



The **UN High Level Political Forum** was convened in a hybrid format during the 10 day period **6 – 15th July 2021** to review progress on the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, and to assess the impact of COVID-19. More than 3,400 people participated in this year’s virtual forum, including stakeholders from civil society, NGOs and the private sector. The **theme for this year’s Forum** was “*Sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic that promotes the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development*” Every session held in the first week seemed to sound the alarm of growing inequality. COVID 19 has certainly revealed the hidden face of inequality as well as exacerbating the recognized disparities. Interventions by member states, UN agencies and other stakeholders acknowledged that accelerating progress towards the achievement of the SDGs is in itself a response plan to COVID-19. While acknowledging the heavy toll that the pandemic had taken on progress on the SDGs, there was general recognition that Agenda 2030 provides an essential roadmap towards a post COVID world.



HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



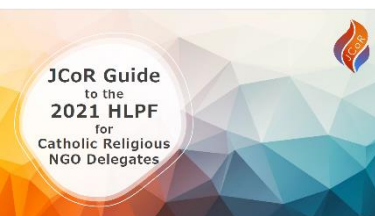
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Some facts from the 2021 Sustainable Development Report

1 NO POVERTY	An estimated 119 million - 124 million people fell into poverty during 2020 after years of decline in global poverty rates.	2 ZERO HUNGER	265 million people face acute food insecurity (WFP)	8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH	255 million people lost full-time jobs, four times the number lost during the 2007-2009 financial crisis.
3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING	COVID-19 pandemic has halted or reversed progress in health indicators such as maternal mortality .	13 CLIMATE ACTION	Greenhouse gas (GHG) concentrations reached record highs in 2020;	16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS	70 million refugees and displaced persons risk disproportionate impacts (UNHCR)
15 LIFE ON LAND	Human activities are causing biodiversity loss faster than ever before in human history. More than 37,400 species are threatened with extinction.	8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH	1.6 billion informal workers have lost 60 % of their income (ILO)	2 ZERO HUNGER	Investment in agriculture, research and development fell by 53% in 2020
4 QUALITY EDUCATION	Uganda school children have gone more than 300 days out of school , while home internet connectivity “is the lowest on the planet there at about 0.3% ”.	6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION	70% decline in investment in provision of water to industry and households	5 GENDER EQUALITY	Over the next decade, up to 10 million more girls will be at risk of child marriage as a result of the pandemic

RSHM NGO involvement at HLPF

Through our partnership and collaboration with others, our **RSHM NGO** was able to support many educational and advocacy initiatives during the HLPF. Veronica RSHM was on the organizing team for two events relating to the elimination of child labor and addressing inequality organized by the Mining Working Group and the NGO Committee on Social Development. We submitted a written statement on behalf of the **Committee to Stop Trafficking in persons**. We participated in the initiatives undertaken by the **Justice Coalition of Religious (JCoR)** to promote engagement of Religious at the local and global level in the **Voluntary National**



Review process relating to the implementation of the SDGs, with particular reference to Zimbabwe and Mexico, both of whom presented their reports this year.

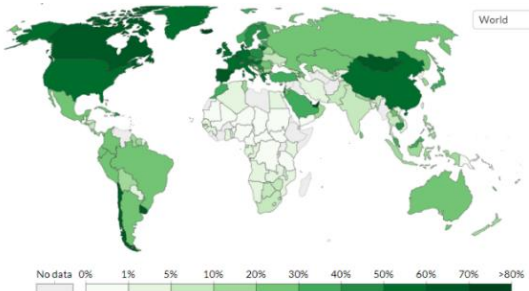
Six years and counting...

Six years ago, **Melati Wijesen** was an **inspiring 14 yr old** from Bali, Indonesia, who, together with her fellow students from the **Green School**, presented the story of their campaign to ban single use plastic bags in Bali, Indonesia. This was at the **Mini COP 21** organized by **Marymount Paris** with the collaboration and support of **Global Issues Network!** It was 2 days before the opening of the **Paris Climate Conference COP 21**. Six years later, Melati was selected as one of two youth to speak on the opening panel during the High Level Segment of the HLPF, addressing her inspiring story to dignitaries and Ministers of Development from around the world. Be challenged and inspired by her story.




