Thursday July 18th 2019

Nelson Mandela Day

9.00 - 11.00am
Along with Sr Elsa and Ann Marie I attended a great side event on Inequality and Human rights with an excellent all women panel! They were really high level experts with their feet firmly on the experiences of people's reality!!

What I took from this side event
1. The most affected by the SDGs are not aware of what the SDGs are.
2. The power of the people must be stronger than the people in power.
3. What happens to me and my neighbour is in my hands.
4. If I as a wealthy, well-resourced person was to be dropped into certain communities then not my wealth nor my resources would help be to get what I would need. I would now be dependent upon people.
5. There needs to be shift in Taxation policy that empties the poorer countries of their wealth to increase the profits of the more developed countries.
6. Politics and vested interests hold back progress on the SDGs
7. Corporates must pay fair tax and workers must earn decent wages.
8. Trade Unions are fundamental to maintaining the rights of those at work.
9. IT companies make secret deals to enhance their profits whilst they make all of our data available to all.
10. Laws that shrink Civil Society Spaces seem appropriate to governments.
11. The SDGs must do more to put people at the centre.
12. Fighting inequalities is not a spectator sport: we must engage.
13. Those who have money also have power, access, opportunity, connections, impunity.
14. Make thinks simple, less jargon.
15. Elite and Corporate interests aggressively challenge progressive taxation.
16. Africa is not poor the people are: What does that tell us?
17. It is time to re-discuss that which is public debt.
12.30 - 4.00pm
Team IPA at the UN met in the IPA Offices to discuss that which stayed with us at the HLPF 2019 and somethings that we would like to see. I offer only some of the many things that came up.

1. Civil Society Space is under attack.
2. Where the youth voice was included it was sometimes patronised.
3. A greater attendance by those from the North and there needs to be a greater inclusion of those most affected.
4. At our own Side Event where Rozie spoke of the lived experiences of inequalities we were given first-hand experience of the stories that affected many. We were spoken to by a young refugee from Syria who described her painful journey to the US and the dire consequences for others of her family who were not so fortunate. Despite now achieving her green card discrimination persists because she explains, that she is a Kurd, Syrian, and Muslim and that this makes her a target to many in officialdom.
5. Whilst at this side event a call came through asking all in the room if they could assist with a Chinese lady whom security had left at the door of the event. She needed genuine assistance in the same way as the Syrian speaker and thankfully someone came to her aid. This made our side event real in so many ways.
6. We somehow need to have a voice at the reform of the HLPF this coming September in the hope that the mechanisms for the VNRs might become less voluntary and more robust.
7. There is a real need for concrete policies and real accountability.
8. Rozie and Analee had the opportunity to meet some of those who are from their countries who had some role in the preparation of the VNRs and this was important to them.
9. The lies told by some countries were frequently mentioned by all at the table and this continues to be a real problem at the HLPF.

After this meeting I had the opportunity to have a look at the preparation of the report into the work that is ongoing at the UN and that all the Justice Contacts fed into. The two fantastic interns Claire and Skye put a huge amount of work into this but have done so in such a way that what they are producing will become a living document that can (and will be updated easily) from now on.

4.00pm to 6.00pm
After these meetings I headed back to the UN for the final roundup and learnings of the HLPF 2019 where Ambassador David Donoghue lead negotiator on the SDGs in 2015 was interviewed and two of his big asks are to include the Youth Meaningfully and take stock of shrinking civil society space.
Other learnings:

From a survey to all who attended:
1. There have now been 142 VNRs
2. The HLPF should guide on the SDGs.
3. The VNRs should have more time and there should be a greater depth to the analysis.
4. The contributions of the Major groups should be strengthened.
5. The HLPF 2019 has been a success
6. There needs to be some work done of the emerging issues.
7. The Review of the SDGs is good and must continue.
8. There is room for improvement.
9. There needs to be greater effort to include the disabled.

And on Mandela Day, July 18th, 2019

Wednesday 17th July 2019

The easiest way to bring you the detail of Wednesday is to take you through our day:

Firstly
I had an early start this morning as I had agreed to take the minutes of the meeting with Coalition 2030 and Minister Canney the night before so that all delegates would have a chance to review the content as this would be the substance of “take-aways” from the event that would be returned to Coalition 2030 plenary upon our return.

9.00 - 11.00 Meeting with Misean Cara
Together with Franciscan International, the IPA, the Good Shepherds, Loretto Sisters, Daughter of Charity, Vincentian Family, and Eco-Jesuits we met with Misean Cara (Eamonn Casey) who explained that there is some funding available for inter-congregational work and this meeting allowed us all to hear what we do and how we might understand our differences and similarities.

What I took away from this meeting.
1. That we can all do more work together to identify the voice of those left behind and indeed to give an opportunity to have this voice heard.
2. That research is important in that it can lead to a greater clarity and focus and that there may be opportunities for all to work together on this research.
3. That there is merit in linking the SDGs to the Human Rights Mechanisms that are UN Geneva Based.
4. In ways our work alone can be an island of excellence but that collaboratively we may achieve more and with greater effect.
5. As religious congregations we are very often direct service oriented, but we must also be influencers of change.

6. When we speak of the difficult experiences of others that the SDGs tries to reach, we must remember that it should be "Nothing about us Without Us", i.e. they need to be included physically.

11.00 - 12.00
I met with Sr Kathryn Keigher (Loretto UK) and offered to include her in all emails that I send to the Sisters of the UK. She was bitterly disappointed in the UK VNR (and rightly so although we knew what was coming). We have a lot of preparatory work completed on the SDGs and the HLPF and the UK VNR preparation that they haven’t done. We are able to respond to all that we saw and heard and the Loretto will use our preparation to help them to react at home to all that they saw and heard at the HLPF. I then offered to the Loretto Sisters all that we have, and they have been extremely grateful, I will continue to offer this assistance as it an easy gift to impart.

12.00 - 1.00pm
I attended the New Zealand First Voluntary National Review.

What I took away from this (New Zealand is one of our IPA Countries)

1. They now produce well-being budgets.
2. The Prime Minister of New Zealand made a great video explaining:
   1. Commitment to indigenous peoples
   2. The well-being budget.
   3. The biodiversity and climate action plan that is needed by New Zealand.
   4. That NZ is agile, wealthy, diverse and that all New Zealanders can have a good standard of living.
   5. That in order to achieve the SDGs New Zealand (NZ) has created an entirely new mechanism to gather, useful dis-aggregated data relative to the indicators for the SDGs.
   6. NZ has created a Living Standards toolkit and is committed to being a leader at home and abroad.

Some of the other points to note:
1. The business forum in NZ are much more committed than other business forums in other countries and have asked for a specific ministry for the SDGs.
2. That a collective movement within NZ could push the Climate and Environmental agenda to the fore where is needs to be.
3. More to be done for rural and marginalised women.
4. There is a need for a national plan for the SDGs
5. There is a real difficulty in health especially Women’s health.
6. There is a huge need to raise awareness of the SDGs at home.
7. Domestic violence in NZ is far and above more prevalent than it appears in other countries.

NZ is a confident country and as a result is not afraid of Civil Society Criticism and see Civil Society as having a real role the implementation of the SDGs. Their Voluntary National review can be found here.

And some local commentary on the New Zealand VNR can be found here.

I then met with some the representatives of the Coalition 2030 as we did this daily unless we were caught up at other events.
2.15 - 4.30
I attended the Permanent Mission of Ireland for an event that was moderated by Geraldine Byrne Nason the Irish Permanent Representative at the UN.

5.00pm - 6.00p
I caught Minister Sean Canney as he offered the National Statement into the record at the UN

We cannot go it alone’ Panelist Monica Asuna stresses the need for collaboration to realize the #SDGs at today’s #taskteam SDG17 event. ‘ We need to be accountable and transparent, not only for resources but also for results.’ #partnerships #GlobalGoals #HLPF2019

The #SDGs are the roadmap to the future we all want by 2030. #ireland was proud to provide leadership on agreeing the SDGs. We want to show the same leadership in achieving them. Minister @SeanCanney delivers Ireland’s national statement at #HLPF2019. #Ireland4SDGs

Rory Steward Delivers the UK's First VNR and you can listen a poor video of it [here](#). You'll need to turn up the sound.
Day 7 Tuesday July 16th

Today I tried to catch the UK VNR.

The best commentaries can be found here from Bond.

