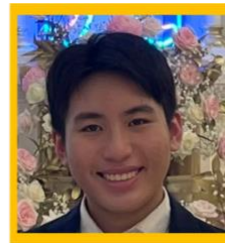


2022 HLPF from the Perspective of Youth

In keeping with UNICEF's practice of meaningful child and youth participation, students from Nord Anglia Education joined UNICEF's efforts to record highlights of the 2022 HLPF. Tim (15), Yashita (15), Emily (17), Angela (16), Sonia (16) and Jazz (15), who have already been learning about the SDGs in school, applied their knowledge, critical thinking and teamwork while serving as student rapporteurs at several key sessions of the HLPF.




The 2022 High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on sustainable development was convened under the auspices of the ECOSOC from 5 to 18 July with the theme: "Building back better from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development."

5th of July 2022 **HLPF 1st Meeting**

The forum started off with the **pledge from all nations to ensure that no one is left behind** - with panellists and the representatives of Romania, China, Nepal and more, emphasising the **issues of poverty and food insecurity** that were exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Concerns over education and children's rights were also raised by representatives of Finland and Romania. Nobel Peace Prize laureate, Kailash Satyarthi highlighted the fact that **every week the number of children that remain out of school in Sub-Saharan Africa rises by at least 10,000**. Furthermore, the SRSV VAC (Special Representative of the Secretary General on Violence Against Children) stressed the economic repercussions of ineffective children's rights, noting that the **psychological impacts on children due to poverty and violence is projected to cost 393 billion dollars per year**.

With the aim of achieving the SDGs by 2030, representatives from Azerbaijan, Finland, France, along with multiple other nations, have started to **provide financial assistance along with vaccine redistributions to LDCs**. Not only does this effort aim to resolve the current concern of vaccine inequity, but it also aids nations in their recovery from the pandemic as well as it helps health systems around the world anticipate and prepare for future shocks. Poland, Romania, Croatia and others have also emphasised the importance of **collaboration between nations with**



further investment in technology to protect jobs. They have also encouraged nations to focus on repairing the education system to **ensure all children have the right to education** - particularly in rural areas where access to educational devices is limited.

5th of July 2022
HLPF 2nd meeting

This conference highlighted the need to **get back on track with the progress towards SDGs and the Paris Climate Agreement.** Delegates were reminded that small States should be less reliant on exports, there should be less bias towards low and middle-income countries in comparison to high income countries, and delegates should continue to ensure coherence between institutions with one framework to help the SDGs. Many delegates re-emphasised the **consequences of the conflict in Ukraine.** With more than 8 million forcibly displaced Ukrainian refugees (the majority of which are children), it is the **most rapid and largest single increase in forcibly displaced populations since WWII.** This conflict has caused economic problems all over the globe, which is why a resolution was encouraged by speakers, as they expressed that to achieve the SDGs and other issues **this one must be dealt with priority through co-operation and long-term solutions must start being proposed.**

Instead of giving a man fish and keeping him fed for a day, we should give him a fishing rod to feed him and the next generations. Concrete cooperation and resilience must be achieved in order to attain the SDGs. In the scientific community, using Biotechnology for carbon capture, green bioenergy, health and nutrition in genetic engineering, local productivity, infrastructure investment, debt relief, and vaccine distribution are all integral in the formation of intricate innovative partnerships. However, **the most important step in this global collaboration is to include youth, the future leaders of this world.** In providing them opportunities early on, UNICEF enables children to create change and use their potential in the effort towards a better future.

6th of July 2022
HLPF 3rd Meeting

The panel began with Mr. Leonardo Garnier, Special Adviser for the Transforming Education Summit, with a keynote speech. Throughout the meeting, all delegates and panellists reaffirmed his key message: ***education is critical for a more just, equal and sustainable future and contributes to economic progress.***

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated existing inequalities: **we are now in a global learning crisis.** For instance, 2.4 million learners may never return to school. Delegates argued that we needed to adopt the mindset that **education is not an expenditure but a long-term investment in a sustainable future and inclusive growth.** The themes of **investment and inclusion were prevalent throughout the meeting.** Delegates and speakers focused on how we needed to **include historically marginalised groups:** poor, rural, indigenous communities, people living with disabilities and girls (particularly pregnant girls). We need to understand why they are



marginalised and **undertake targeted investments in health, nutrition and pupil welfare services**. An example on this is Finland's policy for free school meals.

Additionally, **making e-learning more available and accessible has become a significant step in attaining SDG 4. Girls and women's rights, in particular, must be properly observed in education**, ensuring that they receive the proper education and are properly protected from abuse and child marriage. Another theme was the **importance of the teaching profession**; governments need to act to improve wellbeing, working conditions, salary, and attractiveness of the teaching profession.

Education is vital in ending poverty, improving health, combating climate change, safeguarding decent work, and economic growth.

6th of July 2022 **HLPF 4th Meeting**


The fourth HLPF session addressed the issue of African Countries, Least Developed Countries (LDCs), and Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) being **disproportionately affected by the unprecedented impact of the pandemic**, thus placing them at a great disadvantage for COVID-19 response and recovery.

