



# 2022 High Level Political Forum



*Louise McLeod, VP Advocacy & Education*  
Graduate Women International  
8/1/2022



## GWI Executive Summary Report – High Level Political Forum 2022

Report submitted by Louise McLeod, GWI VP Advocacy and Education with input from GWI United Nations Representatives (NYC)

# High Level Political Forum 2022

under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council

5 July - 7 July 2022 and 11 July - 15 July 2022

### Theme

***“Building back better from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”***

As the world struggles to recover from COVID-19 amidst continuing crises, the HLPF reviewed recovery policies that can reverse the negative impacts of the pandemic on the SDGs and move countries on to a path to realize the vision of the 2030 Agenda.

The HLPF reviewed in-depth Sustainable Development Goals 4 (quality education), 5 (gender equality), 14 (life below water), 15 (life on land) and 17 (partnerships for the Goals) taking into account the different impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic across all Sustainable Development Goals and their integrated, indivisible and interlinked natures.

***Graduate Women International works towards the achievement of SDG Goals 4, 5 and 17 in its programmatic and advocacy work with SDG 4 as its primary focus.***



## Voluntary Nations Reviews (VNRs)<sup>1</sup>

44 countries carried out VNRs of their implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. 187 countries made 292 presentations showing continuing international commitment to the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and progress in efforts to implement and integrate the SDG into national policies and plans, including those aimed at the recovery from the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

All VNRs provided a clear picture of the impacts of the global shocks felt around the world, which have caused setbacks in progress toward the SDGs. Countries described how the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the onset of multiple conflicts, have taken a toll on the economy, supply chains, energy, food security and people’s well-being.

<sup>1</sup> [Voluntary National Reviews: Synthesis of Main Messages](#)



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The VNR process provides opportunities for knowledge sharing, helping countries and their local communities to understand how they can “build back better” that include scaling up local initiatives to achieve the SDGs and adjusting national development policies and plans. Though the effects of the pandemic are still deeply felt, **the momentum for advancing the SDGs has not been lost.**

### **Documentation / Resources for the HLPF 2022**

- <https://hlpf.un.org/2022/documentation>
- [United Nations Secretary General Report on the SDGs 2022](#)
- [Building back better while advancing the 2030 Agenda: report from the UN SG](#)
- [SDG 4 and linkages with other SDGs](#)
- [SDG 5 and linkages with other SDGs](#)
- [Which targets are on track for 2030?](#)
- [Outcome | High-Level Political Forum 2022 \(un.org\)](#)
- [Womens Major Group Position Paper 2022](#)
- **WG-USA Written statement 2022 to the HLPF** (see full statement this document) [ngo-Written-Statements-2022-HLS.pdf \(un.org\)](#) (GWI no. 49, WG-USA no. 53)

### **Building back better and advancing the SDGs <sup>2</sup>**

The year 2022 is the third year of the global pandemic disease caused by the Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19). The pandemic has caused extensive suffering and death around the world. Beyond the many millions who have lost loved ones to COVID-19, billions of people have had their physical and mental health, livelihoods and education disrupted. Large-scale economic disruption has exacerbated inequalities and increased poverty, hunger, food insecurity, and the economic vulnerability of hundreds of millions of people. The number of people in extreme poverty has risen by an estimated 75 to 95 million in 2022 due to COVID-19 and is projected to remain well-above pre-pandemic levels, especially in Africa and Latin America. The pandemic has also put a spotlight on the poorest and most vulnerable, including older persons, women, young people, children, low-wage earners, informal workers, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, people in situations of conflict, refugees and migrants.

Building back better from the pandemic and advancing the full implementation of the SDGs are inextricably linked. The building back better process cannot be achieved without policies that enable transformative change and a just transition towards more inclusive and sustainable development; eradicate poverty and hunger; rein in inequalities, including gender inequality; and take decisive and effective action against climate change, while halting biodiversity losses and environmental degradation.

The 2030 Agenda and its SDGs can serve as the overarching framework for the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic during the current Decade of Action. Implementation efforts need to be

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<sup>2</sup> Secretariat Background Note Executive summary: [Microsoft Word - 2022 HLPF BN Townhall Session FINAL 29June](#)



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bolstered by international solidarity and strong multilateral cooperation as well as universal access to the vaccine, so that the world can move to the trajectory of sustainable development.



### **Sustainable Development Goal 4 and interlinkages with other SDGs**

#### **Background note<sup>3</sup>**

The 2022 HLPF reviewed the progress on SDG 4 (ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all). The Transforming Education Summit in September 2022 will also provide important opportunities to reaffirm the centrality of education for a resilient recovery from COVID-19 and a sustainable future.

Quality education enables upward socioeconomic mobility and is a key avenue for escaping poverty. Access to quality education and life-long learning build the human capabilities and knowledge to tackle today's global challenges like climate change and biodiversity loss. And quality education can help prepare today's youth for employment in the high-skill jobs of the fourth industrial revolution, while training and life-long learning are important for ensuring just transitions to green economies.

Even before the pandemic, when progress on SDG 4 was first reviewed at the HLPF in 2019, projections showed that the world was off track to meet its education commitments by 2030.<sup>4</sup> Some progress had been made - at the time COVID-19 struck, the completion rate was 91 per cent in primary school, 81 per cent in lower secondary and 62 per cent in upper secondary education. In terms of learning, about half of children met minimum proficiency in reading and mathematics by the end of primary and the end of lower secondary school. Shortcomings in quality and inclusiveness were identified as among the biggest barriers to SDG 4 particularly for girls and in conflict areas and humanitarian situations. Identifying the specific barriers to education and learning across contexts and breaking them down was seen as instrumental for achieving the 2030 Agenda. Today, calls continue for reimagining education to fit the modern world with new platforms for cooperation, new partnerships, and shared values around the importance of education, more support for teachers and increased investment in universal quality education and lifelong learning. [Read the full document [SDG 4 and linkages with other SDGs](#)].

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<sup>3</sup> This background note draws substantially from an expert group meeting (EGM) held in Paris on 17 May 2022 organized by the Division for Sustainable Development Goals of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN-DESA/DSDG) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to take stock of where we are in terms of progress towards SDG 4. This EGM was organized back-to-back with the meeting of the SDG4-Education 2030 High-level Steering Committee Sherpa Group and was informed by the its [input paper](#) to the 2022 HLPF.

<sup>4</sup> UNESCO Institute for Statistics and Global Education Monitoring Report. 2019. *Meeting commitments: are countries on track to achieve SDG 4?* Paris: UNESCO.



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### **Sustainable Development Goal 5 and Interlinkages with other SDGs<sup>5</sup>**

#### **Background Note**

*What are the most promising strategies and actions today for overcoming gender inequality and discrimination? How can the empowerment of women and girls accelerate SDG progress and recovery from COVID-19?*

The last time SDG 5 – achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls – was reviewed at the High-level Political Forum in 2017, there was evidence of some progress being made to advance gender equality, including legal reforms, more girls in school, and fewer child marriages. The percentage of women serving in parliament had increased. Nevertheless, the pace of change was not fast enough, and discriminatory laws, social norms, gender stereotypes and violence against women remained pervasive. Women continued to be underrepresented at all levels of decision-making processes and political leadership.

The socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 have added to this, disproportionately affecting women and girls, and threatening to push back recent progress and further entrench persistent gender inequalities. Disproportionate job and livelihoods losses, derailed education, increased burdens of unpaid care work, and increased rates of gender-based violence are among the struggles women and girls have faced with greater intensity since the onset of the pandemic. During the pandemic women have been more exposed to risk, making up 70 per cent of health care workers. They were also more likely to leave the labour market altogether due to the increasing care burden. Negative impacts are compounded for women and girls who are marginalized based on multiple forms of discrimination based on race, ethnicity, age, income, geography, disability, or other characteristics. Women migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers, as well as forcibly displaced women living in humanitarian crises, are also at heightened risk. Women's health services, as well as social services such as shelters and crisis centers, faced major disruptions that cut lifelines for survivors of violence and undermined sexual and reproductive health services.

