



GW I UPDATE – 19 August 2020

High Level Political Forum (HLPF) 2020 Special Edition



HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The meeting of the 2020 United Nations (UN) High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on sustainable development was held 7-16 July 2020, under the theme "Accelerated action and transformative pathways: realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development".

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— GWI VP Advocacy and Education HLPF Summary —



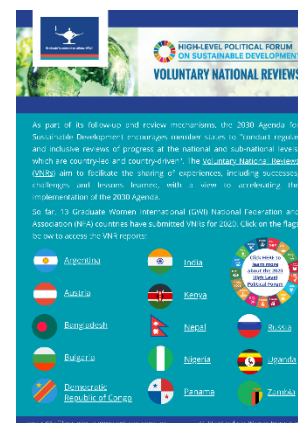
"Accelerating action and transformative pathways:
realising the decade of action and delivery
for sustainable development",
Louise McLeod, GWI VP Advocacy and Education

The HLPF is, since 2013, the main UN platform on sustainable development for the follow-up and review of the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#). This year's HLPF served as a critical and essential turning point for education in the

COVID-19 world. The HLPF was attended virtually by GWI VP Advocacy and Education, Louise McLeod, GWI UN Representative, New York, Maryella Hannum, and the GWI Office staff and intern, Sophie Hussler. Ms. McLeod deconstructed the 10-day HLPF into an extraordinary comprehensive report that presents the sessions thematically, as they relate to GWI advocacy initiatives and strategy. This newsworthy report strikingly validates the need for education to be built back better on the heels of COVID-19, leaving no one behind, especially women and girls, and marginalised populations. We encourage you to read Ms. McLeod's full account of the HLPF, which can be downloaded [HERE](#).

— HLPF Voluntary National Reviews —

As part of its follow-up and review mechanisms, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development encourages member states to "conduct regular and inclusive reviews of progress at the national and sub-national levels, which are country-led and country-driven". The Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) aim to facilitate the sharing of experiences, including successes, challenges and lessons learned, with a view to accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. GWI National Federation and Association (NFA) in 13 countries have submitted VNRs for 2020. Click [HERE](#) to access the [exclusive GWI HLPF VNRs infographic](#), providing easy access to all 13 VNR reports. More information about the VNR process is available [HERE](#).



GWI 2020 HLPF VNR
Infographic

— Special Events (held virtually) —

Learning and Training for SDG implementation in the COVID-19 era

This SDG special event held on 7 July and organised by the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) focused on the implementation of the SDGs in a COVID-19 world, and especially focused on education. The speakers mentioned the massive impact of COVID-19 crisis on school closures, with 1.6 billion students affected and highlighted the need for investment in innovative education and policies, reminding the importance of SDG4, quality education. Education should also include the teaching of sustainability - bringing knowledge is the best way to engage students and youth. But it was also stressed that such changes in education must come with more inclusiveness of all marginalised populations, and it was underlined that a focus must be put on women and girls, as they are among the most affected by the pandemic. Find the recording and the presentations of the event [HERE](#).

Intergenerational dialogue: bringing children and young people into the decade of action

Building on the UN Secretary-General's call to Prioritize Children's Education, Food, Health and Safety amid the COVID-19 Pandemic, Save the Children, UNICEF and the Child Focused Agencies co-organised on 8 July an intergenerational dialogue between children and member states to address the urgent need to invest in and empower children and youth as agents of change both in COVID-19 response and in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The dialogue highlighted the importance of inclusive, gender-responsive and child sensitive social and child protection policies and programmes to implement the Agenda 2030 in light of COVID-19 realities and remaining global challenges. Learn more [HERE](#).

Lessons learned from the COVID-19 crisis and enabling factors for the SDGs

The COVID-19 crisis has made it urgent to think of a renewal of economies towards more sustainability. This SDGs Learning Training and Practice event, held on 10 July, partnered acclaimed organisations such as the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Green Jobs Programme, International Women's Rights Action Watch Asia Pacific, Global Reporting Initiative, Women's Major Group, World Benchmarking

Alliance, UN Global Compact, UN Conference on Trade and Development and the UN Research Institute for Sustainable Development. The speakers highlighted the potential of the pandemic crisis in raising awareness of the need for policies, which integrate social issues such as racial and gender equality but also climate responses. GWI notes the representativeness of women's organisations in this panel, underlining the impact of the current macroeconomic situation on women and girls, their overrepresentation in care jobs and underpaid jobs and the need for systemic changes. Human rights must be put at the centre of change and this panel presented tools for a just transition such as the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) providing the ability to link the human rights framework with the SDGs. More information as well as the full recording of the event can be found [HERE](#).

