



**Summary of the
conference sessions**

**GLOBAL
LEADERSHIP
FOR THE
21st CENTURY**

15 – 16 December 2020

**A joint initiative of the
United Nations Office at
Geneva & the World
Academy of Art & Science**

INTRODUCTION



The mechanisms for global governance need to function in a way that brings different actors and communities together to nurture and inspire each other and to devise more efficient solutions.

TATIANA VALOVAYA
DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE
AT GENEVA



#GlobalLeadership e-Conference - Organized by UN Geneva and WAAS

15-16 December 2020

On 15 and 16 December 2020, the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG) and the World Academy of Art and Science (WAAS) held a virtual conference on Global Leadership for the 21st Century. The conference was the culmination of a one-year joint project to develop cross-sectoral catalytic strategies to address current global leadership challenges. It was held from the Palais des Nations, with over 800 participants from around 100 countries joining online.

Based on findings of 16 working groups, a major e-conference held in June 2020, and several smaller events involving over 70 partner organizations of the UN system, academia, civil society and 400 experts, the project's objectives are to develop forward-looking recommendations for dynamic and efficient global leadership strategies, in support of the findings of the UN75 report: "The Future We Want, The UN We Need".

The two-day conference included thematic sessions on peace and human security, economy and employment, health and food security, environment, financing, education and implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. It also examined leadership strategies for a renewed multilateralism through the engagement of civil society, the media, youth networks, social movements, and the private sector. In addition, it explored the integration of research into policy making and implementation.

Over 60 speakers – diplomats and representatives of the United Nations system, scientists and practitioners, civil society actors and journalists, members of academic institutions and youth representatives as well as of the business community - shared their vision, innovative solutions and practical suggestions on leadership strategies for a renewed multilateralism.

The outcomes of this conference and of the overall project will serve to inform global leaders about good practices and innovative strategies fit for the 21st century.

The following report summarizes the main discussions of the conference.

For more information and videos of the proceedings: <http://worldacademy.org/gl-geneva/>.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



HUMAN SECURITY
AND PEACE



ECONOMY &
EMPLOYMENT



ENVIRONMENT &
CLIMATE



HEALTH & FOOD
SECURITY



EDUCATION



FINANCING THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF
THE SDGs



ACADEMIA



MOBILIZING CIVIL
SOCIETY



RESTORING PUBLIC
TRUST & THE ROLE OF
THE MEDIA



MOBILIZING YOUTH
NETWORKS

The current multilateral system, with the United Nations system as its main pillar, has long been the most advanced international governance model humanity has ever devised to manage global affairs. However, the world has greatly changed over the last decades, and global leadership has not kept up with the pace: The 21st century is marked by a world population soon reaching eight billion people and a planet that is suffering heavily under the human impact. We live in a highly globalized world marked by inequalities among and within countries. We are part of unprecedented technological advancements, which have both positive and negative consequences for our collective well-being.

These trends are all part of a broader paradigm shift, a systemic transformation that started before the COVID-19 pandemic. As many panellists have emphasized, a new social and economic paradigm is shaping up before our eyes. In this challenging environment and considering the current deficiencies in terms of global leadership, innovative solutions are required to catch up with the accelerating pace of change and to leave no one behind.

All panellists agreed on the continued importance of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement as a compass for action. They are our fundamental framework for addressing issues from human security to human dignity in all their dimensions and will be key to build back better.

Trust, as the backbone of democracies, has been severely weakened in the past years. A compounding public trust and inequality crisis is gaining traction. Multiple discussions – in the context of academia, media, environment and climate or civil society - stressed the need for scientific, fact-based and credible information.

With the rise of fake news and misinformation, media has experienced the collapse in trust particularly hard. Reporters, journalists and media professionals spend a lot of time debunking misinformation. Despite - and precisely because of – the declining trust in media reports, media plays an important role in enhancing public trust as an honest broker of fact-based information. However, governments as well must take on their responsibility of providing true information. As a global, joint solution, the idea of an international independent ethics entity was discussed to prevent fake news and misinformation.

In the context of academia, panellist Peter McGrath cited the 2020 Edelman Trust study, a survey run in 28 markets, which reveals that only 42% of respondents trust governments to address challenges, while 80% trust scientists. While this offers great potential to increase public trust and fact-based information, much is left to do: equal access to academia, science and digital technologies is not a reality yet – gender, age and geographical disparities continue to widen and quite often, different academic fields operate in

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

silos. Existing inequalities in the access to science must be addressed globally and through multi-stakeholder initiatives. Elected leaders need to be more inclusive of academia and rely on scientific knowledge in their decision-making process.

Panellists have repeatedly stressed the social and economic tipping point and inequality crisis we are facing and the need for social justice. We must rebuild our society and economy to be more inclusive, equitable and sustainable. This is fully aligned with the most important priorities of the United Nations and it transpired through the UN75 dialogues. The international community needs equitable access to global resources – from tangible one such as food to intangible ones such as security, healthcare, knowledge and technology. Panellists also discussed how the direct and indirect costs of the unemployment, caused in part by the economic repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic, could cost the economy dearly for years to come. It was discussed how a paradigm shift in the world of work could look like to prevent these costs, for example by focusing on skills instead of degrees or a national job guarantee. Other solutions that could facilitate an economic paradigm shift were more public-private-partnerships, more investments in global economic institutions, more social dialogues and more green and digital investments.

