



2021

High Level Political Forum Report



Louise McLeod VP Advocacy & Education
Graduate Women International
8/16/2021



High Level Political Forum (HLPF) United Nations ECOSOC

July 6 through July 15, 2021

Src: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/2021>

The High-level Political Forum, United Nations central platform for follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals, provides for the full and effective participation of all States Members of the United Nations and States members of specialized agencies.

"The 2030 Agenda is our roadmap and its goals and targets are tools to get there." -
Secretary-General António Guterres

The high-level political forum on sustainable development (HLPF) is the core United Nations platform for follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

The meeting of the HLPF in 2021 was held **from Tuesday, 6 July, to Thursday, 15 July 2021**, under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council. This included the three-day ministerial meeting of the forum **from Tuesday, 13 July, to Thursday, 15 July 2021**.

The HLPF discussed ways to ensure a sustainable and resilient recovery from COVID-19 that puts us on track to realize the 2030 Agenda. The theme was ***"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"***.

The HLPF in 2021 discussed Sustainable Development Goals 1 on no poverty, 2 on zero hunger, 3 on good health and well-being, 8 on decent work and economic growth, 10 on reduced inequalities, 12 on responsible consumption and production, 13 on climate action, 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions, and 17 on partnerships in depth. The Forum also considered the integrated, indivisible and interlinked nature of the Sustainable Development Goals.¹

The HLPF adopted the Ministerial Declaration as the outcome of its session.

The Ministerial declaration we just adopted expresses our commitment to realize the vision of the 2030 Agenda and overcome the pandemic through international cooperation, multilateralism, global solidarity, and policies guided by evidence and the concern for equity -- and supported by adequate finance and technology.²

¹ WG-USA program and action priorities focus on SDGs 3,4,5, 10, 16, 17.

² [Microsoft Word - Closing PoE 15 July \(un.org\)](#)

Statement by President ECOSOC at the Closing of the High Level Segment of the ECOSOC³

What are major tasks ahead?

First, universal and affordable access to COVID-19 vaccine is essential to defeat the virus and to revive global trade, investment and growth. We have agreed on what needs to be done. We must now do it.

Second, we need to mobilize the \$4.3 trillion the developing countries need to recover from the crises and achieve the SDGs. We await creation of the \$650 billion in new SDRs and a generous re-allocation of unauthorized SDRs for SDG implementation. New financing mechanisms, 8 such as “FACE” Fund, proposed by Costa Rica, and the liquidity and sustainability facility (LSF) proposed by the Economic Commission of Africa would be welcome.

Third, fulfilment of the commitment made by developed countries to provide \$100 billion per year in climate finance is critical, including for the success of the COP-26 in Glasgow.

Fourth, scaled-up investment in sustainable infrastructure – \$ 1 trillion per year – is essential for the transition to a dynamic “green” global economy. A high-level multi-stakeholder dialogue convened by the UN can advance this objective.

Fifth, SDG investment strategies need to focus on employment creation – in sectors like housing, construction, renewable energy, 9 transport, sustainable agriculture and manufacturing. We need action plans at the national, regional and international levels to promote such employment generating projects.

Sixth, poverty and hunger has increased and must be attacked frontally, including through social protection and relief programmes and, expansion in sustainable food production and distribution. The Food Systems Summit will be seminal event.

Seventh, access to advanced technologies and innovations especially digital technologies, must be drastically liberalized.

Finally, we need to mobilize the political will to address the structural and systemic issues – especially the unequal, financial, tax and trade regimes - which impede equitable and dynamic growth and development.

