

WORKING TOWARDS A PLURALISTIC FUTURE

NEWSLETTER BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE SIKH HUMAN RIGHTS GROUP
NGO WITH SPECIAL CONSULTATIVE STATUS AT THE UNITED NATIONS

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DIRECTORS NOTE

WELCOME TO OUR AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER 2023 NEWSLETTER

BY DR JASDEV SINGH RAI (SHRG DIRECTOR) (LONDON OFFICE)

Welcome to the August and September 2023 newsletter of the Sikh Human Rights Group (SHRG). We now publish these every two months to give us more time to concentrate on the SHRG's many activities. September holds the third Regular Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council which rolls over into October.

A great deal of preparation goes into our Human Rights Council engagement. We also hold a side event at the Council. Documents have to be read. These documents are reports by the Special Rapporteurs, Working Groups and Experts. The various agenda item discussions are based on the reports. NGOs are expected to prepare their statements around the report as a response or to offer proposals.

As detailed in this newsmagazine, the SHRG also participated in the UN SDGs conference in New York. Two new volunteer members from Canada joined our team. They were both overwhelmed by the diversity of participants, the many countries that they come from and the scope of the actions being taken. Their personal reflections are given here.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are defining the approach of the United Nations to bring development to all of humanity with the mission statement, '**leave no one behind**'.

The SHRG is developing expertise in the UN SDGs. As also reflected by the volunteers, Sikh values and activities resonate with the UN SDGs to a great extent. We hope to find synergy between the two and encourage more Sikh and non-Sikh institutions to participate and engage with the UN SDGs.

The SHRG is promoting the integration of gender perspectives in all areas of UN work and activities. The Sikh worldview or GurSikhi, has a strong position on gender perspectives to be integral to all aspects of human and community life. Integrating gender perspectives is different from the pursuit of equality.

Currently, most human activity, decisions, institutional structures and architectural designs are based on the needs and outlook of the male. Women have to fit in. While they can expect 'equal' treatment, women often find the workplace, the decisions, the documents, etc... lack designs and language that reflect women's perspectives and needs. It is important that policies, decisions, designs, structures, etc... integrate both female and male perspectives. This makes all genders comfortable with workplaces and documents.

Of our national projects, the Sikh Neurodiversity Network project continues to gain more participants, respect and support from many Sikh Gurdwaras. Run efficiently and with great sensitivity for all participants under the guidance of Mr Carlos Arbuthnott, the project has won the admiration of many parents. There are regular activities that children find very useful and relaxing. Gurdwaras are happy that a section of the community that felt marginalised now feels integrated within the community. The project has also gained more volunteers.

In October, the SHRG will be holding a Organic Farming event at Sri Khadur Sahib under the patronage and administration of Nishan-e-Sikhi, one of the affiliates of Sikh Human Rights Group. The SHRG will also be participating at the COP 28 where it has been fortunate to get a booth and a side event. Both are in collaboration with other organisations. The SHRG is looking forward to this. In the next edition, we hope to bring highlights of our activities and reflections at COP 28.

For more information on our ongoing work please visit our website by clicking [here](#)

Yours sincerely,

Dr Jasdev Singh Rai

EDITORS NOTE

WELCOME TO OUR AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER 2023 NEWSLETTER

BY MR CARLOS ARBUTHNOTT (HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICER & PROJECT COORDINATOR AT THE SHRG) (LONDON OFFICE)

Welcome to the August and September 2023 editions of the Sikh Human Rights Group's newsletter informing you of our ongoing work. Unfortunately, we are not able to cover everything that we do in this brief newsletter. Nevertheless, and as you will see we are engaged in a wide variety of domestic and international human rights issues to promote our founding doctrine of Pluralism.

We have also taken on a number of interns and volunteers who take up research, take notes during United Nations conferences and events and write reports. Consequently, we always try to encourage them to contribute to our newsletter.

If you would like to get involved in any of our ongoing projects or for anything else then please contact me via: carlos.arbuthnott@shrg.ngo

I very much hope that you enjoy the contents of this edition.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Carlos Arbuthnott



(Mr Carlos Arbuthnott)



GURDWARA SRI GURU
SINGH SABHA
SOUTHALL

shrg
SIKH HUMAN
RIGHTS GROUP

SEND After School Club

Special Educational Needs & Disabilities

Every Wednesday from 4:30pm to 5:30pm

At Gurdwara Sri Guru Singh Sabha (Upstairs Hall)

2-8 Park Avenue, Southall, UB1 3AG



LET'S LEARN ABOUT ...

