



2024 UN High Level Political Forum

8-17 July 2024

Summary Report

Elise Russo, Louise McLeod, WG-USA Representatives to the United Nations

High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF)

8-17 July 2024, UN Headquarters New York

The **High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF)** in 2024 was a significant event that took place under the auspices of the **Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)**.

The HLPF was held from **Monday, July 8 to Wednesday, July 17, 2024**. The three-day ministerial segment of the forum occurred from **Monday, July 15 to Wednesday, July 17, 2024**, as part of the High-level Segment of the Council. The last day of the High-level Segment of ECOSOC was on **Thursday, July 18, 2024**.

The theme of the 2024 HLPF was "**Reinforcing the 2030 Agenda and eradicating poverty in times of multiple crises: the effective delivery of sustainable, resilient, and innovative solutions**"¹.

Overall Purpose:

The 2024 HLPF aimed to support the implementation of the **Political Declaration** and other outcomes of the **SDG Summit** for advancing the **2030 Agenda** and the **SDGs**¹.

Review of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):

The 2024 HLPF reviewed several SDGs in-depth:

- **Goal 1:** End poverty in all its forms everywhere.
- **Goal 2:** End hunger, achieve food security, improve nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture.
- **Goal 13:** Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.
- **Goal 16:** Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all, and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels.
- **Goal 17:** Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development.

These goals were discussed to their integrated, indivisible, and interlinked nature¹.

Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs):

Several countries carried out VNRs of their implementation of the **2030 Agenda** at the 2024 HLPF. These countries included Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belize, Brazil, Chad, Colombia, Congo (Republic of the), Costa Rica, Ecuador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Georgia, Guinea, Honduras, Kenya,



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Lao People's Democratic Republic, Libya, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Namibia, Nepal, Oman, Palau, Peru, Samoa, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, South Sudan, Spain, Syrian Arab Republic, Uganda, Vanuatu, Yemen, and Zimbabwe.

These reviews provided insights into each country's progress toward achieving the SDGs¹.

Other Events:

In addition to the main sessions, various other events were organized on the margins of the 2024 HLPF. These included **Side Events**, **VNR Labs**, **Special Events**, and an **Exhibition**. These events facilitated discussions, knowledge sharing, and collaboration among stakeholders to advance sustainable development¹.

Events attended by Women Graduates-USA Representatives to the United Nations Elise Russo and Louise McLeod

- *Advancing Women's Sexual and Reproductive Agency: Key to Accelerating SDG Progress, Eradicating Poverty, and Building Resilient, Sustainable Societies*
- *Uniting Forces: Integrating Science, Policy, and Society to Achieve Zero Hunger*
- *Plight on the Road to Dignity: The Intersection Between Poverty, Hunger, Climate Change, and Human Trafficking*
- [SDG 16 as an Enabler of the 2030 Agenda](#)

General Outcomes:

1. Challenges and Geopolitical Tensions:
 - Geopolitical and economic challenges were central themes.
 - Delegates debated the Ministerial Declaration¹, emphasizing the link between sustainable development and peace/security.
 - Attention was drawn to the impact of unilateral coercive measures (economic sanctions) on poverty and food security.
2. SDGs Reviewed:
 - HLPF 2024 reviewed five SDGs:
 - SDG 1 (eradicate poverty)
 - SDG 2 (food security and sustainable agriculture)
 - SDG 13 (climate action)
 - **SDG 16 (peace, justice, and strong institutions)**
 - SDG 17 (means of implementation and global partnership)

¹ The **Ministerial Declaration** issued at the **High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) 2024** focused on the theme of "Reinforcing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and eradicating poverty in times of multiple crises: the effective delivery of sustainable, resilient, and innovative solutions." Click [here](#) for the full text of the Ministerial Declaration.



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3. SDG Progress:
 - Only 17% of SDG targets are on track to be achieved by 2030.
 - Bold action on peace and finance is crucial.
 - Upcoming summits and conferences are milestones for advancing the SDGs.
4. Complex Challenges and Debt Crisis:
 - Protracted conflicts and humanitarian crises impact sustainable development.
 - The debt crisis affects vulnerable populations, diverting resources from essential services.

[In summary, while challenges persist, the HLPF remains a critical platform for advancing the broader 2030 Agenda.](#)

Women Graduates-USA supports SDG 16 and Women, Peace and Security

SDG 16, also known as *“Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions,”* aims to create peaceful societies, ensure access to justice, and establish effective, accountable institutions. **Achieving SDG 16 contributes to a safer, more just world for all!**

Women Graduates-USA chose to concentrate on SDG 16 (16.1, 16.2 and its application to women, peace and security) in its written statement prepared by WG-USA subject matter experts Jeanette Westbrook and Kathleen Laurila (see below) given the limitations in the content we were allowed to provide (400 words).

Target 16.1: Reduce violence and promote peace.

