Summer 2017 Written by Commission on Voluntary Service & Action

**Community Education Campaign for the Implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals**

 **Presentation**

 This narrative outline is designed to be accompanied by the PowerPoint presentation on the Flash drive enclosed in the SDG Organizer’s Toolkit. This presentation can also be made without the PowerPoint, as long as you circulate copies of the list of 17 SDGs to everyone attending. We urge you to review the official **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** document in preparation for this meeting and discussion enclosed in the toolkit. If you did not get a copy of this 35-page document, it is available for PDF download on CVSA’s website www.cvsa-investyourself.org – go to the SDG page, or from the official UN website: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld/publication.

 Prior to starting the meeting, assign someone to take notes on this discussion and have a photographer take pictures of the speaker(s), group and discussion. Please send CVSA a brief report and photo(s) of this presentation so that we can include your plans in articles in our newsletter, *ITEMS,* about what people are doing and discussing to get the 2030 SDGs achieved in the U.S.

  **I Introduction**

 Thank everyone for coming
(SLIDE 1) Explain how you learned about the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable
 Development and the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and why
 you’ve called for or organized this meeting about the SDGs.

(SLIDE 2) a) Briefly explain CVSA: Commission on Voluntary Service in Action is an all-volunteer, coordinating and consultative body of nongovernmental volunteer service organizations founded in 1945 to promote, expand, and strengthen voluntary service programs that serve people in need and who are organizing for change. They carry out activities to inspire and compel more people into action as volunteers involved in service to others and organizing to build a better world, and they provides supportive services on a mutual assistance basis to their members, which are independent organizations based primarily in North America as well as others around the world.
CVSA also publishes this catalogue called *INVEST YOURSELF* (show them your copy of *INVEST YOURSELF*) that promotes volunteer opportunities with hundreds of non-government, community-based organizations throughout the US, as well as internationally. (If your organization involves volunteers and is listed in *IY*, bring that to the attention of your audience – if you plan to be listed in the next edition, announce that too.)

 CVSA began this **Community Education Campaign for the Implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals** in January 2016 to build, at the grassroots level, a groundswell of support for and participation in the work to implement the Sustainable Development Goals in the U.S.– from the ground up. CVSA has been giving presentations about the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals to organizations in the community (you can explain that you attended one.)

Hearing their presentation was inspiring and educational and something that we had not heard about previously. Once you hear this presentation, you might wonder why you have not heard about the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals in the media or from those government bodies or individuals primarily responsible to ensure that these Goals are achieved in our country.

b) The objective of this presentation/meeting is to explain the importance and significance of SDGs and how we can incorporate promoting the SDGs into our work, make our community aware of the SDGs and organize to see that they are implemented.

(Explain that you will be discussing how it relates to your organization’s work and how your organization (class, congregation, committee, etc.) can promote the achievement of these Goals and actions you can take.)

**II. What is the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?**

(SLIDE 3) **What does “Sustainable Development” mean?**

The concept of Sustainable Development was defined and accepted globally at the 1987 World Commission on Environment and Development conference. It was defined as:

 ***“…development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”***

In other words, Sustainable Development is the criteria for achieving social and economic progress in ways that will not exhaust the earth’s finite resources and not exploit or impoverish one grouping of people for the enrichment of another.

The majority of the nations in the international community have been fighting for this principle over the past three decades.

(SLIDE 4) **What is the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?**

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is not just another UN *declaration* – this agenda is the product of over 20 years of international work, debate. It is also the product of political shifts in approach to economic, social and environmental questions and an approach that has gained consensus among most of the nations of the world: that a new mode of addressing the problems of poverty, hunger, homelessness, water scarcity, and unnecessary death by malnutrition and environmental destruction is possible and needed to truly develop a sustainable future for everyone.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are not a *UN* *program*, per se. It is not going to be carried out *by* the UN. It is meant for each country to carry out in their own country, for each government to adopt it into their national domestic policies and as the basis of their foreign policies, in cooperation with other countries. **This includes the United States, and the U.S. said yes.**

1. In an historic summit held on September 25, 2015 in NYC, all 193 member nations of the UN, including the United States, agreed to *“….commit ourselves to working tirelessly for the full implementation of this agenda by 2030.”*
2. *[Here, you can read aloud excerpts from the Preamble of the document “Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”]*

(SLIDE 5) **How were the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the**

 **17 Goals written?**

The Agenda and the 17 Goals it contains are the product of a three-year process involving representatives from all 193 member nations of the UN and many hundreds of Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) and civil society groups representing indigenous people, small farmers, working people, environmental movement people, scientists, social workers, minorities, women’s groups and other stakeholders. Hundreds of conferences, discussions, debates and surveys tool place around the world.