Building peaceful, equal and inclusive societies also requires a people-centered approach that protects the most vulnerable and ensures that all voices are heard. We must engage all actors, national and local governments, large and small businesses, civil society and partnerships.⁴

³ [Microsoft Word - 16 July 2021 Statement by President ECOSOC at Closing of HL Segment of ECOSOC FINAL \(un.org\)](#)

⁴ [Microsoft Word - Closing PoE 15 July \(un.org\)](#)



Reports, Documents, Resources

- The Sustainable Development Goals Report: <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2021/#>
- [Ministerial Declaration](#)
- [Written statements by NGOs in consultative status with ECOSOC](#)
- [Annotated Programme with Speakers](#)
- [Links to recorded videos](#)

GWI Written Statement to the 2021 HLPF

The evidence is clear, poverty reduces a girl's opportunity to attend school. The World Bank estimated that in 2020 the COVID-19 pandemic-induced global new poor would be between 119 and 124 million. In 2021, the estimated COVID-19-induced poor is set to rise to between 143 and 163 million. The number of children living in extreme poverty decreased by 29 million between 2013 and 2017.

However, UNICEF and the World Bank Group also warn that any progress made in recent years is concerningly slow-paced, unequally distributed, and at risk due to the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Considering this evidence, Graduate Women International (GWI) declares that the mere access to education is insufficient to the eradication of poverty and reaffirms its previous statements that the quality of the education is the key contributor to the realization of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 1, No Poverty, SDG 10, Reduced Inequalities and SDG 16, Peaceful and Inclusive societies, while acknowledging the interrelatedness of all 17 SDGs.

One of the most significant barriers to improving education is the sector-wide occurrence of corruption. With government spending on education comprising approximately 20 to 30 percent of many national budgets, education systems are highly susceptible to corruption. Corruption in education emerges in many forms and affects all areas of education, including school financing and infrastructure; recruitment, retainment and training of teachers and educators; distribution of resources and equipment, administration and admission to universities. When corruption is tolerated in education systems, quality students are overlooked. Impoverished girls are hazardously marginalized. Corruption prevents them exponentially from obtaining the same educational benefits as their peers, perpetuating globalizing of poverty.

GWI Position and Recommendations: With its 101-year history in the promotion and advocacy of girls' education, GWI uses this voice to speak out about the interconnection of poverty, corruption and education.

GWI makes these recommendations as steps for all women and girls:

- Guarantee availability of quality secondary and tertiary education to all girls and women; enforce mandatory primary.
- Ensure safe access to quality education through enforcement of laws that protect against varying forms of gender-based violence. Include educational approach in all aspects of poverty eradication. Identify/prosecute instances of corruption in the educational system.
- Actively engage/support NGOs within the educational sector as partners.
- Broaden accountability;
- Institute sanctions for bribery.



- Establish legal frameworks to recruit and advance careers based on merit.
- Examine and strengthen policies of recruiting, hiring, retaining, and promoting female educators to provide young girls with role models.

GWI invites States and organizations worldwide to engage with GWI as a means to eradicate poverty worldwide.



Side event at the High-Level Political Forum 2021
THE IMPORTANCE OF SDG TARGET 4.7 FOR A JUST AND SUSTAINABLE FUTURE IN POST COVID ERA

6 July 2021 | 1:30 - 3:00 CEST



This participatory session co-organised by the Slovak Republic, ICAE, Bridge 47, Unesco Institute for Lifelong Learning and the Ban Ki-moon Centre for Global Citizens, will explore what role transformative education can play in responding to the global challenges, risks and trends of the future, and what capacities, skills and knowledge are needed to cope with the changing realities, in and beyond a pandemic recovery.

Together we will look for steps we can take now in order to help us better prepare for the future of our planet, through the power of transformative education.

SDG 4.7 – Transformative Education (HLPF 2021 Side Event)⁵

Education is not just a side effect, but a fuel for everything we do.⁶

Target 4.7 highlights the power of transformative education: that is education that

- promotes global citizenship, sustainable development, human rights, gender equality, peace and appreciation of cultural diversity
- fosters engaged, active and critical learners that take action for sustainable development
- equips us to better respond to the challenges exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and helps set us on the path towards a sustainable and resilient recovery.