Has the UK missed an opportunity for global leadership?

In 2015, countries adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to help transform the lives of people and protect the planet by 2030. The UK was pivotal to securing these goals. Governments are accountable for the delivery of the 17 interlinked goals and take turns to report against their progress.

This July, it is the UK’s turn at the High-level Political Forum. The UK government has now published its Voluntary National Review (VNR) mapping out its progress. So, what do we think?

The government covers every goal, including activity in the UK and internationally, committing to deliver sustainable development at home and abroad. However, the report lacks analysis, ambition and the perspectives of the most vulnerable.

The government is yet to set out a vision and plan for how they will meaningfully contribute to the success of the SDGs by 2030.

What we liked
1. The balance of domestic and international activity is about right.
2. We welcome commitment to a mechanism “to enhance stakeholder engagement and cooperation with government”.
3. The report highlights the interlinked nature of the goals by signposting between them.
4. Data and evidence were used throughout the report and complemented by statistical annexes.
5. The inspiring front cover, which was designed by the 14-year old winner of a UK-wide art competition, adds a nice touch.

Our concerns
1. Still no SDG Action Plan:
2. Is the report a progress review or a synthesis? The report is largely a mapping exercise, outlining existing activity, but it doesn’t offer an ambitious agenda for achieving the SDGs.
3. Policy coherence and interlinkages: Despite signposting between different goals, the chapters don’t explore how to improve integrated working across government departments.
4. UK’s footprint missing: The VNR doesn’t look at how UK domestic policy, trade and consumption impacts on the delivery of the goals around the world.
5. Business as usual: despite some positive hooks in the foreword by the secretary of state, Rory Stewart, there is no indication that the UK government is thinking beyond “business as usual” to deliver the SDGs.
6. Selective rather than comprehensive: the data used offers a selective picture. Claims around inequality and poverty in the UK could be contested by presenting conflicting or alternate data, for example from UN rapporteur, Philip Alston’s recent report highlighting wide-scale poverty in the UK.
7. “Leave No-One Behind” has its own section and is covered in each chapter, but often doesn’t go beyond a token gesture. There is little understanding of the intersecting and multiple factors that lead to discrimination and marginalisation. This is disappointing, given that the UK led the way on championing this principle when the goals were agreed.
What’s next?
While we welcome this report, it doesn’t inspire confidence in the UK government having a clear and focused plan for delivering on that ambition, or that the SDGs are setting the tone and ambition for policy across government.

Lots of gaps and questions remain. And at the UN and beyond, we will be pushing the UK government for answers.

And from UKSSD (United Kingdom Sustainable Stakeholders Development)
In its new report, the International Development Committee (IDC) identifies serious failings in the preparation and presentation of UK’s first Voluntary National Review of progress towards the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The report, which is published on the day Rory Stewart, Secretary of State for International Development, is due to present at the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in New York, casts doubt on the Government’s commitment to the SDGs.

Committee Chair, Stephen Twigg MP, says:
1. We fear that the priority and resources committed to the VNR process – and the whole SDGs agenda – reflect a lack of engagement and understanding at the heart of, and throughout, the UK Government.
2. The UK has taken a long time to get around to producing a VNR and so expectations were naturally that much higher, and the disappointment that much greater.
3. The Government had 19 months between committing to a VNR and producing it. Despite this, the timeline was squeezed and most of the work – and virtually all of the engagement activity – was left to the last few months, preventing stakeholders from meaningfully engaging in, or influencing, the final report.
4. The engagement activity recommended by the UN – consultation with stakeholders like human rights institutions, trades unions, business and industry, NGOs, parliamentarians and UK academia – was not only late but also ‘ad hoc’ and superficial.
5. The VNR itself was selective and partial, relying on cherry-picked data, context-free snapshots and positive vignettes, to present a ‘good story’. It skirted discussion of some serious issues, for instance, food security, poverty trends and EU withdrawal.
6. The implications of these failings of process and substance in the VNR is that the UK is not taking the SDG initiative seriously – as integral to, and coherent with, the Government’s overall agenda.

Finally, stakeholder engagement is taken seriously.

In the review the Government commits to establishing ‘an effective mechanism... to enhance stakeholder engagement and cooperation with government in the domestic sphere’.