- Measure intentional homicide rates and conflict-related deaths.
 - Assess the proportion of people who feel safe walking alone after dark.
 - Address abuse, exploitation, trafficking, and violence against children.
 - [Track human trafficking incidents and sexual violence experienced by young adults.](#)
2. **Target 16.2:** End abuse and violence against children.
 - Monitor the percentage of children (aged 1–14) experiencing physical punishment or psychological aggression by caregivers.
 - [Evaluate sexual violence experienced by young women and men by age 18.](#)
 3. **Women, Peace, and Security:**
 - While not explicitly part of SDG 16, it aligns with promoting peace and justice.
 - Focuses on women’s participation in conflict prevention, resolution, and peacebuilding.
 - Addresses gender-based violence during conflicts and post-conflict recovery.



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The **High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) 2024** put forth several key recommendations to advance the **2030 Agenda** and **SDG 16**. These include:

1. **Strengthening Institutions:** Countries were urged to enhance their institutions, promote transparency, and ensure effective governance. This involves addressing corruption, promoting rule of law, and fostering inclusive decision-making processes.
2. **Promoting Peace and Justice:** The HLPF emphasized the importance of peacebuilding, conflict prevention, and access to justice. Efforts to reduce violence, promote human rights, and provide legal remedies were highlighted.
3. **Data and Monitoring:** Improved data collection and monitoring mechanisms were recommended. This includes disaggregated data to track progress on SDG 16 indicators and assess the impact of policies.
4. **Civil Society Engagement:** The forum stressed the need for active involvement of civil society, including marginalized groups, in shaping policies related to SDG 16. Their perspectives and expertise are crucial for effective implementation.
5. **Partnerships:** Collaborative efforts among governments, international organizations, private sector, and civil society were encouraged. Partnerships can enhance capacity-building, resource mobilization, and knowledge sharing.

In summary, the 2024 HLPF provided a platform for countries to assess progress, share experiences, and collaborate on achieving sustainable development goals in the face of multiple challenges¹.

What this means for WG-USA continuing program and action around these issues:

1. [SDG 16.1: Efforts should continue to significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates globally](#)²³. This involves addressing violence in conflict and post-conflict contexts, as well as criminal and political violence.
2. [SDG 16.2: The focus remains on ending abuse, exploitation, trafficking, and all forms of violence against and torture of children](#). Strengthening child protection mechanisms and ensuring justice for victims are critical.
3. Women Graduates-USA should continue emphasizing the need for gender-responsive approaches including addressing violence against women, promoting their participation in peacebuilding, and ensuring that their rights are protected as outlined in our Written Statement.

Source(s)

1. [High-Level Political Forum 2024](#)
2. [2024 HLPF Factsheet SDG 16 | Department of Economic and Social Affairs](#)
3. [2024 HLPF Thematic Review Expert Group Meeting - Sustainable Development](#)
4. [SDG 16 as an Enabler of the 2030 Agenda \(HLPF 2024 Side Event\)](#)



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2024 session

15 - 18 July 2023

ECOSOC High-Level Segment

Statement submitted by Women Graduates – USA, Inc. in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statements, which are being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

Statement

Women Graduates – USA, Inc. is a United State-based membership organization focusing on national issues having international implications with support for the United Nation's 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals 3, 4, 5, 8.7, 10, 16 and 17 with special emphasis on Human Trafficking in all its forms and Women, Peace and Security.

Achieving Sustainable Development Goal 16, "Promoting peaceful and inclusive societies," by 2030 faces significant challenges. Displacement is expected to increase to 130 million by the end of 2024 due to armed conflicts, terrorism, trafficking, climate crisis, and wealth and political power disparities. This displacement, often to make-shift refugee camps, leads to humanitarian crises, including starvation, lack of healthcare, and violence, particularly affecting women and children. Whether for those displaced or in more stable communities, polarization becomes rampant, leading to unjust, unlawful and often violent societies.

The emphasis on Pillar 1 of the United Nation's Women, Peace, and Security Resolution 1325 (UNWPS) has focused on increasing women's participation in peace-making leadership roles. However, with rising violence and disparities globally, Pillars 2 and 3, focusing on protection and prevention, must also be prioritized to address structural injustices and rogue activities.

Women Graduates – USA, Inc. believes that in order to achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda for "Peaceful, Just, and Inclusive Societies," protecting children from violence is also paramount. Over one billion children globally experience various forms of violence annually, hindering human development across physical, psychosocial, and emotional dimensions. Sustainable Development Goal 16 targets 16.1 and 16.2 recognize that violence against children severely impacts all aspects of their well-being and development including physical, psychosocial, emotional and mental health, effects that last well into adulthood.

Women Graduates – USA, Inc. encourages the full implementation of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons including the full funding of all aspects of the Plan of Action that provides services, justice, and healing modalities to its victims, holds perpetrators criminally accountable, and expanding all efforts in achieving the goal of protecting children and upholding their Human Rights.