(SLIDE 6) **What are the Sustainable Development Goals and how do they relate to our communities and our future?**

CVSA began this Community Education campaign because the mainstream media, all media in the U.S., has been silent about the SDGs, and the government has been silent about it too. Both Administrations, before and since the recent elections, have made no moves to begin implementing these Goals. The entire rest of the globe agreed that if we do not achieve these Goals by the year 2030, we will not have a world to live in. And the document itself calls on the people of each nation to keep their government accountable to this pledge.

CVSA has provided us with a copy of the 35-page document “Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” – it is a roadmap and plan of action for achieving these Goals. (show your copy)

*(Note to presenter: If you want to present more background on how the 2030 Agenda and Goals was written – see Insert A at the end of this document.)*

We will read through each of the 17 Goals now.

As we do, look at how they are inter-related to each other. This is a comprehensive and indivisible set of Goals. The process of developing the SDGs considered *all* aspects of the needs of people. It is a comprehensive list that does not allow for governments to pick and choose *which* they will do and which not, since they are all inter-related and indivisible.

{Note: determine if you will discuss each goal to engage the audience as you move through the presentation, or to discuss all of them after you read each one. This will depend on how long your presentation is scheduled – discussing each goal as you go along will be a longer presentation than if you confine discussion to the end.}

With each Goal, we will take a few moments to raise examples of how and why that Goal is relevant to and needed in the U.S.

For each Goal, CVSA supplied a few examples of statistics about current conditions in the U.S. that exemplify the need for change in relation to that Goal, just to get us started. But we could look at how these Goals relate to the problems we deal with each day, through our work, and give our own examples too.

Also – this is very important — as you read each Goal, think of what policies and practices our government – city, state and federal – need to *change* in order to make the achievement of each Goal possible.

 **III Present the 17 Goals:**

(SLIDE 7) **Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere.**

Please note that it does not say “end extreme poverty;” it says end *all* poverty in *all its forms,* everywhere. This is because they agreed that the resources exist to make that goal possible. The poverty in the world is not due to a lack of sufficient wealth and resources in the world.

This Goal is imperative for the U.S., where currently:

* 1 in 7 people in the U.S. live at or below the U.S. poverty line and nearly half of Americans will experience at least a year of poverty or near-poverty during their working years.
* Over 149 million Americans are currently living in poverty or on the brink.

(SLIDE 8) **Goal 2 : End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and**
 **promote sustainable agriculture.**

* Nearly 50 million people in the US, or 1 in 6 suffer from hunger and lack of adequate nutrition, one third of them children.
* The number of senior citizens facing food insecurity has gone up every year over the last decade.
* Many communities throughout the U.S. do not have a sustainable, adequate supply of local, wholesome food at affordable prices.

(SLIDE 9) **Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages**

* Fear of hospital and doctor bills one cannot afford to pay, is turning minor medical matters into life-threatening urgencies
* 2/3 of bankruptcies are caused by medical debt.

- The U.S. now has the 3rd worst rate of infant mortality among the top 30 industrialized countries: (Turkey and Mexico as the first and second worst; U.S. is third after them.)

* For the first time in decades the average life expectancy of Americans in some regions of the country went down in 2016.

**(**SLIDE 10) **Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable, quality education and promote**
 **lifelong learning opportunities**

* 6.4 million young people in the U.S. between the ages 16-24 are neither in work nor in school – they are disconnected from society.
* 14% of U.S. adults are illiterate. 23% read at 5th grade or lower level. Just 11% of men and 12% of women are proficient readers.
* Since 2001, 1,000 to 2,200 public schools in the U.S. have been closed each year.

(SLIDE 11) **Goal 5 : Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls**

* The United States ranks 74th in wage equality among 145 countries. Women earn two-thirds of what men make for similar work.
* The United States and Papua New Guinea are the only two nations in the world that do not ensure paid time off for new moms according to the International Labor Organization (ILO).
* Only 12% of American companies offer paid maternity leave.

