

In the Margins of the UNGA80

TRANSFORMING OUR WORLD

22-24 September 2025 NEW YORK

Participants Handbook



www.unga-conference.org



The Journalists and Writers Foundation (JWF) is an international civil society organization dedicated to culture of peace, human rights, and sustainable development. The JWF promotes diversity and inclusion by creating forums for intellectual and social engagement, generates and shares knowledge builds with stakeholders, partnerships worldwide and develops policy recommendations for positive social change.

- JWF is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization registered in New York State.
- JWF is associated with the United Nations Department of Global Communications.

JWF Headquarters - NEW YORK

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SDGs CONFERENCE 2025

IN THE MARGINS OF THE UNGA80th SESSION

24 September 2025 | Wednesday | New York | Hybrid www.unga-conference.org

In the Margins of the 80th Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA80), the Journalists and Writers Foundation will host the 10th Annual SDGs Conference 2025 in collaboration with 56 civil society organizations from 30 countries on Wednesday, 24 September 2025 in New York. The year 2025 will also mark the 80th anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations and the 10th year of the SDGs Conference.

Journalists and Writers Foundation and its Global Partners are proud to celebrate this milestone by bringing together over 200 high-level UN diplomats, Heads of State, civil society leaders, human rights advocates, journalists, and youth leaders from around the globe. This signature event, along with the JWF High-Level Reception, the SDGs Roundtable Discussions, and the Pioneers in SDGs Awards Ceremony, continues to generate action-oriented and inclusive policy proposals for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Pact for the Future, while addressing complex issues and rising threats to international peace and security.



PANEL 1: Digitalization of Sustainable Development and Human Rights Advocacy

The integration of digital technologies into human rights monitoring has transformed the way organizations and activists monitor, report, and respond to violations worldwide. Advanced digital tools have increased transparency and accountability, allowing for more accurate and immediate responses to abuses. These innovations have also empowered grassroots communities to participate actively, enabling marginalized groups to document their experiences and draw international attention to issues that may have previously gone unnoticed.



As technology continues to evolve, its role in safeguarding human rights becomes ever more vital, opening new avenues for advocacy and oversight in complex geopolitical environments.

However, recent advancements also pose significant challenges. Undemocratic regimes often utilize emerging technologies to restrict journalists' space, criminalize human rights work, and suppress freedom of expression and assembly. Such developments highlight the urgent need for multi-stakeholder efforts to develop effective regulatory frameworks, promote digital literacy, and implement safeguards that protect human rights while harnessing the positive potential of digital innovation.

The Pact for the Future strongly advocates for civic technologies to advance the revitalization of the SDGs by promoting citizen engagement, improving access to information, and supporting transparent governance. Platforms enabling participatory decision-making and data sharing foster inclusive development, ensuring marginalized voices are heard and policies are responsive to community needs. Nonetheless, the rise of digital tools also introduces challenges such as misinformation and disinformation, which can hinder progress and deepen societal divisions. Addressing these issues requires strategic collaborations with social media platforms and technology leaders to combat false narratives and promote accurate, reliable information. Such partnerships are essential for creating an environment where digital tools serve as catalysts for positive social change and robust human rights advocacy.

PANEL 2: Women and Youth as Leaders for Civic Engagement and Social Change

The selection of the next UN Secretary-General in 2026 presents a pivotal opportunity to advance gender equality and amplify women's leadership in global governance. Despite some progress, women remain significantly underrepresented in high-level decision-making positions. Promoting inclusive leadership selection processes is essential to overcoming barriers to women's empowerment in political spheres. Highlighting women's leadership not only fosters equitable representation but also introduces diverse perspectives that can inspire innovative solutions to worldwide challenges. Facilitating a dialogue on this topic encourages stakeholders to prioritize gender parity as a fundamental criterion, thereby enhancing the legitimacy and effectiveness of the UN's leadership and its capacity to address global crises.

