

2023 UNITED NATIONS SDG SUMMIT REPORT

Louise McLeod, WG-USA Representative to the United Nations

WOMEN GRADUATES-USA www.wg-usa.org

SDG Action Weekend (ECOSOC NGOs and the Private Sector)

16-17 September 2023

The SDG Action Weekend was attended by
Women Graduates-USA UN Representative Louise McLeod.

To maximize the SDG Summit's impact, the Secretary General convened an **SDG Action Weekend**, which generated opportunities for stakeholders, UN entities, and Member States to convene inside the United Nations Headquarters and set out specific commitments and contributions to drive SDG transformation between now and 2030.

The SDG Action Weekend consisted of the SDG Mobilization Day on Saturday, 16 September, and the SDG Acceleration Day on Sunday, 17 September at UNHQ in New York.

The SDG Mobilization Day (16 September) created an opportunity for stakeholders from all sectors to convene inside the United Nations Headquarters and mobilize towards an ambitious SDG Summit and UN General Assembly High-Level Week. Civil society, the private sector, youth, scientists, local and regional governments, and other stakeholders all have a key role in the implementation of the SDGs. Their participation, contributions and catalytic mobilization were essential to the success of the SDG Summit and its follow-up.

The SDG Acceleration Day (17 September) centered [around the UN High-Impact Initiatives](#).

Reference Documents

[United Nations Secretary-General's remarks to the Opening of the SDG Action Weekend](#)
[UNFPA Executive Director's remarks to the Closing of the SDG Action Weekend](#)
[Youth Rapporteur's remarks to the Closing of the SDG Action Weekend](#)

Plenary Sessions

- **Opening Plenary: Mobilization** | Saturday, 16 September 11:00 - 11:45; General Assembly Hall
- **Opening Plenary: Acceleration** | Sunday, 17 September 9:00 - 9:45; ECOSOC Chamber
- **SDG Action Weekend Closing Plenary** | Sunday, 17 September 16:45 - 17:30; ECOSOC Chamber

Mobilization Day Segments | Saturday, 16 September, 2023 | UN HQ, NY

- **Youth** | 9:00 - 10:30 and 12:00 - 13:30; ECOSOC Chamber
- **Opening Plenary: Mobilization | 11:00 - 11:45; General Assembly Hall¹**
- **Women and Girls** | 12:00 - 14:00; Conference Room 2
- **Major Groups & Other Stakeholders** | 12:00 - 14:00; Conference Room 4²
- **Science & Academia** | 12:00 - 14:00; Trusteeship Council Chamber
- **Local & Regional Governments** | 12:00 - 14:00 and 16:00 - 18:00; Conference Room 1
- **Civil Society** | 14:00 - 16:00; ECOSOC Chamber

¹ Attended by WG-USA UN rep Louise McLeod

² "Leaving No One Behind" Attended by WG-USA UN rep Louise McLeod



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- **Private Sector** | 16:00 - 18:00; Trusteeship Council Chamber
- **Side Event: Investing in Climate Change Education for a Greener Future - An Intergenerational Dialogue**³

Acceleration Day High Impact Initiatives | Sunday, 17 September, 2023 | UN HQ, NY

- Opening Plenary: Acceleration | 9:00 - 9:45; ECOSOC Chamber
- **Energy Compacts** | 10:00 – 11:30; Conference Room 1
- **Food Systems Transformation** | 10:00 – 11:30; Conference Room 2
- **FutureGov** | 10:00 – 11:30; Conference Room 3
- **Transforming Education** | 10:00 – 11:30; Conference Room 4⁴
- **Transforming4Trade** | 11:45 – 13:15; Conference Room 1
- **Local2030 Coalition** | 11:45 – 13:15; Conference Room 2
- **Power of Data** | 11:45 – 13:15; Conference Room 3⁵
- **Nature Driving Economic Transformation** | 11:45 – 13:15; Conference Room 4
- **Global Accelerator** | 15:00 – 16:30; Conference Room 1
- **Spotlight Initiative** | 15:00 – 16:30; Trusteeship Council Chamber⁶
- **Digital Public Infrastructure** | 15:00 – 16:30; ECOSOC Chamber
- **The SDG Stimulus** | 15:00 – 16:30; Conference Room 4
- SDG Action Weekend Closing Plenary | 16:45 - 17:30; ECOSOC Chamber

Acceleration Day Special Sessions | Sunday, 17 September, 2023 | UN HQ, NY

- **Advancing Sustainable Development in Complex Settings** | 13:30 – 14:45; Conference Room 3
- **SDG Digital** | 10:00 – 16:30; ECOSOC Chamber⁷
- **Generation Equality** | 10:00 – 14:45; Trusteeship Council Chamber

Assessing the Status of the SDGs at the 2023 half-way point to the 2030 Agenda deadline⁸:

- We are at the intersection of a series of complex and intersecting crises that include the war in Ukraine, the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic and the impacts of climate change. The most vulnerable in our communities, including women and girls, young people, persons with disabilities, older persons and indigenous people have not been spared and are at the foremost receiving end of these crises despite commitments to eradicate poverty and to reduce hunger being at the core of this agenda
- 1.2 billion people were still living in multidimensional poverty as of 2022.
- approximately 8% of the global population or 680 million people will still be facing hunger in 2030
- only 15% of the targets are on track and many are going in reverse

³ Attended by WG-USA UN rep Louise McLeod

⁴ Attended by WG-USA UN rep Louise McLeod

⁵ Attended by WG-USA UN rep Louise McLeod

⁶ “Violence Against Women and Girls” Attended by WG-USA UN rep Louise McLeod

⁷ Occasional drop in during the day. Attended by WG-USA UN rep Louise McLeod

⁸ As taken from the SDG Summit Opening Session, September 18, 2023

- we are in danger of abandoning the SDGs altogether vs working together to accelerate their progress

The 2023 global Sustainable Development report outlines clear steps in that regard recommending an ambitious SDG push scenario to improve social protection, strengthen governance, promote a green economy and address digital disruption while improving access to quality education and healthcare in a human rights setting. It is still possible that by 2030 we could lift 124 million additional people out of poverty and ensure that someone 113 million fewer people are malnourished

- SDG stimulus requires at least 500 billion U.S. dollars a year as well as an effective debt relief mechanism that supports payment suspensions longer lending terms and lower rates
- **Countries already under debt distress** have been further crippled due to the economic and financial tolls of pandemic recovery on climate disasters
- **The growing digital divide** is intensifying
- **gender inequality** continues to undermine our progress.
- more than 800 million people around the world have been connected to electricity since 2015.
- 146 countries have already matched or on track to meeting the under five mortality target
- effective HIV treatment has halved global aids related deaths since 2010.

*The SDGs are not just a list of goals - they carry the hopes dreams, rights and expectations of people everywhere and they provide the surest path to living up to our obligations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights now in its 75th year –
UN SG to the United Nations, Antonio Guterres*

Global Actions Required to complete the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs⁹

1. Take action on **hunger**. Hunger is a shocking stain on humanity and is a epic human rights violation. Building on July's food system summit stocktaking, *we are marshalling finance science data innovations and policy and governance support to our countries to transform food systems so all people can access healthy and nutritious diets.*
2. Transition to **renewable energy**. We are putting forward *new energy compacts in which governments, businesses and global organizations joined forces to invest in decarbonizing energy systems and ensuring a just and equitable transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy.*
3. Benefits and opportunities of **digitalization** are not being spread widely enough to close the divide. *We have launched an initiative to spur digital transformation across 100 countries supporting stronger technology capacities, better governance and innovative financing. Our proposed global digital compacts will also help countries build safe digital systems that provide Internet access for all including students in art to reach communities.*

⁹ UNSG Antonio Guterres

4. Too many children and young people are victims of **poor quality education or receive no education at all**. *An emerging group of front runner countries is leading the way in boosting investment and transforming education systems around the world.*
5. **Decent work and social protection**. Investments in social protection should be massively increased. *Working with governments and the private sector, our global accelerator on jobs and social protection for just transitions, aims to create 400 million new decent jobs especially in the green care and digital economies and **extend social protection to over 4 billion people**.*
6. End the triple planetary crisis of **climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss**. *We're building a group of champion countries to explore how to reform economic policies and put nature and biodiversity at the heart of all decision making.*
7. **Ensure full gender equality**. It's long past the time to end discrimination to ensure a place at every table for women and girls and to end the scourge of gender based violence.

Realizing gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls will make a crucial contribution to progress across all the goals and targets of the 2030 agenda. Women and girls must benefit from equal access to quality education, to economic resources and to political participation, as well as the same opportunities for employment leadership and decision making at all levels – President ECOSOC

*Peaceful settlement of differences and respectful dialogue is our best way to safeguard the development gains worldwide. Therefore we must give priority to the implementation of effective procedures and measures as per the international law to remove the difficulties hindering the right of self-determination for those living under foreign occupation - **Prime Minister and minister of foreign affairs of the state of Qatar***

Executive Summary Report on the SDG Action Weekend 2023 September 16-17, 2023

The SDG Action Weekend 2023, held on September 16-17, served as a dynamic and participatory event dedicated to advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Bringing together stakeholders from diverse sectors, the Action Weekend focused on fostering collaboration, innovation, and concrete actions to accelerate progress towards the SDGs. This report provides an overview of the key activities, discussions, and outcomes of the SDG Action Weekend.