(SLIDE 12) **Goal 6 : Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and**
 **sanitation for all**

* 99% of water fixtures in Portland Oregon Public Schools tested positive for lead: Flint is not the only city with this serious problem of lead leaching out of the pipes into their water system.
* In 2014 30,000 households in Detroit were shut-off from water and sewerage service because they could not afford to pay the high rates.
* Household water shut-offs in Philadelphia, San Diego and other cities are growing.
* Lack of access to clean water affects more then 40% of people around the world. If how water is being managed does not change, by the year 2050 at least 1 in 4 people will be affected by recurring water shortage.

(SLIDE 13) **Goal 7 : Ensure access to affordable, reliable sustainable and modern energy**
 **for all**

* In 2015 the state of Illinois shut off the electricity to 85,000 households during the winter due to their inability to pay the bill.
* In upstate New York, 144,000 people were shut-off from electricity because of inability to pay the increased rates.

(SLIDE 14) **Goal 8 : Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full**
 **and productive employment and decent work for all**

* Only 62.7% of adults in the U.S. are working, the lowest rate since the late 1970s.
* Over 16 million people live on jobs that pay less than $8 an hour.
* After the 2008 depression, 95% of all wealth that was lost by the people of the U.S. was gained by the top 1%, and 94% of the jobs created since then are low-paid, part-time and temporary.

(SLIDE 15) **Goal 9 : Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable**
 **industrialization and foster innovation**

* 1 out of 3 (or 200,000) bridges in the U.S. are structurally deficient or functionally obsolete. More than 1/4th of all bridges are over 50 years old, the average design-life of a bridge.

(SLIDE 16) **Goal 10 : Reduce inequality within and among countries**

* 22 individuals in the U.S. have more combined wealth than the bottom 50% of the population.
* There are 8 individuals in the world that own more than the bottom 50% of the world’s population – 6 of them are Americans.
* According to Credit Suisse Global Wealth Databook, of the half-billion poorest adults in the world, one out of ten is American, about 50 million, because they are in so much debt that any tangible wealth is negated.

**Explanation of this point:** While that may not necessarily mean that they are currently living without necessities, but it gives insight into the current and future danger that debt brings to almost every American living in debt – from the poorest on up – which, as we have seen in 1929 and more recently 2008, can be the cause of great financial disaster and further inequality. Millions of young people today are experiencing this problem before they even enter the workforce, with the total student debt at $1.4 trillion, an average of $30,000 per student.

(SLIDE 17) **Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and**
 **sustainable**

* New York City, like many large cities in the U.S., has an affordable housing crisis for working people.
* Currently 1 in every 147 New Yorkers is homeless.

(SLIDE 18) **Goal 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns**

* Americans constitute 5% of the world’s population but consume 24% of the world’s energy – more than China and Russia combined.
* 40% of the U.S. food supply is wasted and ends up in land fills, or is left to rot in the fields because market prices fell, making the food unaffordable to produce.
* A U.S. citizen produces more than 1,650 lbs of household garbage a year; and a city-dweller in India produces 220 lbs.

(SLIDE 19) **Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts**

* Economic instability and conflict cause people to migrate. So does climate change – increased flooding, droughts, sea rise will all create an estimated 250 million climate refugees in coming decades.
* An increase of just 3 degrees C in the earth’s temperature will mean extinction for 30% of all living species.

(SLIDE 20) **Goal 14 : Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine**
 **resources for sustainable development**

* 70% of the oxygen we breathe comes from marine plants in the oceans, which are dying due to warming and acidification of the ocean
* Industrial fishing practices have overexploited a quarter of fish stocks and half are already exploited to the maximum.
* 3 billion people rely on fish for their animal protein.
* At the current rate of plastic use and disposal, by the year 2050 the amount of plastic in the oceans will outweigh the fish pound for pound.

(SLIDE 21) **Goal 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.**

* As result of soil erosion over the last 40 years, 30% of the world’s arable land has become unproductive.
* Every year the U.S. loses more than 70 thousand acres of wetlands due to urban expansion, pollution, livestock grazing, and construction.– wetlands serve as “nature’s kidneys” absorbing and removing harmful materials from our water, and retaining water on land that prevents flooding in wet years and drought in dry years.
* One of the causes of the high death toll in the U.S. from Hurricane Sandy along the northeastern coast was the absence of former wetland areas which have been destroyed by urban development, which otherwise serve to diminish oncoming storm surges.

