



# NGO NEWS

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## COP27 outcomes 'disappointing'

COP27 lacked ambition. The outcomes were disappointing for the people who are worst affected by the climate emergency: people from developing countries and Small Island Developing States, who have contributed the least to global warming. There were attempts to abolish the Glasgow requirement for countries to update their plans on emissions every year. Of all the outcomes from Sharm el-Sheik, the most significant is the historic decision to create a Loss and Damage Fund to help vulnerable countries hit hard by climate disasters. A decision on the decades-long conversation on funding for loss and damage is giving hope to people who have lost their houses, farmers whose fields are ruined and small islanders forced from their ancestral homes. The agreement to operationalize the Santiago Network on Loss and Damage will provide technical assistance to developing countries.



Antonio Guterres, UN Secretary-General, said the fund was “an important step towards justice. Clearly, this will not be enough, but it is a much-needed political signal to rebuild broken trust. The voices of those on the frontlines of the climate crisis must be heard.”

Sherry Rehman, climate change minister of Pakistan, spoke of the loss and damage in this manner: “This is not about accepting charity; this is a down payment on investment in our futures, and in climate justice.”

High-income countries had resisted the idea of loss and damage payments, for fear of being held legally liable. The European Union forced the United States and China to come on board to take the decision on loss and damage. Rich countries would like to see China and oil-rich countries in the Middle East contribute to the fund. There was also fear among countries that

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## Assembly president calls for UN Security Council reform

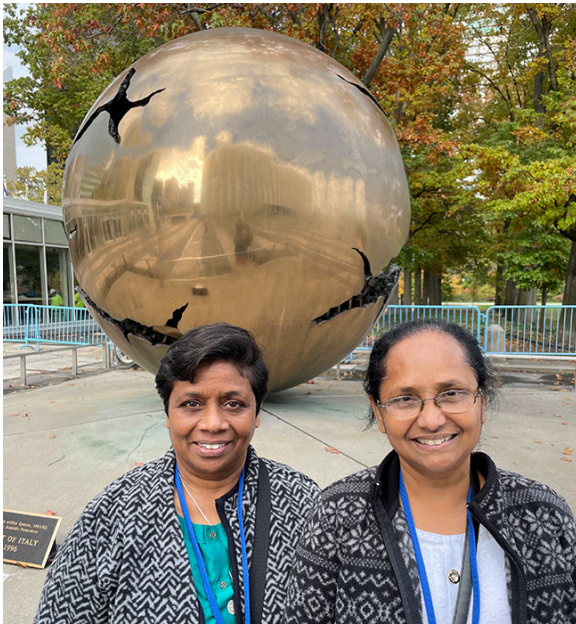
The UN General Assembly President, Csaba Korosi, told the members of a plenary meeting on Nov. 17 that “the entire credibility and relevance of the United Nations will be called into question unless the General Assembly finally takes a lead on reforming the organization’s most powerful body responsible for peace and security issues.”

The global community has been demanding the

reform of the Security Council for many years. The post-World War II structure is no longer relevant for fit for 21st century. The victors cannot cling on to an antiquated power structure designed for their geopolitical advantage, to hold the rest of the world hostage. It has eroded the multilateral system and people have lost faith in its ability to deliver on peace and security.

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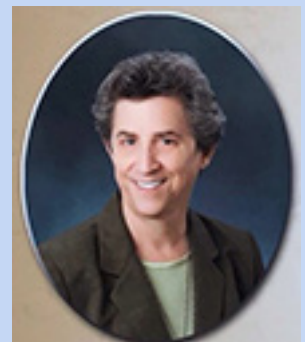
## UN Orientation Sessions

Above: Sisters of Charity of Nazareth Mary Margaret Nirmala, provincial, Bangalore, India, and Vijaya Chalil, vice provincial, were in New York for UN Orientation Nov. 1–6. Right: Jackie Smith, executive administrative assistant, SCN Center, and Sister Jackulin Jesu, SCN, vice president, came to New York for UN Orientation Dec. 1 – 6.



## NGO Liaisons: new and familiar faces

The SC Federation welcomes the following (above from left): Rachel Moccia, NGO Liaison, Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, U.S. Province; Sister Roma De Robertis, SCIC, NGO Liaison for the Sisters of Charity of the Immaculate Conception (she previously served in this role, so we welcome her back); and Sister Marge Kloos, SC (Cincinnati), interim NGO Liaison for the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati until July 1, 2023. We also say farewell to Sister Bernice Steele, CSM (top right), former NGO Liaison for the Sisters of St. Martha of Prince Edward Island; and Sister Pat Poole, SCIC, former NGO Liaison for the Sisters of Charity of the Immaculate Conception.





