



PRESS RELEASE

Launch of the global civil society report *Spotlight on Sustainable Development 2020* – on the eve of the (virtual) United Nations 75th anniversary event

Pushing the reset button will not change the game

New York, 18 September 2020

The COVID-19 crisis and the worldwide measures to tackle it have deeply affected communities, societies and economies around the globe. The implementation of the United Nations 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has been put at high risk in many countries. COVID-19 is a global wake-up call for enhanced international cooperation and solidarity.

But calls for “building back better” by just pushing the reset button will not change the game. We need structural changes in societies and economies that ensure the primacy of human rights, gender justice and sustainability.

This is the key message of the 2020 edition of the *Spotlight Report on Sustainable Development* “Shifting policies for a systemic change.” It is published by a broad range of civil society organizations today – on the eve of the Global Action Week for the SDGs and three days before UN’s 75th (virtual) anniversary summit.

The [Spotlight Report 2020](#) unpacks various features and amplifiers of the COVID-19 emergency and its inter-linkages with other crises. The report points out that even before COVID-19, many countries – especially in the global South - were in an economic crisis, characterized by contractionary fiscal policy, growing debt and austerity measures that made these countries more vulnerable to future crises. They are results of a dysfunctional system that puts corporate profit above the rights and well-being of people and planet.

Governments and international organizations have responded to the COVID-19 crisis on a massive scale. The announced liquidity measures, rescue packages and recovery programmes total US\$ 11 trillion worldwide. But overall, most measures were not sufficient to meet people’s real financial needs and did not take environmental justice into account.

A true alternative: the “8 R”- agenda for transformational recovery

According to the *Spotlight Report*, it is therefore all the more important that longer-term reforms not only support economic recovery, but also promote necessary structural change which will decisively improve peoples’ lives, such as strengthened public social protection systems, improved remuneration and rights of workers in the care economy, and the transition to circular economies, which seek to decouple growth from consumption of finite planetary resources.

As an alternative to the “Great Reset” initiative launched by the World Economic Forum to supposedly rescue capitalism, the Spotlight Report offers the **“8 R”- agenda for transformational recovery**. It identifies 8 key political and social areas in which re-thinking and re-structuring is indispensable, including the need for reclaiming truly public services and revaluing the central importance of care in our societies; decisively shifting the balance between local and global value chains; pursuing climate justice; a radical redistribution of economic power and resources and bold regulation of global finance for the common good; and – underpinning this all - boosting multilateral solidarity and multilateralism by clearly strengthening the UN and its bodies.

“Multiple crises can only be overcome if the massive power asymmetries within and between societies can be reduced”, the authors conclude.

More details of the “8 R” – agenda can be found [here](#).

The Spotlight Report is published by the Arab NGO Network for Development (ANND), the Center for Economic and Social Rights (CESR), Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN), Global Policy Forum (GPF), Public Services International (PSI), Social Watch, Society for International Development (SID), and Third World Network (TWN), supported by the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.

Spotlight on Sustainable Development 2020

Shifting policies for systemic change - Lessons from the global COVID-19 crisis

Global Civil Society Report on the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs

Beirut/Bonn/Ferney-Voltaire/Montevideo/New York/Penang/Rome/Suva, September 2020

www.2030spotlight.org

[#SpotlightSDGs](#)

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Some quotes from the Spotlight Report 2020:

"Governments and international organizations have responded to COVID-19 on an unprecedented scale. But there are indications that policy responses to the crisis so far ignore its structural causes, favour the vested interests of influential elites in business and society, further accelerate economic concentration processes, fail to break the vicious circle of indebtedness and austerity policies, and in sum, widen socioeconomic disparities within and between countries."

Jens Martens, Global Policy Forum

"The social and economic consequences of COVID-19 are not an exogenous shock to an otherwise functioning system, but the consequences of a system that has instability and inequality hardwired into its DNA. We must move towards an economy that rests on ensuring human wellbeing and the realisation of rights."

Carilee Osborne and Pamela Choga, Institute for Economic Justice, South Africa

"International solidarity is needed in the form of a Global Fund for Social Protection to jointly realize the human right to social security for all."

Nicola Wiebe, Mira Bierbaum, Thomas Gebauer, Global Coalition for Social Protection Floors

"The essence of the change that is needed involves shifting the centre of gravity away from the global and take bold public policy and investment decisions to strengthen the domestic economies."

Stefano Prato, Society for International Development

"The pandemic is galvanizing an ever-increasing array of actors to imagine how our economies could be reshaped if human rights and human dignity were put at their center, and to work together to make that vision a reality."

Kate Donald, Ignacio Saiz, Center for Economic and Social Rights (CESR)

"The UN has a rich and full envelope of vital and worthy commitments and obligations. Reiteration after 75 years is not enough. A new funding compact is a sine qua non to move these commitments into the reality of people's lives."

Barbara Adams, Global Policy Forum