

A healthy planet



For future generations

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Statement for the SDG Summit 2019

The active inclusion of civil society in any endeavours to improve the condition of humankind and the sustainability of life on our fragile planet is more essential than ever before. Civil society has demonstrated its ability to work as efficient entities in highly variegated settings; it needs to enter into cooperation on an equal footing with all parties working towards the achievement of the sustainable development goals.

Three key players come to mind: governments, civil society and the private sector. In addition to exercising their legislative and administrative functions, governments have to recognise that civil society and its non-governmental organisations invariably dispose of more information in specific fields than governments do themselves. This underscores the need to secure comprehensive civil society participation, effective communication and genuine partnership. At the same time, the private sector has to assume its responsibility for, and contribute to, the achievement of the sustainable development goals. All three players have to engage in a common endeavour.

Civil society bodies have developed models for monitoring progress towards all seventeen global goals under the generic of *SDG Watches*; they should be emulated by others. We would urge all countries to adopt a basic blueprint of open dialogue between all three players and adhere to a reporting routine that includes exchange of information, discussion of critical reviews and dissemination of the outcome of the consultation process.

Active involvement is of key importance as evidenced by the *SDG Watch Europe*, a cross-sectoral civil society alliance of NGOs from development, environment, social human rights and other sectors. Its goal is to hold governments to account for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable development. It should be extended to include the private sector as well.

True partnership between civil society, government and the private sector is not an illusion; it is a necessity. As the late Koffi Anan once said, 'It is those single-minded enough to believe their mission to be the most important who are also likely to make it the most successful'. May this prove true.