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## NGO Major Group Calls on Sustainable Development Goals to Prioritize the Rights, Health, and Wellbeing of People, Animals, and the Environment

June 28, 2022 (Albuquerque, NM) – A recent study called the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)—the 169 international goals dedicating to achieving a healthy, sustainable world—“all talk, no action”; but a new position paper released by the NGO Major Group for the UN High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) offers countries and their leaders an important roadmap for ensuring that the SDGs fully succeed.

“This is a beautiful report, founded on social and ecological justice,” said Dr. Hope Ferdowsian, an internal and preventive medicine physician, and co-founder and CEO of Phoenix Zones Initiative—which is a member of the NGO Major Group that created the report.

“The COVID-19 pandemic and the climate emergency have brought to reality the importance of social and ecological interventions focused on the interconnected rights, health, and wellbeing of vulnerable humans, other animals, and the environment,” Ferdowsian said. “It’s vital that these interventions are embedded into the SDGs, and I’m heartened that Phoenix Zones Initiative was able to influence so many elements of the Group’s report to ensure that it places justice, primary prevention, and the connections between people, animals, and the planet at the heart of global policy and practice.”

Integral to the relevance of the NGO Major Group’s report are

- the inclusion of the Just One Health approach, which centers primary prevention, justice, and the interdependence of people, animals, and the planet;
- explicit attention to the rights, health, and wellbeing of people and animals in sustainable development;
- attention to ending the exploitation of humans (especially women and children), animals, and nature—including the need to address outdated economic models and harmful industries;
- the need to shift to a sustainable, ethical plant-based food system.

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As the Group noted in its report, “Taking a holistic, One Health approach in pandemic recovery can have myriad benefits, including mitigating climate change, reducing environmental degradation and pollution, halting biodiversity loss, while simultaneously supporting human and animal health and welfare.”

Each year decision makers across the globe come together at the UN High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) to review progress on the Sustainable Development Goals and to make recommendations for new policy. The NGO Major Group, which enables nongovernmental organizations—such as Phoenix Zones Initiative—to engage in efforts to improve and update the UN Sustainable Development Goals, is one of those participants.

The theme for 2022’s HLPF is “Building Back Better from COVID-19 While Advancing the Full Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.”

#### About Phoenix Zones Initiative

Phoenix Zones Initiative (PZI) is a global nonprofit organization that advances the interdependent rights, health, and wellbeing of people, animals, and the planet through education, research, and advocacy. Led by physicians and a diverse team, PZI focuses on widespread ethical and structural change. PZI advances social, economic, and environmental policy to uplift the most vulnerable and marginalized, and provides resources so that others can do the same. Follow Phoenix Zones Initiative on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#), [YouTube](#), and the [Phoenix Zones Initiative](#) website.