(SLIDE 22) **Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable**
 **development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable**
 **and inclusive institutions at all levels**

* In New York City, 94-97% of those charged with a crime end up plea bargaining for a crime they did not commit because they can’t afford legal representation to fight their case.
* Over two million people fill U.S. prisons, and there are currently over 7 million Americans in the correctional system (i.e. in prison, jail, or on parole or probation). This is the highest percentage of a country’s population behind bars of any other country in the world. 25% of all prisoners in the world are in the U.S. Most are poor, black or Hispanic, with the fastest growing population is poor women.

Yet legal aid budgets are being cut, the budgets to run court rooms and trials are being cut and access to justice has become something only a few can afford.

* The United States has the largest population of children in prison: on any given day 10,000 youth are housed in adult prisons and jails.

(SLIDE 23) **Goal 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global**
 **partnerships for Sustainable Development.**

* In this interdependent world, cooperation with other nations on global agreements is imperative. U.S. can start this Goal by carrying out these 17 Goals *in* the U.S. and by fully honoring international agreements such as the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and meet its Official Development Aid (ODA) commitments.
* The U.S. currently spends close to $600 billion, half the nation’s budget, on the military a year. This is roughly the size of the next 7 largest military budgets around the world combined. Multiply that by years, and think of how many of these problems – lack of access to health care, education, housing, water and more – could be solved with just a percentage of that money, as well as open space for building better international relations based on cooperation, solidarity and sustainable development rather than on war and aggression.

Now, having read each of these Goals, it is important to emphasize how inter-related and indivisible they are. The entire logic of the 35-page 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and these Goals emphasizes that all 17 Goals are interconnected and **indivisible** – i.e., we cannot achieve or hold on to the success of achieving *one* of these goals without achieving them *all*.

I can give you an example, and you will probably have others:

(See Insert B, attached below, for an example)

(SLIDE 24) **IV. How are these goals are supposed to be achieved?:**

The 2030 document says:
“…all member states to develop as soon as practicable ambitious national responses to the overall implementation of this Agenda. These can …...build on existing planning instruments, such as national development and sustainable development strategies, as appropriate.”

“…the essential role of national parliaments through their enactment of legislation and adoption of budgets and their role in insuring accountability for the effective implementation of our commitments.
“…governments and public institutions … work closely on implementation with regional and local authorities, sub regional institutions, international institutions, academia, philanthropic organizations, volunteer groups and others.”

However, none of this has been initiated by anyone in the U.S. government as yet, as far as we have been able to find out so far, and very few people in the U.S. have heard of the SDGs because there has been no coverage in the media, and with the exception of *some* state and local elected officials in the country – elected officials are not talking about it.

This is why CVSA initiated this community education campaign for the implementation of the 2030 SDGs.

(SLIDE 25) **How is progress on implementing the 17 Goals supposed to be monitored?**

A, There is a process written into the 2030 Agenda calling for “**Voluntary National Reviews”** at the UN:

Each country is encouraged to “…conduct regular and inclusive reviews of progress at the national and sub-national levels, which are country-led and country-driven.” “Regular reviews at the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) are to be voluntary, state-led, undertaken by both developed and developing countries, **and involve multiple stakeholders**.”

But this is *voluntary* and so far the U.S. has made no report or plans to make a report.

So far 72 other countries have made reports or are scheduled to make reports at this summer’s 2017 HLPF at the UN. Many countries have established planning councils and are making their plans public, and include civil society in the planning. Countries Europe, Africa, Asia and Latin Americas have done this. But so far, not the U.S.

B Stakeholders are supposed to be involved in the whole process.
 That’s YOU! **We, the** **people affected most by the *need* for these Goals – we must keep our government accountable to the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals !** To do that, we must organize!

