

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

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Background

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 learning and capacity building within the United Nations system and beyond, offering over 200 courses and serving 75,000 learners in 2023. Governed by a Board chaired by the Chef de Cabinet of the Secretary-General, the UNSSC is uniquely positioned above institutional silos and works in partnership with a wide array of UN entities, academic institutions, and civil society organizations. Acting as a convener and multiplier, UNSSC leverages its inter-agency mandate to facilitate knowledge and peer exchange and multi-sectoral perspectives crucial for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in three main thematic areas: Sustainable Development, Peace and Security, and Leadership and Management Development.

4. Impacts of multiple crises on the implementation of SDGs 1, 2, 13, 16 and 17 from the vantage point of your intergovernmental body.

- Participants in our courses are increasingly looking for ways to better understand the evolving global landscape and identify where the United Nations can continue to add value to the goals of member states. At the same time, commitment and consensus to implement the Sustainable Development Goals is challenged by multiple crises and increasing polarization. Mistrust in government and multilateral institutions further undermines the collective commitment to the 2030 Agenda from local to international levels. The compounding effects of war, health, environmental and economic crises are exacerbating poverty, forcing people into displacement, and questioning food security.
- In the area of peace and security, the impact of climate change poses increasing challenges, and participants engaging in our learning opportunities seek support to assess, understand and respond to these challenges. Additionally, the effects of an increasingly multipolar world

in which the political role of the United Nations and the Security Council are scrutinized, coupled with decreasing funding for peace and security, present significant challenges.

5. Three key areas where sustainable, resilient and innovative solutions for achieving the SDGs are being effectively delivered, especially related to the cluster of SDGs under review in 2024, bearing in mind the three dimensions of sustainable development and the interlinkages across the Goals and targets.

Learning for sustainable development is not only about the acquisition of knowledge and skills. It is also about changing attitudes, behaviours and practices. We would like to emphasize these three key areas:

1. **Addressing the Climate, Peace and Development Nexus:** UNSSC, in partnership with the UN Climate Security Mechanism and the Peacebuilding Support Office, builds capacities on [climate-related risk analysis](#) and [climate-sensitive programming for peacebuilding](#). This allows UN staff and partners at local, national and international levels to better identify and understand climate impacts and related security risks in specific contexts where the UN operates, and address them.
2. **Strengthening Leadership for Sustainable Development:** UNSSC, through its diverse learning offerings and together with partners from the UN System and beyond, enhances leaders' skills for the 2030 Agenda. Target audiences include [heads of UN entities at the country level](#), [parliamentarians](#), and [leaders](#) from across the broader UN system, who are also brought together with [senior officials](#) from governments, the business sector, and academia. These programs support participants with the necessary knowledge, skills, and competencies to enable them to lead purposefully and effectively, facilitating support for countries and partners to achieve the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. They also enable taking a systems approach to sustainable development issues and aid in identifying strategic opportunities for integrated planning and implementation across mandates and sectors.
3. **Supporting Partnership Building:** UNSSC supports UN staff in effectively fulfilling their role to foster multistakeholder dialogue and action for the benefit of national SDG implementation. Through our course on [building partnerships for sustainable development](#), we convene experts and practitioners to identify innovative tools and methods to address the challenges in partnering with diverse stakeholders, aiming to bolster overall commitment to the SDGs. Additionally, UNSSC invests in building broad coalitions for supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. It expands its network of [academic partnerships](#) in particular with universities based in developing countries; it co-coordinates the [UN SDG:Learn](#) initiative with over 65 partners, and offers an increasing number of learning opportunities on issues such as transforming economies,

[digital transformation](#), [youth, peace and security](#), and [sustainable lifestyles](#), many of which are free of charge and open to the public. From these offerings, participants are able to better understand, take informed decisions, and contribute to change within their broader communities.

6. Three examples of specific actions, policies and measures that are most urgently needed to effectively deliver sustainable, resilient and innovative solutions to eradicate poverty and reinforce the 2030 Agenda, building on interlinkages and transformative pathways for achieving the SDGs.