The youth has been particularly vocal during the conference. Many stressed that the young generation needs to be empowered to become leaders of today, rather than tomorrow. Young people are not just protesters but have their own and often unique approach to contemporary challenges. They deserve a full-fledged seat at the table. An ‘all-generation’-approach must also include the generations yet to come. Education can play a fundamental role by teaching critical thinking and sustainability at an early stage.

Climate change is the defining issue of our time and it affects us all without exception. It has been a mainstream topic throughout all sessions. Climate change exposes deep inequalities within our societies and threatens the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Many advances in the climate action and environment field are people-driven and not addressed on a systemic level. These local actions, such as planting trees or urban sustainability, or advancing the circular economy remain important, but they are not sufficient. It was mentioned by panellist that it was high time for countries to declare a climate emergency and put a functioning climate governance system in place based on a global exchange of science and data. Panellist Jane Fonda insisted that climate change must be addressed with the same urgency as COVID-19. Speaker Sandrine Dixson Declève highlighted: “You cannot build back glaciers that have already melted.”

While 21st century challenges were discussed in many areas, the proposed solutions were often evolving around a renewed multilateralism and a stronger sense of solidarity. Some speakers mentioned the need for an inclusive political platform for networked exchanges between all stakeholders – from governments, civil society, international organizations, science, to the private sector and its finance community. Keywords, such as ‘building bridges’, ‘breaking silos’ or ‘inclusive governance’ were mentioned frequently. Strikingly, many participants did not note an absence of the right solutions, but of the political will to implement them with full force. The UN75 initiative affirmed these necessary changes. For 2021, the implementation of the initiative’s key demands will be a priority.

Geneva was often cited as a lead example for inclusive multilateralism, a city that functions as an operational hub for global cooperation among a multitude of stakeholders. Spearhead initiatives were mentioned, such as the [Geneva Digital Atlas](#), the Building Bridges event of the [SDG Lab](#) or the [Geneva Science and Diplomacy Anticipator](#).

OPENING SESSION



Tatiana VALOVAYA,
Director-General,
United Nations Office
at Geneva



Micheline CALMY-
REY, former President
and former Foreign
Minister of
Switzerland, professor,
Global Studies
Institute, University of
Geneva



Vaira VIKE-
FREIBERGA,
President of Latvia
(1999-2007); Co-Chair
of the Nizami Ganjavi
International Center
(NGIC)



Garry JACOBS,
President & CEO,
World Academy of Art
and Science



Moderator: David
CHIKVAIDZE, Chef de
Cabinet of the
Director-General,
United Nations Office
at Geneva

CONTEXT

The world is facing a complex nexus of global challenges, such as climate change, inequalities, global mistrust and many more. COVID-19 has only exacerbated pre-existing trends. All speakers agreed that these challenges place a severe burden on multilateralism. Garry Jacobs commented that the world seems to be heading towards an actual retreat from democracy and a loss of faith in institutions, facts and science. Micheline Calmy-Rey stated that this comes at a time where – in an increasingly connected world – states frequently make decisions that impact people beyond their national borders. International organizations have grown in importance and breadth of mandate, but the institutional landscape remains fragmented and faith in governance institutions is diminishing.

However, it would be wrong to signal the end of multilateralism. Global cooperation is already transforming and has achieved remarkable successes, such as the Paris Agreement, the Sustainable Development Goals, the establishment of GAVI, the vaccine alliance or the Global Fund. Civil Society has gone global, multinational companies exercise considerable leadership and the role of international organizations has indeed grown. As reflected in the UN75 initiative, for the vast majority of people, solidarity, multilateralism and international cooperation remain the most important characteristics for future global leadership.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

- Global governance innovations are needed at all levels - local, regional and global. Humanity has the necessary technologies, knowledge and finances to solve global challenges, but the current transnational governance system needs to change. Governance models must be more networked and inclusive.
- There is a need to break down silos across disciplines and stakeholders. Major players, such as multinational companies, civil society and scientists have gone global and make important contributions to problem solving. Yet, many voices still remain unheard.
- The current complexity of problems requires a fact-based understanding and analysis. However, the gathering and use of evidence is still a privilege which must be extended to everyone.
- We must rethink our social and economic system, build a more inclusive version of it and rebalance the relationship between economic growth, environment and public priorities. This will require sustainable and just leadership.

HUMAN SECURITY AND PEACE BUILDING



Moderator:
Jonathan
GRANOFF,
President, Global
Security Institute



Yukio Takasu,
Special Adviser to
the Secretary-
General on
Human Security



Christian
DUSSEY,
Ambassador,
Director, Geneva
Center for Security
Policy



Elisabeth TICHY-
FISSLBERGER,
Permanent
Representative of
Austria to the
UNOG and other
International
Organizations in
Geneva



'Funmi
OLONISAKIN,
Vice-President &
Vice-Principal
International
Professor of
Security,
Leadership &
Development,
King's College
London



Tibor TOTH,
Executive
Secretary
Emeritus,
Comprehensive
Test Ban Treaty
Organization

CONTEXT

Human Security is a people-centred and comprehensive concept that entails direct and root causes of insecurity, such as human rights and development. The UN Secretary-General has promoted the mainstreaming of human security into all UN actions, including for the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. Panellists discussed that human security should be implicit in peacebuilding approaches. Also, without addressing the root causes of conflicts, peacebuilding will not succeed.