(SLIDE 26) **V. Discuss Action – what will we do to keep the U.S. government accountable to these Goals, and how will we bring the Goals to the attention of more people, and promote them through our own work:**

(SLIDE 27**) Hold a discussion with the group about what makes sense for the**

**(**SLIDE 28) **organization or this grouping to do, i.e. which of these things you can do, plus additional ideas. These are some ideas that CVSA suggests:**

1. Hold COMMUNITY MEETINGS about the SDGs to explain them to others and make plans to promote the SDGs to your community.
2. Set up more presentations and workshops like this one – in your school, with the staff of your organization, with the social justice committee at your place of worship, or at work.
3. Print the 17 Goals in your organization’s newsletter. Post the 17 Goals on
 your organization’s website.
4. Promote the work that your organization already does *through the SDG*
 *framework* and include the SDGs in your Mission Statement.

5. Discuss what your group can do to engage with local government, elected
 officials, to promote and implement the SDGs:

* 1. How will we find out why they have not formed official SDG Planning Councils yet. Find out who, if anyone *is*  talking about the SDGs and wants to act on them
	2. How will we organize to recommend that they form a council for the implementation of the SDGS and request seats on those councils, as representatives of your constituency, to have a voice in the planning and implementing of the SDGs.

NOTE: CVSA is available to consult and advise on these transactions.

6. Contribute reports to CVSA to include in CVSA’s Report to the 2017
 (and each subsequent year) High Level Political Forum on Sustainable
 Development on progress towards the achievement of the Goals in your
 area in the U.S., from your experience (submit to CVSA by June 5th. If
 you are interested in this, tell us and we will send you a format for this
 submission).

7. Design slogans and posters to make the SDGs known to the general
 public. (If you wish, please submit new designs to CVSA for
 consideration of use in this campaign across the country).

In the course of this discussion, set dates and make assignments to carry out next steps in this Campaign.

(SLIDE 29 and SLIDE 30)

Close the discussion and meeting with affirming who will be the Liaison from your group to CVSA for the Community Education Campaign for the SDGs.

Thank you!

(two INSERTS attached)

INSERT A: More Background on the SDGs

In the year 2000 the Millennium Development Goals, or the MDGs, were established, which was a set of 8 goals to cut in half the number of people living in extreme poverty, to cut in half the number of people living with HIV/ AIDS, to ensure that women and girls had access to education and equal rights, amongst other goals. This was the first internationally accepted development plan of its kind. It focused on developing countries and called for the developed countries to provide assistance and support in this effort. These goals were to be achieved by 2015.

Many developing countries, such as China, Ecuador, Bolivia, and Venezuela, did achieve these goals... and they did so without much aid from the “developed” rich nations in the north. At the same time, the inequality in the world has increased, including in the US, and the systemic underlying causes of massive poverty and the environmental destruction have not been changed. While some nations did make great gains during the time period of the MDGs, they did so out of their own perseverance, progressive policies and access to resources, while the majority of the other developing nations made limited headway, and in the developed nations in the north poverty grew and inequality grew.

There are many reasons for this, but the bottom line was that the majority of the leadership of developing nations became determined that a different approach was needed.

Many nations and nongovernment organizations recognized that those MDGs did not deal with systemic causes of the problems, and you can’t solve poverty if you don’t also deal with access to water, to health care, to housing, and of course good paying jobs and full employment and international trade being based on fairness and solidarity. Additionally, the international community recognized that poverty and inequality was not just a problem amongst developing nations, but also *within developed nations*, like the US, and that you cannot solve the problem in one nation without solving the problem of poverty, inequality, and environmental destruction in *every* nation – in particular in the rich nations.

So in 2012, at the RIO+20 Conference on Sustainable Development, which was a follow-up to the original Earth Summit held in Rio in 1992, a record number of heads of state and non-government organizations from across the world gathered together and produced a new document called the *Future We Want*.

This document became the basis of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. (now refer back to the documents and the rest of the presentation.)

INSERT B: Example of How the Goals are Indivisible:

 For example, in the state of Illinois there is a private company called People’s Gas that owns the right to provide the sale of electricity to the people of the state. The Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC) is legally mandated to regulate People’s Gas and ensure that “the rates for utility services are affordable and therefore preserve the availability of such services to all citizens.” (This is the structure of utility delivery in most states, i.e. the resources and delivery are managed by private corporations and regulated by state agencies mandated to protect customers from unleashed price gouging.)

In 2010 People’s Gas requested a rate hike in electricity prices of $160 million, even though they had made $250 million dollars in profit the previous year. At the same time 56,000 people in Chicago were shut off from electricity in their household that year because the rates were unaffordable. The only arena for citizens to advocate to stop this new rate increase, which would surely lead to more shutoffs, is ICC public hearings which are held during the work week and during work hours in an area of Chicago where it is difficult for poor and working customers, i.e. those most effected by a rate increase, are unable to get to easily by public transportation.

