



UNGA CONFERENCE 2019

TRANSFORMING OUR WORLD

Inclusive Social Development For All

September 25, 2019

4W43 Conference Room
4 West 43rd Street New York, NY 10036
www.unga-conference.org



JOURNALISTS AND
WRITERS FOUNDATION

CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS



The Journalists and Writers Foundation (JWF) is an international civil society organization dedicated to the culture of peace, human rights, and sustainable development. The JWF promotes diversity and inclusion by creating forums for intellectual and social engagement; generates and shares knowledge with stakeholders, builds partnerships worldwide and develops policy recommendations for positive social change.

** JWF is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization registered in New York State, USA*

** JWF is associated with the United Nations Department of Global Communications.*

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Published in February 2020

Designed and printed in the United States of America

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Special thanks to the Editor of the UNGA Conference 2019 Proceedings, Dr. Reginald Maudlin Nalugala, the PDH and MA Governance Coordinator of the Tangaza University College, Kenya.

Special thanks to Rev. Kelly Isola, Chair of the Greater Kansas City Interfaith Council, for the design of this publication. Learn more about Kelly at www.kellyisola.com.

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INTRODUCTION

On the occasion of the 74th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, the Journalists and Writers Foundation organized the UNGA Conference 2019 entitled- Transforming Our World: “Inclusive Social Development for All” in partnership with 36 Global Partners from 24 countries from all around the world. This annual conference is the flagship event of the JWF that aims to gather and engage the multi-stakeholders in the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals. The UNGA Conference creates a platform for stakeholders to discuss inclusive social development, youth empowerment and protection of social, economic, cultural rights in order to provide policy recommendations on how to achieve the SDGs with 169 targets globally without Leaving No One Behind.



The UNGA Conference 2019 hosted esteemed Keynote Speakers, panelists and experts from the UN Member States to the United Nations Secretariat, from renown human rights activists to distinguished civil society leaders and youth who came from 14 different countries. The regional representation from the Americas, Africa, Asia, Australia, and Europe provided multiple perspectives on policies and practices for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. A brief summary Declaration of the UNGA Conference was shared with the United Nations Agencies for their consideration that can offer alternative strategies, solutions, and recommendations for evaluation, assessment, and accountability for all stakeholders.

Some of the distinguished speakers were **His Excellency Adama Dieng**, Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, **Honorable Mark Botomani**, the Minister of Information, Civic Education and Communications Technology of the Republic of Malawi, **Tushar Gandhi**, the Founder of the Mahatma Gandhi Institution, **Craig Foster**, an Award-winning Athlete and Ambassador for Human Rights from Australia, **Enes Kanter**, NBA Player at Boston Celtics and Human Rights Activist, **José Igreja Matos**, the President of European Association of Judges and **Isaque Chande**, Ombudsman of the Mozambique

AWARD RECIPIENTS: PIONEERS IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The UNGA Conference 2019 also recognized outstanding individuals and organizations that contributed to sustainable peace and development while promoting and protecting the culture of peace, diversity, inclusive society, human rights, women and youth empowerment at the local, national, and global levels. The Pioneers in SDGs Awards were presented to Mr. Masaaki Koiwai for contributions from the Japan Organic Farming Association to SDG Goal #13 on Climate Change, to Ms. Fauziya Ali, Founder of Women in International Security Horn of Africa for promoting SDG Goal #5 on Gender Equality, and to the Young Peace Builders Project by the Turkish Cultural Center Brooklyn and Kings Bay Y for their efforts to achieve SDG Goal #17 to foster youth engagement for social cohesion.



PIONEERS IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The UNGA Conference 2019 concluded with a framework of an Action Plan to improve the **implementations and outcomes** of the Sustainable Development Goals that will help create global and local partnerships for the successful implementation of the Global Goals 2030.

The Journalists and Writers Foundation and its Global Partners celebrated their work during the UNGA Reception, which was held at the Penthouse45 in this charming rooftop in New York City. Since 2019 marks

the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the Journalists and Writers Foundation, honorable guests shared their thoughts about the JWF and its work on the culture of peace, human rights, and sustainable development during the UNGA Reception. The ultimate goal is to build peace, harmony and unity among diversity throughout the world. When we work together, everything is possible and we can make our world a better place for all, for today and tomorrow.

SPEAKERS

OPENING KEYNOTE: H.E. Adama Dieng, Under-Secretary-General
Special Adviser of the UN Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide

PANEL 1: INCLUSIVE SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN ACHIEVING THE GLOBAL GOALS 2030

KEYNOTE: Hon. Mark Botomani, Minister of Information, Civic Education and
Communications Technology, REPUBLIC of MALAWI

MODERATOR: Dr. Macharia Munene, Professor, United States International University, KENYA

PANELISTS:

TUSHAR A. GANDHI, President & Founder, Gandhi Foundation, INDIA
Role of the culture of peace in social cohesion and inclusiveness

FLAVIE FUENTES, Legal Manager, North America, Thomson Reuters Foundation, USA
Importance of rule of law and democracy to reduce inequalities and implement social development policies

DR. HAN ENTZINGER, Professor and Author, University Rotterdam, NETHERLANDS
Social integration policies that promote access to basic public services

SILVIA ALEJANDRA PERAZZO, President, ANU-AR, ARGENTINA
Civil society participation to facilitate social development

DISCUSSANTS:

MONEEZA BURNEY, Writer at Dawn Newspaper, Falak Sufi Scholar 2018, PAKISTAN
The role of youth in creating inclusive social societies

PANEL 2: ADVANCING YOUTH THROUGH SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

MODERATOR: Emmanuel N.B. Flomo, Founder & Executive Director, Inspire Liberia Project, LIBERIA

PANELISTS:

JOHNNIE LEE FIELDER, Director of Operations, International Youth Leadership Institute
*Youth as stakeholders in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals:
Advocacy, awareness-raising, and capacity building*

SASHA E. BUTLER, Legal Executive Director, Changing Destinations:
Journey to Excellence, Inc., USA
Key priorities and challenges in access to quality education

ALYSON NEEL, Policy and Advocacy Strategist, UN Foundation, USA
UNA-USA Youth member participation in human rights mechanisms and UN Summits

DISCUSSANTS:

NICK HATZOGLOU, Head of Community Projects, Football Victoria, AUSTRALIA
The role of sports for the social and personal development of youth

KIT MILLER, Director, M.K. Gandhi Institute, USA
Importance of non-violence education and culture of peace for social empowerment of youth

MARIA CRUZ RODRIGUEZ DEL CERRO, Former Vice President, UNESCO Center of Getafe-Madrid, SPAIN
Education as a tool to create peaceful and inclusive societies

PANEL 3: PROTECTION OF SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

KEYNOTE: Craig Foster, Football broadcaster; Author; Ambassador for Human Rights, AUSTRALIA

MODERATOR: Jose Igreja Matos, President, European Association of Judges, PORTUGAL

PANELISTS:

ISAQUE CHANDE, Ombudsman, MOZAMBIQUE

Early warning mechanisms of human rights to prevent conflicts: severe inequalities in access of social services

JAMES C. HARRINGTON, Founder & Director Emeritus, Texas Civil Rights Project, USA

Promotion of social, economic and cultural rights in building peaceful societies

ANTONIO ALBERTO DO VALE CERQUEIRA, Court of Ethics and Disciplinary at the

Brazilian Bar Association - District Federal Section, BRAZIL

Violation of human rights leading to social unrest: Country-based Analysis

DISCUSSANTS:

EKATERINA SHEBALINA, Executive Assistant to the Vice-Rector, Institute for International

Studies, Research Fellow, RUSSIA

Protection of Social, Economic and Cultural Rights

PIONEERS IN SDGs AWARDS

1st Place: Zambia Bio Project

Japan Organic Farming Association

JAPAN, ZAMBIA

2nd Place: CANOPS for Africa

Consortium Bamboo-Equator &

Golden Climate

KENYA

2nd Place: Young Peace Builders

TCC Brooklyn & Kings Bay Y

USA

3rd Place: Women Against

Violent Extremism

Women in Int'l Security-Horn of Africa

KENYA

Innovation Award: Storytelling

for Fundraising

RWANDA, CHAD, USA

Stakeholders Award: A Concert

for Refugees

Turquoise Harmony Institute

SOUTH AFRICA

Scope Award: UN Model &

Simulation Games

UNA-Argentina, ARGENTINA

Impact Award: Keep a Child in School

Safe Future Uganda

UGANDA

**Change Maker Award: Concert of
Three Cultures**

ARCO Forum, UNESCO Centre, Getafe Madrid

SPAIN

Change Maker Award: Washing for Cars

Nile Dialogue Platform, Nile Humanitarian

Development Agency

UGANDA

Change Maker Award: International

Meeting of Intellectuals

MIRNAS, RUSSIA

UNGA 2019 AWARDS

Culture of Peace & Non-Violence Award

Tushar Gandhi, President & Founder

Mahatma Gandhi Foundation

Culture of Peace Award

Sello Hatang, CEO, Nelson Mandela Foundation

Youth Empowerment Award

Enes Kanter, NBA Player Boston Celtics

Enes Kanter Foundation

CONCEPT NOTE

The Journalists and Writers Foundation (JWF) is organizing its traditional annual UNGA Conference “Transforming our World: Inclusive Social Development for All” on Wednesday, 25 September 2019, in the margins of the 74th Session of the United Nations General Assembly. The UNGA Conference 2019 will focus on the central themes of achieving inclusive social development, youth empowerment, and human rights for sustainable development.

BACKGROUND

The United Nations Sustainable Development Agenda 2030 recognizes the important role of inclusive social development, in particular SDG Goal #16, by “promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, providing access to justice for all and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.” The United Nations has recommended the governments, the private sector, and the civil society to join their efforts to develop, implement, and evaluate inclusive social development policies for sustainable development.

In addition, the promotion of democratic values, protection of human rights, and ensuring rule of law and access to justice are essential indicators for sustainable development. Despite significant progress achieved by governments worldwide, some vulnerable people and marginalized groups suffer from conflicts, violence, and inequalities that prevent social and economic development at the national and regional levels.

The participation of the different stakeholders in the UNGA has a significant effect in achieving the sustainable development goals with higher levels of outcomes. The UNGA Conference encourages all stakeholders including the UN Members States, the private sector, the civil society, academics, and experts to take active participation with innovative ideas and practices.

The Conference aims at creating an open platform for all stakeholders to discuss pressing global issues about the UN Agenda 2030 for sustainable development, offer innovative solutions to common challenges, promote best practices to advance tangible results in achieving the sustainable development goals with 17 goals and 169 targets. It is important to highlight that the Agenda 2030 requires a holistic approach rather than fragmented methods for concrete actions with measurable outcomes to ensure no one is left behind.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The UNGA Conference seeks to create a platform for stakeholders from different backgrounds to debate on how to transform our world through inclusive social development, youth empowerment, and respect for human rights and the rule of law, based on the UN Global Agenda 2030.

The Conference outputs will include the adoption of a high-level statement offering policy recommendations about how to address current issues concerning youth participation in decision-making, equal opportunity for education and employment, and access to public services for all citizens as part of the UN Agenda 2030. In addition, UNGA Conference 2019 will propose a framework for action plan to follow-up on outcomes of the conference and build global partnership and collaboration in field projects.

PANEL 1: INCLUSIVE SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN ACHIEVING THE GLOBAL GOALS 2030

This session aimed to convene the role of inclusive social development policies and practices that help the United Nations achieve the Global Goals 2030. The panelists and participants discussed major issues concerning social inclusion and inequalities that play significant role in sustainable development and peace globally.



The panelists focused on current challenges and potential opportunities around key aspects of social integration policies and access to basic public services. The session on inclusive social development acted as the overarching theme for the following debates.

- Social integration policies that promote access to basic public services
- Role of the culture of peace in social cohesion and inclusiveness
- Civil society participation to facilitate social development
- Importance of rule of law and democracy to reduce inequalities and implement social development policies

According to the World Summit for Social Development, inclusive society means “a society for all” that recognizes the rights and responsibilities of individuals and societies with active participation in social, economic, and political affairs at all levels. Governments have to develop a mechanism to ensure the promotion and protection of inclusive societies through striving towards the rule of law and access to justice, trust

between public and private institutions, and social integration, communication, and sense of belonging among the members of the society. The principles of diversity, the culture of peace, mutual understanding, tolerance, and respect are important ingredients in building peaceful, inclusive, and resilient communities. The United Nations underlines the significance of active participation in decision-making, equal opportunity for education and employment, and access to public services for all citizens as part of the UN Agenda 2030. The promotion of these rights and responsibilities increases social and economic development whereas denial of these rights leads to conflicts and violence.

Globalization has also posed new challenges and opportunities for nations to cope with widened inequalities among nations. Negative effects of globalization impact vulnerable groups and societies in accessing basic resources, social services, and opportunities. It is imperative for decision makers and educational institutions to prepare the youth with the 21st century knowledge, competency skills, and abilities to address the needs of the global markets.

PANEL 2: ADVANCING YOUTH THROUGH SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

This session focused on current policies and practices in advancing youth through social and economic empowerment and how multi-stakeholders can work in collaboration to support youth-led initiatives and organizations.



Specific issues addressed under this sub-topic include: youth empowerment, youth participation, volunteerism, education, and girls and young women.

- Key priorities and challenges in access to quality education
- Developing life and entrepreneurial skills to prepare the youth for the rapidly evolving labor market
- From consultation to collaboration: How to create a meaningful and sustained youth participation in the decision – making mechanisms?
- Youth as stakeholders in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals: Advocacy, awareness raising, and capacity building

Youth represents 1/3 of the world population and we cannot talk about social and economic development without meaningful participation of the youth who are most affected by the outcomes of the Global Agenda 2030. Youth has always been considered as a major human resource for sustainable development by the United Nations. Young people are agents of social

change, economic growth, and social development. Consequently, youth participation in the decision-making and implementation processes are critical for sustainable development.

The UN General Assembly resolution 58/133 also reiterates the “importance of the full and effective participation of youth and youth organizations at the local, national, regional and international levels in promoting and implementing the World Programme of Action and in evaluating the progress achieved and the obstacles encountered in its implementation”. Youth has a potential to contribute to the UN Agenda 2030 for sustainable development. SDG Goal #4 aims to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.” Inclusive and accessible quality education plays a crucial role in empowering youth who will transform our world with innovative and creative ideas in the 21st century. The significance of quality education in youth empowerment is recognized by the public and

private sector; however, there is a gap between the policies and the practices when it comes to the implementation of sustainable development goals. Public funds and investment in the education of youth are not sufficient enough for successful outcomes. Therefore, it is a collective effort that all stakeholders including governments, private sector, and civil society organizations to create opportunities for youth voices and youth-led initiatives.

Jayathma Wickramanayake, UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth repeatedly underlined the importance of meaningful youth participation across the UN Development Agenda. The 2019 ECOSOC Youth Forum addressed the challenges, potentials, and need of the youth populations around three major themes 'Empowerment, Inclusion, and Equality' for meaningful youth participation. The most pressing challenges faced by the youth globally are identified as unemployment,

poverty, and illiteracy. The UNGA Conference aims to follow up on the same agenda to address the Goal # 4 Quality Education, Goal #8 Decent Work and Economic Growth, and Goal #10 Reduced Inequalities, and Goal #16 Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions.

As a fundamental right acknowledged by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the youth can play a crucial role in achieving the sustainable development through active and inclusive participation. Youth empowerment means helping young people to attain the 21st century knowledge, develop competency skills, become global citizens responsible for the people and the planet through communication, collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking. It is the responsibility of the state and non-state actors to create opportunities to youth to attain necessary information, skills, and tools to become independent, responsible, and productive citizens.

PANEL 3: PROTECTION OF SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

This session deliberated on the commitment to protection of human rights and access of social services to leave no one behind. The speakers will offer multiple perspectives and practices on how human rights reduce inequalities, eliminate the causes of poverty, and prevent internal and global conflicts. This session will also highlight how realization of economic, social and cultural rights play an integral role in sustainable peace and conflict prevention.

Specific issues addressed under this subtopic include:

- Promotion of cultural rights in building peaceful societies
- Human rights-based approach to the UN Development Agenda
- Violation of human rights leading to social unrest: Country-based analysis
- Early warning mechanisms of human rights to prevent conflicts (eg: severe inequalities in access of social services, lack of democratic space of an active civil society, lack of media freedom)

According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), fundamental human rights, human dignity, equal rights are promoted and protected by all UN Member States as the foundation of freedom, justice, and peace in the world. Respect to human rights, human

dignity, and equal rights of women and men promotes social development and prosperous life for all regardless of diverse backgrounds. It is a mutual responsibility for individuals and societies to ensure equality (parity) and reduce inequality (disparity) in the enjoyment of fundamental rights, freedoms, and opportunities for education, employment, healthcare, and other resources for all for sustainable peace and development.

Public policies have to protect equality, equity and social justice by ensuring rule of law and access to justice, improving access to public services, providing equal opportunities for employment, establishing cooperatives and private institutions, ensuring easy access to healthcare, and enhancing access to quality education for boys and girls equally.

PIONEERS IN SDGs

The Pioneer in SDGs Awards recognize outstanding individuals and organizations that contributed to sustainable peace and sustainable development at the local, national and global levels. In 2019, the Journalists and Writers Foundation and its 36 Global Partners recognized 11 projects from eight different countries in Africa, America, Asia and Europe.



The Selection Committee, formed of distinguished jurors from different parts of the world, evaluated the projects based on new approaches to help the United Nations achieve sustainable development goals through innovative and creative projects that benefit society in general. The Selection Committee evaluated each project considering four criteria: innovation, stakeholders, scope and impact. The projects served as an exemplary model that can inspire other people and organizations to make positive social change and contribute to the UN's sustainable development goals.

1ST PLACE: Japan Organic Farming Association and Japan Bio Farm Company, LTD

PROJECT: ZAMBIA BIO PROJECT



Examination of Zambian soil revealed that the soil has the property to adsorb phosphoric acid and not to release it. This explains that phosphate deficiency occurs in the soil and it makes crops difficult to grow. The solution for that is, by wrapping the phosphoric acid fertilizer with chicken manure, the organic acid came out from the chicken manure dissolves phosphoric acid and makes phosphoric acid effective. As a result, the yield increased from 2.5 t/ha to 9t/ha on average. It recorded 13t/ha in many places.

Furthermore, when chicken manure with lactic acid bacteria which produce acetic acid, is input into the soil, acetic acid and water are generated when chicken manure is broken down by microorganisms in the soil. Therefore, crops become resistant to drought. The United Nations Sustainable Development Agenda 2030 recognizes the important role of inclusive

social development, in particular SDG Goal #16, by “promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, providing access to justice for all and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.” The United Nations has recommended the governments, the private sector, and the civil society to join their efforts to develop, implement, and evaluate inclusive social development policies for sustainable development.



2ND PLACE: Consortium Bamboo-Equator & Golden Climate

PROJECT: CLIMATE ACTIVE NATIONAL ORGANIC PERMACULTURE SOLUTION (CANOPS) FOR AFRICA

Prof. Ezekiel N. Okemwa has invaluable experience and



service to the management. For more than 40 years, he has provided institutions and governments with strategic financial services with a focus on research, corporate finance and research advisory services and teaching at University. His skills include and are not limited to the overall management and operations of research, business, outsourcing, entrepreneurship and consulting.

With rising greenhouse gas emissions, climate change is occurring at rates much faster than anticipated and its effects are clearly felt worldwide. Kenya as UN member



ratified the Paris Agreement and became a signatory to Paris COP 21. Kenya is facing challenges to implement nationally determined contributions (NDC) as approved due to lack of forest cover from 7% to 10% as promised by NDC to the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

The semi-arid areas of pioneer counties in Kenya can barely be cultivated because of erosion and pollution until 2030. Counties in Mt. Kenya must be turned into organic farming. This will make it possible as CO₂ seeker the most damaging are 800,000 tourists who are producing more carbon than farming activities in Kenya.

2ND PLACE: Turkish Cultural Center Brooklyn & Kings Bay Y Jewish Community Center

PROJECT: YOUNG PEACE BUILDERS



The TCC Brooklyn is the largest Turkish-Muslim grassroots organization in Brooklyn. Turkish Cultural Center is a 501(c)(3) charitable, cultural, educational non-profit organization dedicated to promoting harmony in a diverse cultural setting in the United States. The building, increasing and/or fostering a strong and lasting friendship by promoting a better understanding that is based on mutual respect between the individuals of the United States of America and those of Turkish background and/or origin. The Kings Bay Y is the largest Jewish community center in Brooklyn New York. The Kings Bay Y Serves over 40,000 community members annually. The services of the Kings Bay Y provide span from programs for children, families, senior services; to cultural and intercultural work, to greening work, and social services.

