

## IASSW TEAM AT THE UNITED NATIONS FALL 2023 NEWSLETTER



### SDG Action Weekend

In September 2023, the United Nations Secretary General hosted an SDG Action weekend for UN agencies, member states, and stakeholders to discuss the SDGs, their current implementation, and commitments to reach them. From the IASSW team, Dr. Lynne Healy, Main Representative (University of Connecticut-retired), and IASSW's two interns, Diana Dupuy-Faustin and Lorena Martínez (University of Connecticut) were in attendance.

### SDG Summit Reviews Grim News on Progress at the Midpoint

*Dr. Lynne Healy*

With considerable fanfare, the Sustainable Development Goals were launched in 2015. They promised progress toward poverty elimination, reduced inequality, environmental improvements, decent work, and more by 2030. Results in the first few years showed some promise but at the midpoint, the situation appears grim. The United Nations held the SDG Summit in September as part of the UN General Assembly session. It was preceded by an action weekend, open to NGO representatives as well as governments. Several members of the IASSW team participated in the September weekend.

The reality at the midpoint of 2023 is sobering and provided the context for the weekend events and the summit. Only 15%

of the SDG targets are on track; 37% show stagnation or even regression. Therefore, the conclusion reported in the *Sustainable Development Report 2023* is that the promise of the SDGs will not be met. The human costs are huge and include the following:

- 575 million people will remain in extreme poverty in 2030
- Only 33% of children in Sub-Saharan Africa will complete primary school
- Gender equality will take 300 years to achieve
- 54 countries will not meet the target for reducing Under5 mortality
- Maternal mortality will remain high with almost no improvement to date since 2015

The UN concludes that intense efforts by governments and local practitioners are needed. Although political will remains key, local action is also important. Social work educators can contribute in a number of ways. Consider strengthening the links between field internship sites and projects and one or more of the SDGs. Research on effective social interventions is needed. Social workers are well positioned to identify “those most likely to be left behind”; the 2030 Agenda promised to reach them and give priority to the needs of those most vulnerable.

You can also advocate for action by your government. To see what your country is reporting, view its most recent Voluntary National Review. You can find it at:

<https://hlpf.un.org/countries>

For more on the SDG Summit, see:

<https://www.un.org/en/conferences/SDGSu mmit2023>

View the Sustainable Development Report at:

<https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2023/>

If you or your school of social work are engaged in work related to the SDGs, please write to IASSW Main Representative Lynne Healy at: [lynne.healy@uconn.edu](mailto:lynne.healy@uconn.edu) The information would assist with our reports to the UN.

### Report on the SDG Action Weekend

Lorena  
Martínez

Sustainable Development Goals Action Weekend took place over September 16-17<sup>th</sup> at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.



It was a lively weekend filled with civil servants, speakers, artists, and changemakers from all over the world! Secretary General, Antonio Guterres was present and spoke of the need for all countries worldwide to make the SDGs a priority. At this point in time, he stated, only 12% of the SDGs are on track to being met by 2030. Numerous world events, such as COVID-19 pandemic, wars, extremism, and climate change among other causes have impacted the achievement of SDGs worldwide.

On September 16<sup>th</sup>, one of the many forums called, Local & Regional Governments Forum: "Action and Leadership from the Ground Up: Towards the Rescue Plan for People and the Planet" consisted of mayors convening from all over the world to discuss how they were advancing or suggesting advancing the SDGs in their countries. Mayors from Montevideo,

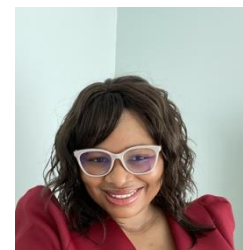
Uruguay, New York, New York, Konya, Turkey, Lampedusa, Italy, Dublin, Ireland, Rabat, Morocco, Bogotá, Colombia, Buenos Aires, Argentina, among many others were present. Topics included environmental solutions in urban areas, advancing gender equity within politics, partnerships to improve issues such as migration, among others. It was fascinating and stimulating to hear how SDGs can be applied in practice, especially among some of the most populated and bustling metropolises in the world. The second event attended on September 16<sup>th</sup> "Youth and Adolescent Girls Driving the 2030 Agenda: Building Collective Power, Securing Sustainable Funding, and Demanding Accountability" consisted of women from Asia who discussed the work they conduct on the ground to advance girls' rights. One young woman from India discussed the way she advocated for girls, particularly those who live in extreme poverty, and are subject to child marriage, sexual violence, and gender discrimination. It was a very busy and notable weekend, to say the least!