Simultaneously, setbacks in women's rights across many regions threaten to reverse years of progress toward achieving the SDGs. Backlash against gender equality initiatives, restrictive policies, and societal resistance undermine efforts to empower women and girls affecting their access to quality healthcare, education, and economic opportunities. This resurgence of opposition risks undoing decades of advancements, underscoring the importance of strategic resilience and persistent advocacy. Additionally, ongoing conflicts and social upheavals increase vulnerabilities, especially among youth, highlighting the urgent need to address intergenerational trauma and mental health issues. Building trust among young professionals through inclusive governance and multilateral cooperation is crucial for fostering resilience, promoting meaningful participation in conflict resolution, and securing a sustainable, equitable future amid global uncertainties.

PANEL 3: Cross-Cutting Threats to the Principles of Democracy

According to Freedom House and the V-Dem Institute, in 2024, for the first time in two decades, autocratic regimes outnumber democracies where the rule of law is upheld and public institutions safeguard fundamental human rights for all citizens, regardless of their political, cultural, religious, or gender identities. The rise of these authoritarian governments has posed significant challenges to the stability and efficacy of multilateral efforts aimed at promoting democracy and human rights worldwide. Autocratic leaders often undermine international norms by consolidating power, suppressing dissent, and manipulating legal frameworks to entrench their authority. These dynamic hampers the ability of global institutions and alliances to enforce collective actions, as authoritarian states exploit diplomatic gaps and geopolitical rivalries to resist accountability. Addressing these challenges requires renewed, adaptable multilateral strategies capable of countering the evolving tactics of authoritarian regimes.

In this world of digitalized media ecosystem, a pilar of democratic governance, social media and technological advancements have become powerful tools for amplifying human rights advocacy and active citizen participation. Human rights defenders utilize digital platforms to mobilize support, expose abuses, and foster greater awareness of social justice issues. However, these same tools are increasingly exploited by authoritarian actors to spread disinformation, manipulate public opinion, and undermine trust in traditional media outlets. This erosion of trust in mainstream sources exacerbates social divisions, weakening social cohesion and peace. Furthermore, the digital landscape is intertwined with geopolitical tensions, as states and non-state actors leverage technology to influence public discourse, complicating efforts to maintain global stability and uphold the rule of law.



Civil society organizations face mounting pressures amid these alarming developments, as governments impose legal restrictions, launch defamation campaigns, and enact laws aimed at limiting their activities. Such attacks on civil society threaten to silence dissent, curtail civic space, and diminish the capacity of grassroots movements to advocate for democratic reforms and human rights.

These restrictions often serve to consolidate autocratic power further, destabilizing democratic institutions and fostering environments of fear and repression. As a result, the overall fabric of civil society becomes frayed, undermining efforts to build resilient, inclusive societies capable of resisting authoritarian tendencies and promoting peaceful development.



SDGs CONFERENCE 2025

IN THE MARGINS OF THE UNGA80th SESSION

24 September 2025 | Wednesday | New York | Hybrid www.unga-conference.org

PROGRAM

10:00 AM - 10:30 AM

OPENING SESSION: Welcome Remarks & Keynotes

10:30 AM - 12:00 PM

PANEL 1: Digitalization of Sustainable Development and Human Rights Advocacy

- The use of digital technologies in human rights monitoring
- Civic technology to foster revitalization of Sustainable Development Goals
- The growing threat of technology-facilitated gender-based violence
- Misinformation/Disinformation as a Tool of Warfare in Divided Societies
- Collaborations with social media platforms and tech leaders for global human rights advocacy

12:15 PM - 1:45 PM

PANEL 2: Women and Youth as Leaders for Civic Engagement and Social Change

- Selecting the Next UN Secretary-General: A Dialogue on Women's Leadership
- Implications of women's rights backlash on the progress of the Global Goals
- Mitigating intergenerational trauma and ensuring mental health of youth in the era of conflicts
- Rebuilding youth trust in inclusive governance and multilateralism

2:00 PM - 3:30 PM

PANEL 3: Cross-Cutting Threats to the Principles of Democracy

- Multilateral Responses to the Rise of Autocratic Regimes and Practices
- The Power of Social Media and Technology for Human Rights and Democracy
- Undermining Trust in Mainstream Media eroding Social Cohesion and Peacefulness
- Global Stability at Risk: Geopolitical Tensions and Weakening Rule of Law
- Civil Society in Turbulence: Legal Attacks, Defamations, and Restrictions

3:30 PM - 4:00 PM CLOSING REMARKS



























SDGs ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION 2025

23 September 2025, Tuesday | 10:00am - 1:00pm EST | New York

As a part of the SDGs Conference 2025, the Journalists and Writers Foundation, in partnership with its 56 NGOs from 30 countries, is organizing the SDGs Roundtable Discussion 2025 to discuss critical issues to promote and protect sustainable peace and development. This side-event aims to create a platform for multiple stakeholders, including experts, practitioners, and civil society leaders to raise awareness on social problems and exchange ideas on possible solutions to social, economic, and environmental issues.