# The New Frontier of Extractive Industry: Deep Sea Mining

The world needs to move into green energy transition at a quicker pace, but it lacks the natural resources, nickel, cobalt, lithium and graphite to do so. According to the Geological Survey of Finland, to replace every vehicle in the world with one EV requires over 280 million tons minerals; and power stations (batteries) to store intermittent electricity generated from renewable sources will require 2.5 billion tons of metals. There is no global reserve to achieve such a transition. Most of these precious minerals are found in the most biodiverse biome on the planet, such as nickel in Indonesia and cobalt in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), where exploitation of child labor is rampant. China produces 64 percent of graphite and controls cobalt production in the DRC. We are facing unprecedented demand for green-transition minerals and inadequate supplies.

This is where deep sea mining comes as an alternative to solve the problem of green transition. According to USGS, the Clarion-Clipperton Zone, an area of the Pacific spanning 4.5 million square kilometers between Hawaii and Mexico contains 21.1 billion tons of dry nodules with high ore grades. Mining companies say deep sea mining is comparable to offshore petroleum production since no drilling or mining is involved. Instead, the ocean floor is scraped to collect the nodules. Researchers call it minimally invasive, superior to extractive industries on land, no displacement or corruption and child labor. However, there is nothing minimal about it. There is very little data on the existing biodiversity of the ocean floor and the impact that mining/scraping of the ocean floor will have on all life below and above. There are insufficient environmental risks studies to show otherwise.

The UN Conventions on the Law of the Sea, which came to force in 1994, established the International Seabed Authority (ISA), based in Kingston, Jamaica



Photo by [Yannis Papanastasopoulos](#) on [Unsplash](#)

to regulate deep sea mining outside each nation's exclusive economic zones (a 200-nautical-mile area surrounding coastal nations.) It has the mandate to organize, regulate and control all mineral-related activities in the international seabed area for the benefit of humankind as a whole. ISA has the duty to ensure the effective protection of the marine environment from harmful effects that may arise from deep-seabed

related activities.

To date, ISA has entered into 17 15-year contracts for exploration for polymetallic nodules and polymetallic sulfides in the deep seabed with 13 contractors. Nautilus Minerals Inc. is the first company to receive the mining lease for polymetallic SMS deposits at the prospect known as Solwara 1, in the territorial waters of Papua New Guinea located in the Bismarck Sea. This project will be world's first deep-seabed mining project aiming to extract copper, gold, and silver.

The following countries: Pacific Island States, Fiji, Samoa, Palau, and the Federated States of Micronesia together with New Zealand, France, Germany, Spain, Costa Rica, Panama, Ecuador, and Chile are calling for a pause, moratorium or complete ban on deep sea mining. French President Emmanuel Macron called for a ban in his opening address at COP27. The Deep Sea Conservation Campaign states: "World leaders are finally waking up to the imminent risks of deep sea mining and the need to protect the blue heart of our planet that sustains us all. Rather than being remembered as the generation that delivered the final blow to our planet by unleashing a new industry which could have catastrophic impacts, we urge States to put sustainability and intergenerational equity first."

Deep sea mining is not needed, not wanted, and not consented. The ocean is the living blue heart of our planet, our common heritage. It is our responsibility to protect it.

# Growing inequalities, especially vaccine inequity

The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated all inequalities. According to the World Bank, by the end of 2022, an additional 75 million people will be pushed into poverty, living on less than \$1.90 a day. That means by the end of the year, 677 million people will be living in extreme poverty. People are also facing food crisis – triggered by the pandemic, the war in Ukraine and the triple planetary crisis our world is facing. It is not easy to comprehend the fact that 828 million people go to bed hungry every night. Acute food insecurity has increased from 135 million to 345 million since 2019.

Around 49 million people in 49 countries are on the edge of famine. Currently, 1.3 billion people live in multi-dimensional poverty.

The informal sector which employs 2 billion people, or 60 percent of the global workforce, offers no social protection or other benefits to these vulnerable people. According to World Bank data, the informal economy has suffered the greatest economic losses and are still struggling to return to their pre-pandemic income levels. The bottom quintile (20 percent) earner are making 6.7 percent less than before the pandemic. The frontline workers are struggling to survive in the face of rising inflation and unemployment.