GURDWARA SAHIB

SIKH CUSTOMS AND TRADITIONS

SENSORY PLAY

KIRTAN

STORIES - SAKHIES

SIKH RHYMES

MUCH MORE



PLAY. LEARN. GROW.

For more information please contact Mr Carlos Arbuthnott via:

carlos.arbuthnott@shrg.ngo



Art & Craft Workshop

SEND FAMILIES ONLY

EVERY **TUESDAY** FROM **4:30 PM** TO **5:30 PM**

GURDWARA SRI GURU SINGH SABHA SOUTHALL,
PARK AVENUE, GIANI DITT SINGH HALL, UB1 3AG

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

MR CARLOS ARBUTHNOTT VIA:
CARLOS.ARBUTHNOTT@SHRG.NGO

See you there!



Brand New West London SEND Football Club

AFTER A HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL START, OUR SEND FOOTBALL TRAINING SESSIONS AT RECTORY PARK FOOTBALL CENTRE (UB5 5FA) ARE NOW RUNNING ON A WEEKLY BASIS (EVERY WEDNESDAY) FOR 1 HOUR BETWEEN 16:30 AND 17:30. OPEN TO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH SEND AGED 5 - 16.

Date & Time:

Every Wednesday
Including School Holidays

16:30 to 17:30

Venue:

Rectory Park Football Centre, Middlesex FA,
Ruislip Road, Northolt, UB5 5FA

Cost: Free

For more information please scan the QR code below or contact Mr Carlos Arbuthnott (Human Rights Officer & Project Coordinator) via:

carlos.arbuthnott@shrg.ngo

"Football gives you the confidence not to hide your disability and shows you can do amazing things..."

Liam Irons

England Cerebral Palsy Team Star



SCAN ME





SEND

Parent & Carer Tea Morning



Gurdwara Sri Guru Singh Sabha Slough, Sheehy Way, Berkshire, Slough, SL2 5SS is delighted to announce that we will be hosting a Free Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Support Group Session (tea morning) for parents and carers in the Bhai Mani Singh Learning Centre on:

Tuesday the 07 November 2023 from 09:30 am to 11:00 am

Come and meet other parents and carers with similar experiences as well as child development experts. This event is being supported by **Ms Rosy Bola (Clinical Child Psychologist - CAMHS)** and **Ms Karimul Dhillon (SEND Family Support Worker)** and is a space for you to find out what is going on in the local area to support your child's needs and to get support from individuals with similar lived experiences.

We can assist with the following; drafting and enforcing Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs); Disability Living Allowance (DLA) applications; blue badge applications; and much, much more...

For more information please contact:

Mr Carlos Arbuthnott
Human Rights Officer & Project Coordinator
Sikh Human Rights Group

carlos.arbuthnott@shrg.ngo





Speech & Language Therapist Parent & Carer Tea Morning

Gurdwara Sri Guru Singh Sabha Southall, Guru Nanak Road, Southall, UB2 4NP is delighted to announce that we will be hosting a **Free Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Support Group Session (tea morning)** for parents and carers in the downstairs library on:

Tuesday the 28 November 2023 from 09:30 am to 11:00 am

Come and meet other parents and carers with similar experiences as well as child development experts. This event is being supported by **Ealing Speech and Language Therapy Team (NHS)** and is a space for you to find out what is going on in the local area to support your child's needs and to get support from individuals with similar lived experiences.

We can assist with the following; drafting and enforcing Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs); Disability Living Allowance (DLA) applications; blue badge applications; and much, much more...

For more information please contact:

Mr Carlos Arbuthnott (Human Rights Officer & Project Coordinator)
Sikh Human Rights Group

carlos.arbuthnott@shrg.ngo

Ealing NHS Speech & Language Therapy Team



LUCY FLAHERTY

- Speech and Language Therapist working in Mainstream Schools, universal and youth justice services.
- Interested in: Working with secondary students and raising awareness of SLT.
- What I do for fun: Play netball!



CIARA HOWEY

- Speech and Language Therapist working in Mainstream Schools and universal services.
- Interested in: Complex Needs & AAC
- What I do for fun: Crochet!



RIMSHA IMRAN TAHIR

- Punjabi and Urdu Bilingual Co-Worker.
- Interested in: Speech and Language Therapy Counselling.
- What I do for fun: Read, bake and make digital art!