Panellists highlighted some possible causes of insecurity and conflict in the future:

- Ms. Elisabeth Tichy-Fisslberger warned that the human rights violations of today will be the armed conflicts of tomorrow.
- It was also mentioned that the consensus on the abolition of weapons of mass destructions seems to be eroding. Additionally, new technologies have the potential to trigger new conflicts. Not only due to their indirect impact on humanity, but also through new weapons such as drones which might not be able to distinguish between a soldier and a child.
- Climate change will affect many human rights, such as the right to food, health, non-discrimination, development and self-determination. Environmental degradation therefore has an enormous potential to trigger even more conflicts and civil wars in the future.
- Currently, even the most powerful nation states cannot find common grounds. Multilateralism seems slow and cumbersome, but there is no alternative.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

- Different UN entities work across various dimensions of human security. They should work closer together, coordinate better and transcend silos.
- Exclusion is at the core of why peace fails. Peacebuilding must put people at the centre and empower individuals to build peace by giving them a voice.
- In times of new conflicts, there is a need to update our tools and skills in peacebuilding. We need a multilateralism that goes beyond national governments. More energy should be invested in mobilizing civil society and involve different organizations, networks and individuals in problem-solving.



Moderator: Phoebe KOUNDOURI, President, European Association of Environmental and Resource Economists



Olga ALGAYEROVA, Executive Secretary, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe



Sangheon LEE, Director of the Employment Policy Department, ILO



Pavlina TCHERNEVA, Bard College, author of Case for a Job Guarantee



Umej Singh BHATIA, Permanent Representative of Singapore to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva

CONTEXT

The global economy is in need of a sustainable transition supported by the determination and financial power of all stakeholders. This includes creating more equitable societies and a thriving economy that benefits everyone. The session highlighted that humanity is at an economic tipping point. Current social clashes and conflicts due to an unfair economic system and precarious working conditions can be addressed through inclusive social dialogues and the promotion of social justice. Mr. Sangheon Lee of the International Labour Organization (ILO) added that lasting peace can only be achieved by granting workers' rights and protection.

In 2020, the situation was aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Our global economy experienced a severe recession and a record high level of unemployment that places an unprecedented burden on the global workforce. At the same time, the current unemployment crisis enables society to reflect on how to transform our current world of work. The indirect costs of unemployment were debated vividly as well as the proposal of a national job guarantee scheme.

All panellists called for an economic recovery in a sustainable and human-centered way. It was discussed that the green transition can generate jobs in new sectors, such as the sustainable energy sector, platform economy or circular economy. The digital economy has a similar potential, but it is also likely to widen gender and regional divides and generate more precarious employment.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

- We need a multilateral approach to tackle the current job crisis. Unprecedented financial investments are needed for a long-term transformation into a just, green and digital economy. Partnerships between the public and private sector can be an important tool to generate more investments.
- Governments must set up an appropriate governance regime with strong institutions to protect workers in the changing economic system. With new economic sectors, such as the gig economy, innovative and coherent social policies are needed to avoid precarious employment.
- Educational policies must transform to keep up with the new demands on the labour market. Labour intensive skills and manufacturing are no longer in demand. Instead, educational systems need to teach skills that enable people for lifelong learning and lifelong employability.



ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE



Moderator:
Elise BUCKLE,
Facilitator,
Planetary
Emergency
Partnership
Network



Sandrine
DIXSON
DECLEVE,
Co-president,
Club of Rome



Mami
MIZUTORI,
Special
Representative
of the
Secretary-
General for
Disaster Risk
Reduction



Michel
JARRAUD,
Secretary-
General
Emeritus,
World
Meteorological
Organization



Bruno POZZI,
Director,
United Nations
Environment
Programme,
Europe Office



Oliver
GREENFIELD,
Convener,
Green
Economy
Coalition



Ana
HANHAUSEN,
Youth leader,
Protect Our
Planet
Movement

CONTEXT

Climate change was a mainstream topic during the conference. All panellists highlighted the urgency of the climate crisis and the breaking point we are facing. So far, only 33 countries have declared a climate emergency. Sandrine Dixson Declève started her intervention with the statement: “You cannot build back glaciers that have already melted. (...) We have to totally rethink the way in which we, people and nature, and climate can actually live together”. Key policy levers to address the cross-cutting challenges of climate change, biodiversity loss and human health and well-being were suggested in the presentation of a [‘Planetary Emergency Plan’](#).

Humanity’s devastating interference in nature continues. High carbon emissions, unsustainable production and consumption patterns, the loss of nature and high density of living are pushing the current environment to a tipping point.

Countless climate and environmental initiatives are launched, but only a few are implemented. During the COVID-19 pandemic, world leaders and society have demonstrated how to act in an emergency. The panellists expressed hope that this would serve as a model for the climate crisis and that governments, civil society, academia, the private sector and others press ahead with global leadership and decisive risk governance. In doing so, Oliver Greenfield calls for climate advocates, especially from the younger generations, to be taken seriously and included in the decision-making.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

- The 21st century challenges in the climate and environment realm cannot be solved in isolation. Many ‘big players’, such as major countries and sectors are yet to engage. All leaders and sectors, including and especially the finance sector, must work together with a long-term view.
- Sustainability must be part of school education. People need to know more about the science and impact of climate change in order to adapt their individual and collective behaviour, such as consumption and production patterns.
- Policymaking and science need to collaborate more closely. On a global level, data on climate change should be exchanged openly to ensure fact-based decision-making for climate action. Eventually, every country has more to gain than to give.
- Inclusivity implies an ‘all-generation’ approach: Everyone – especially young people – can be leaders in climate action.