The Young Peace Builders, a joint initiative of the Kings Bay Y and Turkish Cultural Center of Brooklyn, empowers local teenagers from the Jewish-American and Turkish American communities to participate in social action projects, cultural events and trips that are designed to educate, enlighten and create lasting friendships between Brooklyn's Jews and Muslims, two groups that previously had no formal point of connection. In addition to teaching the teenagers about holidays, customs and the history of both communities, the program develops a cadre of young



leaders who serve as informal ambassadors, engaging family members and others in building an intercultural dialogue through shared experiences and increasing understanding between Jewish-American and Turkish-American neighbors. Indirectly, through the process of learning about each other's culture, participants also

develop a greater understanding of and appreciation for their own culture, which has fostered a greater sense of involvement and commitment to values of peace and equality among the Young Peace Builders from the Turkish Cultural Center and the Kings Bay Y.

3RD PLACE: Women in International Security - Horn of Africa

PROJECT: WOMEN AGAINST VIOLENT EXTREMISM (WAVE)



Women in International Security – Horn of Africa is a Non-Governmental Organization that focuses on advancing the leadership

and development of women in peace and security. It implemented the WAVE project with the support received from Global Affairs in Canada.

Extremist violence has been key concern for the government of Kenya. Over the years the country has witnessed an increasing wave of sustained terrorist attacks, particularly by the militant group Al-Shabaab in different parts claiming the lives of many Kenyans citizens. Local women-led NGOs and Community Based Organizations (CBOs) have developed innovative context-specific tactics to prevent recruitment to violent

extremist groups. Often, their understanding is more nuanced, and they have more local credibility however very limited engagement with both donors and local authorities despite putting in place strategies to ensure gender inclusion and gender equality in peace and security efforts.



PANEL 1: INCLUSIVE SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN ACHIEVING THE GLOBAL GOALS 2030

OPENING REMARKS: ADAMA DIENG

Under-Secretary-General, Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide

Inclusive Social Development for All

Adama Dieng is the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide. As a legal and human rights expert, Mr. Dieng has a distinguished career in contributing to the strengthening of rule of law, fighting impunity and promoting capacity-building in the area of judicial and democratic institutions. Mr. Dieng began his career as Registrar of the Regional and Labour Courts in Senegal, and served as Registrar of the Supreme Court of Senegal for six years. He joined the International Commission of Jurists in 1982, serving the organization in different capacities, including as Legal Officer for Africa and Executive Secretary till 1990. He served a further 10 years as its Secretary-General, a period during which he was appointed as the United Nations Independent Expert for Haiti (1995-2000).

In addition to his accomplishments behind the establishment of the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights as well as the draft of the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption, Mr. Dieng has lectured on international law and human rights and acted as a consultant for many organizations, including the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Ford Foundation and the African Union.

In 2015, the international community adopted an ambitious, comprehensive global development agenda that promised to leave no one behind. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was not only a well-developed document, but it also reflects what humanity can achieve whenever they decide to collectively tackle most pressing challenges. Through this declaration, member states, solemnly agreed that Sustainable

Development Goals should become the basis for international development cooperation.

This framework provides the international community with the golden opportunity to position social justice and economic development for all at the center of global agenda; both as an important end in itself and



as an essential means to achieve peace and prosperity for all. SDGs offers a real opportunity to drive lasting change and to bring universal, comprehensive and transformative change in people's lives. The new agenda is based on 17 goals which are interrelated but also complementary. From SDG 1 on the eradication of poverty to SDG 17 on alliances to achieve the goals, each one of them is closely linked to inequality and inclusion.

However, it is equally true that, our commitment to build an inclusive society, raises the question of inclusion in what? in what type of society are people to be included? It requires us to ask in what type of society we want to live and more importantly, how we achieve that society. We need to consider what the values of an inclusive society are and what the institutional arrangements that would embody these would be. Social inclusion is a process that aims to create a 'society for all', a society in which everyone is an integral part and at the center of what is to be achieved.

Social inclusion focused development, is about guaranteeing human rights and promoting social justice for all, increasing the quality of life of citizens and improving individual wellbeing. An inclusive society is one that rises above differences of race, gender, class, generation and geography to ensure equality of opportunity regardless of origin. In an inclusive society, social interaction is governed by an agreed set of social institutions. The capability of all citizens to determine how those institutions function and relate to their day to day lives, is indeed a hallmark of an inclusive society.

Inclusion requires five dimensions to be effective and indeed meaningful to a society concerned. Roughly it would include; Visibility – to be recognized as a member of the society; consideration – that the needs and concerns of all individuals and groups in society are taken into account by policy planners; access to

social interactions – that everyone has the same rights to participate; equal rights – that the human rights set out in a wide range of international and regional instruments are domesticated and all members of society are able to claim them; and access for all to resources necessary to participate fully in society. Yet we all agree that these five goals are indeed aspirational, as no country can claim to have achieved them all. However, despite this reality, it is always useful to aspire to something positive whose realization can always enhance the future and wellbeing of humanity.

It is true that a nation's most valuable resource, far greater than anything in its possession, is its people – its human capital – and how well it performs in

It is true that a nation's most valuable resource, far greater than anything in its possession, is its people...

its human capital, and how well it performs in productivity and raising living standards depends critically on how available legal and institutions' framework respond to their needs and well-being. Inclusive development requires people to be at the center of development.

productivity and raising living standards depends critically on how available legal and institutions framework respond to their needs and well-being. Inclusive development requires people to be at the center of development. Unfortunately, we continue to witness how extreme poverty and inequality continue to be a badge of shame and hopelessness to millions of our fellow citizens. Despite this reality, we must be candid enough to admit that this situation is not and should not be the way it is. It can and should change.

Most people in this room will agree with me that, many people around the world don't die because of lack of hospitals or clinics. They die because of lack of access and coverage of health care system. FAO has shown that while hunger is claiming millions of victims annually, the truth is a third of all the food produced worldwide is wasted. The gap between rich and poor continues to grow, leaving a trail of exclusion, injustice and undermining the social fabric. What is evident from this sad revelation is that, inequality, violence, and injustice threaten both short and long-term social and economic development and harms not just those who are excluded but also has the potential to undermine the fabric of the



society. To reduce inequality, we must broaden access to services, opportunities and resources.

Kofi Annan, an indisputable champion of people centered development, once noted, “It is not realistic to think that some people can go on deriving great benefits from globalization while billions of their fellow human beings are left in abject poverty. We have to give at least a chance to share in our prosperity to our fellow citizens, not only within each nation but in the global community”. I sincerely believe that, injustice thrive when human rights are violated, the rule of law is considered an inconvenient barrier to those in power, political space is shrunk, legitimate aspirations of citizens are ignored or crushed altogether and many people especially youths lack positive prospects and meaning for their lives.

In many countries I have visited throughout the world, one of the most common explanations given by those who have taken up arms against their respective governments is exclusion and marginalization. The perception of or actual exclusion of certain communities or groups of

people is a key driver to armed conflicts. It is important that governments distribute resources and provide social and economic opportunities to ensure equitable participation of all citizens in the development agenda.

As I conclude, let me reiterate my conviction that, if we are to achieve inclusive development and sustainable peace, we must reaffirm our commitment to the primacy of human dignity and agency of human in development itself. We must put humanity at the center of development. The central objective of any development pursuit should be to uplift humanity from the misery of poverty and injustice. As underscored by the preamble to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, “recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace.” It is our fundamental duty that we continue to solemnly honor and apply these words. But also use the very words as standard to hold accountable those who violate them. Irrespective of who they are.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS: HON. MARK BOTOMANI
Minister of Information, Civic Education and Communications Technology,
Republic of Malawi
Inclusive Social Development in Achieving the Global Goals 2030

Honorable Mr. Mark Botomani is the Minister of Information, Civic Education and Communications Technology of the Republic of Malawi. Hon. Mark Botomani also acts as the official spokesperson for the Malawi Government. Before appointed as the Minister in June 2019, Hon. Botomani was the Member of Parliament for Zomba-Chisi region from the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP). Zomba-Chisi constituency has never had someone holding a ministerial position before him. Hon. Botomani is dedicated to bring about diversity to the government agendas that the Ministry of Information empowers all citizens with social and economic development and prosperity.

The Ministry of Information, Civic Education and Communications Technology has a mandate to provide policy direction and guidance in the production and dissemination of public information; coordinate and manage ICT development and services. The main objective of the Ministry is to provide an enabling environment for the development and usage of information, civic, education and communication technologies.

I am delighted to make a keynote address on the subject inclusive social development in achieving the global goals 2030. But before I do so, allow me on behalf of the Malawi government and the people of Malawi, to bring you greetings from the warm heart of Africa, one of the most beautiful countries in the Southern part of Africa. Allow me also to extend my appreciation to my President. I also thank the organizers for extending



the invitation to me to be part of this very important discourse of leaving no one behind. I would like to express that Malawi as a country, is committed to promoting the agenda 2030. To this extent, our country has developed a medium-term strategy of achieving Vision 2030.

Let me start by saying that inclusive social development is an achievement of the Agenda 2030. Social development requires provision of critical services such as education, health, water, sanitation, energy, housing, which is far from the case that is present. Despite the progress made, substantive gender equality also remains loose in most countries. For example, women are paid twice less than men doing the same work within the same formal sector. Now the question is, what if all the public services are provided to the people in need, what should be packaged together as part of the inclusive social development? The answer is all women working in whichever formal sector, should be offered equal pay as men, if an inclusive social development is to be achieved.

The call here is to address any form of discrimination against women, people with disabilities, indigenous populations, ethnic minorities, refugees, and displaced populations. These groups of marginalized persons should access education. Part of the reason for discrimination is Poverty. It is obvious that if all people get educated then all barriers to integral human development will be eliminated in all formal and non-formal sectors.

Inclusive social development, therefore, means that the SDGs and their targets should be the means of reaching out to the marginalized. The focus should be for everyone to reach the poorest, the most vulnerable, and the furthest behind. How should governments' foreign policies assist us to achieve inclusive social development? Ladies and gentleman, governments must recognize that achieving inclusive social development requires various means.

One such means is social integration policies which should not only promote access to basic and public services but also create an enabling environment for all its citizens to acquire those services. Therefore, foreign policies of governments should contribute significantly to the achievement of the inclusive social development.

As already stated, the poor are not just deprived of the basic resources, they lack access to information that is vital to their lives. This is information about market prices for the goods they produce, about health, about the structures that contribute to their misery, public institutions, and about their rights. They lack political visibility and voice in institutions that purport to help

them. They have no voice in power relations that shape their lives. They lack access to knowledge access and management and the skills that would improve their lives. The governance systems are weak. They often lack access to markets and institutions from both the government and social that could provide them with needed resources and services. They lack access to information about income earning opportunities. Governments should therefore move quickly to develop effective access to information policy to enable citizens to have access to information that benefits them. Malawi is moving quickly to enabling access to information for citizens to demand for.

The second policy area to consider in order to foster the social integration is the civic education, which is informed by participation, an essential value of any democratic state. The rationale for this policy area is that the citizen participation means having a functioning democracy where people are fully engaged in the processes to prioritize their needs. This ensures that citizens become partners with their governments and other service providers to promote good governance and human rights. If citizens fail to actively participate in these processes the foreseen danger is that policies and programs will simply

be imposed upon them. A much wider bottom up approach is in favor of citizens of any country if they are accurately incorporated as key participants in their community led projects.

The third area to consider for inclusive social development to be achieved is to develop comprehensive social protection policies. If appropriately designed and implemented, social safety nets can address some of the

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structural drivers associated exclusion; for example, by overcoming barriers in accessing and owning productive assets, providing opportunities for increasing skills and knowledge, strengthening social networks. Malawi is implementing one of the best social protection policies through an integrated social transport and public works program which has seen improvements, good indicators amongst the most vulnerable societies.

The fourth area is civil society organizations, which should play an active role in the participation process of facilitating the social development agenda. CSOs should continue to foster social development as they are always at the frontline of any social action by predicting the most vulnerable persons in our societies as well as monitoring the resources. Governments, therefore should be mindful of their commitment to the civil society partnerships. In doing this, they will be fulfilling SDGs Goal 17. Therefore, the role of civil societies as active players in the civil space

is essential to achieving the 2030 Agenda. CSOs are the enablers of social cohesion.

Promoting cultural diversity in national and international policies help to foster social inclusion and equality. For instance, promotion of human rights by accessing justice is required for inclusion and accountability.

Finally, policies, strategies and action plans integrated with the government, private sector, civil society should be designed to uphold human rights, access to justice, and equality. This is the foundation for ensuring no one is left behind. Citizen engagement in the framing of laws and their implementation is as important as framing legislative policies. Their inclusivity needs to be complemented and included in all institutions, especially of those supporting the vulnerable. We have our challenges to achieve the SDGs but we are also committed.



MODERATOR: DR. MACHARIA MUNENE

United States International University, International Relations and History, Kenya



Dr. Macharia Munene is a professor of History and International Relations at the United States International University in Nairobi, obtained his doctorate in Diplomatic History in 1985 from Ohio University, Athens, Ohio. Dr. Munene has served as Collaborating International Faculty, Universitat Jaume-1, Castellon, and Professorial Affiliate of the National Defence College, Karen, Nairobi, Kenya. He also taught at the University of Nairobi, where he was Chairman of the Department, Kenyatta University, Moi University, The Ohio State University, Kentucky State University, and Ohio University. Dr. Munene has also served as an External Examiner at the University of Nairobi, Kenyatta University, Masinde Muliro University, and Egerton University.

Dr. Munene is recognized as a public intellectual and resource person. He has received the United Nations recognition as an Expert on Decolonisation. He is also rated among the Top 100 CCTV-4 commentators in the world. And, appears in Kenyan and global media and public forums as an observer, analyst, and columnist. Dr. Munene also serves as an Advisor to the Harmony Institute in Nairobi, Kenya. In discussing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), there are three factors to consider. This is also a three-way mental and attitude transformation to consider as part of achieving the SDGs.

First is the transformation of the mentality and attitude of the policy makers and opinion makers really to accept the implementation of the SDGs. The mentality and

attitude of the policy makers and those who shape public opinion, including those in this room, matters and affects implementation seriousness. This includes those in or out of governments, state officials and those in NGOs and civil society organs. If the policy and opinion makers do not believe in the UN SDGs, and simply talk about them as a matter of political, social convenience or public relations exercises, there will be little progress, due to the little commitment on their part. Often, policy makers are the obstacles to implementation processes. Some might even work to undermine the SDGs while pretending to be supportive. There is, therefore, need to confront the reality of the policy and opinion makers with regard to their commitment to SDGs at the local, regional, and global levels, if the SDGs are to be realized.

Second is to address the mentality and attitude of the people “outside” so that they can accept the intended transformation to bring them “inside” the SDGs. These people may not be interested in the intended transformation, which might sound like external and foreign imposition or the attempt to exploit them anew. If the “outsiders” do not see the value of being “inside” the SDG, the project may not succeed. The intended beneficiaries might actually reject it. If that happens, the whole exercise would be futile. The likely explanation would be because the policy makers were presumptive and did not consider the opinions of those to be transformed.

Third, there is a need to address the plight of those people who are on the margins of being “inside” and “outside”. Policy makers tend to forget these people as they concentrate on bringing into the “inside” those who are on the far “outside”. One of the dangers is that those in the “inside” margins tend to slide “out” and tend to stop being part of those in the “inside”. Stopping those people on the margins from sliding into the deep “out” becomes an SDG challenge. The policy maker tendency to ignore those on the “inside” or “outside” margins could undermine the entire effort.

PANELIST 1: TUSHAR GANDHI

Mahatma Gandhi Foundation, Founder, India

Role of the culture of peace in social cohesion and inclusiveness

Mr. Tushar A. Gandhi is the President and Founder of the Mahatma Gandhi Foundation established in India in 1997. Mr. Gandhi is the great-grandson of Mahatma Gandhi and son of Journalist Arun Manilal Gandhi. The Foundation works to continue the legacy of equality, empowerment, and justice for the “have nothing” constituents of our society. Mr. Gandhi is associated with organizations like Lok Seva Trust, Australia India Rural Development Foundation, and the Gandhi Research Foundation.



He is a peace and human rights activist and strives for a world without violence. Mr. Tushar writes and speaks on peace, nonviolence, justice, compassion, liberal ideals and stands against extremism and bigotry. His first book Let's Kill Gandhi!, a chronicle of the conspiracy and murder of Mahatma Gandhi, was published in 2007.

TRANSFORMING OUR WORLD BY TRANSFORMING OURSELVES FIRST

Transforming our world is such an attractive notion, everyone wants to transform the world. Some want to change it for personal gains, some want to change it to suit their needs, some for their ambitions and some for their aggrandizement, what is common amongst all these is the selfish self-seeking motive. Hitler and Milosevick also wished to transform the world, turn it into something to suit their own vision of the world, as they wished it to be. what is also common in all these desires is to transform everyone else, but true transformation happens when one transforms one's self, changes the self to become better and then inspires

others to emulate the transformation. This is the ethical and sustainable kind of transformation.

In the not too distant past we saw how the movement of transformation disguised as 'Civilising the savages' gave birth to slavery and colonisation and subjected humanity to brutal imperialism and oppression. These were all selfish transformations. The industrial revolution too subjected economic imperialism on humanity, today the communications revolution and Artificial Intelligence are exposing us to technological imperialism of the corporates and curbing of fundamental rights by Governments. All these are examples of self-seeking and self-serving transformation. They all suffer from the flaw of wanting to oppress and subjugate others in one way or another, but not transforming one's self, not being the change.

Today we talk of sustainability and inclusiveness but in the past couple of decades we have created more parochial exclusivist nations and societies that exclude more than they include or embrace. Globally we have

created inequalities of such magnitude that they now appear unbridgeable. Culturally too we are in a contest of cultures, each trying to show itself better and superior. A mere declaration of intent towards equality and inclusiveness is not going to bring about transformation. Transformation will have to become an individual responsibility, if we change as individuals, we will be able to change society, nations and finally humanity. The new catch phrase of this century has been Global Village, where is this global village? More and more nations are building walls, fences, barriers and breaking out of unions, isolating and insulating themselves under the garb of security. We as a society are becoming more and more exclusive, isolationist.

We label one another and generalise in our prejudices, one race is labelled criminal, another is labelled savage yet another is called terrorists, we look at each other with such tainted hate filled and generalised prejudices.

We merely tolerate each other, tolerate our differences. How can tolerance become a virtue? Doesn't tolerance mean we merely suppress our anger until it becomes unbearable and then explode and cause violence and strife. It is time we stop tolerating and start understanding, and through that understanding start respecting our differences, only then will we be able to bring about true and sustainable transformation.

No two individuals are identical everyone is different, in appearances, behaviour, habits, nature and way of life, relationships are formed and sustained when we understand and accept and respect our differences. Only those relationships are sustained which are based on understanding, respect and acceptance it is through this that love happens. A relationship based on compromise

or subjugation cannot be sustained and will not survive. Transformation must also be mutual, otherwise it becomes one sided and is a form of subjugation. Subjugation does not create relationships it perpetuates oppression.

Transformation must also be based on achieving equality. Today in our consumption of the earth's resources itself there is criminal inequality. Some nations and societies have so much and waste so much that it is a sin and then there are nations and societies who live amongst such scarcity and poverty that it is inhuman and unimaginable. But we have conditioned ourselves to be oblivious to it. We exist in our own comfort zone and have insulated ourselves to the suffering of humanity in another country,

continent or of another race.

Our collective conscience is aroused only when we see pictures of the infant Alan Kurdi's dead body washed up on a beach, or images of the vulture stalking the skeleton of the Ethiopian child dying of starvation due to a man-made famine, even then our collective outrage about such horrifying occurrences is short lived. As long as these tragedies happen in other nations other continents other races we

remain unmoved. When we are so uncaring how honest is it to talk about inclusiveness?