⁵ The importance of SDG 4.7 target for a just and sustainable future in post covid era, HLPF side event 2021 | Mr Rilli Lappalainen Chair of Bridge 47; Ms Tereza Čajkova Foresight 4.7 report University of British Columbia; Ms Anna Plassat Muriňová Slovak Ambassador to UNESCO in Paris; Shermaine Barrett (U. of Technology, Jamaica); Ms Monika Froehler CEO of Ban Ki-moon Centre for Global Citizens; Mr Werner Mauch UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning

⁶ Mr Rilli Lappalainen Chair of Bridge 47



ESD: Education for sustainable development

SDG 4.7 Target

[4.7 by 2030 ensure all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including among others through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development – Indicators and a Monitoring Framework](#)

Capacity Skills Needed

Transformative education⁷ will be well positioned by 2030 but far more complex than it used to be and will be more connected.

- Changes will occur at an unprecedented pace to keep up with climate change for example.
- We will have to learn how to shift our current lifestyles.
- We will need to teach learners how to relate with other in a multifaceted way.
- We may need to realize and face the impact of increasing connectivity but in a more fragmented way.
- We will need to learn how to respond to these realities.
- More and more people are seeking security in information silos.
- Transformative education should teach us how to relate to our planet and our living world, foster a recognition of our interrelationship with each other.

Transformative educators will need to learn how to:

- Respond to new realities.
- Try to move beyond education using static methods and prepare learners to their own critically informed and context relevant discernment rather than transmitting static content about what to think.
- Take the time to learn what failed. Our current education paradigm is still teaching us how to behave like individual consumers (our cosmopolitan way of life).

Features of Transformative Education

Non-formal education that happens beyond the walls of school is also transformative education. Experiences are important: ie Black Lives Matter, The #MeToo movement).

A more reflexive approach to education should cause us to reflect on who we are, are we only interested in our own perspectives or are we involved in a more global approach?

Transformative Education is an examination of where you are and your engagement. Human Rights awareness is critical.

Critical Capacity Skills:

Capacity skills and knowledge are needed in the uncertain future marked by the covid-19 pandemic. A key competence will be adult education in order to increase the capacity to act along with

⁷ **Transformative learning** is one theory of **learning**, and particularly focuses on adult **education** and young adult **learning**. **Transformative learning** is sometimes called transformation **learning**, and focuses on the idea that learners can adjust their thinking based on new information.



motivation to undergo the learning process and equipping people with skills and confidence such as the ability to communicate using written language.

Citizenship education is defined as equipping people to be able to act as a responsible / active person in society. How can I participate? Take a role in my society? This should include human rights education and the understanding and awareness of these processes.

Global citizenship education should include how to act as a responsible global citizen in the same way.

How do we use our possibilities and innovations?

Are we concerned about our inability to reach the unreached? How can we influence them? Sometimes the unreached don't want to be reached or transformed or have the world transformed. Reaching these will be the key challenge. What skills / means do we have to reach those who don't want to be reached and/or have their values change.

1. Collective Consciousness – we need to be grounded in what it means to be sustainable and live in a global world. Eg. Nelson Mandela, Mahatma Gandhi who created new traditions of thought and culture grounded in equity and rights for all humans.
2. Reflexive Action – the ability for us to reflect on who we are and our contributions, attitudes etc.
3. Dialogic Engagement – act in ways that put dialog central to everything we do, providing inclusivity and the creation of a collected voice
4. Lifelong learning starting from pre-school to adulthood and adaptability to times of uncertainty: pandemic, climate change etc.
5. Shifting lifestyles that are adaptable to future actions.

Concrete Skills:

1. It is necessary to be able to deal with uncertainty
2. Put education at the center of recovery post-COVID-19
 - a. education which aims to catalyze global debate on the future of our planet (vision of what education and learning should look like),
 - b. strengthen the global education cooperation mechanism to put education at the center of education and the role of teachers in promoting non-violence and global citizenship (international solidarity)
 - c. support for time-bound initiatives to help countries accelerate towards SDG 4.
3. ESD – has to be complemented by top down action and secure a political commitment to achieving SDG 4. So far political commitments haven't translated to action.

Before covid-19, 75 m children were shifted out of educational systems and during covid-19 128 m are now out of the educational system.

How do we now teach such things as critical thinking for life skills?

SDG 4 achievement is essential for 21st century skills: human rights education along with communications and critical thinking, conflict resolution, creativity, team work etc.