

**11th INTERNATIONAL FORUM
OF NGOS IN OFFICIAL PARTNERSHIP WITH UNESCO**
UNESCO Headquarters Paris, 16-17 December 2019

“Challenging Inequalities”
to build a Just and Peaceful Society

We, the representatives of national, regional, and international non-governmental and civil society organizations and members of NGOs in official partnership with UNESCO gathered in Paris, France, 16-17 December 2019, on the theme “Challenging Inequalities to build a Just and Peaceful Society.”

We **reaffirm** our commitment to the United Nations’ 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the pledge to end all forms of poverty, reduce inequalities, tackle climate change, and promote prosperity, peace, and justice.

We take **note** of the outcomes and practical actions suggested by the 11th UNESCO Youth Forum held on 18-19 November 2019, and the World Non-Formal Education Forum held on 9-11 December 2019.

We further **note** that just months shy of the 25th Anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action; the 12 Critical Areas of Concern remain a significant challenge to the international community. Similarly, we **note** the publication of the SOFI Report which confirms a rise in world hunger for a third year in a row. There were 821 million chronically undernourished people in the world last year, with one in nine people in the world now facing hunger.

We **acknowledge** that income inequality has increased, at different speeds, in nearly all regions of the world in recent decades, thus depriving many individuals the capacity for an adequate standard of living and the enjoyment of full civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights.

We **note** that social and economic exclusion due to extreme poverty and rapidly increasing economic inequalities impede the eradication of poverty worldwide. This excludes a vast number of individuals from active participation in political, economic and cultural systems. This fundamental inequality is one of the major challenges of our time, a challenge that limits the potential of all people, everywhere in the world. We **acknowledge** that the fight against inequalities is at the heart of human dignity and human rights;

We agreed on key conditions and actions to strengthen inclusion at all levels, and call on governments to:

- Prioritize quality education throughout life and recognize education as a fundamental human right. Engage families in the school life whatever their social status and train teachers to encourage cooperation rather than competition to combat attitude to challenge inequalities.. Ensure suitable teacher training as well as safe and productive learning environments. Provide adequate financing for formal and non-formal education to eradicate the trend in education commercialization;

- Provide suitable tools, training and awareness raising programmes to address the broadening digital divide to reach out more particularly to women and those living in rural areas;
- Provide support and pathways to integration within new societies for those living in conflict, under occupation, or those who have suffered forced migration, including Internally Displaced Persons and refugees, and their families. This support must include culturally relevant education, health and psychological care;
- Build capacity for youth and create opportunities for them to meaningfully engage at all levels of society including in democratic processes and develop intergenerational collaboration;
- Invest in disaggregated data collection, identifying and challenging the disparity between most and least economically developed countries and ratify ILO and other conventions which provide a framework for accountability;
- Involve those in rural and less developed communities in the design of societal reform, with specific emphasis on women, to ensure equitable and meaningful income security;
- Exercise political will and genuine transformative change to accompany legislation, policies, and programmes that promote gender equality;
- Address the intersecting inequalities faced by women and girls and acknowledge the compounding impact these have on their daily lives all over the world;
- Protect and preserve natural resources and our diverse ecosystems, reflecting the reality of the earth's climate emergency and the impacts that societal actions have on our planet.
- Guard and strengthen the Civil Society spaces available to NGOs within the UN system, and recognise the importance of partnership towards achieving the 2030 Agenda and ensure that no one is left behind.

As we enter the last decade of SDG realization, we reaffirm our commitment to the SDGs through collective action across all continents. We furthermore commit to strengthen partnership between stakeholders, other social sectors, the media and the broader community to promote inclusion and equity.

We **commit** to building civil society capacities; including engaging other stakeholders more effectively and in collecting and analysing evidence-based, disaggregated-data on the most marginalized groups.

We **acknowledge** UNESCO's leadership in Education, Culture and Science and we reaffirm that NGOs in official partnership with UNESCO are key stakeholders for increased information-sharing, capacity building, and collaboration amongst CSOs in the implementation of the SDGs.

We **call** on UNESCO to ensure that NGOs spaces at UNESCO are strengthened to enable them play a key role in UNESCO's leadership of the SDGs. This must include continuing to recognize civil society as a fully-fledged partner in debates and decisions in the implementation of the SDGs.