We are now on the verge of self-destruction caused by our own greed and self-serving nature. We can change, we must change, if we change individually, one at a time. We need a 'Me First' movement of transformation. this world has been given to us to hold in trust for the future and it is our responsibility to ensure that when it is time to hand over this world to future generations we give it, if not better, definitely not worse than what was given to us. An Indian philosopher saint Kabir

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has said, 'Jheeni Jheeni Bini Chadariya, Das Kabeer Jatan Kari Odhi, Jyon ki tyon dhar deeni chadariya.' It means 'delicate very delicately woven is the cloth of life, the servant Kabeer draped it with care and when it came time to hand it back ensured that it was as it had been gifted to him.' For this to happen we must create a just, inclusive and understanding world of equality, of frugality, consuming enough for sustenance, not indulgence. Gandhi said 'Nature provides enough for everyone's needs but cannot provide for anyone's greed'. In every aspect we must become consumers by need and not by greed.

To transform humanity, we must begin with children, they are the inheritors of the world, education is what will empower our children to become capable

of inheriting the world and holding it in trust for the future. Today education instils selfishness, instils the habit of self-seeking, becoming an uninhibited consumer. Education will have to change, become more enlightening not merely a method of transfer of knowledge. But medium of enlightenment. A fountain of learning.

We as individuals will have to obey our responsibilities not just our rights but our duties too. And perform them to the best of our abilities and with honesty. There are many examples of civil society bringing about a transformation for the better but it's not enough, much more is required we must form a global collective of good intentions and individually strive for collective success. Anuradha Bhosale, was forced into becoming a child



labourer because of the poverty her family was enslaved by. Through dint of hard work and some benefactors, Anuradha educated herself and is today heading an organisation AVANI in Kolhapur a city South of Mumbai. Anuradha has rescued more than 5 thousand children forced into hazardous labour and susceptible to exploitation and has rehabilitated them and is providing education, nourishment and security to them and making them aware of their rights. This is the kind of transformation that matters. More than organisation it requires a commitment passion and responsibility.

Ila Bhatt was a Union Leader, she started working with women who worked as rag pickers and started organising them, from it was born a collective of women SEWA, the Self-Employed Women's Association, a union of women. Today SEWA is a Nationwide Bank Of women, By Women and for women. SEWA has economically and socially transformed millions of women in India and in scores of countries across four continents and is one of the fastest growing collective of women globally empowering women and bringing about a transformation in their lives and their societies. There are many like Anuradha and Ila, individuals and organisations, but much and many more are required urgently.

Today we have a surfeit of self-serving 'Me and only Me' Leaders, we need selfless servers, servants of humanity, in the service of the needy. Not for Me and I, but for Us and All. Our greed has put life at peril. Since we have placed it in jeopardy only we will be able to save it, conserve it.

Cultures have more often than not created conflicts and strife, because cultures have always fallen prey to superiority and supremacy, my way has always been thought to be the better one. We must bring about a culture of nonviolence and peace. We must create a culture of understanding, accepting and respecting our differences, a culture of justice, peace and compassion, only then true transformation will occur. We must create a humanity which holds life as a trust and us as its trustees.

Time, talent and ability along with wealth must be held and used in trust for a better present and future, beyond the borders of nation, beyond regions, races and religions, we must create a system of compassionate commerce and benevolent governance. Global village and exclusive sovereignty are mutually contradictory concepts and in today's time are unsustainable. Humanity, if it is to survive will have to become compassionately inclusive, equal and just, the responsibility of achieving this is ours, individually.

In 1930 on the eve of breaking the Salt Tax imposed by the British. A Canadian journalist asked Gandhi if he had a message for the world. Gandhi's message to the world was 'I want world sympathy in this battle of right against might'. Today too, the battle of right against might is waged around the world, we must unite in sympathy and solidarity in all such battles, not remain mute spectators to rights being trampled, denied and persecuted.

The UN must become more equal and less subservient, only then can it become a truly inclusive grouping of nations an organisation serving humanity and life compassionately and humbly, equality and justice must become its creed, it is not today.

I repeat. A trust for Life must be formed which is beyond parochial nationhood, beyond race and religion based on understanding, compassion, trust, justice and equality for all. And all of us must become its trustees, its servants.

If we change individually, the result will be a global transformation but it must start with "Me First." In parting I must sound a warning 'We are running out of time'.

PANELIST 2: FLAVIE FUENTES

Thomson Reuters Foundation, Legal Manager - North America, TrustLaw, USA

Importance of rule of law and democracy to reduce inequalities and implement social development policies

Ms. Flavie Fuente is a dual-qualified lawyer in France and England & Wales and holds a Master's Degree in Human Rights from the Université Paris X. In August 2018, she joined the Thomson Reuters Foundation as the Legal Manager for North America and the Caribbean. She oversees the network of TrustLaw's members and handles legal pro bono requests from non-profit organizations and social enterprises. Ms. Flavie identifies strategic human rights issues, scopes, and manages the development and publication of legal research for the social sector. Ms. Flavie and her team regularly host legal workshops and events in collaboration with law firms and corporate partners.

Before joining the Foundation, Ms. Fuente worked in London for Advocates for International Development ("A4ID"), a UK charity that empowers lawyers to eradicate poverty, as the Deputy Head of Partnerships and Legal Services. She worked extensively in collaboration with several UN agencies, primarily through the lens of the Sustainable Development Goals. Ms. Fuente also has experience working in Geneva with International Social Service, a non-profit dedicated to promoting children's rights in the context of international adoption, and immigration and family lawyer in France.

Today, I would like to talk to you about the law and how we can use the law and especially pro-bono lawyers to achieve the SDGs, in particular SDG 16. I have always wanted to be a lawyer, not only to make sure that human rights are respected, but also because I think that the law is a powerful agent of change.

First of all, let me introduce you to the Thomson Reuters Foundation (TRF), which is the charitable arm



of Thomson Reuters, the global news and information services company. As you may know, it was founded in 1983 and we have now over 100 staff in 17 countries. What do we do? We promote media freedom, raise awareness on human rights and support the initiatives to strengthen inclusive economies. How do we achieve that mission? Through news, media development, free legal assistance and convening initiatives. There is an amazing team of journalists across the globe who are reporting on underreported news, that is to say news that you will not read in the mainstream media. For example, women's rights and land rights, human trafficking, the human impacts of climate change. These journalists not only write on very important topics, but they are also making sure this news have an impact on communities.

So, to give you an example, in 2016, we had a team of journalists that went to India to investigate children who were working in Mica Mines. Mica is a naturally occurring mineral dust often used in makeup foundations, is naturally produced and particularly popular among organic and natural beauty brands. The Thomson Reuters

Foundation investigation found children dying in crumbling, illegal mines. As a result of this investigation, the Indian government decided to count the number of child workers in mica mines for the first time and the chief minister of the eastern state of Jharkhand unveiled a drive to make mica child labour free. The private sector also decided to look into this matter and take action. So that's an example of how this kind of journalism is having an impact on human rights issues.

The Thomson Reuters Foundation also has a media development team. We have a team of journalists, traveling across the globe to train other journalists and making sure that the trained journalists are reporting in an impactful way. We train them on the topics that I mentioned before; human trafficking, climate change, gender equality, discrimination.

And finally, we have our pro bono program, which I am managing in North America and the Caribbean. TrustLaw is a global pro bono program supporting organizations, NGO, nonprofits, but also social enterprises by connecting them with lawyers, who are offering their expertise. It is pretty amazing as these organizations do not have to worry about legal fees, which can be really expensive, especially in the US. We enable them to focus on their mission and allow them to achieve a greater impact.

It is also very important because the organizations that we are working with are very small organizations and most of them do not have in-house legal counsel. I will take the example of an organization that is addressing the issue of access to water, which is a human right. As we know, millions of people do not have access to water. We work with social entrepreneurs in countries who are basically coming up with inventions to enable people to access water. If they do not protect their mission and do not have access to lawyers, who are meant to help them protect their intellectual property rights, they will not be able to reach out to communities and scale up their impact.

Pro bono legal assistance is also very important in terms of advocacy. We are working with nonprofits, grassroots organizations, NGOs who are engaging with other civil society organizations. They are trying to implement legislative and policy change in countries where human rights are not respected. We scope the legal research needed, connect the organization with law firms in one of several countries, depending on the project. The pro bono lawyers will then review the laws of specific countries, highlight the best practices and conduct research to support the civil society organization's advocacy plans. We really think that using the law and having access to pro bono lawyers in your home country is a great way to achieve change. When you think of the rule of law, access to legal assistance is one of the pillars. I want to give you a few examples.

Three years ago, we supported the Committee to Protect Journalists. They were reviewing what we call defamation laws in the Americas. As you probably know, defamation laws mean that a journalist might be prosecuted in a criminal court just for exercising their freedom of expression. We had a team of lawyers who reviewed the laws of different countries in the Americas

Thomson Reuters Foundation has a media development team of journalists, traveling across the globe to train other journalists; making sure they are reporting in an impactful way. We train them on the topics such as human trafficking, climate change, gender equality, discrimination, women's rights and land rights.

and highlighted best practices to make sure that journalists are protected from criminal prosecution in the exercise of their functions.

I also want to give you an example from Uganda. We supported a nonprofit called Sugur, development agency, which is working in the area of the rule of law, strengthening participatory democratic processes, and protecting human rights. We help them with what we



call a “know your rights” guide for people who had been displaced as a result of the conflict. When these people returned to their lands, they just found out that they had been victims of land grabbing. So, these people came to us and they asked us to put them in contact with Ugandan lawyers, not only to explain to them their rights, but also to explain to them how they could access justice and get compensation.

We supported another amazing organization called The International Development Law Organization. They are based in the Netherlands. They came to us because they were looking into the issue of sexual and gender-based violence in several countries. What they explained to us is that sexual and gender-based violence crimes, such as rape and female genital mutilation, are not prosecuted in criminal courts due to lack of formal judicial institutions. We put them in touch with several law firms, both international law firms and local law firms, to review not only the law, but also the case law in several countries to understand how these crimes

were prosecuted. What they plan to achieve with this comparative study is training judges, prosecutors, lawyers and, more generally, strengthening the judicial system, to make sure that these sexual and gender-based violence crimes are properly prosecuted, and that women’s rights are respected.

My last example is from Argentina. It is an organization called *Asociacion Civil por la Igualdad y la Justicia*, which also works in the area of the rule of law. They contacted us because they are tackling tax secrecy. And as you may know, tax secrecy often leads to corruption. It is also a violation of the right to access public information. They wanted to have a comparative study of the laws on tax secrecy and asked the pro bono lawyers to review the laws of Nordic countries, which have the best practices in this area. The *Asociacion Civil por la Igualdad y la Justicia* will be better equipped to advocate for better laws with the Argentinian Government.

PANELIST 3: DR. HAN ENTZINGER

Erasmus University Rotterdam, Professor of Migration and Integration Studies, Netherlands

Social integration policies that promote access to basic public services

Dr. Han Entzinger is Emeritus Professor of Migration and Integration Studies at Erasmus University Rotterdam, Netherlands. Earlier, Dr. Entzinger held a chair in general social sciences at Utrecht University. He also worked at the Scientific Council for Government Policy, a government think tank close to the Prime Minister of the Netherlands, as well as at the International Labour Office (ILO) in Geneva. Entzinger studied sociology with economics at the Universities of Leiden, Rotterdam, and Strasbourg, and obtained his doctorate at Leiden University.

He has advised several European governments on the introduction of civic integration courses for immigrants and has also acted as a consultant to the European Union and the Council of Europe on migration-related issues. From 2013-2018 he chaired the Scientific Committee of the EU's Fundamental Rights Agency in Vienna. Social Service, a non-profit dedicated to promoting children's rights in the context of international adoption, and immigration and family lawyer in France.

Migration is a major source of diversity in today's world, and it will continue to be so tomorrow. It is often claimed that diversity has a negative impact on social cohesion. The more people in a society differ, the less likely they may be to accept one another and to develop mutual contacts. Is this true? Does diversity negatively affect social cohesion? And, if so, what policies can control or even redress this process?

Before I shall try to answer these questions, it is important to understand the scope of migration as a phenomenon. About 250 million people (3.3 percent of the world's population) live in a country other than their country of birth, and therefore can be called immigrants. Immigrants, however, are spread quite unevenly over the world. In traditional immigration countries such as Canada and Australia well over 20 per cent of the population are immigrants (not including the so-called second generation, i.e. children of immigrants). In the USA and Western Europe, this percentage lies between 10 and 15, while in other



countries, often the migrants' countries of origin, it is much lower. There are also countries outside the Western world that attract large numbers of migrants. The Gulf States have the highest shares of foreign citizens in the world – up to 85 per cent, while certain states in Western and Southern Africa and in South-East Asia serve as regional poles of attraction. And don't forget Russia, which houses many people from countries that were part of the former Soviet Union.

Large and populous countries, such as China, India, Brazil or Nigeria may not have high numbers of international migrants, but are characterised by a substantial internal migration, often with a comparable social and cultural impact on the original local or regional communities. If one includes internal migrants, an estimated one billion people, or fifteen percent of the world population live in an area other than where they were born and raised.

It should also be noted that migration can be a major source of diversity, but it is not the only one. People also differ from one another in many other respects: religion, nationality, gender, 'race', sexual orientation,

education, political preferences, age, skills, etc. etc. Some of these characteristics are genetically determined ('ascribed'), others may be the result of individual choice or achievement. In the case of migrants, however, several characteristics 'accumulate' so to say: religion, ethnicity, physical traits, unfamiliarity with dominant values and customs and with the local language, often in combination with a relatively weak legal position and social deprivation.

Back to the question whether diversity has a negative impact on social cohesion. In 2007, Robert Putnam, a reputed US political scientist published an article called 'E Pluribus Unum: Diversity and Community in the Twenty-first Century'. 'E pluribus unum', as you will all know, is Latin for 'Out of many, one', the traditional motto of the United States, a long-standing country of immigration. Putnam argued on the basis of empirical evidence that living in an ethnically heterogeneous environment was harmful to interpersonal trust and undermined social connections within and between ethnic groups. Faced with ethnic diversity, people would tend "to hunker down - that is, to pull in like a turtle", as he wrote it, or, in common language, to retreat from social life. Under such conditions, ongoing immigration would erode social cohesion.

Putnam's conclusions received wide attention in the media and among policy makers, serving as input to public policy debates in various countries. His conclusions have also been challenged by literally hundreds of other scholars from all over the world, who have carried out similar studies in their own countries. The results of these studies are very mixed: some confirm his findings, others reject them, and again others find no significant relationship between heterogeneity and social cohesion. This is partly due to the fact that social cohesion can be interpreted in many different ways: e.g. do we measure attitudes vis-a-vis others, or do we measure actual intergroup contacts? It is also due to the fact that countries differ not only in the composition and history of their immigrant populations, but also in their policy approaches. As a general rule, however, Putnam's findings appear to hold much less often for Europe than they do for the USA. What also matters is the size of a neighbourhood: the larger the area under consideration, the less noticeable

the negative impact of heterogeneity on social cohesion. Social cohesion is something that becomes more concrete in the direct neighbourhood. Policies to promote social cohesion, therefore, should primarily take shape at the local, if not at the sub-local level.

Yet, such policies should not be limited to the local or neighbourhood level. They should be facilitated by higher levels of governance, the state level, the federal level or even the international level. The tensions that immigration provokes today in many societies are due not only to a lack of acceptance by the native population, but also to a lack of opportunities for newcomers. This is why public authorities should develop policies to redress this situation. Several of the Sustainable Development Goals that the United Nations has defined provide clear guidelines for such policies. I am thinking here of goals such as 'No Poverty', 'Good Health and Well-being', 'Quality Education', 'Gender Equality', 'Decent Work and Economic Growth', 'Reduced Inequality', and 'Sustainable Cities and Communities'. Each of these, and several others, can be translated without much effort into concrete policy measures that, if properly implemented, would benefit immigrants and native populations alike.

A crucial condition for more cohesive societies is the granting of a sound legal position to immigrants. After they have resided in a country for a certain number of years they should be given a full residential status, preferably of a permanent nature, or even full citizenship. Security of residence provides a perspective to newcomers, and for that reason it is a necessary condition for a fuller participation in society's major institutions, such as the labour market, housing, education, health care and the political system. The principle of equal opportunity should be leading here: after a limited number of years – a 'probation period' - immigrants should have the same rights as everyone else, which obviously implies that they must also have the same obligations.

In the liberal democracies of the Global North we can distinguish two basic ways of creating equal opportunity. One is what I would call the 'Anglo-Saxon way': a strong anti-discrimination legislation combined with efforts of affirmative or positive action

to compensate for disadvantage and discrimination encountered in the past or the present. The other one is the 'Continental European way', which uses the social policy instruments of the welfare state to correct and prevent social deprivation. A drawback of the 'Anglo-Saxon way' is that it spurs feelings of being discriminated against among members of the original population, while the weakness of the welfare state approach is that it creates dependency on the state rather than preventing such dependency. As is so often the case, the ideal solution lies in the middle, I think. Discrimination should be attacked under all circumstances, but affirmative action may be a bridge too far. And, more than in the past, social policy instruments should be used to encourage a fuller participation of everyone, not only immigrants. It is better to invest in language courses and in education and training for everyone than in the financial support of newcomers, though they too should, of course, be guaranteed a minimum income level.

A fuller participation of all members of a society, whether immigrant or not, whether at the neighbourhood level or at the national level, is indispensable to achieve more social cohesion. Still, this does not come without certain challenges. A major challenge, particularly in the case of immigrants, is that a fuller participation requires a certain degree of cultural adaptation. It would be tempting to say that such adaptation is reciprocal. In reality, however, newcomers adapt much more strongly to the dominant culture than vice versa. Opinions differ as to how far this adaptation should go; this is one of the big debates in contemporary society, certainly in liberal democracies. The potential tension between participation and the preservation of a separate identity is an issue that keeps coming back in the academic literature, but also in political debates. My Canadian colleagues Will Kymlicka and Michael Banton have labelled this as the tension between 'recognition' (of different cultural identities) and 'redistribution' (of scarce resources and opportunities). Another colleague, Irene Bloemraad, has written about the difficulty of reconciling the granting of rights, the promotion of participation and the recognition of identity in diverse societies.

It is a struggle that we all recognise, because we all live in societies characterised by a certain degree of diversity, which is increasing in nearly all cases. What is needed under such circumstances is respect for others, and also acceptance of others. That should not be too difficult as long as the other respects and accepts you, but the



question is how to act if and when the ideas of the other are disrespectful or are perceived as disrespectful. There are certainly limits to the degree of diversity a society can accept, but opinions differ on how far such acceptance may reach. There is a clear and probably growing gap here between more cosmopolitan attitudes, open to diversity that stems from globalization on the one hand, and more restrictive nationalist attitudes, that wish to protect societies as they once were (or are perceived to have been), often with populist slogans, on the other. This gap is noticeable, certainly all over the Global North. Yet, I think we all agree that complete assimilation – wiping out diversity – provokes and perpetuates inequalities, while fully institutionalised forms of multiculturalism lead to segregation and fragmented societies. In order to achieve inclusive social development, we need to find the middle road that I have tried to describe here in very broad terms.

In short, we can conclude that diversity is on the increase, not the least because of growing immigration. Diversity may challenge social cohesion, but these challenges can be coped with through policies that guarantee a sound legal position, that encourage social participation for everyone, and that promote respectful ways of handling cultural differences. I am not suggesting, though, that this will be an easy road to go!

PANELIST 4: SILVIA ALEJANDRA PERAZZO

ANU-AR, President, Argentina

Civil society participation to facilitate social development



Silvia Perazzo is a historian specialized in the history of contemporary Africa and a lecturer at various universities from Argentina (Universidad Austral, Universidad del Salvador, Universidad Nacional de la Defensa, Universidad Nacional de La Matanza). Serving as the President of the United Nations Association from Argentina Republic (UNA-AR), Silvia continues to strengthen her professional career as a speaker at different multilateral civil society forums in topics related to education, such as Istanbul Summit, C20, 67 United Nations Civil Society Conference. “We, The People”, Foro de Participación Ciudadana de UNASUR.

I would like to begin by highlighting the importance of the role of civil society in our current world. More than two hundred years ago, civil society began to organize around raising awareness on certain issues. This marked the birth of abolitionist movements – to fight against slavery-, organizations that tried to humanize wars and protect civilians, and organizations that, faced with atrocious crimes, cried out for human rights. As a result, international humanitarian law and the Human Rights Charter emerged.

Nowadays, it is civil society that spontaneously or collectively brings up to states the need for structural changes. It is civil society that brought to light and demanded reforms on environmental issues, on the various forms of human exploitation, on gender violence, gender equality, minority rights, free sexual choice and animal cruelty. In this sense, civil society is always a step ahead of the State; what is more, it sets the agenda for great changes

An example of this is the ever-increasingly important place that international organizations give to NGOs. Such is the case

of the United Nations or the C20, and the ultimate goal of this Civil Society Summit. However, goals are not reached in an isolated manner, but through coordinated actions with the State, which can implement and execute them. Therefore, one of the functions of civil society should be to work jointly with the State, and not to compete with it. For their part, States should understand that civil society is not an obstacle to their actions and get used to considering its proposals.

