**Ellen Chesler** 00:04

Welcome to International Horizons, a podcast of the Ralph Bunche Institute for International Studies at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, which brings scholarly expertise to bear on our understanding of a wide range of international issues.

**Ellen Chesler** 00:19

My name is Ellen Chesler, and I'm a visiting research scholar at RBI doing work on the historical contributions made by women in shaping human rights and development practice and policy at the United Nations and around the world.

**Ellen Chesler** 00:33

This week, the UN Economic and Social Council is hosting a high level meeting to discuss the Sustainable Development Goals. So it seemed a good time to talk about this new mechanism for judging development and assessing development around the world, that has been in effect since 2015; so we're in year six. 43 countries will be presenting voluntary assessments or findings of how they're doing.

**Ellen Chesler** 01:08

I am fortunate today to be joined by an expert in the field of women and development, Anju Malhotra, who is a recognized leader on gender equality, development, reproductive health. She is currently a principal visiting fellow at the UN University International Institute of Global Health. For eight years, she headed UNICEF's work on gender, building and guiding the organization's resources, commitment, capacity and results to introduce gender as an analytical tool across all of its programs. She was a leader in shaping the SDG target around child marriage and adolescent girls. Prior to being at UNICEF, she was an analyst at the International Center for Research on Women known as ICRW for 14 years. She holds a PhD in demography and sociology from the University of Michigan. Welcome Anju.

**Anju Malhotra** 02:09

Thank you, Ellen.

**Ellen Chesler** 02:11

I guess the way to start a conversation on the SDGs is to tell our audience what they are. It's a long list: 1) no poverty; 2) zero hunger; 3) good health and well being; 4) quality education; 5) gender equality, cross-cutting tool across all of the others; clean water and sanitation; affordable and clean energy; decent work and economic growth; industry innovation; infrastructure; reduce inequalities; sustainable cities; responsible consumption and production; climate action; peace, justice; strong institutions; partnerships to achieve all of these goals.

**Ellen Chesler** 02:56

You see my drift here? I guess from a charitable perspective, one could say this list of 17 certainly worthy objectives to be realized with --I read these from the website-- 169 targets; 5448 independent actions; over 1300 publications; 3000 events is a worthy way of shaping aspirations for a better world. Tom Weiss, the longtime head of RBI, the Ralph Bunche Institute, who's written really an extraordinary intellectual history --or not written it himself, but he wrote one book on the intellectual history of the UN that shaped a many, many year project-- makes the point that the institution UN's value added is really not in what it does, but in it's ideas, in the policies, in its aspirations, the ideas that it puts forward, the normative innovations and standards that it set.

**Ellen Chesler** 04:00

In Tom's words, in a recent piece that he wrote in "PassBlue", the popular blog about the UN, he points out that the SDGs provided international framework for development for measuring and comparing economic and social progress, combining growth with poverty reduction, making development environmentally sustainable. Again, quoting Tom, who is a gorgeous writer, as well as I think profound thinker --if I can make this my love letter to Tom Weiss-- the world would be a poorer and less mean place without the aspirations expressed in a tool like the SDGs.

**Ellen Chesler** 04:36

More skeptically, or unkindly, however, as Tom also points out in this piece, is a metaphor that he takes from the always provocative development scholar, Bill Easterly, William Easterly, who called the SDGs the kitchen sink of objectives without priorities or sequencing. Easterly, who's a provocateour, as I said, suggests another meeting for the acronym SDG: Senseless, Dreamy, Garbled.

**Ellen Chesler** 05:03

So first question Anju: you've spent a decade at UNICEF as an analyst and shaper of how to measure progress around development goals in gender. What's your top-line takeaway from this experience? What's your overall assessment of the value of this exercise? Where on the spectrum between, you know, shaping aspirations and being "Senseless, Dreamy and Garbled", do you see the SDGs? This is a sort of a big question, but I think we should start big and then drill down into specifics.