10:00am - 11:15am

Round 1: The Role of Interfaith Dialogue for Sustainable Peace and Development

In an increasingly interconnected world, fostering mutual understanding and collaboration among diverse faith communities is crucial for advancing sustainable peace and development. Interfaith dialogue provides a vital platform for building bridges, promoting social cohesion, and addressing shared challenges faced by societies worldwide. Recognizing the significant role faith-based initiatives can play in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), this roundtable aims to explore how interfaith collaboration can contribute to creating more inclusive, peaceful, and resilient communities. Through dialogue, mutual understanding, and collective action, interfaith communities can make meaningful contributions toward building a more cohesive, equitable, and sustainable world. This event serves as an important step in harnessing the transformative potential of faith-based collaboration to achieve the SDGs and foster lasting peace for future generations.

The discussion will focus on five key areas:

• Sharing Experiences and Best Practices: Cases and success stories from interfaith leaders and practitioners; Lessons learned from various interfaith initiatives and projects



- The Significance of Interfaith Collaboration: Role of faith-based efforts in fostering social cohesion and community resilience; Interfaith approaches to conflict resolution and peacebuilding
- Challenges and Obstacles in Interfaith Initiatives: Common barriers such as distrust, miscommunication, and cultural differences; Political, social, and structural challenges impacting interfaith efforts
- Strategic Approaches and Collective Actions: Strategies to overcome resistance and build mutual understanding; Designing inclusive and participatory interfaith programs; Innovative methods to mobilize collective action aligned with SDGs
- Building Partnerships and Networks: Creating sustainable collaborations among faith communities, civil society, and government; Engaging youth and marginalized groups in interfaith dialogue; Developing platforms for ongoing engagement and knowledge sharing

11:30am - 1:00pm

Round 2: Global Youth Voices for Peace and Justice

In today's global world, young people stand at the forefront of advocating for peace, justice, and social cohesion. Their unique perspectives, innovative initiatives, and active participation are vital to fostering sustainable peace and preventing conflicts. This panel aims to showcase the vital role of youth in shaping peaceful societies and to explore strategies for amplifying their voices in decision-making processes at local, national, and global levels.

This roundtable also aims to create a platform for dialogue among youth leaders worldwide in communication with policymakers and practitioners on how youth are promoting peace and justice, leading initiatives that build social cohesion, participating as decision-makers, and cooperating in crisis response efforts.

Empowering youth as active agents of social change is essential for sustainable peace and justice. This panel aims to elevate youth voices, showcase impactful initiatives, and inspire collective action towards a more peaceful and just world. The panel will offer policy recommendations for integrating youth perspectives into peacebuilding and conflict prevention strategies.

The discussion will focus on five key areas:

- Youth Promoting Peace and Justice while Preventing Conflicts: Exploring how young people are actively advocating for human rights, social equity, and conflict prevention and highlighting successful youth-led campaigns and movements that have contributed to peacebuilding.
- Youth-led Initiatives that Build Peace and Social Cohesion: Showcasing innovative projects and grassroots initiatives led by youth that foster dialogue, understanding, and reconciliation within diverse communities.
- Youth and Digital Tools for Peacebuilding: Discussing the role of digital platforms and social media in mobilizing youth for peacebuilding efforts; Exploring how digital platforms and strategies amplify youth voices, facilitate social cohesion, and enhance their active participation in conflict prevention and reconciliation processes.

