**Confronting Challenges: Strategies for Recovery Post COVID-19**

In this document, we share theconcerns and recommendations put forward by the groups making up the alliance in order to contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the country. Argentina suffered the impact of COVID-19, as did other countries, with the setback in achievements and progress, especially in SDGs. The increase in poverty and its effect on the population is worrying. In relation to labor, especially in the informal sector, it resulted in the loss of employment for various population groups as well as the subsequent loss of quality of life for those in vulnerable situations. This included those of African descent and indigenous people as well as the particularly vulnerable population of care workers, encompassing, among others, sex workers, migrants, displaced people, and women with disabilities. The government adopted the measures of the Emergency Family Income (EFI) for highly vulnerable families, reaching a considerable number of those in need. Unfortunately, there were groups unable to gain access to the services such as disabled persons who receive non-contributory pensions or irregularly or undocumented migrants. Population-level demographic information on ethnicity, race, and other variables is still lacking and prevents us from measuring the magnitude of the affected population. This year’s census should resolve the situation. Faced with the increase in drug consumption, the challenge is to map the incipient areas with the highest risk and develop coordinated programs for all areas with sufficient budgets from the local to the national level, including border areas. In the case of indigenous peoples, the preexisting systemic conditions of their vulnerability were increased by COVID-19. Indigenous women were the most affected due to their vulnerability.

The conditions experienced by indigenous peoples need to be urgently addressed as historical debts continue to impact the development of the careers of children and youth within their territories as well as both their private and social lives. The deficient nutrition and lack of clean drinking water contribute to a vulnerability to disease and subsequent suffering and disability. There is an urgent need to address the problems of the child and adolescent population of indigenous peoples: malnutrition, sexual abuse, lack of access to basic health care, and lack of water, among other problems. What these solutions require can be achieved through the inclusion of these populations in the decision-making and political process, as well as budget setting. The State must guarantee legal security in all contexts to indigenous peoples as serious immediate action is needed in order to avoid the further suffering of women in these territories. It is necessary to review and process disaggregated data on the multiple forms of pollution as the consequences of extractive companies and their use of agrotoxins. The State must respect and enforce the implementation of food sovereignty, an inalienable intercultural rights that are not being respected. Inequalities need to be eliminated in order for sustainable life and the ability for indigenous people to exercise their rights, like Free Prior and Informed Consent.

The pandemic affected the progress of SDG 4. The two-course interruption of in-classroom learning had a severe negative impact. We welcome the 2021 education budget increase. The difficulty of connectivity in many parts of the country, even in the precarious housing of large cities as in most emergency neighborhoods, the lack of access to a computer or phone for exclusive use, the limited available time for school-related activities, and the difficulties in using programs lead to the abandonment of the education system of more than two million children and adolescents who need to recover. UNICEF showed that two months into the 2021 school year, 33% of students continued to have access to only virtual education. The recent result of the Connect Equality plan is a positive step in the right direction (Dec. 11/22).

The pandemic highlighted the difficulties of access for people with disabilities (PWD) to accessible technological environments, educational supports, reasonable accommodation, real educational inclusion, as well as the refusal of enrollment that exists despite the Convention on the Rights of Persons With Disabilities and Resolution 311. Educational inclusion is based on all children studying in the same schools with the same support, reasonable accommodations, and accessibility measures. Under educational inclusion, special schools are also supported for those who require a specific institutional setting to attend but retain the possibility of sharing common school spaces. We continue to owe this to the children. As evidenced by COVID-19, we also lack Comprehensive Sexual Education in virtuality, something that had preexisting delays. It is essential that the State adopt and strengthen measures and public policies aimed at ensuring the implementation of Comprehensive Sexual Education throughout the country, including in teacher training, from a human rights, gender, and diversity perspective. We celebrate the 2021 creation of the Federal Supervisory Committee of Integral Sexual Education within the National Education Ministry as it has fostered multisectoral participation. The recent sanction on the Resolution N 419 of the Federal Council of Education proposed to strengthen the implementation of Integral Sexual Education and its reach to all schools. Indigenous women and girls must have the right to Integral Sexual Education in the framework of Integral Bilingual Education programs. In order to achieve this, a program must be implemented in order to strengthen the programs from a local to a national level. Another important goal is the sustainable development of education through the implementation of teaching and the application of SDGs in the curriculum of formal education, something that is yet to exist in the country.

Gender equality SDG 5 is a cross-cutting issue. The objective of SDG **Goal 5.2** is to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls, including all forms of trafficking, sexual exploitation, and other types of exploitation. This goal has been advanced by the implementation of comprehensive assistance programs and the strengthening of the economic and decision-making autonomy within programs like “Acompañar” and “Producir”**.** Something to overcome is the inability of pensioners to apply. In order to understand the frequency of this occurrence, we need to strengthen the intersectional approach of the information systems. The lack of disaggregated data from an intersectional approach, for example, on the violence and abuse of other groups, including that of indigenous women and other vulnerable groups, and limits the ability to design specific and effective public policies. We should expand the plans of the Civil Society Organizations (CSO) for the design and implementation of anti-violence plans. With respect to ILO Convention 190, which was ratified in 2021, regulations should be accelerated so that the plans can begin to be applied.