If vast numbers of vulnerable are laboring to recover from the pandemic, technology platforms and billionaires increased their wealth. A new billionaire was minted every day during the pandemic. There were 573 more billionaires in the world by March 2022 than in 2020. Since COVID-19, their net worth increased to \$5 trillion, and collectively their worth is \$12.7 trillion – equal to nearly 14 percent of global gross domestic product (GDP.) According to Oxfam, “billionaires have six times the wealth than the poorest 3.1 billion people.” Oxfam goes on to say, that just 20 tycoons collectively own more than the entire GDP of sub-Saharan Africa.

In this context, where does the world stand on the COVID-19 vaccination front? High-income countries achieved vaccination rates of 75 to 80 percent, while low-income countries vaccinated less than 10 percent of their people. This disparity is one of the greatest fail-

ures of international cooperation during a pandemic. The current model of global vaccine distribution is based on financial competition for limited vaccine supply. While high-income countries got preference, low-income countries had to depend on donations or programs like COVAX from the World Health Organization (WHO). Pharmaceutical companies own the intellectual property (IP) rights to COVID-19 vaccines, allowing them to control manufacturing, distribution and pricing – even though the pharmaceutical industry did not develop these vaccines alone.

Although solutions to enable global equitable access exists, it took India and South Africa around two years to receive an agreement on relaxation of intellectual property restrictions from World Trade Organization (WTO) in June 2022 to

start producing COVID vaccines in some developing countries. At present the agreement excludes costly therapeutics against COVID and diagnostics; WTO is supposed to pronounce a judgement on it six months.

Lack of access to low-and middle-income countries is playing out on two expensive vaccines – HPV (human papillomavirus) and malaria. HPV vaccine, approved in 2006 protects against cervical cancer and WHO has a strategy to eliminate cervical cancer with the goal of having 90 percent of girls fully vaccinated by the age of 15. To date, only 123 countries have introduced the vaccine in their national immunization programs. However, these countries represent only 33 percent of the world's girl population. World's largest populations are in China and India and they are yet to include it in their national immunization programs. HPV vaccines are produced by just two manufacturers – GSK and Merck. WHO is hopeful, that new manufacturers from China and India could produce it to drive down prices. Inequity and access will not end without funding, to supply low-income countries. As of 2021, only 13 percent of the world's girls have been fully vaccinated.

World's first malaria vaccine – Moquirix is still in pilot phase in Ghana, Kenya and Malawi. Soon it will be

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# The Human Development Report for 2021–2022

The Human Development Report for 2021–2022 by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) states that “we live in a world of worry” and people are feeling more insecure; six out of seven people worldwide are feeling insecure about many aspects of their lives. The report states that we are “navigating uncharted waters, caught in three volatile crosscurrents: the dangerous planetary change of the Anthropocene; the pursuit of sweeping societal transformations on par with the Industrial Revolution; and the vagaries and vacillations of polarized societies.” Navigating this new uncertainty complex is hampered by persistent deprivations and inequalities in human development. COVID-19 pandemic and Ukraine war are devastating manifestations of today’s uncertainty complex. Each exposes limits of-and cracks in-current global governance. They have battered the global supply chains, driving up price volatility in energy, food, fertilizers, commodities and other goods. Billions of people face the greatest cost-of-living crisis in a generation and billions are grappling with food insecurity because of inequalities in wealth and power.

We humans have the power to influence our future, but we do not necessarily have any control over it. Our responses to the climate crisis and technological changes are inadequate, because we fail to use our policy options and technology for common good – often we misuse it. The pandemic forced the development of safe and effective vaccines to save millions of lives. However, access to COVID-19 vaccines in low-income countries is nonexistent. The emerging uncertainties brought on by technologies and planetary-level changes wrought by the Anthropocene are far more detrimental than the pandemic. Humans are now shaping planetary trajectories – global temperatures to species diversity and thereby altering the fundamental frame of reference humans have been operating under for millennia. For the first time in history, human-made materials, such as concrete and asphalt, outweigh the Earth’s biomass.

Microplastics are everywhere. For the first time in history, anthropogenic existential threats loom larger than those from natural hazards.

