



SOCIETY OF THE SACRED HEART AT THE UN
Seeking Justice with the Heart of an Educator

CONCEPT NOTE

Dignity at the Heart of the SDGs in a Post-COVID Era: Listening to Youth, Older Persons, Refugees, and Indigenous Peoples (SDG 1, 2, 3, 10, 16, 17)

July 7, 2021
9-10:30 a.m. EDT

Registration link: <https://bit.ly/3gyfOZm>

Interpretation in English, French and Spanish

In 2015, the world's nations came together and committed to a bold and ambitious agenda for sustainable development centered on the fundamental dignity of each person. In unison, they presented their vision for *a world of universal respect for human rights and human dignity, the rule of law, justice, equality, and non-discrimination; of respect for race, ethnicity, and cultural diversity; and of equal opportunity permitting the full realization of human potential and contributing to shared prosperity.*

Based on **the fundamental dignity** of every person, the General Assembly unanimously adopted the goals and targets and a timeline for all nations and peoples and all segments of society to accomplish sustainable development by 2030. Four years later, in 2019, COVID swept across the globe, exposing *inequalities between and within countries revealing systems in which health outcomes are tied to economic and social well-being.* Countries' response to the pandemic has exposed weak institutions and failures by states to uphold their role as protector of their people, exacerbating divisions and inequalities. (SDG 16). It has led to severe and widespread increases in global food insecurity (SDG 2), affecting vulnerable households in almost every country. The World Bank estimates that the pandemic will *push an additional 88 million to 115 million people into extreme poverty this year (SDG 1), with the total rising to as many as 150 million by 2021, depending on the severity of the economic contraction.* Access to vaccines has revealed once again the fundamental correlation between health and wealth (SDG 3). By the time a vaccine was developed, tested and distributed in 2020, ten of the wealthiest countries had 75% of supplies, while 130 of the poorest countries had yet to vaccinate any of its people.

Our interactive panel will represent voices from the field, their experiences, and challenges to re-build a healthier, more equitable, and peaceful world in a post COVID era in which the fundamental dignity of each person is realized. We will hear from individuals living in four of this year's VNR countries: Colombia, Japan, Mexico, and Spain. They will present some of the challenges they face in achieving the promise held in the SDG's to leave no one behind and reach the furthest behind. Additionally, they will offer best practices and offer suggestions for a sustainable way forward.

Rationale

- The global pandemic has revealed more than ever the extent of inequalities that exist in the world. To be true to the global pledge of *leaving no one behind*, the SDGs must be implemented using a rights-based approach.
- The global pandemic is demanding of us to work together in innovative ways to humanize the world. This means that human dignity, not profit, must be placed at the heart of our work forward. *The COVID-19 pandemic is a public health emergency — but it is far more. It is an economic crisis. A social crisis. And a human crisis that is fast becoming a human rights crisis. In February, I launched a Call to Action to put human dignity and the promise of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights at the core of our work.* (Antonio Guterres, “We are all in this Together: Human Rights and COVID-19 Response and Recovery”, April 23, 2020)

Objective/ Desired Outcome

- Prioritize the integration of SDGS in intersectional human rights-based approaches.
- Highlight the nature of best practices and the problems that prevent potential solutions.
- Propose integrated models that are rooted in human dignity, based on social and environmental needs, the health and wellbeing of the whole person, and innovative solutions that *leave no one behind*.

Co-Sponsors

- Permanent Observer Mission of the Sovereign Order of Malta to the United Nations, Ambassador Paul Beresford-Hill
- Associated Country Women of the World (ACWW)
- Justice Coalition of Religious (JCoR)

PANELISTS



Norma Joela Acevedo Olea is a member of the Mixtecos, an indigenous people in Mexico, Ñuu Xavi (Oaxaca). She is the General Coordinator of the Collective "Indee Tekio". Norma Joela studied Business Administration and has diplomas in Human Rights and Gender Equality from UNESCO. She also works for an NGO that supports children's education in different states of the country (FAFI A.C.). Here she is the Coordinator of the support programs. Besides these roles, Norma Joela is part of a Social Economy Network of producers in Solidarity. She lives in Guadalajara.

Norma Acevedo will share her experience as coordinator of the indigenous-led project 'Artesanía y Gastronomía In dee Tekio', which aims to promote the culture of the Mixteco people and of several indigenous peoples of Mexico who have joined forces to achieve it. Its members wish to reclaim the custom of Tequio, which promotes the sharing of resources and labor of all members in the building of community; approximately seventeen ethnic groups from the center of the country are part of this project. One of its objectives is to recognize the creation of handicrafts as a way of life, assigning fair prices to each artistic piece, thus helping to reduce migration due to economic needs. This custom can help achieve the 2030 Agenda, which seeks to address several issues, including the end of poverty, gender equality, decent work, reduction of inequalities, responsible production and consumption, peace and justice, and solid institutions.



