SDGs Learning, Training and Practice at the United Nations High Level Political Forum (HLPF) 2021

Session 4: Fostering Evidence-Based Decision-making for Sustainable and Just COVID Recovery and Transformative SDG implementation

Wednesday, 7 July during the Afternoon (2:00 to 3:45PM EST)

https://sdgs.un.org/events/fostering-evidence-based-decision-making-sustainable-and-just-covid-recovery-and

Overall Description

Evidence-based decision-making is essential to driving a sustainable and just recovery from COVID-19 and getting back on track with the SDGs, in line with a Decade of Action. Evidence can ground policy programs in facts, allow the anticipation of potential scenarios, and foster constructive exchanges in collective decision-making. This session will showcase new tools, resources, and knowledge platforms enabling the systems-level transformation that is foundational to building forward stronger for current and future generations.

Partners across sectors will highlight impact-driven solutions critical to a post-COVID pandemic recovery. Presentations will include revised methods to measure national wealth, assessments of business and economic alignment with the SDGs, as well as integrating satellite technology to track SDG progress and bolster disaster resiliency. The session will conclude with the presentation of tools for effective decision-making amidst complexity and information overload.

Session Partners

- International Institute for Sustainable Development
- World Benchmarking Alliance, GRI, UN Global Compact, UNRISD, FEMNET, Danish Institute for Human Rights, and the Women's Major Group
- UNITAR-UNOSAT & UK Space Agency
- Geneva Science-Policy Interface & Simon Institute for Longterm Governance

Agenda

1. Introduction to overall concept + aims (3-5 minutes)
2. Part I: Tools and Resources for Evidence Based Decision-Making (75 minutes in total)
   a. Thinking Beyond GDP - IISD (25)
   b. From Fragilities to Resilience: Tools for Sustainable, Just, and Transformed Economies – WBA, UNRISD, GRI, UNCTAD, FEMNET (25)
   c. Leveraging the use of geospatial information technology and satellite data to strengthen evidence-based decision making for sustainable, climate-resilient and inclusive development - UNITAR-UNOSAT & UK Space Agency (25)
3. Part II: Behavioral Solutions for Evidence-based Decision-making (25)
   a. Geneva Science-Policy Interface & Simon Institute for Longterm Governance
4. Conclusion – Wrap Up (2-3 Minutes)

Learning objectives

Part I: Tools and Resources for Evidence Based Decision-Making (75 min)

a. Thinking Beyond GDP - International Institute for Sustainable Development (25)

Expanded measures of wealth ("comprehensive" or "inclusive" measures) to complement GDP are under development by United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), World Bank, Bennett institute at Cambridge University and International Institute for Sustainable Development and other prominent organizations. How can these measures be used to prioritize post-COVID recovery and contribute to SDGs?

Key Objectives of the learning session:
- Introduce key components of expanded measures as they are developed by international agencies and suggested to be applied to the country context and decision-making
- Provide examples to the participants of the session to be able to find data and conduct basic interpretation of expanded wealth measures for countries and regions. Open data will be used that are accessible for participants after the session
- Provide specific case studies to demonstrate how expanded wealth measure assist in prioritizing investments that are best fit to country's sustainable development pathway and post-Covid recovery

For more information please visit: [Measuring Wealth to Promote Sustainable Development | International Institute for Sustainable Development (iisd.org)](#)

b. From Fragilities to Resilience: Tools for Sustainable, Just, and Transformed Economies (25)

- Highlight actionable tools and learnings that aim to accelerate systems-level social and environmental shifts and transformations that are key for the Decade of Action.
- Explore tools for integrating stakeholder interests into business practices, including data collection and analysis

- Strengthen engagement of citizens, social movements and workers in an ecological & social contract
- Explore how to support businesses in setting ambitious targets and integration of human rights and the SDGs into their business models
- Identify how human rights and environmental considerations can work together in business strategies

c. **Leveraging the use of geospatial information technology and satellite data to strengthen evidence-based decision making for sustainable, climate-resilient and inclusive development (UNOSAT&UKSA) (25)**

- Illustrate how the applications using geospatial information technology (GIT) and satellite-based earth observation (EO) data help improve climate resilience and disaster risk management;
- Showcase how capacity building in GIT can contribute to evidence-based decision making for sustainable and inclusive development;
- Provide examples of how GIT tools assist disaster preparedness and response, especially in the context of natural hazards and COVID-19 pandemic;
- Facilitate further global partnerships that can help promote satellite solutions for climate resilience and disaster risk management.

Part II: Behavioral Solutions for Evidence-based Decision-making (25)

a. **Behavioral Solutions for Evidence-based Decision-making (GSPI & SI)**

The UN 2030 Agenda fosters an approach to sustainable development that relies on specific metrics and motivates the use of scientific evidence and reasoning to monitor progress. In international and national policy-making, evidence-based policy-making is increasingly recognized as the state-of-the-art. As part of this development, NGOs, think tanks and academic institutions work on providing cutting-edge information to policy-makers. The information provided is mixed with other media and public discourse.