The limited reach of data

The Government has delivered on its intention to produce a data-led review.
Ignoring poor performance
It’s understandable that critically analysing your own Government’s performance on the SDGs is going to be hard. But it appears the UK government’s report is ignoring or misrepresenting the targets for which it is receiving criticism or doing nothing about. For example, Goal 12 explicitly states the UK does not subsidise fossil fuels. Making excuses with definitions of what is or what isn’t a subsidy doesn’t disguise the Government’s support for fossil fuels in the UK and UK Export Finance, as highlighted in the recent inquiry by the Environmental Audit Committee.

Are we leaving people behind?
To ‘leave no one behind’ is a critical principle that underpins the SDGs. The review makes promising references to it throughout, highlighting the challenges experienced by obvious groups such as women or people with disabilities. However, the review fails to acknowledge the regional disparities that exist across the UK. In Measuring up, UKSSD’s review of the UK’s performance on the SDGs, we identified regional disparities in almost all areas – from access to health care and educational outcomes, to productivity levels and transport infrastructure. In fact, the evidence that people and places are being left behind in the UK was one of the biggest findings in Measuring up.

An unfortunate case of political bias
In his recent evidence to the International Development Select Committee, Rory Stewart, the Secretary of State for International Development, acknowledged the VNR could provide the opposition with a stick to beat the Government with.

An absence of local government, Northern Ireland, and the Overseas Territories
It’s notable throughout the review that Northern Ireland features less than England, Scotland and Wales, and there is no explanation of how the Overseas Territories are reporting on their SDG progress.

What happened to our contributions?
Aside from the case studies scattered throughout the report, we cannot see any reference to your case studies and contributions made at stakeholder events.

Given the importance of stakeholders in delivering SDGs, and the commitment to future stakeholder engagement, this feels like a lost opportunity to present a more complete picture of UK progress on the SDGs by reflecting our perspectives.

The Lived Experiences of inequality SDG #10
In the afternoon we were at a wonderful Side event where our very own Sr Rozie Younas gave a warm and complete presentation of the lived inequalities that are experienced by the families of those children she works with in Pakistan. We livestreamed this event but a clear copy can be found here
Day 6 Monday July 15th

Monday saw the beginning of the Voluntary National Reviews and the Ministers were now in town to present to be present and accounted for. The easiest way to bring you the best account of the day would be to take you through the day:

9.00 am
I attended the plenary on Financing the SDGs. One might think this as being boring, but it was anything but. We had impassioned contributions from many of the African States and South Africa who demanded that all need to step up NOW. All were asked to consider their need to commit to 0.7% of overseas development aid as soon as possible. Very few countries lead from the front on this generous ODA. The key message at this meeting was that if your country is doing better that then your country must commit to paying more into the SDG implementation at home and abroad.

11.00am
I sat through the Voluntary National Reviews of both the Philippines and Chile both IPA Countries.

Philippines: Key take-aways:
1. This was their second VNR
2. The process of the VNR is as important as the product.
3. SDG #4 is of primary importance: Quality Education. They announced a reduction in bribery
5. A commitment to green jobs.
6. They mentioned a long standing conflict in the South.

What they carefully left out:
1. Their poor Human Rights Record.
2. Any commentary on their governance and government.
3. Tools for measuring progress on the SDGs
4. Workers who leave home to send home money that the country desperately needs.

Chile Key Take-aways.
1. There is a new stable government that engages fully with Civil Society,
2. There is a national plan for children.
3. 30% of people live in poverty.
4. They have reformed the pension system.
5. They are trying hard to eliminate child labour.
6. They will close 8 coal mines immediately and all by 2040. They are hugely dependent on coal.
7. They plan to plan 100,000 hectares of forest over the next 5 years.
8. They have modernised the police force and have now an arms-register which is new and is a nod to SDG #16 Peace.

Challenges:
1. They have an aging population
2. Chile is in a period of change and modernisation.
3. They suffer at the effects of Climate Action.

I met with the Irish Delegates to plan for a meeting with the Minister Sean Canney later today.
1.00pm
I attended the Irish Mission with Minister Katherine Zappone who along with other distinguished guests spoke to their countries efforts to reach furthest behind to include those most in need. Also present were Geraldine Byrne Nason (Permanent Irish Rep to the UN) and the former New Zealand Premier. Sr Ann Marie Quinn was also at this event.