### Introducing IASSW Interns

#### Diana Dupuy Faustin

IASSW is pleased to have Diana Dupuy-Faustin as a graduate student intern with the IASSW Team of Representatives at the United Nations for the academic year 2023-2024. Diana is a social work student with a concentration in policy practice. Diana graduated with a bachelor's degree in Psychology and French with a minor in Spanish from UCONN. Her first master's



degree is in Healthcare Administration from the University of New Haven. She currently works for Stamford Health in Stamford, CT as a Community Health Worker for the Haitian community. Prior to this, she was a program manager for Abilis, which is an organization working with individuals with disabilities (i.e., autism, intellectual disability, cerebral palsy). Her other work experience includes case manager for St. Vincent's Medical Center in Bridgeport, CT for almost 5 years. She is the founder of Kanpe Tabou Sante Mantal, which translates to Stopping Mental Health Taboo in Haitian Creole. Kanpe Tabou Sante Mantal is to 1) educate Haitians living in Haiti and abroad about mental health and 2) provide mental health support for Haitians living in Haiti and abroad when needed via WhatsApp and/or zoom by speaking with a member of our team. As a Haitian American, Diana's goal is to always to give back to the Haitian people. She hopes to learn plenty on what the IASSW is doing at the UN and is thankful for representing IASSW at the UN.

### **Lorena Martínez**

Lorena Martínez is a social work student at the University of Connecticut, focusing on policy practice and a focused area of study in International Social Work. She has a Bachelor of Arts in International Affairs, with a dual concentration in Latin American Studies and International Development, and a minor in Sociocultural Anthropology from The George Washington University. She has spent the last decade working with NGOs and nonprofits who work closely with marginalized and vulnerable populations, mainly those from Latin America and the Caribbean, to access health and education. She is excited to intern for the IASSW, learn



from its members, broaden her knowledge of social work in an international environment, and work with colleagues from all walks of life, disciplines, and the world.

### **How familiar are you with “social protection”?**

*Lorena Martínez*



Image from [socialprotection.org](http://socialprotection.org)

What comes to mind when you hear or read the words “social protection”?

I became familiar with social protection at an internship at the Organization of American States in Washington, D.C., slightly, over a decade ago. As a senior in college interested in international development, I found the concept fascinating and quite complex. Ideally, social protection is how our society could ensure the wellbeing of individuals.

Despite my working within the humanitarian and global health space, social protection went on the back burner, until I found myself in multiple meetings at the United Nations (UN) where the topic has resurged to the forefront of my brain. I have found social protection to be in a variety of settings, whether it is explicitly discussed, a tool to support the advancement of the Sustainable Development Goals, or a subtheme as part of the 68th Non-governmental Organization Committee of the Status of Women Forum.

With an insatiable curious mind, I have gone off the deep end researching social protection. If you yourself are interested, [SocialProtection.org](http://SocialProtection.org) offers podcasts and recorded events on social protection and you can find several professionals on LinkedIn

working in diverse spheres and organizations worldwide dedicated to researching, providing evidence, and promoting social protection as an essential tool to support individuals in marginalized and vulnerable circumstances in both industrialized and developing countries.

If you are still wondering what the exact definition of social protection is, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) provides a comprehensive definition. The ILO states: social protection is “a set of policies and programmes designed to reduce and prevent poverty and vulnerability during our lives.” The ILO emphasizes that universal social protection is “key to achieving several of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Without it, we cannot eradicate poverty, reduce inequalities, or achieve gender equality.” If all countries adopted or improved their policies and programs related to social protection this would mean all individuals and communities worldwide would have access to child and family benefits, maternity protection, unemployment benefits, employment injury benefits, sickness benefits, health protection, old-age pensions, disability pension, and survivors’ pensions (International Labour Organisation). Individuals, regardless of working in the formal or informal sector would have access to these benefits. Unfortunately, there are large gaps to achieving social protection worldwide.

