



Advocacy and Action at the UN AND at home

Soroptimist International of Great Britain and Ireland Conference 2019
Beverly Bucur, SI Director of Advocacy

Today I would like to speak briefly about the big issues at High Level Political Forum (HLPF) and the General Assembly (GA) and the wins for women and girls from the 2019 General Assembly.



What are the Big Issues?

Two important meetings were recently held at the UN in New York:

High Level Political Forum (HLPF) a meeting open to all member states to review progress on the Sustainable Development Goals

The United Nations General Assembly (GA)

A meeting where all [193 Member States](#) of the organization come together to discuss and work together on a wide array of international issues covered by the [Charter of the United Nations](#).

This summer and early fall our UN representatives in New York were busy with 2 major meetings:

High Level Political Forum or HLPF

What is HLPF?

The United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) is a subsidiary body of both

the [United Nations General Assembly](#) and the [United Nations Economic and Social Council](#) responsible for the entire organization's policy on [sustainable development](#). It adopts negotiated declarations, reviews commitment and the progress of the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#). The Forum replaced the [Commission on Sustainable Development](#) on the 24 September 2013

[1] Meetings of the Forum are open to all Member States of the United Nations. Specific SDGs are chosen as the focus of the meeting, though reporting countries are expected to report on all SDGs in their report.

What is the General Assembly?

THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL
ASSEMBLY (GA)

A MEETING WHERE ALL [193 MEMBER STATES](#) OF THE ORGANIZATION COME TOGETHER TO DISCUSS AND WORK TOGETHER ON A WIDE ARRAY OF INTERNATIONAL ISSUES COVERED BY THE [CHARTER OF THE UNITED NATIONS](#).

High Level Political Forum 2019

**51 Countries
Participated in
Voluntary
National
Reviews**



“Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality”

The following Sustainable Development Goals were reviewed:

**Goal 4: Quality Education
Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth
Goal 10: Reduced Inequalities
Goal 13: Climate Action
Goal 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
Goal 17: Partnerships for the Goals**

The 2019 high-level political forum under the took place from 9–18 July 2019 under the theme “Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality”. The following Sustainable Development Goals were reviewed:

Goal 4: Quality Education

Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth

Goal 10: Reduced Inequalities

Goal 13: Climate Action

Goal 16: Peace, Justice and Strong
Institutions

Goal 17: Partnerships for the Goals

This year, 51 States submitted Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs), including several countries with indigenous peoples.

<https://www.un.org/development/desa/in-digenouspeoples/focus-areas/post-2015-agenda/the-sustainable-development-goals-sdgs-and-indigenous/high-level-political-forum-on-sustainable-development/hlpf-2019.html>

Our UN reps were very disappointed by

the members states lack of will to support and ensure that the 2030 agenda is accomplished. We are currently not on track to achieve any of the SDG targets.

Read HLPF blog here:

<https://www.soroptimistinternational.org/?s=bette+Levy>

United Nations General Assembly

- September 23 Climate Action Summit
- Climate Action Week



The UN Takes Climate Action

- Women as agents of change
- Clean Energy and Green Jobs
- Early Warning Systems and Disaster Risk Management
- Education is key!

"We must change course by 2020 or we miss the point where we can avoid disastrous consequences for people and the natural systems that sustain us."

UN Secretary General. Antonio Guterres
consequences

Climate change is here and is the biggest challenge we face today. We are in a fight for our survival and there is a need for immediate action. The entire world participated in marches and strikes to protest the lack of action on the part of governments during Climate Action Week and on September 23, 2019 the Climate Action Summit was held.

1. Women as agents of change:

At the Summit the UN Secretary-General singled out women's leadership for their unique ability as "drivers of solutions" when they are empowered. In rural and developing countries, women play a significant role in supporting their households, as care-takers, providers of food, and income generators for the family.

2. Clean Energy and Green Jobs:

UN Secretary-General António Guterres called on all leaders to embrace the Paris Accord and to work on new solutions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 45

per cent over the next decade, and to net zero emissions by 2050. Technology is present Accelerated climate solutions can strengthen our economies and create jobs, while bringing cleaner air, preserving natural habitats and biodiversity, and protecting our environment.

Moving away from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources will provide new green jobs. According to an International Labor Organization (ILO) ILO report, 24 million new jobs will be created globally by 2030, provided sustainable practices are adopted and implemented. Doing so will also enable millions of people to overcome poverty and enjoy improved livelihoods.

3. Disasters, Early Warning Systems and Disaster Risk Management

A primary premise of the Paris Agreement is consensus on the need to strengthen the resilience to climate impacts, focusing on the poorest and most vulnerable.

Poorer communities, particularly rural areas in developing countries, are less equipped to deal with increasing natural disasters; livelihoods are lost in already fragile economies, forcing people to leave their homes and, at times, sparking conflict over land and food sources.

Early warning systems are adaptive measures for climate change, using integrated communication systems to help communities prepare for hazardous

climate-related events. A successful EWS saves lives, jobs, land and infrastructures, and supports long-term sustainability. Early warning systems assist public officials and administrators in their planning, saving money in the long run and protecting economies.

4. Education is key to addressing climate change

Education is a critical agent in addressing the issue of climate change. The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) assigns responsibility to Parties of the Convention (States) to undertake educational and public awareness campaigns on climate change, and to ensure public participation in

programmes and information access on
the issue.

