhagen Declaration and work toward inclusive and sustainable equity for all.





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MAY 2025