- Youth Participation as Decisionmakers: Examining the importance of including youth voices in policymaking, peace negotiations, and community leadership; Sharing best practices and challenges in institutionalizing youth participation at different governance levels.
- Youth Cooperation in Crisis Response: Analyzing how young people contribute to emergency response, conflict mitigation, and recovery efforts during crises; Identifying ways to strengthen youth engagement in humanitarian and peacekeeping operations.

Date & Time:

Date: September 23, 2025 – Tuesday

Time: 10:00 am - 1:30 pm EST Venue: 630Second - Guild Hall

630 Second Ave New York, NY 10016

(Entrance between 34th and 35th Streets)

Format:

Introduction: Welcome Remarks by the organizers

10:00am - 11:30am

Round 1: The Role of Interfaith Dialogue for Sustainable Peace and Development (90

mins) - Panel Discussion Format Brief introduction by the moderator Speakers' presentations and reflections Q & A: Interactive Discussion Closing

11:30am – 12:00pm BREAK Session

Light food and drinks / Networking

12:00pm - 1:30pm

Round 2: Global Youth Voices for Peace and Justice (90 mins) - Panel Format

Brief introduction by the moderator Speakers' presentations and reflections Q & A: Interactive Discussion Closing

Closing Remarks: Final Remarks by the moderator and organizers

Reception: Light food and drinks / Networking

Participants: Interfaith, civil society and youth leaders, including policymakers, academics, journalists, and practitioners worldwide will participate in the roundtable discussions and the workshops.























SDGs CONFERENCE >>> 20

IN THE MARGINS OF THE UNGASO SESSION

24 SEPTEMBER 2025 | NEW YORK | HYBRID

DIGITALIZATION OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PANEL 1:

AND HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCACY

WOMEN AND YOUTH AS LEADERS FOR PANEL 2:

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND SOCIAL CHANGE

CROSS-CUTTING THREATS TO THE PANEL 3:

PRINCIPLES OF DEMOCRACY

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Manhattan Cruise Tour

4:00 PM – Circle Line Cruises
Departing from Pier 16 at South Street Seaport
www.circleline.com

Departing from Pier 16 at South Street Seaport, this 50-minute cruise gets you up close to Lady Liberty with stunning views of the Manhattan skyline and Ellis Island. Participants must arrive 30 minutes before departure at Pier 16.



4:00 PM - 5:00 PM Please arrive at 3:30pm for docking.

*Registration is required - Global Partners and international guests only.





Empire State Building

Standing 1,250' (381m) tall, it was the world's tallest building from 1931 until the World Trade Center was completed in 1972.



Chrysler Building

Classic Art Deco architecture, the building dons gargoyles that depict car ornaments and a spire modeled on a radiator grille.



One World Trade Center

Built to memorialize the Twin Towers, the 1,776' (541m) "Freedom Tower" is the tallest building in the Western hemisphere.



Statue of Liberty

Standing 305' (93m) tall, Lady Liberty has welcomed visitors since she was bequeathed to America from France in 1886



Brooklyn Bridge

The longest suspension bridge when it opened in 1883, its 276' (84m) high towers are built of limestone, granite and cement.





SDGs Conference Former High-Level Speakers



H.E. Sofia Voultepsi
Deputy Minister of Migration and
Asylum in Charge of Integration
(GREECE)



H.E. Helen Clark
Former Prime Minister
(NEW ZEALAND)



Hon. Prof. Bob Carr
Former Foreign Minister
(AUSTRALIA)



H.E. Celia Parnes

Former Head of the Secretary
of Social Development of the
State of São Paulo (BRAZIL)



Dr. Wayne Henry, JP
Director-General of the
Planning Institute, Ministry
of Finance and Public
Service (JAMAICA)



Hon. Verity Firth

Former NSW Minister for
Education and Training
(New South Wales, AUSTRALIA)



H.E. Mark Botomani

Minister of Information,
Civic Education and
Communications
Technology (MALAWI)



Adama Dieng
Former USG, Special Advisor
of the UN Secretary-General
on the Prevention of
Genocide



Lakshmi Puri
Former AssistantSecretary-General,
Deputy Executive
Director of UN Women



Former Assistan-Secretary-General, Policy Coordination & Inter-Agency Affairs of UN DESA

Thomas Gass



Vivian Heyl

Representative of the

Minister of Education

(CHILE)