September 23, 2019 UN General Assembly Universal Health Coverage Approved

MOVING TOGETHER TO BUILD A HEALTHIER WORLD

A Reality by 2030?



World leaders approved a political declaration on Universal Health Coverage that had been previously negotiated and that is the most comprehensive agreement ever reached on human health. In it, they reaffirmed the right of every human being, without distinctions of any kind, to have access to the highest standard attainable of mental and physical health services.

- Preventative Care
- Robust Primary Care
- Investment in Infrastructure, technology and research
- Cures for Diseases like Aids, Tuberculosis



Getty Images



Slide 5 Universal Health Coverage Declaration was approved on 23 September.

World leaders approved a political declaration on Universal Health Coverage that had been previously been negotiated, that is the most comprehensive agreement ever reached on human health. In it, they

reaffirmed the right of every human being, without distinctions of any kind, to have access to the highest standard attainable of mental and physical health services.

This is a major win for us all. Now we need to convince our governments to sign this declaration and implement it.

Read the Declaration here:

<https://www.un.org/pga/73/wp-content/uploads/sites/53/2019/07/FINAL-draft-UHC-Political-Declaration.pdf>

September 24-25, 2019 UN General Assembly SDG Summit

ACTION:



Heads of State and Government gathered at the United Nations Headquarters in New York comprehensively review progress in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals

Adoption of a Political Declaration
<https://undocs.org/en/A/HLPF/2019/1.1>

More than 100 Acceleration Actions
Announced
<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgsummit>

This is the 4th year into the implementation of the SDGs. On 24 and 25 September 2019, Heads of State and Government gathered at the United Nations Headquarters in New York to follow up and comprehensively review progress in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 Sustainable Development

Goals (SDGs). The event was the first UN summit on the SDGs since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda in September 2015.

The SDG Summit resulted in the adoption of the [Political Declaration](#), “Gearing up for a decade of action and delivery for sustainable development”.

Read the Declaration Here:

<https://undocs.org/en/A/HLPF/2019/I.1>

In the declaration world leaders called for a decade of action to deliver the SDGs by 2030 and announced actions they are taking to advance the agenda. More than 100 [acceleration actions](#) were announced.

“SDG Acceleration Actions” are initiatives

voluntarily undertaken by countries and other stakeholders to contribute to a speeded up implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Such acceleration actions can be registered by national Governments, local and regional governments, the United Nations system, other intergovernmental organizations, international and regional financial institutions, major groups and other stakeholders including the private sector, civil society organizations, academic and research institutions, the scientific community, and other actors - individually or in partnership. Soroptimists can submit Acceleration Action.

Accelerator Actions:

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgs/summit#acceleration-actions>

More about the SDG Summit:

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgs/summit>

September 27, 2019 UN General Assembly International Labor Organization

Call at the UN for the Ratification of the ILO Convention to End Violence and Harassment in the Workplace



UN Communications Dept. Photo

- The ILO Convention on Violence and Harassment in the Workplace was adopted during the annual International Labor Conference in held in Geneva, June 2019
- First Legal legal instrument to tackle violence and harassment in the world of work
- negotiated between governments, workers and employers
- work should be free from violence and harassment
- harassment may extend beyond the physical workplace because of technology
- discrimination of women and vulnerable populations not tolerated
- multifaceted approach needed:
 - equal representation in the workplace
 - awareness raising as well as
 - changing the laws based on the Convention

Call for the Ratification of the ILO Convention to End Violence and Harassment in the Workplace

September 26, 2019, UN General Assembly. Representatives of governments, workers, employers, foundations, civil society and other stakeholders gathered together at the United Nations General Assembly at a

high-level breakfast meeting, to urge member States to ratify the [ILO Convention on Violence and Harassment in the World of Work \(No. 190\)](#).

The ILO Convention on Violence and Harassment in the Workplace was adopted during the annual International Labor Conference in held in Geneva, June 2019. It also confirms that harassment may extend beyond the physical workplace because of technology.

First legal instrument to tackle violence and harassment in the world of work

negotiated between governments, workers and employers

Key Points

The future of work should be free from violence and harassment. While the Convention was negotiated between governments, workers and employers, like all ILO Conventions

There is a gendered aspect of violence and harassment, noting that any discrimination of women would not be tolerated

Addressing violence and harassment at work had to be based on a multifaceted approach, including more equal representation in the workplace, awareness raising as well as changing the laws based on the Convention.

Read Berthe de Vos blog here:

<https://www.soroptimistinternational.org/100-years-of-the-un-international-labour-organisation/>

https://www.ilo.org/newyork/news/WCMS_721593/lang--en/index.htm

https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_711891/lang--en/index.htm

https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_709686/lang--en/index.htm



What Can We Do?

Advocacy and Action

- Know the issues in your own community and educate the community about these issues
- Contact your local political leaders and ask them to support important issues
- Encourage National Leaders to support UN Conventions and legislation around issues
- Use Social Media to create awareness in the larger world
- Join forces with other community groups
- Club projects

Remember to report your club projects!



Soroptimist International Resources

Website: www.soroptimistinternational.org

- [Where We Stand Statements](#)
- [Recommended Reading Section](#)
- [Members Section](#)
- [News from the SI UN Representatives](#)
- [Sign-up for the Global Voice for current news](#)

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Website:

www.soroptimistinternational.org

Where We Stand Statements

Recommended Reading

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