How shall we face these uncertainties? As per the report, “there is promise and opportunity in uncertainty.” Uncertainty engenders the possibility of change, also for the better. We must learn to live with uncertain times and unsettled lives. The report challenges us to aspire to more than mere accommodation. Unlocking our human potential will require us to let flexibility, creativity, solidarity and inclusion guide us to imagine and create futures in which we thrive.

- **Flexibility** – rejecting one-size-fits-all policy solutions and finding solutions that adapt best to different contexts and moments. Flexibility allows adaptation to constantly changing conditions.
- **Creativity** will not thrive in homogenous and rigid contexts. Creativity requires exploring tools and approaches such as iterative learning, diverse perspectives and risk management. It depends on societies’ interconnectedness, the fidelity of the information and learning transmitted and cultural trait diversity.
- **Solidarity** should be understood as our interconnectedness. Our lives are interconnected by the multidimensional impacts of our choices and our shared physical, economic and social spaces.
- **Inclusion** is more than participation and diversity. It requires shifts in institutions’ norms and attitudes and cooperation of relevant stakeholders, society and policymakers to address the roots of unequal treatment.
- **Solidarity and inclusion are interdependent.** Solidarity requires recognizing and incorporating the diversity of individuals, groups, perspectives and lived experiences that coexist. At the same time, greater inclusion contributes to solidarity by fighting divisiveness and inequalities. Social movements can teach us a lot about solidarity in the search for inclusion, leading the way to leave no one behind. Institutions can support transformations pushed by social movements and community initiatives.

The [Human Development Report](#) is easy to read – short chapters written by experts. Please take the time to read and learn how we each can transform ourselves as well as our societies.





## COP27 *continued from page 1*

a loss and damage fund would benefit China, which calls itself a developing country and still is one of the biggest polluters.

This decision offers hope for countries to recover and rebuild after a disaster. However, details on how the fund will function is not clear. Who will pay into the fund, and what will the funding look like? Who will benefit from the fund, and how will it be governed? The governments have agreed to establish a “transitional committee” to make recommendations on how to operationalize both the new funding and the fund at COP28 next year. The first meeting of the transitional committee will take place before the end of March 2023. One of the main concerns is accessibility to the fund, for existing global climate mechanisms are very cumbersome for countries seeking funding.

Climate advocates were frustrated to see countries lacking the courage to call for the phasing out the use of fossil fuels—the biggest driver of climate change—in spite of calls from many countries. In fact, no significant new decision on cutting greenhouse gas emissions to limit global warming to 1.5 degree Celsius above pre-industrial levels. Instead, the agreement went for “a copy and pasted language from Glasgow.”

Other outcomes:

- New calls to accelerate deployment of renewable energy
- Negotiators agreed to produce a report on progress towards doubling adaptation finance by 2025. They failed to set a global goal for adapting to climate impacts.
- Mobilize more than \$2 billion for local communities and entrepreneurs to restore degraded land in Africa.

- Establishment of the African Cities Water Adaptation fund will help African cities get grants needed to provide safe, affordable and reliable water.
- Brazil, Democratic Republic of Congo and Indonesia renewed commitments to preserve their tropical forests.
- Governments representing over half of global GDP set out 12-month action plan to make clean technologies cheaper and more accessible everywhere. They launched 25 new collaborative actions to be delivered by COP28 to speed up decarbonization in power, road, transport, steel, hydrogen and agriculture.
- The UN Secretary-General announced a \$3.1 billion plan to ensure everyone on the planet is protected by early warning systems within the next five years.
- The G7 and the V20 (‘the vulnerable Twenty’)

### [Read the Sharm el-Sheik Implementation Plan](#)

#### Other Highlights from COP27 at Sharm el-Sheikh

Around 35,000 people gathered for COP27.

There were 636 fossil fuel executives/lobbyists at the COP, 25 percent more than at COP26 – their influence is far greater than frontline countries and communities. Around 30 countries brought 200 fossil fuel lobbyists as part of their delegations. They eclipse the power of the environmental groups. Their presence was likened to: COP27 looks like a fossil fuel industry trade show. Civil society groups fear that the increasing presence of fossil fuel lobbyists are detrimental to the demands for climate justice. This is what civil society said: climate action would “continue to fail to meaningfully address the climate crisis as long as polluting interests are granted unmitigated access to policymaking processes and are allowed to unduly influence and weaken the critical work of the UNFCCC.”