Gender equality is a cross-cutting issue with critical interlinkages with all 17 SDGs. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development cannot be fully achieved unless gender inequality is addressed. As countries respond to and recover from COVID-19, this requires addressing the root causes of gender discrimination through promotion of gender responsive laws, policies, institutions, programming, and budgeting across sectors. [Read the full document [SDG 5 and linkages with other SDGs](#)].

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<sup>5</sup> [SDG 5 and linkages with other SDGs](#)



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### **Key Points from the Sustainable Development Goals Report 2022 – Secretary General’s SDG Progress Report on SDG4 and SDG5**

<https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2022/>

#### **SDG4: Ensure Inclusive and Equitable Quality Education and Promote Lifelong Learning**

1. *Prolonged school closures have heightened the risk that children will not return to school.*
2. *COVID-19 has cast a shadow on an already dire picture of learning outcomes.* Less than 60% of students in low- and middle-income countries can meet the minimum required proficiency in reading at the end of lower-secondary school. If this does not change, it will have negative consequences for both the individual and the state.
3. *Entrenched inequalities in education have only worsened during the pandemic.* Disparities in attendance are based on gender, urban or rural location, and household wealth. Children living in rural areas and the poorest households are consistently more disadvantaged in terms of education participation and outcomes. Of particular note, in 2019-20 one-fourth of primary schools world-wide lacked access to electricity, drinking water, and basic sanitation facilities.
4. *Online schooling offers Ukrainian children a sense of normalcy in the chaos of war.* Two-thirds of Ukrainian children have been displaced from their homes. Nevertheless, nearly three million students, the majority of school-age Ukrainian children, showed up for online classes. Video lessons are also being broadcast on television. Remote schooling has offered them a safe ‘space’ and a semblance of normalcy. World-wide, approximately 130 million children and youth are in a similar situation due to war and other crises – providing safe, inclusive, and continuous education is one of the soundest and most important investments

#### **SDG5: Achieve Gender Equality and Empower all women and Girls**

1. *Awareness of violence against older women is growing, but data remain limited.*
2. *The nature, scale, severity, and complexity of such violence may be underestimated.* Further, older women may be subjected to specific forms of violence not usually measured in surveys, such as economic exploitation, ostracization, and neglect.
3. *Child marriage and female genital mutilation are persistent human rights violations holding back progress for girls and women.* The highest rates of child marriage are in Africa (35%) and Southern Asia (28%) although world-wide the prevalence has declined by about 10% in the last five years. COVID-19 may have changed that. In terms of FGM, 200 million girls and women alive today have been subjected to this practice in the 31 countries that continue the practice. Progress would need to be 10 times faster to eliminate FGM by 2030. Education is



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key to its elimination – opposition to having the procedure is highest among educated girls and women. Girls whose mothers have at least a primary education are 40% less likely to be mutilated.

4. *Progress in women’s access to leadership positions, in both political and economic spheres, remains sluggish.* As of 1-1-22 the representation of women in national parliaments reached 26.2%, up from 22.4% in 2015. At this rate, it would take another 40 years for women to reach par with men in national parliaments. Locally, women fill about one-third of the leadership positions.
5. *In many countries, women still lack the legal right to autonomy over their own bodies.* Only 57% of women aged 15-49 who are married or in a union make their own informed decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use, and reproductive health care. During the first year of COVID-19 there were 1.4 million additional unintended pregnancies in lower- and middle-income countries.
6. *Protection of women’s land and property rights still has a long way to go.* Progress has been greatest in terms of succession rights and in protection from being dispossessed in land transactions.
7. *Accelerated progress is needed to align public financing with gender equality objectives.*



# GWII Executive Summary Report – High Level Political Forum 2022

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## HESI+10 Global Forum<sup>6</sup>

*Role of higher education in building back better from COVID-19 and advancing the 2030 Agenda*

HESI+10 Global Forum  
Role of higher education in building back better from COVID-19 and advancing the 2030 Agenda



The **Higher Education Sustainability Initiative (HESI)** is an open partnership between several United Nations entities and the higher education community launched in the run up to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20 in 2012). Each year, HESI organizes a global forum as a special event to the **HLPF** to highlight the critical role of higher education in achieving sustainable development.

This year three open webinars on topics related the theme of HLPF were held in the lead-up to the forum.<sup>7</sup>

## HESI+10 Global Forum

**HESI+10 Communique:** The outcome of the forum will be the production of a HESI+10 Communique to be submitted to HLPF and the Transformation Education Summit. The Communique will be based on the discussions and recommendations from the webinars and the forum discussions.

Download the [HESI+10 Communique](#)

### 3 Key Messages from the HESI+10 Communique<sup>8</sup>:

- The pandemic posed significant challenges, as well as opportunities for higher education, including the difficulties to nurture a sense of community and belonging, and the benefits of work-life balance resulting from remote practices. The pandemic has catalyzed significant innovations that were long due, most notably a rapid transition from traditional to more “agile” and adaptive modes of teaching and learning, including maximizing the use of existing digital learning management systems. At the same time, it requires an enhanced focus on human rights and equity issues, the social-emotional aspects of learning and its connection with mental health and inclusion efforts.
- Higher education needs to break silos and embrace holistic approaches to sustainability to produce research and curriculum development that addresses real world issues, including the climate change crisis, sustainable development, and the SDGs more broadly. Lifelong learning becomes extremely important to advance the SDGs and the need to implement innovative

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.iau-hesd.net/news/5409-hesi10-global-forum.html>

<sup>7</sup> [Higher Education Sustainability Initiative | Department of Economic and Social Affairs \(un.org\)](#)

<sup>8</sup> [HESI+10 Communique](#)





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solutions at scale. Higher education must focus on developing the current and next generation of leaders with a sustainable mindset, that is reflected in the way to be, think and act.

- Higher education is well placed to champion innovative solutions for positive system change at scale. Collaboration and partnerships across sectors become an integral part of this endeavor. HESI Action Group

**HESI Action Groups:** in response to the number of SDG challenges and opportunities, HESI launched several Action Groups to tackle issues related to higher education for sustainable development:

- Rankings, ratings and assessment
- Education for Green Jobs
- SDG Publishers Compact Fellows
- Integrating SDGs in Higher Education

**Call to Action:** HESI calls on all governments, UN entities, higher education institutions and other relevant stakeholders to support higher education in transforming, integrating and advancing the SDGs of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and building back better from the COVID-19 pandemic.

*Education is a human right, and words should lead to action*

**SDGs in focus: SDG4 and interlinkages with other SDGs - Quality education**



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### **2022 HLPF Outcome – Ministerial Declaration**

The HLPF will adopt the [Ministerial Declaration](#) as the outcome of its session.

#### **Excerpts from the 2022 HLPF Ministerial Declaration SDG 4, SDG 5, SDG 17**

\*\*\* Please read document for full details.

<https://hlpf.un.org/sites/default/files/2022-07/HLPF%202022%20MD%2013%20July.pdf>

#### **I. Introduction:**

- a. The Ministerial Declaration reaffirms commitments to:
  - i. The full implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals to include recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and accelerating the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development
  - ii. Eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions
  - iii. Strengthening the plan of action for people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership (5 Ps)
  - iv. Leaving no one behind
  - v. Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement amongst others
  - vi. International cooperation, multilateralism and international solidarity as the best way for the world to effectively overcome and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic

- II. **Addressing the Impact of COVID-19 on the 2030 Agenda** includes calls for international cooperation, multilateralism and solidarity and improvements in health care delivery, pandemic preparedness and prevention efforts, provisions of economic and social support / protection measures, disaster risk reduction (Sendai Framework), and other measures besides health care and education such as sustainable and inclusive economic growth and decent job creation.

