

2023 International Conference on Sustainable Development (ICSD) Parallel Session Themes

The [Global Association of Master's in Development Practice Programs \(MDP\)](#), in collaboration with the [Sustainable Development Solutions Network \(SDSN\)](#), will hold the [Eleventh Annual International Conference on Sustainable Development \(ICSD\)](#) on 18-20 September, 2023, in a hybrid format. Plenary sessions where abstracts will be presented will take place virtually. You do not need to attend the event in person to submit or present a paper. A second component of the event will feature high-level panels and keynote speakers, and can be attended in person in New York or virtually. Registration for all parts of ICSD will open in June. **If you would like to present at the conference, you must submit an abstract as directed below.** The conference is also open to observers (i.e. non-presenters).

The theme of the 2023 ICSD is “**The Midpoint of the SDGs: Global and Local Progress & Challenges**”. The aim of the conference is to bring together persons involved in research, policy, practice, and business. Participants will share practical solutions for achieving the SDGs at local and national levels. This year ICSD will accept abstracts within 7 themes, several of which have different “tracks” within them. Abstracts should be **directly relevant** to one of the following themes and subsequent tracks:

1. [Advancing Quality Education](#) (5 tracks)
2. [Climate Change](#) (3 tracks)
3. [Multidisciplinary Approaches to Development](#) (3 tracks)
4. [Progress Made by the Private Sector in Meeting the SDGs](#) (1 track)
5. [Social Sciences & Humanities](#) (6 tracks)
6. [Sustainable Cities](#) (3 tracks)
7. [The Digital Age](#) (2 tracks)

Interested presenters should submit an abstract of at least 300 words but not exceeding 500 words, in English, by 1 May, 2023, via the form below. Each abstract may only be submitted once and under one track. **Failure to answer questions on the submission form or the submission of the same abstract under multiple tracks is likely to result in the abstract being declined.**

The scientific committee will review abstracts and send all decision letters by 9 June, 2023. Abstracts can be accepted as either poster or oral (i.e. PowerPoint) presentations. Presenters invited to give oral presentations must submit a full paper by 1 August, 2023*, in order to maintain their position in the program. Presenters who do not register before the 1 September, 2023 deadline may also forfeit their spot in the agenda.

Please submit all abstracts through Oxford Abstracts at <https://app.oxfordabstracts.com/stages/5589/submitter>.

Abstract Timeline

1 March 2023	Call for Abstracts Open
1 May 2023	Deadline for Submission of Abstracts
9 June 2023	Abstract Decision Letters Emailed
1 August 2023	Full Papers Due (for Abstracts Accepted for Oral Presentations Only)
1 September 2023	Registration Deadline for Presenters

*The submission of a conference paper is optional for track, "Universities driving SDG-led transformation in their cities and communities" under theme 1 (Advancing Quality Education).

1. Advancing Quality Education

1A. Building the capacity of research centers to engage at the science-policy interface to address the SDGs

The disconnection between science and policy makers is a critical issue that has hindered the development of effective solutions to global environmental challenges, as highlighted in the 2012 United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) report "21 Issues for the 21st Century." The relationship between science and policy communities has been referred to as a "broken bridge". To rebuild this bridge, it's vital to train new generations of early-career researchers, and introduce new curricula in science-policy interfaces, scientific advice, and science diplomacy. A specific area dedicated to addressing research projects with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) could also be instrumental in bridging the gap between science and policy making. This will be useful especially for Global South nations and will have positive effects locally and globally.

1B. Enhancing responsible business education in the classroom through playful pedagogies

Business school members of the Principles for Responsible Management Education ([PRME](#)) community invite contributions detailing qualitative or quantitative studies exploring the integration of playfulness in business education. These examples should include relevant references of tools, materials, assessments, or pedagogical processes based in research or practice that complement the ICSD agenda.

Submissions should denote relevant taxonomies including level (prerequisite, undergraduate, postgraduate, and beyond), faculty/department, and methods/curriculum. The goal of this conference track is to raise awareness of different pedagogical approaches in business schools, growing from the Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) initiative's Impactful-five ([i5](#)) project. We hope to share findings with educators around the world and discover new ways of teaching and learning in the business school, based on best-practice of SDSN institutions and researchers.

1C. Higher education for sustainable development (ESD)

In this session, ESD is understood as the field of knowledge and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are the topics within the field as well as the mechanism for organization and measurement. Much is being written on ESD in K-12 but little on how ESD is being linked to higher education. This session will focus on activities that are linked to higher education and ESD via courses and/or activities in teaching and learning; research; community engagement, or governance. The guiding question will be, "What progress has been made to date between higher education in support of ESD and what are the challenges?"