SDG Acceleration Actions to Build Back Better

SDG Acceleration Actions is an online platform established by UNDESA to capture and promote new commitments and actions from national governments and all non-state actors to accelerate the SDG implementation. On 14 July, UNDESA organised a special event aiming to present insightful examples of SDG Acceleration Actions. Opening remarks by the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) President, H.E. Ms. Mona Juul, insisted on the need for collaborative forces on a quest for joint solutions. Among the examples of SDG acceleration actions was the United Kingdom initiative for girls' education, presented by H.E. Ms. Baroness Sugg, Minister of Department for International Development & Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Special Envoy for Girls' Education in the United Kingdom, with a specific focus on SDG4 (quality education) and SDG5 (gender equality). To find out more and get inspired by the SDGs Acceleration Actions, view the full recording of the webinar or read each speaker's statement [HERE](#).

Where Next? Redesigning Further Education for the Future

Education has been put to test by the COVID-19 crisis. This special event organised by the Higher Education Sustainability Initiative (HESI) with specialists from UN agencies and universities, and with notable participation of three young student representatives and opening remarks by ECOSOC President, H.E. Juul, reflected on the current situation of higher education and explored the possibilities to redesign it for a better future. Digitalisation has been at the core of this discussion, underlining the need to integrate an equitable approach of distance learning, by providing equal access to digital tools and the internet to all, and especially ensure that women and girls are not left behind. The speakers stressed the need for more scientific cooperation, with circulation of knowledge and strengthening of the global network. Find the recording of the event [HERE](#).

— Side Events (held virtually) —

SDG after COVID-19: actions for a gender-responsive recovery

This side event, organised by UN Women on 8 July, focused on both immediate and long-term policy actions that are necessary to ensure a gender-responsive recovery to COVID-19 to achieve gender equality and sustainable development. The COVID-19 pandemic is exposing vulnerabilities in social, political and economic systems, which are amplifying its impact. More specifically, the crisis is deepening pre-existing inequalities and structural barriers, particularly in relation to women's limited access to education at the highest level, decent work, social protection systems, healthcare services, safe water and sanitation, decent work and digital infrastructure. Rising demand for care will also likely exacerbate inequalities in the gender division of labour, placing a disproportionate burden on women and girls with potential long-term implications for their health, wellbeing and economic empowerment. Speakers included representatives from Member States, civil society organisations and UN entities. To hear more about actions for gender-responsive recovery click [HERE](#).

Collaborate to accelerate: gendered health

On 8 July, The Kota Alliance organised side event in collaboration with the International Women's Health Coalition and Centre for Migration, Gender and Justice. The event pointed out the issue of access to health for women and marginalised populations and underlined the need for collaboration between all actors on these issues to accelerate the realisation of equality on this matter. The panellists insisted on sexual and reproductive rights as well as access to menstrual hygiene necessities. The full recording of the event can be found [HERE](#).

COVID-19 response and accountability for the elimination of WASH inequalities

The provision of safe water, sanitation and hygienic conditions is essential to protecting human health during all infectious disease outbreaks, including the COVID-19 outbreak. Ensuring good and consistently applied Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) and waste management practices in communities, homes, schools, marketplaces, prisons and health care facilities will further help prevent human-to-human transmission of the COVID-19 virus. Organised on 8 July by Sanitation and Water for All in partnerships with UNICEF and WaterAid, this side-event provided an opportunity to look across different response policies and accountability strategies for the elimination of inequalities in access to WASH, sanitation, hygiene and waste management. Learn more about the event [HERE](#) and about the importance of WASH in the management of the COVID-19 crisis [HERE](#).

Education Post-COVID-19: now is a pivotal time to put education back on course

The COVID-19 crisis highlights the urgent need to put education back on course, capitalise on lessons learned during the crisis and demonstrate the centrality of education to drive recovery and build more sustainable and resilient society. Organised on 9 July by the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) SDG-Education Steering committee and the permanent missions of Argentina, Czech Republic, Japan, Kenya and Norway the "Education Post-COVID 19" side event brought together multilateral institutions, national governments, civil society actors, teachers, private sector and youth advocates to identify key lessons learned during the crisis and alternative learning delivery models to ensure access to equal and safe education to all. Mr. Robert Jenkins, UNICEF Global Chief of Education, highlighted "Framework for Reopening Schools" which was proposed jointly by the UNESCO, UNICEF, the World Food Programme and the World Bank as a guiding document to help national and local authorities to reopen schools. He stressed the importance of adhering to the key principles of education equity and inclusiveness as we strive to realize this once-in-a-generation opportunity for all students. This was reinforced by Ms. Haldis Holst, Education International's Deputy General Secretary, who called on governments to "trust the professionalism of educators and prioritize social dialogue with teachers and unions while ensuring equity as a top priority". To hear this important discussion click [HERE](#).

