



New York, 18 September 2023

Declaration of the Global People's Assembly 2023

Halfway to Agenda 2030, we are still far from achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The draft 2023 Political Declaration fails to commit to the urgent action required to accelerate response towards the rising inequalities and poverty, for human rights, gender equality, social justice, peace, and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We demand governments match the political determination and persistence of civil society and activists, in all our diversity. Failure to achieve the SDGs - let alone make significant progress towards them - would be catastrophic for humanity and our planet.

This critical, interlinked Declaration of the 2023 Global People's Assembly, co-created by over 40 national and regional People's Assemblies and Global Peoples Assembly co-organizers, in all our diversities, is our shared and collective vision for a human-rights centered, gender transformative, intergenerational change to address the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and violence the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated, and to accelerate the faltering progress toward the achievement of the SDGs.

1. Economic and Financial Justice

Reverse current patterns of consumption, production and global economic governance and decision-making power, in particular in the Global North, that are rooted in colonial histories and the concentration of wealth among the elite few, leading to the exploitation and destruction of people and the planet. Establish a multilateral legal framework under the aegis of the UN to cancel, restructure, suspend, and lower rates on existing debt, and cease including austerity conditionalities in any new debt issued. Call on governments to repudiate illegitimate debts that have harmed people and the planet. Privatization puts profits over people, and that very fact is fundamentally incompatible with human rights obligations. Reject corporate capture of the UN and all other multilateral spaces by, among other actions, negotiating and adopting a legally binding instrument on business and human rights, and establishing a binding convention and a global tax body under the auspices of the UN. Build new paradigms of development and public policies centered on care, justice, human rights, reparations, and restoration. Deliver commitments on development cooperation volumes and effectiveness, especially the 0.7 GNI target for Official Development Assistance (ODA). Abandon economic systems dependent on the exploitation of the underpaid and unpaid labour of women and girls, and the unequal distribution of care and domestic responsibilities.

2. Climate and Environmental Justice

Abandon false solutions to the climate crisis in favor of human rights-based climate solutions that prioritize people over markets, protect ecologically sustainable food systems and healthy ecosystems, uphold Indigenous Peoples' rights to land, territories, and resources, and the right of free, prior, and informed consent as human rights. When Indigenous and rural people, especially women, have more secure land rights, they are in a better position to protect biodiversity and foster climate resilience; which is increasingly urgent as our climate crisis deepens. Increase and deliver on climate finance pledges, including loss and damage, in accordance with Common But Differentiated Responsibilities. Address interlinkages between climate change, disaster risk reduction, and health and human rights for all. Ensure sufficient, safe, acceptable, accessible, and affordable access to water and sanitation through public, adequate, and community-owned services. Prioritize investment in a just transition towards renewable energy infrastructure and technology that is community-owned and democratically controlled, while ensuring compliance with ethical, non-violent and human rights standards and sourcing. Adopt the fossil-fuel non-proliferation treaty.

3. Social Justice and Gender Equality

Eliminate all forms of discrimination and exclusion, including but not limited to caste, work and descent, class, race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, disability, age, religion, geography and other marginalizations. Protect and uphold the human rights, including sexual and reproductive rights, of all people - particularly all women, girls, and gender-diverse people by removing discriminatory laws and policies that criminalize gender identity and expression, and sexuality. Advance sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) through the provision of universal health care (UHC), provision of comprehensive sexuality education, and recognizing access to abortion as a human right. Address the root causes of and prevent gender-based violence by working with feminist groups to combat misogyny, patriarchy, ageism, and harmful gender norms guided by principles of intersectionality. Take targeted and sustained actions to remove gender bias, stereotypes, and discrimination. Guarantee and allocate public financing and resources for social protection systems, establish the solidarity-based Global Fund for Social Protection and put in place public social infrastructure to eliminate inequalities. Abandon our current militarized and nationalized understandings of security, and in their place adopt understandings of security that center on human security, bodily autonomy, and the fulfilment of human rights.

4. Civil Society, Human Rights and the UN

Reverse the trend of shrinking and closing civic space in many countries in all regions across the globe, with Member States being held accountable for their egregious violation of international human rights standards. Advance civil society access, leadership, and meaningful participation and decision-making within UN spaces and negotiation processes, especially historically marginalized and vulnerable communities. An independent and fully funded civil society is a prerequisite for the development of policies that will enable us to live our lives in dignity and equality. Reclaim leadership of governments and the UN from the private sector and other actors encouraging them to weaken or abandon human rights obligations. Speak out against anti-gender and anti-rights narratives and actions by state and non-state actors, online and offline. Protect human rights defenders from reprisals, harassment and persecution when they engage with UN spaces and mechanisms, and repeal laws and weaponizing of justice institutions to criminalize dissent, resistance, fact-checking, peaceful gatherings, protests and spreading awareness. Unequivocally uphold freedom of speech, expression and safe assembly by safeguarding fundamental rights of all human rights defenders, climate justice activists, environmental defenders, peacebuilders, journalists, and other feminist and socio-economic defenders, enabling them to positively and safely influence the outcomes of these current and upcoming global and regional processes that impact our lives and futures.

For more information: peoplesassembly.global