

IASSW TEAM AT THE UNITED NATIONS SPRING 2024 NEWSLETTER

UN and IASSW Focus on Social Development in February

Dr. Lynne Healy

The focus of the UN in February is on the annual meeting of the Commission for Social Development. This issue of our newsletter will highlight IASSW activities for and during the Commission. The Commission almost always has a broad theme. This year was no exception. The theme of the 62nd session was: **“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.”**

The many topics embedded in the theme are central to the concerns of IASSW and the social work profession. Your UN team was active throughout the process, contributing alone and in coalitions with other NGOs through the NGO Committee for Social Development and the NGO Committee on Migration. IASSW co-sponsored several side events at the Commission meeting; these are described in this newsletter. We also submitted an IASSW policy statement to the Commission; it was accepted and posted as part of the official record of the 62nd session. In the statement, we pointed out the coherence between our association’s values and Global Agenda and the UN’s 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals, especially the goals chosen as highlights for the 62nd session: SDG1 (eliminating poverty), SDG10 (reducing inequality), and SDG 17 (expanding partnerships). We also noted our long involvement in the UN having held consultative status since 1947.

We made the following recommendations to the 62nd Session:

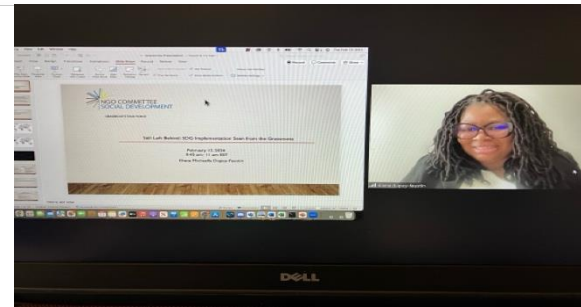
- More partnerships between governments and civil society organizations, including those active at the grassroots level, to identify and engage those most vulnerable and most likely to be left behind.
- A commitment to participation in policy design by those affected.
- Redoubling the attention to reduction of inequality and poverty eradication
- Strengthen attention to social integration in the design of social policies.
- Ensure attention to the needs of migrants and refugees as one of the most vulnerable groups.
- Build on the lessons from the Covid-19 pandemic to strengthen social policies to achieve the SDGs.

You can read the entire statement at:

<https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n23/358/43/pdf/n2335843.pdf?token=AOeDnX0Mcaw8HYn1Rc&fe=true>

You can watch the official presentations and panels of the Commission at:

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



NGO Committee Social Development Grassroots Task Force Side Event

Still Left Behind: SDG Implementation Seen from the Grassroots

Side Event - February 13, 2024

Dr. Lynne Healy

“Leave no one behind” was the promise of the United Nations 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. Progress to date shows that this remains a promise not kept. IASSW, working with the Grassroots Subcommittee of the NGO Committee for Social development, sponsored a virtual side event on February 13, 2024: “Still Left Behind: SDG Implementation Seen from the Grassroots.” It brought together voices from 31 countries across the globe giving their views on the progress made toward meeting the SDGs and the message that respondents would like to give to the UN and governments. These inputs were gathered in a survey conducted by the Subcommittee in advance of the 2023 SDG summit.

Diana Dupuy-Faustin, IASSW intern, presented a summary of the written survey responses, in which she showed the parallels between developed and developing countries on some issues. Whether in the UK or in Mozambique there was a cry to address the housing shortage. Both Indonesia and the USA are struggling to face the climate crisis. Lack of educational opportunities affects children in both India and Chad. A cry for gender equality was heard with great passion from Burkina Faso.

The session then featured 3 short videos from those collected. One was from two young women in India, Aanshi and Shally, both alumnae of the Life Project 4 Youth training program. They talked about women's rights in their daily lives and the place of women in their community. Shally shared her story, explaining how her boyish look is one way to try to have the same opportunities as men. Two young people from Colombia spoke to the need for jobs and education for youth and noted that the country had many half-done essential infrastructure projects waiting to be completed. In the third video from Zambia, the speaker gave us insight into what needs to be done to achieve the first six SDGs in her rural village. She noted, in particular, the need for better access to education.

Two panelists, Richard Quadros, from India, and Maryann Broxton, from ATD 4th World in the United States, then brought their perspective on the SDGs and people left behind. Richard reminded us of the core definition of sustainable development as development which does not compromise future generations or the environment. Maryann spoke about extreme inequality

across countries, including the rich United States. She made an excellent point about how, under Covid, the government found the funding to meet many needs but lacked the political will to continue this when the crisis ended.

Lynne Healy provided summary comments before Moderator Barbara Bozak concluded the session, underscoring the importance of hearing from and listening to people at the grassroots.

It is exciting that our side event was one of those chosen to be featured by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) as a follow-up to the Commission meeting. The side event can be viewed at:

<https://social.desa.un.org/sdn/still-left-behind-sdg-implementation>

(Note: this article is an edited version of a report to DESA written by Barbara Bozak).

ECOSOC Partnership Forum



Partnership: its role in achieving the SDGs? what does it mean? How to achieve it?

Diana Dupuy-Faustin

The role of partnership is important in achieving the SDGs. I attended the Economic and Social Council Partnership Forum in February as the representative of the IASSW. Speakers emphasized the importance of partnerships among stakeholders. The representative from Suriname stated that “Public-private partnerships ensure safe, secure transformation for all.” As different representatives from several from countries and non-governmental organizations gathered in the ECOSOC chamber to discuss partnerships, many described their strengths and weaknesses and called for the crucial need for partnerships.

Denmark reported that member states cannot drive the transformation alone. The process is experiencing a financing gap of \$3.9 trillion each year. Denmark recognizes that inclusivity matters, and global, regional, and local partnerships are important. Slovenia, on the other hand, aligns with policy recommendations of stakeholders. Fighting poverty is at the core for Slovenia. It is a member of the Green Group and it values partnerships with academia, research, and science. Its concern is with the rise of global food insecurity.

One of Colombia’s goals is to eradicate poverty. To do so, they wanted collective access to means of production and public-private alliances in rural areas. Malta had a \$300 billion project towards infrastructure, and they strongly emphasize the need for partnerships with Small Island Developing States (SIDS). Canada reported that they are behind on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) because of COVID, climate change, and what is going on around the world; however, they

are looking forward to a team global approach that provides a transformative relationship between economies and societies.

Saudi Arabia's greatest global challenge is eradicating poverty, and they want to work towards an outcome-oriented approach. It also launched the Middle East Green Initiative project. The United States fostered a whole-of-society approach. They reported that cooperation and partnership are key. USAID (United State Agency for International Development) creates space for local actors, where they provided \$16.5 billion in grants to 47 well-governed democracies. Sweden promoted an inclusive partnership, especially with Congo and Indonesia.

Representatives from different organizations reported their interest in partnerships as well. The International Federation on Aging stated that it is crucial that they engage the aging population as poverty is a major concern for older persons. In contrast, the Children and Youth International see the voices of young people as pillars of hope. The International Development Law Organization want partnerships with different stakeholders as they specify the strengthening of partnerships as key in the SDG implementation. Lastly, the International Center for Research on Women stated that we need accountable, collaborative, and inclusive partnerships with robust reporting mechanisms.

Let the words of Colombia University graduate student, Ropati, resonate as we seek partnerships to achieve the SDGs by 2030: “our families moved because the ground was sinking. The land has always provided and shared by those in the community, which created a bond. The bond brought us joy, respect all living things. There is very close relation between animal and human world. Fossil fuels are killing. Sea levels are rising, and my people are dying. Indigenous people make up less than 5% of the world. First in her group to hold an engineering degree from Colombia University, she is in search of justice. Decisions made about us should include us. Stop pretending and take direct action. When the land is healthy, the people are healthy. We find wealth through kinship.”

Participation is Essential for Effective Policy: ICSW/IASSW UN Side Event (*Lynne Healy, based on a summary by Sergei Zelenev*)

People are the experts on their own needs and active consultation is essential for effective policy. IASSW co-sponsored a virtual side event with the International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW) on February 7: “Social policies to accelerate implementation of the 2030 Agenda: promoting civic engagement and community participation.”

As the lead-off speaker, Lynne Healy (IASSW Main Representative) grounded her presentation in the reality that social policies to address the sustainable development goals are falling seriously short. She argued that policies will only be truly effective by involving those who will be affected by the policies. Participation must also be genuine, based in an intent to listen and use input received. Initiatives to identify and engage those most likely to be left behind are particularly needed.

Continuing the discussion Suresh Pathare (India) shared his thoughts on importance of cultural dimensions in social policy formulation and community engagements, linking his examples to the

rich history and culture of India. He underscored such values as interconnectedness and the quest for universal happiness in community and society as vitally important in the context of civic engagement and public action.

Peta-Anne Baker of Jamaica (and prior board member of IASSW) referred to the tides of neoliberalism and conservatism as important constraints for the goals of equity and popular participation. In her view, populist conservatism often misuses the consultative mechanisms that are essential for democratic development at the national and grass-roots levels. Referring to the ten commitments of the 1995 World Social Summit she felt that the follow-up process has been important, and the commitments are still relevant today.

Christopher Dapaah of Ghana stressed that social policies are essential for developing human potential. Social policies become effective when they are well integrated with economic, environmental and foreign policy considerations and are aimed at promoting dialogue, participation, inclusion and diversity. Fostering social cohesion and solidarity among different sectors of society is a way to build trust, cooperation and mutual support, and to prevent conflicts and violence.

Sergei Zelenev (ICSW representative and side event organizer) advocated for a comprehensive and inclusive approach when conceptualizing social policies at all levels. Building community awareness regarding the existing socio-economic options and their interconnected nature is essential. The expansion of social protection programs and benefit coverage has proved its value in reducing poverty and inequality.

(Article based on a summary of the side event prepared by Sergei Zelenev for UN DESA).

We encourage educators to look at the available videos of sessions as possible teaching resources.

Newsletter prepared by Diana Dupuy-Faustin..