

**Coalition 2030**

*For Immediate Release*

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## **Landmark Irish conference explores a Just Recovery from COVID-19 using the Sustainable Development Goals**

***Leading Thinkers, including Dr Mike Ryan of WHO and Minister Eamon Ryan, put forward key recommendations on Ireland's Recovery from the pandemic and the importance of the Sustainable Development Goals.***

Coalition 2030 [1], Ireland's civil society alliance on the Sustainable Development Goals, last week [14th July] hosted a conference [2] on the theme 'A Just Recovery from Covid-19: Using the Sustainable Development Goals to Guide Ireland's Recovery'. As the Government faces the challenges posed by the pandemic and begins to look towards long-term recovery, the conference explored the importance of the Sustainable Development Goals for a just recovery from Covid-19 and addressed 6 key principles, produced by civil society, for a fair and sustainable recovery from the social and economic shock of the Covid-19 pandemic [3].

**Yvonne O'Callaghan of SIPTU and the Coalition 2030 Steering Committee said:**

*"This landmark conference underlined that there are four key elements to ensuring a just recovery: equity, access, dignity and solidarity. The question is now how can the public, communities and civil society use our collective power to highlight and elevate these priorities with Government. An important opportunity will be the Government's public consultation on a new SDG implementation plan that has just been launched [4]"*

The conference recording and key takeaways from the conference are now available [online here](#). The conference featured significant contributions from keynote speakers on health, workers rights and climate justice, which are also [available on the Coalition 2030 website](#). These include:

**Dr Mike Ryan, Executive Director, WHO Health Emergencies Programme warned that without radical change in our approach to vaccinations, we are entering into a 2-tier pandemic where lower-income countries will suffer most:**

*"We are talking about booster vaccines in the developed world. I'm being asked for my opinion about booster vaccines all day today. But no one is asking me for my opinion on the fact that there are people dying all over the world that don't need to die - no one is asking me about health workers who are going to work today in isolation wards all over the developing world without being vaccinated, risking their lives. But I'm being asked about booster vaccines for people in the developed world. Sometimes it gets very hard to take"*

**Dr Mike Ryan also spoke about the need to address issues in an interconnected way to recover from the pandemic. He said:**

*"This microbe has exploded all of those existing frailties in our system: economic, social and health injustices that have existed for years...this virus is not what's actually killing*

*people...what's killing them are the underlying conditions that lead them to not be able to tolerate or be able to survive the infection.”*

**Regarding links with climate action, Dr Ryan noted:**

*“... the reality is that climate stress and climate change is driving epidemic and pandemic risk, directly and indirectly: drought stress, changes the rainfall temperature patterns humidity patterns - they're driving direct changes in the, in our biome....But not only that, the indirect impact is that it's driving migration, it's driving urbanization and it's driving all those other things that are increasing the risk of epidemics because we don't have the services in place.”*

**Dr Ryan stressed that it has become essential to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, noting that they are crucial for our survival. He said:**

*“...the SDGs are becoming much less about development and more about survival...maybe we should call them Sustainable 'Survival' Goals...this isn't just about development anymore this is really about survival of our civilization...”*

**Also speaking about the Sustainable Development Goals, Minister Eamon Ryan noted:**

*“The framework provided by these Goals will provide a sustainable inclusive recovery and an equitable future for all people especially the most vulnerable. We're committed to ensuring a balanced and inclusive recovery...”*

The Minister also announced the development of a new national implementation plan for the Sustainable Development Goals based on a new [public consultation](#) which will address supports necessary for groups to participate with the SDGs.

**Paola Simonetti, Deputy Director, International Trade Union Confederation noted that COVID 19 has triggered an extraordinary wave of destruction across the world of work. She said:**

*“The international Labour Organization estimates that over 250 million jobs have been destroyed and more than 1.6 billion informal workers are facing deprivation. The number of workers living in moderate or extreme poverty increased by 108 million in 2020, reversing five years of continuous progress.*

*It is now imperative to focus on a human-centred recovery from the unprecedented crisis that is affecting the world of work...the Sustainable Development Goals..are helping us in this respect, showing the path towards resilient economies and just societies.*

*“You cannot have a human centred approach if you don't have Just Transition measures that can accompany the transition of workers when there are technological or climate shifts...we see that countries that have a stronger social protection system cope better now with the pandemic”*

**Asad Rehman, Executive Director of War on Want noted that we cannot have a just recovery unless we tackle existing injustices faced by the Global South. He said:**

*“...we are currently heading towards a catastrophic warming of the planet of at least three degrees, if not more, and that of course threatens the existence of many of our fellow citizens across the world. So richest countries are not only failing to do their fair share as set out in*

*the Paris Agreement ...but even those inadequate plans that are in place continue to bank on unproven risky and non-existent technologies ...*

*...the unmet promise from a decade ago to provide 100 billion a year to the close to 13 trillion, that has been spent, mainly in the global north on the corporate response ...the 16 trillion that has flowed in financial flows from the south to the north since 1980 alone...Even today the reality is, for every \$1 that flows in aid, \$24 flows in the opposite direction. It literally is that the South, is developing the Global North...*

*...I think we have this incredible opportunity at this moment - there is a window that exists for us to actively and, and, and consciously uproot these unjust systems, and for us to champion, a vision of a genuine just transition for all. That's why we as War on Want together when many of our partners all around the world are calling for a global Green New Deal."*

ENDS

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**Notes:**

[1] Coalition 2030 is an alliance of 75 civil society organisations working together to ensure Ireland keeps its promise to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), both at home and abroad. The coalition is made up of both international and domestic NGOs along with youth organisations, environmental groups, academics, and trade unions. Its member organisations work in a broad variety of areas – from humanitarian relief to labour rights and environmental sustainability – in Ireland and around the world. See more [here](#).

[2] See further [information on the conference here](#).

[3] During the Conference, civil society experts discussed the 2020 “[Shared Vision for a Just Recovery](#)” - a joint statement endorsed by 14 national coalitions and 50+ organizations from all sectors of Irish civil society – which includes 6 principles for a fair and sustainable recovery from the social and economic shock of the Covid-19 pandemic.

[4] The conference highlighted that the COVID-19 crisis has seriously jeopardised progress on the Sustainable Development Goals. Ireland has also failed to produce an adequate Implementation Plan to integrate the Global Goals into domestic policies. However, the Government announced on Monday that it is leading a public consultation on the development of a new national SDG implementation plan. See

<https://climateconversations.citizenspace.com/decc/sdg-national-implementation-plan-consultation/>