

77th session of the United Nations General Assembly

Third Committee

Statement of Ireland's UN Youth Delegate

General Discussion on Social Development

Chair, Excellencies, Delegates,

Ireland aligns itself with the statement of the European Union.

To briefly open in the Irish language: Is mise Daithí Ó Glaisne agus le Jessica Gill, tá muid Toscairí na nÓg as Éirinn chun na Náisiúin Aontaithe. Is mór an onóir dúinn a bheith anseo.

My name is David Giles and this is my co-delegate Jessica Gill and we are the Youth Delegates of Ireland to the United Nations. It is a great honour for us to represent the youth of Ireland on this international stage today.

We live in a world where protecting the climate system has often been seen as in conflict with the goals of development- yet the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda offers us a path to move forward conscious of the needs of a world rife with inequality, poverty and injustice. Multilateral partnership to achieve the SDGs is more important than ever for a more equal, stable and just world for all.

Together, we must work towards inclusive societies, equipped with the mechanisms and systems to accommodate and celebrate diversity. We must enable active and meaningful participation for all in their political, economic and social lives. Social development, in ensuring equal opportunities, must empower those voices that are underrepresented at decision-making tables. This includes minority communities, persons with disabilities, and members of the LGBTI+ community.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child grounds the right for children to be heard in International Law. Ireland proudly enshrines this principle through our *National Framework for Children and Young People's Participation in Decision Making*, the first of its kind in Europe. We encourage all other member states to consider building similar structures for meaningful youth involvement at all levels of decision making. This is how we support young people to play a full role in society.

Gender equality is a necessity to fulfilling human rights and achieving social development. Ireland's enduring commitment to the empowerment of women and girls is reflected in our national and foreign policy.

Ireland's National Strategy for Women and Girls guides our domestic work, including advancing socio-economic equality, embedding gender equality into decision-making and combatting violence against women. Our third National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security underscores the importance of the full, equal and meaningful participation of young women both nationally and internationally. Ireland is also committed to addressing all recommendations contained in the Report of the Citizens' Assembly on Gender Equality.

Gender equality is critical for the achievement of all Sustainable Development Goals. But as we pass their halfway mark, urgent action is necessary for the world to meet its commitments.

As visible in the Secretary General's report, food insecurity and malnutrition continue to disproportionately affect women and girls globally. [In many countries, girls are twice as likely as boys to die from malnutrition.] Ireland recently announced a pledge to UNICEF of an additional 50 million euros over three years. This aims to accelerate the global response to the early detection, prevention and treatment of child malnutrition. We urge all member states to take similar action to break cycles of poverty and make way for sustainable development through investment in low-income countries.

In looking forward we must learn from the lessons of the past two years. As noted by the Secretary-General in his report on the outcome of the World Summit on Social Development, young people around the globe are suffering long-term consequences of the pandemic, with difficult transitions from education to the labour market and interrupted career paths. Young women have been disproportionately impacted, widening existing inequalities such as the gender employment gap. Through investment in digital education and training capacity, including open educational resources, Member States can enhance people's resilience to future crises, including those induced by climate change.

The Youth of Ireland urge you to take immediate action in progressing the 2030 Agenda and facilitating social development. We don't have time to wait.