The Vatican is part of UNFCCC and a Party at COP27, no longer an observer, but a negotiator on equal footing with other countries. The Vatican formally joined the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement on Oct. 4, 2022. The Vatican always supported the agreement, but now it has a commitment to abide by and meet its goals, in reducing emissions to limit global temperature rise well below 2 degrees C and preferably 1.5 C. Cardinal Pietro Parolin addressed the world leaders at the COP on Nov. 8, 2022: “By ac-

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# International Tax Cooperation at the UN

On Nov. 23, 2022, developing countries rejoiced over a historic win for tax justice: the approval of a resolution from the UN General Assembly as a first step towards an inclusive, democratic and transparent process to reform global tax architecture. For over two decades, G77 and China and its members have been calling for an intergovernmental tax negotiation process at the UN, which would allow all countries to participate in discussions and decision-making related to tax on an equal footing. The resolution gives the UN a mandated to monitor, evaluate and determine global tax rules and support the establishment of a global tax body.

Currently, the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development controls all decisions on tax matters. The tax-architecture rules, frameworks and decision-making spaces are geared towards the inter-

ests of the wealthy and global North countries. Every time a proposal for a UN Convention on International Tax Cooperation was tabled at the UN General Assembly, the developed countries united to oppose it.

Civil society organizations across the world welcome the approval for tax cooperation. The resolution is only a first step in a long process. Next, intergovernmental discussions on ways to strengthen the inclusiveness and effectiveness of international tax cooperation will begin in New York – to develop an international tax cooperation framework. By September 2023, the UN Secretary-General shall prepare a report where all relevant international legal instruments, other documents and recommendations that address international tax cooperation will be analyzed, and potential next steps outlined. The General Assembly will consider the report at its next annual session.

## Vaccine inequity *continued from page 4*

rolled out nationally, but GSK is the only manufacturer. The vaccine requires four doses and it is costly: \$39 per person, the most expensive in the Gavi (the Vaccine alliance) portfolio and it will require co-financing from philanthropists. This vaccine efficacy level is just 30 percent.

In general, on the vaccine issue, low-and middle-income countries remain dependent on a few manufacturers. WHO refers to the global vaccine market as “oligopolies” concentrated in a few countries. Africa and eastern Mediterranean region have limited manufacturing capacities and depend on external manufacturers for 90 percent of their vaccine needs. The limited number of manufacturers leads to supply constraints. Six of the eight vaccines that could be needed, in case of disease outbreak are at high risk of supply constraints. They are for cholera, typhoid, meningococcal disease, smallpox/monkeypox and Ebola. Some of these vaccines have no established stockpile. WHO is calling for “greater public investments and more government oversight of the vaccine value chain, and ‘tighten’ its hold on innovations for the sake public health.”

Is the world prepared for another pandemic? You be the judge!

## COP27 *continued from page 6*

ceding to the convention and the Paris Agreement, the Holy See is even more committed to moving forward on this journey together, for the common good of humanity and especially on behalf of our youth, who are looking to us to care for present and future generations.”

Mia Mottley, prime minister of Barbados, served as the de facto champion of low-income nations at COP27. She openly talked about the hypocrisy of high-income countries on climate change – it fueled their rise, but now threatens to sink everyone else. “We are the ones whose blood, sweat, and tears financed the Industrial Revolution,” she said. “Are we now to face double jeopardy by having to pay the cost as a result of those greenhouse gasses from the Industrial Revolution?” [Watch video](#) of Mia Mottley’s speech at COP27

She has been pushing for the reform of the international financial system – International Monetary Fund and the World Bank Group – that underpin the global multilateral system, which she says is not serving the interests of lower-income countries. She may get the support of Canada and France to fund struggling countries, including the expansion of multilateral lending. She wants to unlock trillions of dollars in financing, including \$500 billion in Special Drawing Rights. Issuance of SDRs by IMF is controlled by the U.S. Congress, which holds veto power.

## Security Council *continued from page 1*

In this context, it is commendable that Mr. Csaba Korosi is taking the lead to have an intergovernmental negotiation process on Security Council reform. You can find his address here:

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Forty-three years have passed since the question of Security Council reform first appeared in the General Assembly agenda. It has been 17 years since world leaders expressed their support for the so-called “early reform” of the Council, calling it an essential element of the overall effort to reform the United Nations. And it has been 13 years since the Assembly launched the intergovernmental negotiations process.