This implies a huge responsibility for civil society since, apart from setting an agenda, it must propose specific measures to address major issues. One of these major issues is the promotion of social development, which cannot be considered without addressing inclusion. The best tool to address social inclusion is education. An Education that promotes, from the base of society, the values of respect and tolerance towards others and towards the environment. There is no peace possible without everyone's commitment.

Social development cannot be achieved without inclusion and this, in turn, requires inclusive education that promotes equality of opportunities. Inclusive and quality education should not only emphasize technological and academic knowledge but also achieve everyone's commitment to significant community issues, both national and international.

Inclusive and quality education –apart from reaching all social sectors, as well as all urban and rural areas-should favor the integration of children with different abilities and with different learning abilities.

But inclusive and quality education should also focus on building a more peaceful society that does not tolerate or accept violence. It is a kind of education that should form citizens who do not accept violence in any manner whatsoever. Peace means much more than the absence of war. Peace is the absence of violence. It is the absence of direct violence, which involves acts of war and insecurity. It is the absence of symbolic violence, which refers to cultural constructions that either directly or subliminally involve some kind of aggression against others.

It is also the absence of structural violence, understood as the conditions in a country that prevent our fellow citizens from living with dignity. And it also implies the absence of cultural violence, which is the one that builds stereotypes, myths and phobias that segregate, exclude, discriminate. Regardless of the inalienable role of the State, this concept of comprehensive peace is built through Education and the active participation of citizenship; in everyday life, professional practices, civil society organizations. Peace is a way of life. Peace in its comprehensive sense is also part of social development.

Inclusive and quality education is that which promotes responsible citizenship that condemns and does not tolerate corruption or the abuse of power; and that, in turn, is educated in values to serve society in case of governing. Inclusive and quality education should also promote specific actions from all educational sectors to address unattended local issues. For example, in my country, especially in large cities, there is blatant discrimination and stigmatization of migrants.

However, if the State and the civil society take action, mass campaigns and projects aimed at getting to know each other, sharing problems and understanding different realities, it will be possible to start preventing such violent behavior. On multiple occasions, society is moved when seeing terrible pictures of refugees in distant places, but it is incapable of being touched by those who suffer the same fate in its own city. And there is where education is needed.

Inclusive and quality education contributes transversely to the other 16 SDGs proposed by the United Nations. But carrying out specific actions and making these ideas come true require the joint work between the civil society and the State, which has the economic and legal resources needed to massively promote educational actions. For inclusive and quality education aimed at the development of people to exist, it is necessary to pass Education Financing Laws that ensure the intangibility of the funds allocated to Education. Such laws should, in turn, ensure the existence of a budget that guarantees that nobody drops out of school due to economic reasons or due to the fact of living in remote areas. They should also ensure that teachers at all levels of education have access to quality training and good salaries, that there are funds for research, programs and projects, and that education infrastructure is suitable. This is a decision to be made by the State, but a cause that should be defended and promoted by all the sectors of civil society.

In addition, civil society should join efforts with international organizations with a view to promoting collaborative actions that have greater impact. It is true that various Civil Society Summits have not achieved the expected results; on multiple occasions egos and the craving for leadership paralyzed specific actions. This is the reason why it is necessary to bridge the differences among the various civil society organizations in order to reach consensus on the big issues and take action.

None of us grows in isolation. True world changes are promoted by civil society and implemented by institutions. We have to walk this path knowing that there still are several issues that prevent us from reaching development. Let's take the challenge and work to make it possible.

DISCUSSANT: MONEEZA BURNEY

Writer at *Dawn Newspaper*, Falak Sufi Scholar 2018 of NYU, Pakistan

The role of youth in creating inclusive social societies

Moneeza Burney is associated with several social projects in Pakistan related to youth empowerment and poverty alleviation through education and creative content development. Working as a script writer, a freelance journalist, and leading youth programs of her own, Moneeza has served as a Director of the Lahore Students Union (LSU), a platform for youth community service and social leadership, which has placed over 1,000 students across a network of 75+ partner NGOs, social projects and civil society initiatives since 2014.



In the summer of 2019, she has visited Beirut, Lebanon to share ideas with local NGOs about youth engagement for conflict resolution and empowerment through creative methods. Moneeza continues to write for DAWN newspaper in Pakistan, for whom she has worked as a feature writer since 2013. Moneeza is currently a graduate student at New York University in the Near Eastern Studies program as a Falak Sufi Scholar 2018, and holds a BA (Hons) degree from Sheffield Hallam University, UK, in Business Economics.

Respected representatives, I'm honored to address this conference about the role of youth in creating inclusive societies. For the last 6 years I have had the privilege to be a youth program organizer in my home town of Lahore, Pakistan, and have personally managed over 1,000 youth volunteers across a partner network of over 75 NGOs, social projects and civil society organizations. Through the platforms I run, I have been able to closely observe young people of varying ethnicities, religions, genders, and economic classes come together to improve the lives of those less fortunate than them, or collaborate to tackle problems that are meaningful to them at a deeply personal level. I'd like to share one such experience with you today.

In 2013, Dr. Ali Haider, a well-known eye doctor in Lahore, was assassinated for the sole crime of being a Shia Muslim, one of Pakistan's many religious and sectarian minorities who have been systematically targeted by radical religious militant groups. Murdered alongside him in cold blood was his 11-year-old son, Murtaza, who was on his way to school. They are just two of over 70,000 Pakistani civilians killed as a result of violent extremism since 9/11, the forgotten domestic casualties of the world's war on terror and the rise of global militancy. The platform I work with was created a month later, with the hope of organizing and encouraging the youth to take back their culture, their country, and their religion from those who misuse it to spread evil and hatred across the world. I started a program called the Community Service Initiative to let students learn how to be responsible citizens, realize their obligation to give back to society, and strive to improve the lives of those who can't help themselves.

Over the last 6 years, through this program, I have organized youth volunteer programs for an organization run by the widow of the late Dr. Ali Haider, and watched students from all backgrounds, Sunni, Shia, Christian, Punjabi, Pakhtun, Sindhi, Hazara, Male and Female,

come together to spread religious tolerance and help the survivors and victims of violent crimes. When a bombing took place in a park on Easter Sunday in 2016, these volunteers came together to organize storytelling and art sessions for children in hospital wards, collect financial assistance for families to bear their medical costs, arrange prosthetic limbs for patients who could never be whole again after the tragedy, or sometimes simply pay the utility bills for families who had never had to survive without their primary breadwinner. When not working on such projects, the volunteers visit churches, temples, mosques of different sects, all to prove that people of varying faiths and beliefs can still peacefully coexist in a society built on equality, freedom, and mutual respect.

In an increasingly polarized world, we often think of the layers of religious, ethnic, and cultural identity as problematic, it is my personal experience that when young people from diverse backgrounds and experiences unite towards a noble purpose, their efforts take on a multiplier effect. Our personal traits and histories play a huge role in defining the world we live in and the challenges we face, and are an undeniable part of our human experience. But when we acknowledge our differences without judgment, we recognize that these only make us stronger, more complete, and more able to tackle complex problems as a cohesive whole rather than from just our limited point of reference. I have seen student volunteers who are embarrassed by their less expensive clothes, or those with an air of superiority over others, or those suffering from trauma due to marginalization, and watched them slowly realize that in the quest to serve humanity and bring good to this world, we are indeed all created equal. I have seen them transform, leave the shell of their former self, command the respect of their peers, and grow into the noble, empathetic human beings we all aspire to be.

We are once again at a generational crossroads, where identity politics has permeated hearts and minds in every corner of the globe, and sent us into our silos, threatening to unravel the peace with the spread of bigotry, religious phobias, radicalization, and hateful narratives of racial supremacy. And yet, in Pakistan I have worked with Muslim volunteers to provide food, clothes and education to Christian orphans and children, victims of systemic marginalization for generations. In Lebanon I have met Christian volunteers who help Syrian Muslim refugee children remember their traditions and keep their culture alive even when the homes they left behind have been burned to ash.

Young people are the perennial reservoir of hope, as an evolving world will always be in need of those who see past the flaws of the present and aspire to a better future. Only when we create inclusive platforms for young people of diverse backgrounds to interact freely, to share their ideas and experiences, to feed each other's dreams with the fuel of their exuberance and optimism, only then can we hope to overcome the grave mistakes of the past and the demons that walk among us at present. These are indeed times of great suffering, but only the youth can inherit a world where that pain is a memory rather than a gaping wound. Only through them can we heal, and only by healing together can we hope to not repeat the same mistakes again.



ORAL STATEMENT: DR. ADA JUNI OKIKA

Executive Director, Center for SDG Global Education

Dr. Ada Okika is a Consultant to many Organizations at the United Nations. Ada Okika's expertise is on gender equality, children and youth's empowerment programs. She is also the Proprietor of Irene Menakaya School Onitsha and Executive Director of Friends of Education for African Children orphaned By AIDS. Dr. Ada Okika has been honored with many awards including the recent Women Ambassador Award, Ambassador for Peace Award, Community Leadership Award, Member Community Advisory Board, Project Brief Initiative at Jacobi Medical Center NY and Honorary Doctor of Counseling.

Since the Post-2015 Era, the Center for SDG Global Education has focused on "Education Solutions in Community Classrooms" along the SDG Goal # 4 and its targets in the Global Agenda 2030. In the course of our reach, we observed that quality education and inclusion for lifelong learning seems far-fetched in communities in developing countries.

Most communities still lack a curriculum on educational technology and technological facilities, qualified teachers and standard teaching and learning infrastructure.

In communities with opportunities and facilities for quality education, educational practices begin with a complex curriculum that focuses on what children do not know but what they know. This hinders quality education, which is expected that SDG Goal # 4 and its targets will address globally by leaving no one behind.

In addition, we launched Barr Juni and Irene Endowment Trust to raise

\$80,000 to help provide schools in the Community Rehabilitation Scheme, scholarships, introduce visiting teacher services to community classrooms and Global Teacher Classroom.

We are committed to these initiatives that will help achieve the Global Agenda 2030. These initiatives will support partnerships between stakeholders and UN agencies to address quality and inclusive education in community classrooms in developing countries. As we digress on the input from the 74th Session of the UNGA, it is pertinent to focus on the addendum that the community classrooms have an urgent need to improve the quality of education and the level of teaching and learning to meet the demands of SDG Goal # 4 and its target globally.



PANEL SESSION 2: ADVANCING YOUTH THROUGH SOCIAL and ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

MODERATOR: EMMANUEL N. B. FLOMO

**Inspire Liberia Project, Founder & Executive Director, Liberia
Youth in The Social and Economic Development**

Emmanuel Emmanuel N. B. Flomo has an MBA in Public Finance and is the 2015 Winner of the Future Africa Award Prize for Youth in Public Service, Lagos, Nigeria. He has contributed to youth development work in Liberia and Africa for over 15 years. Mr. Flomo was elected as Vice President for Liberia National Student Union (LINSU), which serves as the umbrella organization for all students in Liberia. In 2013, he was also selected to the Technical Youth Team of Former Liberian President, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf Program called the President's Young Professional Program. Mr. Flomo is the Founder & Executive Director of The Inspire Liberia Project, an institution in Liberia working to promote youth empowerment through community civic engagement, community empowerment, and to increase indigenous participation in decision making in Liberia.

Young people are a significant segment of the global population index and critical to the social and economic development of any country. Today, there are over 1.2 billion young people aged 15 to 24 years; indicating that Young people are key. We can play a significant role in enhancing global social and economic development and change if we are given the opportunity. Some progress has been made in many Countries in advancing Youth Development, but the challenges in the process are still overwhelming in many parts of our globe.

Much of the progress so far in youth development is overwhelmingly credited to developed nations, while developing nations are far from giving serious attention to these issues. For example, the European Commission considers that "Europe's future prosperity depends on its young people and thus deserve particular support and consideration as well as seeks to strengthen people's current and future capacities and improve their opportunities to participate in society" (EC European Policy brief, 2014). Such a policy like this is vital for Youth Social Advancement and Empowerment, but the step

taken by the EU is yet acknowledged or cheer in the entire continent of Africa.



The youth of the continent is poor; education and access to jobs have been challenged. This and the lack of progress in youth development in Africa poses a tremendous global threat to the SDGs if African leaders and the young people are not proactively engaged. As part of the engagement effort, I have made continuous advocacies in Liberia with emphasis on the national frameworks that promote a productive workforce and creating opportunities that could allow the youth to make a significant contribution to nation-building. Young people should be empowered and motivated to consider political leadership as a means to serve their nation and should be oriented on anti-corruption drives with a focus on prevention, education, and strategies for fighting corruption and restoring economic development.

When we take critical development steps, a huge to the reduction in the rural and urban gap becomes visible and appreciable by the society and its people. Young people represent courage, wisdom, and energy, the will-power to do good, they are able to take leadership that would make the difference. Their energy and understanding must be respected, guided and built for future roles.

PANELIST 1: JOHNNIE LEE FIELDER

Director of Operations, International Youth Leadership Institute, USA

Youth as stakeholders in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals: Advocacy, awareness-raising, and capacity building



International Youth Leadership Institute was founded in 1989 by two African American men by the name of Keith Brown, who worked in Africa as a Peace Corps Volunteer, and Dr. Micheal Webb, who worked on education development in Africa. When the two men returned to their home city of New York, they asked themselves how can more brown and black youth experience travel as an educational and leadership tool. By encouraging young Brown and Black youth to actively engage with their communities, both local and global they are furthering the mission of some of the SDGs.

I would like to first read to you all the mission and vision statements of the International Youth Leadership Institute. The mission of the International Youth Leadership is to nurture a new generation of visionary leaders from the African diaspora who, inspired by their rich African heritage, are committed to leaving a legacy in the world. It is important for youth to be given the opportunity to express and flex their leadership capabilities and the International Youth Leadership Institute does this cultivation of leadership by introducing the concept of being a global citizen to youth who are rising ninth graders to 12th grade.

The vision of the International Youth Leadership Institute is Every day, youth of African descent are assuming leadership roles in making the world a better place, wherever they are. Leaders of the IYLI will be in multiple places simultaneously creating and generating innovative ideas and solutions to some of today's most nuanced issues.

Through CSDPs, or Community Service Development Projects, youth are able to identify issues in their communities and then tackle them throughout the school year. Some past projects have been focused on eliminating violence, mental health awareness, urban farming, fundraising initiatives, and gender equity. The Community Service Development projects, then culminate in our Summer Heritage Program where youth travel to South Americans or African nations where they are then able to interact with municipalities, public officials, various non-governmental organizations and bridge cultural relations between themselves and host country nationals, and conducting ethnographic research reflecting the socio-economic and political climate of that specific Summer Heritage Program. The amazing thing about having youth as decision makers is that they aren't corrupted by being categorized or conditioned to operate within boundaries of bureaucracies. They have all the energy and desire to make change a reality.

PANELIST 2: SASHA E. BUTLER

Changing Destinations: Journey to Excellence, Executive Director, USA

Key priorities and challenges in access to quality education

Ms. Sasha E. Butler is the Executive Director of Changing Destinations: Journey To Excellence, Inc., located in Columbia, Maryland. She leads critical global education initiatives for school-community partnerships and the implementation of leadership, socio-emotional learning, community service, and global citizenship education programs. Previously, Ms. Butler held various leadership positions in New York within higher education institutions, community-based organizations, and the business industry.

Ms. Butler also serves as an International Education Consultant and Strategist for InXcellence Consulting: Training & Coaching Solutions. She provides professional development resources to educators in the United States, Uganda, and Nigeria. Ms. Butler is a member of the Harvard University GSE Think Tank on Global Education: Empowering Global Citizens, equipping teachers and administrators to foster global competence in schools by co-constructing curriculum and devising strategies for systemic change. She is also a member of the World Council on Intercultural and Global Competence to promote intercultural understanding for a more peaceful and sustainable world.

Despite the progress made in increasing access and participation around the world, economic and social disparities remain a threat to this fundamental right. UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) reported 200 million youth are out of school. Current challenges in access to quality education include lack of funding, inadequate infrastructure, overcrowded classrooms, and outdated learning materials. Adequate ongoing training resources are also an issue in high-poverty schools hindering teachers' effectiveness and students' ability to learn. Additionally, racial, gender, and disability discriminatory practices deny youth access to quality educational opportunities.

To achieve the goal of advancing youth through social and economic empowerment we must establish clear priorities aligned with our mission. The United Nations



Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide a framework for fostering innovation solutions. Quality Education (SDG 4) and Partnerships for Goals (SDG 17) are at the center of our four key priorities: Social Emotional Learning; Leadership Development; Community Services; and Global Citizenship. Support for youth-led initiatives is an essential component for achieving learning objectives and preparing youth for success inside and outside the classroom. School districts, higher education institutions, local, state, and federal governments, small businesses and large corporations must share the responsibility for equipping youth with the skills and knowledge needed to become leaders and global citizens by creating grassroots, multi-stakeholder platforms where youth are given opportunities to lead.

Shared power is an important core value which motivates young people and teaches them to think critically about the world around them. They bring a fresh perspective on addressing challenges and generating innovative ideas. Youth are key to achieving the SDGs when empowered to lead and develop confidence to act and mobilize others toward a more equitable and sustainable future.

PANELIST 3: ALYSON NEEL

UN Foundation, Policy and Advocacy Strategist, UNA-USA

UNA-USA Youth member participation in human rights mechanisms and UN Summits

Alyson Neel serves as Policy and Advocacy Strategist for the UN Foundation's Global Policy team, with journalism, policy design, and advocacy experience in Turkey, the United States, and most recently Myanmar. Neel has worked to shed light on and address many manifestations of gender inequity, including gender-based violence, sexual and reproductive health and rights, and the gender wage gap, with The Washington Post, UN Women, and the Offices of Louisiana Senator "JP" Morrell and U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin. Neel recently returned to New York after spending 18 months



in Yangon, Myanmar, where she supported a local women's organization and authored a bilingual children's book, Girl Power in Myanmar, about women rocking their communities across the country. Neel holds an MPA from Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School, and a BA in political communication from Louisiana State University.

I am thrilled to be at the UNGA Conference 2019. This past week I have been thinking about the topic of youth and youth empowerment which is at the core of what the UN foundation does. As I am with our global policy team, I have been thinking about it and as I watched everything that is happening at the UN this past week. I am also wondering how we, as adults, are going on with something such as this. How we should be doing more by stepping back, listening and then

doing whatever we can to put young people at the table of youth empowerment. I am really grateful for this opportunity because I have been thinking about what that means for me specifically, in my role in our team, at our foundation. I started thinking through endless, I felt I could have given my seat here to a youth advocate in our network.

I manage a loose coalition of advocates that are working on the SDGs and we could bring more young people into that network and build into these conversations. We do an internal analysis every year of the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs), which are the national report cards on the SDGs progress. We should be connecting those findings to youth advocates as part of their own advocacy. With that spirit in mind, I wanted to share with you a few relevant findings on what we are seeing in these progress reports this year. I am committing myself now to everyone here that if this is interesting and you want to learn more, especially if you are working with youth or youth advocates who are interested in advocating at the UN, I am happy to share more.

Despite that there is still room for improvement, what we are beginning to see is a rise in the voluntary review of national reports. The reports are supposed to be for the whole society to use in analysing the SDGs progress in implementation process. It also calls into question if there is progress in working towards new plans for implementation and progress. We can affirm that there is progress in the analysis with more data being generated. More Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) are talking about challenges that they are facing. We are seeing a focus on interlinkages across the SDGs by looking at how the goals are interconnected. It is all really good news. That said, multi-stakeholder engagement by including the youth continues to be a challenge in both SDG implementation and reporting. Most voluntary national reviews are now committing to leave no one behind. This is the core principle that cuts across discussions on SDGs as we all know. We are seeing the youth

showing up for reviews about situations that affect in consistency with the theme leaving no one behind. As an organization we have to recognise the youth as one of the most marginalized groups, which makes them a target for achieving sustainable development. Also, in terms of consultations for these volunteering national reviews, we are seeing youth specifically mentioned in VNRs of Iceland, Serbia, Sierra Leone. The reports show that Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) partners in these countries go to communities to discuss with the youth on the situation the youth find themselves in. In these communities, discussions are geared towards helping the youth ask questions and share how their communities are doing in terms of issues behind the SDGs.