This torrent of information creates cognitive overload. For instance, in the context of a crisis such as COVID-19, more than 100,000 scientific papers were published in approximately 12 months.

Therefore, while decision-makers need to make informed decisions about complex problems under time-constraints, they face the problem of sorting through a vast range of information sources of various quality.

This challenge, therefore, begs the following question: **how can decision-makers deal with information overload in the face of uncertainty?**

This session segment builds on behavioral science to equip participants with cognitive tools to effectively filter information, navigate interconnectedness and learn from their decisions.

The **learning objectives** are the following:

- Learn about what psychology and neuroscience tell us about decision-making in the face of complexity
- Learn about behaviorally-informed techniques that improve individual and collective decision-making
- Discover ready-to-use resources to help you make better decisions under time-constraints and in the face of complexity

Moderator and speakers

Moderator:

- Nicolas Seidler, Executive Director, Geneva Science-Policy Interface

Key speakers:

Thinking Beyond GDP - International Institute for Sustainable Development
- Livia Bizikova, Lead Governance and Monitoring, International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)
- Matthew Agarwala, Bennett Institute for Public Policy, Cambridge University

From Fragilities to Resilience: Tools for Sustainable, Just, and Transformed Economies

- Dan Neale, Social Transformation Lead, World Benchmarking Alliance
- Mwanahamisi Singano, Head of Programs, FEMNET
- Isabell Kempf, Head of Bonn Office & Senior Research Coordinator, UN Research Institute for Social Development
- Andrea Padilla, Head of Regional Hub: Hispanic America, GRI
- Elena Botvina, Economic Affairs Officer, Division of Investment & Enterprise, UNCTAD

Leveraging the use of geospatial information technology and satellite data to strengthen evidence-based decision making for sustainable, climate-resilient and inclusive development
- Einar Bjorgo, Director of Satellite Analysis and Applied Research, United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR)
- Liz Cox, Head of International Engagement – International Partnership Programme, UK Space Agency (UKSA)

Behavioral Solutions for Evidence-based Decision-making
- Maxime Stauffer, CEO, Simon Institute for Longterm Governance; Science-policy Officer, Geneva Science-Policy Interface

Resources

- UNCTAD Guidance on core indicators for entity reporting on contribution towards implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals: https://unctad.org/webflyer/guidance-core-indicators-entity-reporting-contribution-towards-implementation-sustainable
- UNRISD, A New Eco-Social Contract, Vital to Deliver the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: https://www.unrisd.org/ib11
- World Benchmarking Alliance, Social Transformation Framework: https://www.worldbenchmarkingalliance.org/social-transformation-benchmark/
- Integrating SDGs into Sustainability Reporting: *https://www.globalreporting.org/standards/download-the-standards/ and SDGs Reporting Tools: https://www.globalreporting.org/public-policy-partnerships/sustainable-development/integrating-sdgs-into-sustainability-reporting/*
- Simon Institute training programs: https://www.simoninstitute.ch/projects/category/policy-support/
- UNOSAT, CommonSensing Knowledge Hub: https://common-sensing.cern.ch/training
- UK Space Agency, Case study of International Partnership Programme, https://www.spacefordevelopment.org/library/commonsensing-ipp-project-case-study/
- *Women's Major Group. "From Pandemic to 2030: Feminists Want System Change" series. https://www.womensmajorgroup.org/from-the-pandemic-to-2030-feminists-want-system-change/*
- *UN Global Compact SDG Ambition Initiative - https://www.unglobalcompact.org/take-action/sdg-ambition*
- Danish Institute for Human Rights, https://biz.sdg.humanrights.dk/; Data explorer: https://sdgdata.humanrights.dk/

Bios of moderator and speakers

Nicolas Seidler, Executive Director, Geneva Science-Policy Interface

Nicolas Seidler has been the Executive Director of the [Geneva Science-Policy Interface (GSPI)](#) since October 2018. In his previous position as Senior Policy Advisor at the Internet Society, he developed an extensive network of collaboration and engagement with international organizations and NGOs in Geneva and abroad. He led the organization's policy implementation in the fields of Digital Rights and the Internet of Things and made numerous publications and public interventions in international fora. Nicolas obtained a Masters in International Relations from the University of Geneva and the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in 2007, and a Masters in Communication and Media Sciences from the University of Geneva in 2009.

