



## Sustainable Development Progress Report 2022



“Our world is in deep trouble—and so too are the Sustainable Development Goals.” **Secretary General Antonio Guterres** did not mince his words in addressing the Heads of State and Government Ministers attending the **High Level Political Forum** at the UN in **July 2022**. In a world reeling from the effects of the COVID pandemic, beset by conflicts, geopolitical instability, global economic turndown, food and energy insecurity, and the worsening climate crisis, the **Sustainable Development Goals** are perhaps more crucial than ever.

During the period **5 – 13<sup>th</sup> July** the progress on attaining the SDGs was reviewed with the focus placed on **SDG 4** (quality education), **SDG 5** (gender equality), **SDG 14** (life below water), **SDG 15** (life on land), and **SDG 17** (*partnerships for the Goals*). Forty four countries presented their “**Voluntary National Reviews**”, - sharing challenges and good practices and Civil Society representatives pushed for action and accountability. It is clear from the VNRs presented that a lot more needs to be done to accelerate progress on the SDGs.

While statistics showed that progress has been severely limited by the pandemic, the Sustainable Development Goals continue to offer the best roadmap or blueprint for a green recovery which “*leaves no one behind*”. This was asserted by the UN Secretary General. This is - a goal which to which all member states re-iterated their commitment in a **negotiated political declaration**. ➡ Watch the [short video](#)

### Did you know that:

- An additional **75 million to 95 million** people are living in extreme poverty in 2022, as compared to pre-pandemic projections.
- More than **17 million metric tons of plastic**
- entered the ocean in **2021** This is projected to triple by 2040.
- **10 Million ha** of forests are destroyed every year with **90% of global deforestation** being due to large scale agricultural expansion.
- **More than 4 years of progress** against poverty have been erased by COVID 19.
- An estimated **41 % of people forcibly displaced** in 2021 were **children**.
- At the present rate, it would take another **40 years** for women and men to be represented equally in **national political leadership**.

## The Human Right to a Clean, Healthy and Sustainable Environment

On July 28<sup>th</sup>, in an encouraging display of consensus, the **UN General Assembly (UNGA)** voted overwhelmingly (160 – 0) with 8 abstentions, to adopt the **resolution recognizing the right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment as a universal human right**. The UN Secretary-General António Guterres welcomed the passage of the resolution, noting that it was a “landmark development,” five decades in the making and asserting that it will help to reduce environmental injustices, close protection gaps and empower people, especially those in vulnerable situations,



Why are UNGA resolutions important, even if they are not legally binding? As **David Boyd, Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and the Environment** noted, they can serve as effective catalysts for action. By way of an example he cited the 2010 Resolution on the right to water and sanitation which resulted in “*a cascade of positive changes that have improved the lives of millions of people*.” It is hoped that the UNGA resolution will prompt member states to enshrine the right to a healthy environment in their national legislation and regional agreements, thus enabling people “*to challenge environmentally destructive policies under human rights legislation*.” ➡ [Read more](#)

## Global Crisis Response Group..



As part of the UN’s response to the interlinked crises related to the **War in Ukraine**, **UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres** established the **Global Crisis Response Group in April 2022**. The coordinating group has been charged with actively focusing their efforts on three fronts with enormous humanitarian consequences globally: - **food, energy and finance**. They aim to mitigate the impact of the Ukraine crisis on global markets which have left millions of people around the world on the brink of famine and extreme energy poverty. Launching the third brief produced by the Global Crisis Response group in early August, Secretary General Antonio Guterres highlighted the immorality of oil and gas companies making huge profits on the back of the poorest during the pandemic while also contributing to the climate crisis. The report recommends that governments find effective funding for renewable energy solutions, such as publicly financed cash transfers and rebate policies to protect vulnerable communities. Windfall taxes to fund social protection measures for the most vulnerable are suggested while also advocating for a transition to more cost-effective renewable energy. ➡ [Watch the short video](#)

## The Black Sea Grain Initiative.



Horn of Africa and bring down food prices in the global market.

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## The 10 yr Review Conference – Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty

The **Tenth Review Conference** of the Parties to the **Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons** was held during four weeks in August 2022 after a two year delay due to the COVID pandemic. As UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres *noted in his opening remarks*, the **Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)** is a landmark international treaty. *“Its unique status is based on its near universal membership, legally-binding obligations on disarmament, verifiable non-proliferation safeguards regime, and commitment to the peaceful use of nuclear energy”* Its objective is **threefold**: a) to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, b) to promote cooperation in the peaceful



uses of nuclear energy and c) to work towards nuclear disarmament. With a total of **191 States signatories** to the treaty, including the **five nuclear-weapon States**, it provides an essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament.

### RSHM News Briefs:

During a five-week period in July/August, our RSHM NGO welcomed a summer intern from **Emmanuel College, Boston**. **Mariana Kordorsky** shared a reflection on her internship:

*“On the first day of my internship, walking into the UN, I expected to be met with a sea of older businessmen hurrying to their next obligation, similar to the streets of NYC. To my surprise, I waited behind two lines of African children, all holding small signs and barely concealing their excitement for **World Kiswahili Language Day (July 7<sup>th</sup>)**. This first impression makes me smile but also perfectly encapsulates my experience at the UN. There is a palpable depth and vibrancy within the building from the beautiful gifts from member states to the rich diversity of its inhabitants, all working together to achieve a common goal.*

*Primarily, I worked with the **RSHM NGO** during the **High-Level Political Forum (HLPF)** which focused on the world’s progress regarding the **UN’s 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**. After experiencing lively debates regarding the best tactics to fight pressing global issues like climate change, food insecurity, nuclear proliferation, gender-based violence, and more – I left not defeated but inspired. Undeniably, what stood out to me was a unanimous commitment to refuse to settle for the current status quo. There is a stubborn optimism that encourages innovative solutions, ambitious projects, and increased youth engagement which inspires hope that a better world for tomorrow is inevitable”.*

**Mariana Kordorsky**



From the beginning of the Conference it was recognized that the current geopolitical divide relating to the **war in Ukraine** would make it difficult to of

reach consensus on a substantive outcome document. Despite the good will among delegations, and diligent work done in committee and plenary sessions and informational side events, in the end one negative vote on the part of the Russian Federation was enough to prevent agreement on the negotiated outcome document including conclusions and recommendations. Many delegations deplored this failure, while affirming that they strongly supported the content of the Treaty itself, and the achievements made thus far.

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### Distribution

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