



Global Goals week



Held outside the UN HQ in New York for the first time, **Global Goals Week** took place from 15 – 22nd January at the heart of Expo 2020 in Dubai. It brought together partners, activists and advocates to mobilize and accelerate momentum on the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**. As the **UN Deputy Secretary General, Amina Mohammed**, noted in her opening remarks, the 2015 commitment to Agenda 2030 represented a major paradigm shift to which member states committed, promising to deliver 17 SDGs. Progress has been painfully slow and the Decade of Action has been severely impacted by COVID 19. However she highlighted its vital importance. *“The 2030 Agenda still remains our indispensable blueprint to avert a future of widening inequality, escalating climate catastrophe and perpetual conflict”* → Watch [the video](#)

Galvanizing momentum for Universal Vaccination

On February 25th the President of the General Assembly convened a special hybrid high level meeting to galvanize global momentum for universal vaccination against COVID. Statistics cited by opening speakers were stark and revealing. Vaccine rates in **high income countries** are **13 times** those in **low income countries**, with 83% of the population in the African Union not having received a single dose. *“Vaccine inequity is immoral and impractical”* he said. *“We have the tools, the resources and the know how... Our strength lies in solidarity.”* While 1 billion doses have been distributed through the **COVAX initiative**, the global rollout has been uneven and more global partnership and cooperation is urgently needed if the WHO target of 70% of the global population being fully vaccinated by mid 2022 is to be achieved. → Watch [the short video](#)



Did you know that:

- **The decline in hours worked in 2021** due to Covid were equivalent to the loss of **125 million full-time jobs**
- Of the **734 million extreme poor** prior to the COVID-19 crisis, **80% live in rural areas**, most working in the **informal sector** and largely excluded from social protection measures.
- During the COVID pandemic many of the **2 billion informal workers** worldwide (**61% of all workers**) have fallen deeper into poverty.
- **More than 3 billion** people worldwide are unable to afford a healthy diet and **118 million people** are projected to be **undernourished** due to the impact of COVID 19
- In 2020, **155 million people in 55 countries** were in crisis or experiencing serious levels of **acute food insecurity** due to worsened access to food due to COVID, conflict and natural disasters.

60th Commission on Social Development



The UN Commission on Social

Development (CSocD) held its annual session from 7 – 16th February 2022. With special responsibility for the social pillar of the UN’s work, the Commission has a particular focus on **poverty and inequality**, as well as needs of specific social groups including *youth, the elderly, families and those with disabilities*. The Commission is made up of 46 member states who are elected for a three-year term and led by a Bureau of six member states, one from each geographic region. This year, the Permanent Representatives of **Portugal and Zambia** were prominent as elected members of the Bureau, representing Europe and Africa respectively.

The theme of the Commission this year centered on **“Inclusive and resilient recovery from COVID-19 for sustainable livelihoods, well-being and dignity for all: eradicating poverty and hunger in all its forms and dimensions to achieve the 2030 Agenda”**. Our **NGO Committee on Social Development** worked closely with UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (**DESA**) in the planning and preparation of a four-part Civil Society Forum. A strong **Civil Society Declaration** was signed by close to 1,000 NGOs and individuals and presented in person by the Co-Chairs at the opening session held in the General Assembly hall. It featured a **10 point “Call to Action”** addressed to member states. A rich virtual programme of 50 side events relating to the main theme of the Commission brought the voices and contributions of speakers from around the world to the 10 day proceedings.

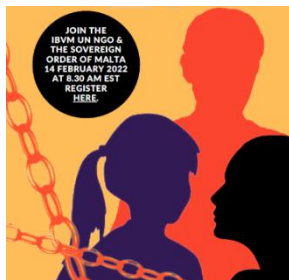


“The pandemic speaks all languages, and has revealed how acute inequality is and how social protection has gone astray....There is a need for greater cooperation at this historic juncture so that the new normalcy does not reproduce the flaws of what came before it” **MARÍA DEL CARMEN SOLUFFE** (Argentina) – Chair of the Commission

- Watch a [short video](#)
- Watch another [short video](#)
- Read the [Civil Society Declaration](#)

A Faith-Based response to Human Trafficking.