**Anju Malhotra** 05:36

Thanks, Ellen, for having me. And thanks for asking this very profound, large question. I think that I would probably say that both Tom and Bill Easterly are right. Sustainable Development Goals are both a very important normative framework and aspirational articulation, that brings the world together in stating where we want to be going, what we want to be doing. And given that we live in a very, very globalized world, it's important that every country in the world be able to say that, how are we working together, especially given so many of the crisis that we are facing.

**Anju Malhotra** 06:23

And the Sustainable Development Goals were particularly good at doing that --at bringing in things that people had put aside in the past --things like climate change, like inequality, like the challenges of technology. And perhaps, you know, they didn't anticipate COVID-19, but really within the Sustainable Development Goals framework, the essential need for global cooperation to get to all of these things is articulated and is very, very important. And in that sense, having gender equality as an aspirational goal very squarely stated within a global articulation of what we want to be doing together, and where we want to be going, is very important.

**Anju Malhotra** 07:14

That said, the Sustainable Development Goals are not something that most of the world knows about. Many of the countries see it as that Christmas tree, where are they --and not just countries, but many of the interest groups that work on different issues-- see it as a Christmas tree where you hang your ornament, and it's just an ornament, therefore, to look at, rather than necessarily to work around. And I want to be careful and say that there are many, many wonderful groups that are working towards achieving the different Sustainable Development Goals; and I'm not saying they just sit there and nobody works on them, but what I'm saying is that probably the average global citizen has no clue what the Sustainable Development Goals are. Probably more people in the Global South know about it than the Global North. More people in Europe know about it than in the United States, but still, I would say that the average Indian citizen or South African citizen has no idea what they are.

**Ellen Chesler** 08:26

Actually, I was going to get to this question later, but it's fine to do it now. I was quite shocked however, as I told you in some informal remarks we had together before this recording, that there is a World Economic Forum study that suggests that elite in India and China, for example, and of all countries, Turkey --I couldn't quite figure this out, but maybe I don't know much about Turkey, really-- the knowledge of the SDGs is much more widespread than anywhere else in the world. And of course, India and China are a lot of people half of the world's population.

**Ellen Chesler** 09:01

So I just kind of actually buoyed by that. I was going to end with this just so that we could end more optimistically and clearly the United States doesn't pay any attention to the UN. I mean, other than a podcast like this, and "Pass Blue", published now at The New School. But, you know, there's almost no coverage of it, and you never even see it the fact that this meeting is happening isn't even in the New York Times, or The Wall Street Journal, national or international newspapers.

**Ellen Chesler** 09:28

But you know, if, in fact, people are being educated about this on the ground, the purpose of the SDG's last goal, as I mentioned, was building partnerships with NGOs, with corporations and businesses, and this study actually suggested more knowledge than I would have ever thought. I mean, it said about 25%; one in four in the world, overall, but a little higher in those three countries. And actually, that's terrible in my view, but maybe I'm being overly optimistic here?

**Anju Malhotra** 10:02

Yeah, well, that I guess maybe it tells us what low a bar we have set for ourselves in understanding the influence of the UN. And I think that is sort of sad, probably 50 years ago, a lot more people would have been interested and known. And I do think one of the challenges that continues that compared to the Millennium Development Goals, which were sent 15 years before the SDGs.

**Ellen Chesler** 10:32

Explain the difference and why we went from five MDGs to seventeen SDGs.

**Anju Malhotra** 10:38

Yeah, so there were eight. And the differences that the idea of the Millennium Development Goals came about as we were approaching 2000 --and those were goals set from 2000 to 2015-- again, the idea was that the world should come together, and work on these shared problems together, and very clearly define where we want to go, and then try to reach there together. And so they were very simple, very clear goals and that's their power, you know. And hunger, everybody can understand what that means. Right?

**Ellen Chesler** 11:23

The goals are clear, but there's so many others now.