The SDG Action Weekend was designed to complement the broader SDG Summit, providing a platform for stakeholders to translate discussions and commitments into actionable initiatives. Participants included representatives from governments, NGOs, businesses, youth organizations, and academia, all motivated by the shared goal of achieving the SDGs by 2030.

Key Activities and Initiatives

1. **Pledges and Commitments:** A central feature of the Action Weekend was the opportunity for stakeholders to make specific pledges and commitments aligned with the SDGs. These commitments encompassed a wide range of actions, from financial investments and policy changes to technological innovations and partnerships. Emphasis was placed on areas where immediate action was urgently needed.
2. **Interactive Workshops and Collaboration Sessions:** The event featured a series of interactive workshops and collaboration sessions. These sessions facilitated knowledge sharing, best practice dissemination, and the exploration of innovative solutions to pressing SDG-related challenges. Topics covered a broad spectrum of issues, including climate action, gender equality, poverty reduction, and more.
3. **Youth Engagement:** Acknowledging the crucial role of youth in driving progress towards the SDGs, dedicated sessions and panels were organized for young leaders and activists. Youth participants actively shared their perspectives, projects, and insights related to the SDGs, encouraging intergenerational dialogue and collaboration.
4. **Innovation and Technology Showcase:** The Action Weekend included an innovation and technology showcase, allowing organizations, startups, and entrepreneurs to present innovative solutions and technologies with the potential to accelerate SDG achievement. This platform provided investors, businesses, and governments an opportunity to identify promising partnerships and investment opportunities.
5. **Networking and Partnership Building:** Participants were encouraged to network and establish new partnerships and collaborations. These partnerships spanned a wide spectrum, from public-private collaborations to civil society initiatives, all aimed at leveraging collective efforts to advance the SDGs.



Outcomes and Achievements

The SDG Action Weekend 2023 resulted in several notable outcomes and achievements:

1. **Concrete Commitments:** Numerous governments, organizations, and businesses announced tangible commitments to advance the SDGs. These commitments ranged from financial investments in sustainable projects to policy changes and the initiation of specific projects and programs.
2. **Youth Empowerment:** Youth engagement was a prominent success, with youth-led initiatives gaining recognition and support. This engagement fostered a sense of empowerment among young leaders and activists, who emerged as key drivers of SDG progress.
3. **Innovative Solutions:** The innovation and technology showcase highlighted several cutting-edge solutions with the potential to address critical SDG challenges, including climate change, healthcare, education, and more.
4. **Partnership Growth:** The Action Weekend facilitated the formation of new partnerships and collaborations, bridging gaps and enabling collective efforts towards SDG achievement. These partnerships were characterized by a spirit of cooperation and shared responsibility.
5. **Knowledge Sharing:** The interactive workshops and collaboration sessions facilitated knowledge sharing and the dissemination of best practices, enabling participants to learn from one another and apply lessons in their own contexts.

Conclusion

The SDG Action Weekend 2023 successfully mobilized stakeholders from various sectors, fostering collaboration, innovation, and concrete commitments towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. As the world continues to grapple with complex challenges, this event underscored the importance of collective action and partnership in addressing the urgent global issues outlined in the SDGs.

The commitments and initiatives generated during the Action Weekend represent a significant step towards realizing the vision of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Continued dedication, collaboration, and innovative approaches are essential to ensure that these commitments translate into meaningful progress and a more sustainable and equitable world for all.

The United Nations 2023 SDG Action Summit

18-19 September 2023

The SDGs at the Half-Way Point

The 2023 SDG Summit (Member States only) took place on 18-19 September 2023 in New York. It marked the beginning of a new phase of accelerated progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals with high-level political guidance on transformative and accelerated actions leading up to 2030.

Convened by the President of the General Assembly, the Summit **marked the half-way point to the deadline set for achieving the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals**. It was the centerpiece of the High-level Week of the General Assembly. It responded to the impact of multiple and interlocking crises facing the world and is expected to reignite a sense of hope, optimism, and enthusiasm for the 2030 Agenda.¹⁰

Outcome Document and Political Declaration

Member states approved the following Political Declaration submitted by the High Level Political Forum 2023 pledging to recommit to the completion of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The General Assembly in its resolution [70/299](#) decided that the [High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development \(HLPF\)](#) shall have only one negotiated **Political Declaration**, covering the different and complementary functions of both sessions of the forum under the auspices of the General Assembly - the Summit, and the forum under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) when the forum is convened twice in the same year.

>> **[Political Declaration adopted at the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development \(HLPF\) under the auspices of the General Assembly in September 2023](#)**

Executive Summary Report on the 2023 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Summit

September 18-19, 2023

The 2023 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Summit, held virtually on September 18-19, 2023, brought together world leaders, policymakers, experts, and stakeholders from around the globe to assess the progress made in the pursuit of the 17 SDGs. This report provides an overview of the key themes, discussions, and outcomes of the summit, highlighting achievements, challenges, and the way forward in advancing the global sustainable development agenda.

