

Reviving the Decade of Action: exploring interlinkages and partnerships

This HLPF 2023 side event examines the COVID-19 impact across SDGs and the goals' integrated, indivisible, and interlinked nature.

About this event

This High Level Political Forum (HLPF) 2023 side event examines the COVID-19 impact across Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the goals' integrated, indivisible, and interlinked nature. The event will also be the pre-book launch of Bali Swain and Min's edited volume on Interlinkages between Sustainable Development Goals.

Main Organiser: Ranjula Bali Swain, Research Director Center for Sustainability Research, SIR, Stockholm School of Economics and Professor, Department of Economics, Södertörn University, Sweden.

Co-organisers: Xin Zhou, Research Leader, Integrated Sustainability Centre, Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES), Japan and Mustafa Moinuddin, Deputy Director, Integrated Sustainability Centre, IGES, Japan.

Time: Wednesday 12 July 2023, 13-14:30 hrs Eastern Standard Time (EST)

Venue: Permanent Mission of Sweden to the United Nations One Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza, 885 Second Avenue, 46th floor New York, NY 10017 (also virtual participation)

The pandemic has particularly emphasized the interlinkages (synergies and trade-offs) between various SDGs, particularly water (SDG 6), energy (SDG 7), industry (SDG 9), sustainable cities (SDG 11) and partnership (SDG 16). These SDGs are deeply interconnected with other SDGs. Through identifying strong synergies and trade-offs across goals and related targets, countries can design integrated, coherent policies and prioritize the allocation of scarce resources to build back from the pandemic while advancing the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The event will investigate interlinkages at the thematic, regional and country levels to discuss examples of possible applications, implications, and best practices.

Summary of the presentations

Professor Ranjula Bali Swain, Research Director, Center for Sustainability Research, SIR, Stockholm School of Economics and Department of Economics, Södertörn University emphasized that by identifying strong synergies and trade-offs across Sustainable Development Goals and related targets, countries can design integrated and coherent policies and leverage policy efficiency. This allows countries to prioritize the allocation of scarce resources toward targeted programs and projects to achieve optimal sustainable development outcomes. She presented evidence from her recent research, publications and books on SDGs 7 and 12. The world is currently grappling with a confluence of crises, primarily driven by the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, and increased conflicts. These multifaceted and interrelated crises have exacerbated pre-existing challenges, resulting in significant and far-reaching impacts on all of the Sustainable Development Goals. Bali Swain's research showed that while COVID-19 had a negative impact on SDGs in the short run, results are mixed and depend on the SDG under focus. For instance, Bali Swain finds a positive

impact of the COVID-19 crisis on Sustainable Investments. According to Bali Swain, a renewed focus on data and information and regional benchmarking of policies is essential.

Dr. Yongyi Min, Chief of SDG Monitoring Section at United Nations Statistics Division, talked about pursuing SDGs in a world facing cascading crises. The SDGs are interconnected and require integrated approaches to achieve their objectives. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated poverty, hunger, healthcare gaps, and inequality, while the climate crisis has caused irreversible damage and increased sea-level rise. Conflicts and crises have disrupted supply chains and led to a refugee crisis. Solutions involve strengthening social protection, providing public services, harnessing innovation, embracing green economy approaches, transforming finance, investing in data, and promoting peace. Political will, partnerships, capacity building, and inclusiveness are crucial. It is essential to recognize the interconnected nature of the goals and address multiple challenges simultaneously for a sustainable future.

Mr. Måns Felleesson, Coordinator Agenda 2030 and Financing for Development (FfD) and Division for Multilateral Development Banks, Sustainability and Climate, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Government of Sweden, shared his views on SDGs implementation from the Swedish perspective. He observed that while a lot of work is going on with the SDGs, halfway through the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, data availability remains a major challenge, especially in the global south. Turning to the Swedish experience, he notes that Sweden is performing really well on a global scale. But there are also challenges and issues in Sweden, including the lack of progress with the climate goal, and the rising inequality in the society. Two separate ministries are delegated to oversee SDG implementation at the national and global levels, but this institutional arrangement can be more synergistic. He pointed out the importance of the research community in providing inputs to policy decisions, for example through identifying the synergies among the SDGs, and guiding decision-making processes. Mr. Felleesson stressed the importance of strong political leadership in making the right decisions for the successful implementation of the SDGs.

Dr. Xin Zhou, Research Director of Integrated Sustainability Centre at the Institute of Global Environmental Strategies (IGES), talked about harnessing SDG synergies in post-pandemic recovery to accelerate the achievement of the SDGs related to water, energy, sustainable infrastructure, industrial development, and sustainable cities. Understanding the interlinkages between the SDGs is crucial for taking an integrated approach. IGES developed a methodology and an online tool for analyzing SDG interlinkages, widely accessed by users and used in scientific works. Linkages between SDG 6, 7, 9, and 11 with other goals are examined, highlighting positive and negative connections. The analysis results offer two directions for SDG acceleration: harnessing synergies for effective resource utilization and managing trade-offs to minimize offsets and development challenges.

Dr. Mustafa Moinuddin, Deputy Director of the Integrated Sustainability Centre at the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES) discussed how stakeholders perspectives can be incorporated in integrating climate action and SDGs at the subnational level from an SDG interlinkage perspective. He presented the methodology and results of an IGES activity focusing on developing a qualitative approach to identify the synergies and trade-offs between climate actions and SDGs through local stakeholders' engagement in West Java Province of Indonesia involving a questionnaire-based survey and a focus group discussion. The results show the core issues and challenges in West Java as well as the interlinkages of key economic, social, environmental and governance issues with climate change. Insights from the study can help raise awareness, co-generate knowledge, and support local SDG and climate policy processes.

Associate Professor Susanne Sweet of the Stockholm School of Economics presented the sectoral aspects of SDG interlinkages in the textile sector. She discussed the connection between global

apparel consumption and its dependence on production supply chains in low-income countries where over 80 per cent of environmental impact occurs. Besides the environmental impact, apparel manufacturing also affects sustainable development and includes many social issues related to poor working conditions and below living wages etc, and studies have shown that the informal sector in textile production could be as large as 80 per cent. Along with the growth of fast-fashion consumption, apparel production with its high dependence on low-income countries with coal-based energy sources for production releases pollution and chemicals into the water sources and environment. She argued that the growth of fast-fashion consumption contributes to the reason why the environmental impact of the industry is accelerating rather than improving. Sweet also discussed how the textile sector was disrupted by the negative COVID-19 impact.

Dr. Vivi Yulaswati, Deputy for Maritime Affairs and Natural Resources, Ministry of National Development Planning / National Development Agency (BAPPENAS) of the Republic of Indonesia talked about SDGs acceleration in Indonesia and explained how Indonesia is designing and implementing integrated strategies at the national and local levels. After pointing out the challenges of SDG implementation in Indonesia, she introduces the process of identifying the priority indicators at national and local levels. Then Indonesia's SDG acceleration strategies, regulations, plans and policies are briefly explained. Dr. Yulaswati emphasised inclusive collaboration in SDG implementation through multistakeholder partnerships. Innovative funding, SDG localisation and SDG monitoring and evaluation processes are also presented. She also notes that some specific issues such as food, energy and water nexus play a crucial role in Indonesia's long-term development plan. Addressing this nexus, she observed, requires integrated approaches that consider the efficient use of resources, sustainable agricultural practices, and the promotion of renewable energy sources.

Even photographs (3 photos):





