

“Building back better from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”.

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While battling against the global health crisis, young people are not losing sight of the 2030 Agenda. Having worked with young women in conflict-affected areas through the Young Women+Leaders for Peace network, a program of the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders. I believe that SDGs need to be the foundation for recovery efforts, and for rebuilding more resilient communities and institutions. We have to recognize that without reduced inequality, violence, injustice, and corruption, it will be impossible to make the necessary progress on the different global agenda, even more so in the context of the pandemic.

Young people are some of the most affected by the pandemic's socio-economic impacts. Despite the intersecting effects of this pandemic to young people, youth remains the most active in the COVID responses in the local and national level. In our network, our young women are at the frontlines volunteering in delivering relief services, initiating fundraising activities, delivering hygiene kits to young women and girls, and translating COVID prevention materials to different local languages to make information more accessible to communities especially those with no internet access. However, most of these efforts, especially from the local level, to this date, remain unrecognized, unamplified and receive little financial and technical support.

To achieve sustainable development, we need to be serious in being inclusive in all our processes. In the context of COVID 19, this pandemic has reminded us that it is critical to recognize its impact on young people including young women, and to ensure that young people are meaningfully included in shaping responses and in deciding the “*New Normal*” from health to the economy, and security to social protection, particularly in conflict-affected and post-conflict areas where young men and women face the risk of being excluded from decision-making processes.