**Anju Malhotra** 11:26

So things like that. But then when, those goals in 2015, when we looked back and see what we had achieved, we had achieved many things, but then there were many things we had not achieved. So, you know, there had been movement on, let's say, looking at just gender, for example, on girls being enrolled in primary schools, in maternal health, maternal mortality being reduced. And some of it definitely can be attributed to the fact that there were the MDGs and people were putting a push behind achieving some of these goals. But gender equality was not articulated as a clear goal in the MDGs. And neither was inequality more broadly, neither was climate change, none of these other things. And part of the issue for example, when people were framing the Sustainable Development Goals, which were set in 2015, and the clock started ticking 2016, and they're supposed...

**Ellen Chesler** 12:29

We didn't want to develop a world that was not environmentally sustainable.

**Anju Malhotra** 12:34

That's the other word, sustainable. But also, these more nuanced issues of inequality were more important. Water and sanitation had become a big issue by now. You know, technology had become a big issue by now. And so people were facing all those things, which is why we now have 17 goals and I can't remember how many indicators. But that does -- and part of the interest in doing that also was to say that it's not just an agenda for the Global South; it's not just about developing countries, it's about also developed countries. I don't think that despite those best intentions, that purpose has actually become decreed by which we are actually living, unfortunately.

**Anju Malhotra** 13:27

Well, other than, again, skipping forward in what I had thought the outline, but I think it actually, we should talk about it right now. I mean, recent analysis of the SDGs shows that there are about 50 countries that are not meeting all of the targets, but meeting some of them but of course, they're all the world's developed countries, the likely was, you know, the Scandinavian, Western European countries, a couple, actually --I was quite shocked to see this, the Czech Republic and Slovenia in Eastern Europe-- Canada, Australia, not the United States, of course, because we have so much inequality here.

**Ellen Chesler** 13:59

But none of the poor countries are meeting them. And although some --as we'll get to in a bit-- are doing better than others on some of them. I mean, you have vast differences in Africa and Asia in terms of meeting some of these goals. But I think you're right, while we are now measuring progress in the Global North, you know, in the developed world, this is still seen as a tool really for solving problems in the developing countries.

**Ellen Chesler** 14:30

Although again, as in the United States, when social security was given to everybody, not just poor people. I mean, I do think that the SDGs has achieved something in not creating a stigma around meeting these or being measured as to whether you meet these targets. And showing also that those of us in the north who consume too much are contributing to some of the problems aren't resolving the problems well. Vast inequalities in developed countries and including something like China, which is sort of in between developing world and developed world, are creating new problems and need to be measured and judged and assessed and held accountable.

**Ellen Chesler** 15:17

Let's go back, though, and just unpack a little bit of what I said in the introduction in terms of the critique from somebody like Bill Easterly. Is there a way of sequencing or prioritizing these goals that would make sense in terms of achieving one first? So that perhaps it would have an impact on the others? What in your view, as a person who's a practical --not just a scholar, but who was practically involved in designing these tools and in trying to measure progress -- how would you sequence? Is there something more important than something else? You know, will meeting one goal hasten or strengthen the ability of countries to meet another?

**Anju Malhotra** 16:07

Right. So I think maybe it would be helpful to focus on the gender equality goal, which is goal five, which is the one I know best. But obviously, part of the logic this time around was that --and this is a challenge that those of us who are aspiring to achieve gender equality are always stuck with --which is we have to have a two tiered approach, right? So if we don't create a goal on gender equality, and highlight gender inequality, per se, and just say gender inequality exists in every other thing we do, which is true, right? Gender inequality exists and how we deal with climate change, gender inequality exists in health, gender inequality exists in economic development, and so forth. And all of those sectors, all of those issues, have to deal with gender inequality and improve it, then gender inequality becomes so diffuse and so scattered that we don't realize it's importance. So we have to have a goal on gender inequality per se.