Dr. Mihir Kanade drew attention to how, in the urgency of today's climate, it is imperative to create accountability for leaders to prioritise global health. In a powerful quote, he stated that: *"International cooperation is an international legal obligation, not just a soft moral call for generosity or charity."*

Government representatives of concerned countries such as Mongolia, Ethiopia, Nepal, and Paraguay delivered similar messages about how the events of the past year have resulted in the halt of significant sustainable development in several key areas. In their statements, they emphasised the matters of **debt distress, mobility restrictions, the disruption of global supply chains** and the **ever-widening digital divide**. As such, they have called upon the international community to **forge appropriate alliances to provide ample support** for swifter recovery and long-term access to finance and investment. In particular, the Distinguished Representative of Nepal expressed the need for a *"paradigm shift in global financial architecture that delivers the poorest countries first."*

On the topic of COVID-19 immunisation, several representatives shared the following points as integral plans of action:

- A need to enhance support for healthcare systems, improve local infrastructure, and place larger investments in the pharmaceutical field to secure sufficient medical progress and resilience in every country.

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- A need to improve digital connectivity, ICT (Information and Communication Technology) learning, and technological innovation in order to stimulate economic transformation and improve disaster response.
 - A need for inclusivity and transparency - particularly towards heavily marginalised groups such as women and persons with disabilities - in discussions within local settings to ensure that decisions are not only efficient but also adequate.

The session placed large prominence on SDG 17 and the need for international cooperation. In the moving words of the Distinguished Permanent Representative of Denmark: *“Agendas, goals, and plans will only make a difference if we move from deliberations to delivery, if we move from pledges to payment, if we move from intentions to investments.”*

6th of July 2022 **HLPF 5th Meeting**

With less than 20% of Africa vaccinated and the goal instituted by the WHO (World Health Organization) standing at least 70%, it is hard to talk about equal vaccine distribution. The dilemma was also proven further, by representatives of Denmark, emphasising that **1.4 billion people lack access to social protection programs**. The only way to increase this rate is to **increase infrastructure development** to allow vaccine distribution. Additionally, there is the need to **create the optimal environment** for producing, storing, and injecting vaccines. This can be achieved through **better trade and technology facilities** - thus improving competitiveness and cutting costs - as well as educating people through simple means.

To help with infrastructure and vaccine storage, LDCs, LLDCs, and African countries have also worked with the EU to mobilise over 425 million vaccines with 4.5 billion dollars in support. In addition, Malawi has also partnered up with a German company to produce mRNA vaccines in Africa with Kenya updating their health policies to achieve **universal access to quality healthcare**.

High income countries also feel that instead of stockpiling vaccines, it is their duty (not charity) to help reach equal vaccine distribution as **peace, dignity and equality on a healthy planet is the key to success in the SDGs**. Long-term solutions are required (such as better infrastructure and the implementation of green energies) to maximise the potential of African countries in the long run to help **mitigate problems and support future generations**.

Partnerships ought to be scaled up to support and implement the Doha Declaration Global Programme, to not only help COVID-19, but also STI (Sexually Transmitted Infections) vaccines. All Member States are following the Doha programme for sustainable recovery as well as ensuring equality for all, focusing on SDG 4, 5, and 6.

7th of July 2022



HLPF 6th Meeting

Women and girls have been disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. They accounted for **39% of total employment in 2019, but 45% of global employment losses in 2020**. Women have been at the frontlines of the pandemic, in terms of the response (making up 70% of the health force globally) but also its impact. They have had to experience long absences from family, doing double the work and increased exposure to the virus.


Other issues include rising burdens of **unpaid domestic labour and increases in domestic abuse**: a product of poverty, discrimination, unhealthy diets and tobacco and alcohol use. **Delegates reported higher levels of gender-based violence and femicide**. Up to 10 million more girls will be at risk of child marriage over the next decade as a result of COVID-19. Throughout the meeting, youth voices were included from the delegates from Denmark, Sweden and Belgium. Suggestions to address the issues include **inclusive labour market policies, increase in public expenditure on policies addressing gender inequality** and the **inclusion of women in policy decisions and social dialogue**. Additionally, we must **increase**, among other things, **access to education, technology and help women to return to the job market through the creatio of care groups**.

The SDGs cannot be achieved without removing barriers faced by women to fulfil their full roles in society acting as the catalyst to peaceful inclusive resilient societies. The South African delegate quoting Nelson Mandela said, *“Freedom cannot be achieved unless women have been emancipated from all forms of oppression.”*

11th of July 2022 HLPF 7th meeting

The panel started off with SIDS (Small Island Developing States) as the topic of concern for the session. The two keynote speakers, the Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda and the President of the Caribbean development, made sure to give a clear-cut statement on how **the old ways of measuring are no longer reliable and how it is high time to look for new methods**. The prime predicament being the major loss that the islands face after being hit by external shocks, such as climate change, the pandemic which subsequently ruined production activities, disrupted education, and widened the gaps between incomes and gender inequality.