Livia Bizikova, Lead Governance and Monitoring, International Institute for Sustainable Development

Dr. Livia Bizikova is the Lead, Monitoring and Governance of IISD's Tracking Progress program, with experience in the fields of sustainable development, scenario development, participatory planning and integrated assessment.
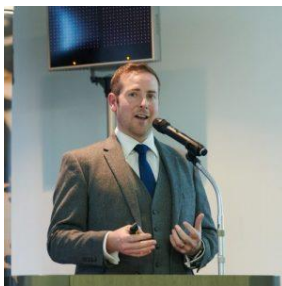
She works with diverse stakeholders: decision-makers at various levels; agencies including the United Nations Environment Program, the United Nations Development Program and the World Bank; and countries including Canada, Ghana, Uganda, Kenya, Mozambique, Tajikistan, China, Bangladesh, Vietnam, Honduras and Nicaragua.

Dr Matthew Agarwala, Project Leader: The Wealth Economy

Matthew Agarwala is an environmental economist interested in wealth-based approaches to measuring and delivering sustainable development. The pace of globalisation, innovation, and social, environmental, and economic upheaval leaves no doubt: 20th century statistics can't capture 21st century progress. Matthew joined the Bennett Institute's wealth economy project to transform economic measurement to better reflect sustainability, inequality, and human wellbeing. Initially, the project will focus on natural and social capital. Matthew regularly consults for governments (from local councils to national governments and international institutions) and scientific organizations on topics of natural capital, ecosystem services, and sustainability. He enjoys working across sectors and disciplines, and his co-authors include ecologists, economists, conservation scientists and practitioners, social anthropologists, civil servants, members of UK Parliament, and Nobel Laureates in peace, medicine, physics, and chemistry. In addition to the Bennett Institute, Matthew enjoys affiliations at the LSE (Geography & Environment + Grantham Research Institute) and UEA (Centre for Social & Economic Research on the Global Environment), and maintains active research networks in Canada, Hong Kong, Germany, USA, Japan, and throughout the UK.

Dan Neale, Lead Social Transformation, World Benchmarking Alliance

@sdgbenchmarks @thedanneale

Dan leads the social transformation within the WBA, responsible for establishing the framework to assess the 2,000 keystone actors on core social aspects. Previously, Dan led the Corporate Human Rights

Benchmark (CHRB), doubling the number of companies assessed and setting up UNGP Snapshot assessments, supporting the movement for mandatory human rights due diligence. Before CHRB, he spent five years working with extractives and renewable companies on social risk and impact management in the UK, Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa. Dan spent his twenties with the British military, with several years spent working in stabilisation, influence, community engagement and training roles.

Mwanahamisi Singano, Head of Programmes, FEMNET

@msalimu

Mishy is a seasoned development expert and a African feminist with extensive experience in socioeconomic programming, policy advocacy and development campaigns. For more than 10 years Mishy has worked intensively on women's rights advocacy and campaigns from different angles namely; violence against women, financial inclusion, women empowerment, land rights, farmer's and food rights, climate change, governance and leadership and sexual reproductive rights. As FEMNET's Head of Programmes, Mishy provides strategic oversight, technical design and management of programs to ensure timely delivery of responsive and high-quality programs, including co-creating and co-leading resource mobilization and building mutually beneficial relationships with members and partners.

Isabell Kempf, Head of Bonn Office & Senior Research Coordinator, UN Research Institute for Social Development

@unrisd

Isabell Kempf leads the UNRISD Bonn Programme on Integrating Knowledge and Capacity Development for the SDGs. Prior to joining UNRISD, Isabell was the co-Director of the UNDP-UNEP Poverty-Environment

Initiative based at UNEP in Nairobi. She has 26 years of experience working with the UN, including UNESCO, the Economic Commission for Latin American and the Caribbean, and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. Isabell has published widely on the right to development, poverty reduction, economic, social and cultural rights, and the social dimensions of sustainable development, and she brings many years of experience in the areas of capacity building and policy-oriented research. She was appointed to the Advisory Board of the Global Governance Institute of University College London in 2014. Isabell has a B.A. and an M.A. from Oxford University in Politics, Philosophy and Economics, and a Ph.D. in International Economics and Development from the University Complutense of Madrid. She also has post-graduate degrees in Gender and Public Policy as well as Social Communication from universities in Chile.