1D. Training and Education for the skillsets of a sustainable future

The [six transformations](#) and four levers of the [UN GDSR 2023](#) to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will lead to great labor market upheaval. Workers will require reskilling and upskilling to keep jobs with companies or move across sectors to other companies. In addition, SDG Education at all levels of education will also be needed to supply labor in a sustainable future. In this session, we will look at professional training and education to help workers manage such transformational waves.

1E. Universities driving SDG-led transformation in their cities and communities

Universities as 'anchor institutions' are ideally placed to convene stakeholders across private, public, and plural organizations to tackle the shared adaptive challenges of the SDGs. In addition to efforts such as living labs, new models, ways of working, and enabling structures for education, research, and governance are needed at this mid-point to accelerate and scale efforts to act locally to advance global efforts. This session invites higher education institutions to showcase examples of how they are powering-up to realize fully the transformational potential of collaborating in their cities and wider community. Gathering around the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a shared purpose unites these local actors in their concerns about climate change and its inequitable impacts. Reflecting on different local and national contexts, institutional archetypes, and academic mission, the session will draw out actionable, scalable examples that might be adopted more widely to fuel timely delivery of the global goals. *Submission of a conference paper is optional.*

2. Climate Change

2A. Data, knowledge, and technology to combat the climate crisis

Recognizing the need for leaders worldwide to take immediate decisive action, the research community is poised to provide science-based recommendations to combat the climate crisis and prevent further deterioration. This session seeks papers that demonstrate how extensive data, knowledge and technologies from multiple disciplines can be used in country-specific action plans and solution pathways, and should include elements such as: (1) Existing technologies, (2) Circular economy,

(3) Nature-based solutions, (4) Digitalization, (5) Innovation commercialization, (6) Sustainable finance and adaptation investment schemes, and (7) Policy reforms.

2B. Linking the SDGs, disaster risk reduction, and climate change adaptation and mitigation in sustainable land use and development planning

Linking Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), and Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation (CCAM) for urban and regional sustainable land use and development planning is essential. Through this approach, we can address the fundamental and related questions of progressing past the midpoint of the SDGs. The struggles to rebuild in the aftermath or in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic permits us to take the bold and transformative steps to shift the world onto a sustainable and resilient path at all spatial scales. This session aims to disseminate pioneering approaches particularly around mainstreaming DRR, CCAM, SDGs, and the COVID-19 response in urban and regional land use and sustainable development planning, socio-ecological systems, economies, energy provision, transport networks, health systems, food production, and institutional resilience.

2C. Nature-based solutions to pressing societal challenges

Nature-based solutions refer to a set of actions or policies that harness the power of nature to address some of our most pressing societal challenges, such as the threat of water availability, the increasing risk of natural disasters, or global climate change. Work applied throughout the globe are suggested, with results that allow evaluating the success of the solutions.

3. Multidisciplinary Approaches to Development

3A. Sustainable development of mountain regions

Highly vulnerable areas, like mountains, are not directly and explicitly addressed by any of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These regions have a very specific identity and are working under unique constraints, particularly relevant for the promotion of a sustainable development paradigm. Hill and mountain regions, comprising 20% of the Earth's land area, are critical ecosystems that host a wide range of plant and animal biodiversity and several Indigenous communities. Of late, ecologically- and culturally-important hill and mountain regions have been highlighted as high-climate risk areas. Due to the difficult terrain and constraints on mobility, often communities in the region have to rely on highly climate vulnerable local food systems. In addition, they suffer from depopulation, aging of the resident population, and reduced opportunities offered by the labor market. With the exception of difficult terrain, these same challenges also apply to small islands, and some of the solutions may be applicable in both contexts.

Literature related to these regions suggests significant changes in climatic variables and growing impacts on forests, agriculture, marine areas, and livelihoods. However, studies are disjointed and there is a need for coordinated research that can help in identifying the nature of climate change and its impacts on food systems and to understand which kind of productions among the traditional/innovative economic, cultural, social ones are relevant to foster -in-turn- the development of communities, so as to inform policy and develop effective adaptation strategies.

3B. Sustainable resource management for socio-economic development

At the midpoint of the time to meet the targets set in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the global community is found with significant challenges to address. The Covid-19 pandemic, conflicts (see Russia-Ukraine), delays towards the energy transition, regional initiatives like the European Green Deal, and technological innovation with focus on renewable energy technologies have profound implications for the energy-growth nexus, sustainable natural resource management (e.g., rare earths), employment, inequality, and energy security. This session brings together inter-disciplinary theoretical and empirical insights on energy developments and progress to meet the 2030 targets. Session contributions advance the understanding of issues related to the energy-growth nexus, sustainable energy consumption and production, just energy transition, efficient resource management for local, regional, and global sustainable economic growth, development, and labor market developments.

3C. Transformation of food systems considering the SDGs nexus and spillover effects

It is well established that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are interlinked, and that efforts to advance towards one SDG can have positive or negative effects on another (SDG Nexus), in the same country and/or abroad (spillover effects). Additionally, a key part of achieving the SDGs is transforming our food systems (both locally and globally), going beyond SDG 2, since food systems interact with several SDGs. This session seeks studies on mapping and monitoring the SDGs nexus and spillover effects, as well as solutions that drive the necessary transformations of food systems along production chains. Works that apply Input-Output Analysis and/or Life-cycle Assessments are particularly welcomed. Studies with a focus on climate action are also very welcomed.

4. Progress Made by the Private Sector in Meeting the SDGs

Ever since Agenda 2030 was launched at the end of 2015, it has been acknowledged that the private sector has to play a key role in its achievement. The private sector has embraced its role enthusiastically. Indeed, one would be hard put to find a firm which does not have some sort of sustainability objective, whether it is doing what it can to mitigate global warming or helping to achieve one (or several) of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). But, as many firms have realized, this

is not an easy thing, and many are discovering that pursuing sustainability requires a fundamental re-thinking of how they do things. In other words, a re-thinking of their business models. This theme will bring together work that will allow for an engaging, fruitful discussion of what kinds of business models will work best to allow the private sector to make genuine progress on sustainability.

5. Social Sciences & Humanities

5A. Addressing social inequality in sustainable development

In this session we will focus on the topic of Social Inequality as is outlined in Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 10, as well as the barriers social inequality can place in achieving the other SDGs. Presenters should focus on the main dimensions of social inequality (social class, gender, ethnicity, disability) and highlight how social inequality can prevent the promotion of sustainable development, and what solutions can be put forth to break down those barriers.

5B. Children and youth at the SDG midpoint: Progress, challenges, and pathways to accelerate inclusive innovation

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) framework calls for no one to be left behind. Children and youth figure centrally in addressing each of the 17 SDGs, yet effective policy requires more data and analysis on their situations and increased attention to their perspectives and participation. Achieving progress on the SDGs demands a focus on the opportunities and barriers of incorporating children and youth voices, interests, needs, and perspectives in SDG actions, planning, and transformations. We invite papers on theories and practices that consider progress and challenges to the amplification of children and youth voices, perspectives, and participation in achieving the SDGs.

5C. Elevating the pluriverse: Indigenous and diverse visions for sustainable development

Where are we, where are we going and with whom and how are we going? With layered environmental crises of climate change, biodiversity loss, food and water insecurity, etc., there is urgency to address and redress our relationships with societies and nature. With this session we hope to build upon several years of considering Indigenous Approaches and Alliances for Sustainable Development by broadening the lens, to shine a light of the plurality of visions for the questions posed above. Indigenous and other, like-minded communities hold a diversity of ontologies, epistemologies and knowledge systems that relate to the natural world beyond solely utilitarian and intrinsic values. This session seeks create space for learning about innovative case studies and projects, undertaken by a wide diversity of actors, that showcase the many distinct and relational approaches to enhanced well-being for all that are needed to transform how we live on the planet.

5D. Human and planetary health and well-being in the Anthropocene

We are currently living in the age of the Anthropocene, a geological period of time where the impact of human activities on environmental degradation have become aggressively pervasive. On the other hand, science has evidenced the interconnection linkages between the Earth's natural processes and systems impacts on human health and well-being. Climate change, pollution, and biodiversity loss are consequences of irresponsible human intervention, affecting the health and well-being of people in the form of spillover human pathogens (Covid-19 pandemic), natural disasters (flood, etc), and communicable diseases (asthma, mosquito-borne diseases). Thus, a paradigm shift to overhaul and reshape by placing planetary health agenda in the current healthcare, education, business, and community communication systems and approaches is deemed timely and urgent. The topics under this track will cover various aspects such as research, economic models, business cases as evidence, and sustainable/ regenerative approaches from the business and education perspectives.

5E. The science of social violence and crime prevention

Reducing or eliminating all forms of violence is a key focus of the SDGs. Although various stakeholders, including academic researchers, government organizations, public and private funding agencies, non-governmental organizations, and civil society, have made strides toward achieving this objective, many of their efforts have been siloed. This session aims to provide a platform for participants to learn from each other about innovative approaches across sectors to prevent or reduce social violence and crime (SVC). With this session, we hope to foster a space to learn from each other about the innovative approaches employed across sectors and strengthen the network of people committed to the science of SVC prevention. We welcome proposal abstracts that discuss innovative approaches to preventing SVC in all its forms. We aim to create an inclusive session that recognizes diverse ways of knowing and learning. Therefore, we value quantitative and qualitative evidence-based research proposals and those that center the lived experiences of individuals disproportionately impacted by SVC. We encourage submissions of research studies, evaluation and assessment projects of community-engaged interventions and activities, interdisciplinary efforts on SVC prevention, community mentoring and mediation, and project exemplars. SVC, in this context, encompasses all forms of social violence and crime, including those outlined in SDG Targets 5.2 (ending violence against women and girls), 16.1 (reducing all forms of violence and related deaths everywhere), and 16.2 (ending abuse, exploitation, trafficking, and all forms of violence against children).