Key take-aways at this event:
1. "Never borrow for the groceries" i.e. don't borrow to pay for education.
2. Invest in teacher education.
3. Second Chance Education is extremely important.
4. Period Poverty is a real problem throughout the world and not just in the global south.
5. School Meals are very important
6. Schools need to be safe places.
7. Invest in Youth.
8. (Mary Robinson also attended this event, quietly!)

3.00pm
I attended the Ministerial Segment on the Voluntary National reports that was delivered by Sean Canney to the General Assembly and he referenced: He did well given that when we met him later in the day he explained that up until October of last year (2018) he had no idea of what the SDGs were.

1. Our Commitment to the SDGs.
2. The involvement with CSOs
3. Measuring progress and climate commitments.
4. 13 new SDG Champions
5. The SDG Stakeholder forum
6. The Citizen Assembly.

6.30 - 8.00pm
Meeting with Minister Canney.

Together with Coalition 2030 Irish Delegates we met with Minister Canney where he kindly listened and engaged on the following

1. Civil Society Participation in the next National Implementation Plan and the next VNR (he agreed to both)
2. A Dail/Seanad debate should happen. He agreed but said that now might not be the time as he felt that it would be poorly attended as very few of the TDs know about the SDGs and that indeed he is only a recent convert.
3. We spoke plainly as did he about Climate Change and the Climate Emergency Bill
4. We spoke of policy incoherencies and financing the SDGs.
5. We asked him to bring up that the HLPF reform next Sept the absolute lack of Civil Society Space at the September Meetings.
6. We also asked him to do his utmost to ensure that future VNRS could be less voluntary and more compulsory and that there would be scrutiny.
7. The minister was questioned closely on the Just Transition proposed in the Climate Action Plan 2019.
8. We told him that we wanted to meet the Interdepartmental Reps and the Senior officials’ groups who have responsibility for delivering the SDGs across government
9. We offered as a coalition with expertise and willing to train the following:
   I. The Senior Officials
   II. Co Councils
   III. PPNs
   IV. Interdepartmental Reps with responsibility for the SDGs.
V. The Youth Forum on SDGs and
VI. The yet to be announced 12 SDG Champion.

This was a positive meeting and we got said all that we needed to say.

I attach a few photos of the day.
Day 5 July 13th 2019

There are no official events at the HLPF on Saturday, but there was an important space set aside for passionate members of the Civil Society Organisations (CSO) whose countries will present their Voluntary National Reviews next week and the extent to which they had some involvement in this process as partners. One of the first things that strikes me is that from a small country it is much easier to mobilise and engage as CSOs in planning a course for our involvement in the SDGs. Some countries are huge, some have very poor human right records, some treat indigenous people as second class citizens. Some of the best countries are Lichtenstein, Iceland and the Scandinavian countries and those at the bottom of the list are Pakistan, Brazil and some of the African countries. We heard from about 12 different countries and each told a different story. We heard from Cambodia, Chile, Philippines and the UK and all here are linked with OUR IPA. In the UK we were told of the tokenistic engagement of the government with the CSOs. We heard how there is still a perception that the SDGs are for poorer countries and others also said this. We were told that the devolved states were laterally involved. On the plus side there was a debate on the SDGs in parliament and there is a plan for a comprehensive stakeholder forum. However, there is still no National Implementation Plan. The United Kingdom Sustainable Stakeholders Development (UKSSD) kept an eye on the domestic implementation of the SDGs. Whilst Bond UK have a significant role in foreign aid and kept a watching brief on how the SDGs are implemented abroad by the UK. To the credit of the UK they have reached the 0.7% GNI target of overseas development aid (ODA).

Day 4 July 12th 2019

This was my first full day at the UN and indeed my first day at the HLPF. Whilst a huge privilege it is really a daunting place. I am fortunate to be a part of Coalition 2030, the Civil Society Coalition in Ireland who hold the 2030 Agenda for Civil Society Organisations in Ireland. There is an Irish Delegation of about 6 members of the Coalition who are here with the assistance of the Department of Communications Climate Action and Environment. There are a number of others who attend, like me, who are members of the Coalition but who are being sponsored by our NGOs, e.g. International Presentation Association and Misean Cara. We have been afforded every assistance by the Irish Government to attend and to be a part of the HLPF and this is only more noticeable when we see the lengths to which some have made to attend and the reluctance of some to speak plainly about SDG progress because their words may have adverse consequences for attendees at a later period should they criticise those in power. Some conversations and contributions are therefore quite tentative.

