

Statement by Colm O'Rourke, UN Youth Delegate for Ireland
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Madame Chair:

What have you been reading, listening to or watching about poverty in the world? The simple truth is that although poverty is portrayed in the media, little effort is made to provide coverage of the real life experience of people in poverty. You cannot expect to pass an exam without reading the material in advance, so how do we expect to overcome the challenge of poverty without the wider public understanding its reality, in a diverse and accurate manner?

It must be understood that utilising media in an effective and ethical manner, using people's stories, will create a surge of energy among the public to uproot poverty. The power of media for social good must not be underestimated. Every effort must be made by countries to ensure that media is part of their plan to efficiently achieve Goal 1 of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Media misinformation continues to grow across the globe and the realities of inequalities are inaccurately perceived by many. News becomes history and fake news becomes fake history, and we must not be the first generation that is responsible for remembering things that never happened, creating a false depiction of our society, and giving a false sense of direction for our future generations to fight societal inequalities and maintain common growth. Instead, we must be energised by the potential reality that we can become the first generation to end poverty.

I believe that if there's one group of people in the world that can stop the spread of fake news, it is young people. Through Global Citizenship Education (in formal and non-formal sectors), young people must be given the tools and information to make sense of the times

in which they live, to be empowered and enhance their media literacy skills to make the world a better place in which to live, for everyone.

In achieving Agenda 2030, let's make access to funding for innovative technologies to combat misinformation, introduce incentives for initiatives to fact check claims made in the media, and let's bring the message of sustainable development to new media and to places where young people gather. Member states must take the lead in ensuring that they play their part in using media as a strategy for the eradication of poverty to achieve sustainable development for all, and consider the establishment of centres to deal with misinformation.

Let's zoom in on poverty, make it the story and shape public opinion to eradicate it. It costs nothing to keep poverty in mind, but forgetting about poverty could cost us a lot.

Go raibh míle maith agaibh.

***As delivered by Colm O'Rourke in his personal capacity as a UN Youth Delegate.*