This year, we approach Security Council reform with new attention – facing a set of interlocking crises that have placed the entire multilateral system under pressure. Countries are struggling due to conflicts and wars, climate change, food, water and energy crises, unsustainable debts and health emergencies. The war in Ukraine, now in its ninth month, has only amplified these effects, displacing millions and forcing countries to make unprecedented choices to meet the needs of their citizens. Through it all, the Security Council – the main guarantor of international peace and security – has remained blocked, unable to fully carry out its mandate.

Growing numbers are now demanding its reform. During High-Level Week, one-third of world leaders underscored the urgent need to reform the Council – more than double the number in 2021. They are looking to the General Assembly to lead on change. We should admit that this is about the credibility and the relevance of the United Nations.

A choice is at hand: does the Assembly continue its annual repetition of well-known positions – or, moved by these crises, does it swing into action to find common ground and achieve breakthroughs?

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen: You simply must answer this call. The General Assembly is, quite literally, the only UN body with a mandate to seek a solution to the question of Security Council reform.

I count on you, the Member States, to drive the transformation now urgently needed.

The ancient philosopher Lao Tzu – who is said to have lived in an era of warfare and reform – has an apt



*UN Photo/Loey Felipe | Csaba Kőrösi, President of the 77th session of the UN General Assembly, briefs reporters following the plenary meeting on Security Council reform.*

saying:

“The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.”

Today, I ask the Assembly to take its collective step.  
To start from a position of “yes.”  
To listen to each other.  
To build on shared interests.  
To find areas of commonalities.

I have held several meetings with Member States to hear your views on the way forward. I have heard your desire to achieve solutions. I have appointed the Permanent Representative of Slovakia and the Permanent Representative of Kuwait as co-chairs of the intergovernmental negotiation process.

I thank them for accepting their important responsibility. I have complete confidence in them and their intention to understand the views of Member States and steer these negotiations in good faith, and with mutual respect. I ask all of you to offer them full support.

As you embark, I also encourage you to engage on the critical questions of our day. How can we ensure the process goes ahead “in an open, inclusive and transparent manner”? Are Member States ready to seek practical solutions on the reform of the Council? What do you envision as the outcome this session? Our meeting today is webcasted and recorded. Would you like to proceed the same way during the forthcoming rounds of negotiations?

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# UN News Highlights: Iran

There is widespread condemnation of Iran for the brutal crackdown on the protesters who are demanding justice for the death of Mahsa Amini under the custody of morality police, who are tasked to enforce dress strict codes and behavior. Iranians of all ages and genders have joined peaceful, nonviolent protests across the country. They have banded themselves under the slogan, “Woman, Life, Freedom,” and they have been met with police brutality and death sentences. The protesters have been in the streets for three months demanding the right to live in dignity and without discrimination. According to UN Human Rights, “at least 15,000 people have been arrested, more than 402 people, including at least 58 children have been killed.” These figures could be much higher

How is the world community reacting to the state-sponsored violence against its own people? On Nov. 2, the UN Security Council held an informal meeting called: Arria Formula, co-hosted by United States and Albania, to highlight the ongoing repression of women and girls and members of religious and ethnic minority groups in Iran and underscore ongoing unlawful use of force against peaceful protesters. The meeting will also identify opportunities to promote credible, international, independent investigations into the Iranian government’s human rights violations.”

The Third Committee of the General Assembly, which deals with human rights issues, met on Nov. 16, to vote on a draft resolution, sponsored by Canada and United States on the “alarmingly high frequency of the imposition of the death penalty in the country.” It urged the Iranian officials to “cease the use of excessive force against peaceful protesters, including women and

children.” Eighty members voted in favor, 28 against and 68 abstained. The vote, though highly symbolic, has infuriated Iran. The full General Assembly will vote on the resolution in mid-December.

Another significant development took place during the 35th special session of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva on Nov. 24: the Human Rights Council voted on a resolution requested by Germany and Iceland to create an independent and impartial fact-finding mission investigate human rights violations against women and children since the protests began on Sept. 16. During the vote, many members took the easy road of geo-political expediency and national interests to abstain (16 countries.) They do this at the expense of human rights. The Iranian officials have been defiant and have denied any wrongdoing.

There is another move to punish Iran by removing its membership of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). CSW is “the principal global intergovernmental body exclusively dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women.” Central to CSW’s mission is ending gender-based violence. It is ironic that countries with no credibility in upholding human rights, gender equality, empowerment of women and girls become members of powerful UN bodies, either to maintain status quo or delay and stifle progress. On Dec. 14, members of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) adopted a U.S. drafted resolution to “remove with immediate effect the Islamic Republic of Iran from CSW for remainder of its 2022–2026 term.” The question is: Will the expulsion bring about a desired change in Iran, especially to uphold human rights of all especially women and girls. Would it have been better to have Iran at the table to keep challenging them?