HEALTH AND FOOD SECURITY



Moderator:
Chantal LINE
CARPENTIER,
Chief, UNCTAD
New York Office



Ibrahima Socé
FALL, Assistant
Director-General,
World Health
Organization



Catherine
BERTINI,
Distinguished
Fellow, Global
Food and
Agriculture,
Chicago Council
on Global Affairs



Gerda VERBURG,
Coordinator,
Scaling Up
Nutrition (SUN)
Movement



Ismail
SERAGELDIN,
co-Chair, Nizami
Ganjavi
International
Center (NGIC)



Hazel
HENDERSON,
Founder, Ethical
Markets Media

CONTEXT

Global health and food security are among the most serious concerns for human development. As food and health constitute the very basis of human existence, it affects everything from security to brain development. The COVID-19 pandemic revealed the fragility of our food and health systems. It caused a huge disruption in food systems on all levels and pushed millions of people back into food insecurity. In 2021, the UN Secretary-General will convene a Food System Summit aimed at transforming the current food systems and making them more resilient to future shocks.

The panellists discussed solutions that create more resilient and sustainable health and food systems and labelled the systems in place as a 'market failure'. Women are among the most-affected victims of the current health and food security crisis but are often only talked about and not invited to the table.

International cooperation is needed for a more effective response to the current crisis. Chantal Line Carpentier mentioned that siloed approaches are counterproductive. Gerda Verburg further added that the topic should be discussed with a more human-centred approach. Investment in the health and food sector means investment in people and not only in economies.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

- The responsibility to improve health and food security must be shared more equally. There is a need for strong international emergency systems that also rely on local leadership.
- The public and private sectors need to cooperate more closely. Social networks, such as food banks that bring communities and private investors together and create a network of socially responsible people are an effective tool.
- The transformation of food and health systems must be more inclusive, with particular attention to gender. Empowering women, giving them the right to their own land and elevating their role in decision-making processes will contribute to a sustainable change in the health and food sectors.
- Global finance and price speculation on the food market must stop. In order to protect people and farmers, supply and prices need to be more stable.



EDUCATION



Moderator:
Alberto
ZUCCONI,
Chair of the
Board, World
Academy of Art
& Science



Remus
PRICOIE,
Vice President,
International
Association of
Universities



Irina BOKOVA,
former Director
General,
UNESCO



Ralph WOLFF,
Founder and
President, The
Quality
Assurance
Commons



Marie-Laure
SALLES,
Director,
Graduate
Institute of
International
and
Development
Studies



Christine
KADDOUS,
Professor,
Director of the
Master of
Advanced
Studies in
European and
Global
Governance
(MEIG),
University of
Geneva



Ekaterina
ZAGLADINA,
President,
Permanent
Secretariat of
the World
Summit of Nobel
Peace
Laureates

CONTEXT

Education is key to overcoming current global challenges - it equips people with the right skills and knowledge and constitutes the basis for societal development. However, education must constantly adapt to the changing needs of society.

Marie-Laure Salles argued that the individual survival depends on the capacity to solve global and collective challenges. Education should be reorganized and retooled to provide people with these capacities. COVID-19 has already forced the society and the educational sector to some form of retooling, as it spurred a new development for online education and digital home schooling. However, it also disclosed the world's unpreparedness and slow progress to ensure digital equality. This poses the threat of a lost generation, that will be disadvantaged in the long-term due to a lack of access to the internet, technical solutions and teaching support.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

- Students must be provided with the capacity to learn. Learning how to continuously acquire skills becomes nowadays much more essential than any professional competencies or degree and is more sustainable and efficient in the long run.
- Transdisciplinary platforms and solutions gain importance to tackle the current crises in our globalized world. This needs to be reflected in education.
- Ensuring equitable access to digital infrastructure and the internet in particular is the basis of providing equal access to education.
- The earlier students get in touch with the professional world the better. Practical skills and a general understanding of combining theory and praxis is essential. The bridges between education and the professional markets should be strengthened.



LEADERSHIP FOR FINANCING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SDGs



Moderator:
Ketan PATEL,
CEO and the
founder of
Greater Pacific
Capital



Stefan
BRUNNHUBER
Future of
Finance
Project, World
Academy of
Art & Science



Nadia ISLER,
Director, SDG
Lab, United
Nations Office
at Geneva



Fiorenzo
MANGANIELLO
Managing
Partner, LIAN
Group



Marcos NETO,
Director,
UNDP
Financial
Sector Hub



Dusan
VUJOVIC,
World Bank



Chantal LINE
CARPENTIER,
Chief, UNCTAD
New York Office

CONTEXT

In light of the recent developments, the Sustainable Development Goals are more important than ever. The world is experiencing extreme shocks and is exposed to the vulnerability of its own systems. An additional 88 million people have been forced back into extreme poverty in 2020 alone. The Human Development Index decreased for the first time in 30 years by 20%.

To address these alarming developments, moderator Ketan Patel posed the question of how to get the SDGs financed. Achieving sustainable development relies on commitments in every sector. Nadia Isler highlighted that there was a complex equation behind achieving the SDGs - not just one silver bullet, but many good ones. The knowledge on SDGs across disciplines and sectors is already an achievement. However, the mere existence of discussions on SDGs is not enough to accelerate their implementation.