GURDWARA SRI GURU
SINGH SABHA
SOUTHALL

INTERGRATION OF A GENDER PERSPECTIVE

BY MS BETHAN WALTERS (HUMAN RIGHTS, COMMUNICATIONS AND MEDIA OFFICER)
(LONDON OFFICE)

As we prepare for the 54th Regular Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council, we have been undertaking extensive research to see why the integration of a gender perspective is so essential.

The integration of a gender perspective is an imperative of paramount significance on the global stage. It addresses historical and systemic gender inequalities, upholds human rights, and propels sustainable development. A gender perspective discerns the pervasive marginalisation and discrimination experienced by individuals based on their gender, which perpetuates unequal access to resources, opportunities, and decision-making power. This article underscores the urgency and importance of integrating a gender perspective and articulates the significance of this approach across diverse domains.

Human Rights: The integration of a gender perspective is pivotal for the recognition and safeguarding of the rights of all individuals, irrespective of their gender identity. It is the bedrock of principles such as equality, non-discrimination, and the preservation of human dignity enshrined within the fabric of international human rights agreements.

Empowerment: At its core, a gender perspective empowers women and girls by challenging detrimental gender norms and stereotypes. It fosters an environment where they can harness their full potential across all spheres of life, thereby dismantling gender-based barriers.

Inclusive Development: Achieving gender equality is indispensable for sustainable development. When women and girls enjoy equitable access to education, healthcare, employment, and decision-making, it catalyses economic growth and propels social progress.

Peace and Security: A gender perspective holds paramount importance in fostering peaceful and secure societies. Acknowledging the unique vulnerabilities faced by women and girls during conflicts, and engaging them in conflict prevention and resolution efforts, significantly contributes to enduring peace.

Effective Policies and Programs: Infusing a gender perspective into policies and programs ensures their responsiveness to the diverse needs and experiences of different genders. This holistic approach culminates in more effective and pertinent outcomes.

In relation to our menstrual health and women's health project, we have also shared the importance of integrating a gender perspective with regard to women's health. The integration of a gender perspective is essential when addressing women's health due to the unique biological, social, and cultural factors that influence their health outcomes. The gender perspective recognises that biological differences do not solely determine health but are profoundly shaped by the roles, expectations, and inequalities assigned to individuals based on their gender. Here's why the integration of a gender perspective is crucial in the realm of women's health:

Tailored Healthcare: Women and men have distinct health needs and vulnerabilities. A gender perspective enables healthcare providers to understand and address these differences, leading to more tailored and effective healthcare interventions.

Access to Healthcare: Gender norms can limit women's access to healthcare services, particularly in patriarchal societies. Integrating a gender perspective helps identify barriers and develop strategies to ensure that women have equitable access to quality healthcare.

Reproductive Health: A gender perspective is fundamental in understanding and addressing reproductive health issues. For instance, women have unique reproductive health requirements and thus these types of considerations require particular attention when developing comprehensive reproductive health services.

Menstrual Health: Issues related to menstrual health are often stigmatised and ignored. A gender perspective ensures that menstrual health is addressed as a crucial aspect of women's well-being, promoting awareness, access to hygiene products, and proper healthcare.

INTERGRATION OF A GENDER PERSPECTIVE

BY MS BETHAN WALTERS (HUMAN RIGHTS, COMMUNICATIONS AND MEDIA OFFICER)
(LONDON OFFICE)

Maternal Health: Pregnancy and childbirth involve complex biological and social dynamics. A gender perspective examines the roles of women as mothers and caregivers, ensuring proper care, support, and maternal well-being.

Violence Against Women: Gender-based violence has severe health implications. A gender perspective helps recognise the intersection between violence and health, ensuring that survivors receive appropriate medical care and support.

Mental Health: Societal expectations and roles can impact women's mental health. A gender perspective acknowledges the unique stressors women may face and promotes mental health support tailored to their needs.

Research and Data: Integrating a gender perspective in research leads to a better understanding of health issues specific to women. This results in more accurate data and thus informed policies.

Empowerment and Decision-Making: A gender perspective empowers women to make informed decisions about their health, encouraging them to seek medical care, demand appropriate treatment, and actively participate in health-related discussions.

Policy Formulation: Policies that consider gender differences are more likely to address women's health needs comprehensively, leading to better health outcomes and reducing health disparities.

Intersectionality: A gender perspective recognises that other factors like race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and sexual orientation influence women's health experiences. This approach ensures inclusivity and addresses the unique challenges faced by marginalised groups of women.

