



UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

« Human rights-based approaches to development are powerful tools that build our security and resilience. They focus on those most at risk of discrimination. They are the best way to reduce inequalities and get us back on track to achieve the 2030 Agenda. » —Michelle Bachelet



HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM
ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

TAKING STOCK AT MID-POINT

When the Member States agreed to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015, they committed to work to realize them in their own countries by 2030. Goal 17 asks for a “Revitalization of global partnerships for sustainable development”. (i.e., to facilitate the ambitious SDGs agenda). The High-level Political Forum ([HLPF](#)) is the principal global forum for the follow-up and review of the 2020 Agenda for Sustainable Development by monitoring the progress of member States in realizing the SDGs. This year marks the half-way point for the achievement of the UN Agenda against the target year of 2030. The HLPF was convened in July from 10 to 17th under the sponsorship of the Council on Economic and Social Development (ECOSOC) with the specific purpose of reviewing the progress made by named governments in achieving the SDGs 6, 7,9,11, and 17.



Many governments were found lacking despite the United Nations' adoption of them in 2015. With the launching of the SDGs, the overarching theme on UN deliberations became "Leave no one behind". [Progress report](#)

WHERE ARE GOVERNMENTS IN THEIR MEETING THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS TODAY?

The halfway review revealed little progress has been made in achieving the SDGs. Progress has been hampered by climate change, conflicts, food and economic crises, as well as the still lingering effect of the Covid-19 pandemic around the world. Governments also complained that promises of needed financial resources have not been honored. The lack of substantial progress puts every country and population at risk. [Member States recommitted at the Forum to making greater efforts to implement the SDGs in the next seven years](#). They also gave their support to the SDG Summit that the General Assembly is convening to take place in New York in September 2023.

Each year a number of Member States choose to give a report of their country's progress on the SDGs. Listening to these reports was very enriching. They helped understand how each government organizes itself, its strengths and weaknesses, and how they drew encouragement for their own efforts after hearing about the effective practices of other states. Among the thirty-nine countries that presented national assessments of their implementation of the SDGs, were two countries where Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur serve, namely Belgium and the Democratic Republic of Congo. These [voluntary review countries](#) offer citizens an opportunity to listen to what their governments say they have done and compare it with their own experience. They are then in a position to chide their governments to do more and take their commitments seriously. The review demonstrates how the United Nations monitors Member States and encourages them to move forward.

GOVERNMENTAL ACCOUNTABILITY REPORTS

The halfway review revealed little progress has been made in achieving the SDGs. Hampering progress has been climate change, conflicts, food and economic crises, as well as the still lingering effect of the Covid-19 pandemic around the world. Governments also complained that promises of needed financial resources have not been honored. The lack of substantial progress puts every country and population at risk. Member States recommitted at the Forum to making greater efforts to implement the SDGs in the next seven years. They also gave their support to the SDG Level Summit the General Assembly is convening to take place in New York in September 2023.



Voluntary review of the DR Congo

«The Democratic Republic of Congo is not on track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Progress is slow across all the SDGs due to Covid 19 and the war impacting the whole country. However, the country has improved its economy, thanks to mineral resources. In addition, the government has made structural changes in the education sectors by introducing free basic education, along with free health care for pregnant women and children under five; as well, it is working to improve the water system, electricity, roads and the whole transport sector both in cities and the rural areas.»

« The Belgian government has made progress in achieving the SDGs, but these are not yet sufficient. The authorities are aware of the challenges and are working to overcome them. They were pleased to have worked on this report with all the stakeholders, namely: local governments, civil society, women and young people. It strives to make different investments, each contributing to the SDGs.»



Voluntary review of Belgium

2023 SDG SUMMIT OF MEMBER STATES

The United Nations will organize the [SDGs summit](#) on 18-19 September 2023 at its Headquarters in New York, during the General Assembly. This high-level meeting will bring Member States together with non-governmental actors from both the private sector and civil society, women, youth. They will carry out a comprehensive review of the state of the SDGs, respond to the impact of multiple and interlocking crises facing the world, and provide high-level political guidance on transformative and accelerated actions leading up to the target year of 2030 for achieving the way forward to achieve the SDGs within the remaining seven years. This will be formalized in a public declaration.



SISTERS OF NOTRE DAME DE NAMUR COMMITMENT TO THE SDGs

SNDdeN have a long tradition of engagement in addressing poverty (SDG 1), health (SDG 3) education (SDG 4), and More recently they have developed a project aimed at SDG 6 (access to potable water) and SDG 7 (renewable energy) through mobilizing a global north-south project of collaboration (SDG 17) to bring water and electricity to parts of rural Africa. The photo-voltaic project called



“The Power of the SUN”, was piloted first at the Cuvilly Arts and Earth Center in Ipswich, MA (USA) before being installed in communities in both the DR Congo and Nigeria providing



electricity, technology for communications, water purification and sanitation. The project serves the SNDdeN communities as well as their health and educational institutions, other convents and the population.

Additionally, today a “pure water project” of the SNDdeN in the [Ohio Province](#), with the help of their Mission Partners, now provides clean water for Notre Dame sites in Zimbabwe and Kenya, as well as Brazil and Peru.

In these ways, Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur are partnering with others (SDG 17) to expand the reach of the SDGs.

EDUCATION: AN IMPERATIVE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



**Marie Josephine Ibanda,
SNDdeN**

Sustainable development is defined as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." The former Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon, explained it as follows: "Today, we hold the future in our hands. Together, we must ensure that our grandchildren never have to ask us why we didn't do the right thing and let them suffer the consequences of our inaction." In short, sustainable development is a call to present generations to take action today so as to bequeath a world fit to live to future generations.

Since the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2000, and even more so in 2015 with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, education is recognized as an indispensable means for each individual to realize his or

her potential, and for the international community to promote global progress. As a congregation of women religious committed to education in all its forms and for all ages, while the chances of influencing educational policies at national level may be less, it is still possible to take concrete action based on the Sustainable Development Goals in our various educational contexts (schools, health centers, Christian movements, etc.). In the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in other countries where the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur serve, it is possible to organize discussions on climate change based on the consequences of human activities on the environment, including reduced agricultural production and the consequent deterioration in the health of rural populations. It is also possible to remedy the destruction of the environment by

initiating reforestation activities with any group. Education is essential if we are to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals in our living environment.

For more thought

- ✓ Are you aware if your ministry might be promoting the SDGs?
- ✓ Which of the SDGs have you worked on the most?
- ✓ What was your mode of action to achieve the SDGs?
- ✓ In your work are you aware of the importance to “not leave anyone behind”?
- ✓ Who in your society are often left behind?