Panellists agreed that it was not necessarily the lack of available money that hindered progress on the achievement of the SDGs. The hesitant and slow implementation and financing of the SDGs derives from systemic issues. It is difficult to convince people that “doing good actually pays”. The panellists came up with different suggestions to inspire leadership for financing the implementation of the SDGs.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

- The financial resources exist, but they need to be redistributed. Money must be pulled away from fossil fuels and steered towards sustainable sectors. Regulatory incentives can be used to increase the attractiveness of financing in sustainable development.
- It was discussed whether the usage of parallel digital currency systems could solve the liquidity issues and optimize the funding process in financing the implementation of the SDGs.
- Building bridges is key to accelerate the achievement of the SDG. The development and finance community must have a common platform to exchange ideas, create a mutual understanding of the goals and develop common projects. One successful example is the event ‘Building Bridges’, organized by the [SDG Lab](#) at the United Nations Office at Geneva.

ACADEMIA: INTEGRATING RESEARCH INTO POLICY MAKING AND IMPLEMENTATION



Moderator: Emil CONSTANTINESCU, President of Romania (1996-2000)



Michael MØLLER, Chair, Diplomacy Forum, Geneva Science and Diplomacy Anticipator



Piero DOMINICI, Scientific Director, International Research and Education Programme on Human Complex Systems



Afshan KHAN, UNICEF Regional Director for Europe and Central Asia



Paul LADD, Director, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development



Peter MCGRATH, Executive Director, InterAcademy Partnership

CONTEXT

In a context of declining trust, misinformation and global tensions, “data, research and evaluation is an important pillar for the leadership we need to renew multilateralism”, stated panellist Afshan Khan. Peter McGrath cited the 2020 Edelman Trust study, a survey in 28 markets, which revealed that while only 42% of respondents trusted governments to address challenges, 80% trusted scientists.

The COVID-19 pandemic showed what can be achieved in less than a year, if decisionmakers and scientists collaborate closely on a global level. However, much is left to do to ensure the effective application of science in decision-making and equal access to science. Gender, age and geographical disparities are still tangible realities. Academia continues to be a male-dominated sphere. Young people are often excluded from scientific dialogues, even though they have much to contribute in terms of innovative thinking. Investing in young people’s scientific education will also equip them with the right leadership skills for the future. Another barrier exists due to both a North-South divide, with the African continent accounting only for a fraction of research publications, and an additional South-South divide between countries in terms of investment in research.

The United Nations Office at Geneva and the city itself are on the forefront of connecting academia and science with other fields, such as the humanitarian or development sector. Panellists mentioned Geneva-based initiatives, such as the [Geneva Science and Diplomacy Anticipator](#) or the [United Nations Research Institute for Social Development](#).

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

- Elected leaders need to establish more meaningful collaboration with researchers. They must rely on science and facts in the decision-making processes.
- Existing inequalities and gaps in access to science must be addressed globally. International multi-stakeholder initiatives, involving academia and beyond and cutting across silos, are a useful starting point to make academia more inclusive and leverage scientific knowledge for leadership.
- The SDGs contain many dimensions that contribute to making academia more inclusive, such as promoting equal access to digital technologies. At the same time, a closer link between research and the SDGs helps to ensure a data-informed, effective implementation of the global goals.



MOBILIZING CIVIL SOCIETY: BUILDING GLOBAL SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS



Moderator: Mila POPOVICH, Member, Executive Committee, WAAS



Liberato BAUTISTA, President, CoNGO - The Conference of NGOs in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations



Gabriela BARRON, Hon. President, Inter-Parliamentary Union



Jovan KURBALIJA, Founding Director, DiploFoundation and Head, Geneva Internet Platform



Cecilia CANNON, Academic Adviser to the United Nations for its 75th Anniversary



Alejandro BONILLA GARCIA, President, Greycells

CONTEXT

Moderator Mila Popovich stated that according to an estimate, 20 years ago, about 28,000 NGOs existed. Today, this number has reached about 10 million, reflecting the ever-increasing mobilization of civil society. This awakening of a global social consciousness is needed, since responding to current challenges – such as access to basic services, climate change or respect for human rights – requires a global and representative social power.

Panellist Cecilia Cannon cited the results of the UN75 initiative, a global listening and engagement exercise launched by the UN Secretary-General in January 2020 to find out what people worldwide want for their future. Over a million people and thousands of organizations took part, demonstrating that people want to be listened to. The results show that people believe in international cooperation and global solidarity, with a leadership role of the United Nations for fostering global cooperation.

Speakers argued however that there were limits to the full deployment of global social power:

- Many people feel alienated from decision-making spheres, which jeopardizes their commitment.
- The digital divide prevents inclusive mobilization and many people are left behind.
- There is a cemetery of platforms dedicated to the mobilization of civil society, which are no longer used and fall into oblivion.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

- While governments remain the key players in international relations, they need to be more inclusive of their constituencies. Panellists suggested an increased use of referendums and polling and more direct communication between governments and their people.
- Existing platforms, networks and associations can be leveraged to this end. New technologies can facilitate the development of more effective networking platforms but creating another unused platform should be avoided. Alternatives must be offered to individuals who are not digitally connected to ensure full inclusiveness.
- Leadership must be 'glocal': both global and local to ensure that all voices are taken into account, even on the smallest scale.