## Security Council *continued from page 7*

One of the principles applied to the IGN (Intergovernmental Negotiation) during recent years was that “nothing is agreed until everything is agreed”. Would you like to follow the same principle or prefer another methodology? The 2008 decision provides possibilities for Member States to negotiate.

The objective is to find solutions. In a transparent manner. Along a well-designed process. It is up to you to decide whether or how to use the available

techniques. In turn, you can count on me to provide all support to the co-chairs and Member States in an impartial, objective and open-minded manner.

Excellencies,

It was also Lao Tzu who said: “Perseverance is a sign of willpower.” Let us persevere. Let’s break free of entrenched positions. Let’s go beyond the calculations of distrust and rivalry. Let’s focus on the common good.

I thank you.

# Transforming Education Summit: Let me learn!

Education is a human right. Education is common public good. Every child and young person has the right to go to school and learn. Quality education from early childhood can transform every child into an extraordinary citizen. Our governments have failed to invest in education and in turn, sacrificed the future of many generations. According to UNICEF report, only one in three ten year olds globally can read and understand a simple story.

There is a global education crisis. The triple planetary crisis - climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution and waste, along with conflicts and wars are disrupting the lives of people everywhere. More are more people are forced to flee their homes from the impacts of climate induced disasters and conflicts. Here are some shocking data on education globally:

- In 2021, 244 million children and young people were out of school.
- 12 million children will never set foot in a school.
- Globally, 118.5 million girls are out school.
- Children with disabilities are 2.5 times more likely to have never been in school than their peers without disabilities. In developing countries, 90 percent of children with disabilities do not attend school
- In low-income countries, just 20 percent of children are enrolled in pre-primary education.
- 344 million children do not complete primary school and learn the basics.
- 50 percent of refugee children do not receive education

According to UNICEF Director Catherine Russell, “under resourced schools, underpaid and underqualified teachers, overcrowded classrooms and archaic curricula are undermining our children’s ability to reach their full potential.” This failure to educate an entire generation has to be reversed to ensure education serves our shared needs and common futures.

The [Transforming Education Summit](#) is an initiative of the UN Secretary-General to accelerate the implementation of sustainable development goals and to find new ways to work together for the common good. It is part of his proposal to think for the long term and to deliver more for young people and succeeding generations through a new social contract anchored in human rights.

The Summit was organized under five Thematic

Action Tracks – key levers to transform education by focusing on five areas that need attention. These Action Tracks are meant to mobilize commitments from governments and all stakeholders.

1. Make educational systems places of equal opportunity and shared abundance by advancing inclusion through changes to educational cultures and practices that reduce competition and selection. Education systems must be inclusive and prioritize education for all.
2. Foster curricula focused more on connections than categories by supporting interdisciplinary, intercultural and ecological approaches in and outside formal education. Curricula transformation can help learners to better understand and act on the interdependencies, inequalities, asymmetries, and relationships that shape today’s world.
3. Support teachers to create transformative education by investing in teaching that builds cooperation and solidarity. Teachers should have dignified working conditions and ongoing professional support, transparent compensation, healthy and safe workplaces and systems to help them to use expertise and judgement in designing student learning.
4. Make digital technology and learning more inclusive, equitable, effective, relevant, and sustainable. (Inequities in digital access was evident during the COVID-19 pandemic - 1.3 billion children did not have internet access at home.) Key issues are digital transformation of education systems; connectivity/narrowing digital divide; inclusive/assistive technologies; free, open and high quality digital education content; digital citizenship, well-being, privacy and security.
5. Strengthen education as a global common good by ensuring more equitable cooperation within and across countries, address the gaps in financing education by increasing efficiency and equity of allocations and expenditures.