→ [Watch the short video](#) → Learn about the campaign [Bye Bye Plastic Bags](#)

Vaccine Inequity.



“Vaccine inequity is not only a moral failure, it is also epidemiologically and economically self-defeating” the **WHO Director-General** said recently. Noting that vaccine inequity is the world's biggest obstacle to ending this pandemic and recovering from Covid-19, he highlighted the fact that one in every two people in high income countries have been vaccinated as of 21st July 2021 (**50.15%**) whereas in low-income countries the figure was 1 in every 76 or only **1.32%** of the population. This extreme gap will result in long term losses. Two UN agencies have partnered with an Oxford University research unit to produce a **Vaccine Equity Dashboard**. Data pooled by diverse UN agencies shows that low-income countries would add \$38 billion to their GDP forecast for

2021 if they had the same vaccination rate as high-income countries. Socio-economic impact assessments which are based on findings from more than 60 countries and 5 regional reports, show that the poorest and most vulnerable are the least able to cope with the impacts, given the fact that the world was already on an unsustainable trajectory with widespread pre-existing inequalities. Dr. Tedros ended by highlighting the need to increase production capacity significantly so there are sufficient vaccines for 70% of the global population to be vaccinated by mid-2022.  [Visit the Vaccine Equity Dashboard.](#)


Uniting the world to tackle climate change: The 100 day countdown to COP 26



In November the UK will host the 26th Conference of Parties to the

“It is indisputable that human activities are causing climate change, making extreme climate events, including heat waves, heavy rainfall, and droughts, more frequent and severe” (IPCC report August 2021).

UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 26). Because of the urgency of the issues at stake, this is being called the last best chance to prevent global temperature rise from spiraling out of control. **The four main goals of COP 26** are :

- a) a steep change in commitments to emissions reduction
- b) strengthening adaptation to climate change impacts
- c) getting finance flowing for climate action and
- d) enhancing international collaboration, including for the COP26 [campaigns](#) on energy transition, clean road transport and nature. Devastating heat waves, uncontrolled fires, unprecedented storms and widespread floods have brought home the urgency of addressing the human-induced causes of climate change.  [Watch the short video](#)

 [Read more](#)



The Race to Zero is a global campaign launched in the build up to **COP 26**

in **Glasgow** in November 2021 where Governments must strengthen their Nationally Determined Contributions to meet the goals of the **Paris Climate Agreement**. The aim is to rally leadership and inspire commitment from **regions, cities, businesses, investors and higher educational institutions**, aiming for a healthy, resilient, zero carbon COVID recovery, one that will achieve net zero carbon emissions by no later than 2050. When viewed collectively these non-government initiatives now cover nearly **25% of global CO₂ emissions** and over 50% of the world's Gross Domestic Product. The campaign aims to build momentum around the shift to a decarbonized economy. It will send governments a resounding signal that business, cities, regions and investors are united in meeting the Paris goals and creating a more inclusive and resilient economy.

 [Watch the video....](#)


The UN Climate Report: All Is Not Well

On Monday 9th August the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change launched its 6th Assessment report on the physical science basis of climate change. This provides the most updated information on the scientific knowledge on climate including the past, present and future climate scenarios, as well as its impacts and future risks. The report is the fruit of

the collaborative work of 320 scientists from 66 countries, reviewing 14,000 scientific studies. It provides important information for policy makers at different levels, for society as a whole and especially for global climate negotiators. It provides the basic options for adapting to climate change and mitigating its effects.  [Read more](#)



Food systems and climate

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres is warning that climate change and conflict are both consequence and driver of poverty, income inequality and the high cost of food. Guterres also told a meeting in Rome that the world's food system generates a third of all greenhouse gas emissions. He said in his video message that the same system is responsible for as much as 80% of biodiversity loss. The gathering is helping prepare for a **UN Food Systems Summit** to be held in September in New York. A UN report noted earlier this month that up to 161 million more people faced hunger last year compared to 2019.  [Watch the short video](#)



Distribution

Institute Leadership Team; Provincials/ Regionals, JPIC Animators; Global Network of RSHM Schools; UN Interest Group *Portuguese translation by Maria Luisa Pinho, RSCM.*