RESTORING PUBLIC TRUST AND THE ROLE OF MEDIA



Moderator:
Donato KINIGER-
PASSIGLI, Vice
President, World
Academy of Art &
Science



Noel CURRAN,
Director General,
European
Broadcasting
Union



Catherine
FIANKAN-
BOKONGA, Vice-
President,
Geneva Press
Club



Yasuhiro UEKI,
Professor, Faculty
of Global Studies,
Sophia University,
Tokyo



Meera SELVA,
Director,
Journalism
Fellowship
Programme,
Reuters Institute
for the Study of
Journalism,
University of
Oxford



Xin LIU, Host,
China Global
Television
Network (CGTN)

CONTEXT

Public trust, trust in the media and the role of the media in enhancing trust are strongly interlinked.

In an age of increasing public distrust, misinformation and fake news, media plays an essential role in ensuring that the public is well informed by providing true and verified information. According to Noel Curran, gaining trust is linked to providing information that adheres to the principles of truth, transparency, competence, impartiality and accuracy. The dissemination of false information, the lack of coordination, the overabundance and sometimes difficult access to information pose substantial limits to the full restoration of public trust.

Currently, trust in global media is challenged, but not in a state of total collapse. According to the European Broadcasting Union, public trust levels for public service media during the COVID-19 pandemic ranged between 70 and 90%. Trust in radio also remained high. Social media platforms are facing the lowest trust levels.

However, while media has a role to play in restoring public trust and trust in media reports, it cannot restore trust on its own. Political leaders and institutions can be the origin of information obstruction and have a key role in providing fact-based information.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

- Increased collaboration and exchange between academia, media and politics can generate more representative, inclusive and true information which is essential to increase public trust. Scientists could more regularly transmit their knowledge through media platforms.
- New measures must be implemented to regulate media activity and ensure respect for the fundamental principle of truth. Among the discussed solution where more investment in fact-checking processes, training and the regulation of platforms. The creation of a global, independent ethics entity that could identify false information and discipline platforms was also discussed, but details on how to ensure its independence were considered an issue.
- If the accuracy of information can be better ensured, social networks have great potential in terms of providing trusted and inclusive information: They are widespread, easily accessible and understandable means of communication.

MOBILIZING YOUTH NETWORKS AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS



Moderator: Olena PRYKHODKO, 2021 Vice President, Junior Chamber International



Kehkashan BASU, Founder, President, Green Hope Foundation



Jodi CULLITY, Head of Partnerships, Youth Leadership Network



Ash PACHAURI, Founder, POP Movement



Luke ADDISON, UK Rotaract Chair

CONTEXT

Young people are the key actors of today and tomorrow, as they are particularly affected by the current global challenges and will continue to be so in the future. They are at the heart of the SDGs and the United Nations recognizes the contribution of children and youth as vital to the achievement of sustainable development. SDG 4 on quality education highlights that “education is a transformative tool that provides them with the knowledge skills and behaviour to think and act for a sustainable future”. However, panellists criticized that teaching students on sustainability is not yet part of curricula.

Speakers agreed that there was a lack of inclusion of young people in critical discussions about their future. Kehkashan Basu asserted that young people are not just protesters, and Luke Addison added that young people know how to mobilize through different platforms, take concrete action and make themselves heard.

Inequalities in terms of youth mobilization, were best overcome through collaborative and inclusive multilateralism.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

- Young people deserve a full-fledged seat at the table. Adults are not the only ones that do substantive work and youth should be part of decision-making for an intergenerational exchange.
- Local and bottom-up approaches are useful to amplify the voices of the excluded and empower young people to be leaders.
- Empowerment of the young generations also requires cooperation between different stakeholders, such as academia, businesses, international organizations, governments and many more.
- New technologies can enable promising online collaboration, but only if the digital divide is addressed.

CLOSING SESSION



Fabrizio HOCHSCHILD-DRUMMOND, Special Adviser to the UN Secretary-General on the Commemoration of the United Nations 75th Anniversary



Jane FONDA, Academy Award-winning actor, producer, activist and author



Garry JACOBS, President & CEO, World Academy of Art and Science



Tatiana VALOVAYA, Director-General, United Nations Office at Geneva



Moderator: David CHIKVAIDZE, Chef de Cabinet of the Director-General, United Nations Office at Geneva

CONTEXT

75 years after the creation of the United Nations, international cooperation is more important than ever. All panellists acknowledged the emergence of multiple global challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the rise of social inequalities, disruption through new technologies, as well as the climate crisis. This shows that there is a real need for structural changes. Jane Fonda commented that the issue of climate change cannot be solved sequentially.

These multiple challenges can be overcome collectively through inclusive leadership, integrating governments, international organizations, the private sector, academia and civil society. A new global governance model with institutional innovations is needed to keep up with the changing environment.

The United Nations system still holds a leadership role in the multilateral forum but needs to change as well in order to meet today's and tomorrow's needs. The UN75 initiative with its about 1.5 million participants is proof that most people are united in their desire and intend to find solutions together. The Sustainable Development Goals remain the yardstick for a more sustainable future.

International Geneva is well-equipped to lead by example in a more innovative global governance structure.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

- An equitable, inclusive and sustainable multilateral system must be built, that includes in particular women and young leaders in a more meaningful way.
- There is a need for more networked problem-solving approaches. The UN75 initiative already provides a good starting point on how to reach out to civil society and include them in discussions and polling.
- Leadership should not only be global, but also local to ensure that the needs of all actors are taken into consideration. Policy-making processes should be as close as possible to the people.

CONFERENCE QUOTES



It would be wrong to signal the end of multilateralism. There is no alternative to international cooperation for solving global problems such as climate change, pandemics, the arms race, migration and the global financial crisis. This makes me confident in the future of the specialised international organisations that form the bedrock of International Geneva.