**Anju Malhotra** 17:19

On the other hand, if we only say, "well, there's this goal of gender inequality, and here are the five things we need to do with regard to that, then all these other things --you know, women's access to contraception, women's access to livelihoods, women's role in dealing with climate change --that just gets lost. So that's why we typically use this what we call a two tiered approach, that you have to have gender equality as an issue and a goal embedded in all the goals and then it has to be a goal by itself.

**Ellen Chesler** 17:56

You are making a very important point, which is that a priori, if we don't lift up 50% of the population that's women, we will never achieve these other goals of economic equality, quality education, good health and well being. This seems so obvious, but people like you and me who spend our entire careers talking about this realize how hard it is to make people understand that women are not just another vulnerable group that deserve rights and deserve opportunities; they are the key to unlocking the larger progress that the UN in its vast development institutions. And [make] the world, US and other developed countries in terms of their foreign policy [understand] that they are the key.

**Ellen Chesler** 18:45

And as I've said on this broadcast earlier, when we focus specifically on women, I always quote former Secretary of State Clinton who said, "investing in women is not only the right thing to do, it's the smart thing to do if you want to achieve these other goals." But I know from a long career that it's very hard to prioritize women. In fact, I would argue that the MDGs, way back in 2000, where Kofi Annan desired to sort of take a little of the focus off the women that occurred as a result of the tremendous attention that was given to the Beijing Women's Conference in 1995 in China, and the fifth year celebration in 2000 at the beginning of the year --in which I was involved as a younger professional-- he really wanted to try to make everybody realize that the UN was really about more than just women. And yet women are so central, because we're half the population and have been held back for so many centuries.

**Ellen Chesler** 19:45

So I guess you're saying that priority one should be women. Interestingly, in the same World Economic Forum poll of what the world knows about SDGs, the question was asked, "what do you approve of?" And, of course, everybody who was polled and knew something about it approved of ending hunger, poverty, inequality but there was contention around gender equality as the most effective tool for achieving the other goals. And, again, I guess 5000 years of patriarchy is hard to unravel and we know that culturally, attitudes are still stuck in many parts of the world, including our own --I mean, witness our former president, about gender equality.

**Ellen Chesler** 20:33

Let's talk not only intellectually about what you would prioritize before we get back and dig down a little bit deeper into gender. Operationally, how might you think the UN would be effective? Are all of these targets, and all of these measurements, and all of the institutions that target and measure --I mean, the UN has a vast development apparatus located all around the world, many agencies and cities. Is there a better way to do this? Tell us a little bit about how you set up the measurement you did with respect to [gender].

**Anju Malhotra** 21:08

So I think that there are a number of challenges that we are facing why we are not going to achieve the gender goals and why we're not going to --and we can talk about sort of this pace of the progress. I think one challenge is that when you're very, very busy in trying to get an issue on the agenda, then you're very happy in the beginning for just saying, you know, we got our issue on the agenda and people aren't paying attention to it. So for example, we got the gender equality goal in there, and we're very pleased --and we should be. But all the targets, you set a target, right? So for example, people who are working on health have been doing this for a really long time, and they have really good --I shouldn't say great, but fairly good-- measures on a number of their targets, right.

**Anju Malhotra** 22:14

So we know, for example, where we are on improving immunisation for children, and how many more children need to be immunized, which are the countries that are really lagging behind. So when the people who are experts set that target, they're pretty precise, and they have pretty good measures for figuring out how they're going to move forward. They don't say we're going to immunize every child in the world on every disease. They instead say, "Our target is X million more children immunized in these 20 countries where immunization is really lagging" right? It's a very precise target. And then that allows you to have a very precise strategy for getting there.

**Anju Malhotra** 23:08

For gender equality, we have targets that say: we'll end child marriage, we will end violence against women, we will end --our targets are so aspirational. I mean, there's no realistic way we can end violence against women in 15 years; we haven't been able to do it for centuries, right? So how do we use strategies for doing that? And we have a lot of debate and discussion within the field of how to even measure violence against women. Because there's domestic violence, there's violence in the streets, there's sexual violence, there's all different kinds of violence. And what do we consider violence is grossly underreported. And when we start measuring it will actually go up for a while because people will start reporting it ends are going down.