Discrimination and Corruption: Two sides to the same coin?

This special event organised by Equal Rights Trust in cooperation with Transparency International on 10 July addressed the correlation between corruption and discrimination, two issues, which undermine the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. The panellists highlighted how corruption affects mostly women and marginalised groups such as indigenous peoples, as they lack education and resources and are undermined by the weight of cultural norms. Corruption is taking different forms in societies, such as corruption on land ownership or sextortion, and is usually the result but also the cause of discriminations. The speakers stressed the need for law enforcements and for empowerment of women and marginalised groups, to provide them with the tools to react to the corruption they face by using the law to defend their rights, in order to start changing the practices. For further information on this theme, click [HERE](#).

Save our Education - Save the Children special event

With the pandemic crisis, new projections have been made regarding the education field, which is at risk of facing a \$77 billion funding gap over the next 18 months. Ten million children may never return to school, according to the Save Our Education report. On 14 July, Save the Children held a side event on the necessity to invest in education and prevent it from drowning into the crisis. Recommendations on a global COVID-19 education action plan for organisations and governments were provided and the speakers highlighted the efforts made in their countries and the need for innovations. The presentation noted the importance of a focus on girls' access to education through means such as distance learning, ensuring that girls are able to get access to the necessary technologies to this end. A dialogue between all institutions such as ministries of education as well as investment in tools and teachers training will be a necessity to implement sustainable solutions for education. Speakers included Ministers from several countries, as well as Director of Education at the World Bank Jaime Saavedra. The full recording of this noteworthy event can be found [HERE](#).

Make Mothers Matter: Care and Education - Cornerstones of Sustainable and Just Economies

All over the world, in both developed and developing countries, women assume the majority of unpaid domestic and care work, often juggling paid work and family responsibilities, to the detriment of their personal aspirations, their economic independence, and even their health. The Covid-19 crisis has exacerbated this situation. In families with children, mothers, much more than fathers, have seen the time they devote to childcare increase during the lockdown. On 16 July, Make Mothers Matter (MM) held a side event on Care and Education, highlighting the failings of our current economic system in recognising the essential role of Care, especially unpaid care work, and education in the building of a more just and sustainable future for all. The side-event further emphasised how Covid-19 and its economic devastation offers a unique opportunity to “build back better” by prioritising Care for wellbeing, sustainability and equity. To learn more about MMM and the Care and Education initiative click [HERE](#).

— HLPF 2021 Theme —

HLPF 2021 to Focus on Nine SDGs Linked to Pandemic Recovery

The next session of the HLPF is expected to take place from 6 to 15 July 2021 in New York City. The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) has voted a resolution putting the focus on nine of the 17 SDGs for the HLPF 2021 session. These nine SDGs, being Goal 1: No poverty, 2: Zero hunger, 3: Good health and wellbeing, 8: Decent work and economic growth, 10: Reduced inequalities, 12: Responsible consumption and production, 13: Climate action, 16: Peace, justice, and strong institutions and Goal 17: Partnership for the Goals, will be reviewed at the HLPF 2021. The resolution states that the remainder of the current four-year HLPF cycle (2020-2023) will include an in-depth review of the other SDGs. The UNGA has decided that the thematic focus of ECOSOC and HLPF in 2021 will be ‘Sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, that promotes the economic, social, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development: Building an inclusive and effective path for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda in the context of the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development’.

— Other information and events —

23 August	Indian Federation of University Women's Associations Centenary
8 September	International Literacy Day, Global
14 Sept-2 October	Human Rights Council, 45 th session, United Nations Office, Geneva
18-20 September	Centenary of the French Association of University Women (AFFDU)
21 September	International Day of Peace, Global
5 October	World Teacher's Day, Global
11 October	International Day of the Girl Child, Global
15 October	International Day of Rural Women, Global
17 October	International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, Global
24 October	United Nations Day, Global
17 November	International Student's Day, Global
19 November	World Toilet Day, Global
20 November	Universal Children's Day, Global
25 November	International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, Global
25 Nov-10 Dec	16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, Global

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Empowering women and girls through lifelong education for leadership, decision-making and peace. GWI, formerly IFUW, is in special consultative status with ECOSOC since 1947 and is an NGO maintaining official relations with UNESCO and ILO.

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