MICHELINE CALMY-REY
FORMER PRESIDENT AND FORMER FOREIGN MINISTER OF SWITZERLAND AND PROFESSOR, GLOBAL STUDIES INSTITUTE, UNIVERSITY OF GENEVA



Leadership must become more inclusive, effective, networked and honest to rebuild broken trust within societies and among countries. Youth is particularly important. Let's face it, our generation is not leaving the planet, or our societies in any shape to brag about. It is the youth of today that must do double duty, for our generation and their own.

DAVID A. CHIKVAIDZE
CHIEF OF CABINET OF THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL, UNITED NATIONS OFFICE AT GENEVA



Global Leadership in the New Normal is not about fighting the problem. It is about together creating the solutions.

CHRISTIAN DUSSEY
AMBASSADOR, DIRECTOR, GENEVA CENTER FOR SECURITY POLICY



Climate emergency is the key trial of our time. Extreme weather and other disruptions are happening faster, lasting longer and hitting harder. Strong leadership is needed to turn the tide and create a resilient future for all.

NAMI INZUTORI
SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL, FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION, HEAD OF UNITED NATIONS OFFICE FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION



Crisis, crisis, crisis. A generation of failed leadership. From today, society should only give its mandate to leaders who work for a green and fair recovery. Our lives depend on this.

OLIVER GREENFIELD
CONVENER, GREEN ECONOMY COALITION



We need a global platform for people around the world to directly project their views regarding national and global issues without the intermediation of nation-centric political institutions.

GARRY JACOBS
PRESIDENT & CEO, WORLD ACADEMY OF ART AND SCIENCE



The most pressing challenges of today can be overcome through wise human conduct. This requires leadership based on clear analysis, moral insight, and practical policies.

JONATHAN GRANOFF
PRESIDENT, GLOBAL SECURITY INSTITUTE



The only path to peace is justice. The Human Rights Council, in its imperfect ways, is shedding light on the worst atrocities. It tries to prevent suffering and, wherever it can't, assists in ensuring accountability.

ELISABETH TICHY-FISLBERGER
PRESIDENT OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF AUSTRIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN GENEVA



The phantom of unemployment must be banished so that anyone who seeks decent work can find it--guaranteed. This is the aim of the Job Guarantee proposal: to provide voluntary employment.

PAYLINA ISHERINEVA
SARD COLLEGE, AUTHOR OF CASE FOR A JOB GUARANTEE



I wish to see the recovery packages mobilized towards investments and jobs for the future, fully aligned with the green transformation, circular economy, sustainable use of natural resources, digitalization and all SDGs.

DEGA ALEKBEROVA
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY, UN ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE





Together we can change the world through #RadicalCollaboration to unlock positive change for people and the planet.

ELISE BUCKLE
PRESIDENT OF CLIMATE & SUSTAINABILITY, PLANETARY EMERGENCY PARTNERSHIP FACILITATOR



SDG alignment is NOT a trade-off between financial and non-financial returns, but it is a value proposition towards a more sustainable and inclusive economy. We need coherent policies, robust global standards and right financial tools to align public and private finance with the SDGs.

MARCUS NETO
DIRECTOR, UNDP SDG FINANCE SECTOR HUB



Courage is a critical component of effective global leadership.

CATHERINE BERTINI
DISTINGUISHED FELLOW, GLOBAL FOOD AND AGRICULTURE, CHICAGO COUNCIL ON GLOBAL AFFAIRS



Global leadership for the 21st Century is about multilateralism that ensures sustainable path of inclusive and resilient development and puts human security and human well-being at its heart through investing in education and health.

IRINA BOKOVA
FORMER DIRECTOR GENERAL, UNESCO



Effective leaders are change agents. They are team-builders, promote a culture of learning, facilitate the emergence of new young leaders, listen to others and learn from them.

ALBERTO ZUCCONI
CHAIR OF THE BOARD, WORLD ACADEMY OF ART & SCIENCE



Improving reporting standards and Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) per sectors will make businesses more reliable on their SDGs self-contribution claims.

FIORENZO MANGANELLO
MANAGING PARTNER, LIAM GROUP



In the current COVID context, driving more capital towards the SDGs has never been so relevant and urgent.

NADIA ISLES
DIRECTOR SDG LAB, UNITED NATIONS OFFICE AT GENEVA



Food security is a right and nutrition needs to be prioritised. Calories alone are not enough for the full physical and cognitive development of children and nutrition is essential for a strong human capital of any society. So, let's put nutrition at the heart of a food systems approach to food security.

GERDA VERBURG
COORDINATOR, SCALING UP NUTRITION (SUN) MOVEMENT



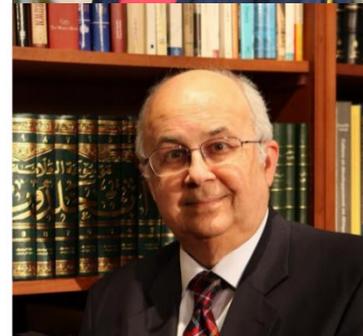
The World Academy of Science and Art and this joint conference with the UN is helping us bridge several gaps and find clear steps forward through partnerships and a Global Green New Deal.

CHANTAL LINE CARPENTIER
CHIEF, UNCTAD NEW YORK OFFICE



Real development is when the poor and the marginalized become the producers of their own welfare and bounty, not the recipients of charity or the beneficiaries of aid.

