The High-Level Political Forum 2024 (HLPF) will be held in New York from 8-17 July 2024, hosted by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). This includes a three-day ministerial forum from 15-17 July.

The HLPF is the main United Nations platform on sustainable development and it has a central role in the follow-up and review of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the global level.

The theme for the HLPF 2024 is - Reinforcing the 2030 Agenda and eradicating poverty in times of multiple crises: the effective delivery of sustainable, resilient and innovative solutions.

SDG4 IN THE HLPF

SDG 4 on Quality Education is addressed by the HLPF every four years and is not under review this year, but the right to education has several linkages with the entire agenda, so it is still very important for the civil society movement to address them and contribute to the political discussions for advancing human rights.

This year, the HLPF will review:
- SDG 1 (No Poverty)
- SDG 2 (Zero Hunger)
- SDG 13 (Climate Action)
- SDG 16 (Peace, Justice & Strong Institutions)
- SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals)
Due to its enabling nature, the right to education is directly related to the realization of the aforementioned SDGs. This is because the development of learning and life skills enables individuals and communities to make progress in eradicating poverty, in seeking solutions to reactivate economies, and meeting nutritional needs. Furthermore, education empowers societies to overcome climate crises and adopt peaceful forms of coexistence that resolve conflicts.

This year, the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) will focus on disseminating, at the HLPF, the mechanisms and opportunities that education provides to build peaceful and non-violent societies.

In an era marked by turmoil and strife, education emerges as a beacon of hope, offering pathways to understanding, empathy, and reconciliation. As UNESCO stated, peace in the 21st century is not just the absence of violence and conflicts. It is also a positive, participatory, and dynamic process that nurtures our ability to value human dignity and take care of ourselves, each other, and the planet we share.

By nurturing critical thinking skills, promoting dialogue, intercultural understanding, environmental stewardship, and fostering a culture of tolerance and respect, education empowers individuals and communities to navigate conflicts peacefally and constructively.
We understand that the Sustainable Development Agenda, especially SDG 4, will likely not be achieved by 2030. However, this pessimistic forecast does not discourage us; instead, it compels the civil society movement to intensify its advocacy efforts and political struggle towards states and the international community, which are still failing to fulfil their educational duties and core obligations.

The monitoring of the Sustainable Development Agenda must be coherently integrated with the human rights framework to recognize its legally binding nature, deepen its impact, and establish robust follow-up mechanisms where civil society plays a crucial role.

The attempts by corporate sectors to co-opt the Sustainable Development Agenda, which have unfortunately received UN endorsement, can only worsen existing problems and disparities. Development and rights issues cannot be understood or resolved using the mindset and tools of private businesses, which focus on maximizing profits rather than meeting human needs and upholding people’s rights.

In the pursuit of peace, for example, war must be denounced as an arms business. Achieving this level of consciousness is only possible through education that emphasizes human dignity and the supreme value of life. Although these learnings are far from being realized, we remain steadfast in our commitment to making them a reality.