**Anju Malhotra** 24:02

So there's so many practical challenges. And our strategies for dealing with it are still very much nascent. I mean, we can pass laws, but we know that they're far from sufficient. We can train police, but we know that has not been the answer. We can get hospitals to start screening for women coming in having been beaten up, but you know that goes only so far. You know, I was just thinking that we now have that for protocol. For example, if most of you have ever gone to your doctor recently, and you're a woman, they almost always ask you why are you feeling depressed? Has anything been happening to you? And it's interesting. Just for the sake of seeing what happens --because I happen to be a researcher-- last time I said, "Yes, I was feeling depressed" and then my doctor didn't ask me anything more about it. So they checked off a box, and so if I was a woman who was suffering, what would I do? You know, my doctor would have done their job and I would still be in in trouble. So we don't have clarity on that.

**Anju Malhotra** 25:16

So in that sense, I think having really good measurable targets, which is why, for example, I worked so hard to get the child marriage target in there, and we worked because that, as it turns out, out of the all the different targets within the gender goal, it's the only one that's a high quality measurable target, right? And even there, I was trying to really work with people to calculate how far we can get in 15 years, but everybody really felt that, advocacy wise, it was better for us to say, "We'll end child's marriage." And we're not going to by 2030. We're are going to make good progress --it is one of those areas where we do have a little bit better strategies. We know if we keep adolescent girls in school when they're 14 or 15, they're not going to get married, we are [inaudible].

**Ellen Chesler** 26:13

I'm a little bit optimistic, because I think people, all they hear is bad news. I mean, I was shocked to see --I had just written a piece about one of the pioneers in women's rights in Ghana, who helped write the Convention to Eliminate Discrimination Against Women --and I've seen that Ghana is actually moving ahead in educating girls; secondary education. I mean, there has been progress around the world in primary education but that really is not what makes a difference; what makes a difference is secondary schooling, which, of course, you know, I always like to remind people there are changes in American history --and I'm not a demographer or a sociologist like you-- but being trained as an American historian is actually very useful when you look at gender in the contemporary world, because you have to remember that until 100 years ago, women weren't educated beyond the eighth grade in the United States.

**Ellen Chesler** 27:07

So you know, it's not as though the West had tremendous progress for women; and we still have a long way to go, but we've made a lot of progress in the last 50 years. And you see that in a country like Ghana, there's progress being made. And that will have an impact on employment, decent jobs, all of the other quality education, good health and wellbeing and we know that there's a direct parallel between women's education and smaller families: better health care, hunger. So all of these others will be impacted by more girls graduating from secondary schools. And it's not only Ghana, there many other countries, certainly, where most people live, in India and China, there is progress, not universal progress, but a great deal of progress made certainly in the cities, but also beginning to go into the provinces and into the rural areas.

**Anju Malhotra** 28:13

I think that you raised a very important point. I think one of the challenges, I think, with regard to gender equality achieving, making serious progress, is that first of all, many things are related. It is 50% of the world's population, it is the most lasting inequality that the world has ever seen and that has been mostly universal; that most people are affected by. And it is the inequality that is embedded not just in our public systems, it's not just inequality that women see in the workplace, or women see in schooling, or women seeing the health care system; it's also embedded in our families in our social lives. So it is very, very hard to eradicate. So let's just take education as an example.

**Anju Malhotra** 29:13

One of the things we are really slow to realize is that the bar that we have to achieve has to keep moving and we seem to do one thing at a time rather than recognize that. And I think education is the best example of this. So for example, in the MDGs, we said, "we need to get girls into school." If there was anything focused on gender equality in the Millennium Development Goals, that was it; girls' education was going to be the magic bullet.