HLPF 2024 Reports on Side Events Attended

Elise Russo, WG-USA Representative to the United Nations

Side Events attended:

- *Advancing Women's Sexual and Reproductive Agency: Key to Accelerating SDG Progress, Eradicating Poverty, and Building Resilient, Sustainable Societies (Elise Russo, Louise McLeod)*
- *Uniting Forces: Integrating Science, Policy, and Society to Achieve Zero Hunger (Elise Russo)*
- *Plight on the Road to Dignity: The Intersection Between Poverty, Hunger, Climate Change, and Human Trafficking (Elise Russo)*
- [SDG 16 as an Enabler of the 2030 Agenda \(Louise McLeod\)](#)

Title of Meeting: **Advancing Women's Sexual and Reproductive Agency: Key to Accelerating SDG Progress, Eradicating Poverty, and Building Resilient, Sustainable Societies**

Introduction: Session featured reports from Georgia, Spain, Colombia, and Nepal along with USAID and International Planned Parenthood highlighting the programs they are supporting to enable women to make their own decisions with regard to contraception, choice of partner, and other reproductive rights.

Key Points:

- Women should be able to make voluntary and informed decisions about their reproductive health
- Decisions should include, among others, choice of partner, when to begin a family and how large it should be. Women should be free from sexual violence, discrimination, and mutilation
- Out of 153 countries reviewed by UNFPA, 76% of the countries have laws to support women's choice when it comes to reproductive health decisions. However, laws are not always enforced
- Women and girls must know and understand their rights before they are able to demand them
- Programs that are developed and supported locally have the greatest chance of continued success

Conclusion:

Many countries have laws addressing women's reproductive rights, however, they are not always enforced or understood by those the laws were enacted to protect. Data collection is a key component to supporting women and girls and ensuring their agency. Which data to collect, how to interpret it, and who is being left out of the collection (sex workers, migrants, teenagers, and LGBTQ people, for example) are key issues that researchers must keep in mind. Finally, once again, consulting with members of the local community to plan and support programs is critical.



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Title of Meeting: Plight on the Road to Dignity: The Intersection Between Poverty, Hunger, Climate Change, and Human Trafficking

Introduction: This session featured women from Nigeria and Kenya speaking about ways in which they have engaged communities to help address human trafficking, particularly prevention, at the local level. Latina speakers, currently living in Canada, addressed how they are striving to ensure especially Latin and South American women, receive accurate information about ways in which they can safely and legally make their way to and through the United States and Canada. They are accomplishing this by all groups working to combat the misinformation that potential migrants receive from gangs, members of drug cartels, and human smugglers/traffickers.

Key Points:

- Nations do not target the cause of human trafficking but, rather, address the results
- Prevention is the key and governments must address the root causes
- Communities must be transformed from within, working with local individuals who are most directly affected
- Refugees have a lot to offer and must be connected to opportunities
- Receiving false and/or misinformation causes migrants/refugees to make wrong, and often dangerous decisions

Conclusion:

Climate change, hunger, and poverty create conditions that result in people having to leave their homes in search of a better life. Often, they are confronted with misinformation and promises about a wealth of opportunities awaiting them in another place, most often, another country. Since the root causes of the actions and decisions that desperate people make are not addressed, exploitation of misinformed people results. Actions must be taken within communities and with the guidance of people directly involved in these situations to remedy these situations and end the exploitation, particularly of women and children.

Title of Meeting: [SDG 16 as an Enabler of the 2030 Agenda](#)

Introduction

The Sustainable Development Goal 16 (SDG 16), focusing on peace, justice, and strong institutions, plays a pivotal role in achieving the broader 2030 Agenda. International IDEA recently published a report exploring the interlinkages between SDG 16 and other sustainable development goals. This report sheds light on the challenges, impact, and policy recommendations related to SDG 16.

Key Points

1. Challenges to Democratic Governance:

- New technology presents both opportunities and challenges.
- Social media's role in spreading disinformation and eroding trust is significant.
- Addressing fake news is crucial for protecting democratic processes.
- SDG 16 is foundational for achieving all other SDGs.



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2. *SDG 16's Impact and Global Trends:*

None of the 12 SDG 16 targets are likely to be achieved by 2030. Democracy decline worldwide affects SDG 16's effectiveness. Democracy is weakening and authoritarianism is rising globally.

3. *Interlinkages and Research Findings:*

- Peace and development are closely linked, supported by historical evidence.
- Negative impacts of violence, corruption, and insecurity affect health and urban development.
- **More research attention is needed for SDG 16.2 (ending abuse, violence, and torture against children).**

4. *Participatory Decision-Making and Urban Development:* Participatory decision-making contributes to sustainable urban development. Access to justice and poverty reduction are interconnected with better health outcomes.

5. *Limitations and Recommendations:*

- Encourage **quantitative studies** focusing on causal relationships.
- Consider research prior to 2016 and explore interplay between different dimensions of SDG 16.
- Protect those working on SDG 16 in challenging environments.

Conclusion

As we recommit to SDG 16, let us recognize its critical role in building resilient, inclusive societies. Together, we can create a sustainable future for all.