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Session on “How do we get on track for building more peaceful, equal and inclusive societies?”

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Thank you, Director-General Beagle. I would like to make three points.

First, the Covid-19 pandemic holds important lessons for responses to the global climate crisis. Far from seeing an equitable allocation of scarce resources like protective equipment, medicine, and vaccines, we’ve these resources follow the contours of wealth and power.

In responding to the climate crisis, I urge you to uphold the principle that resources for climate adaptation and mitigation should be allocated on the basis of *equal rights to a healthy and safe environment*, rather than as a commodities to be allocated on the basis of purchasing power or as a privileges to be allocated on the basis of political power.¹

Second, with respect to international cooperation. We must ensure that international assistance builds *national fiscal capacity* to provide vital public goods and services rather than supplanting this capacity. Two steps that would help are first, to encourage (rather than discourage) tariffs on luxury imports; and second, to end the ubiquitous tax exemptions granted to the international community.

When tariffs are slashed in the name of free trade – even tariffs on luxuries such as automobiles, yachts, private airplanes, and whiskey – countries give up an important tax handle that is not only easy to administer but also progressive in its impact.

Similarly, when international agencies demand and receive exemptions from the payment of taxes and tariffs to host governments, this not only fails to build fiscal capacity but also sends the counterproductive signal that rich and powerful people cannot be expected to pay their fair share of taxes.²

Finally, and again with respect to resource mobilization: The complementary goals of building more peaceful, equal and inclusive societies requires that governments and international agencies move resolutely to *curb plunder, money laundering, tax evasion, and capital flight*.

¹ For discussion, see James K. Boyce, *Economics for People and the Planet*. London: Anthem, 2019.

² For discussion, see James K. Boyce and Madeline O’Donnell, eds., *Peace and the Public Purse*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2007.

Stemming the massive hemorrhage of resources from developing nations to offshore havens requires more than fine words and good intentions; it requires deep reforms in the international financial architecture, including concerted action by countries that are on the receiving end of the looted resources, to combat the transnational networks that facilitate and enable plunder in all its forms.³

Thank you.

³ For discussion, see Léonce Ndikumana and James K. Boyce, eds., *On the Trail of Capital Flight from Africa*. Oxford University Press, forthcoming in January 2022.