Prevention and Education: Gender-sensitive health education and awareness campaigns ensure that women have the knowledge to make informed choices about their health, promoting early detection and prevention of health issues.

In conclusion, the integration of a gender perspective in women's health is not just about biological differences; it's about acknowledging the social and cultural context that profoundly shapes women's health experiences. By doing so, we can ensure that healthcare is equitable, effective, and respectful of women's diverse needs and identities.

To amplify the integration of a gender perspective with a pluralistic approach, we propose the following actions:

Inclusive Representation: Foster diverse representation and amplify the voices of all genders in decision-making processes across the United Nations and its member states. Elevate women, non-binary individuals, and marginalised genders to key leadership positions.

Gender Mainstreaming: Infuse gender considerations into all United Nations policies, programs, and activities. Systematically scrutinise intersections of gender with various issues and redress gender disparities correspondingly.

Education and Training: Disseminate comprehensive training and education on gender issues to UN staff and Member States. This encompasses gender-sensitive language, gender-responsive budgeting, and gender analysis.

Data Collection and Analysis: Gather and analyse sex-disaggregated data to identify gender disparities and inform evidence-based policy formulation. This data holds the potential to gauge progress towards gender equality objectives.

Resource Allocation: Allocate substantial resources to gender-focused initiatives and programs that advance women's leadership, economic empowerment, and reproductive health.

INTERGRATION OF A GENDER PERSPECTIVE

BY MS BETHAN WALTERS (HUMAN RIGHTS, COMMUNICATIONS AND MEDIA OFFICER)
(LONDON OFFICE)

Partnerships: Forge collaborations with civil society organisations, grassroots movements, and feminist groups that champion gender equality. These partnerships enrich policy formulation with ground-level insights.

Gender Norms Transformation: Pioneering campaigns to challenge harmful gender norms, stereotypes, and discriminatory practices is pivotal in all societal strata.

Women, Peace, and Security: Endeavor to implement and uphold the United Nations Security Council resolutions on Women, Peace, and Security. Ensure the active participation and protection of women in conflict and post-conflict scenarios.

Accountability: Hold Member States and UN entities accountable for their gender equality commitments through regular monitoring and transparent reporting mechanisms.

The pursuit of a pluralistic approach embracing diversity and acknowledging the intricate interplay of gender with other social identities is instrumental. The United Nations, through this approach, stands poised to further the integration of a gender perspective and pave the way for a world that is more equitable, just, and inclusive.



UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN FOCUS

BY MR IVAN LORENCI DE FRANCISCO (HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICER AT THE SHRG)
(GENEVA OFFICE)

This past September, my colleague Albert Barseghyan and I joined Jasmeet Singh and Ranbir Singh in New York to participate in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), the Sustainable Development Goals Summit (SDG Summit), the Sustainable Development Goals Action Weekend (SDG Action Weekend), and the Global People's Assembly. But what are all of these meetings squeezed into less than ten days?

The United Nations General Assembly is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations and is often considered the leading deliberative, policymaking, and representative body of the UN. It was established in 1945 as part of the UN's founding charter. The UNGA consists of all 193 Member States of the United Nations, each of which is represented in the assembly. Among its vital functions and responsibilities, the UNGA acts as a forum where Member States discuss and make decisions on various international issues, including peace and security, development, human rights, and so on... This organ has been established with the one-member, one-vote principle. It holds annual sessions during which, on top of the previously mentioned activities, it elects the non-permanent members of the Security Council, approves the budget of the UN, appoints the UN Secretary-General, and establishes the subsidiary specialised agencies.

As for the SDG Summit, this meeting seeks to accelerate progress towards achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals with high-level political guidance from the member countries. The SDG summit marks the halfway point to 2030, the deadline set for the fulfilment of the 17 SDGs. The SDG Summit was complimented by the SDG Action Weekend, thanks to which non-governmental organisations, the private sector, and other relevant stakeholders had the opportunity to contribute to the catalysation of the SDG's success.

Lastly, the Global People's Assembly was established to give voice to civil society organisations that are excluded and marginalised in the process of the SDG's implementation. Thanks to the inclusion of civil society, it supports the '**Leave No One Behind**' principle by holding Governments accountable for their commitments.

These meetings, both organised by the UN and by civil society organisations, show the resilience of the international community's commitment, despite the challenges encountered on the road to achieving the SDGs overarching objective - to achieve a sustainable and inclusive future for all.