The Argentine State must have adequate policies for the comprehensive protection and eradication of online gender violence designed with the participation of women´s and LGBTQIAᐩ organizations. It should campaign to visualize this form of violence and incorporate prevention tools into formal education. Progress has been made with regard to Goal 2.4 on unpaid care tasks: an inter-ministerial roundtable on care was set up to include the gender perspective and a commission of specialists was formed to draft the preliminary draft of a comprehensive national care system. The bill presented with the extension of the leave period for non-gestating parents and the care for people with disabilities, incorporates leave for adoption, assisted fertilization, and gender violence. It also recognizes co-responsibility and redistribution of caregiving tasks. It is essential that these policies reach the entire working population, including those in the informal system as well as independent of self-employed workers.

**Goal 5.5** on the full and effective participation of women and their equal opportunity for leadership at all decision-making levels lead the country to make progress with the parity law in the national parliament, achieving levels close to the parity in the Chamber of Deputies and with laws in 7 provinces in 2020. In the Executive Branch, there are only two women who hold ministerial positions (10% of the administrations). In the Justice System, the Gender Map, updated in 202, shows only 31% of women holding positions as judges and National Chamber of Civil Appeals workers within the Federal Courts. The Supreme Court of Justice is composed only of men. Although the deadline has expired, the nomination has yet to have been sent to the Senate in order to fill the vacant position after the registration of the only woman. Feminist organizations are demanding the nomination of a woman.

We welcome the December 2020 approval of the law on the Voluntary Interruption of Pregnancy, which made progress on **Goal 5.6** with the measures adopted for its implementation, despite persisting barriers. The State must guarantee the effective implementation of the law, which requires public policies to ensure the availability of sexual and reproductive health services, trains professionals, ensures access to misoprostol, promotes the commercialization of mifepristone, strengthens post obstetric care, strengthens comprehensive sex education and access to information to legally empower women and pregnant people, ends the criminalization of health professionals and legal proceedings against people who have had an abortion or suffered a miscarriage. In relation to surrogacy, legal loopholes impact the ability to exercise rights. In relation to reproductive technology, despite regulation guaranteeing free access to assisted reproduction methods within the social security system, there are still barriers preventing equal access for all people, regardless of economic status.

 In relation to **SDG 17**, the ability to ensure the participation of all stakeholders involved in the implementation of the Agenda is still pending. The difficulties that large population groups, like indigenous peoples or those of Afro-descent, have faced are based on structural inequalities that must be overcome. In addition, there is a lack of compliance with the 1989 Convention on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples (N. 169) and the Latin American Policy Innovation Connections (LAPIC). In order to comply with SDGs, indigenous peoples must have suitable, sufficient, and budgeted conditions. Both collective and individual rights continue to be violated through deforestation, water pollution from extractive activities, burned territories, the trafficking of indigenous women, and the living conditions that have unfolded on women’s bodies and the history of conquest for centuries. It is important to recognize indigenous *Piqueteras* or *Villeras* women from popular slums who are on the front line. These women are at the desks of justice. They hold assorted professions and activities in the countryside, sell food in the cities, and are essential to the struggle for life in these communities.

Two conventions have been adopted during the Forty-Third Regular Session of the General Assembly of the Organization of American States, held in La Antigua, Guatemala in 2013: The Inter-American Convention Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, and Related Forms of Intolerance (A-68), which came into effect on November 2017; and the Inter-American Convention Against All Forms of Discrimination and Intolerance (A-69), which came into effect in February 2020, signed in Argentina in 2013. Both conventions should be ratified as soon as possible. Difficulties persist for participants who don´t live in the AMBA. We propose the institutionalization and expansion of opportunities for participation within the Civil Society for existing or future provincial groups in order to ensure that no one is left behind. We offer our collaboration in order to have social dialogue at local, provincial, and national levels with the participation of stakeholders, as stated in goal 17.17. Regarding **Goal 17.** indigenous women demand the elimination of criminalization by extractive companies in their territories. The power and development of these companies have advanced with the systematic expropriation of territories. Civil Society and Feminist Movement groups claim that National and Provincial governments contradict the discourse of environmental conservation which promotes sustainable development, without achieving compliance with the 2030 Agenda, which specifically respects land and territory sovereignty against the impact of extractive industry, thus preventing the usurpation or contamination. The State must expand national funds and establish the necessary regulations in order to prevent projects from affecting either the environment or the lives of indigenous populations. It must try to generate clean energy and discard and reduce the use of fossil fuels. This must accompany the articulation of Public Policies of the National State with the collaboration of provinces and municipalities in order to improve sustainable development and eliminate the structural inequalities that it generates in Argentina and across all countries (**Goal 17.14)**.

We make these recommendations to the national government based on the challenges that we see in the Civil Society. These contributions do not exhaust all observations but consider the need for the strengthening of civil society participation. We offer our collaboration and assistance, but the government must act on these recommendations now.

Buenos Aires, April 2022.