I attended the plenary on Climate Change which was quick with so many speakers each getting a maximum of 2-minutes to speak and what seemed really off-putting was that their microphones went silent after the two minutes and the moderator moved on to the next speaker. Some contributors were honest, explaining the
challenges and indeed their plans to mitigate Climate Change whilst others were clearly lying about how much they were doing, and this goes on unchallenged. It was good to see but it is hard to see what can come of this process of SDG Review.

I then met with the Irish delegates to discuss the details of the Irish involvement next week and the ministers who will attend what events and where and more importantly what access we will have to them. We have a meeting with Sean Canney, (an Irish Independent politician who has served as Minister of State for Natural Resources, Community Affairs and Digital Development) on Monday evening next and although we have an agenda set this will change. Sean Canney is coming to read into the record Ireland Voluntary National Report (different from the Voluntary National Review that the UK will present this year and that Ireland presented last year).

Other work on this day...

In the afternoon I went to the International Presentation Association Offices to help Rozie as she prepares her presentation for the second Side Event that involves IPA.

As HLPF focused on SDG 13 (climate action), members of civil society demonstrate outside the UN Headquarters, saying 'we need you to wake up, we need you to rise up.' (picture below)

As the first week of HLPF 2019 drew to a close, two sessions reviewed the implementation and interrelations among Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), on SDG 13 (climate action) and SDG 16 (peace, justice, and strong institutions).

In the discussion on SDG 13, Luis Alfonso de Alba, the UN Secretary-General’s Special Envoy for the 2019 Climate Action Summit, pleaded with governments to bring ambitious plans to the Summit, to deliver a 45% reduction of emissions by 2030 and carbon neutrality by 2050. Carolina Schmidt, Minister of Environment, Chile, and President-designate of the 2019 Climate Conference identified seven priorities for the Conference: ambition in implementation; rules for the carbon market mechanisms; climate finance; science for climate solutions; adaptation and loss and damage; forests and food security; and oceans and climate change. Gender will be a crosscutting theme for all the issues, she said.

In the discussion on SDG 16, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) reported no substantial progress on SDG 16 targets in recent years, with thousands at greater risk of intentional murder, aggression, and sexual violence. Women comprise 70% of the victims of violence, and murders of human rights defenders increased by 2 victims per week in 2018 compared to 2017. Speakers called for involving women, youth, and children in policymaking related to SDG 16; promoting non-discriminatory policies; instituting and enacting policies to protect human right defenders; and putting technology at the centre of enhancing institutional capacity.

A brief session in the morning also discussed the 2019 report of the Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) Forum, which called for strengthened capacity and policies for development of STI roadmaps, and for tackling the fragmented nature of official development assistance for STI. Speakers said the UN General Assembly should be requested to report on progress of the Technology Facilitation Mechanism (TFM); member states should include STI in their voluntary national reviews (VNRs); and indigenous knowledge and citizen science should be considered as part of STI.
HLPF 2019 continued into its third day with a thematic review on empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality, focused on the perspectives of society. Interventions by women and stakeholders were noticeably predominant in this session, which addressed four issues:

1. guiding principles for strengthening the follow-up and review process of the 2030 Agenda, including HLPF reform;
2. integration with other crosscutting and thematic processes such as Financing for Development (FfD), Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) Forum, Committee on World Food Security (CFS), and Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction;
3. strengthening regional processes; and
4. ensuring vibrant participation and effective dialogue in the voluntary national review (VNR) process at national and global levels.

There were calls for further inclusivity and space for civil society involvement; moving away from tokenism and “tick-boxing”; and honest assessments of global and national processes, moving away from “rose tinted” messages to a more critical review of progress, with space for civil society to present alternative reports. The potential of using regional spaces for better civil society engagement was also recognized.