Ambassador,
Permanent Mission of
Sweden to the UN
(SWEDEN)



Deputy Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Slovenia to the UN **(SLOVENIA)**

Sasa Jurečko



Ambassador,
Permanent Mission of
Eritrea to the UN
(ERITREA)



Michelle Breslauer
Senior Manager, UN
Global Compact (USA)



Sarmad Khan

Member of the

ACUNS Board of

Directors (CANADA)



H.E. Markova
Concepcion Jaramillo
Ambassador, Permanent
Mission of Panama to the
UN (PANAMA)



SDGs Conference Past Speakers



Assistant-Secretary-General



H.E. THOMAS GASS Assistant Secretary-General



H.E. LAKSHMI PURI Assistant Secretary-General



H.E. SIA NYAMA KOROMA First Lady of the Republic of Sierra Leone



H.E. AISHA BUHARI, Wife of the President of Nigeria



H.E. BESNIK MUSTAFAJ Fr. Minister of Foreign Affairs (Albania)



H.E. LAMBERT KOTY Fr. Minister of Public Works and Transport (Benin)



H.E. DR. ARBEN MALAJ Fr. Minister of Finance and Economy (Albania)



HON. NDEYE AWA MBODJ Member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs (Senegal)



H.E. FATOU LAMIN FAYE Minister of Basic and Secondary Education of The Gambia



H.E. ASHOK SAJJANHAR Former Ambassador of India to Kazakhstan, Sweden and Latvia



STEVE KILLELEA President & Founder, Institute for Director, Earth Institute Economics and Peace (Australia) Columbia University (USA)



DR. LISA GODDARD



LAURENCE KEMBALL-COOK CEO & Founder, Pavegen (United Kingdom)



LEANNE BAYER Senior Social Development Specialist



DR. TRAN VIET THAI Deputy Director-General Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam



JEFFERY HUFFINES **UN Representative** CIVICUS (USA)



SELLO HATANG CEO, Nelson Mandela Foundation (South Africa)



DR. HELMUT DINSE President, Eringerfeld Educational Inst. (Germany)



SAVAS METIN Secretary-General Kimse Yok Mu (Turkey)



ERIK KABERA Director, Kwetu Film Institute (Rwanda)



MOHAMED ALI ANSAR Co-Director, Timbuktu Renaissance Association (Mali)



One Acre Fund (East Africa Region)



MANOJ GURSAHANI President, US-INDIA Investment Forum (India)



H.E. LAMBERT KOTY Fr. Minister of Public Works and Transport (Benin)



SDGs Conference Past Speakers



Hon. Prof. Bob Carr Former Foreign Minister of Australia



Dr. Wayne Henry JP, Director-General of the Planning Institute of Jamaica | Jamaica



Donna Orender Founder, CEO of Orender Unlimited and Generation W | USA



Anton Morozov Member of the High Council of the LDPR, Deputy of the State Duma | Russia



Houry Geudelekian NGO CSW, Chair | USA



Jeff Schlegelmich, Director, National Center for Disaster Preparedness, Columbia University | USA



Diya K. Wynn Amazon Web Services, AI/ML Ethicist, Emerging Technologies | USA



Mehmet Kilic President, Journalists and Writers Foundation



Dr. Marina Sorokina Alexander Solzhenitsyn Center for the Study of the Russian Diaspora



Paula Boland President, UNA-NCA |



Michael Collins Executive Director, Institute for Economics and Peace | USA



Natalia M. Molina Member IAWJ | Argentina



Waqar Gillani Special Correspondent, The News on Sunday Pakistan



Mohna Ansari Member Commissioner, National Human Rights Commission | Nepal



Dr. Shekh M. A. Rahman Thammasat University, School of Global Studies |Thailand



JJ Green National Security Correspondent, WTOP Radio | USA



Shiv Vikram Khemka Vice-Chairman, SUN Group Global | India



Basma Alawee State Refugee Organizer, Florida Immigrant Coalition | USA



Burak Haylamaz Human Rights Solidarity



Prof. Diane Elson Emeritus Professor, University of Essex, Department of Sociology | UK



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPME























































15 LIFE ON LAND

















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