The 2023 UN SDG Summit marked an essential milestone in the ongoing efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Building upon the work since the adoption of the SDGs in 2015, the summit aimed to reinvigorate the global commitment to achieving these goals, recognizing the

¹⁰ [SDG Summit 2023 | United Nations](#)

significant setbacks caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the urgent need to address climate change and other pressing challenges.

Key Themes and Discussions

1. COVID-19 Response and Recovery

The pandemic remained a central theme throughout the summit. Participants discussed the impact of COVID-19 on the SDGs, highlighting disruptions to healthcare, education, and economic systems. The importance of global vaccine equity, healthcare strengthening, and preparedness for future health crises was emphasized.

2. Climate Action and Environmental Sustainability

Climate change and environmental sustainability took center stage. Discussions focused on the urgent need for increased climate action, commitments to reach net-zero emissions, and strategies for protecting biodiversity and ecosystems. Calls for the acceleration of renewable energy adoption were prominent.

3. Inclusive and Equitable Development

Addressing inequality and ensuring inclusivity were key priorities. Participants emphasized the importance of gender equality, reducing income disparities, and improving access to quality education and healthcare, particularly for marginalized populations. The summit highlighted policies that promote social inclusion and economic opportunities.

4. Digital Transformation and Innovation

The role of technology in advancing the SDGs was a significant focus. Participants discussed the potential of digital transformation, innovation, and data-driven decision-making to accelerate progress, with particular attention to bridging the digital divide and ensuring data privacy and security.

5. Partnerships and Financing

Collaboration and financing remained crucial enablers of SDG achievement. Summit participants stressed the importance of multi-stakeholder partnerships, public-private collaboration, and innovative financing mechanisms. Calls were made for increased investment in sustainable development projects and debt relief for developing nations.

Achievements and Commitments

The 2023 UN SDG Summit resulted in several noteworthy achievements and commitments:

- 1. Global Commitment to Vaccination:** World leaders pledged to work towards global vaccine equity, enhancing vaccine production, and ensuring equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines for all nations.
- 2. Renewed Climate Ambition:** Many countries announced strengthened climate targets, aiming for more ambitious emissions reductions and investing in renewable energy and sustainable infrastructure.

3. Gender Equality Commitments: There were strong commitments to promoting gender equality, combating gender-based violence, and improving women's participation in all aspects of society.
4. Youth Engagement: Initiatives were launched to engage youth in SDG implementation, recognizing the importance of their involvement in shaping the future.
5. Digital Inclusion: Strategies were discussed to bridge the digital divide, expand internet access, and promote digital literacy, especially in underserved communities.
6. Inclusive Recovery: Leaders committed to a post-pandemic recovery that prioritizes inclusivity, social safety nets, and sustainable economic growth.

Challenges and Road Ahead

Despite the achievements and commitments, several challenges remain:

1. Resource Mobilization: Many countries, particularly in the Global South, continue to face resource gaps for SDG implementation. Innovative financing solutions and international cooperation are needed.
2. Inequality Reduction: Reducing inequality requires comprehensive policy reforms and targeted interventions to ensure that no one is left behind.
3. Climate Urgency: The urgent need for climate action necessitates swift and sometimes difficult decisions, which may face resistance in certain sectors.
4. Geopolitical Tensions: Geopolitical tensions and conflicts can hinder global cooperation and affect progress on the SDGs.
5. Data and Monitoring: Enhanced data collection and monitoring are essential for tracking progress accurately, and many countries face capacity constraints in this regard.

Conclusion and Relevance to Women Graduates-USA

The 2023 UN SDG Summit served as a platform for recommitting to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, even in the face of formidable global challenges. While progress has been made, the path ahead remains challenging, demanding continued dedication, cooperation, and innovation from all stakeholders to build a sustainable, equitable, and resilient world for future generations.

The outcomes of this summit underscore the importance of collective action, inclusive development, and the need for sustained effort to realize the vision of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It is essential that the commitments made at the summit translate into concrete actions at the national and international levels to drive meaningful change and ensure a better future for all.

>> Political Declaration adopted at the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) under the auspices of the General Assembly in September 2023

Women Graduates-USA: While the United Nations Members states have recommitted to ensuring the success of the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda, so too should Women Graduates-USA, as a member of civil society, continue its mission of advocating for the rights of women and girls, eliminating violence against



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women and girls, gender equality and equity, and ensuring safe access to education for women and girls in particular migrant/immigrant and indigenous women, women who despite living in one of the richest countries in the world still live in marginalized situations and need our voices for their empowerment. Movement and improvement at the local, community and regional levels are critical to the success of the SDGs.