A session on the science-policy interface followed, with a briefing from the independent group of scientists on the Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR). Peter Messerli, GSDR Co-Chair, noted uneven progress in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and called for integrated approaches in implementation. The value of science in achieving the Goals and identifying challenges beyond the Goals; the importance of making science accessible; and the need for scientific institutions to be involved in policy making and resource planning were emphasized.

In the afternoon, a review of implementation and interrelations among SDGs focused on SDG 10 (reduced inequalities). A statistical snapshot of SDG 10 showed that income and other forms of inequality are on the rise. Globally, the bottom 40% receive less than 25% of overall income, and an increasing share of income going to the top 1% in many countries. Meanwhile, 50% of those affected by extreme poverty are children below 14 years. The principles of “leaving no one behind” and “nothing for us, without us” were evoked as essential for achieving SDG 10.
Day 2 July 10th 2019

I still hadn’t travelled to the event, but I was keeping a close eye on all that might be of interest to any of us at home. Below some of the most difficult challenges and indeed opportunities that may face all in the years to 2030. There has also been a strong feminist theme this year and indeed we have all been encouraged to wear certain colours in solidarity.

A thematic review on empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality in the morning included two sessions, on the perspectives of small island developing states (SIDS), and of least developed countries (LDCs) and landlocked developing countries (LLDCs). Speakers highlighted innovations, such as a peer review system for voluntary national reviews (VNRs); and challenges, such as high vulnerability and capacity needs, in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

They emphasized mutually reinforcing synergies between achieving the SDGs and the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway; the Vienna Programme of Action (VPoA) for LLDCs; and the Istanbul Programme of Action for LDCs.

In the afternoon, a review of implementation and interrelations among SDGs focused on SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth). Progress on achieving this Goal was reported as being slow, and somewhat mixed: despite an increase in gross domestic product growth globally, the LDCs are falling short of their 7% target; 22% of the young people around the world are not in education, employment, or training; and the increase in labor productivity shows a high variation across regions.

Several speakers discussed the impacts of the digital economy, describing it as a "double edged sword" that empowers people but can also have disruptive implications for the future of work. The need to reform educational curricula to ensure that skills match future needs was emphasized, as was the critical need to increase women’s participation in the labor market in general, and in the digital economy in particular.

Pat Breen, Minister of State for Trade, Employment, Business, EU Digital Single Market, and Data Protection, Ireland
Day 1 July 9th 2019

I haven’t left yet but am working away to log the progress and details of all is now in full swing at the UN HLPF 2019. Below is a photo carousel of some of the pictures of Day 1 where the International Presentation Association held their Side Event on SDG 4 At the of Achieving the 2030 Agenda.

What of the main messages of DAY 1:
SDGs are our blueprint to leave no one behind to improve lives of billions. Progress is slow on many SDGs
Urgent need to put children at the heart of the 2030 Agenda.
Resources are now at stake in a world that is not developing sustainably.
Stop subsidizing fossil fuels.
Must mobilize resources to be more accessible at the community level with youth involved. Must welcome disruption. Business as usual is not progress. Do more. Move faster. Do better. Take the decision that requires more courage.
Who is at risk of being left behind?
Populations identified as at risk of being left behind include children and youth, persons with disabilities, people living with HIV/AIDS, older persons, indigenous peoples, refugees and internally displaced persons and migrants
President of ECOSOC; she met with ATD 4th World yesterday. They work with the poorest who said that “We would like others to not make decisions for us; or to think for us; to stop doing things for us; We would like them to do things with us”.
Extreme inequality is rising everywhere making societies less able to transit to sustainable development.
Taxes have proven to be essential to generate resources to invest in education, health, tackle climate change.
Global inequality is a factor of global unsustainability Tackling extreme inequality is key to end extreme poverty.

Indigenous peoples:
States fully implement to land territories of indigenous peoples
Establish mechanisms of state engagement, participation and inclusion of indigenous peoples including women
UN agencies, development actors reach out to indigenous peoples to establish partnerships under rights based approach.
5% of the global population but 15% of the poorest. Overwhelming discrimination of cross sectional; criminalization of indigenous men and women; lack of access to justice. We manage 80% of global biodiversity, we play a vital role. States and businesses pursue economic development plans without regards to wellbeing of indigenous peoples worsening discrimination.