We are also pleased to observe that more and more of these UN official presentations had contributions coming out as active participation of the young people. Examples are many to show how the youth are getting involved in issues that affect them most like the recent campaigns on climate change. The voice of the youth has come out stronger.

I mentioned that advancing youth is at the core of our work. I want to talk very quickly just about two programs. One of them is Girl-Up. You might have heard of this campaign which was started in 2010. The program emphasizes leadership training and development as its core mandate. Because of the nature of this programme, more and more young women are taking part in leadership training and articulation of development issues. The campaigns done through this initiative have created a global movement of young women around the world to fight for gender equity. It is this Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) which is taking the lead in providing leadership training and then creating the platform and resources for girls and young women to advocate for themselves on whatever issues they see fit for situational reflection within their respective communities.

The second is UNA USA, which is the United Nations Association of the United States. Right now, we have 20,000 members, 60% of which are under the age of 26. This is a grassroots network in the US, serving Americans. It is a network that informs and provides



tools for these chapters of young people to better understand how the UN works, what the SDGs are, what they mean to them, and what they can do to push, to encourage, to ask questions of their local leaders.

One thing I have been thinking about, as part of the staff working internally at UNF, is the great opportunity we have to provide the platform for all groups mentioned earlier to share all their activities with Voluntary Local Reviews (VLR). The Voluntary National Reviews are these official recording mechanisms, even though supposed to be inclusive, for governments to come to the UN and present how their country is doing on the SDGs. Voluntary Local Reviews is an innovation which we started last year here in New York City. We encouraged New Yorkers to sign up for voluntary local reviews on SDGs. It means that even though it is not obligatory, this being the City that hosts the UN, we recognized the need to step up this campaign as a sign of New York City's contribution to building awareness on SDGs.

Since then we have seen many other cities around the world follow suit. Helsinki, Bristol and Los Angeles (LA), just to mention the three. But there are several cities around the world which are analysing and coming up with similar reports. Most of us championing the voluntary local reviews (VLR) have been thinking about expanding this initiative with universities. We have been thinking about how young people could go to their local leaders and push them for similar reviews. This is a great opportunity to engage leaders on the SDGs.

DISCUSSANT: NICK HATZOGLOU

Football Victoria, Head of Community Projects, Australia

The role of sports for the social and personal development of youth

Mr. Nick Hatzoglou has a Post Graduate Certificate in Event Management from Victoria University. He is the Head of Community Projects with Football Victoria and has overall responsibility for the Indigenous, Multicultural, LGBTI+, and Disability projects. He ensures football clubs are safe, welcoming, and better reflective of all Australians. He is Australian-born with Greek heritage and has a passion for cultural diversity and sport. Mr. Hatzoglou combines experience gained within the multicultural sector, local government, Australian Football League, and Cricket Australia with his appreciation of the positive role sport plays in a vibrant contemporary Australia.

He acknowledges the role sport contributes to nurturing community interaction, social harmony, and believes football can facilitate an essential role in developing people's understanding of each other at a local, national, and international level. Previously, Nick has played a significant role in developing the Sunshine Heights Cricket Club, the most culturally diverse cricket club in the world, the AFL Peace Team, which brings together Palestinians and Israeli's into one

team, Sunshine Heights Western Tigers Football Club, and created the AFL Multicultural Program from scratch.

I would like to approach this question by distilling the many learnings I have embraced in my personal and professional life. Having made all the mistakes, I find myself in a great position to pass on some advice and wisdom. This will be summarised in 6 key areas

1. Promoting Wellbeing & Confidence
2. The Importance of Mentoring
3. Sports Can Be a Level Playing Field
4. Youth Leading Projects
5. Promote a Growth Mindset
6. More Indigenous Engagement and Respect

PROMOTING WELLBEING & CONFIDENCE

Sport helps with self-confidence, especially early on in life. It's always easy to integrate into new environments using sport as the common interest. Sport when successful, improves relationships and makes people happier. This is especially relevant for our youth. Sport can create opportunities and get you to the other side of

the world. Football is a great gateway to navigating other cultures and countries.

THE IMPORTANCE OF MENTORING

Everyone should have a mentor/s. In a world where people hang out in virtual communities or are less engaged in a person to person sense, it is even more vital to have that important other you can share ideas with, ask questions and explore life skills. My strong recommendation is for youth to have older mentors and older people to have youthful mentors. In this way everyone can learn from each other and foster creativity and build tool kits for life's opportunities and



challenges. As Michael Mandalis said so powerfully upon receiving his recent Football Victoria Hall of Fame Award “I look around me and what do I see – Amazing people, amazing football players, I walked in here and I said yeah, It’s very important that we keep in touch, keeping in touch with the old and embrace the new and the new to embrace the old.

SPORTS CAN BE A LEVEL PLAYING FIELD

In a world that’s increasingly unfair - with more disparity in distribution of income, sports seem to be one of the few things that gives everyone a level(ish) playing field. It can lift the poor and humble the rich.

In Australia, we have made giant strides in sport that better engages with under-represented groups such as females, LGBTI+, indigenous and multicultural cohorts. Our sport, football can play a massive role in bridging the gap and we are on a positive pathway with this led by young people.

YOUTH LEADING PROJECTS

We see Government inertia on many issues and a growing expectation from consumers to fill the void. Youth can make a stand as they are on climate change. Just last Friday in my hometown of Melbourne, young people were leading a march to bring more attention to climate change – Let’s let our youth lead campaigns, invest in them and guide their journey.

PROMOTE A GROWTH MINDSET

We must promote a Growth mindset to our youth, where they can embrace challenges, build resilience, have pathways to mastery, learn and apply criticism and find lessons from others that lead to their success

MORE INDIGENOUS ENGAGEMENT AND RESPECT

In a world where your number of likes on a picture can determine your status – Instagram has removed

In a world that’s increasingly unfair with disparity in distribution of income, sports seem to be one of the things that can give a level(ish) playing field.

It can lift the poor and humble

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the counter amid concerns it was creating pressure on users, it’s time to connect with our Indigenous communities, these collectivists societies in my opinion hold the key to a more wholesome and resilient lifestyle. As my friend Craig Foster strongly advocates, Indigenous Australia will make a positive compelling impact on Australian Football if we can turn our collective attention to engaging them (both male and female) into our sport- allow them to take risks and boost our cultural intelligence and meaningful engagement of Indigenous People. Our youth can lead this engagement and break the cycle of despair and welfare.

I want to finish by saying that getting young people active in

sport is only the start. The real measure of our success lies in harnessing the power of sport and play to enhance wellbeing, to boost achievement and to help young people develop life skills, and the toolkit which will help them to thrive, be happy and healthy.

At Football Victoria during this last year, we have built on the work of previous teams in developing and running successful programmes, continued to innovate new products and pioneered new ways of working to transform young people’s lives for the better. Examples of how we have worked to enhance the social and personal development of youth are:

- **Created and promoted new core organizational values** for our staff - Integrity, Inclusion, Respect, Unity and Leadership.
- **Promoting Go Football** - We still come across (too) many sports bodies, clubs and coaches at the grassroots level who only see the world through the lens of ‘sport’, ‘winning’ and ‘performance’. They think that the whole world should support and play the real, traditional versions of their sport that they have been practising and training for ages. New social forms of football where the emphasis is on



fun – Walking Football, Social Sevens, Fun Football, Soccer Mums and All Abilities programs provide welcoming environments for that critical mass of less talented and able participants that just want to play and have fun.

- **Indigenous Football** - Employed an Indigenous young man to lead our football forays into better engagement with Indigenous young people. Building capacity and creating employment outcomes
- **Empowering African Australian communities** - engaged with young people to capacity build them so they can play a leading role within their communities to feel better prepared for life through football, including further accreditation as coaches and referees and employment

Over the past 12 months, research continued to paint a concerning picture of young people's wellbeing. Young people were increasingly likely to be obese, to be struggling with their mental health or feeling isolated and lonely. We found that too many young people are:

- **Inactive** - 82.5% of young people are not meeting CMO guidelines of more than 60 minutes of activity every day.

- **Stressed** - 92% of 15 to 16-year-olds suffer from exam stress.
- **Lonely** - 45% of young people aged 10-15 years old reported they felt lonely either some of the time or often.
- **Lacking confidence** - one in five girls told us that they lack confidence.
- **Overweight** - one in three children are overweight or obese by the final year of primary school.
- **Unhappy** - 27% of children aged 10-15 rated their happiness as low or medium.
- **Struggling with mental health** - one in eight young people aged 5-19 has at least one mental health disorder.
- **Lacking opportunity** - 760,000 young people in the UK aged 24-years-old (10.9%) are not in education, employment or training.

Meanwhile, evidence shows these issues are magnified for girls, young people from BAME (Black, Asian and minority ethnic) communities and young people facing disadvantage.

DISCUSSANT: KIT MILLER

M.K. Gandhi Institute for Nonviolence, Director, USA

Importance of non-violence education and culture of peace for social empowerment of youth

Ms. Kit Miller has a Masters in Social Innovation and Sustainability from Goddard College. She served as the director of the M.K. Gandhi Institute for Nonviolence in Rochester, New York since 2009. Prior to that, she worked as the director/celebrator of Bay Area Nonviolent Communication in Oakland, California. Ms. Miller has been learning about nonviolence and organizing on its behalf for the past 26 years. She draws on Gandhian and Kingian nonviolence, as well as Nonviolent Communication and permaculture, for direction and daily practice.

Ms. Miller sees herself as an educator/practitioner hybrid. In addition to using the Institute itself as a learning laboratory for principled nonviolence, she teaches and works on community projects related to restorative justice, sustainability, and anti-racism in Rochester and elsewhere. She also has taught hundreds of groups worldwide and has spoken at the United Nations twice (in 2017 and 2018) sharing nonviolence with youth in the 21st century.

The question that I want to address briefly is how are we going to ground the youth in the years to come. How do we ground people in a time of tremendous change and uncertainty; where we are at a loss in terms of self-identity, regional connection, extermination of species, where society continues to experience a culture of violence? How do we ground human beings into true values that promote non-violence and culture of peace for social empowerment of youth? How do people, humanity become their best despite the lack of grounding? I would like to discuss the importance of non-violence education and culture of peace for social empowerment of youth.

Our focus, for the last 10 years have been in the Rochester located in New York State. This city stands out as having some of the worst rates of poverty in the United States. For this reason, Rochester became an important place for us to focus our work in. We did not

want to go a mile wide and an inch deep. I am going to share with you some key highlights of our main activities we have been involved in over these years.

I got inspired by Adrian Murray Brown, in the world famous 2017 book, *Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds*. The main discussion of *Emergent Strategy* is about the radical self-help, society-help, and planet-help designed to shape the future we want to live. The world is in a continual state of flux (associated with the philosopher, Heraclitus of Ephesus). The world is a stream of ever-mutating, emergent patterns. Rather than steel ourselves against such change, this



book invites us to feel, map, assess, and learn from the swirling patterns around us in order to better understand and influence them as they happen. However, the book should inspire us to develop a visionary incantation to transform that which ultimately transforms us. Answers do not have to be at the same scale as problems. Actually, thinking that answers have to be at the same-scale as problems is one of the things that holds us back. I am going to talk about some small-scale solutions that I hope will inspire you regardless of where you call home today.

There is a school and it is just four minutes behind the Gandhi Institute in Rochester. It is a school with about a 98% poverty rate among the students. Our focus primarily is working with the youth between the ages of 12 and 24. We had some 11 and 12 years-old who have formed something called the brain committee. Their objective is about solving problems for the entire school. They meet with my colleagues, identify issues going on and then find solutions that are presented to the rest of the school. We know that kids, through generations that have gone by, tend to have remarkable ideas. One of our jobs as an Institute is just to empower and get around. Most of the people that work with me are actually in their twenties. I look old among them, but get inspired by their work and hence the motivation to run around and look for everything, like financial resources to support the activities.

I find the meaning of community as the native climate of the human spirit for everything we do. For me, this native climate of our spirit is when we feel like we are in community living side by side with one another. We are trying to create opportunities to bring the full intelligence of human beings by creating

face-to-face opportunities, especially doing circles and using practices related to restorative justice. Restorative justice can be applied in everything we are involved in education, problem-solving, conflict resolution, grieving and mourning as we have come to experience and wanted to do a couple of times in our school and other schools across the United States. We have not had the massive school shootings that have become too common in the United States.

From these exposures we have been able to use circles to bring children together for all of us to learn, share grief and grow stronger together. The example at hand is something that took place last Sunday, September 22, 2019. The violence that ensued made all of us to

get together in a very multicultural inclusive setting to talk about the topic of hatred. We brought people together across all cultures to look at hatred and try to understand how to handle it should it recur. These interactive experiential moments can assist in producing new ideas for solving future problems holistically together.

Another important piece of the work that has featured in our training program in the last three years is systems thinking. In addition to culturally informed conflict transformation modeling, which pulls on traditions or restorative practices and nonviolent communication, we are also increasingly bringing in systems tools like the

one you see behind me right now, systems thinking can be taught to people of all ages. Through this initiative we have been able to reach over 18,000 youth and adults in the community. This is a critical skill because most of the outcomes that we are struggling with right now are unintended consequences of systems. Many of them are intended consequences.

Many of our systems in this country, for instance, were set up to preferentially support the advancement of white people.

So, some of the outcomes that we have known as a nation are very much intended, but some of them are not. We think it is critical to reach out to all, whether the system serves you or have been left out of the system. We assist people to literally get rid of the blindness and ask for this help as a right. Therefore, systems thinking has been mainstreamed in our education system at every level. I love this quote from an educator that I learned from several years ago while working in the San Francisco Bay area. He said, "Simple answers to complex problems make problems worse." We should not look for simple answers to complex problems or we make problems worse. I should admit the current political rhetoric in this country and in the neighborhood actually, is advancing civil problems that are making our complex problems worse. So, systems thinking is important.

This native climate of our spirit is when we feel like we are in community living side by side with one another. We are trying to create opportunities to bring the full intelligence of human beings by creating face-to-face opportunities, especially doing circles and using practices related to restorative justice.

I also want to put in the work we do on the importance of access to beauty and nature to help us understand where our food comes from, especially for children who are systematically deprived of access to beauty in nature and understanding. There are some of the kids who are involved in the work of beauty in nature. We have an acre of land at the Gandhi Institute. We grow and share food with our immediate neighbors. We deliver food, especially to the senior citizens around us. It is the young kids in the neighborhood who are involved with this act of charity to the elderly. The remainder is shared among households too. In every tradition, food is important for community integration and cohesion.

I want to speak about a different kind of project that we took on a year and a half ago with the help of the public foundation in Atlanta. We wanted to recognize how much time young people, especially with all of us spend on our phones, pretend to have a phone in my hand right now, please. We were also realizing that too many young people were getting swept up into extremism, both in this country and elsewhere because of the recruitment that was taking place online. Some of you may have read that there are specific recruitment strategies and external script used in online spaces to get young people engaged in acts of extremism leading to terrorism. We felt that it was unfair for us a community to leave vulnerable young people alone in those spaces they engage in online.

We created a project called nonviolence now and we were able to put advertisements out and received about 4 million impressions. We put advertisements in spaces where violent video games were played. We placed advertisements in spaces where weapons are marketed. Other advertisements we wanted to promote were to be in pornography sites but those concerned would not allow us to do it.

We are trying to put nonviolence materials in spaces found online where too often the lowest common denominator of humanity predominates. We are working on that project now and I hope very soon you will access on your phone this new nonviolence project. One of the outcomes that we had from the project was we ended up creating a nonviolence new service. When we were running our research on the project, dozens



of stories started reaching us every week about the use of nonviolence globally. As you are aware, nonviolence movement is strongly associated with Gandhi.

And we know how important it is to teach young people and people of all ages around how powerful and important strategy that nonviolence can be. The youth need to be aware of everything: from the climate strikes and other social challenges that affect humanity today. As part of the global family, we can influence change through small initiatives that build awareness on the ever-rising challenges. The young can help people know how to engage with these situations.

We also know how vulnerable journalists are. We have seen on social media, television stations how journalists take great risks to inform the world about emerging challenges. They cover events in war zones, among gangs of criminals, terror groups and even home bred violence. It makes us feel privileged to be among you, with this particular group of people given the recent highlights on how difficult it is to be a journalist anywhere around the world.

As my conclusion, I am excited about the idea of advancing strategic nonviolence to young people. They are going to learn why it is critical that a free press becomes part of all global societies.

DISCUSSANT: MARÍA CRUZ RODRÍGUEZ DEL CERRO
UNESCO Center of Getafe-Madrid, Former Vice President, Spain
Education as a tool to create peaceful and inclusive societies



Maria Cruz Rodríguez del Cerro is an author of over 50 scientific and review articles published in high-impact international journals. From 2009 to 2019, Maria Cruz Rodríguez del Cerro served as Vice President of the UNESCO Center of Getafe (Madrid, Spain) and as Director of the Cabinet of the President of the Economic and Social Council of the King of Spain from the years of 2002-2006. Further, she was the principal investigator and co-principal investigator in 17 national and international research projects, as well as the organizer of national and international Congresses of Psychobiology and Behavioral Neuroscience.

As a visiting professor, Maria Cruz Rodríguez del Cerro lectures at Rutgers-The State University of New Jersey and University of California, Irvine. She holds a PhD in Psychobiology from Psychology School of National University of Distance Education (Madrid, Spain).

I would like to present some of my experiences as a mother, grandmother and neuroscientist about something important: The effects that LOVE has on our brain during our development and in our first years of life.

My aim is to highlight the importance of the first parent-baby relationship for the future of the individual and, thereby, of society. The title indicates that we can shape our brains and thereby our behavior mainly through early

life affective interactions. A bit later in life, enters another powerful factor, Education. Affection and Education: both impact the way in which people live their lives. The structure of our brain is based on the research of Santiago Ramón y Cajal, the eminent neurophysiologist who is well known as the father of neuroscience. One of his most significant contributions to the knowledge of the nervous system was the phenomenon of the growth and development of neurons in mammals, as a function of their behavioral experience.

Why do I introduce my talk with this insight? It is because the idea of the statement, EDUCATION FOR PEACE, is directly linked to the concept of brain and behavior. Considering these ideas, we can assume that family and school are the major influences on the structural and functional development of our brain and our behavior. The environment is a third factor that plays a significant role in this process. During gestation and during the post-natal period, through our mothers, the environment, internal and external, affects our brain development.

“Education, as one of the critical factors, ... shall be directed toward the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.” (Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights). On the other hand, “Peace education is the process of acquiring the values and knowledge, and developing the attitudes, skills, and behaviors to live in harmony with oneself, with others, and with the natural environment.”¹

Frequently, the programs devoted to Education for Peace are directed toward Educative and NGO policies. My aim here, today, is to alert stake-holders and representatives from different institutions involved

¹ Monisha Bajaj (ed.) *Encyclopedia of Peace Education*. (pp. 75-83).

in peace education programs as to the ways in which gestation, the perinatal period, and the first years of life, play a crucial role in the structural development of the brain and the subsequent development of the behavior of individuals. This unifying concept is based on neuroscientific studies of my colleagues and my own research group of UNED, Madrid, Spain and Rutgers University, New Jersey, USA.

How do we develop our understanding of brain and behavioral function? We need to use animal models to study questions such as molecular processes underlying brain development, neurochemical mechanisms, neurotransmission, and communication among neurons. Using Positron Emission Tomography imaging technology (or PET), neuroscientists have found dramatic changes in the level of energy use by children's brains over the first several years of life—from very low at birth, to a rapid rise between infancy and early school years, to a gradual decline to adult levels between middle childhood and the end of adolescence. Imitation using so-called mirror neurons of the cortex of the brain is one way by which baby and parents communicate.

Touching, listening, kissing and all types of interactions, contacts with the baby, healthy or even unhealthy, can produce specific responses of hormone secretion in the baby, which will affect its brain structure and neural transmission systems. Behavior “per se” can be a significant factor affecting brain development. Inappropriate maternal or paternal care of children has been shown to have a detrimental influence on the development of children's affective behavior and cognitive ability.

During the first years of life, connections among neurons are forming for the processes of learning and memory. Approximately 70 % of the total number of synapses, which are the connections among neurons, are formed from 0 to 6 years. An additional 20% of synapses form between the ages of 10 and 15.