#### **SDG Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all**

The Ministerial Documents reaffirms its commitment to:

- a. The **goal of Sustainable Development Goal 4** to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all and to implement all targets of Goal 4.
- b. The **right to education as a Human Right** including increased funding for inclusive and



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- equitable quality education
- c. **Mitigating the effects of school closures due to COVID-19** and cuts in national education budgets including learning, child nutrition, all forms of violence and child abuse.
  - d. **Quality education** to achieve sustainable development
  - e. **Promoting digital technologies**, including low- and no-tech strategies, access to broadband internet and technology devices, connectivity, digital inclusions and literacy among other things.
  - f. **The transformation of education systems** to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 4 and better prepare our societies for the future, by ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all, as well as affordable technical, vocational and higher education; promoting universal literacy and numeracy, education for sustainable development and global citizenship; building and upgrading inclusive, equitable, safe and healthy schools; expanding higher education scholarships for developing countries; and increasing the supply of qualified teachers in developing countries.

### **Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls**

The Ministerial Documents reaffirms its commitment to:

- a. Achieving gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls and to implement all targets of SDG 5
- b. Ending all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere
- c. Eliminating, preventing and responding to all forms of violence against women and girls, in public and private spaces, in personal and digital contexts
- d. Protecting and promoting the right to work and rights at work of all women
- e. Universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights

### **Goal 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development**

The Ministerial Documents reaffirms its commitment to:

- a. Strengthening the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development and implement all targets of Sustainable Development Goal 17.



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- III. **Goals under in-depth review and voluntary national reviews** – see Ministerial Document.
- IV. **Other priority issues:** Climate change, climate action, climate finance, economic diversification and productive capacity enhancement, income generation, decent work for all, human right to safe drinking water and sanitation, disease prevention, migrants, the role of young people for sustainable development, investing in children and youth.
- V. **Our road map for the way forward**

We call for a renewed global commitment to sustainable development to achieve a more sustainable, resilient and inclusive recovery and address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the current global instability and conflicts, climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution as well as other systemic obstacles for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. We urge countries to adopt sustainable, resilient and inclusive recovery strategies as an important element contributing to a sustainable global recovery and growth action and to accelerate progress towards the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda and drive transformative change towards more inclusive and just societies. We call for the implementation of the present declaration and reaffirm our commitment to the actions in the political declaration adopted at the 2019 Sustainable Development Goals Summit and past ministerial declarations of the high-level political forum and recognize the urgent need to accelerate action on all levels and by all relevant stakeholders, including through COVID-19 response and recovery efforts, to fulfil the vision and Goals of the 2030 Agenda.

**Calls to Action can be found in sections 119 to 142 of the 2022 HLPF Ministerial Declaration.**

### **Highlights from the Advanced Copy of the 2022 HLPF Ministerial Declaration**<sup>9</sup>

#### **SDG4: Quality Education**

1. COVID-19 has exacerbated pre-existing inequalities between countries and between and within educational systems in terms of access to quality education and lifelong learning opportunities. These discrepancies include but are not limited to the digital divide, the rural-urban divide, and the gender divide.

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<sup>9</sup> Taken from the 2022 HLPF Report from the GWI Representatives to the United Nations



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2. Governments are urged to invest in resilient, inclusive, and shock-responsive funding, including early childhood development and care and pre-primary education; funding in these areas will directly reduce women’s unpaid childcare work.
3. There is a need for international funding for education to help close the widening gap between resources and expected outcomes in developing and least developed countries.
4. We must prevent a multigenerational crisis in education. Reopen schools, provide a safe learning environment, ensure qualified teachers, and scale up efforts for remedial, accelerated learning and catch-up strategies to provide children and adolescents with functional literacy and numeracy skills.
5. Stress the key role teachers play in improving the quality of education and learning at all levels of schooling, formal as well as informal. Promote teachers’ continuous professional development, including digital competencies and learner-centered pedagogies, and seek to invest in teachers’ well-being and decent working conditions.
6. Member States, youth, and civil society must work towards the transformation of education systems to achieve SDG4 and better prepare our societies for the future. Such a transformation would include:
  - \* Inclusive and equitable quality education
  - \* Affordable technical, vocational, and higher education
  - \* Promotion of universal literacy and numeracy
  - \* Education for sustainable development and global citizenship
  - \* Building and upgrading inclusive, equitable, safe, and healthy schools
  - \* Expanding higher education scholarships for developing countries
  - \* Increasing the supply of qualified teachers in developing countries

### **SDG5: Gender Equality**

1. Address structural barriers such as discriminatory laws and policies, gender stereotypes, harmful practices, and negative social norms and attitudes.
2. Ensure access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, and other resources. Likewise, provide access to credit, financial resources, and services.
3. Confirm that all women and girls play a vital role as agents of change for sustainable development.
4. There must be gender-responsive and disability-inclusive disaster risk-reduction policies, plans, programs, and financing, and an acknowledgement of the importance of women’s leadership in gender-responsive risk governance.
5. COVID-19 resulted in a disproportionate loss of job and education opportunities for women and girls while their already unequal, unpaid care and domestic work increased. Safety nets must be strengthened through social protection systems and measures.



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6. Commit to eliminating, preventing, and responding to all forms of violence against women and girls, in public and private spaces, both in person and in digital contexts. Violence against women and girls is a major impediment to the achievement of gender equality, empowerment, and the full enjoyment of their human rights and fundamental freedoms.
7. Women and girls should have full access to justice, effective legal remedies, and health care and psychosocial services, including protection, rehabilitation, and reintegration.
8. Commit to universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights.
9. Recognize the important roles and contributions of indigenous women and girls, women and girls living in rural and remote areas, women with disabilities, women smallholders and family farmers and entrepreneurs, and women in fisheries, as guardians of natural resources, biodiversity and ecosystems and agents of change in responding to climate change, and ensuring food security and nutrition.
10. Recognize and value women's and girls' disproportionate share of paid and unpaid care and domestic work and adopt measures to reduce and redistribute this work, as well as the need to reward and represent paid care work, including improved wages and working conditions. This requires promoting the equal sharing of responsibilities within the household, accessible, affordable and quality social services, including but not limited to care services, childcare and maternity, paternity or parental leave.
11. Fully engage men and boys as agents and beneficiaries of change and as strategic partners and allies in the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.
12. Strengthen and implement gender-responsive planning and budgeting processes and develop and/or strengthen methodologies and tools for the monitoring and evaluation of investments related to gender equity. Reaffirm the importance of collection, analysis, and dissemination of sex-disaggregated data to develop and strengthen evidence-based public policies and programs.
13. Reaffirm the full, equal, effective, and meaningful participation of women in all stages of peace processes, conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peacebuilding. This is one of the essential factors for the maintenance and promotion of international peace and security.