PERSONAL REFLECTIONS RE: UN SDG ACTION WEEKEND 2023

BY MR JASMEET SINGH SANDHU AND MR RANBIR SINGH (HUMAN RIGHTS VOLUNTEERS
AT THE SHRG) (TORONTO)

This past September, we were honoured to attend the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Action Weekend summit in New York City. Arriving from Canada, we joined Albert Barseghyan and Ivan Lorenci De Francisco to represent the Sikh Human Rights Group on this international stage. The timing of the summit marked the midpoint of the timeline of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), which were to be achieved by 2030. Considering the slow global progress towards the realization of many of the Sustainable Development Goals, the opening tone of the conference was earnest, yet optimistic. As representatives, we aimed to contribute Sikh philosophy to conceptual and practical discussions on the Sustainable Development Goals. We also aimed to learn about how to communicate the community work of Sikhs worldwide in dialogue with the Sustainable Development Goals.

At the United Nations, we joined representatives from NGOs and governments from around the world at high-level events. On the first day of the conference, we attended the Major Groups & Other Stakeholders: **'Breaking Down the Barriers to Leave No One Behind'** event. Through diverging perspectives, a common vision of community-led international development was evoked by the panellists we heard. Representatives from various countries spoke to their governments' efforts to support the localization of the SDGs in rural and urban areas. The need to relieve women in communities from unpaid care work to realize the SDGs was also spoken to. At another event regarding SDG localization, one outstanding perspective about the ability to use sport as a tool to accelerate the SDGs in local communities came from the International Olympic Committee.

Although community-led development was emphasized, the need for national and international policy interventions to realize the SDGs was also highlighted. Representatives from international financial institutions spoke about their organizations' work in financing infrastructure in the Global South. Other speakers touched on the need for policy rooted in global justice. At an event concerning civil society and collective planning, the need for indigenous conceptions of wellbeing to be integrated within development policy was advocated for. Other perspectives which stood out at this event emphasized the need to address neocolonial trade relations, as well as to institute equitable funding for climate change technology.

Following the first day of the conference, we attended the United Nations General Assembly Kickoff Event at the Century Association. This event was a networking event aimed at connecting individuals from a variety of professional and academic fields. During this event, we were able to make introductions with community, business, and academic leaders.

On the second day of the conference, we attended the Biodiversity and Nature Session: **'Nature Driving Economic Transformation: Leveraging the Power of Biodiversity and Nature to Drive Equitable Economic Progress'**. This session was incredibly informative, with regards to discussions about the relationship between equitable development, and the preservation of nature and biodiversity. There was discussion about bioeconomics, as well as transitioning to a social and economic model based on the ethics of sustainability of biological resources. There were several knowledgeable speakers, such as Valerie Hickey, the Global Director for Environment, Natural Resources and Blue Economy at the World Bank. One of the biggest takeaways from the discussion was the importance of SDGs 12-15 in achieving the completion of all of the SDGs. In addition, there was an emphasis from the World Bank on moving away from financing individual green projects, towards building a green economy.

Following the SDG Action Weekend Summit, we attended the Trilateral Partnership of Regional Faith-Based Networks for the SDGs. This was an opportunity to hear from the leaders of major interfaith groups about the importance of integrating religious ideals with substantive development and climate action. We also attended the Global People's Assembly, which paralleled the United Nations General Assembly. The Global People's Assembly was composed of civil society and ground-level actors who discussed how to better integrate the views of grassroots organizations into the technocratic policy decisions made in the United Nations.

PERSONAL REFLECTIONS RE: UN SDG ACTION WEEKEND 2023

BY MR JASMEET SINGH SANDHU AND MR RANBIR SINGH (HUMAN RIGHTS VOLUNTEERS
AT THE SHRG) (TORONTO)

Reflecting on the time we spent in New York, it was a tremendous honour to represent the Sikh Human Rights Group at the United Nations. We were able to connect with leaders from across the world towards the advancement of the Sustainable Development Goals in local contexts. Looking towards the future, we plan to work towards communicating Sikh contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals to the United Nations. Because Sikh philosophies and practices resonate so greatly with the aims of the SDGs, there is an opportunity to highlight, at a global stage, the worldwide contributions of Sikhs to the realization of human rights, wellbeing, and global sustainability. Conversely, reflecting on the aims of the SDGs is also an opportunity to think about how our communities may better collectivize to support the wellbeing of all, and empower our most vulnerable members.

The image below is a picture from our trip featuring us with Albert from the Sikh Human Rights Groups Geneva office, standing in front of a series of pillars with the SDGs painted on them.