Between September to present day, at the UN, UNICEF has hosted “International Seminar on Social Protection, Care, and Support towards inclusive and sustainable systems in Latin America and the Caribbean”, United Nations University World Institute for Development Economics Research Presentation presented a conference: “Towards peace, decent work, and greater equality: Research evidence on transforming economies, states, and societies”, and UN Women sponsored

“Women’s Peace and Humanitarian Fund: A UN and Civil Society Partnership”, the ILO hosted “Special session on Measuring Social Justice.” In October, the *Handbook on Social Protection and Social Development in the Global South* was launched. SocialProtection.org podcast has topics, such as “Social Protection and its Impact” and “Social Protection, sustainability, and fisheries.”

Attending the aforementioned meetings and listening in on webinars and podcasts, I have found that social workers are an essential asset to promote social protection policies among our native countries and possibly influence policies abroad. Social workers are key to working with other disciplines, such as statisticians, economists, and politicians among others given the social worker’s power and ability to bring the voices of those who are marginalized and vulnerable to be heard.

A consistent message I have heard from the many meetings attended and audios heard is the need to center and build policy with and around those who it is meant to be designed for. Social Protection can have incredible impact if governments, local communities, constituents, civil society organizations, and international organizations work together. The confluence of these multiple entities could mean that women who are risking their lives to ensure their undeniable rights, have social security to fall back on when they are threatened and ousted by their governments, and yet have a means to support themselves and their loved ones. This could mean an increase in available data by national statistics offices on those who are living in difficult circumstances and therefore, lawmakers creating and/or improving policies that are reflective of the needs of, for example, elderly individuals and those with disabilities. This could mean that those in the informal sector have social security to fall

back on in case of another future pandemic, and therefore, will not lead to dire circumstances, such as having children abandon school to work and provide for their families or recidivism in education.

Social protection is absolutely a way forward to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, and ultimately, improve the lives of billions of people on this planet.

If you are interested on learning more about social protection, here are a couple of resources:

<https://socialprotection.org/> has publications, podcasts, and recordings.

Recent publication: [Handbook on Social Protection and Social Development in the Global South](#)

### **Migration: Does it lead to freedom or is freedom an illusion of hope?**

*Diana Dupuy-Faustin*

Migration is the process involving individuals traveling either by air, land, or sea. Individuals and/or families migrate for different reasons, including climate change, poverty, hunger, violence, and political unrest in their own country. People who migrate legally may experience challenges of adapting to another country, such as language, different tradition, and culture, and availability of services for immigrants. However, people who migrate by foot from one country to another may face the above-mentioned challenges but may also face their human rights challenged. Pia Riggiozzi spoke at the November NGO Committee on Migration and is a professor of Global Politics at the University of Southampton at the United Kingdom, focuses her work on Venezuelans fleeing their country to go to Brazil. She reports that 8 million Venezuelans are displaced and half of them are women and children. Although Brazil put

into place a humanitarian program to welcome Venezuelan, the measures taken, however, are so securitized that it really puts into question the validity and reliability of the program. Pia et al (2023) mentioned in her article, *Securitisation, humanitarian responses, and the erosion of everyday rights of displaced Venezuelan women in Brazil*, that “framing migration and mass displacement as a “security crisis” begs the question of “crisis for whom.” As Venezuelans are moving into Brazil, they settled into Boa Vista and Manaus, which resulted in many shelters being created there. Those shelters are controlled and supervised by the army. The effects of that as Pia et al (2023) reported is the de-humanization and the loss of dignity and respect that these women and girls feel as they are supervised by the army, who are mostly men. These women and girls do not have privacy, they are called “prostitutes”, and women with children must wake up at 5 am to get breakfast and have curfews to return to the shelters. If they miss their curfews, they are given warnings and face evictions. Even though Brazil passed the Migration Law 13445 in 2017, which included Operation Welcome, people’s view and acceptance began shifting as the numbers of immigrants increase. Therefore, does migration really lead to freedom or is freedom an illusion for hope?

IASSW is represented on this committee by team members Marciana Popescu and Rebecca Thomas and by interns, Diana Dupuy-Faustin and Lorena Martínez.

