

EESC President Declaration: A Summit for a youthful, sustainable and peaceful Future



European Economic
and Social Committee



New York, 2024

Summit of the Future

20-21 September – Action Days
22-23 September – Summit

The Summit of the Future will bring together world Leaders, policymakers from all corners of the globe and civil society representatives from communities throughout the planet. At times of uncertainty, this gathering holds a responsibility: to pave way for a future where cooperation and multilateralism can deliver a fairer and safer future.

In light of the many challenges the international order is facing, the Summit of the Future is an extraordinary opportunity to rethink our political, economic and social systems and make sure they can address the demands of peoples, countries and generations. Our planet and our communities expect to see the Sustainable Development Goals back on track, a reaffirmed commitment towards UN Charter and solutions for a future where young people can aspire to freedom.

We must ensure focus, financing and concrete improvement in the five major areas below for a youthful, sustainable and peaceful Future.

1. Sustainable Development and Financing for Development

- Developing an integrated and comprehensive approach to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The sustainability transformation must take into account the complex interlinkages between economic, social, and environmental dimensions. Civil society, the private sector, academia, youth, women's organisations and all relevant stakeholders must be fully integrated into the implementation of the SDGs.
- Ensuring a transition towards climate neutrality which is just and inclusive, through robust policies that promote skills development and job creation in green sectors, ensuring that climate action is aligned with social justice and poverty eradication. Developing sustainable food

systems as crucial enabler for all SDG transformations. Sustainable food policies must prioritise healthy diets, fair food supply chains, and the transition towards resilient, agroecological practices. In doing so, the financialisation of the food sector and food speculation must be addressed, as it undermines efforts to combat hunger and ensure fair revenues for farmers.

- Reforming fundamentally the global financial architecture, through an increased SDG financing and innovative mechanisms, such as a comprehensive approach to debt relief, to support sustainable development, particularly in vulnerable regions.
- Engaging meaningfully civil society organisations in driving forward the Agenda 2030 at EU and international levels, and establishing clear mechanisms for consultation and collaboration between civil society organisations and institutions. The involvement of civil society organisations is crucial for ensuring broad support and effectiveness in achieving the SDGs, and it will enhance transparency, accountability and inclusivity in the implementation of the SDGs.

2. International Peace and Security

- Promoting an enhanced international cooperation for conflict prevention, mediation, and resolution. Recognising the critical role that civil society plays in peace-building efforts, strategies must be developed for their structured involvement in decision-making processes related to peace and security.
- Ensuring the protection of all individuals, especially women, children, and other vulnerable groups, in conflict situations, upholding human rights and international law.
- Recognising the increasing risks posed by climate change and environmental degradation to global security, urging for comprehensive strategies that address climate-induced migration and its impacts on peace and stability.
- Acknowledging the need for reform within the United Nations, particularly the Security Council, to ensure it is more effective in working towards global peace.

3. Science, Technology, and Innovation and Digital Cooperation

- Adopting a more inclusive approach to global digital cooperation and governance, with a meaningful involvement of civil society in the dialogue around the global digital cooperation and governance. A multistakeholder approach must be emphasised and put into action in the context of Pact of the Future, Global Digital Compact and their subsequent implementation as well as any other activities taken by the United Nations in the field of science, technology and innovation.



- Developing an inclusive strategy to seize the opportunities presented by science, technology and innovation. Digitalisation has a potential to bring considerable economic, social and environmental benefits. Digital technologies themselves have the potential to cut global emissions by a fifth by 2030.
- Investing intensively in digital infrastructure, research and innovation, and skills development, all of which are key enabling factors of digitalisation. The digital transformation must take place in a sustainable, human-centred and inclusive way for the benefit of all. Due attention must be paid to the prevention of harmful environmental impacts of digitalisation and the digital divides regarding access to infrastructure and skills.
- Promoting a human-in-command approach to artificial intelligence and other emerging technologies, with policies supporting open science and open source technologies. The objective of guaranteeing secure international cooperation for research and innovations should never give rise to discriminatory and/or unfair practices towards actors in this field, nor should it be in conflict with labour rights and the safeguarding of working conditions for those working in this sector.
- Removing the digital gender gap and embedding the gender perspective in the digital and artificial intelligence agendas. A digital future must be a provider of equal opportunities.
- Increasing the digital literacy of women and girls, and reducing gender skills gaps, especially in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) specialisations(including programming and AI).
- Eliminating bias in algorithms, as one of the main sources of inequality in the development of AI technology and digital reality, as well as stereotypes, to avoid increasing the digital gender gap.
- Supporting the promotion of a gender-balanced uptake of Information Technology (IT) work, by promoting STEM education from early age, equal access for female students to IT studies and ensuring that the IT sector provides a gender-equal supportive work environment and career development possibilities, enabling women access to leadership and decision-making roles.

4. Youth and Future Generations

- Reaffirming a global commitment to investing in the social and economic development of children and young people, accepting the need for public and private investments that support the full potential of the younger generation. Addressing child and youth poverty is central to this goal, through policies that protect young people from poverty and social exclusion.
- Empowering youth and women, by promoting their involvement in translating the SDGs into actionable policies, ensuring that their rights and inclusion are upheld.

- Creating mechanisms that enable young people to participate meaningfully in national and international decision-making processes, reinforcing their role in shaping a sustainable future. One good example is the development of tools to strengthen youth participation and youth mainstreaming in policymaking (such as the EU youth test).

5. Transforming Global Governance

- Recognising the need for fundamental reforms in global governance to address the challenges of today and tomorrow. A more equitable representation within international institutions is needed, particularly the United Nations, where developing countries must have a stronger voice in decision-making processes.
- Supporting amore representative, inclusive and effective UN governance, in order to make it fit for the rising challenges and to stabilise the consensus on shared values and norms.
- Making the UN's decision-making processes more efficient, transparent and less prone to deadlocks, as they tend to undermine its ability to react to current crises and challenges. UN Member States in breach of the UN Charter or their commitments under UN agreements or conventions should not be allowed to exercise their full participation and voting rights, nor election to a leadership role in a UN or related body.
- Reforming the international financial system. Theglobal financial architecture must be restructured to align with climate goals and ensure that financial flows support sustainable development. One important step is moving beyond GDP as the sole measure of economic progress, advocating for new indicators that reflect social and environmental well-being.

www.eesc.europa.eu

European Economic and Social Committee • Rue Belliard/Belliardstraat 99 • 1040 Bruxelles/Brussel • BELGIQUE/BELGIË

© European Union, 2024

Reproduction is authorised provided the source is acknowledged.

For any use or reproduction of the photos / illustrations, permission must be sought directly from the copyright holder(s): © Shutterstock

EESC-2024-60-EN

Print: QE-01-24-003-EN-C • ISBN 978-92-830-6602-6 • doi:10.2864/5795153

PDF: QE-01-24-003-EN-N • ISBN 978-92-830-6601-9 • doi:10.2864/8549399