The main message that we should transmit to our young people is to appreciate the effects of both internal and external environmental stimuli on the plasticity of the brain, which thereby profoundly affects subsequent

behavior. Currently, some programs that convey such information to young people are: Brain Awareness Week at the National Museum of Health and Medicine in the US, Semana del Cerebro - UNESCO, Getafe-Madrid, Spain, and E4P-Education for Peace in Switzerland.

I want to emphasize that as a priority, we need to introduce, in the UNGA agenda, the following statement: good care during gestation and the early post-natal period can promote healthy development of relationships and social behavior and help to reduce anti-social behavior. Through simple and inexpensive educational programs, we may contribute to sustainable peace by demonstrating to children and young people the importance of their early brain developmental period. If we would pay more attention to this critical period of human brain development, we could most likely



significantly reduce anti-social behavior, thereby benefiting society. Thus, this issue is in direct support of the goals of the 2030 UNGA agenda, that is, better care for women and children including their empowerment at the local, national, and global levels.

In conclusion, I would like to answer the question “Why Brain and Peace Education?” Let me answer it with the following quote from the preamble of the UNESCO Constitution. “Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed”

DISCUSSANT: VINCENT TUCCI

Youth Representative of the Changing Destinations: Journey to Excellence

Education as a tool to create peaceful and inclusive societies



I was invited to talk today about a few things that are very close to my heart, one of which is youth engagement. What I have experienced most recently is that a lot of the youth are addicted to their phones. This addiction is so much that when I am at lunch in my school, people are sitting across from each other, but instead of talking to each other, they are texting each other. They are just five feet away from the other and yet they text each other.

The greatest resource at risk for my generation is hope. Hope has been fading away since technology has become more prevalent and increased level of usage. Everyone is worried about updates and who is going to snap them next, who is on Instagram and who is present.

Another perspective that I wanted to talk about is social isolation. Social isolation leads to things such as being antisocial, depression leads to suicide, and eventually separates yourself from your community. I think some of the solutions for this issue is collaboration and

becoming a part of the community. The community is what sets people up for greatness.

Dignity is another thing that is really important to me. When I was six, I was in Baltimore City, on my way to church and I saw a homeless man sleeping in a box. I asked my mother "What can I do to fix this?", and she said that "I do not know, you tell me". That is when my brain went to over-time thinking. What can I do? How can I fix this? That same winter, I had 175 blankets collected and distributed throughout Baltimore City.

The real question is how do we give hope. We can give hope through donations. Caring for one another is another way to spread hope. Food and shelter gives the homeless hope today and tomorrow.

The last thing that I want to talk about is social action. I am going to start a campaign once I return to my community called "Put down the Phone and Pick up a Friend". Everyone is so attached to their phones, worried about what is going on and who is doing what. It is time that we put down our phones and look for people to connect with, to engage with and become a good social community. If I were to ask you whether you have your phone on you right now, I bet 99% of you will raise your hand. So, with this campaign "Put down the Phone, Pick up a Friend", I want to help more people increase the amount of social interactions within my community.

I would like to end with this saying. When you find a friend, look at life through their views, walk a mile in their moccasins, look at things from their point of view, and maybe you will rethink about how you judge them and what you think about other people.

PANEL SESSION 3: PROTECTION of SOCIAL, ECONOMIC and CULTURAL RIGHTS

KEYNOTE REMARKS: CRAIG FOSTER

Football broadcaster; Author; Ambassador for Human Rights, Australia
Role of human rights for sustainable development

Craig Foster is one of Australia's most respected former athletes with an award-winning career in broadcasting, athlete activism, social justice and human rights. As Australia's 40th National Football Team Captain, Craig's broadcast career spans five male and female FIFA World Cups with three national broadcast awards: Olympic Games and European, South American and domestic professional football competitions.

An author and columnist, Craig developed the successful 'Harmony Game' with the Department of Citizenship and Multiculturalism, Australian Government and Special Broadcasting Service, Australia's multicultural broadcaster to further cooperation, understanding and acceptance of diversity among school children throughout Australia.

A Life Member, former CEO & Chairman of Professional Footballers Australia, the exclusive representative body of Australia's professional players, he is a leading proponent of human rights as a Refugee Ambassador with Amnesty Australia, Australia Committee member of Human Rights Watch, Advisory Council of the Human Rights Institute, University of New South Wales (UNSW) and advocates strongly for sport to fulfill its social responsibility to create a better world.

Thank you for the opportunity to impress on the United Nations and world community the critical importance of ensuring that sport, recognized in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as an enabler of development and peace,¹ continues on its path to synchronisation



with human rights and thereby upholds its duty to protect and further the Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of people everywhere.

We will briefly explore 4 areas:

1. Importance of human rights in sport, and the challenges of implementation and enforcement
2. Global movement in sport towards gender equality and economic parity and challenging the prevailing arguments in this regard
3. Rise of racism in football
4. Extremely concerning, projected growth in displaced people through climate migration and international sport's social responsibility to its member nations in this regard

SPORT AND HUMAN RIGHTS HOPE FOR UNIFIED STANDARDS

In recent years, following a number of human rights crises particularly pertaining to Mega Sporting Events (MSE's), a number of global sporting bodies have implemented human rights policies that obligate all official bodies to audit their human rights impacts and adhere to the 'Protect, Respect, Remedy' framework of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. FIFA, the global football governing body should be congratulated for being at the forefront of this change.²

This is a growing trend that is of extraordinary social importance to the world as, the traditional call from sport to be independent of the impacts it creates, are no longer relevant.³

The potential for positive social change is immense and, this room can anticipate with considerable hope the impact that applying all internationally recognized human rights standards in the *International Bill of Human Rights* including the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*⁴, the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*,⁵ the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*⁶ and the *International Labour Organisation's Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work*⁷ will have on the universality of rights when we consider the scale and social license of sport.

Sports has become the 21st century, universal vehicle for universal rights and, whereas the United Nations can urge, collaborate and perhaps coerce, to 'push', sport is one of the greatest 'pull' factors ever known to humankind and can impose, obligate and educate to a common, human standard.

However, as the world wakes to these obligations, and becomes increasingly aware of their rights, it is critical that sport upholds its duty. It cannot become hostage to political compromise and as we look ahead to social progress through sport and rights, we must acknowledge that failure to uphold these obligations has real, human impact.

A. HAKEEM AL-ARAIBI, FIFA AND THE AFC

The willingness of FIFA, the Asian Football Confederation

(AFC) and Member State Federations to abide by the FIFA's Human Rights Policy of 2017⁸ was put to the test late last year with the detention in Thailand and attempted extradition of Mr. Hakeem al-Araibi, a Bahraini, refugee football on a protection Visa in Australia's care, back to Bahrain contrary to Mr. al-Araibi's internationally recognized human right against refoulement as a refugee.⁹

Despite his case being a clear contravention, and his position as a registered footballer for Pascoe Vale Football Club in Melbourne, Australia, a global campaign was required to impress on FIFA the importance of using their 'apply effective leverage' with all relevant stakeholders, including the Governments of both Thailand and Bahrain, under Article 4 of the Policy.¹⁰

Were it not for this extraordinary outpouring of support from the global football community, outraged at the flagrant breach of Hakeem's rights and the complete failure of the AFC to act, only issuing a public statement after more than 60 days in incarceration and in the context of the purported recusal by the AFC President from the matter,¹¹ his hopes would likely have been forlorn.

We can acknowledge the immense power of sport in this case to enforce the rights of one young man, in part because the common international language of football cuts through to fans and supporters everywhere. Sports gave Hakeem a more 'human face' than the tens of millions of other refugees around the world, and in this we see both its true power and the persistent challenge to humanise a section of humankind when governments everywhere are increasingly seeking to do the contrary.

B. SAHAR KHODOYARI

But the failure of football to actively promote his rights could have been fatal. We know this because, in a different context, we sadly witnessed a tragedy just weeks ago when FIFA refused to apply the express sanction of suspension or expulsion to their member nation, Iran for an ongoing gender equality violation in Article 3 and 4 of the FIFA Statutes¹² and Article 5 of the FIFA Human Rights Policy.¹³

Despite the implementation of Article 3 in 2016 and that Article 4 has been in place since 2004 which expressly state the gravity of discrimination on the grounds of gender, which can no longer be countenanced in global sport, no sanctions have been imposed and the world watched a female fan, Sahar Khodoyari, arrested and facing a lengthy jail sentence for her attempts to enter the Azadi Stadium in Tehran to watch a male football match, self-immolate and perish.¹⁴ This is despite the recommendation of the FIFA Human Rights Advisory Board of November, 2018 that a timeline to sanctions be immediately applied.¹⁵ This is a regrettable, avoidable and salutary tragedy that stains the very notion of sport.

C. NECESSARY SUSPENSION OF IRAN

Iran should be suspended from international competition until such time as women are provided with their rights accorded to all through football. To watch the sport, they love. Having the power, and authority to greatly further the economic and social rights of women through sports is of great importance as sports are arguably a human right and not only to participate but to spectate and celebrate,¹⁶ but this power is useless if politics impede its application. And the consequences can be devastating.

Further, the women of Iran will note with interest that the International Judo Federation suspended Iran on 18 of September for violation of its Code of Ethics and the Olympic Charter regarding non-discrimination on grounds of race, origin or nationality.¹⁷ Sports have taken valuable, exciting new steps towards a world which is fairer, safer and more equal than ever before and should be congratulated for so doing, but the final step is proving the most difficult, certainly for our largest sport, association football.

To hold to its commitment.

Despite the implementation of Articles of law since 2004 which expressly state the gravity of discrimination on the grounds of gender...

...no sanctions have been imposed and the world watched a female fan, Sahar Khodoyari, arrested and facing a lengthy jail sentence for her attempts to enter the Azadi Stadium in Tehran to watch a male football match, self-immolate and perish.

D. ONGOING GOVERNANCE FAILURE AND PLAYERS' DUTY

This problem is more acute because of the complete failure in global football for the electoral eligibility criteria of FIFA Code of Ethics¹⁸ to account for either inaction or even complicity in human rights abuse such as, for example the President of Iranian football,¹⁹ Mehdi Taj, who was elected in April as a Vice President of the AFC amid the failure of his governing body to protect Sahar and her colleagues. Or the Secretary-General of the Afghanistan Football Federation,²⁰ Sayed Ali Reza Aghazada, elected to the Executive Committee of the AFC even though at that time suspended by the Afghan Attorney General's office for alleged sexual abuse of women national team players.²¹

The athletes, and players of the world must take responsibility for upholding the highest standards of governance of their sport including ensuring the efficacy, robustness and legitimacy of ethics chambers and fully independent oversight mechanisms because failures at governance level don't only have economic consequences, they come at a human cost.

Sports governance is critical to providing the framework and environment in which the rights of others in, and through sport can be respected and FIFPro,²² the global footballer's body has been too silent during recent AFC and FIFA elections in which consideration of the human rights of players were a nullity.

GENDER EQUALITY THROUGH SPORTS AND FURTHER STEPS REQUIRED

Women's equality and economic and social rights are rightly on the global agenda at present and, again, football is undergoing positive change through the exertion of their rights by leading players, and teams.

While the marvelous US Women's National Team prosecute their economic rights against the US domestic governing body,²³ the Australian National Women's Team, the Matildas,²⁴ Australia's most loved representative team, are doing likewise on a global scale. And women everywhere should be in full support as the visibility of sport gives a social uplift to women raising their voice for equal treatment whether in the boardroom, the university, the workplace, home or any other area of social life.

The Australians, through their domestic player Union, Professional Footballers Australia (PFA)²⁵ are challenging the lack of adherence to the FIFA gender

In football, racist abuse of black players, in particular, has occurred worryingly regularly in recent years including cases involving players in England, Montenegro and Italy and at the very highest levels of the game. If these are allowed to go unpunished, the effects throughout society are detrimental to a world of unity, understanding and inclusion.

equality statutes regarding FIFA World Cup prize money distribution. And the Jamaican women's football team, earlier this month instituted a strike in protest at a failure of the Jamaican Football Federation to honor their contractual payments.²⁶

Sports do not exist only for economic reasons, and thus the proposition that women's football, or sport must 'pay its own way' and be given only what it returns in kind, is fallacious where a global governing body is concerned. Sport is a social vehicle in which all have a right to participate, in an equal manner and without discrimination of any kind.

FIFA, and other major governing bodies have a social responsibility to provide equal opportunity and rewards, to both female and male and, notwithstanding that women's sport is growing exponentially in line with greater investment, women have a right to equality. Now. And the Australians will ensure that the women's rights

agenda, whether economic and the attendant social and cultural freedom this provides, will continue apace. All male players around the world should be in full, vocal support for their sisters and certainly women's teams everywhere should be considering unified action to press their claim.

It is also time for FIFA to fully commit to equality in decision making at governance level consistent with Goal 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals to 'Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls'²⁷ to become a glowing example to the world of the important sporting principle of equality between women and men. Currently, just one woman must be elected from the 6

Confederations out of a total of 37 FIFA Council Members, including the President.²⁸

FIFA should commit to a gender equal balance at Federation, Confederation and thus global level and

demonstrate strong leadership in showing the world that women are of equal stature, importance and value. And female players everywhere should consider this a strategic priority, and worth fighting for on behalf of women everywhere.

RIISING RACISM AND SANCTION FAILURES

Recently, we have seen the rise of deeply concerning elements of nationalism and racially discriminatory treatment across the world, and the community of nations must escalate its response to ensure that no person is treated differently on the basis of any factor of difference, colour being just one, though historically one of the most prevalent and damaging.

In football, racist abuse of black players, in particular, has occurred worryingly regularly in recent years including cases involving players in England, Montenegro and Italy and at the very highest levels of the game.²⁹

If these are allowed to go unpunished, the effects throughout society are detrimental to a world of unity, understanding and inclusion.

As yet, FIFA, UEFA and the Italian Football Federation (Federazione Italiana Giuoco Calcio, FIGC),³⁰ in particular have not applied sufficient sanctions to deter this type of behaviour in stadiums and this should be a particular focus for the world of sport in the immediate term. I am pleased to see FIFA President, Gianni Infantino make strong statements in the past days regarding sanctions for offending clubs in Italy,³¹ however this is long overdue and further, where a Member Federation, or country, is unable to act in an effective manner, it is critical that FIFA has recourse as custodians of the game.

Sport has a central role, and responsibility to society to demonstrate that all involved, whether players, fans, officials adhere to a non-discriminatory code of conduct to demonstrate a powerful example of unity to the world during a time of growing division and rejection of difference.

CLIMATE MIGRATION AND SPORTS' RESPONSIBILITY

Finally, as an Ambassador for Refugees with Amnesty Australia and a strong advocate for adherence to international human rights law regarding asylum seekers, including in my own country of Australia in which we face ongoing compliance challenges, I would like to impress on all global sports, whether FIFA, the IOC, FIBA, the Commonwealth Games and others that the number of displaced people is rapidly increasing and simultaneously our humane treatment of people seeking refuge is under extreme threat in many regions of the world.

According to the UN, the projected displacement of human beings from climate related change and extreme events and disasters is projected to increase dramatically in coming decades, according to the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), by around 143 million people by 2050,³² aside from the more than 17 million in 2018 alone³³ and, in light of the severe issues faced by our fellow human beings in this situation, this is something that I am personally very concerned about.



The economic, social and cultural rights of all involved are severely threatened, including the right of all children to an education, the right to health and an adequate standard of living (under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)) which too often is limited or missing altogether in the camps that house many hundreds of thousands, and this will become far more acute. In 2018 alone, UNHCR reported that at least 4 million refugee children had no access to primary school.³⁴

I am delighted that so many major sports have agreed to the UN Sport for Climate Action Framework³⁵ and the 5 following principles:

- 1. Promoting greater environmental responsibility**
- 2. Reducing overall climate impact**
- 3. Educating for climate action**
- 4. Promoting sustainable and responsible consumption**
- 5. Advocating for climate action through communication**

However, while many sports are highly active in reducing overall climate impact (2), few are educating for climate action (4) or advocating for climate action through communication (5) on a systemic basis. Sports is often called a 'global family' and this is certainly both a common refrain in football, and accurate in its characterisation of the commonality, sense of community and brother and sisterhood felt between competing nations.

Too many of our family are being, and will be, forced from their homes through both internal and cross-border migration from environmental factors and all of sport should recognise a common duty to assist our global community.

CONCLUSION

Sports is a universal language through which, for the first time, we are beginning to see the incredibly positive, uplifting and beneficial promulgation of universal rights and I congratulate all involved in the fast-emerging field, however policies are only the first step, enforcement and adherence is proving a challenge to the prevailing system.

It is critical that Member States everywhere understand that by upholding sport's social contract and responsibility to provide opportunity, a safe space, equality, health and wellbeing benefits for all, we carry the world closer towards a commonality of human interaction, greater understanding of humanitarian values, high profile role models for the next generation, and respect for the Economic, Social and Cultural rights and peace and security for all.

Football must commit to upholding its human rights policy or human beings like Hakeem, or Sahar will be lost and this will take greater strength of independence and advocacy from the players themselves. A stronger focus must also be placed on the growing tide of racism, given trends across the world today.

The economic rights of women everywhere are supported by our wonderful, female footballers who are pressing their rightful claims which should include equal governance representation as an urgent priority, and I call on all governing bodies of sport to advocate more voluminously for environmental sustainability given the immense, projected, negative impact on the rights of tens of millions of our global family from climate migration in years to come.

Our voice and positive support, in sports, and not only our compliance, is critical to achieving the global progress we need to see. I thank you for your time and urge you to carry the message back to your countries that the synthesis of human rights and sport will benefit humanity and take us forward in a spirit of not only competition, but shared human values and a more sustainable, better world for all.

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MODERATOR: JOSÉ IGREJA MATOS

President of European Association of Judges, First Vice President of the International Association of Judges, Portugal

As a judge for 30 years, JOSE IGREJA MATOS was elected as the President of European Association of Judges in 2016 for a two years mandate and re-elected for a second term in 2018. Mr. Matos also has been serving as a Member of the Advisory Board of the Global Judicial Integrity Network of United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) since April 2018.

In addition to his professional career as a judge, he is also an Associate Researcher of the Centre for Social Studies of the University of Coimbra and a Member of Portuguese's High Judicial Council Cabinet - 2011/2013. Mr. Matos also lectures in meetings of the judiciary in several dozens of countries in four continents and has written several books, articles and studies in different topics including Human Rights protection and Rule of Law affirmation.

I am here as the President of the European Association of Judges. We are the biggest organization of judges in Europe assembling 43 countries represented by their respective national associations. For the judiciary “dark clouds” are now pending in our old continent. During the past few years, we were confronted with a crisis of rule of law, with severe implications for human rights protection, which is spreading like a plague in multiple countries.

Allow me to tell you a story. Some months ago, I was, once again, in Poland, as you know one of the more disturbed countries within the European Union. I was speaking informally with an international expert that works now in Warsaw. And then she explained me, “Look, José, during more than 14 years I worked for international human rights organizations.

But very recently I decided to change my professional framework and actually to take a step back.



I realize that to be really effective in avoiding violation of human rights, we desperately need to have previously an institutional framework. Courts and judges play an essential role especially to protect social and cultural rights; if we don't have independent courts committed in an impartial way to defend our core values then we will be in very serious trouble.

So here I am now; working with judges because in Poland like in other countries of the region is mostly here that our future is being shaped.”

In a recent survey more than 60% of our 43 EAJ members declared that in the past 5 years the situation of judiciary in their countries concerning judicial independence as worsened.

Turkey, today, represents the most terrible of the examples: thousands of judges and prosecutors arrested for years, expelled from the judiciary and with all their assets confiscated. The European Association of Judges has already spent more than one hundred twenty thousand euros in humanitarian assistance to several dozens of judges and their families with contributions that don't exceed 900 euros to each of those families; only to cover very basic needs.

Democracy is based on elections providing legitimacy to the rulers but also the values assembled by the “Rule of Law”, as opposite of rule of men, in which the principles of separation of powers and judicial independence are vital prerequisites. The arrival of so-called illiberal democracies at the very heart of European Union has, since the early stages, instigated a vigorous attack on courts. Therefore, in countries like Hungary or Poland, the second pillar of democracy is neglected, if not dethroned.

The menaces to Rule of Law are now everywhere as democracy is being characterized as outdated and inefficient with its terrible habit of respecting minorities, upholding human rights and freedom of expression and of avoiding excessive concentration of State powers.

Alexis de Tocqueville, almost 200 years ago, baptized Democracy as “the great experiment”. I sympathize with this definition that alert us to the delicacy of democracy, characteristic of a system that is always being tested. I do believe, working intensively in the last years in

different regions of the world, that the solutions for the problems the judiciary is facing today is intimately connected with Goal 16 of UN Sustained Development and should be built in cooperation and partnership with civil society working together in field projects that address our mutual concerns.