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### **Graduate Women International Participation in the 2022 HLPF**

**1. Graduate Women International Written Statement (see below)**

**2. Graduate Women International Registered Official Delegates**

- Maryella Hannum, Dr. Maureen Byrne, Dr. Sophie Turner: Graduate Women International United Nations Representatives – in person delegates for GWI

**GWI ECOSOC Accredited participating NFA, Women Graduates-USA, Delegates**

- Louise McLeod, GWI VP Advocacy and Education, WG-USA United Nations Representative - virtual delegate
- Carolyn Cowgill: WG-USA United Nations Representative – virtual delegate
- Dr. Deirdre Carney: WG-USA Membership Chair – in person delegate

**3. GWI Executive Summary HLPF Report prepared / submitted by:**

Louise McLeod, GWI VP Advocacy and Education

**4. GWI and WG-USA HLPF Rapporteurs:**

Louise McLeod: GWI VP Advocacy and Education, WG-USA Representative to the United Nations

GWI Representatives to the United Nations: Maryella Hannum, Dr. Maureen Byrne, Dr. Sophie Turner: Graduate Women International United Nations Representatives – in person delegates for GWI

Carolyn Cowgill: WG-USA Representative to the United Nations

Dr. Deirdre Carney: WG-USA Membership Chair



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### **Graduate Women International Written Statement to the 2022 ECOSOC High Level Political Forum**

Graduate Women International (GWI) research identifies six critical need areas for the successful implementation of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4.

The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic continue to be devastating for the education of women and girls, setting back women's and girls' education by twenty years in many countries. To regain momentum, the United Nations (UN) has urgently called for an acceleration in implementing the 17 SDGs. Especially relevant is the 2022 High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) theme, "Building back better from COVID-19 while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", which notably amalgamates with recent GWI research that identified six critical need areas for the successful implementation of SDG 4, quality education and lifelong learning.

In response to the UN's call for help to renew the acceleration of the SDGs by adding capacities to UN agencies, GWI affiliates in 48 countries researched the SDG progress in their respective countries. With a focus on SDG 4, the research, conducted during the fall of 2021, identified six categories of action needed to implement the SDGs, irrespective of the country's demographics and economic level:

- **Building Awareness about the SDGs**
- **Outreach to Communities and Vulnerable Populations**
- **Conducting Community Dialogues**
- **Providing Training and Support Based on Existing Programmes**
- **Policy Review and Development**
- **Data Collection**

Applying research findings, GWI will contribute to the implementation of SDG 4 by adding capacity to the UN agencies. This goal is based on GWI's understanding that graduate women have the competencies to respond to capacity needs identified by the UN and that Institutes of Higher Learning (IHL) can share responsibility in this effort.

As graduate women, GWI values the transformative, unique position of IHL to influence the implementation of SDG 4. Furthermore, given their access to large numbers of young people, IHL can work alongside GWI to contribute to the six actionable categories.

IHL create future SDG implementers. Recognizing that research cooperation contributes to the implementation of all 17 SDGs, GWI calls for a continued, global, and concerted effort to cultivate partnerships and collaboration that provide a unique interface between IHL, the six action items, policymakers, and the success of SDG 4. GWI suggests that the HLPF uptake the GWI research data and create strong alliances with IHL and nongovernmental organizations to achieve SDG 4 successfully.

Certainly not exhaustive, GWI recommends that the 2022 HLPF elevate its commitment to the achievement of the SDG 4 with emphasis on activities to carry out the six need categories defined in the GWI research and continue to encourage collaboration between IHL at the global level as a means of achieving SDG 4.





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### **GWI Positioning vis a vis the 2022 HLPF Ministerial Declaration**

In the GWI written statement to the 2022 HLPF, GWI and its NFAs identified six categories of action needed to implement the SDGs, irrespective of the country's demographics and economic level:

- **Building Awareness about the SDGs**
- **Outreach to Communities and Vulnerable Populations**
- **Conducting Community Dialogues**
- **Providing Training and Support Based on Existing Programmes**
- **Policy Review and Development**
- **Data Collection**

Further analysis of the Ministerial Declaration will be needed to determine the extent to which these GWI identified action items have been collectively considered for ongoing action and how effectively they can be carried out.

#### **General Take Aways from HLPF 2022 and re-affirmation of areas still needing attention and action:**

1. If COVID-19 has taught us anything, it is that we need to unite.
2. We are at a turning point in terms of achieving the 2030 SDGs. We need action not words.
3. Education is a human right not a privilege.
4. More money is needed to finance quality, equitable education.
5. Students' voices must be included when determining the future of education.



## GWII Executive Summary Report – High Level Political Forum 2022

Report submitted by Louise McLeod, GWII VP Advocacy and Education with input from GWII United Nations Representatives (NYC)

# Delegate Reports and Meetings Attended

### Words heard during the HLPF presentations

*closed mindedness*    *architecture of power*    *Big Picture*  
*practical training*    *silos*    *poverty*    *global statistics*  
*partnerships*    *crises*    *change*    *collaborate*    *resilience*

### Quotes from the Presentations

*“The 2030 Agenda is our roadmap and targets are tools to get there.”*

Secretary General Antonio Guterres

—

*“We can’t solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used to create them.”*

Albert Einstein

—

*“No one can whistle a symphony. It takes an orchestra.”*

Colleen Connors, Senior Manager-GRI (Global Reporting Initiative)

## Salient Points Made During HLPF 2022

The **GWII Representatives to the United Nations** in their report pointed out the following during HLPF 2020:

#### **Education:**

1. It is estimated that as many as 70% of 10-year-old students are currently unable to read at an acceptable level. Raising performance to functional levels could increase global GDP by 17%. If girls and women were educated to the same level as boys and men, countries would see a 20% increase in GDP.
2. We will be unable to achieve SDGs 4, 5, and 8, as well as any others, if we don’t eliminate the inequities in education. Education investment is highly unequal both between and within nations. High-income nations currently spend an average of \$8,500 per student; middle-income nations \$1,000; low-income nations \$275, and very poor nations \$50. If we know investment makes a difference, why aren’t we doing it? The lack of universal equality is the main obstacle to education truly becoming a human right.



## **GWI Executive Summary Report – High Level Political Forum 2022**

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3. Many country representatives and speakers spoke about the need to ensure adequate pay for teachers, improve teacher training, and acknowledge in both words and actions the value of educators.

4. Member States and NGO reps were surveyed on how best to achieve SDG 4.7 by 2030.

The top four choices were: (1) political will, (2) collaboration, (3) money, and (4) inclusion.

5. UNESCO urged a reimagining of our future together and a new social contract for education, beginning at the Transforming Education Summit to take place in NYC September 2022.

6. School fees continue to be problematic for poor families. For example, one member state said that parents should not have to choose between food and education fees.

### **Finance:**

1. There has been a deceleration in financing of the SDGs from the private sector. One speaker (Ms. Fourie) stated that if we want to see an increase in private financing then investors need to see the results of their investments. She recommended that member states adopt a uniform, standardized approach to measuring the SDGs.

2. Small states are at very high risk in part because they must rely on exports, thereby exposing them to economic downturns. How do we provide buffers, especially as the world is facing a new era in which economic shocks may not be infrequent events? One solution offered was risk free, low interest funding.

3. Least developed countries are overwhelmed by their debt burden – a solution is needed for this. There is a massive debt crisis in the global south that impedes progress and investment. Sixty percent of low-income countries are in high debt distress, making it all the harder for them to invest in the SDGs. Recommendations included debt restructuring, more effective development funding, an increased role for public development banks, and creation of SDG bonds for private fund raising. <https://oecddevelopment-matters.org/2020/10/28/public-development-banks-gateways-totransformative-sdg-financing/>

4. The global tax standard needs a correction. Recommendations included having the UN sponsor an international convention to address the tax system.

5. Developed countries need to meet their aid commitments. Member states have not delivered on their promises. In addition, there were calls for the North to pay its energy debt.

### **Food & Agriculture:**

1. The war in Ukraine has resulted in a crisis in food access and availability. One solution is to improve food production at the country level. Likewise, the agricultural food chain must be strengthened. Both solutions, however, require time, money, and political will.



## **GWJ Executive Summary Report – High Level Political Forum 2022**

Report submitted by Louise McLeod, GWJ VP Advocacy and Education with input from GWJ United Nations Representatives (NYC)

2. School feeding programs have been a significant help; investment is needed to make sure it continues.

### **Gender:**

1. There was a call for a Parliament of Young Girl Leaders. Youth advocates called for a security and legal framework to allow girls to develop free of HIV, rape, early marriage, FGM, and STIs. They called on the UN and Member States to make this commitment.
2. Youth Advocate (Ms. Rabanal) proudly announced that Chile, her home country, is the first nation to incorporate gender parity into its Constitution. She urged attendees to never take women's rights for granted, as crises are a fervent enemy of girls' and women's rights.

### **Health:**

1. Only 58 countries have vaccinated at least 70% of their population.
2. Only 20% of Africa is vaccinated. Urgent action is needed. We will never be a COVID-free world if 80% of Africa is not vaccinated. No one will be safe unless everyone is safe.
3. As with education, vaccine access is a human right. The European Union said that for every dose provided in Europe, there will be one shipped to Africa. China has shipped 2.3 billion doses to 120 countries free of charge.
4. The medical supply chain is extremely fragile. Local production and distribution of pharmaceuticals is needed, especially in the low-income nations. The EU is working with African states to develop, produce, and distribute pharmaceuticals to their people.

### **Highlights of Individual Country Comments on Education**

1. *Antigua and Barbados* reported that they are trying to transform education into a STEAM-based curriculum while also including a schools' uniform grant, school meals for all primary students, psycho-social support, behavior management programs, and technology and vocational training.
2. *Sierra Leone* has pledged to use 22% of the national budget to fund education.
3. *Finland* emphasized that teachers in its country are viewed as "pedagogical experts" and were the country's greatest asset during COVID-19. It has provided free school meals to its students for 70 years, something many can only aspire to do. Finland urged us to think of learning in terms of flexible, life-long education systems that would allow citizens to constantly re-skill and up-skill.
4. *Madagascar* recommended local control and a greater voice for parents, unions, and teachers. The country pledged to increase education funding to 20%. Children in Madagascar get 1 year of pre-school education, begin primary school at age 5, and have mandatory attendance through 10 years of age.



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5. *The Czech Republic* reported that teachers in its country are not held in high regard. As a result, there is a shortage of qualified teachers. In addition, there is a high dropout rate during the first few years of teaching. The country needs to provide the necessary support to attract and maintain high performing teachers.
6. *Malawi* reported a sharp increase in child marriages in the rural areas that will have a negative impact for decades. Further, it said the country lacks the necessary infrastructure for Pre-K and low access to quality education for special education students at all grade levels.
7. *Iran* recognized the right to free, public, Islamic education in 2011 and described schooling as family-oriented. It proudly stated that a half million non-Iranian refugee children are being provided an education.
8. *Vietnam* stated that the government must increase educational funding to 20% of its national budget. Current enrollment rates are above the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile for Pre-K and Primary school. The nation is on track to reach SDG4 by 2030.
9. *Azerbaijan* reported that there is a need for blended education and teacher training. Currently 50% of children have no access to the internet.
10. *Nepal* indicated that enrollment is 97% for Primary School and 70% for Secondary school. The gender ratio is 1:1.4 females to males. Unfortunately, only 13% of schools were able to stay online during COVID-19. As a result, the country is seeing increased school dropouts.
11. *France* reported its nurseries are adopting a green global approach. Teaching is done by education teams and there is a concerted effort to work with parents, combat bullying, and use organically grown local produce to feed students.
12. *Ethiopia* stated that disparities in educational access was stark during COVID-19; digital learning never reached many children.
13. *Congo* closed all schools during the pandemic. Students had no education. The country is working on increasing the number of teachers available.
14. *Cuba* stated that it allocates 23.7% of their GDP to education.
15. *Qatar* indicated that their education institutions are cutting edge and that the country has donated \$977 million to help educate 10 million children around the world.



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### **Reports from the GWI Representatives to the UN on Sessions Attended**

**Name:** Maureen Byrne, Ph.D; Maryella Hannum, MSc; Sophie Turner Zaretsky, M.D.

**City of UN Representation:** UN Headquarters/NY

**Session/meeting attended:** 2022 Session of the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on

Sustainable Development. The 2022 HLPF, Under the Auspices of the Economic and Social Council, took place at UN Headquarters/NY, on 5 July – 7 July and 11 July – 15 July. Several hundred side events, special events, Voluntary National Reviews (VNR) Labs, and exhibitions took place in-person and on-line during the HLPF. The HLPF was attended by six Heads of State and Government, more than 120 deputy prime-ministers, ministers, and viceministers, as well as other representatives from governments, intergovernmental organizations, and civil society.

**Subject of session/meeting:** The theme for the 2022 HLPF session was “Building back better from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”. The HLPF is designated as the main forum for sustainable development issues within the UN. The annual meeting serves to review the status of the 2030 Agenda along with an in-depth review of specific SDGs. 2022 served as the first in-person meeting of the HLPF in three years.

**Sustainable Development Goals addressed:** The 2022 HLPF reviewed five SDGs in-depth: SDG 4 (quality education), SDG 5 (gender equality), SDG 14 (life below water), SDG 15 (life on land), and SDG 17 (partnerships for the Goals). Consideration of the impacts of the COVID-

19 pandemic across all SDGs and the integrated, indivisible, and interlinked nature of the Goals was an important underlying theme throughout the meeting. With a focus on Building back better and advancing the SDGs, discussions during the session also focused on addressing the needs of developing countries, including how a long-discussed

Multidimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI) might assist policy makers to incorporate risk assessments into their decision making.

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

[GA resolution 70/1](#) - Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

[GA Resolution 75/290B](#) - Review of the implementation of General Assembly resolutions [67/290](#) on the format and organizational aspects of the high-level political forum on sustainable development and [70/299](#) on the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the global level

[GA Resolution 66/288](#) - The future we want

[GA Resolution 70/299](#) - Follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the global level



## **GWI Executive Summary Report – High Level Political Forum 2022**

*Report submitted by Louise McLeod, GWI VP Advocacy and Education with input from GWI United Nations Representatives (NYC)*

[GA Resolution 67/290](#) - Format and Organizational Aspects of the high-level political forum on sustainable development

[GA Resolution 72/305](#) - Review of the implementation of GA Resolution 68/1 on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council

[GA Resolution 74/298](#) - Review of the implementation of General Assembly resolution [67/290](#) on the high-level political forum on sustainable development, resolution [70/299](#) on the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the global level and resolution [72/305](#) on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council

[GA Resolution 74/4](#) - Political declaration of the high-level political forum on sustainable development convened under the auspices of the General Assembly

**Summary of session/meeting:** Forty-four countries presented Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) during the HLPF 2022. These sessions facilitated the sharing of experiences, including successes, challenges and lessons learned. The HLPF 2022 also began planning for the second “SDG Summit”, which takes place every 4 years. The SDG Summit will take place in September 2023 during the UN General Assembly.

At the close of the session, the HLPF adopted a 142-paragraph Ministerial Declaration that had been negotiated by Member States over a period of six months. Although there is disagreement among delegates regarding approach to sustainable development on specific aspects of the declaration, Member States did reach consensus in adopting the Declaration.

## **Reports from GWI VP Advocacy and Education on Sessions Attended**

### **Notes on the HLPF Opening Session**

**July 5, 2022**

*Submitted by Louise McLeod, GWI VP Advocacy and Education / WG-USA Representative to the United Nations*

#### **Opening remarks from the President of ECOSOC**

*Building back better from COVID-19 while advancing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*

I would like to start on a note of high hope and optimism. We can and shall overcome our challenges. For global action in order to fix the global crisis, we need to start today. The SDGs offer the best path to fix this global crisis and build back better after the corona virus disease with special focus on education, gender equality, life below water and on land, partnerships.