The ICC granted People’s Gas the rate increase, despite outcry from a wide range of people of the Chicago community who did attend the public hearing. In 2014 the results of that rate hike led to an additional 29,000 people being shut-off from electricity, bringing the total to 85,000 in 2014. In the Fall of 2014, People’s Gas asked for another rate hike of $56 million, even though they made a 10% clear profit the year before. Again, the ICC granted them a rate increase and in the first month of the rate increase, 11 people were recorded to die in their homes after freezing to death because they couldn’t afford electricity.

There are many immense repercussions to being shut-off from electricity. Out of 12 million single parents in the United States, 83% are single mothers and 51.9% have lived in extreme poverty, defined as half of the federal poverty level, which is $16,240 for a family of two. If a single parent or family has no electricity in their homes, Child Protective Services can take their children away from them for the crime of being too poor. If, and in most cases when, the parent or parents fight to keep or get their child back they would have to pay money out of pocket for legal fees, which they do not have and go through a long, arduous process if they can afford to even try.

Additionally, the children who are taken away are either put into the foster care system or given to other family members – often in another city or state, having to disrupt their education and leaving them to deal with the undue stress of being taken from their immediate family and parents – which damages the child’s health and well-being.

In the case of those put in the foster care system, around 9% are still in the system by the age of 18 and at that point they have come of age to be ‘emancipated’ i.e. kicked out of the system. 1 in 5 of these young people will be homeless by the age of 18, only half will be employed at age 24, less than 3% will receive a college degree, 71% of young women will be pregnant by age 21, and 1 in 4 will experience PTSD, which deprives them of any quality future and only continues and creates more poverty.

Whether someone has children or not, when their electricity is shut off - their ability to prepare healthy food, and therefore keep up their health, is diminished. They will be left cold in the winter, which could lead to many health problems. In the winter, those without electricity often use space heaters or other unsafe heating methods to keep warm, which if left on overnight, can and do lead to house fires.

In some states and counties, landlords can evict someone with no electricity as a breach of lease because of abandonment for failing to maintain the apartment – often leaving the individual or family homeless. 36% of the homeless population are families with children.

Those who are homeless have a harder time keeping their current job or finding new employment, which eventually leads to chronic poverty, extreme poverty, or lifelong homelessness.

In Chicago, for a single parent with one child to meet their basic budget needs it takes an hourly wage of $22.78 an hour – however the minimum wage, which is what most in the city make, is $10 an hour. This leaves most unable to pay for their electricity, water, transportation, housing, education, food, etc., forcing people to decide between having electricity in their home or food in their stomachs.

 This situation is not isolated to Chicago. Cities across the country have watched their stable production jobs leave the country so that company owners can find cheaper labor elsewhere. These well-paying factory jobs, which included benefits and retirement, have been replaced by low-wage, mainly temporary, employment.

The point here in relation to the 7 Goals is:

We cannot achieve Goal 7 – affordable clean energy – if utilities are made increasingly more expensive while those too poor to afford it are being shut off from access. We cannot achieve Goal 5 – reduce inequality within nations… empowerment of women and girls – if single mothers are disproportionately affected with poverty. We cannot achieve Goal 10 if the interests of those who own and hold bonds/stock in People’s Gas is put above the 85,000 households that were shut-off from electricity because of high rates. We cannot achieve Goal 11 – make cities inclusive … – if the government finds it acceptable to have 85,000 households lacking basic access to utilities. We cannot achieve Goal 16 – peaceful, inclusive , just societies…– if the only form of recourse to stopping these utility shut offs are public hearings being held during workdays and work hours at locations inconvenient for those most affected by the increase to get to. And we certainly cannot achieve Goal 1 – eliminate poverty in all its forms, everywhere – if those who are already poor are further penalized for their poverty and are driven to homelessness or chronic poverty due to the cost of basic necessities such as electricity and water.

This is just one example of how these goals are all connected and indivisible. Can anyone think of other examples of how these goals are interconnected in relation to the work you do?

(Now go back to the discussion on action to take to make achievement of these Goals our nation’s priority!)