



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
14 June 2019

Original: English

2019 session

26 July 2018–25 July 2019

Agenda item 5

High-level segment

Statement submitted by Baha’i International Community, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



Unity in Action: Reclaiming the Spirit of the Sustainable Development Agenda

More apparent today than ever before in human history is one simple truth: that the peoples of the world constitute a single human race living in a common global homeland. The interconnection inherent in this reality is evident on all sides. The lives of multitudes around the world are impacted by agreements reached in far-off capitals and centers of commerce. So too, even the greatest beneficiaries of the current global order find their personal circumstances increasingly influenced by the hopes and aspirations – all too often frustrated – of the masses of humanity. The welfare of any one segment of humankind, it becomes clear, is inextricably bound up with the welfare of the whole. This is the foundation for progress and lasting development today.

Such interdependence, or what we refer to as the oneness of humankind, calls for conscious expansion of the bounds of empathy and concern. Yet dominant currents everywhere are pushing people apart, not drawing them together. Competing ideologies and struggles for power proliferate as various groups strive to define themselves, their place in the world, and how they should act. And rival conceptions about the primacy of particular peoples are advanced to the exclusion of the truth that humanity is on a common journey in which all are protagonists.

Despite these trends, the international community has achieved commendable consensus around the form of the Sustainable Development Goals, as articulated in their various targets and indicators. Yet translating those aspirations into lived reality will require a tremendous expansion of Agenda 2030's "spirit of strengthened global solidarity". Crucial in this regard will be ensuring that the interconnected nature of humanity is a principal consideration in both policy-making and action.

Agenda 2030 provides useful guidance on how this can be achieved. Calling for "collaborative partnership" among all stakeholders, it commits signatories to "inter-cultural understanding, tolerance, mutual respect and an ethic of global citizenship and shared responsibility." Yet such ideals must transcend rhetoric and find greater expression in the working processes of global affairs if meaningful change is to be achieved. This requires, for example, the practice of holistic collaboration, inclusive processes, and mutual respect across every race, class, nationality, and religion. Decision-making and planning, execution and assessment – every facet of the global development endeavour – must be organized to reflect the conviction that every people has a unique and vital role to play in the advancement of civilization. This is work that must be carried forward at every level of governance, as well as through the efforts of civil society organizations, local communities, and individuals themselves. In this way can more unified patterns of interaction be built, and Agenda 2030's "transformational vision" take on greater life and meaning.