**Anju Malhotra** 29:47

And there's there's no question that girls' education is very powerful, probably is the single best investment anybody can make anywhere. There's probably no question about it. But to expect that you're going to get five years of education for girls everywhere and that's going to solve gender equality is crazy, right? Because guess what? What did we do? We shoved girls into schools that didn't have teachers, they're coming out of fifth grade without learning how to read and write. And we did this in the 2000s, when the global economy and the world was moving to a technology space that was leaps ahead of where you're required a primary schooling. Now you have the tech gap in girls and boys, and guess what? Even the developed countries are moving backwards on this; if you look at the rates of women going into tech fields, if you look at the the rate of STEM education for girls, it's been going down instead of going up.

**Anju Malhotra** 31:06

So we need to always be thinking ahead of where we need to be going, which is why we should be thinking now about what happens to women's jobs when pandemics calm, which is why it is now we should be thinking about what happens to women and the burden of work they're going to face when climate change becomes a common problem. So we have to not only look at the problems that were of yesterday, we have to always be looking at the problems that are coming up, which is one reason why gender equality is such a challenge to achieve, because we constantly slip backwards also. And we slip backwards, not just because they're new problems, but because there's backlash.

**Ellen Chesler** 31:51

We're trying to create equal opportunity for women at a time when larger geopolitical forces --in globalization of finance and of the economy-- are creating greater inequalities for everybody. So we also, obviously, we didn't want to spend too much time on just women on this podcast, because we were supposed to talk about the larger questions. But I mean, the pandemic showed us that when there is a slowdown in the economy, so much progress that was achieved for women was completely wiped out. That when times are tough, last hired and first fired, and so forth, and so on.

**Ellen Chesler** 32:35

Let me just again, because I constantly try to balance my pessimism and cynicism with some optimism, point to the one hard indicator. And when I think kind of impressive change that has occurred in the world --at least in my 50 years of being a professional or almost 50 years, and certainly in the last 25 since Beijing-- and it is one of the indicators used on the gender equality target. One of the targets in the gender inequality indicator, and that's female political representation, which is improving in the world, and which has been shown in hundreds of studies in a hundred countries to make a big difference.

**Ellen Chesler** 33:20

And in November 2020, in this recent UN Women report, in the EU, women's representation in national parliaments is up to 32%. In the United States, it's risen considerably and at local levels gets even higher, I mean, with many, many more women. I mean, the New York City Council this week, for example, for the first time will have representation of more than 50% women, which is -- I mean, I started in local politics with Carol Bellamy, who also went on globally to run UNICEF when you were there. She was the first woman elected to head the New York City Council in 1977, not 1877, as I like to say to my students, but 1977. (I'm old, but I'm not that old. And I've said that before here.) You know, it's extraordinary to see five countries with gender balanced parliaments, women's representation improving at a steady pace. And again, also in the developing world.

**Ellen Chesler** 34:22

And here we have knowledge about how to accelerate this progress, which is bogus. You know, and where you have quotas in places like Rwanda for example --I mean, Rwanda is a bad example, perhaps because of larger concerns there about human rights --but you do have quotas and women have higher levels of representation. And the studies show that all of the other development indicators improve when women are members of parliaments, hold national office or local office. So, you know, there are things we could do that would make a difference. Why is it so hard? Well, larger cultural factors, I guess; maybe you have other ideas?

**Ellen Chesler** 35:09

Let's just wind up our conversation here. I find that we always get to gender, because gender really is the most critical tool. If we have laws that provide equal opportunities for women and laws against which they can measure their progress and laws that they can use to fight discrimination, the situation improves, and these larger goals seem more achievable. But anything else you want to leave our listeners with in terms of how we can make progress here, and what you might do, whether institutionally at the global level or on the ground.

**Ellen Chesler** 35:50

One of the things that I think is the public private partnerships, and we just had announcements of billions of dollars to achieve gender equality at the forum in Paris last week, to mark the 26th --now, it was meant to be the 25th --anniversary of Beijing, will this money make a difference? I mean, are public private partnerships corporate as well as NGO participation, is this valuable? Is it important?