Obeying to a lesson of practical conduct enshrined in our European culture is advanced many centuries ago by Aristotle’s words: “For the things we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them, for example men become builders by building and lyre players by playing the lyre; so too we become just by doing just acts”.

An alliance of good will that the men and women have to protect democratic values is now the only remedy to the rise of populism and radicalism. That is why is so important for me, as a judge, to be present on this conference and to publicly praise the work of the Journalists and Writers Foundation and of all the global partners specially, in my particular case, the Associação Ilhas da Paz of Mozambique.



PANELIST 1: ISAQUE CHANDE

Ombudsman of Mozambique, Mozambique

Early warning mechanisms of human rights to prevent conflicts: severe inequalities in access to social services

As a lawyer, Isaque Chande serves as the Chair of the Constitutional Council of the Mozambican Bar Association since May 2013. Chande participated in various international and regional conferences on energy. Further, since 1996, he is a Member of the Bar Association of Mozambique. In terms of his notable experiences in the legal field, he was a legal advisor at National AirLine-LAM from 1996-1999, and to the Dean of Pedagogical University from 1999-2000. Chande also participated in a team of Consultants for resizing of working force of Mozambique Railways Company (CFM) and into the Working Group for the Revision of the Energy Sector Law from 2000-2005.

Humankind has never faced so many global challenges as it does today. The 2030 Agenda is one of the most consensual platforms aimed at establishing

mechanisms to overcome problems such as poverty and unworthiness in which millions of people live. There is no doubt that millions of people on the continents of Africa and Asia lack access to basic services such as water, electricity, sanitation, health and food.

Agenda 2030 is presumed to be one of the most important vehicles for ensuring that the international community takes all necessary steps to achieve the seventeen goals set out in Agenda 2030.

My topic at this special and important event is to talk about the protection of social, economic and cultural rights, in order to show what we are doing in Mozambique and other African countries. We will highlight the diverse environment in which we are



trying to figure out the best ways to implement the 2030 Agenda.

Moreover, we cannot talk about the protection of social, economic and cultural rights without mentioning one of the core ideas that are essential and meet all seventeen goals of the 2030 Agenda. We are referring to the idea of including social development for all. In fact, most objectives are based primarily on this concept of inclusive of social development, such as objectives 4, 8, 9, 11 and 16, among others. So, what does inclusive social development mean? In a nutshell, inclusive social development for all means that no one needs to be left behind and all human beings must be involved in the world's transformation process.

PROTECTION OF SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

Do we all know what social, economic and cultural rights are? It should not be difficult to find out what kind of human rights we are talking about. As it is well known, human rights are the principles established internationally to provide protection, guarantee and respect for human beings. They are guaranteed for any human-being regardless of race, color, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, religion, social status and so on.

In short, social, economic and cultural rights are these specific human rights related to basic living conditions such as education, food, housing, employment, health and others. These human rights are indispensable for any human-being to live in dignity. As we all know, dignity is something that is inherited by humans and is essential to be respected by all entities, whether public or private. The question is how to protect them? And who is responsible for providing them? For these two questions there is no simple answer and, in some cases, there should be no consensus.

Although it may seem easier to answer the second question, we cannot say the same thing to the first. Indeed, there should be no doubt that the state has the primary responsibility to provide the minimum living conditions for those who need and are highly vulnerable. Assuming this responsibility for the state means that it must ensure that all citizens have access

to basic education, health services, housing, food and related services.

Considering what we have experienced since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, the first question on how to protect social, economic and cultural rights when the state does not provide them depends on public policies and the level of commitment of each government.

In some countries, such as Brazil, there are legal mechanisms that allow vulnerable citizens to file legal proceedings against the state or municipalities, claiming their social, economic and cultural rights. For example, if a citizen needs medical care and cannot afford it, it is the obligation of the state or municipality to provide it. If they do not, and if the lawsuit has been opened, they may be convicted. In fact, there are many lawsuits that ended in the conviction of a state or municipality. This shows that the legal framework needs to be strengthened to help implement the main goals of Agenda 2030.

On the other hand, there are countries where such legal procedures have not yet been established. In these countries, governments generally use the national budget as the limit of their responsibilities to provide minimum living conditions. So, they were arguing that the national budget is the fundamental source that must be used to meet all needs of society, including vulnerable ones. In addition, they also argued that once the national budget was approved, it should act as the limit for governments to adopt all necessary social programs. Moreover, they argued that the judiciary should not condemn states or municipalities in this case, because it is not the responsibility of the judiciary to take care of those who are vulnerable. And finally, they saw the condemnation of the judiciary as an intervention that violated the sacrosanct principle of separation of power.

Indeed, it shows that there is no consensus on the implementation measures adopted around the world. In our view, there must be an obligation on the state to provide the minimum conditions so that citizens can live with the necessary dignity. Because dignity, as we said, is essential for all human beings. Indeed, as long as there are starving people, without access to education,

employment and basic health services, inclusive social development will remain a big dream.

PROTECTION OF SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL RIGHTS IN MOZAMBIQUE

Mozambique is one of the nations that has approved the relevant international human rights instruments. Although it is also one of the poorest countries in the world, it has been doing much to reasonably implement human rights principles. For this reason, in Mozambique, the state is primarily responsible for promoting human rights and simultaneously ensuring their effectiveness.

The Mozambican Constitution, as its main law, in its Article 11, established major objectives of the Mozambican State, where among others, the following were highlighted:

1. The construction of a social justice society and the creation of material, spiritual well-being and quality of life
2. The defense and promotion of human rights and equality of citizens before the law
3. The strengthening of democracy, freedom, social stability and social and individual harmony

Although the Constitution provides for this provision, we are far from equating the effectiveness of social, economic and cultural rights. Nevertheless, given the country's stage of development and limited economic resources, we recognize that there has been a commitment to implement the goals set out in the 2030 Agenda.

Unfortunately, efforts to protect social, economic and cultural rights are not enough to provide schools for all our children, especially those in rural areas. On the other hand, we are also facing challenges in providing basic health services, which means that many people, including children, women and the elderly, cannot access this service.

Job creation for young people is also one of the biggest challenges, although the government has established specific job creation policies for young people. What makes matters worse is that millions of people are still victims of poverty and hunger, including the most vulnerable, such as children, women and the elderly. Finally, I have never seen a vulnerable citizen who has filed a lawsuit to complain about violations of his social, economic and cultural rights. It seems that Mozambique is one of the countries that uses the national budget as a limit for its social, economic and cultural responsibilities. However, we are aware that the Government of Mozambique has implemented different social programs, including providing subsidies for the elderly and vulnerable.

CONCLUSION

Achieving inclusive social development is a long way to go. Therefore, much needs to be done to ensure the implementation of mechanisms that will allow countries to provide minimum living conditions.

There must be no doubt that it is the primary responsibility of the state to promote and protect human rights, including social, economic and cultural rights, and to establish appropriate mechanisms that it can allow citizens to fight for their human rights. For this purpose, it is important to establish a legal mechanism that allows citizens to open legal proceedings in case of violations of this type of human rights.

Finally, no country in the world will be able to tackle inclusive social development on its own. The main strategy is to act collectively so that no one can be left behind until 2030.

PANELIST 2: JAMES C. HARRINGTON

Texas Civil Rights Project, Founder and Director Emeritus, USA

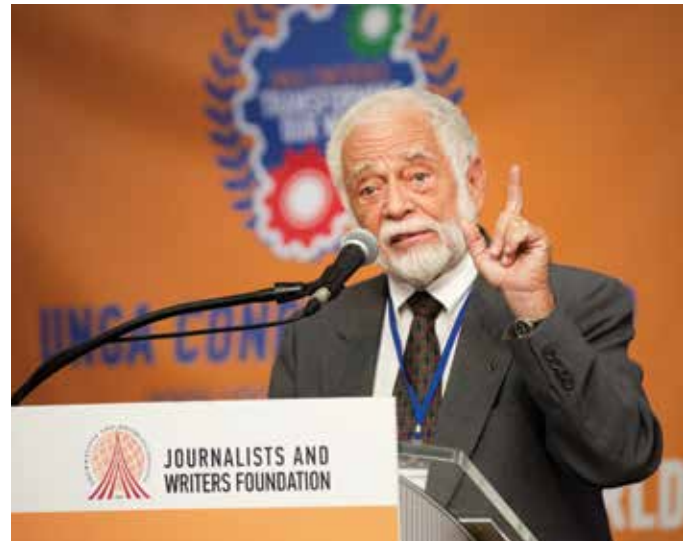
Promotion of social, economic and cultural rights in building peaceful societies

James Harrington, a human rights attorney of forty-five years, is the founder and director emeritus of the Texas Civil Rights Project. He graduated from the University of Detroit Law School in 1973, from where he also holds a master's in philosophy. He was an adjunct professor at the University of Texas Law School for 27 years and also taught undergraduate writing courses in civil liberties. In 1990, Mr. Harrington founded the Texas Civil Rights Project, a statewide non-profit foundation that promotes social, racial, and economic justice and civil liberty, through the legal system and public education, for low income and poor people.

*In addition to his professional career in handling a wide array of civil rights cases, he is also the author of *The Texas Bill of Rights: A Commentary and Wrestling with Free Speech, Religious Freedom, and Democracy in Turkey: The Political Trials and Times of Fethullah Gülen* and co-author of *Three Mystics Walk into a Tavern: A Once and Future Meeting of Rumi, Meister Eckhart, and Moses de León in Medieval Venice*. Since his retirement, Mr. Harrington has established *Proyecto Santiago* at St. James' Episcopal Church in east Austin, which advocates for the Latino community.*

It is both a pleasure to come to these events and but it is also depressing. It is depressing, of course, because we hear all the problems over and over and over again, with little solution. And we look at these charts that we have worked on for all these years. When we scrutinize them, we see that there is still a lot to do. But what is uplifting for us is to be part of this gathering to share, learn and inspire each other because you all are involved in a lot of really good, important work. If you were not involved in this work, the world would be a lot worse off than where it is today. So, when you walked out of here, you should leave having listened to some new ideas, new energy, and to be grateful for each other about the work that we are doing together in this global family.

My work has been about civil rights, human rights work and NGO work in the United States, spanning over 50 years. I have also been involved in national human rights



advocacy. The big question is “how do you protect the rights of people?” Do you go to court and say you have ultimately protected the rights of people? This is an issue that we are facing in the United States. Of course, it is an issue people are facing in other countries too. The important thing is for us to keep in mind when we are out there having coffee or tea or beer in whichever country we live in, that our talk should be about these issues. Our idea of the rule of law is under attack.

The list of democratic countries is fewer, and going down every year. How is it that we go about furthering human rights, protecting human rights? How do we institutionalize democracy, how do we create these institutional frameworks that we accept and respect democracy? How do we create laws that actually penalize people who break them?

Title nine is the law guaranteed women and girls from elementary schools all the way up to have equal access to sports. This opened the door for women to enter professional life and enjoy equality. I am sure this is totally true of Australia and less in the United States where a lot of the movement into higher education is because of scholarships open to men as well as women alike. Opening that door of professional life, like athletics scholarships, and opening that door to girls,

opens many doors to different professions. When I entered law school 50 years ago, we had 92 people and 3 of them were women. When I stopped teaching law school three years ago, more than 50% were women.

So, is this the kind of institutional change? How do we work on that? How do we make that work? One reason why we are here today is to think about how to make this work. There are 70,000 human rights documents that had been generated by 700 NGOs. 70,000 documents on everything you could think of. But when we look at the world, where are we in terms of those basic ideas that I really know, with 70,000 documents that for us spell out equality, dignity, respect?

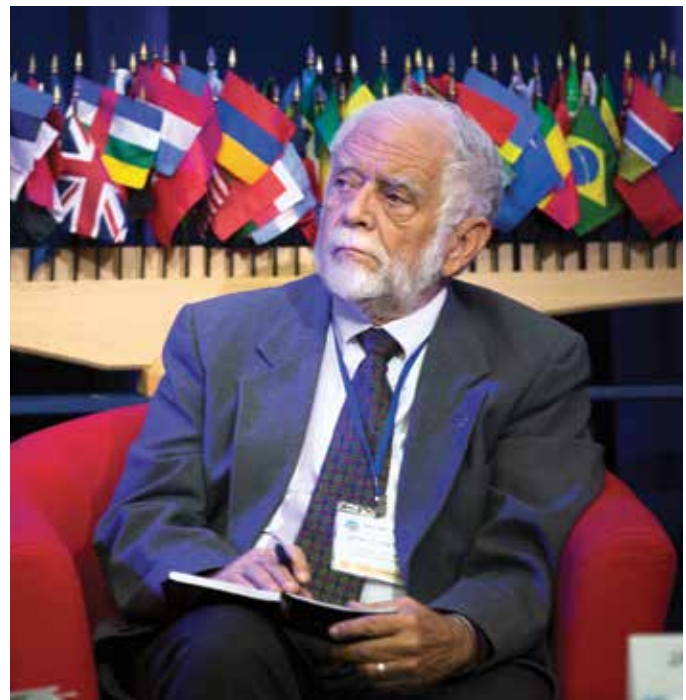
One of the reasons why we are here is because of the United Nations General Assembly gathering in New York. Three of the best documents you should have are about the universal declaration of rights, the international covenant on civil and political rights, which the United States calls civil liberties. Then, you have the third document, the international covenant on economic, social, and cultural rights. So, the second document, civil liberties is restrictions on government allowing guaranteed press and fair trials. These are very important possible liberties. The flip side of that, the positive rights like healthcare, a right to food, the rights of the safety net, are becoming less guaranteed globally.

Where are we on these human needs, how do we create mechanisms to address debate and sound policies? And this is something that we each of us has to figure out in our own lives. I cannot give you the answer. Not one of us up here can give you the answer. What do you do in your own lives? How do we do similar action plans in our own countries and respective communities? What can we do it? What kind of conversations do we have with people if we think that democracy is important, that the rule of law is critical. This should be our bread and butter. What can we do in our own lives? We are always waiting for the savior. We think of Martin Luther King and these people came from heaven, as our leaders. That is not true.

It was the parents, the friends, the teachers that raised up these leaders. Everything that we do in our lives,

every moment of our lives, every contact and we have in our lives has an impact. That is how we can put meaning into those 70,000 documents.

This an example of how we can think creatively by using sports, as a sound example to advance the rights message. How do we use sports inside the United States? How do we use sports inside of other countries? How do we use sports internationally? This is a moment to rethink how we become proactive in our local community activities that bring out the question on rights. We are a global family through sports, but we are a global family in the context of human rights as well. How can we be creative? We can, we are watching



the people of Hong Kong creatively standing up against what the Beijing government wants to impose in Hong Kong. How many weeks have we seen people out in the streets speaking with their feet? That is what we need to do. Speak with our mouths, speak with our feet. We have to organize ourselves into strong movements of people to have a better impact on an oppressive regime. We have to be creative because at the end of the day, it is not just about us, but it is about our kids and our grandchildren whom we should fight for. There is a poet in the United States and she has this line: We make a living by what we get. We make a life from what we give. Well, we have done for the world is immortal.

PANELIST 3: ANTONIO ALBERTO DO VALE CERQUEIRA

Court of Ethics and Disciplinary at the Brazilian Bar Association - District Federal Section, Founder and Partner of Cerqueira and Dantas Associated Lawyers, Brazil

Violation of human rights leading to social unrest: Country-based Analysis

Antonio Alberto do Vale Cerqueira is the Founding Partner of Catta Preta and Vale Cerqueira Advogados on 04/1998 (since 2015 Cerqueira and Dantas Advogados). Graduated in Law at the Federal District Unified Teaching Association (AEUDF) in 1998. Post graduated in Civil Procedural Law at ICAT master / AEUDF (2002). Professor for over ten years at UNICEUB, IESB and UNIEURO. Mr. Cerqueira was chairperson of the Brazilian Bar Association Selection Committee - Distrito Federal Section, during the three-year period 2010/2012, when he served as Section Director.

He is a lecturer frequently consulted by media outlets of the Federal District and Brazil to give their opinion on relevant legal issues. Currently, Mr. Cerqueira is counselor of the Brazilian Bar Association for the three-year period 2019/2021 and is President of the OAB / DF Court of Ethics and Discipline, responsible for overseeing the ethical conduct of more than 60,000 registered lawyers. Lawyer for 21 years, has been active in legal cases of high complexity, including the Superior Courts, especially STJ and STF.

I would like to start by reminding you of a very important book by Jean-Jacques Rousseau. He was a thinker that lived in the 18th century and he wrote the social contract. The idea is that once we are born, every child in the world signs a social contract, which gives them their rights. Everyone who lives in a society, expects us to work, to marry, have kids, pay taxes and have a behavior that can be an example to everyone else.

This contract gives us the main rights, the human rights. So, we have to ask ourselves, how are the States,



our countries respecting this role? Is everyone here is obeying their social contracts? Can we say we are receiving our rights? Do we have full access to these rights? Do we have food for everyone, housing for everyone, education, equality; no, we do not have. That is the reason why the criminal activities are growing in Brazil and in so many countries. People do not have basic rights.

Brazil is a huge country. It is the fifth biggest country in the world. Brasilia is the center, the Capital of the country. Brazil is divided by 26 states and 1 federal district, where the Brasilia is, very similar to here, like Washington DC. Brasilia is a very beautiful place. It is considered a world heritage site by UNESCO and it is one of the most developed cities of Brazil. It offers the best quality of life in the world. It has the highest per capita income in the country. It almost doubles compared to the rest of the country. There are many large spaces, a lot of green, not a huge traffic. The

executives and judiciaries are the center of power. I was born and have been living there. However, only 3.3 miles away, we have a structural zone, “Favela”. It’s so near, you can walk through there at a minimum distance. We have a huge lack of human rights over there.

Favela was born when Brasilia was developing and it became the waste deposit. There are no streets, there was no sanitation, there is not a school, nothing over there. I would like to focus on homicide rates per 100,000 inhabitants. What most people will say about homicides is the drug trafficking, assault, rape and everything anti-social. We have the graphic figures from 2011 to 2018 and we have Brasilia, this beautiful city. In 2011, the difference between the 100,000 inhabitants was over in ten times. It was a very bad place to be.

But the district federal government has been putting money in this city to improve economic development, schools, cleaning streets, sanitation, cleaning the

city water. As you can see, the rate is dropping over the years. Now the difference is only five times approximately. So, what I can say to you, our conclusion is crimes are not because of the poverty. The main reason is when the states does not obey the social contract, as they were saying before, and it starts to take from these inhabitants for his citizens. The human rights include a right to good education, the right to food. The right to access the 17 goals that we have here.

We come to a very dangerous line. There is human dignity, life, and once we cross that line and the people live below it, then generations will collapse. If we think about these 17 Goals, maybe now it is too early to deliver this to the population.

But can we ask ourselves if the state can properly delivery these goals alone or we should participate even if it means crossing the dangerous line.



DISCUSSANT: EKATERINA SHEBALINA

Executive Assistant to the Vice-Rector, Institute for International Studies,
Research Fellow, Russia

Protection of Social, Economic and Cultural Rights



Ekaterina Shebalina is a Research fellow at MGIMO-University. She earned her PhD in International Relations and had three internships at the MFA of Russia. She represents MGIMO at international conferences.

Today, a lot has been said about the importance of protecting social, economic and cultural rights, and, most importantly, human rights. Only promoting human rights-based approach, introducing mechanisms of prevention of violation of human rights can lead to inclusive social development. These things are crucial to achieving any global goal. But the question still remains: Why does the protection of human rights not always work? There are undoubtedly a number of factors, but one of them, in my opinion, is the gap between those who make policy, those who implement these policies and those who are affected by these policies.

The fact is that evolving nature of global challenges, namely, human rights problem, breed the necessity of finding new types of cooperation. And here comes what I call the network diplomacy, being one of the most effective mechanisms to boost human rights protection. Network diplomacy may be defined as the multi-level communication, representation and negotiation of an idea through a set of actors, which may extend, and

that's the most important thing, beyond the traditional, region, state sponsored institutions and encompass other actors integrated with the idea or parties involved.

As such, network diplomacy may feature a multipronged approach to tackling human rights related issues. Why network diplomacy? Because it is particularly potent as it allows engagement of a multitude of actors. Moreover, it is subject to comparatively low transaction costs. Again, why network diplomacy? Because it meets the requests of three major contemporary developments in international relations.