5F. The contribution of the arts and culture to achieving the SDGs

The 2030 Agenda is an opportunity to expand the full potential of cultural heritage, the arts, and the cultural and creative sectors as a driver of sustainable development. Culture is intimately connected to local communities, it influences lifestyles, tastes and consumption, it has the power to help us reimagine our world and to inspire societies to take action. At the societal level, culture contributes to

social well-being and inclusion, cohesion, as well as people's self-esteem and collective identity. Many voices have called for culture to be considered as another dimension of sustainable development, together with the social, economic, and environmental pillars. By proposing this topic, we aim to bring together researchers and practitioners working on the intersections between culture and the 2030 Agenda, and to identify relevant examples of research and/or initiatives that promote sustainable development within the cultural ecosystem or that use the power of the arts to push forward the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

6. Sustainable Cities

6A. Energy applications and the urban environment

The session will aim at investigating the connections between all energy-related applications and the built environment. It welcomes contributions focused on (but not limited to) the efficient use of energy in cities and settlements; applications of renewable energy systems; innovative design strategies and methodologies to buildings; industry applications and sizing of renewable energy systems; sustainability assessment of energy systems; energy using products; buildings; and mobility.

The perspective can focus both on the local perspective or on a wider scale although the investigation of the contribution of the smaller scale to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on a regional or country scale is highly encouraged. The session will accept innovative research studies; assessment methodologies development or updates; case-studies investigations as well as contributions to innovative modelling and demonstration of business cases for energy applications. The session will also address how scholars and practitioners are advancing the implementation of SDGs in construction, looking at on-site construction processes and operational life of built environment assets.

6B. Future challenges in the urban transition

Humanity is now primarily an urban species. Consequently, what happens in cities, given their population and energy intensity, will largely determine whether or not the transition to sustainability occurs. The growth of cities brings great risks and challenges: How can we guarantee that cities are sustainable, equitable, and thriving? This session welcomes papers on issues such as green energy transitions, sustainable manufacturing and supply chains, urban food systems, the circular economy, green infrastructure, and questions of positionality and identity, such as gender and class.

6C. Urban regeneration of vulnerable neighborhoods

This session proposes to focus on the urban regeneration of vulnerable neighborhoods in cities as a reliable and necessary path towards the territorialization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the fulfillment of the New Urban

Agenda of United Nations. The COVID pandemic has dramatically hit vulnerable urban areas, reinforcing their socio-economic and environmental disadvantages with negative consequences in the daily life of their residents and the global sustainability of cities. Because of this, the urban integrated action in these areas (on the base of public regeneration policies) arises as a necessary and urgent step towards the equitable resilience that is at the base of the SDGs. Departing from the observation of this policy challenge, this session is open for contributions that address the regenerative action of vulnerable neighborhoods with the objective of providing an arena for debate to advance knowledge and enhance practice in this relevant policy domain for urban and global sustainability.

7. The Digital Age

7A. Digital technologies and the SDGs: Past successes and future directions

Constant improvements in the availability and accessibility of digital technologies since the launch of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have played an essential role in how cities, communities, governments, non-governmental agencies, and private sector firms have been able to monitor and measure their progress toward meeting the SDGs. They also have made it easier to disseminate information across those entities, facilitating cooperation among them and allowing them to be more resilient in the face of challenges such as those that have been posed by the COVID pandemic. The success of digital technologies, however, also presents ethical challenges and sometimes leads to unintended consequences. Thus, concerning how they can be positively transformed to promote sustainable resilience has drawn attention. Submissions highlighting examples of the positive role digital technologies have been playing in achieving the SDGs as well as submissions which explore the directions they can take, are encouraged.

7B. Leveraging open data and artificial intelligence (AI) to measure SDG progress in resource-limited settings

This session will explore the difficulties many local governments face in measuring their progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), due to limited resources and expertise. The session will show how open data and AI can solve these challenges and improve local government's ability to measure and report on their SDG progress. We welcome submissions that feature practical examples and case studies of the successful use of open data and AI, as well as insights from researchers on the impact of these technologies. Best practices and approaches for integrating data from various sources and sectors, and streamlining the process with open data and AI, will also be discussed. This session aims to foster a collaborative environment for attendees to learn from experts and each other.