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Maria Elena Arteaga is from Colombia. She is an Economist by profession, and has completed studies in Women and Gender and in Agroecology. For more than 40 years, she has worked to develop social programs with the Social Pastoral in Colombia, programs with recyclers and micro-entrepreneurs. Marie Elena accompanies women's groups to help strengthen their capacities.

Maria Elena Arteaga sees this event as a great opportunity to reflect on Dignity at the heart of the SDGs from the perspective of women and their contribution to the construction of supportive communities that help to overcome hunger in times of pandemic. Women demonstrate through evidence, that dignity enables human beings to develop integrally, coupled with their environment as a social "being", as an economic "being" and as a political "being". She will make visible the contribution of women from this vision of dignity that, in spite of the cultural discrimination, the exclusion to which they are subjected, the violence and feminicide they face, women fulfill the maternal role of caregiver, intimately connected to the needs of their community. The multiple challenges faced by these institutionally patriarchal Latin American societies, which prevent them from having a collaborative look, of value inclusion, of other ways of solving the multiple challenges they face, will be raised.



Pilar Pavia, RSCJ was born in Barcelona (Spain). Her academic background includes a Degree in Pedagogy, Theological studies, a specialization course in Political Analysis, and a Master in Human Rights and Migration. Since 1985, Pilar has been a member of the Society of the Sacred Heart. She says, "I have worked for 30 years in educational centers of different social milieus, and am currently working in the Migrastudium Foundation for the reception of migrants and refugees."

Pilar Pavia, RSCJ, will address the theme of reducing inequalities (SDG 10) from the perspective of migrants/refugees, a group that is particularly vulnerable and significant by number and presence in Spanish society. Her main message will highlight how the Spanish Government wants to address social recovery after the impact of COVID-19, by putting people's rights at the center of the actions. She will also highlight and develop those issues that are considered to prevent human rights from being at the center of these actions. For example, difficulties of access to housing, precarious labor contracts, limitations and impediments derived from the application of the Immigration Law (at the base of the migratory policy) and bureaucratic complexity of the different levels of the administration: local and state (both autonomous and central).



Yasuko Taguchi, RSCJ, is from Japan. She has her M.Ed. from Boston College. She worked in volunteer service in Uganda in 60's. Yasuko entered the Society of the Sacred Heart in 1971. In the 90's she was appointed to the congregation's Peace and Justice Committee in her province, and then JPIC (Peace, and Integrity of Creation) Committee at present. Yasuko has a rich experience as an educator of the Sacred Heart, spanning five Sacred Heart Schools in Japan. From 2002-14, she was Principal at the Sapporo Sacred Heart School, where she has been promoting MDGs and SDGs education with the help of UN NGO the Society of the Sacred Heart. There she continues to serve as Chaplain.



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Yasuko Taguchi, RSCJ will present on her educative work with youth concerning critical thinking, global and social awareness with basic humanitarian ethics. She will propose two best practices for integration into the current Japanese Educational System.



Magdie de Kock was elected World President of the Associated Country Women of the World in May 2019. This global mandate extends the themes of her personal work in South Africa and with societies in the region. A member of the Women's Agricultural Union Mpumalanga and Die Dameskring, she held a series of local and national leadership roles in South Africa including the SA National Education Fund and South African Women's Agricultural Union. Magdie is a trained teacher and worked as a school principal, motivational speaker, and has spoken at events around Africa, in Norway, and New Zealand, as well as at the Commission on the Status of Women in 2021. She works to promote the organisation internationally, and to elevate and amplify the voices of rural women globally. Taking the phrase 'Rural Women in Action' to heart, Mrs de Kock has accelerated ACWW's work on advocacy and ensured that every opportunity is taken for members' voices to be heard using UN mechanisms, and facilitating resources to empower and enable local, national, and regional advocacy by members themselves. This has included a series of surveys to assess the impact of Covid-19 on rural women and cooperate with UNESCO on the reporting of results, and directing ACWW's continued support for CEDAW and its global implementation.

Magdie de Kock will outline the need for governments to understand and prioritise a human rights-based approach to global rebuilding in the light of COVID-19. In 2019, we heard governments make commitments to renewed energy and vigorous action towards securing the success of the SDGs; in 2020 these commitments disappeared as States prioritised national survival – but missing the key point that success of the SDGs would significantly mitigate the impacts of such a pandemic, if not prevent it in the first place. Mrs de Kock brings personal experience of working with young and older women in rural communities, and has seen first-hand the critical need for indigenous voices to be heard in securing stronger, inclusive societies for the future.

MODERATOR



Teresa Blumenstein, Coordinator for the Justice Coalition of Religious (JCoR). Teresa has been supporting the efforts of Catholic congregations of women and men Religious to advocate at the United Nations for justice and peace since 2015. She currently coordinates the advocacy collaboration of nearly 200 congregations who are engaged in the Justice Coalition of Religious.

Technical support provided by Justice Coalition of Religious (JCoR)

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