Andrea Padilla, Head of Regional Hub Hispanic America, GRI

@apradilla, @GRI_Secretariat

Andrea Pradilla is a lawyer from the Pontificia Universidad Javeriana de Colombia, specialized in International Business Law at Universidad de los Andes. She holds a Master of Science in Foreign Service with Honors from Georgetown University and an honors certificate in International Business Diplomacy.Before joining GRI (Global Reporting Initiative), Ms. Pradilla led the National Contact Point for the OECD Guidelines at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism in Colombia. Previously, she worked as a consultant in Corporate Social Responsibility and International Development at Wise Solutions LLC in Washington DC. Similarly, she was part of the Albright Stonebridge Group and the International Labor Rights Forum in Washington DC. She previously served as an advisor to the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development of Colombia.Since 2014, Andrea Pradilla has been the Director of GRI Hispanic America where she promotes corporate sustainability nd sustainable development through the sustainability reporting and the use of the GRI Standards.Andrea is also a professor of Corporate Sustainability at the College of Higher Studies in Administration-CESA and Universidad de los Andes in Colombia. In her commitment to promoting good business practices, Andrea is a founding member and institutional member of initiatives such as the Observatory of Benefit and Collective Interest Corporations and the Responsible Investment Task Force in Colombia; She is also a member of the Advisory Committee of the Colombian Climate Asset Disclosure Initiative -Initiative for the Disclosure of Climate Assets of Colombia, of the Board of Directors of the Fundación América Solidaria Colombia and of the Committee of Experts of the Integridad 100 Laboratory: Accelerator of Business Ethics. Since February 2021, she is one of Climatekic's mentors in Colombia.
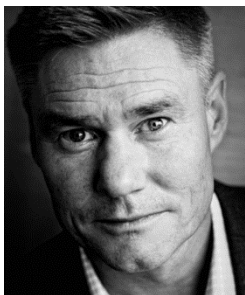
Elena Botvina, Economic Affairs Officer, Division of Investment & Enterprise, UNCTAD

@UNCTAD_ISAR

Elena is an Economic Affairs Officer at the Division of Investment & Enterprise of UNCTAD, working on facilitation of the intergovernmental support as well as expansion of the technical cooperation projects on assessing the progress of the private sector in attainment of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with a view to facilitate sustainable investment and inclusive growth. She conducted extensive economic research and contributed to preparing analytical reports on sustainability and SDG reporting as well as coordinated development of the practical case studies on measuring the contribution of the private sector to the implementation of the SDGs. Elena leads technical cooperation project on enabling policy frameworks for enterprise sustainability and SDG reporting in the African region and facilitates the work of UNCTAD as a co-custodian for developing metadata guidance for the SDG indicator 12.6.1. Her previous experience relates to working in multinational organizations providing expertise in credit ratings, audit and reporting including Fitch Ratings and KPMG. Elena holds an MBA degree from IMD Business School, Switzerland and B.A. from State University of Management, Russia.

Einar Bjorgo, Director of Satellite Analysis and Applied Research, United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR)

@unosat @unitar

Einar Bjørgo is Director of the Division for Satellite Analysis and Applied Research at the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and Manager of UNITAR's Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNOSAT). He joined the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in 1999 working on integrating new technological solutions into its operations, with special focus on use of satellite imagery. In 2002 he joined UNOSAT, and has in this capacity ensured satellite image analysis is made timely

available in support to humanitarian relief, sustainable development, environment, climate services, peace & security, human rights and international law, all key components of the Sustainable Development Goals. Through UNOSAT knowledge-transfer mechanisms he also supports beneficiaries from UN Member States, regional organizations, sister agencies and NGOs with training and capacity development on geo-spatial technologies. As of January 2018, he also oversees UNITAR's Strategic Implementation of the 2030 Agenda Unit with a focus on integrated policy development, data and innovation in support of strengthening capacities of UN member states. He is part of the Scientific Advisory Board at the Office of the Prosecutor, International Criminal Court.

Liz Cox, Head of International Engagement – International Partnership Programme, UK Space Agency (UKSA)

@spacegovuk @spacefordev

Liz Cox is Head of International Engagement for the UK Space Agency's award-winning 'International Partnership Programme' (IPP) – a >£150m space for sustainable development initiative utilising UK research and innovation capabilities to help tackle global development challenges. As such, she oversees communications and stakeholder engagement for IPP's portfolio of 43 projects in 47 countries across Africa, Asia Pacific and Latin America. Liz joined the UK Space Agency in 2011 and worked in International Policy, managing existing and seeking new opportunities for future international collaboration, before her move to IPP. Prior to that, she worked for the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council and multinational organisations including Siemens, Randstad and Burmah Castrol. Liz is a member of the International Astronautical Federation's Administrative Committee on Developing Countries and Emerging Communities.

Maxime Stauffer, science-policy officer, Geneva Science-Policy Interface & CEO, Simon Institute for Longterm Governance

Maxime is co-founder and chief executive officer of the Simon Institute for Longterm Governance (SI). He is also a research fellow at the Global Studies Institute at the University of Geneva and science-policy officer at the Geneva Science-Policy Interface. Before, he co-founded the Social Complexity Lab and Effective Altruism Geneva, where he still serves on the board. In the past, he was a researcher at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, advised the European Commission's Joint Research Centre on evidence-based policy-making. He has written on evidence-based policy, knowledge brokering, long-term governance and decision-making support.