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



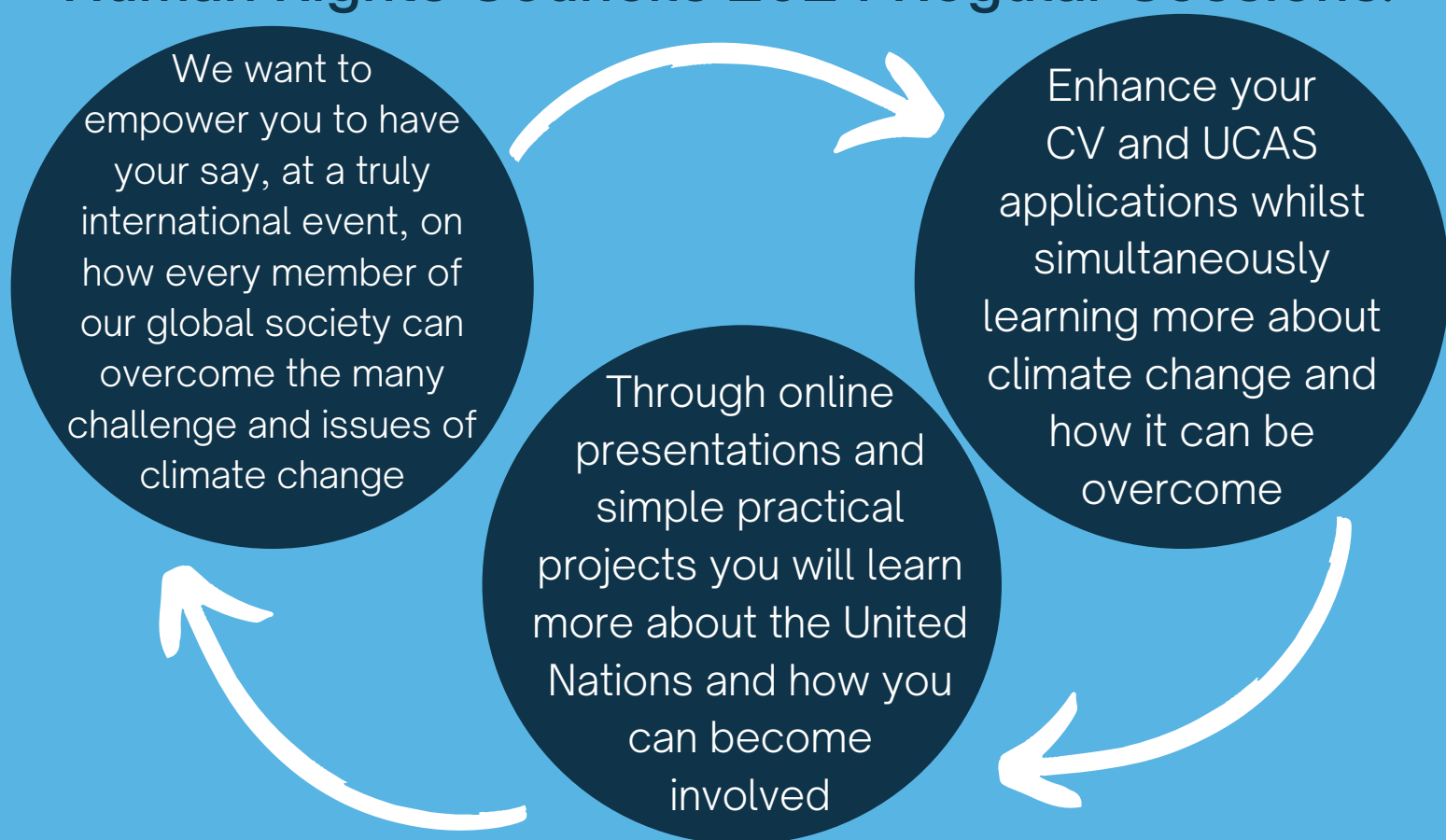
United Nations Engagement Opportunities 2024

A large, faint watermark of the United Nations logo is centered in the background. It features a world map within a circular frame, surrounded by a laurel wreath.

Want to contribute to a written and oral
statement at the United Nations
Human Rights Council?



We are currently searching for secondary school and undergraduate students to help us prepare our written and oral statements on climate change adaptation and mitigation for the United Nations Human Rights Councils 2024 Regular Sessions:



To apply please send an expression of interest statement to:

carlos.arbuthnott@shrg.ngo