

# GWI United Nation Representative Advocacy Report 2019

## GWI advocacy goals

1. 100% of United Nations Member States commit to policy, legislation, budget and infrastructure to facilitate transition of girls from primary to secondary school and ensure gender parity and gender equality throughout secondary education by 2030.
2. By 2030 100% of United Nations low income Member States have increased access to tertiary education for girls and women by 50%.
3. 100% of United Nations Member States commit to and implement policies for continuing education to empower women throughout the life course, within the formal and informal economies.
4. Influence the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4.
5. All 17 SDGs will include girls' education targets.

**Please bear in mind these five overarching, long-term goals during any United Nations intervention that you make on behalf of GWI. Any intervention should push these five goals further.**

**NB:** *Although these goals represent GWI's mission, our United Nations Representatives are should always promote all GWI key messages and represent GWI professionally.*

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**Name:** Maryella Hannum - GWI UN Representative/NY

**City of UN Representation:** UN Headquarters, New York, NY

**Session/meeting attended: (place, date, time, name of meeting)**

The 57<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission for Social Development (CSocD57), February 11-21, 2019, United Nations Headquarters, NY

**Subject of session/meeting**

*Priority Theme: Addressing Inequalities and Challenges to Social Inclusion through Fiscal, Wage and Social Protection Policies*

*Two Focused Emerging Issues: Empowerment of people affected by natural and human-made disasters to reduce inequality; and addressing the differential impact on persons with disabilities, older persons and youth*

**Background:** The Commission for Social Development (CSocD) is the UN entity dedicated to the social development pillar of global sustainable development within the UN system. It is made up of 46 members elected by ECOSOC for four-year terms and based on equitable geographical distribution.

**Sustainable Development Goals addressed:**

3 Health & Well-Being; 4 Quality Education; 5 Gender Equality; 8 Decent Work; 10 Reduced Inequalities; 16 Peace & Justice; and 17 Partnerships

**Relevant treaties/conventions/resolutions referenced/addressed:**

Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action (World Summit for Social Development, Copenhagen 1995); and situations and action plans of social groups including Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Person with Disabilities; World Programme of Action for Youth; and Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing

The CSocD is the UN entity responsible for follow-up and implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action (1995), based on consensus by world leaders of the need to put people at the center of development.

Original declaration (1995) consisted of 10 commitments adopted by governments (periodically updated with new initiatives):

- Create an economic, political, social, cultural and legal environment that will enable people to achieve social development
- Eradicate absolute poverty by a target date to be set by each country
- Support full employment as a basic policy goal
- Promote social integration based on the enhancement and protection of all human rights
- Achieve equality and equity between women and men
- Attain universal and equitable access to education and primary health care
- Accelerate the development of Africa and the least developed countries
- Ensure that structural adjustment programmes include social development goals
- Increase resources allocated to social development
- Strengthen cooperation for social development through the UN

**Summary of session/meeting:**

The CSocD57 consisted of high-level panel discussion, ministerial session on social protection, interactive dialogue and panel discussions, and side events on the priority theme and emerging issues including the Civil Society Forum.

The CSocD57 emphasized inequality as a central defining issue in sustainable development and stressed the link between social protections and inequalities, and that fiscal, wage and social policies are key to reducing inequalities. It was also emphasized that the priority of the international community is to deliver on achieving the 2030 Agenda for Social Development of eradicating poverty and of leaving no one behind and with a focus of placing people at the center of development.

It was highlighted that the CSocD57 priority theme as a pervasive issue was closely aligned with the work and themes of other high-level meetings taking place in 2019 including the 2019 High Level Political Forum (HLPF), *Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality*, and the 63<sup>rd</sup> Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), *Social*

*protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.*

It was stressed during the sessions that income inequality had increased in many countries around the world and that health and education disparities remained high. It was also emphasized that extreme poverty exists in the world together with extreme wealth and that the CSocD's commitment is to address inequality in all forms along with other UN functioning units focused on sustainable development.

UNDP expressed the year 2019 as "inequalities year" and to focus in on "how the world can accelerate the reduction of inequalities". The issue of inequalities was expressed as "at the heart and the intersection of all our global agendas—sustainable development, sustaining peace or prevention". Overall it was stressed that the issues and importance of addressing social protections and inequalities is understood and in agreement but the challenge is how to address it effectively. Adoption and implementation of innovative policies are needed both globally between governments and in-country on national levels. G77 discussions emphasized "resource mobilization and fiscal policies that ensure sustained public investments in education and skills development, creating enabling environments for business and entrepreneurship, and promoting labor policies that foster decent jobs, particularly for women and youth, combined with effective, inclusive social protection systems".

With a focus on the number of persons living in poverty and the mass of people living without decent employment, governments were called on to adopt and implement policies that would increase investment for education, health, infrastructure and social protection systems, and for governments to avoid cutting social services or having a focus on austerity measures and privatization methods. Governments were instead encouraged to distribute resources and promote social inclusion to protect people and support families and address the many challenging issues of inequality and social inclusion (leaving no one behind).

Adoption and implementation of fiscal policies was highlighted including re-distribution policies and broader economic policies focused on increased public spending, strengthening the tax base, job growth and the creation of opportunities for people, especially women, to ensure no one is left behind. It was stressed that the IMF and WB approaches need to better align with the universal benefits and targeting of the 2030 Agenda and the approach of UN entities to achieve the goals.

The CSocD approved four draft resolutions for adoption (ECOSOC).

On inequalities, "*Addressing Inequalities and Challenges to Social Inclusion Through Fiscal, Wage and Social Protection Policies*" (According to Thematic Expert, Catherine Benson Wahlen: ECOSOC would encourage governments to expand social protection to cover all through their life cycle; promote affordable and equitable access to basic services; use sound public spending policies to facilitate universal health care (UHC); promote labor policies to provide decent work for all and a fair share of productivity for workers; and tackle social exclusion and discrimination; and ensuring women's employment and earnings contribute to curbing inequality and promoting equal pay for work of equal value).

On youth, “*Policies and Programmes Involving Youth*” (According to Thematic Expert, Catherine Benson Wahlen: The resolution calls for promoting the full participation of young people and their organization in decision making at all levels, including in implementing the 2030 Agenda, and underscores the linkages between youth unemployment and inequality; redoubling efforts towards quality education and ensuring that learning helps to develop skills for the future of work and comprises sustainable development education, civic education and conflict prevention; strengthening evidence-based national policies and programmes for young people, including through generating and using more robust disaggregated data on young people).

On Africa, “*Social Dimensions of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD)*” (According to Thematic Expert, Catherine Benson Wahlen: The resolution stresses the importance of promoting integrated and coordinated implementation, monitoring and reporting of the 2030 Agenda and the African Union’s (AU) Agenda 2063 through joint programmes and activities).

The fourth resolution on organization of work (CSocD) called for ECOSOC to agree that the priority theme for the 58<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission will be *Affordable Housing and Social Protection System for All to Address Homelessness*.

**Intervention by GWI representative:**

Submit reporting on the overall session

**How this serves GWI members:**

Serves to explain the prominent themes of social protection and inequalities at several high-level meetings scheduled to take place in 2019 and their relevance in achieving sustainable development and Agenda 2030. Understanding the link between pervasive inequalities and the need for social inclusion through social protection systems is key in advocating for the adoption and implementation of policies that will address inequalities, ensure access to social protection systems and lead to sustainable development.