



**UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION  
OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

**UN Human Rights Council Intersessional Meeting: 16 January 2019**

“Human Rights and the 2030 Agenda: Empowering People and Ensuring Inclusiveness and Equality”

UNA-USA Written Statement: Submitted 9 January 2019

Established in 1943, the United Nations Association of the United States of America<sup>1</sup> (or UNA-USA) is a grassroots movement of Americans who support the United Nations. UNA-USA acknowledges this intersessional meeting of the UN Human Rights Council was endorsed by a consensus of the Council’s membership and is grateful for the body’s continued action and focus on these interrelated and vital issues.

UNA-USA and its network of more than 200 college and community chapters across the U.S. have long acknowledged that human rights and the SDGs are inextricably linked. For example, in 2017 the UNA-USA chapter in Northern New Jersey and Prospanica celebrated the International Day for Persons with Disabilities with a job fair for persons with disabilities. There, participants and business representatives agreed on one message: ensuring the rights of persons with disabilities and achieving the SDGs are one in the same. In Chicago, a UNA-USA chapter marked UN Day with the Center on Halsted, an NGO serving the LGBTI community. At the event, the Center mapped its efforts across the SDGs. During the launch of the current UN General Assembly session, UNA-USA also convened private sector representatives and students at New York University’s Stern School of Business to discuss building intergenerational and inter-sector bridges that can advance gender equality, fight climate change, and promote the ethical use of technology. Finally, just last October, Ohio State University’s UNA-USA chapter brought the UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights to Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation to Columbus to discuss synergies among SDG 6 and the right to water.

UNA-USA has learned three things from these experiences. First, by acknowledging the overlap in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and human rights commitments at home, there are greater opportunities for different sectors, generations, and populations to unite and work together. Second, like the protection of human rights, supporting the SDGs begins at home. Third, there is a thirst among youth to be implementers and change agents for both the SDGs and human rights. A 2018 Better World Campaign poll has affirmed this, ranking the environment, poverty, and human rights as top issues for young Americans.<sup>2</sup>

Cognizant of this, and in advance of the 68<sup>th</sup> UN Civil Society Conference in Utah in 2019, UNA-USA is honored to announce that it will convene a first-ever Youth Solutions Summit under the theme of “Building Safe, Inclusive, Resilient, and Sustainable Communities Together.” Through this unique solutions incubator planned for spring 2019, we hope to continue the momentum towards identifying and implementing solutions that recognize that action on human rights and the SDGs are two sides of the same coin.

UNA-USA looks forward to sharing the outcomes of the Youth Solutions Summit with the UN Human Rights Council, OHCHR, as well as other partners. We remain firmly committed to pursuing the achievement of the SDGs and advancing human rights commitments in the United States.

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<sup>1</sup> For more information on UNA-USA please visit <https://unausa.org/>. Contact Ryan Kaminski, UNA-USA Senior Program Manager for Human Rights and Special Initiatives, at [rkaminski@unausa.org](mailto:rkaminski@unausa.org).

<sup>2</sup> See “National Survey of Generation Z and Millennials-Key Findings,” Public Opinion Strategies and Hart Research Associates. September 17, 2018, <https://betterworldcampaign.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/2018-Gen-Z-Millennial-Survey-Key-Findings-Memo-Final-Public-Opinion-Strategies-Hart-Research.pdf>.