85% of all VNR included references to ageing. Population ageing is not only to be framed as a burden that is framed in ageism. Issue is how to seize the opportunities of ageing. People retain the right to live in dignity as they age. We are calling for a paradigm shift - older persons as active agents who already make contributions.

In Rwanda, SDGs means youth, children, women and people with disabilities and that is all.

And on Education
Teaching remains an unattractive profession with poor professional development; poor salaries; poor conditions; precarious contracts. In the UK, 2/3 are seriously considering leaving due to high workloads.

Human rights continue to be violated. Freedom of association.

Remains underfunded; being privatized; recognize education as a human right.

Ethiopia: invested significant amount of resources on SDG 4; over 1/3 of our 100 million plus population are currently students. Many developing countries lack infrastructure. Sub-Sahara Africa faces biggest challenge in lack of basic drinking water, computers, internet, etc. How can we bridge disparity in education along the lines of gender in urban and rural locations?

UK: supported 11.4 million children gain access to decent education. April launched leave no girl behind in 17 countries to reach 1.5 million girls. June 2018, 152 countries signed a UK statement on girls’ education.

I have been updating a site each day that I put together for Coalition 2030, IPA and the Major Groups and there is plenty more information on this site if you want to have a look click Here.
Attendance at the High Level Political Forum HLPF 2019
I am to attend the HLPF from July 11th - 20th. I officially attend for the International Presentation Association during the ministerial segment (second half) but as I’m coming a few days earlier I can be a part of the Coalition 2030 HLPF Delegation. I will be attending the Voluntary National Reviews of those IPA Countries that are of interest to us all. I am particularly interested in UK Voluntary National Review given that at the Justice Desk we have made submissions to the Department For International Development (DFID) whose responsibility it is to prepare and deliver the VNR. At the Justice Desk last year, we also made submissions to the Shadow report produced by UKSSD (below) that offers (right) our view on the UK progress towards Agenda 2030.

Two reports (short) on the UK SDG implementation.....

Bond are the umbrella group with responsibility for overseas development work that the UK is so good at. They have prepared their report: The UK’s global contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals Executive Summary [here](#). This reads well in tandem with the UKSSD report Measuring Up which looks to the domestic implementation of the SDGs executive summary [here](#).

This year’s High Level Political Forum has as its theme Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality. The following SDGs are under review.

**Goal 4.** Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

**Goal 8.** Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

**Goal 10.** Reduce inequality within and among countries

**Goal 13.** Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

**Goal 16.** Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

**Goal 17.** Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

In 2019, 47 countries (7 for the second time) have volunteered to present their national voluntary reviews to the HLPF. For more details, please [click here](#).
Click the picture (left) you will be brought to:

1. Coalition 2030 Website the Irish Civil Society Coalition for the SDGs
2. United Kingdom Sustainable Stakeholders Development website, a coalition of domestic UK stakeholders in the SDGs
3. The International Presentation Association website.

Presentation Side Events

Voluntary National Reviews and Main Messages for IPA Countries
We are particularly interested in the International Presentation Countries that are presenting at the High Level Political Forum and they are: Click the country to read the main messages of the country prior to the delivery of their Voluntary National Review

1. **Philippines** Monday 15th July VNR Presentation 11:00 -2:00pm (Second timer!)
2. **Chile** Monday 15th July VNR Presentation 11:00 -2:00pm (Second timer!)
3. **Guatemala** Monday 15th July VNR Presentation 11:00 -2:00pm (Second timer!)
4. **United Kingdom & Northern Ireland** Tuesday 16th July VNR Presentation 10:00 2:00pm
5. **Pakistan** Tuesday 16th July VNR Presentation 10:00 -2:00pm
6. **Cambodia** Tuesday 16th July VNR Presentation 3.30pm -6:30pm
7. **New Zealand** Wednesday 17th July VNR Presentation 09:00 am-1:00pm
8. **Israel** Wednesday 17th July VNR Presentation 3:30pm -6:30pm
So how well are these IPA Countries doing relative to their SDG commitments?

These Report Cards were published at the end of June!
Click the country name to read their SDG profile and progress per SDG and Targets.

Ireland, Philippines, Guatemala, United Kingdom, Pakistan, Cambodia, New Zealand, Israel Chile

This is the High Level Political Forum in Numbers