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PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

At turning point for sustainable development, Taoiseach's statements at UN don't match Ireland's actions at home - Coalition 2030

- **SDG Summit the “centrepiece” of the 78th UNGA**
- **Political Declaration adopted by UN General Assembly at 14:45 GMT +1**
- **Taoiseach Leo Varadkar made statement to UNGA given Ireland's co-facilitation of the Political Declaration**

NEW YORK, [18 September 2023] — Coalition 2030, representing over 70 Irish civil society groups, has criticised Ireland's recent UN General Assembly address on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). They deem it a missed chance for Ireland to demonstrate increased leadership on the SDGs.

The Taoiseach, on behalf of the government, responded to UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres' call for fresh national commitments to the SDGs. While expressing support for SDG targets, the Taoiseach fell short of specifying concrete actions.

Meaghan Carmody, Coalition 2030 Coordinator, stated,

"It was positive to hear the Taoiseach acknowledge that the government's focus hasn't been as strong as it should have been on the SDGs, and the importance of bold, accelerated, just and transformative actions anchored in international solidarity. But actions speak louder than words. Ireland has earned a leadership role, yet our leaders still fail to recognize the significance of the SDGs domestically."

Dearbhail Lawless, Co-Chair of Coalition 2030 added,

“The Taoiseach said that it's the responsibility of world leaders to ‘breathe life’ into the adopted Political Declaration and ‘make it real’. We agree, Ireland, as a co-facilitator of the Political Declaration, should be leading the way. If the Taoiseach stays true to his word, we should see real efforts in Ireland to reach the furthest behind first.”

Ms. Lawless continued,

"If the Taoiseach is serious, we must witness concrete actions at home and abroad. The SDGs are universal, and leaders must prioritise those left furthest behind."

The Coalition also lamented the lack of engagement with Irish civil society in shaping the National Commitment. According to Ms. Carmody,

“UN Secretary General António Guterres was very clear in his instruction to countries to ensure the active participation of civil society in the development of States’ National Commitment. But despite this, Irish civil society was not asked to play any role in the development of the National Commitment.”

Ms. Carmody concluded, "There is still time for the government to inject urgency into SDG implementation and become a true leader in this space."

World leaders are set to announce National Commitments to SDG Transformation at the 78th United Nations General Assembly. Taoiseach Leo Varadkar, Tánaiste Mícheál Martin, and Minister Eamon Ryan are attending the SDG Summit, where Ireland's role in preparing the Political Declaration is prominent.

For media inquiries, please contact:

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About Coalition 2030: Coalition 2030 is an alliance of 70 civil society organisations from the international development, environmental, anti-poverty and trade union sectors working together to ensure Ireland keeps its promise to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) both in Ireland, and abroad.

[Political Declaration adopted here](#)

Webcast

The United Nations Webcast services will provide live streaming coverage of the SDG Summit in 6 languages as well as on-demand coverage (recorded video) in English and original language, through the UN Web TV website at: <http://webtv.un.org>. The coverage will include the opening segment, plenary segment, the six Leaders’ Dialogues and the closing segments.

Notes to the Editor

1. In September 2015, all 193 UN Member States, including Ireland, adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to ‘end poverty, protect the planet and ensure prosperity for all’ as part of the new agenda — Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This framework is made up of 17 SDGs and 169 targets. Ireland had a significant role in its development and adoption, as co-facilitator, together with Kenya, of the intergovernmental negotiations in September 2015.
2. [SDG Summit List of Speakers, Concept Notes on the Leaders Dialogues and Logistics Note](#)
3. The SDG Summit Programme can be found [here](#).
4. The [Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023](#) found that only 12% of the SDG targets are on track to be achieved by 2030. Stark reversals in the gains made before Covid-19 and the triple cascade of climate change, Covid-19, and conflict have added increased urgency to the Summit.
5. The UN Secretary General has requested that, at the Summit, States outline a forward-looking National Commitment to SDG Transformation. This can be uploaded in advance of the Summit to the [SDG Summit Acceleration and Accountability Platform](#). It should include:
 - (i) priority transitions and areas for investment that will help maximise progress across the SDGs;
 - (ii) a national benchmark for reducing poverty and inequality by 2027; and
 - (iii) steps towards strengthened national planning and institutional frameworks

