



## Input by the United Nations System Staff College (UNSSC) to the United Nations High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) 2021

***"Sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic that promotes the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development: building an inclusive and effective path for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda in the context of the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development".***

According to its statute, the [United Nations System Staff College \(UNSSC\)](#) serves as a distinct, system-wide, knowledge management and learning institution, providing strategic leadership and management development, strengthening inter-agency collaboration, increasing operational effectiveness; enhancing cooperation with stakeholders inside and outside the UN system, and developing a more cohesive, system-wide, management culture."

UNSSC is fully committed to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. It supports the reform of the UN Development System and its repositioning efforts for an improved, integrated, and strategic support in the context of the 2030 Agenda. UNSSC plays a central role in ensuring that learning, training, and knowledge management play a strategic role within and beyond the United Nations in supporting governments' efforts in advancing human well-being in an equitable and just manner, ensuring that no one is left behind, while the limits of the planet are respected.

UNSSC established the [Knowledge Centre for Sustainable Development in Bonn, Germany](#) to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda further and enhance its efforts in supporting a reinvigorated Resident Coordinator system and a new generation of UN Country Teams, that is more cohesive and responsive to national needs and priorities, through nurturing a culture of results and learning. UNSSC's complete portfolio of learning offerings are geared towards enabling the UN system and its partners to address the demands of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. UNSSC has also mainstreamed the UN System Leadership Framework into its learning offerings and plays a lead role in fostering innovation across the system by managing the UN Innovation Toolkit under the leadership of its Knowledge Centre for Leadership and Management.



## **The COVID-19 pandemic and UNSSC's work in the areas of the SDGs under review in the 2021 HLPF**

UNSSC provides support to a holistic response toward achieving sustainable development through learning, training, and knowledge management, guided by a whole-of-society approach and based on cross-sectoral collaboration at all levels of society. Multi-stakeholder collaboration at local, national, regional, and global levels is critical if we are to enhance adaptive capacity to respond to the immediate and long-term effects of COVID-19 and build sustainable and resilient recovery in the decade of delivery and action for sustainable development.

In this light, the United Nations System Staff College has strengthened its function as a knowledge broker, facilitating access to knowledge relevant for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development and facilitating peer exchange and knowledge sharing among UN officials, civil servants and other stakeholders. To this end, during the pandemic, UNSSC has revamped its overall offerings and developed various interactive, participatory, as well as self-paced online formats for UN staff, as well as other stakeholders:

To provide a common narrative on the 2030 Agenda, UNSSC and DCO developed the [SDG Primer](#) available to all UN Staff. UNSSC and DCO also developed a [Foundational Certification on Sustainable Development](#) to certify all UN Resident Coordinators. This effort ensures that UN leaders at the country level are better equipped with a shared understanding of the integrated nature of the 2030 Agenda, which can support integrated approaches to its implementation. To support a coherent and strategic direction for UN development activities by all UN entities at country level, UNSSC and DCO developed an [online course on the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework](#), which is a core instrument for providing a direction for strategic planning, funding, implementation, monitoring, learning, reporting, and evaluation, all of which are undertaken by the UN development system with the host government and partners.

UNSSC also delivers [UNCT "Dream Teams" programmes](#) that directly support the enhancement of skills of UN Country Teams to lead collaboratively and deliver a whole-of-the-system UN response to the country's sustainable development priorities. To further enhance multi-stakeholder engagement at the senior leadership level, UNSSC launched the [UN Mastermind groups for leaders](#). Two distinct groups were created: a UNCT Alumni Mastermind Group that directly supports UN Country Team members towards a more effective and results-oriented UN Development System; and a UN Leaders for Sustainable Development Mastermind group composed of leaders from governments, business sector, academia, civil society, and international organizations who must work together to tackle global challenges.

With regards to the issue of health and well-being, UNSSC has accelerated the support provided to the World Health Organisation over the last years. Several courses and [learning formats have been developed for WHO representatives worldwide](#), as well as for WHO representatives in tandem with Ministry of Health and other ministerial counterparts for the EMRO region. These learning formats aim at positioning the work on health and well-being through efforts beyond the health sector, exploring to what extent SDG 3 influences progress on other SDGs and is influenced by progress or lack thereof under other SDG areas. The formats also explore what kind of leadership approaches, behaviour changes and changes in approach to stakeholder engagement, policy support and advocacy are necessary for WHO to provide support to national health priorities in this context. In fact, an online mandatory course for WHO representatives, developed by UNSSC, is due to be launched mid 2021.

Transborder and regional work is also critical in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda; thus the UNSSC signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to inaugurate enhanced collaboration through the implementation of a joint programme to accelerate [SDG learning, training and knowledge management for the Arab region](#). Moreover, UNSSC fostered [learning exchange at the Africa Regional Forum for Sustainable Development](#) in a side event on empowering action and supporting the decade of delivery for the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 through high-impact learning. National and local governments are essential actors in the decade of action and delivery.

Public administrations have a key role in transmitting and amplifying ideas and initiatives horizontally and vertically, top-down, bottom-up, and between sectors. Within this context, UNSSC, in collaboration with the German Development Institute and with the support of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU), deliver an 8-month programme, combining various online training formats, including two cohorts of a 3 – months train-the-trainer course, strengthening knowledge and capabilities on the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and overall global megatrends, including a focus on Digitalization. The training series is titled "[Building Back Better: Strengthening capacities of Schools of Public Administration in a Post-Covid-19 World](#)".

UNSSC also fosters multi-stakeholder co-creation, knowledge exchange and facilitated dialogue-based learning. To achieve this, UNSSC organizes the annual [UN Summer Academy](#). UNSSC also scales its learning opportunities to broaden its outreach to development practitioners and organizations working with vulnerable groups. Thus, UNSSC offered all its sustainable development moderated online courses free-of-charge and used a cohort-based learning approach to strengthen peer exchange among its participants. Courses include [Paris Agreement on Climate Change as a Development Agenda](#), [Circular Economy and the 2030 Agenda](#), [Unleashing the Power of the Private Sector for](#)

[the 2030 Agenda](#), [Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development](#), and [Anti-Corruption in the context of the 2030 Agenda](#)

### **Areas requiring urgent attention in relation to the SDGs and to the theme from UNSSC's viewpoint, including from the perspective of "Leaving No One Behind"**

A resilient and sustainable recovery in the context of the decade for action and delivery will require better uptake of lessons learnt, successes achieved and shortcomings emerging from SDG implementation so far. The realisation that sustainable development progress requires integrated solutions, maximising synergies and minimizing trade-offs across sectors and levels of government, requires accelerated efforts towards the identification of sustainable development pathways, strategic entry points for transformation and societal levers that are able to accelerate progress toward sustainable development outcomes. Overall, this requires a better understanding of what is meant by integrated policy support and integrated approaches to implementation. Efforts to share contextualised knowledge from concrete practices, as well as success stories and in-depth case studies must be increased in fora that allow for real sharing of practices, beyond a mere showcasing of successes.

At the same time, efforts to assess and analyse cross-boundary effects of international practices and policies must be increased and their effect on domestic situations studied, in pursuit of policy coherence for sustainable development "here" and "now", "elsewhere" and "later."

### **Key messages for inclusion into the Ministerial Declaration of the 2021 HLPF.**

"We recognize the importance of strengthening knowledge and capabilities among all stakeholders with regards to successful approaches toward policy integration and ways to implement the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development, maximising synergies and minimizing trade-offs, domestically and internationally. We therefore commit to increasing efforts towards learning, training, knowledge management and capacity development to achieve sustainable development."