## **GWI Executive Summary Report – High Level Political Forum 2022**

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Why so optimistic? That we are gathered here together in person means that in spite of the challenges, we are advanced in dealing with Covid-19 even though it has slowed down the SDG agenda. It has served as a wake up call in exposing inadequacies leading to building back better.

1. We have the blueprint for our recovery.
  - a. The [UN Secretary General 2022 SDG](#) report tells us that an additional 75m-95m people will live in poverty due to the slowing down of the economy at the end of 2021 and that this continues into 2022.
  - b. We have the highest number of refugee flows.
  - c. On the plus side, a good number of countries have put into place social protection as a result of the pandemic.
2. If we are sincere in our calls for multilateral cooperation we are on the right path and we need to act accordingly. Even though we have missed the WHO target of 70% vaccination rates, we are still moving forward none-the-less.
3. There is an increase in international monetary funds.

What we need is **the determination** to carry out the solutions we already have. We have all come here with the common purpose of the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

We are poised to have a successful HLPF 2022 by:

- Learning from each other and expand our common ground
- Drawing from the experiences of the Voluntary National Review (VNR) countries.
- Using the opportunity of this HLPF to delve deeper into discussion leading to solutions and
- Rising to new heights with strong and inclusive partnerships.

### **Deputy Secretary General of the UN, Amina Mohammed**

This is the 7<sup>th</sup> year of VNRs (887 to date with almost universal reporting).

This year's reviews are a stark revelation of the effect of the pandemic and the climate crisis:

- Impact on education, health care and poverty, widening inequalities, reduction in income particularly in developing countries.
- Effect on women and children with loss of income, effect of the climate, gender inequality, violence against women.
- Effect on young people in particular with increasing insecurities.

VNRs reflect on progress and steps taken since the first review and include recovery actions from the pandemic, the reinforcement of government responsibilities along with the subnational actions taken and their increasing importance. The Multiple crises we are experiencing are a wake up call.

**The SDGs will be the major focus of the September 2022 General Assembly.**

### **Mr Nicholas Stern, London School of Economics**

We are at a critical crossroads | Investment is needed | Finance is needed





## **GWI Executive Summary Report – High Level Political Forum 2022**

*Report submitted by Louise McLeod, GWI VP Advocacy and Education with input from GWI United Nations Representatives (NYC)*

**Crossroads:** there is a decay of investment and finance along with COVID-19. Of fundamental importance is that we have an understanding that investment in climate change will provide a better future with new technologies leading to a more optimistic story along with growth and development.

**Scale of Investment:** What is the immediate fallout from the pandemic and the crisis in the Ukraine?

We have to build back better. The first decade is the most important. To realize the acceleration needed to develop resilience we have to invest an extra 2% in the GDP and transform the key systems such energy, transport etc. for systemic change - a \$1.3 trillion in immediate investment along with human capital and natural capital. This is possible in a world where investment is low historically. We need to recognize the urgency and provide the opportunities to make it happen especially for infrastructure. **Expectations require credibility** to insure a just transition.

**Financing:** We need to deal quickly with the festering debt of many countries

- Roughly half of the investments will be financed internally
- External finance of 1T \$ will be necessary by 2030.

### **Suriya Chindawongse, Vice President ECOSOC**

Coordination is everything. Effective coordination is a force multiplier for the ECOSOC and its 30 systems. Promotes harmony. To reach out to the younger generation such as AESPA<sup>10</sup> is important. Mr Chindawongse used the initials of the group's name to describe the purposes of the HLPF and the 2030 agenda.

- ✓ **A – All** - all voices should be heard
- ✓ **E – Equity** – women and girls are the most impacted by inequities and should be more empowered
- ✓ **S - Sustainability and synergy** – achieve transformation changes and the SDGs are in danger of back sliding. Increase in interlinkages for a better global response (synergy)
- ✓ **P - People, planet, policies** – taking into account health issues, climate change etc.
- ✓ **A – Architecture** - strong synergies between UNICEF, ITU and UN Women to bring women into technologies. The regional voice is important.

### **QU Dongyu, FAO, Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN**

We must:

- protect the livelihood of farmers etc and increase sustainable productivity in order to provide food security.

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<sup>10</sup> **Aespa** is a South Korean girl group formed by SM Entertainment. The group consists of four members: Karina, Giselle, Winter, and Ningning. This group performed at the opening session. The group's name, Aespa, combines the English initials of "avatar" and "experience" (Avatar X Experience) with the English word "aspect", meaning "two sides", to symbolize the idea of "meeting another self and experiencing the new world".



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- The viability of food chains and systems is key to the achievement of the SDGs.
- support countries to implement agricultural systems and learn from indigenous populations especially women.



### The HESI+10 Forum, July 6, 2022 Session

Submitted by Louise McLeod, WG-USA UN Representative

**Opening Statement:** [HESI+10 Global Forum Role of higher education in building back better from COVID-19 and advancing the 2030 Agenda](#) Liu Zhenmin, Under-

Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs

**Panel dialogue** – The role of higher education in building back better from the COVID-19 while advancing the 2030 Agenda

#### Panelists:

Ms. Prof. Maneesha Vinodini Ramesh, Provost, Amrita University (India)

Ms. Hanna-Leena Pesonen, Dean, School of Business and Economics, University of Jyväskylä (Finland)

Mr. Prof. Dr. Steven DeHaes, Dean, Antwerp Management School, University of Antwerp (Belgium)

Mr. Dr. Paul J. LeBlanc, President, Southern New Hampshire University (United States)

Ms. Prof. Romeela Mohee, Commissioner of the Higher Education Commission (Mauritius)

Mr. Ali Awni, Director, John D. Gerhart Center for Philanthropy, Civic Engagement and Responsible Business, American University of Cairo (Egypt)

Ms. Patricia Stuart, Vice-President, University of Lima (Peru)

Mr. Cobus Oosthuizen, Dean, Milkpark Business School (South Africa)

Moderated by Ms. Sophie Charrois, International co-president, Oikos International

#### Notes from the Panelists

**Stephania Giannini** – Assistant Director General for Education, UNESCO

We have to be ahead of the current situation. Much transformation is needed along with democratizing the process and strengthening partnerships.

Fundamental principles:

- Inclusion and diversity – the right to education and the common public good.
  - Strong social justice is imperative
  - opportunities must be equally distributed
  - a holistic approach is needed and not solely on professional training / teaching
  - requires new social responsibility towards sustainability



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- a transdisciplinary approach across subjects in order to preserve biodiversity, connect the sciences and the humanities
- requires an open science that would include traditional indigenous approaches
- universities have to run as a system that works post-secondary moving from rigid hierarchy towards a more flexible model using regional approaches putting technology at the service of effective teaching not the other way around. This requires a shift in mind set, diversity over uniformity etc.
- a trust in new forms of solidarity.
- Protection of academic freedom
- Commitment to sustainability

**Moderator Sophie Charrois**, OIKOS International, student leader

Youth is aware of the challenges and willing to stand up to them.

### **Dr. Cobus Oosthuizen, South Africa**

At the start of Covid-19, they already had online teaching in place.

Challenges – we resisted the temptation to put the global sustainable items on the back burner but instead moved them into a position of urgency linking SDG applications from the the UN and key concepts to the most relevant SDGs. In addition to that, we put into place a social responsibility module otherwise adversely affected by covid lockdowns, and engaged with the community including global ethics and corporate social responsibility... changes that have been taking place in the school have improved the Build back Better.

