All Global Research articles can be read in 51 languages by activating the Translate Website button below the author's name (only available in desktop version).

To receive Global Research's Daily Newsletter (selected articles), click here.

Click the share button above to email/forward this article to your friends and colleagues. Follow us on Instagram and Twitter and subscribe to our Telegram Channel. Feel free to repost and share widely Global Research articles.

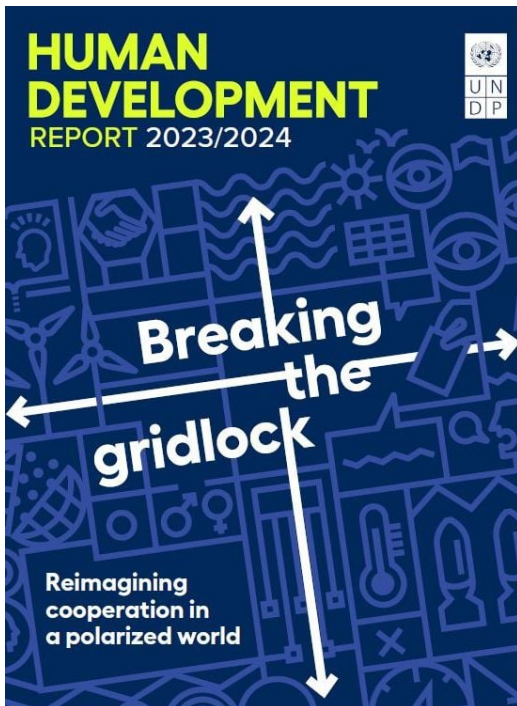Spread the Truth, Refer a Friend to Global Research

***

Purpose of the Briefing Note

This briefing note will inform the coordinators and scholars of the Sustainable Leadership and Positive Peace Research Fellowship Programme and global audiences about key findings from the 2023/2024 Human Development Report published by the United Nations Development Programme.

It will also present practical recommendations for the problems identified within the report concerning human development, threats to security and the role of sustainable leadership and positive peace in promoting global cooperation.

Background and Brief Discussion

Image is from UNDP

The Human Development Index (HDI) was introduced by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 1990 amidst the international context that standard measures of development such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita were insufficient to measure the complexity and multi-dimensional components of development including living standards, health and well-being, education, inequalities, multi-dimensional poverty, gender parity, agency and political participation. Inclusive, resilient and sustainable policies, practical interventions and institutions are necessary for ensuring that development is people-centred and future-oriented.

However, the 2023/2024 Human Development Report notes that wars, civil disturbances, mass inequities in income and wealth distribution and access to opportunities, growing poverty, rising populism, environmental degradation and climate change along with the long-lasting implications of the COVID-19 pandemic have reversed decades of gains in social and economic development, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and continue to be key threats to international peace and security and democratic norms, practices and public institutions and administration. This necessitates the research and evidenced-based policy mandate of the collaborative endeavour between the Global Sustainable Futures Network and UN-Aligned through its Sustainable Leadership and Positive Peace Research Fellowship Programme. The 2023/2024 Human Development Report outlines the following findings that should guide the individual and collective decision-making and implementation of research project activities within a short- to long-term period:

- Between 1999 and 2019, the global human development index (HDI) was on track for most countries that were categorized for scoring high or very high human development.
- Although the global human development index (HDI) has rebounded to project high records for Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries in 2022 and 2023, the global HDI is still below pre-pandemic levels. The COVID-19 pandemic has subverted global progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- The decline of the human development index (HDI) in 2020 and 2021 was

unprecedented.

- The global COVID-19 recovery is highly unequal whereby 51% of Least Developed Countries (LDCS) human development indices have not surpassed the 2019 HDI values while all Organizational for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries have rebounded and surpassed the 2019 HDI values in 2023.
- Extreme weather events, greenhouse gas emissions and environmental vulnerabilities drive rapid, planetary changes.
- Innovation is central to attaining deep, transnational/societal transformations.
- Power and resource imbalances and diverse, development needs, interests and strategies often hinder coherent, integrated and collective decision-making.
- Agency refers to expanding people's capabilities and scope for opportunities but agency gaps are widening for poor and marginalized communities in developed and developing countries.
- Learning from successful efforts to managing complex, global challenges can enhance global cooperation.
- Sustainable leadership can propel and sustain social norms in support of global cooperation.
- Interdependence between public institutions and development state and non-state actors needs to be harnessed through collaboration and coordination to advance human development.

Proposed Policy Recommendations to the Issues Raised in the 2023/2024 Human Development Report

- Key decision-makers and policymakers from the Global North and Global South should foment stronger partnerships through memoranda of understanding and agreements to foster access to opportunities in the areas of health, education, gender parity, labour market reforms, affirmative action and social protection to alleviate inequalities.
- International financial, justice/legal, trade and social institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank (WB), World Trade Organization (WTO), International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the United Nations (UN) should be reformed to enhance the decision-making representation, leverage and power of countries of the Global South. Enforcement mechanisms should be introduced, implemented and monitored in these institutions to ensure fairness in decisions, rulings and agreements in alignment with both contextually sensitive and common principles underpinning public international law.
- Countries of the Global South that continue to suffer from historical and contemporary, systemic disadvantages should further capitalize on South-South cooperation to exchange and apply best practices in climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies to address environmental vulnerabilities and climate change. Additionally, they should seek to access concessionary development financing loans from Southern regional blocs with established development banks.
- Developed country governments, developing country governments and international institutions should build data and technical capacities to ensure greater integration and coherence of socially and culturally responsive policies and programmes of action in alignment with monitoring, evaluating and attaining the Sustainable Development Goals indicators and targets.

- Universities, research institutes and research non-governmental organizations (NGOs) should strengthen their engagement with community-based organizations and social movements that are connected to poor and vulnerable communities. A combination of knowledge-based innovation and direct participation can bolster advocacy efforts geared towards policy and legislative changes at the sub-national, national, regional and international levels.
- There should be an increase in cross-border public education, awareness and peace-building opportunities and campaigns, to mitigate against the consequences of polarization and populism which spread hate, discrimination and violence.
- Civil society and human rights organizations should be given greater civic space in collective decision-making in both countries of the North and South to bridge the gaps in trust and legitimacy between citizens and governments and public confidence in democratic reforms and institutions.

*

Note to readers: Please click the share button above. Follow us on Instagram and Twitter and subscribe to our Telegram Channel. Feel free to repost and share widely Global Research articles.

Tina Renier is an Afro-Jamaican scholar-activist. She is also a Research Fellow for the Sustainable Leadership and Positive Peace Research Fellowship Programme, a UNESCO Inclusive Policy Lab expert and a regular contributor to Global Research. She received a Master of Arts in International Development Studies from Saint Mary's University in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada.

Featured image *source*

The original source of this article is Global Research
Copyright © [Tina Renier](#), Global Research, 2024

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [Tina Renier](#)

For media inquiries: