

SDG ACTION WEEKEND
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Closing Statement

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**Thank you, moderator for the floor.
Excellencies distinguished guests, young people!
People Power. Power in Youth.**

I am Nadia Islam Tedoldi from Uganda from the African UN Youth Delegate Programme and the Major Group for Children and Youth. I am passionate about mental health and inclusive education.

It is an honor to be the youth rapporteur for the Action Weekend.

Yesterday, various partners convened to discuss the SDG mobilisation. This included Major Groups and Other Stakeholders, Women's groups, Science and Academia, local and regional governments, the private sector, civil society, and youth. And I would like to share some key highlights.

From the **Major Groups** session - the Major Groups and Other Stakeholders have been key to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Their mandated role in the process and self-organizing structure has enabled us to drive transformative change globally. Our power is in our diversity, expertise, and grounding in communities and most marginalized populations. It is essential to protect civil society and their freedoms. and to finance them to scale impact.

From the **Women's session**, the demand was made for the international financial architecture to be reformed into an inclusive framework, with a strong gender equality perspective. This must be done by including feminist civil society and countries of the Global South on the reform of the institutions; with the cost of care economy included in the calculations. A Global Tax Mechanism and a Global Debt Workout Mechanism should be instituted to oversee the capital flows and investments with an intersectional approach.

Science & Academia highlighted the need to ensure that

- 1) Scientific knowledge is accessible, including in developing countries;



- 2) That the science-policy interface is strengthened at all levels including by building the capacities of both scientists and policymakers; 3. and that indigenous and traditional knowledge is integrated and local communities are actively engaged in addressing global challenges.

At the **Local and Regional Governments** session, the constituency called on mobilizing transformative partnerships that put care at the center to achieve the SDGs and towards the Summit of the Future. With the presentation of 7 years of monitoring SDG Localization through VLRs and VSRs, participants called to include local and regional governments in SDG monitoring frameworks

The **private sector session** highlighted that **small & medium enterprises** are the backbone of our economies - representing about 90% of businesses and more than two-thirds of employment worldwide. Yet the financing gap facing small businesses is more than 5 trillion USD. Women and youth-led SMEs face unique challenges – paying higher rates for lending, while not having access to the same level of capital.

Civil society advocates called for an inclusive and human rights-based approach to SDG implementation. In a dialogue with the UN Secretary-General, the crucial role of civil society in the race to 2030 was emphasized. **Remember that power is never given but taken.**

Finally, the **Youth Session** highlighted the need to strengthen meaningful youth engagement in policy and decision-making processes at all levels - at the UN and beyond. Young people are torchbearers of the SDGs and demand to be included as full-fledged partners at every step - inception, design, implementation, review, and follow-up - of the 2030 Agenda and UN processes. Young people also launched their contributions to the SDG Summit - a summary of the Torchbearers Consultation, and the Global Youth Position Paper available online.

As we cannot encompass all the discussions deeply in this summary, we invite you to watch the recording of the sessions on the UN Web TV.

Last but not the least, the voices of grassroots communities and people were brought together at the March for Sustainable Development yesterday, and today a fossil-fuel march is happening outside. We call upon the UN system to immediately divest from taking funding and close partnerships with hydrocarbons and polluting industries; and to adopt the Fossil-Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Not everyone has the privilege to advocate for the SDGs inside UN buildings. As we mark the midpoint of the 2030 Agenda, **we remind you** that this is not a moment of celebration alone. Millions of people are worried about their next meals, about their safety, their bodily autonomy, and about being alive.

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