### **Hanna-Leena Pesonen, Finland**

Universities in Finland lost all the mobility: international and exchange students and researchers have not been able to move around, students haven't been able to socialize. There will be longer term impacts on cultural understanding and diversity which we will only begin to see as we come out of the pandemic.

Positive impact is that the decrease in mobility has also decreased the carbon footprint of the university, hopefully something from that will permanently change.

### **Paul Leblanc, Southern New Hampshire University, USA**

Next steps should be focused on underserved populations of the U.S. and low income learners. 1.4 million students dropped out of their courses. We should offer faster / shorter courses for these programs.

### **Maneesha Romesh, India Amrita University**

- education for life



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- compassion driven research that builds collaboration with partner sources. Research needs to be in such a manner that it is beneficial to society. Students should live in a community where their experience living in a village allows them the experience / opportunities to propose solutions

### **Dr. Romeela Rohee , Mauritius**

At beginning of the pandemic all teaching was traditional. During the first lock down online teaching was just about recording lectures and powerpoints but they have now moved to a more blended approach to learning leading to a change in the regulations and accrediting programs and courses along with a new regulatory framework and moving away from physical locations for learning. This harmonized the way to develop online / blended learning. Students' satisfaction was very low at the beginning when having to engage digitally with teachers / professors. Mauritius is a small island nation. Mauritius applied SDG 4 – granting access to education for all, free primary secondary and tertiary education. More students now get to education (45%), the highest in Africa.

### **Steven DeHaas**

There is a steep learning curve in embracing technology / virtual learning . We are not there yet. WE have to change the rationale and the conversation. For business schools, the key question is how to create impactful learning situations. Technology is a key capability / enabler but we have a long way to go. Virtual learning is a key factor in developing skills for the future and better disciplinary approach, lifelong learning, ecosystems / partnerships... the best is yet to come.

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### **How do we track / trace out impact?**

Finland's Positive Impact Rating 2 years ago found that students appreciate what is being done for sustainability content of the studies but are not actually aware of everything being done. Students are still asking for more, giving more motivation to continue down the path.

Students across the globe are ready to take these steps.

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**Competencies and skills needed for the future** – imagination as an important tool. We are not captives to a predetermined set of choices but can develop pathways that can enable beneficial paths. We need to establish a dominant logic of responsibility for teach training and practices, embrace moral obligation to achieve the SDGS with the SDGs wholly incorporated into the agenda for learning → scenario where students have mastered the SDGs.

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### **Future HESI Initiatives for Higher Education**

- Positive System Change.
- SDG Accord – embed the SDGs by institutions into their operations / teaching, student and sport organizations... the most influential SDGs are education and partnership. The least



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influential are poverty, life under water and life on land. (mainly because the accord institutions are in Europe).

- Green Gown Award
- Education for Green Jobs – how do we integrate education for green jobs in education? Document. Green employers are moving ahead in the requirements for employees in a green economy and the universities are not quite up to speed yet... curriculum and guidance officers, policy makers etc.
- Green learning network
- SDG Publisher compact Fellows – publishers etc. also have a unique impact on the SDGs. – get the research out to the practitioners, policy makers. Get education and research aligned to solve the SDGs.

## Reports from Women Graduates-USA on Sessions Attended



### SDGs in focus: SDG4 and interlinkages with other SDGs - Quality education

July 6, 2022

Submitted by Déirdre Carney

Several broad observations were drawn from introductory remarks: “poverty traps” are the exact opposite of the SDGs; devices, computer skills, and home atmosphere have to allow for virtual learning (it doesn’t happen on its own); and psychosocial support for students is a necessity. These themes, and others, were revisited throughout the morning. Moderator Stefania Giannini, UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Education, also concluded from the introductions that countries were “dangerously off track” in meeting education goals.

*UNICEF provided disturbing data, including that two-thirds of 10-year-olds cannot read a sentence and nine million children are at risk of child labor.*

Speakers were permitted three minutes to describe setbacks and/or progress in education in their countries or strategic areas, or to respond to issues raised. UNICEF provided disturbing data, including that two-thirds of 10-year-olds cannot read a sentence and nine million children are at risk of child labor. Among five key solutions UNICEF discussed to address such concerns, three were to scale up

learning assessments, increase the efficiency of teaching, and support students’ emotional well-being.

Susan Hopgood from Education International noted, “Teaching itself is an act of optimism.” The foundation for improving education is social dialogue, another solution frequently referenced in other presentations. Victoria Huallpa Mamani from Bolivia explained the necessity of teacher training that understands the student’s reality. She described that



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schools impose a way of learning on students instead of appreciating the knowledge that students already have. To that end, the needs of Indigenous, disabled, and street children need to be valued. Youth Network representative Doris Mwikali emphasized equipping young people to be innovative. Youth want to be in the room, she said, and should be engaging in national consultations. Adults must commit to youth engagement.

Sheam Satkuru from ITTO noted that SDGs 1, 2, 5, 8, 12, 15, and 17 all impacted achieving SDG4, so collaborative efforts are needed to remedy the negative impacts. She described the dilemma, for example, of eating or surviving vs. going to school. As other speakers shared, various issues are impacting education around the globe. Some countries are tackling learning loss due to the pandemic, while others are addressing families marrying off girls to mitigate against extreme poverty and still others the increase in teen pregnancies. In Ukraine, the impact of war on students was discussed, as well as the 2,000 education institutions damaged in the war.

*SDGs 1, 2, 5, 8, 12, 15, and 17 all impact achieving SDG4*

In one positive report, the representative from France described an ambitious program of education as awareness-raising. Through the schools’ “green global approach,” children bring know-how back home so entire families benefit. Additionally, municipal services and workshops for students help students help their communities.

Closing remarks concluded that education is a human right, and words should lead to action. Girls, boys, and teens should be drivers for transforming education.



### Disruption Global Perspectives on Digitalization of Education Panacea or Anathema

HLPF July 11, 2022 International Council, World Bank, UNDESA Statistical, Institute of Contemporary Art

Submitted by Carolyn Cowgill, WG-USA UN Representative

Panel Presentations and Discussion:

- Katrina Popovic-ICA Secretary
- Shermain Barrett-ICA Adult Education, Moderator
- Sheila Jagannathan-World Bank, Head of Open Learning Campus in D.C.
- Mitali Sen, Ph.D.-Chair 2021-23 Global Institute for Statistical Training(GIST)
- Thekla Jema-Learning Disrupted Case Study Leveraging Strategic Partnerships



## **GWII Executive Summary Report – High Level Political Forum 2022**

*Report submitted by Louise McLeod, GWII VP Advocacy and Education with input from GWII United Nations Representatives (NYC)*

Acceptance of digital learning helped bridge the gap of COVID disruption and helped the continuation of learning. Hard-to-reach groups were able to participate. It democratized access to information.

But we must consider the digital gaps: Half the world is not online. Digital learning is not always effective. It is not cheaper if there is no systemic expertise. There may be a lack of privacy. There is a danger of technology being used to control people. Questions remain: Is learner-centered learning still valid? Is social-emotional learning crucial? Is the teacher as role model important? Are values and ethics without closed mindedness essential?

### **Takeaways**

- Find a balance between social and isolated learning, on the job and through research.
- Focus on learning in an applied context. Build capacity with international partnerships and statistics.
- Fill in the gaps by collaborating with partners in other countries.
- Start using data and formulating statistics at a young age.
- Access to technology and infrastructure is primary in discussions of quality of life.
- Given that many are experiencing longer life spans and five generations in the work force, adults need learning opportunities throughout their lives to maintain learning agility and up to date skills.



## **Dialogue on the Role of Media Partners in Ensuring the Global Goals Are Met: Leveraging the Power of the Media Forum on SDGs**

HLPF July 15, 2022 Association for International Broadcasting (AIB) and ECOSOC

*Submitted by Carolyn Cowgill, WG-USA UN Representative*

Dialogue Participants: Simon Spanswick-Chief Executive, AIB.

