



Media Statement

267 Civil Society Organizations call on the United Nations Summit of the Future in New York to entrench effective accountability measures to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals

New York City (September 21, 2024)—Bill Jeffery, Executive Director of the Centre for Health Science and Law made the following statement on a joint statement endorsed by 267 civil society organizations and experts worldwide.

“It is no surprise that companies that sell food, alcohol, tobacco, and fossil fuels and the machines they power pressure governments to weaken government regulations to favour the uninhibited sale of their products. The manner in which that influence is exerted on the United Nations is largely secreted from view. The UN has no lobbyist registry, no access to information guarantees, and only patchy conflict-of-interest safeguards. Public interest organizations, experts and the news media are routinely excluded from treaty negotiations and other member state meetings, including negotiations of the Pact for the Future that is the centrepiece of the meetings this week in New York.

It is difficult to overstate the importance of the Sustainable Development, but plain to see that progress in achieving them is terribly insufficient.

Non-governmental organizations lack the transparency tools to hold governments to account and many governments generally provide little or no funds to NGOs to ensure that they exercise their vital role to hold them to account. Discretionary, short-term funding always carries the expectation that criticism is a deal-breaker for future funding.

As of today, 267 organizations echoed these concerns and called on the United Nations and member states to provide independent funding to experts and expert-qualified NGOs to monitor and publicize shortcomings in progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

But the environmental and human health harm of those products exceeds their purchase price and the combined cost to consumers, governments and other industries is roughly half of the US\$60 trillion value of the global commercial economy.

See the full joint statement at <https://tinyurl.com/SDG-accountability>

BACKGROUND

Conflicts of interest: The Centre for Health Science and Law does not accept funding from industry nor discretionary funding from government.

About the Centre for Health Science and Law: CHSL is an Ottawa-based health advocacy organization focussed on food issues. Bill Jeffery, BA, LLB, is its Executive Director. Since 1997, he has advocated law and policy reform to protect public health nutrition in Canada and internationally. He is the corresponding endorser of the Joint Statement, but he can also connect reporters with endorsers from many countries. He can be reached in New York September 20-23, 2024 at BillJeffery@HealthScienceAndLaw.ca mobile/WhatsApp 1-613-565-2140.

INTERVENTION

As the corresponding endorser for the [joint statement endorsed by 267 Non-Governmental Organizations and experts](#), I expect to make the following statement. Check against delivery in interactive dialogue #1 entitled "Transforming global governance and turbocharging the implementation of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development," chaired by His Excellency KP Sharma Oli, Prime Minister of Nepal, on Sunday, September 22, 2024 in the Trusteeship Council Chamber of the United Nations Headquarters in New York.

This summarizes a joint-statement endorsed by [270+] ECOSOC-accredited groups and experts worldwide.

Progress realizing human rights is measurable by [healthy life expectancy](#). [National averages span 44-74 years](#). Domestic variation mirrors inequality. Deprivation, ill-health and death obstruct enjoyment of all rights and foment conflict.

- 1. Ensure the primacy of rights to health, food, water, shelter, and development. Prevention is affordable and humane, but not immediately politically gratifying and prone to resistance from vested-interests. Had rights to health trumped pharmaceutical company contracts, millions of COVID-19 deaths might have been prevented. COVID-19 killed [7.5 million/year](#), rivalling 10 million/year by WWII. Progress negotiating treaties on the right to development and businesses' respect for human rights has been slow; SDG targets include few needed regulatory reforms.*
- 2. Adopt the Code-of-Conduct for engaging with civil society calling for conflict-of-interest safeguards, access to information rules, a UN lobbying registry, and access to so many negotiations secreted from public view.*
- 3. Mandate SDG-impact warning labels on food, alcohol, tobacco, fossil fuels and machines they power on which \$15 trillion/year is spent, one quarter of the [US\\$60 trillion commercial global economy](#). But, they externalize \$20 trillion in harms and cause half of all deaths. National economic indicators should report true cost accounting.*
- 4. The Pact for the Future promise to raise Official Development Assistance to 0.7% of Gross National Income was within reach in 1960. Many high-income countries nearly doubled their national budgets to protect their citizens from COVID-19, but [ODA rose from 0.30%-0.37% of OECD GNI](#), or US\$0.02/capita/day for people living outside high-income countries.*
- 5. Financially support teams of NGO-SDG-advocates appointed at arm's length by judges or as officers of Parliament with security of tenure until 2030. Advocate-experts are often starving for funds, but lose impartiality if they accept discretionary grants from companies or governments they are duty-bound to hold accountable.*

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