Exploitation of poverty and vulnerability is at the root of human trafficking. And the COVID 19 pandemic has laid bare and heightened the pre-existing vulnerability to traffickers of many women and girls living in poverty. **As Sr. Imelda Poole IBVM** noted, natural disasters, homelessness and lockdown all played a part in giving rise to an increase in human trafficking. With strong personal testimony from India, Albania and Philippines the **IBVM / Mary Ward NGO** presented the problem, and offered the lessons from their programmes developed during the time of COVID. As traffickers went online, the strategies changed. Creative responses were developed by the **Kolkata Mary Ward Social Center** in India. Relief kits were given to the most vulnerable families, self-help livelihood programmes were started, smart phones and guidance on their use helped parents in poverty in the protection of children. A child tracking system was developed to protect those most at risk. Survivors' groups were established, together with counselling and legal aid. ➡ Visit [their website](#)



Food Insecurity: Youth from the Grassroots speak out

Through the medium of a short video, our **Grassroots Group** side event brought the voices of youth from a large refugee camp in Kenya, an Indigenous community in Indonesia, and an informal settlement in northeast Brazil to a side event during CSocD 60. The young people shared their experience of food poverty, and their efforts to address hunger and access to food in the time of COVID. Comments by two social work academics from Slovenia and Brazil and a Ugandan UN official from Iraq highlighted the importance of addressing the intersecting related issues such as land, water, extractivist policies and climate change, - issues addressed by **SDG 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 13 and 15**. The pandemic has exacerbated pre-existing inequalities and policy failures, natural disasters and COVID lockdowns have added new dimensions. Underlying the solutions suggested to end hunger and make the SDGs a reality were the importance of strengthening community movements, increasing political will and promoting participation by youth at all levels at part of the solution.



➡ Watch the [short video](#)

Security Council : Exit briefing



On 22nd February the **WFUNA** hosted the “**exit briefing**” featuring 4 **outgoing elected members** of the **UN Security Council – Viet Nam, Estonia, Tunisia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines** – whose two-year term (2020/21) was indelibly marked by the COVID 19. The briefing provided an informative and insightful glimpse into their experience as they reflected on successes and failures, responded to questions from Member States and NGOs and offered recommendations for the Security Council going forward. Notable points included the number of meetings held (839) the fact that membership of the Security Council required a ‘face-to-face’ approach meaning that lockdown restrictions had to be modified to enable this and the fact that small population size, is not a deterrent to having a strong and credible voice on the Security Council as in the case of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Although the agenda of the Security Council is often seen as crisis-driven, the Ambassadors highlighted the growing importance of working on prevention of conflict and shared some concrete strategies for doing this.

Emergency meetings of the Security Council in the last days of February have highlighted the anachronistic veto provision for the 5 permanent members and the limits it imposes on meaningful steps to conflict resolution. ➡ [Read more](#)



RSHM News Briefs



★ On February 16th **NGOs were invited** by the **President of the Third Committee of the General Assembly** to participate in an informal **consultation session** held in person in the General Assembly Hall. This marked only the second time that

NGOs were enabled to enter the UN buildings since the COVID lockdown took hold on 11 March 2020. The hybrid event focused on the recommendations covering the social and humanitarian areas of the UN work, and the shrinking space for NGO engagement at the UN, made more difficult by COVID. We were glad for our RSHM NGO to be represented.

★ **The RSCM School in Fatima** celebrates its’ 70th Anniversary this year under the theme “*together we make US!*” - highlighting the importance of integrating diversity. The strong commitment of the school to **Pope Francis’ call to integral ecology, RSHM mission** and the **UN Agenda 2030** has



been evidenced by a range of activities in the last few months. They have been recognized as a leading eco-school, which links ecology and spirituality, promotes a holistic, child-friendly environment and mobilizes young people around the Sustainable Development Goals. ➡ [Learn more...](#)

Distribution

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