6. The full suite of Coalition 2030's suggestions for policy changes can be found here: [Coalition 2030 Asks](#)
7. Coalition 2030 argues via ['Furthest Behind First, or Falling Behind Further? The human stories that challenge Ireland's claims to be leaving no one behind'](#) that, although the State has been an influential advocate for the SDGs internationally, commitment and progress domestically is less apparent, and that this is most evident in how the State is failing to reach those who are in most need of the State's support; the furthest behind.
8. On April 3rd 2023 the UN Secretary General, Mr. António Guterres, wrote to all Heads of State and Governments of Member States regarding the SDG Summit. In [this letter](#), he wrote:
"I urge all countries to fully engage their domestic constituencies, particularly civil society and the private sector, in their Summit preparations."
9. In July of this year, seven Coalition 2030 representatives were facilitated by the Department of Environment Climate and Communications to attend the High Level Political Forum on the SDGs as part of Ireland's official delegation. At this event, Minister Eamon Ryan presented Ireland's Voluntary National Review of progress. A meeting was facilitated with Minister Ryan, and a reception was held in the Irish mission with H.E Ambassador Fergal Mythen and his team.
10. H.E. Ambassador Fergal Mythen has written an op-ed on the Political Declaration, ['The World Has Only 7 Years Left to Thatch Its Roof and Save Itself'](#)
11. Coalition 2030 Members: 80:20 Educating and Acting for a Better World, Action Aid, Aidlink, Airfield, Akidwa, Alcohol Forum, All Together in Dignity, An Taisce, AONTAS, ASTI Association of, Secondary Teachers of Ireland, Baby Feeding Law Group Ireland, Carrig Conservation, Childfund Ireland, Children's Rights Alliance, Christian Aid, Christian Blind Mission (CBM), Comhlámh, Community Work Ireland, Concern, Cork Environmental Forum, Cultivate (Sustainable Ireland Cooperative), DCU Centre for Climate and Society, Development Perspectives, Disability Federation of Ireland, Dóchas (membership of 60 Members and Associate member organisations), ECO-UNESCO, Environmental Pillar (membership of 29 member organisations), European Anti-Poverty Network Ireland, FAIRTRADE Ireland, Forest Friends Ireland, Fórsa, Friends Of The Earth Ireland, Global Action Plan, Global Citizenship School, GOAL, Good Energies Alliance Ireland, Green Foundation Ireland, ICTU Irish Congress of Trade Unions (consisting of 44 unions affiliated to Congress and representing over 800,000 workers), IDEA - Irish Development Education Association, Independent Living Movement Ireland, International Presentation Association, Irish Family Planning Association, Irish Forum for Global Education, Irish Forum for Global Health, Irish Rural Link, Irish Wildlife Trust, Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice, Misean Cara, National Adult Literacy Agency, National Women's Council (membership of over 160 member organisations), National Youth Council of Ireland (membership of over 50 member organisations), Outhouse LGBT+ Centre, Pavee Point, Traveller & Roma Centre, Rediscovery Centre, Roscommon Environmental Network, Self Help Africa, Sightsavers Ireland, SIPTU Services Industrial Professional Technical Union, Social Justice Ireland, SpunOut, Suas (& its STAND programme), TASC (Think Tank for Action on Social Change), The Ladder, The Simon Communities, The Vincentian Partnership for Social Justice, The Wheel (membership of over 2,235 member organisations), Trócaire, UNESCO Chair in Inclusive Physical Education, Sport, Recreation and Fitness MTU - Munster, Technological University, UNICEF Ireland, University of Galway (formerly NUIG), VOICE Ireland, World Vision Ireland, Zero Waste Alliance Ireland.