1. The necessity for increased cooperation in a volatile and highly populated globalized international environment. Nowadays, the world is facing a wide range of issues which are intricately linked to seemingly unrelated issues: from poverty, under-development, food insecurity or environmental concern can now stem radicalization, terrorism, refugee crisis, conflicts and various other potential issues. In short, security threats have become uniquely multidimensional, and what may have required one or two parties in the past may require dozens of actors from various backgrounds today poverty, environment (e.g. military conflicts).

More importantly, the issues of our current system transcend physical borders, which have now become the last remains of yesterday's sovereignty. The cyberspace, organized crime, terrorism, and other significant and potentially destabilizing issues can cross borders and spaces quite easily, thus exploiting gaps (physical, material, legal, etc.) before traditional actors can identify and address these issues.

2. The current evolution of technologies, most particularly in the fields of information and communication dissemination. It is a trite truism, that the emergence of the internet and modern information technologies have significantly altered our social and communicative patterns, and thus our global environment. In this context, its influence on

the public diplomacy appears evident. The amount of information is no longer an issue, and the sources have become multiple.

Yesterday, diplomatic apparatuses required complex, sometimes covert sources and information to adequately address the challenges they faced, often to extract limited information from finite sources, with a significant risk. Today, sources are seemingly infinite, what could be gathered yesterday from a unique source through an intelligence service can now be replaced by a public diplomatic network with local communities and non-state actors. Journalists and other civil society-based networks can sometimes provide and disseminate valuable knowledge to and from diplomatic institutions more efficiently than the likes of Benjamin Franklin or Anatoly Dobrynin could have ever conceived.

As a particularly accurate prediction formulated by HSBC's marketing team in the late 1990s: data, communication and networks will become the currency of tomorrow. Today, communication is without a doubt one of the central pillars of the network diplomacy. It is the main feature of the modern world, that is why, public diplomacy has transformed from a high-risk / high cost information gathering and analysis product into a low-cost / low-risk information gathering and dissemination process. If anything, today's modern network diplomacy has in many ways started to replicate some of the marketing and public relations strategies developed by corporations from the 1980s.

3. The expanding number of relevant international actors and sources of influences. In the past decades a wide range of non-state actors such as multinational corporations (MNCs), international media outlets, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), armed non-State actors (ANSAs), religious groups and other civil society organizations (CSOs) as well as international and intergovernmental organizations have stepped more profoundly into the multi-layered field of global (geo)politics and therefore global diplomacy.

Their influence is at times comparable, even stronger (for short or extended period of time) to that of certain States or groupings of States. A highly contrasting example would be to compare the power of a corporation such as Facebook, Microsoft or Google and their global reach and influence to that of Lesotho, St.



Kitts and Nevis or Suriname. In this context, it seems clear that the formulation of an effective diplomacy in the 21st century needs to devote more attention to the multiplication of “engage-able” actors, their interests, reach, influence, power and strategies, be they a group of small / medium powers such as the group of Landlocked Developing Countries or a set of CSOs such as the Vienna NGO Committee.

So, what we need to do is to unite interconnected individuals who occupy analogous positions in institutional or social structures that create your community relationships that, build upon, democratize, magnify existing social framework. I would summarize that in protecting social, economic and cultural rights we need:

1. Flexibility
2. Effectiveness
3. Act across traditional boundaries
4. Lower the cost of common activity

So, in achieving SDG's and protecting human rights traditional diplomacy needs to transcend traditional borders and frameworks, in order to create networks of actors from varied actors with varying views, degrees of power, skills and audiences through creation or adherence to new channels of communication and cooperation with other international actors.

Concluding, I would like to say that the UNGA Conference presents a vivid example of natural diplomacy. We are here united by common scope, all from different countries, speaking different languages, someone implementing human rights policies, someone forming these policies.

STATEMENT: SEDA PUMPYANSKAYA

Director for Strategic Communications Division, UN Department of Global Communications

Seda Pumpyanskaya was the correspondent from Moscow for the Spanish daily El País, a producer for the BBC in London, and after a year spent at Harvard as a Nieman Fellow, she joined the United Nations, where she was a senior public affairs and communication official in Bosnia Herzegovina, Kosovo and Guatemala. From 2005 to 2010 she was the Council of Europe's Director of Communication in Strasbourg. In 2010 she joined Skolkovo as Vice President of International Relations and Communication. She is currently an Independent Consultant on International Relations and Communication in Moscow.

The vicious climate action demands that we pick up action points. Poverty is falling too slowly. No country is on track to achieve the goal of gender equality. Diversity is being lost at an alarming rate with the greenhouse gas emissions still rising when we are close to the three or five degree temperature increase with all the devastation that science keeps warning us about. And of course, the issues of human rights; all the questions that have been discussed in this session, cultural, economic and social rights are the core of what the United Nations has been dealing with. We know that there are many problems in many countries.

However, there is another fact that we must embrace to achieve the SDGs. And there is still time for us to get on track. It is critically important to support advocacy and public engagement and the SDG implementation. Education is another key tool to promote awareness of sustainable development since the next generation of leaders is being shaped by schools and universities. This critical front line has to provide the ambitious means and inspiration for new developments and solutions to be creative and tested.

SDG 16 and 17 explicitly called for the environment that supports tolerance, differing views with participation, responsible leadership, legal frameworks that appear to the human rights standards and great investment in

transparent and accountable institutions, are critical in achieving this gap. There seems to be an obvious need to mobilize young people worldwide and foster their ideas, build on leadership and energize them to become more proactive in demanding for solutions to global challenges. Particularly the youth of today has the chance to shape what the world will look like in 2030. Clearly the youth of today will keep leaning out for love and connectivity. The SDGs are the primary means for the United Nations to satisfy their demand; but it's also a need to ensure that women are centrally involved in all efforts aimed at SDG implementation.



Again, we should identify who is being left behind and set up the progress and inclusive strategies to reach to persons with disabilities, indigenous people and other marginalized groups. The UN General Assembly reiterated the determination for the implementation of the SDGs and the Secretary General issued a global call for a decade of action to deliver their SDGs by 2030.

We need all state stakeholders including you to step up. The United Nations remains committed to working with responsible partners on this journey.

CONFERENCE DECLARATION

PREAMBLE

Inspired and guided by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and recalling the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to development, the Journalists and Writers Foundation (JWF) in collaboration with 36 NGOs from 24 different countries organized an international conference to run alongside the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA, 2019). The UNGA Conference 2019 theme was: **Transforming Our World: Inclusive Social Development**



for All. The JWF invited practitioners from Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, Latin America, North America and all leaders associated with promoting humanity to make the world a more inclusive community.

The objectives of UNGA Conference 2019 were:

1. Create a platform to debate on UN Global Agenda 2030 to Transform Our World
2. Develop strategies and policy recommendations for Inclusive Social Development to ensure equal access to basic services for all
3. Share innovative ideas and practices for youth empowerment through inclusive and meaningful participation in achieving sustainable development
4. Ensure human rights and rule of law for social and economic development for all
5. Propose a framework for an action plan to follow-up on the outcomes of the conference and building partnerships.

The UNGA Conference 2019 referred to what the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) formally adopted four years ago as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Sustainable Development Goal #16 is to “promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.” The successful implementation of SDG Goal #16 is at the core of the activity

of the Journalists and Writers Foundation since being founded in 1994 as well as its global partners that fully support SDG Goal #16.

The organizers and partners adopted these objectives for the UNGA Conference 2019:

- **Promote social justice, human rights protection, and strengthen rule of law and democratic values that ensure social justice, equality and sustainable peace.**
- **Share common practices for policy development as well as opportunities and challenges for policy change within different judicial systems.**

TRANSFORMING OUR WORLD

Understanding transformation is very important. The JWF fraternity believes that “Significant problems of today cannot be solved with the same level of thinking which created them.” As stated by Albert Einstein (as cited by Pierli and Selvam, 2017). In addition, Sullivan Roland adds that “those that can change themselves and can lead change and transformation will be rewarded beyond imagination” (as cited by Pierli and Selvam, 2017).

Akman (2008) argues that ‘social transformation’ is an ambiguous term and concept. Therefore, right at the outset, there is a need to discuss the



terminology. Pierli and Selvam (2017) see social transformation as not simply identified with development (Castles, 2001). While social transformation and development cannot be considered univocal, social transformation is considered broader than ‘development’, particularly in cases where development term is meant to refer only to economic growth. Therefore, social transformation is a set of processes in which individuals and groups of people bring about large-scale social

change with an aim of enhancing quality of life. Pierli and Selvam (2017) conclude that in this sense, transforming our world and bringing about an inclusive society, we need to go beyond development (Castles, 2001). The expected outcome of social transformation is quality of life (Nussbaum & Sen, 1993), which is understood as the wellbeing of individuals and groups in a given society.

Indicators of quality of life include not only economic growth but also systems such as education, healthcare, political structure, environmental

care and leisure activities that safeguard the “capabilities” (Nussbaum, 2003) for the functioning of all members of a given society or a nation in order to enjoy wellbeing. In psychological terms, wellbeing (Deci & Ryan, 2008) is construed and measured in terms of subjective wellbeing that includes life satisfaction (Diener, 1984), psychological wellbeing (Ryff & Keyes, 1995), and social wellbeing (Larson, 1993). Lastly, any social problem cannot be approached from a singular point of reference e.g. education or health but looking what education should do and has not been able to do that. Perhaps, the main challenge to offering transformative education is the political structures, economic, social, deprived technology, environment, culture and the types of theologies society embraces but blind to new ongoing transformation within the structures.

Therefore, built around these few definitions on transformation, the JWF and its global partners presented and discussed the UNGA Conference 2019 theme of Transforming Our World: Inclusive Social Development for All under three panels as follows.

PANEL 1: INCLUSIVE SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN ACHIEVING THE GLOBAL GOALS 2030

The Panel 1 aimed to convene the role of inclusive social development policies and practices that help the United Nations achieve the Global Goals 2030. The panelists and participants discussed major issues concerning social inclusion and inequalities that play significant role in sustainable development and peace globally.

The panelists focused on current challenges and potential opportunities around key aspects of social integration policies and access to basic public services. The panel session on inclusive social development helped to lay the ground for the following debates.

On social integration policies that promote access to basic public services. The role of the culture of peace in social cohesion and inclusiveness was an important conclusion. To achieve this, the place of civil society participation to facilitate social development is of great importance. The discussion emphasized why bringing the rule of law and democracy into the equation could help reduce inequalities and implement social development policies.



Globalization has also posed new challenges and opportunities for nations to cope with widened inequalities among nations.

Negative effects of globalization impact vulnerable groups and societies in accessing basic resources, social services, and opportunities. It is imperative for decision makers and educational institutions to prepare the youth with the 21st century knowledge, competency skills, and abilities to address the needs of the global markets.

According to the World Summit for Social Development, inclusive society means “a society for all” that recognizes the rights and responsibilities of individuals and societies with active participation in social, economic, and political affairs at all levels. Governments have to develop a mechanism to ensure the promotion and protection of inclusive societies through striving towards the rule of law and access to justice, trust between public and private institutions, and social integration, communication, and sense of belonging among the members of the society. The principles of diversity, the culture of peace, mutual understanding, tolerance, and respect are important ingredients in building peaceful, inclusive, and resilient communities. The United Nations underlines the significance of active participation in decision-making, equal opportunity for education and employment, and access to public services for all citizens as part of the UN Agenda 2030. The promotion of these rights and responsibilities increases social and economic development whereas denial of these rights leads to conflicts and violence.

Globalization has also posed new challenges and opportunities for nations to cope with widened inequalities among nations. Negative effects of globalization impact vulnerable groups and societies in accessing basic resources, social services, and opportunities. It is imperative for decision makers and educational institutions to prepare the youth with the 21st century knowledge, competency skills, and abilities to address the needs of the global markets.

CONCLUSION

The panelists concurred that we should stop preaching but share thoughts on good service delivery with humility. Therefore, a core element in transforming the world is starting from the self before reaching out. If ONE is not transformed to get rid of prejudices, how can I transform the world?

Second, an inclusive economy, media freedom and human rights are important to **Transforming Our World: Inclusive Social Development for All**. It calls for respect for peoples’ rights to movement and migration, respect for refugees and respecting their culture and human rights. The promotion of diversity, reduction of barriers and acceptance of all people where they are helps to bring about Transformed World and Inclusive Social Development for All. Civil societies have the arduous task of eliminating all obstacles that hinder the direction towards transforming our world for inclusive social development for all, including civic education and sound communication within the receptive respective communities where refugees, migrants and internally displaced persons seek solace. Brazil, Mexico, Uganda, Kenya, Eritrea, the Sahel-Maghreb and Mediterranean regions stood out.

PANEL 2: ADVANCING YOUTH THROUGH SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

The Panel 2 session focused on current policies and practices in advancing youth through social and economic empowerment and how multi-stakeholders can work in collaboration to support youth-led initiatives and organizations.

As a fundamental right acknowledged by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the youth plays a crucial role in achieving the sustainable development through active and inclusive participation. Youth empowerment means helping young people to attain the 21st century knowledge, develop competency skills, become global citizens responsible for the people and the planet through communication, collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking.

Specific issues addressed under this sub-topic included: youth empowerment, youth participation, volunteerism, education, and girls and young women. It was pointed out that key priorities and challenges in access to quality education should be addressed.

The youth should be prepared to develop, improve life and garner entrepreneurial skills to face the rapidly evolving labor market.

It is the responsibility of the state and non-state actors to create opportunities to youth to attain necessary information, skills, and tools to become independent, responsible, and productive citizens.

Another key challenge was about helping the youth move from consultation to collaboration. The youth tend to be excluded from processes that should transform their lives. The call was to create a meaningful and sustained youth participation in the decision-making mechanisms. It was clear that the youth, as stakeholders, should play a major role in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. It means advocacy, awareness-raising, and capacity building should be taken up by civil society organizations.

The panelists agreed that the Youth represents one third (1/3) of the world population and one cannot talk about social and economic development without meaningful participation of the youth who are most affected by the outcomes of the Global Agenda 2030. The Youth has always been considered as a major human resource for sustainable development by the United Nations. Young people are agents of social change, economic growth, and social development. Consequently, youth participation in the decision-making and implementation processes is critical for sustainable development. The UN General Assembly resolution 58/133 also reiterates

the “importance of the full and effective participation of youth and youth organizations at the local, national, regional and international levels in promoting and implementing the World Programme of Action and in evaluating the progress achieved and the obstacles encountered in its implementation.”

For youth to potentially contribute to the UN Agenda 2030 for sustainable development, we should aim for the SDG Goal #4, which aims to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.” Inclusive and accessible quality education plays a crucial role in empowering youth who will transform our world with innovative and creative ideas in the 21st century.

All stakeholders, especially the public and private sector, should recognize the significance of quality education in youth empowerment. However, the panelists recognized a gap between the policies and the practices when it comes to the implementation of sustainable development goals. Public funds and investment in the education of youth are not sufficient for successful outcomes. Recalling Jayathma Wickramanayake, UN Secretary-General’s Envoy on Youth repeatedly underlined the importance of meaningful youth participation across the UN Development Agenda.

The 2019 ECOSOC Youth Forum addressed the challenges,

potentials, and need of the youth populations around three major themes ‘Empowerment, Inclusion, and Equality’ for meaningful youth participation. The most pressing challenges faced by the youth globally are identified as unemployment, poverty, and illiteracy. The UNGA Conference 2019 aimed at following up on the same agenda to address the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goal #4 on Quality Education, Goal #8 on Decent Work and Economic Growth, and Goal #10 on Reduced Inequalities, and Goal #16 Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions.

PANEL 3: PROTECTION OF SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

The Panel 3 session deliberated on the commitment to protection of human rights and access of social services to leave no one behind. The speakers offered multiple perspectives and practices on how human rights could reduce inequalities, eliminate the causes of poverty, and prevent internal and global conflicts. This session highlighted how realization of economic, social and cultural rights plays an integral role in sustainable peace and conflict prevention.

Specific issues, which came out of the panel discussion, were about the promotion of cultural rights in building peaceful societies. Creating a human rights-based approach to the UN Development Agenda. Being aware of the violation of human rights leading to social unrest, there were



countries identified where violation of human rights is rampant. It meant Country-based Analysis mechanism on abuse and violation of human rights should feature in upcoming policies for Transforming Our World: Inclusive Social Development for All. Early warning mechanisms of human rights to prevent conflicts should be picked early enough and support reduction of inequalities in access of social services, challenge lack of democratic space of an active civil society and lack of media freedom.

To this end, the UNGA Conference 2019 participants join the international community in ensuring that Transforming Our World: Inclusive Social Development for All is a concerted effort by all global citizens, people who strive for the highest call to universal values reflected in different UN Charters. The participants who attended the UNGA Conference 2019 have arrived at the following resolutions.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS AND DECLARATIONS

Based on these discussions from the guest speakers, panelists, conference participants representing all continents and JWF and its global partners, these are key resolutions.

1. Observing Human Rights. According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), fundamental human rights, human dignity, equal rights should be part of policy development.

- The fundamental human rights, human dignity, equal rights should be part of policy development promoted and protected by all UN Member States as the foundation of freedom, justice, and peace in the world.
- Respect to human rights, human dignity, and equal rights of women and men promote social development and prosperous life for all regardless of diverse backgrounds.

We, as the participants of the UNGA Conference 2019, declare that by all people, stakeholders, all the UN affiliated states, should live and uphold the above UDHR principles and slowly but steadfastly move towards Transforming Our World for Inclusive Social Development for All.

2. Ensure Equality and reduce inequality. It is a mutual responsibility for individuals and societies to ensure equality (parity).

- Reduce inequality (disparity) in the enjoyment of fundamental rights.
- Freedoms, and opportunities for education, employment, healthcare, and other resources for all for sustainable peace and development, should give purpose for Transforming Our World for Inclusive Social Development for All.

We, as the participants of the UNGA Conference 2019, call for the international community to ensure equality and work towards transforming all conditions that promote inequality. In doing this, the international community will Transform Our World for an Inclusive Social Development for All.

3. Improved Public Policies for protection of individual well-being. Public policies have to protect equality, equity and social justice by ensuring rule of law and access to justice, improving access to public services.

- Providing equal opportunities for employment, establishing cooperatives and private institutions, ensuring easy access to healthcare.
- Enhancing access to quality education for boys and girls equally, especially in every country and communities that host migrants/ refugees and those unjustly imprisoned.

We, the participants of the UNGA Conference 2019, declare that all people should work towards improved public policies that work towards the protection of individual wellbeing. In doing this, we shall be moving towards Transforming Our World for Inclusive Social Development for All.

4. Rule of law affects the world. We are aware that migration is tough. Transforming local communities to embrace migrants is difficult.

It calls for changing the way people think and helping them to think outside the box.

- The international community called to put hands together and make a change. Many strategies could be developed e.g. using sports.
- Sports captivate and develop people. Sports bring people together.

We, as the participants of the UNGA Conference 2019, declare that rule of law is the entry to transforming our world. Minorities and migrants need protection and support to find a new life in a new country.

5. Mentorship and nurturing social transformers is necessary. The youth are calling for “drop the phone and pick a friend.” Young people need to find mentors. However, older people too need to find young mentors.

We, as the participants of the UNGA Conference 2019, declare that to bring about a transformed inclusive world, mentorship to nurture social transformers should be part of the UNGA agenda of Transforming Our World for Inclusive Social Development for All.

6. Collaboration with governments to bring change and transformation.

- Transformation, inclusion means empathy. The JWF and its global partners organized the conference because people whose lives are affected by others affect us.
- We hold hands and transform the world together. However, our collaboration with existing governments is of paramount importance. Economic challenges and economic run down, poor governance, all call for efforts to move globally together.
- The JWF and its global partners call for finding mechanisms and strategies of working closely with host nations.

7. Interreligious dialogue among communities. Tolerance is key, respecting different traditions and knowledge for each of them.

- Solidarity and compassion are values that help to reach out to the 70 million global refugees. Protection and assistance to refugees.
- The government policy is to help all people even refugees. Recognition of stateless persons since 2016 is globally accepted resolution.

We, as the participants of the UNGA Conference 2019, call for an inclusive international community through interreligious dialogue in transforming Our World and enhancing an inclusive Social Development for All.

NOTE:

This Declaration of the UNGA Conference 2019 is compiled by Dr. Reginald Maudlin Nalugala, Tangaza University, Nairobi. The declaration aims to serve as recommendations by scholars, practitioners, and experts for policy change and actions to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