‘Resilience’ and **‘vulnerability’** are two concepts that have been significantly brought up by every speaker making them the theme of discussion. Dr. Hyginus Leon stated that, **“there can be no sustainable development, without resilience,”** emphasising on the need to work on building the SIDS resilience in order to navigate safely from the legacy, structural weaknesses to transformative development while maintaining sustainability, and macroeconomic stability. However, with recent times, it’s been evident that the GDP cannot adequately capture the **vulnerability resilience dimensions of development, nor does it map well for the financing needs**.



In light of this, UNICEF has launched a different index, called the MVI (Multidimensional Vulnerability Index). All Member States appeared to agree with the idea of an MVI as they believe that an MVI will create an evidence-based approach to better understand what vulnerability means to help establish eligibility for funding and guidelines for policy options. This index can also aid countries in conducting their own diagnostics of their current situation.

12th of July 2022
8th meeting

The 8th session of the HLPF centred around having an interactive discussion on “Vision of Civil Society: Leaving no one behind in recovering better.” Representatives from 44 countries gave their views on how civil society can help us get back on track toward the ambitious 2030 Agenda.


After the adverse effects of the pandemic and our slow transition to the new normal, our progress towards the SDGs have been no less than reversed, leaving the world back at square one, or for some countries, even worse than we started off. Quoting Liu Zhenmin, **“only through Civil Society efforts, we can now hold our world and its leaders accountable to ensure that the needs of the future generations are met and ensure that no one gets left behind.”**

As the Jamaican representative eloquently stated, *“vulnerable groups will be better served when they are heard out.”* **Only by actively engaging civil society in implementing SDGs can we start to make real progress towards our goals.** And for the civil society to be agile, active agents for change they must have **access to resources and finances**, provided by the government. The Sudanese representative said it best when they stated, *“only by thinking together, planning together and implementing together, can we truly develop.”* After the first half, the session moved onto the Voluntary National Reviews of countries Latvia, Philippines, Switzerland, Argentina and Ghana. They updated us on all things SDG related and had plans to be achieved by the next summit.

Some of the actions suggested by the speakers included:

- Using volunteering as an opportunity to build bridges between countries can be a strong solution toward the advancement of the SDGs.
- Reversing corporate capture of food and agriculture could help strengthen the country’s economy and the rights of the farmers and businessmen.
- Weaning off fossil fuels by 2023 and switching to clean and green energy.
- Ensuring universal healthcare can help socially strengthen social protection networks.
- Establish a 10-member panel to review and take stock of CSO (Civil Society Organisations) participation.


15th of July 2022
9th meeting



The ministerial declaration is a central outcome document which constitutes a non-legally binding political commitment of the international community in favour of accelerating the actions that must be taken to empower the SDGs. The representative of the USA noted that they are working tirelessly at home and internationally to address the climate crisis by promoting actions to keep a one-and-a-half-degree limit on temperature rise. They are also helping vulnerable communities to increase their resilience to cope with the difficulties that come with climate change. The distinguished representative of the Czech Republic stated they believe in the momentum of the declaration, and they do value it as a means of progress to accelerate the SDGs. In contrast, **they noted the lack of sufficient empowerment of women and girls in the ministerial declaration.** The Delegate of Canada echoed this by reiterating the importance of gender equality and the empowerment of women. This is the 5th sustainable development goal. However, according to the Permanent Executive of Italy, these times of international crisis put the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and SDGs at risk, therefore the adoption of the Ministerial Declaration will unite and accelerate the goals of the 2030 Agenda and will **“help all and leave no one behind.”**

Among key recommendations from youth (Student Rapporteurs) to Leaders:

- 1. Take larger strides in alleviating geopolitical tensions in order to better form multi-stakeholder international relations for faster crisis recovery.** Acknowledge that the first step in addressing global issues is to strengthen political will to innovate and develop as a civil society. We urge leaders to uphold the collective duty of working in unity and harmony under the doctrine of “leaving no one behind.”
- 2. Not only value but, more importantly, actively invite youth voices in conversations concerning the future.** Introduce creative and fresh perspectives in worldly discussions to encourage new-age sustainable growth. Through this act, many nations, leaders, and the general population are inspired to turn words into action and hold each other accountable for change.
- 3. Provide specialised support for marginalised groups such as women, children, and persons with disabilities whose human rights fall in danger in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.** Ensure that in dialogue concerning the greater community, inclusivity and transparency are not only observed but rather, actively made the social standard. Through targeted policies and interactive cooperation, leaders and public partners can aid in the movement towards reducing social inequalities.
- 4. Observe equity and morality in the global financial architecture, favouring a system that delivers to all.** We call for Member States, the public and private sector, as well as any other concerned organisations to cooperate in a shared effort to bolster the economy and promote financial independence. In this vein, we hope for a paradigm shift that ensures the poor do not continue to be punished whilst the wealthy flourish.

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5. **Increase investments in the field of education in least developed countries (LDCs) to decrease vulnerability whilst simultaneously improving resilience.** Amidst the setbacks presented by the pandemic, it has become more crucial than ever to ensure that the youth are adequately prepared for the transformative actions of the future. As such, it is vital that the contemporary curricula, educational facilities and resources, as well as academic employment are constantly improved, incentivised, and made readily accessible for all.