

UPF Office of Family Forum Reveals Poor Progress in Ending Poverty & Hunger

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New York, United States - UN member states presented updates on their nations' progress in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) during a forum at UN headquarters in New York. Despite a concerted effort by all nations to improve their situation, their reports showed that progress is on track for only 17% of the SDGs.

The High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) was held from July 8 to 17, 2024, under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council. The theme was "Reinforcing the 2030 Agenda and eradicating poverty in times of multiple crises: the effective delivery of sustainable, resilient and innovative solutions."

There was a strong presence of government ministers throughout the programs, including the Voluntary National Reviews (VNR). In these reviews, 36 nations reported on their progress and difficulties in achieving the SDGs, especially those related to poverty, food security and nutrition, and climate change.

UPF representatives attended many of the plenary programs, including the VNRs where countries highlighted their achievements. For instance, Oman reported an increase in women's education, rights, and accomplishments. Some other countries also reported encouraging areas of positive gain. However, the overall assessment is that improvements have been made toward only 17% of the SDGs. After nine years of implementation this meagre result on such key issues is disconcerting.

During the discussions, there was often a demand for more money. Many speakers recommended more collaboration and services. It was noted that bringing digital capacities and information to every corner of the Earth greatly enhances opportunities for improvement in financial access, marketing, technical advancement, medical information, and education. However, the least developed countries remain the most behind technologically. Many noted the importance of having better data to measure the situations and find more effective remedies.

One problem is that many poor countries are also experiencing violent conflict, unrest, and climate challenges which exacerbate basic survival, poverty, hunger, violence, and social disintegration. In addition, authoritarian forms of government and/or government instability and corruption prohibit or even reverse progress.

Although not the main focus of the forum, one of the more hopeful aspects was introduced by NGOs with innovative grassroots programs that provide services or education to some of the neediest areas in the world. The most inspiring were local programs to help citizens master skills that brought their families and communities out of poverty or illiteracy, and on a path to prosperity. The real sustainable development in many ways was most apparent in the investment and empowerment provided through face-to-face interaction between people in grassroots partnerships.