The Summit took place during the 77th session of the UN General Assembly on Sept. 16 (Mobilization Day), 17 (Solutions Day) and 19(Leaders Day). On Sept. 16, youth from around the world led and organized the Mobilization Day, at the end of which they presented their common vision for change: Youth Declaration on

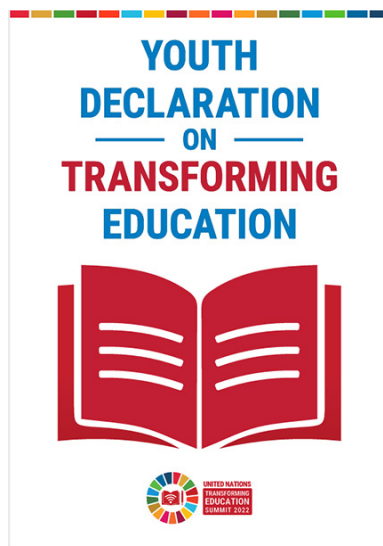




Transforming Education, fruit of extensive consultation among half a million youth from 170 countries.. They want to transform the state of education “not as passive beneficiaries, but as partners and collaborators every step of the way“, and want to be at the forefront of driving change.

Here are some of the demands they have placed before the Member States, all governments, civil society, international organizations, the UN and other key decision makers in education systems:

- Engage with youth in all their diversity;
- Promote and invest in youth, include youth and students in policy and decision-making bodies and national delegations;
- Decolonize and democratize knowledge production, pedagogy, and learning by improving and mandating curricula that dismantle colonial, racist, misogynistic and other discriminating attitudes;
- Invest in gender-transformative education to create a present and future that is feminist, equitable, and free from harmful gender stereotypes;
- Invest in inclusive education that embraces diversity and ensures the full participation of all students in the same learning environment;
- Promote a broader and holistic vision of education that is founded upon the principles of peace and human rights and one that enables every young person to lead a fulfilling, motivated, enjoy-



able, and quality life;

- Eradicate all legal, financial, and systemic barriers preventing all learners, particularly migrant, refugee, and displaced youth, from accessing and fully participating in education, such as lack of recognition or prior learning, lack of recognition of academic documents, barriers related to transitioning from one level of education to another;
- Center the mental health and wellness of all learners within and beyond the classroom throughout their educational journeys, also extending to out-of-school children and youth;
- Invest in social protection to support the educational journeys of all children and youth, especially girls and young women, refugee youth, young persons with disabilities, indigenous youth;
- Provide quality and relevant training, professional development, necessary facilities, appropriate working conditions, and an innovative, safe and enriching environment for teachers, including by raising the status of the profession;
- Invest in the digital infrastructure of education and affordable, dignified, safe and stable access to digital connectivity for all, to aid learning and close the digital divide;
- Increase funding for education during and after emergencies in the adversely affected regions and territories through official development assistance, humanitarian aid, public financing, and others until all children and youth have equitable access to quality education, particularly girls and young women, refugees and displaced persons;
- Establish robust, democratic measures and procedures for transparent, accountable, and effective implementation of these recommendations.

Read the [Youth Declaration on Transforming Education](#) (PDF)



*Religious at the UN (RUN): Sister Teresa Kotturan, SCN, with members of RUN in December in New York (not all interns are identified). From left: Mary Jane Caspillo, MMS; Paul Rahmat, SVD; Beth Blissman; Patricia Flattery, CND; Jim Claffey; Daniel LeBlanc, OMI; Annemarie O'Connor; Durstyne Farnan, OP; Veronica Brand, RSHM; Thomas Pallithanam, Salesian; Beatriz Martinez Garcia Sisters of Notre Dame; Fr. Frank Breen, MM; Teresa Kotturan, SCN; Frank McCann, CSJP-A; Rohan Dominic, CMF; Michelle Loisel, DC; Angela Reed, RSM; Cecilie Kern; Leah Schiffman; Marides Santo, SSsP; Henry Ramirez Soler; Winifred Doherty, RGS; Br. Kevin Cawley, CFC. Jimmy Walters also attended this meeting and took the photo.*

## Federation marks transition at UN

In October, Sisters of Charity Federation staff, NGO liaisons and guests gathered in New Jersey to honor outgoing UN NGO representative Sister Teresa Kotturan, SCN, and to welcome Dr. James (Jimmy) Walters (right), who will begin serving as SC Federation NGO representative on Jan. 1, 2023. The NGO Liaisons also met at the Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth motherhouse. [Read story/view photos](#) on the SC Federation web site



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### Upcoming UN Meetings:

- 61st Session of the Commission for Social Development: Feb. 6–16, 2023
- 67th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women: March 6–17, 2023
- UN 2023 Water Conference: March 22–23, 2023
- UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues: April 17–28, 2023
- ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development: April 24–27, 2023