HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM
ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

PERMANENT MISSION OF
COSTA RICA TO
THE UNITED NATIONS

2021 High Level Political Forum Side Event

Beyond the Rhetoric on "Leaving No One Behind": Concrete Policies and Actions to Eliminate Systemic Racism in Implementation of the SDGs

6 July 2021, 7:30-9:00AM EDT

TO REGISTER: https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_EcZ4VKgHTS-M5pvZHw--Jg

Concept Note

Organized by the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues (SPSSI),
Co-Sponsored by the Permanent Mission of Costa Rica,
In Partnership with the following NGOS having Consultative Status with ECOSOC:
ATOP Meaningful World, European Health Psychology Society, International Association for Applied Psychology, Psychology Coalition of NGOs Having Consultative Relationship with the UN ECOSOC, World Council of Psychotherapy

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On 31 May, the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues (SPSSI) submitted a proposal for a side event consisting of panel presentations and a discussion to contribute to the Decade for Step Up Action and Delivery for Sustainable Development (2020-2030) and to observe the 20th Anniversary of the Durban Declaration and Programme for Action (DDPA) as a comprehensive guide against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. The purpose of the side event is to address the urgent need to integrate concrete human rights policies and programmes, especially policies and programmes for the elimination of systemic racism and racial and ethnic discrimination, throughout the implementation and assessment of progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues and its co-sponsor, the Permanent Mission of Costa Rica to the United Nation (UN) extends a warm invitation to all representatives of Missions to the United Nations (UN), UN entities, NGOs, CSOs, the private sector and other stakeholders to register for and participate in this side event, held virtually under technical arrangements set up by SPSSI.

Contributions of the Side Event to the HLPF

The UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, launched a little over five years ago (2015), promised to fulfill human rights to equality and non-discrimination across the 17 SDGs, "leaving no one behind." According to SPSSI's analysis of the SDGs framework, although the introduction to the SDGs is visionary in its stated commitment to protect and fulfill human rights for all and to end racial, gender and other forms of discrimination prohibited by international law, the targets and global indicators developed to evaluate progress on the attainment of the SDGs do not reflect an equally robust focus on this laudatory human rights commitment.

Especially concerning is the finding that the targets, global indicators and voluntary national reports to date are silent on the eradication of systemic racism and racial and ethnic discrimination which function as global, national and local barriers to human development throughout the lifespan. Despite some advances due to decades of anti-racism struggle, systemic racism and racial and ethnic discrimination continue as sources of oppression, marginalization, exclusion and intersecting inequalities among people in all regions of the world. Psychological and social scientific studies have documented economic inequalities and unequal access to basic needs like food, safe drinking water, sanitation and housing; access to quality education, employment with living wages, justice, physical and mental health and social security; access to political participation, equal protection against the ravages of climate disasters and health epidemics; access to protection against racial profiling and police violence; and access to the economic, social, and environmental inclusion of migrants and refugees. COVID-19 has revealed and exacerbated many of these inequalities resulting from systemic racism.

Additionally, in spite of the call by several human rights experts for disaggregated data and the inclusion of a mandate for disaggregated data within the SDGs framework, limited attention has been given to such data especially for racial and ethnic groups who experience some of the most dehumanizing forms of discrimination. The SDGs will be attainable only to the extent that racial and other human rights inequalities are acknowledged, meaningfully assessed with timely, reliable data including disaggregated data, and addressed through comprehensive, concrete policies and programmatic actions.

SPSSI's role at the UN

SPSSI has a long and distinguished history in addressing racism, prejudice and discrimination and other human rights issues through scientific research and policymaking. The Society began working with the UN in the period 1947-1969 when leading psychologists and social scientists became engaged with the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to build a bridge between social scientific research and UN policy making. At the time, their work addressed conceptions and scientific facts of race, published by UNESCO to combat racism and racial prejudice. Since 1987, SPSSI has been affiliated with the UN in New York and Geneva, where its representatives seek to bring psychological and social science perspectives to bear on a range of global issues, including racism, women and gender, children's rights, ageing, climate and environment, health, mental health and psychosocial resilience, migration and the UN's 2030 SDGs Agenda. The Society holds Special Accreditation Status with the UN Economic and Social Council.

Objectives and format of the Side Event

SPSSI in partnership with missions to the UN, NGOs, and independent experts will host a one and a half-hour panel presentation and discussion on 6 July, 7:30 to 9:00 AM EDT during the 2021 High Level Political Forum. The panel will consist of Ambassadors of regionally diverse countries with a strong commitment to leaving no one behind through the integration of human rights and the elimination of systemic racism and racial and ethnic discrimination into their implementation of the SDGs. The panel will include one expert on effective policy making and programming for the elimination of systemic racism and racial and ethnic discrimination and one expert on disaggregation of data and other valid and reliable assessments. The objectives of the panel will be to: (1) advocate for Member States, UN departments/agencies, NGOs/CSOs, the private sector and other stakeholders to integrate the elimination of systemic racism and racial and ethnic discrimination into each of the 17 SDGs; and (2) illustrate how this can be achieved in at least one SDG, building on existing UN human rights standards and promising foundational policies and concrete actions already taken at the national level of particular Member States. Each panelist will speak for 12 minutes followed by a moderated discussion with the audience of representatives of Member States, UN entities, NGOs/CSOs, the private sector and other stakeholders.

The following persons have been invited to be panelists:

H.E. Ambassador Rodrigo Alberto Carazo Zeledon
Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the UN -CONFIRMED

H.E. Ambassador Mahamat Zene Cherif
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Chad to the UN - INVITED

H.E. Ambassador Mathu Joyini
Permanent Representative of South Africa to the UN – INVITED

Dr. Verene Shepherd, Vice Chair
UN Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination – CONFIRMED

Dr. Inga T. Winkler
Incoming Associate Professor in International Human Rights Law at the Central European University in Vienna, Austria – CONFIRMED

The panel will be moderated by _____

Coordinated by the SPSSI UN/NGO Team: Corann Okorodudu, EdD, Professor Emerita of Psychology & Africana Studies, Rowan University; Email: okorodudu@rowan.edu
David Livert, PhD, Associate Professor of Psychology, Pennsylvania State University
Deborah Fish Ragin, PhD, Professor Emerita of Health Psychology, Montclair State University
Laurel Peterson, PhD, Associate Professor of Health Psychology, Bryn Mawr College
Doctoral Interns: Trisha Dehrone, Laura Lopez-Aybar, Mehrgol Tiv, Xu Yimeng
Priyadharshany Sandanapitchai, Graduate Intern