

Building back better from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

United Nations System Staff College (UNSSC) submission to the 2022 High Level Political Forum for Sustainable Development:

20 years after its creation, the UNSSC fosters forward looking inter-agency learning and multi-stakeholder engagement to enhance the impact of the UN's collective value proposition on the ground and accelerate SDG implementation.

20 years after its foundation in 2002, the UN System Staff College has been deepening its efforts to contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals through its learning, training and knowledge management activities, which it is dispensing for audiences within and beyond the UN system. Starting from a modest beginning, training 1,200 UN staff in its first year, today the College has become a centre of excellence for system-wide learning and training. In 2021, UNSSC was the premier provider of knowledge to over 20,000 learners from the UN, governments, civil society organizations, and the private sector.

Since 2020, as the global community identified the need to accelerate efforts to progress on the goals and in response to the new challenges posed by the Corona virus and its effects on societies around the globe, UNSSC has redefined substantive focus areas and moved most of its learning and training offerings online. Delivering a fully online programme in 2020, the UN System Staff College experienced a 241% increase in participants in its courses and knowledge events, bearing testament to the need to acquire relevant knowledge and competencies in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. UNSSC's move to online learning has extended the reach of its programmes and while, face-to-face formats will return to some extent, lasting legacies will remain in terms of new approaches to blended, hybrid, as well as entirely online or face-to-face programmes.

While many UNSSC offerings have continued to focus on specific substantive areas and leadership and management competencies, increased focus has been put on offerings underlining the need for integrated approaches toward sustainable development, identifying linkages between goals and focusing on strategic entry points for a systemic and cross-sectoral approach to sustainable development. To establish a foundational knowledge base among UN personnel and partners about the 2030 Agenda, UNSSC has opened the [online SDG Primer](#) as a free of charge resource. Furthermore, UNSSC has deepened its efforts to provide opportunities for

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UN personnel, heads of agencies, Resident Coordinator Offices and entire UN Country Teams to identify strategic opportunities for integrated planning and implementation across agency mandates, addressing different sectors and working across levels of government and with a diversity of stakeholders. Offerings include an online self-paced [course on the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework \(UNSDCF\)](#), as well as a tailored [learning path for UN Resident Coordinator Office staff](#) covering issues such as systems thinking, economic transformation, financing, the climate emergency and evidence informed policymaking. UNSSC has also increased its offerings across the pillars of the United Nations, providing specific learning offerings related to the humanitarian – development and peace nexus in support of more integrated delivery of the United Nations on the ground. In order to influence the ability of the UN system at country level to strengthen its collective value proposition to member states, the UN System Staff College runs tailored courses for senior executives at agency level, as well as [leadership courses for UN Country Team representatives](#), and tailored offerings for specific UN Country “Dream” Teams.

SDGs in focus in 2022

SDG 4

With regards to the SDGs under focus in 2022, as a learning and training institute, UNSSC directly contributes to SDG 4 by promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all. In fact, in 2021/22 UNSSC has upscaled its efforts to provide free of charge learning opportunities for a variety of audiences in areas of sustainable development. This includes a series of moderated online courses offered for cohorts between 300 and 500 learners. Courses include the [Paris Agreement on Climate Change as a Development Agenda](#), [Circular Economy and the 2030 Agenda](#), [UN Private sector partnerships](#), [Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development](#), [UN Strategic Communication for the 2030 Agenda](#) and [Anti-Corruption in the context of the 2030 Agenda](#)

UNSSC also fosters multi-stakeholder co-creation, knowledge exchange and facilitated dialogue-based learning. To achieve this, UNSSC organizes the annual [UN Summer Academy](#), as well as other multi-stakeholder formats for a variety of audiences.

A new flagship programme of the UN System Staff College is constituted by the [Executive Leadership Programme for Sustainable Development](#). In collaboration with the National University of Singapore, Lee Kwan Yew School of Public Policy and the Hertie School, the University of Governance in Berlin, the programme brings together a cohort of leaders from a diversity of sectors to share practices and approaches, deepen their knowledge and advance their understanding of ways to contribute to societal transformation toward sustainable development through approaches such as design thinking, behavioural insights and foresight.

The online and multi-stakeholder courses are offered free of charge thanks to the contribution of the Federal Republic of Germany to the Knowledge Centre for Sustainable Development. At the same time, open self-paced courses on sustainable development and online learning have been made available through the [virtual school of government of Brasil](#) as a follow up to a [several months training course for civil servants](#), organized by UNSSC, in collaboration with a network of schools of government, 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).

UNSSC has also developed a number of online modules on public health in the context of [epidemic and pandemic leadership](#), which were published on the Open WHO website and have attracted around 10,000 learners to date through an open free-of charge learning space.

At the same time, UNSSC has upscaled its offerings toward the UN system through its [online learning ecosystem 'Blue Line'](#), which is designed and conceptualized with the ambition to be a unique and global learning hub open to all UN staff for personalized and self-directed learning. Blue Line provides free of charge courses and learning products to UN personnel on a wide range of topics pertinent to improve their effectiveness, efficiency and knowledge base.

UNSSC has also intensified its efforts to advance the efforts to reposition the UN Development system and support UN Reforms overall.

With regards to UN specific offerings, UNSSC has rolled out courses both for mixed UN cohorts in order to increase inter-agency knowledge and collaboration, as well as agency specific tailored offerings, whether from a substantive entry point or to strengthen particular skills and competencies for specific agencies to be better able to navigate the transformation that is required for them to continue to play an effective role at country level. Tailored trainings on topics such as agency specific positioning and programming and results focused management, have been designed for a variety of agencies, such as FAO, WHO, UNESCO, UNICEF and UNDCO, as well as regional commissions and the UN Secretariat to name but a few.