- Collen Dickson Kelapile-President of ECOSOC
- Davy Shukman- former BBC Science Editor from Scotland
- Steve Herman-National Correspondent
- Aida Salihbegovic-Producer, Balkan Booster Project
- Angelina Karickina-Head of News, Ukraine Public Broadcasting
- Georgia Arnold-Executive Director of the MTV Foundation

In his opening address, H.E. Mr. Kelapile stated that the media is a vital stakeholder in achieving the SDGs; it is key in promoting solidarity. Global government leaders, business, NGO's and media must work together to become better partners in achieving the SDGs.

David Shukman noted that the Amazon rainforest is losing 3 football fields of trees every minute. Time is getting short to sort problems out. Encourage all to join the younger generation who want to get on the right side of history by challenging preconceptions and the status quo.

Steve Herman said, "It is vital to avoid preachy journalism. Lure the public with a story which includes a solution. People want to put their lives back together. I see a need for resilience, mitigation, and



## **GW Executive Summary Report – High Level Political Forum 2022**

*Report submitted by Louise McLeod, GWI VP Advocacy and Education with input from GWI United Nations Representatives (NYC)*

success stories. He continued that he intended to focus on elections but then war in Ukraine happened. Nimbleness is required. A 2–3-minute story takes hours to gather.

Aida Sakihbegovic produced short movies focusing on young journalists traveling to near-by countries, learning from other young adults and getting excited about setting up similar projects in their home country which have been sustained for 5 years. The stories were related to climate change, for example, how to eradicate air pollution.

Angelina Karickina stated that daily reporting in Ukraine involves all SDGs. Every Ukrainian must defend herself each hour of her life. We are aware of the figures from the UN: 49 million people in 48 countries are at risk of falling into famine partly because Ukrainians’s grains and oils may be impossible to obtain. This is reality and a huge challenge. Reporting includes a bombing which killed 80 people yesterday but also Ukrainians who continue to operate the state working and sending kids to school. War is not only tragedy and loss; it is soldiers and rescuers who are giving what they have—blood, food from their own gardens.

Georgia Arnold explained that the MTV Foundation has created series focusing on sexual health and gender-based violence which have been very effective across Africa and India. Research studies in the U.K. and the U.S. have supported the information shared through television, radio, novels, digital platforms, and social media.

In conclusion, Simon Spanswick, AIB chief executive, said this forum, SDGs and the Media, is the beginning of a series that will be organized in cooperation with the UN. He continued, “The aim will be to explore effective ways for the global media industry to support story-telling around the SDGs and the need to protect the planet.”

Watch the event: <https://youtu.be/lvdcIRbHkGg>. Press Releases from the AIB (Association for International Broadcasting) were used as a reference for this report.



## **Transformational Partnerships and Practical Tools to Promote Collaboration, Policy Integration and Coherence**

HLPF July 4 2022 SDG 17 UNITAR, The Partnering Initiative

*Submitted by Carolyn Cowgill, WG-USA UN Representative*

Darian Stibbe-Executive Director of The Partnering Initiative, pioneer of the multi-stakeholder collaborative.

Judith Kaulem-Executive Director of Poverty Reduction Forum Trust, Zimbabwe

Simon Masanga-Directpr in Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, Coordinator of Civil Society SDG’s, Zimbabwe

Suzanne Salz-Director in ICLEI (Global network of 3500 Local Governments for Sustainability)

Jenny Ekelund-Director of The Green Transition

Initial Considerations in Building a Sustainable Partnership





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- Alignment of interest- Example: 2 people, an organization and a rural community, an organization and a business
- Finding resources-Example: funding for travel and food for a stakeholders meeting, skills and computer for researching and posting data
- Including “time in the kitchen” and enough social events to establish trust

### Setting Up a Framework to Make Partnership Work

1. At the beginning, identify extra value that will result from this partnership. What will it look like if change happens? Examples: Success for the bank and for the community in East Africa, the government gets buy in with the locals and community members learn knowledge and get services, businesses and colleges each benefit from students in internships.
2. The partnership groups need to check in with each other often and on a regularly scheduled basis. Be clear with each other. What else is needed for extra value? Would an Impact Pathway Template be useful?
3. Measure to prove it is working. Tools vary. If there are many stakeholders, a survey may be used. With one child or a family, an Impact Story might be effective. Can each partner prove it works?
4. Use written reports, notes, interviews for annual or periodic evaluation.

**Conclusion:** Time is required to build trust, to consider the added value to each partner, to set up the framework, to track progress continually, to measure the benefits, and to evaluate the resulting collaboration. The most effective partnership is when each partner has skills essential to the other. How else can one partner attempt to walk in the other partner’s shoes?

Darian Stibbe obtained his doctorate in quantum physics as a young man and then went on to found his own business, The Partnering Initiative. He has since trained over 1000 United Nation staff members. With partnerships cited as valuable during the HLPF 2022, the focus of SDG 17, and related to many of the other SDG’s, it was interesting to see and hear Dr. Stibbe.

“Partnerships are messy. Partnerships need some level of review all the time. Few partnerships can be measured.” Darian Stibbe



## **Achieving Gender Equality 2030 Agenda from a Gender Perspective**

HLPF July 12 2022 SDG 5 Gender Equality

*Submitted by Carolyn Cowgill, WG-USA UN Representative*

### **Panelists:**

Lauren Pandolfelli-Moderator, UNICEF Gender Statistics Specialist Data Division

Lea Beuzit-UN Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR)

Caitlin Kraft-Buchman-AI and ITU, Applied Research in SE Asia and Thailand



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Bette Levy-Women’s Major Group

Antra Bhatt-Statistic Specialist at UN Women

Lara-Zuzan Golesorkhi, M.D.-Assistant Professor of Political Science and Global Affairs, University of Portland

April Porteria-Attorney and Activist for Women’s Rights in Asia Pacific Law, Development Justice

This outstanding panel of women in applied research is tracking the progress toward meeting the 2030 SDG Goals. Their presentation outlined the current barriers and solutions needed to achieve SDG 5: Gender Equality.

Barriers include:

1. Gaps in data such as gender insensitive algorithms which often fail to relearn gender differences.
2. Unpaid care work.
3. Extreme poverty often caused by child labor or early marriage.
4. Female migrants often experience violence.
5. Older women and women with disabilities interface.
6. Language barriers cause disruption in communication.
7. Countries get around taking responsibility due to stating, “We have our own laws which prohibits our participation.” This becomes a major loophole.

**Solutions discussed:** Government bodies need to collaborate with inquiry partners through dialogue, engagement with civil society and consultation opportunities with UNCSW, CEDAW, HLPF, CMW Families (Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families), and GCR (Global Compact on Refugees Forum), and GCM (Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration). Development Justice is a system which helps governments and those most vulnerable understand barriers, but it is currently non-binding and lacks accountability. Each group of migrants needs to engage with civil society organizations within the community to specify their issues and discuss capacities within the community for meeting their needs. Migrants new to the community often lack access to education and services and need organizational assistance from civil society to learn how to address the appropriate government representatives. Civil societies need to work through labor laws and government policies for binding agreements as a framework. Continual engagement and constant feedback is required by representative stakeholders at the community level.

### **Major Group Position Paper**

Panelist Lara Zuzan-Golesorkhi, M.D., representative for Europe. A reference paper for SDG 4 and SDG5 compiled by representatives of 12 global sections concludes:

“The NGO Major Group is calling for a global commitment to meaningful action supported by engagement with Civil Society, evidence-based reporting, and steadfast political will.”

It is an excellent summary of presentations at the 2022 High Level Political Forum.