For more information:

Riggiozzi, P., Cintra, N., Grugel, J., Garcia, G.G., Lamy, Z.C., (2023, February 27). Securitisation, humanitarian responses, and the erosion of everyday rights of displaced Venezuelan women in Brazil. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 49(15), 37755-3773.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2023.2191160>

## Take Action: Support Afghan Women, Girls, and Refugees: Sign the Petition

[https://act.amnestyusa.org/page/127553/petition/1?\\_gl=1\\*1qopcwx\\*\\_gcl\\_au\\*MTUyNjM4NjUwMi4xNzAwMTQ0NzEz](https://act.amnestyusa.org/page/127553/petition/1?_gl=1*1qopcwx*_gcl_au*MTUyNjM4NjUwMi4xNzAwMTQ0NzEz)

NGO Committee on Migration [Report of a Survey on Migrant and Refugee Victims of Xenophobia, Racism and Intolerance in the Context of the Coronavirus Pandemic](#)

NGO Committee on Migration [four-pager, entitled Priorities and Practices for Solutions in the SDGs, the Global Compact for Migration, and the International Migration Review Forum in 2022 and Beyond.](#)

## 11 Days of Action Summary

Rebecca Davis

IASSW Cosponsored Day #4 of the 11 Days of Action leading up to the [United Nations International Day of the Girl Child on October 11, 2023](#), in support of GIRLS –

*Girls Rights and Girl Power.* The [11 Days of Action](#) is organized annually by the UN ECOSOC-affiliated Working Group on Girls of which IASSW is a member organization. The 11 Days of Action was organized by member organizations to promote Girls' Rights through social media campaigns on Instagram, X (Twitter), & Facebook. Day #4's theme was: *Investing in girls' rights to live a life free of violence.* Collaborating with S.H.E. Collaborative, Inc. and the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese, IASSW messaged with posters and girls' personal narratives about living a life without violence by promoting safe spaces for girls in education and institutions of learning, promoting access to mental health services

for all girls, and amplifying girls' messages in their local communities.



**IDG 2023**  
INVEST IN GIRLS' RIGHTS: OUR LEADERSHIP AND WELLBEING

DAY-GIRL

11 DAYS OF ACTION THEMES

The Working Group on Girls

- OCT 1: INVESTING IN GIRLS' TO ACCESS COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH CARE
- OCT 2: INVESTING IN GIRLS' WELL-BEING
- OCT 3: INVESTING IN GIRLS
- OCT 4: INVESTING IN GIRLS' RIGHT TO LIVE A LIFE FREE OF VIOLENCE
- OCT 5: INVESTING IN GIRLS' RIGHT TO A CLEAN AND HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT
- OCT 6: INVESTING IN GIRLS' ACCESS TO MENTORSHIP
- OCT 7: INVESTING IN GIRLS' LEADERSHIP AND POWER
- OCT 8: INVESTING IN GIRLS' RIGHT TO QUALITY EDUCATION
- OCT 9: INVESTING IN GIRLS' RIGHT TO WATER, SANITATION, AND MENSTRUAL HEALTH
- OCT 10: INVESTING IN GIRLS' RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE IN DECISION MAKING
- OCT 11: INVESTING IN GIRLS' LEADERSHIP AND WELL-BEING

## Preparing for UN Summits: News from the NGO Committee for Social Development

Lynne Healy

Having just experienced the SDG Summit in September 2023, the United Nations is planning a “Summit of the Future” for 2024 and the World Social Summit in 2025. The 2025 session is an important global 30 year follow up to the Copenhagen Summit for Social Development held in 1995. The landmark 1995 event identified poverty eradication, full employment, and social integration/inclusion as the 3 pillars of development and made 10 global commitments. The global social work organizations, especially the International Council on Social Welfare, were very active in preparations for the first Social Development summit. Watch for ways to engage in the 2025 event.

In the meantime, the NGO Committee for Social Development is preparing for the 62<sup>nd</sup> session of the Commission for Social Development to be held in February. The



[www.iassw-aiets.org](http://www.iassw-aiets.org)

International Association of Schools of Social Work  
Association Internationale des Ecoles de Travail Social  
Asociación Internacional de Escuelas de Trabajo Social  
国际社会工作教育联盟  
国際ソーシャルワーク学校連盟

group will be sponsoring a full day Civil Society Forum on Friday February 9, plus several side events on the priority theme. This year's theme is: "Fostering social development and social justice through social policies to accelerate progress on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to achieve the overarching goal of poverty eradication." Team member Lynne Healy and intern Lorena Martinez have written a policy statement for IASSW that we hope will be

part of the session record. If accepted, it will be posted on the IASSW website.

For more information, see:

<https://social.desa.un.org/csocd/62nd>