SDG 5

Regarding SDG 5, as an inter-agency learning provider to the UN system and its partners, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (including the gender equality outcomes) together with the UN Sustaining Peace Agenda provide a

framework for the College's work. Not being operational by its mandate, the College contributes to Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women (GEEW) by developing capacities, fostering change in practices and behaviours of UN staff, managers, leaders as individuals, UN entities as institutions and wider non-UN stakeholders.

UNSSC continues to scale up internal UN system change to enable GEEW through gender mainstreaming into capacity building and advisory services UNSSC offers to other UN Entities both from external programmatic perspective (focusing on SDG5, GEEW in other SDGs, such as SDG13 on Climate Action or SDG16 on peace and security) and internal UN capacities to have more gender-responsive leadership (focusing on gender-responsive application of UN System Leadership Framework) and gender-responsive analysis, programming and evaluation.

UNSSC continues to support the generation and transfer of knowledge to enhance integrating of GEEW across SDGs (gender and climate change; women, peace and security, women's leadership, partnership, etc.) in a number of UNSSC programmes targeting primarily developing countries and implementation of SDGs at the national level. UNSSC launched its first GEEW Campaign in 2021 #WomensVoicesForAnEqualFuture ("Women's Thought Leadership Series- Voices For an Equal Future") in partnership with Group of Women Leaders – Voices for Change and Inclusion.

In 2021 UNSSC adopted its first UNSSC-wide Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women strategy to address the need for a coherent framework to mainstream gender equality and the empowerment of women of any planned action, policies and programmes in all areas and at all levels.

Following the establishment of the Gender Architecture in December 2020, the UNSSC Gender Team was a catalyst to activate College-wide awareness and action on GEEW. The UNSSC Senior Leadership for GEEW internally and externally along with the bottom-up efforts to mainstream GEEW by the UNSSC Gender Team members led to this critical milestone of UNSSC GEEW Strategy endorsement and creating an enabling environment and commitment to advance GEEW.

The goal of UNSSC's GEEW strategy is to achieve gender equality and parity at all levels of the organization and to advance gender mainstreaming in the UN System Staff College's learning, training and knowledge management interventions.

SDG 14 and 15

Regarding the contribution to SDGs 14 and 15 UNSSC has intensified its efforts to feature biodiversity and the threat of biodiversity loss as part of its offerings across the board. The flagship course on the Paris Agreement as a Development Agenda features among others chapters on tradeoffs and synergies between climate adaptation and mitigation measures and the environmental dimension of sustainable development. It strongly emphasizes the triple crisis of climate – biodiversity and pollution and its effects on and from the social and environmental sustainable development dimensions. Moreover, discussions about the relevance of the environmental dimensions of sustainable development are intrinsically embedded into all offerings for UN personnel, especially related to integrated programming across agency mandates and shifts that are required from this perspective in terms of leadership, partnerships, communication and stakeholder engagement.

Key policy recommendations

From the vantage point of the UN System Staff College, the key policy recommendation is to continue to strengthen UN reforms across all pillars and advocate for further integration of mandates and approaches. Pressures and disincentives for UN entities to collaborate are still strongly perceived at country level and further efforts are required to shift the focus of UN personnel from technical, agency specific approaches toward more integrated approaches, which leverage the UN's presence as a catalyst and broker a systemic whole-of –society approach at country level. UNSSC remains committed to work with member states and the UN system at the highest level to accelerate this shift and provide the capacity development approaches most conducive to advance a renewed understanding of the role of the United Nations in a reinvigorated multilateral system.

In this regard the UN System Staff College fully supports the UN Secretary General's 'Our Common Agenda' with its recommendations. The College is committed to upgrading the multilateral system by supporting the workforce of the United Nations in the transition toward more agile and innovative support systems to advance national priorities toward sustainable development solutions. As a testament to our readiness to read the learning pulse of the system, in partnership with some of the most world-renowned academic institutions and relevant practitioners in the public and private sectors, the UN System Staff College offers and designs a number of learning opportunities relevant to the "Quintet of Change."

Key messages

- The pandemic has forced the UN System Staff College to move its offerings online, which has increased the reach of its programmes.
- The UN System Staff College acts as key knowledge broker within the UN system for inter-agency learning and learning in collaboration with stakeholders.
- Despite important advances, the UN's support at country level is not yet as cohesive and integrated as it should be to address cross-cutting priorities within countries and across borders. Important knowledge and capability gaps remain.
- The UN System Staff College supports UN entities through tailored and on demand learning and training offerings as they strengthen their collective value proposition at country level and in headquarter locations.
- In order to accelerate SDG implementation, UN entities must engage in a fundamental transformation in terms of the way they shape their contribution within the wider sustainable development ecosystem. This requires a fundamental shift in their approaches to leadership and programming, in order to better connect, communicate, collaborate and co-create with other relevant societal actors. UNSSC stands ready to support this transformation.

Key messages for inclusion into the Ministerial Declaration of the 2022 HLPF.

To accelerate SDG progress and to achieve the fundamental transformation required toward sustainable development outcomes, we recognize the importance of strengthening knowledge and capabilities among UN personnel and all stakeholders toward systemic approaches, identifying strategic entry points for interventions, which maximize synergies and minimize trade-offs, domestically and internationally. The United Nations entities are expected to play a key role in fostering multi-stakeholder dialogue and action across sectors, levels of government and time scales. The United Nations System Staff College therefore commits to increasing efforts towards learning, training, knowledge management and capacity development to achieve sustainable development.