From the vantage point of a UN learning and training institution, translating analysis into action, addressing capacity gaps and fostering mindset shifts are fundamental to realizing the 2030 Agenda. Key critical actions and measures include the following:

1. **Enhancing Climate, Peace and Security Literacy and Capacity for Action:** There is an increased need for the UN system and its partners to foster a deeper understanding and dialogue regarding how climate change and emergency/conflict sensitivity teams can work together to mainstream the issues systemically across their workplans and strategies to maximize opportunities for peace through climate action and vice versa.
2. **Strengthening Partnership for the Goals:** Against the backdrop of a marked increase of the estimated SDG financing gap and with the advantages of the multilateral system being increasingly under scrutiny, there is an increased need for departments, agencies, funds and programmes to understand, share and identify innovative ways of leveraging more actors and resources in support of the 2030 Agenda.
3. **Promoting Policy Coherence and Integration:** Given the increased data on interlinkages (GSDR 2023) and associated trade-offs, there is a pressing need to deepen the understanding of applied governance approaches (SDG 16) such as policy coherence and consensus building, ensuring that progress made in certain goals simultaneously addresses the trade-offs faced in other goals. This is especially relevant in the topic of green and just transitions.

7. Follow-up actions and measures being undertaken by your intergovernmental body or forum to support implementation of the Political Declaration of the SDG Summit.

With its innovative learning solutions and dynamic partnerships, both inside and outside the UN system, the UNSSC offers vital support to the UN and its partners in advancing sustainable development. The College is committed to enhancing the effectiveness of the multilateral system by supporting the United Nations workforce with the knowledge and skill sets needed to navigate the transition toward more agile and innovative

entities, helping advance national priorities in line with the 2030 Agenda. Examples include:

- UNSSC delivered trainings to senior-level UN employees to share the outcomes of the SDG Summit and Global Sustainable Development Report 2023 (GSDR), as well as introduce practical skills and tools to be able to better advocate and partner for implementation of the 2030 Agenda with senior government officials at country level.
- UNSSC built a strong partnership with the MPTFO and UNOSSC to deliver trainings to UN employees on the changing financial landscape affecting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and shared knowledge and innovative best practices in [financing, partnerships](#), and [South-South](#) and triangular cooperation.
- UNSSC delivered [several programmes](#) to civil servants, government staff and [parliamentarians](#) on a diverse range of topics from Climate Transparency to sustainable land management to the triple planetary crisis that support the implementation of SDG 13, among others.
- The UNSSC has championed learning on [climate, peace and security](#) through its role of a knowledge broker and facilitator for UN inter-agency trainings, working with and for key entities including the UN Climate Security Mechanism and the Peacebuilding Support Office. These partnerships also extend to think tanks and academic institutions for the delivery of knowledge management events (adelphi, SIPRI, FBA, ISS, CCCPA) helping the UN system and its partners to understand and adapt to the impact of climate change on the delivery of their mandates.
- UNSSC provided customised trainings to diverse UN organisations, sharpening their contributions to a reformed UN development system and its collective value proposition for effectively supporting countries in the implementation of 2030 Agenda. The College also continued to deliver interagency trainings on [leadership for sustainable development](#) in order to positively influence the ability and effectiveness of the UN system at country level, and it offered courses on policy coherence, systems thinking and integrated policies.
- Through offerings in the areas of [management, innovation](#), and [organizational change management](#), the College helped UN colleagues and institutions to enhance their capabilities for driving transformation, particularly in view of the Secretary-General's vision for a future-ready UN 2.0, thereby enabling more effective and efficient support to member states.

8. Recommendations and key messages for inclusion into the Ministerial Declaration of the 2024 HLPF.

- **Strengthening Capacity Building for Transformation:** To reverse course and accelerate progress on SDG implementation and the objectives of the 2030 Agenda, it is imperative to strengthen

capacity building and learning at both individual and institutional levels, in particular with regard to i) how to address interlinkages and trade-offs through inclusive processes in policy coherence, consensus building and political economy analysis, ii) how to prioritize and invest in initiatives that yield positive spin-off effects for all the goals as identified in the Global Sustainable Development Report 2023, and iii) how to invest in the exploration and quick adoption of new technologies that advance the SDGs.

- **Strengthening the effectiveness of the UN System:** The UN System must continue to play a key role in supporting member states national priorities in line with implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. For this purpose, UN teams and entities must reinforce the shift in their approaches to leadership and programming in order to better connect, communicate, collaborate and co-create with each other and other relevant societal actors. They must also keep pace with the rapid changes taking place to be able to provide relevant and effective support. Member States should reiterate their support for UN's role and commit to further strengthening the UN System in its efforts to effectively support integrated sustainable development solutions at scale and in line with the demands of the 21st century.