

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to address you today.

My name is Alicia Tauro, and today I am speaking on behalf of the United Nations Major Group for Children and Youth. We are the General Assembly-mandated, formal, self-organised mechanism for youth to engage in certain intergovernmental sustainable development processes. We are also an active member of the Civil Society Financing for Development Group. The Major Group for Children and Youth is committed to ensuring decent jobs for all young people, and we encourage everyone to make a commitment to the Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth, as well.

Personally, I work for YUVA, which since 1984 has been supporting and empowering the oppressed and marginalised, including young people. Youth are not passive; we are a strong positive energy that can disrupt the status quo to transform societies

At the ECOSOC Youth Forum last week, young people stressed that we must look beyond GDP and challenge the mainstream discourse of development. GDP doesn't measure inclusivity of growth OR inequalities, and yet we continue to use it as our magic metric.

Young people - all people - must be seen as more than just engines of GDP, steamrolling over planetary boundaries. We are partners in development, equal citizens of the world. And in order to achieve that, we need: living wages, safe working conditions, social security and social protection floors. We need affordable and quality education at all levels; education is a right, not a commodity. We need institutions that are open, transparent, and accountable to all people.

To make this policy mix especially effective, we must also ensure that these don't stop at the national level. Whether a universal social protection floor or a universal labour guarantee, these things must be mobile, especially since there are a record number of migrants and globally displaced people today. We need to strengthen regional and international cooperation to prevent tax avoidance and evasion.

Investing in youth development is only possible if we stop illicit financial flows.

Progressive taxation, especially on extreme wealth and large corporations, and equitable redistribution through open and democratic processes is the only way to achieve inclusive, human-centered growth.

But redistribution alone isn't enough to right all of the inequalities in the world today. We urgently need structural transformation! Financialization has led to perverse concentrations of wealth in the hands of a few, exclusive growth, and extreme inequalities. The global trend of "one-dollar one-vote" democracies is the single biggest barrier to achieving Agenda 2030.

Yes. The private sector must be included in these discussions, but the first principle of corporate social responsibility must be to pay their fair share of taxes. They must also be held accountable when they invest in development to avoid any human rights violations. These accountability standards must be set at the global level, but can only be implemented locally. Decentralized, bottom-up, grassroots engagement of all stakeholders is the only way to reduce structural inequalities.

And in the midst of this rise of the private sector, we find the dialogue shifting towards entrepreneurship as a solution to youth unemployment.

Entrepreneurship is not a silver bullet. It takes responsibility away from job creating institutions and employers. The policies

that will support entrepreneurs will also help everyone. Access to health care will help everyone, not just entrepreneurs.

On a similar note, youth participation in the labour market can only be fixed with an honest and critical reflection and analysis on why we aren't currently participating. How can you expect someone to do well in school when they don't have enough to eat? How can you expect a young person to take a risk like starting their own company when they have student debt? How can we have a job when we have to care for the young or the elderly?

This morning, the Secretary General said that "We need more money to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals." The money is there, it is the redistribution mechanisms that are not. We must increase tax revenue, and then invest, equitably and together.

And to those asking for incentives, well, sustained life on Earth is the only incentive anyone should need to invest.