

Inputs for the **2023** High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) for Sustainable Development from the United Nations System Staff College (UNSSC)

The UN System Staff College has been contributing to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 goals through its learning, training, and knowledge management activities. Established in 2002, the Staff College has evolved into a leading centre of excellence for UN-wide learning and training, serving over 40,000 learners in 2022.

In response to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and the need to accelerate progress on the SDGs, UNSSC shifted most of its offerings online and expanded its focus on integrated approaches to sustainable development.

The pandemic also led to the adoption of new learning technologies at speed. Expanding the virtual learning environment created opportunities for more inclusive collaboration and increased participation from those who lacked the resources for in-person training. Hybrid and blended learning formats also increased. As the COVID-19 abates, there is an increasing need for face-to-face meetings and training.

Learning for sustainable development is not only about acquiring knowledge and skills, but also about changing attitudes, behaviours, and practices. This requires a multi-stakeholder approach and collaboration between various actors, including governments, private sector, civil society organizations, and individuals.

UNSSC plays a crucial role in fostering this collaboration and building bridges between different actors by promoting knowledge exchange and peer-to-peer learning opportunities in three main thematic areas: Sustainable Development, Peace and Security, and Leadership and Management Development.

SDGs in focus

SDG 6 and 7

UNSSC contributes to SDG 6 and 7 by providing spaces for learning and knowledge exchange. Examples include:

- At UNSSC's multi-stakeholder virtual learning event, [UN Summer Academy](#), leaders were featured who are making a positive impact through innovative solutions to address providing clean water and sustainable energy for all. These learning exchanges covered emerging trends that may shape the future, such as converting kitchen waste into biodiesel to ensure that the wasted oil does not go to the ground and affect the community's groundwater. Another session focused on cleaning up the ocean by collecting plastic and converting them into fuel to power ships using cleaner energy.
- UNSSC offers virtual tours through 360-degree films that showcase a city's transformation towards sustainability. In this immersive learning experience, leaders and learners visit a city that depended on coal for its economic development for centuries. Through the tour, participants vicariously live with different stakeholders and listen to their stories as the society unpacks what a sustainable future means for all of them.
- The [UN SDG:Learn initiative](#), co-coordinated by UNSSC with over 65 partners, provides over 100 courses and microlearning to increase knowledge and understanding around SDGs 6 and 7. A [podcast episode](#) highlighted how space satellites could bring sustainable energy to remote communities in Sub-Saharan Africa.

SDGs 9 and 11

Numerous UNSSC self-paced and moderated online courses cover topics like [climate change](#) and [circular economy](#) and are facilitated by experienced tutors who provide feedback and create networking opportunities. These programmes also feature top-level climate change and circular economy policy leaders and scientists to ensure that the learning exchange is informed by the most recent and robust research in the field.

UNSSC also partnered with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to create the "[My Sustainable Living Challenge](#)," a gamified platform aimed at promoting attitude and behaviour change as well as self-paced courses on environmental topics and international conventions, including [digital sustainability](#), [sustainable lifestyles](#), and [Minamata Tools](#).

In collaboration with the Initiative for Climate Action Transparency, UNFCCC, and UNEP Copenhagen Climate Centre, UNSSC ran a blended training programme on [climate transparency](#) for regions in Africa and Asia Pacific. In 2023, the French edition will be released.

Enhancing the capacity of civil servants to adopt circular economy principles is critical in achieving the objectives of the 2030 Agenda. UNSSC partnered with the Government of Victoria in Australia to offer [circular economy training to 300 civil servants](#). The learning opportunity provides a safe space for the civil servants to learn from each other and work together in increasing the resilience of their communities.

UNSSC also covered topics like blockchain technology, artificial intelligence, and 3D printing houses for disaster victims, with the goal of reaching vulnerable groups in society. It also explored subjects such as repairing, caring for, and circularity in cities and communities, and how landscape architecture can transform urban spaces and produce food while reducing flooding in cities.

SDG 17

UNSSC regularly and actively builds partnerships with different stakeholders (within and outside the UN system) aimed at supporting efforts towards sustainable development and the goals. Examples include:

- UNSSC offered free online courses to build [foundational knowledge on the 2030 Agenda \(SDG Primer\)](#), including a highly facilitated course on [social protection](#) and partnering with the [private sector](#) for the SDGs.
- In 2023, UNSSC will be launching a [new programme on partnerships, financing, and resource mobilization for sustainable development](#) to help participants understand the different types of partnerships, financing models, and approaches to resource mobilization, and how engagement with various entities and joint resource mobilization strategies can help implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- in partnership with some of the most world-renowned academic institutions and relevant practitioners in the public and private sectors, the Staff College offers and designs a number of learning opportunities relevant to the “Quintet of Change.”
- UNSSC conducted a UN Country Programming training for UNICEF and curated an online learning path for UNAIDS with a view to identify opportunities for integrated planning and implementation across agency mandates, addressing different sectors and working with a diversity of stakeholders. It also put together a training programme on Building Future-Proof RCO and concluded the RCO Learning Path for over 200 RCO staff.
- UNSSC provided customized training to different UN organizations, including a strategic communications programme for 130 UN staff and WHO Somalia, as well as the Global Induction Programme for the World Health Organization (WHO). UN Women leaders also engaged with UNSSC for new self-paced modules.

Key policy recommendations

The UN System Staff College is committed to supporting the UN workforce by providing capacity development opportunities. Key opportunities for strengthening action for learning, training, and knowledge management for goals 6, 7, 9, 11 and 17 include enhancing and scaling up learning opportunities in areas such as financing, technology, and partnerships.

Key messages for inclusion into the Political Declaration of the September 2023 SDG Summit.

- Learning and capacity building are essential to accelerating SDG progress and achieving the objectives of the 2030 Agenda.
- The United Nations entities are expected to foster multistakeholder dialogue and action across sectors, levels of government and time scales. With support from the UN system and Member States, the United Nations System Staff College, as an inter-agency learning and training organisation, can play a key role as a knowledge broker, learning designer, and change catalyst.
- In order to accelerate SDG implementation, UN entities must engage in a fundamental transformation, shifting 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.