ISMAIL SERAGELDIN
CO-CHAIR, NIZAMI SANJAVI INTERNATIONAL CENTER (NIGIC)



Human food rights require ending speculative financialization, corporate domination, diversification of eco-agriculture, restoration of soil and protection of farm income.

HAZEL HENDERSON
FOUNDER, ETHICAL MARKETS MEDIA



Major disruptions in education began before COVID but have now been accelerated by it. They include the impact of technology providers, employability and the changing definition of quality.

RALPH WOLFF
FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT, THE EQUALITY ASSURANCE GOVERNORS



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COVID-19 has restricted access to basic public services. The social effects can be dramatic. Leaders are called upon to identify solutions to reduce imbalances and ensure peace and security.

REMUS PRICOPIE
VICE PRESIDENT, INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITIES



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The leader of the future is a person with the power of positive transformation who uses it to create a fair, harmonious, happy world.

EKATERINA ZAGLADINA
PRESIDENT, PERMANENT SECRETARIAT OF WORLD SUMMIT OF NOBEL PEACE LAUREATES



“

I am thrilled and excited that we are building another world. I particularly look forward to paradigm-changing ideas to implement during the finance session.

STEFAN BRUNNHUBER
FUTURE OF FINANCE PROJECT, WORLD ACADEMY OF ART & SCIENCE



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The world's challenges are our common responsibility. Our imagination, intelligence and efforts are not the barriers, who we define as "we" is the obstacle to our peaceful co-existence.

KETAN PATEL
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF GREATER PACIFIC CAPITAL, AUTHOR OF 'THE MASTER STRATEGIST'



“

The world is experiencing breakthrough science and technological discoveries at an unprecedented pace: they will reshape the way we view ourselves, how we relate to each other in society and how we care for our environment.

MICHAEL MÖLLER
GRAND DIPLOMACY FORUM, GENEVA SCIENCE AND DIPLOMACY ANTICIPATOR



“

UNICEF supports and uses research, evaluations and data to determine what works best for children. We draw on sound evidence to respond to the needs of children, including the most vulnerable.

AFSHAN KHAN
UNICEF REGIONAL DIRECTOR FOR EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA



“

COVID-19, the climate crisis, and other challenges all require evidence-based solutions. Science has a critical role to play in tackling these issues and it is vital that its voice is heard.

PETER MCGRATH
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, INTERACADEMY PARTNERSHIP



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As long as political leadership is dominated by mediocrity & populism and the economic milieu focuses on maximizing profit, responsibility falls on the academic milieu to build strategies.

EMIL CONSTANTINESCU
PRESIDENT OF ROMANIA (1996-2000)



“

The future belongs to those who can address the gap between man and technology, who can bring knowledge and skills together, and to those who know how to unite sciences and humanities.

PIERO DOMINICI
SCIENTIFIC DIRECTOR, INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH AND EDUCATION PROGRAMME ON HUMAN COMPLEX SYSTEMS



“

Global leadership today must have a focus and a locus at once local and global. It will require transborder and transnational organizing and mobilizing for glocal consciousness and action.

REV. DR. LIBERATO C. BAUTISTA
PRESIDENT, CONGO - THE CONFERENCE OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN CONSULTATIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE UNITED NATIONS



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No one is too young or too old to be heard, to act and to have an impact. Intergenerational awareness, leaving no generation behind, is a key building block of inclusive global social consciousness.

ALEJANDRO BONILLA GARCIA
PRESIDENT, GREYCELLS



“

We must build a multilateral system that is closer to people's needs and demands at all levels. For it to be effective, multilateralism must place people at the center of all decisions.

GABRIELA BARRON
HONORARY PRESIDENT, INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION





Public Service Media (PSM) responded rapidly to the coronavirus crisis – helping inform, educate and entertain society throughout lockdown. And, in turn, audiences have responded to PSM, turning to it in huge numbers for trusted news and information to help keep them safe.

NOEL CURRAN
DIRECTOR GENERAL, EUROPEAN BROADCASTING UNION



Media's role matters. We must exercise our sense of social responsibility to win the trust of our readers, wherever they may be from.

XIN LIU
SENIOR HOST, CHINA GLOBAL TELEVISION NETWORK (CGTN)



I am inspired by the words of American astrophysicist, planetary scientist and author Neil deGrasse Tyson: "I am driven by two main philosophies: know more today about the world than I knew yesterday and lessen the suffering of others. You'd be surprised how far that gets you."

LUKE ADDISON
UK ROTARACT CHAIR



The process of rebuilding better must begin with those who are the farthest first & it is incumbent upon us, the youth, to drive this process of change through multilateralism & collaboration.

KEKASHAN BASU
FOUNDER, PRESIDENT, GREEN HOPE FOUNDATION



Public trust in leaders and information is based on fairness and people's perception. A new system with highly influential public trustees is urgently needed for the common good.

DONATO KINIGER-PASSIGLI
VICE PRESIDENT, WORLD ACADEMY OF ART & SCIENCE



In the months to come, youth and social networks will play a key role in rekindling human interactions and building economic prosperity. We need to act on a local, national and international level to help achieve those goals.

OLENA PRYKHODKO,
2021 VICE PRESIDENT, JUNIOR CHAMBER INTERNATIONAL



The power of transformational leadership lies within every young person. Youth can unleash its potential to lead when loved, nurtured, and inspired to take action founded on knowledge.

ASH PACHAURI
FOUNDER, POP MOVEMENT