**Anju Malhotra** 36:18

I think that we are going to, I think we are at a point of reckoning globally. And, you know, I'm afraid that my view is generally that we're not in a good place; I think we have lost ground. I think that right now what has happened is --and, you know, this is common, that a strategy that was a good strategy gets distorted, gets used, not necessarily in the right way. So I think the idea that "women's rights are not just the right thing to do but the smart thing to do" that's what we've been doing for the last 20 years. And a lot of corporations, a lot of countries have been brought on board as a result of that to see gender equality as an important thing.

**Anju Malhotra** 37:17

But the the sad, I think, side effect of that has been that I almost feel like we have sold gender equality cheap. It's easy for a lot of global leaders and corporate leaders and companies to say, "Oh, yes, we are doing the right thing and a smart thing by addressing gender equality," and then what they are actually doing is something fairly little. I mean, even when you look at the commitments that were made at the global gender equality forum in Paris, it's $40 billion --and it sounds like a lot of money-- but a lot of that money is actually double commitments. So it's money that was already committed to family planning, or already committed to whatever. And if you think about the hundreds of billions of dollars that are needed to move big global issues, it's a drop in the bucket. I mean, if you look at the global development assistance funds, for example, in the last decade, the best that we have done is move from gender equality from getting like 3% of global funding to 5% of global funding; it's nothing, it's a drop in the bucket.

**Anju Malhotra** 38:42

Unfortunately, I'm old enough to remember when feminist economics, which made the point that investing in women strategically is the smartest thing. Now, at least we have it being discussed among the global financial institutions at the highest levels of government.

**Anju Malhotra** 39:07

Then it what it has done, unfortunately, is put gender equality as a tool to achieve the things that they are aiming to achieve, and those things stay important. And lifting women and having power that women need to have is not really on the agenda. And that's something we need to I think revisit; it's time for the global feminist movement to do a reset in the world that we're living in today. And I'm not sure that this gender equality forum necessarily did that. Although, I would agree that our coming together really helps us to see where we are and what we need to do going forward. So it is a good [point of reckoning].

**Ellen Chesler** 39:57

[Another thing] is that literally, other than "Pass Blue" we are Barbara Crossette, whom I met in Cairo in 1994 when she covered that International Population Development Conference brilliantly, other than her coverage, I didn't see one good bit of press about it. I mean, Hillary Clinton spoke there in person in Paris: nothing in the newspapers. The New York Times doesn't cover the UN. I mean, these are larger issues of how you bring public attention to something if you have complete indifference by the international press corps, at least in the United States. I mean, maybe it's better elsewhere.

**Ellen Chesler** 40:35

I do you remember that --and again, this is talks about what we might do largely to the SDGs to make them more effective tools and to make more people aware of them--years ago, in Beijing, I had been fortunate in that time to be working for the Open Society Foundations, and I was able to use private funds to hire public relations people to work with the UN and we got fantastic press.

**Ellen Chesler** 41:00

I mean, I always do feel that in a certain way, the MDGs occurred because the outsized attention that suddenly women got at the UN and there was a desire to balance things out.

**Ellen Chesler** 41:14

I think our time is over. I want to thank you, Anju Malhotra of the UN University, formerly of UNICEF and ICRW, a terrific organization measuring progress by women around the world, headquartered in Washington.

**Ellen Chesler** 41:32

I want to remind our listeners to subscribe and rate International Horizons on SoundCloud, Spotify and Apple podcasts ---wherever you get your podcasts. My thanks to Hristo Voynov for his technical assistance and to Merrill Sovner for helping to produce this episode. And to Duncan Mackay for sharing the song International Horizons as the theme music for the show.

**Ellen Chesler** 41:57

My name is Ellen Chesler. Again on behalf of the Ralph Bunche Institute, I want to say thanks for joining us, and look forward to having you with us for the next episode of International Horizons.

**Anju Malhotra** 42:09

Thanks Ellen, an bye bye.