

# Accelerating the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in Africa (Pretoria, South Africa, 5-6 March 2020)

## Rationale

Many higher education institutions in Africa have been engaged in sustainable development activities as a whole and on teaching and research in particular. Teaching and research on sustainable development offers African universities a unique opportunity to explore new ideas, tackle new dimensions and open up new perspectives. In particular, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provides a unique opportunity for African universities to meet their social obligations as innovation-led institutions on the one hand, and to realise their social mission as agents for change on the other, addressing issues such as illiteracy, poverty, health and climate change. The SDGs also provide a basis upon which African universities can mainstream their teaching and research, providing a sound basis upon which the principles of sustainability as a whole, may be implemented. Making sustainability a reality does not only require knowledge creation. Rather, it requires an integrated thinking, in the context of which research and teaching on, for and about sustainable development, may lead to changes and to improvements in the way Africans see, perceive and treat their environment and their societies.

But despite the fact that teaching and research on the SDGs is important, and may deliver decision-making tools for future oriented action and for a sustainable society, there is at present a need to strengthen and accelerate the initiatives from African higher education institutions in this key area. It is against this background that the Symposium “**Accelerating the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in Africa**” is organised by the Inter-University Sustainable Development Research Programme, the World Sustainable Development Research and Training Centre, the Hamburg University of Applied Sciences (Germany) and the University of South Africa (Unisa), in cooperation with a number of institutions active in this field. It will involve educators and researchers in the field of sustainable development in the widest sense, from business and economics, to arts and fashion, administration, environment, languages and media studies.

The Symposium will focus on the means to integrate, promote or otherwise catalyse the implementation of sustainable development at higher education institutions, assisting them in their efforts to implement the SDGs, and will contribute to the further development of this central topic.

The Symposium is part of the “**Accelerating Sustainable Development Series**”, which consists of key events on sustainable development with a focus on the implementation of the SDGs.

## Aims

The aims of the Symposium “**Accelerating the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in Africa**” are as follows:

- i. to provide researchers at universities who are active and/or interested in sustainable development and specifically the SDGs, with an opportunity to display and present their work (i.e. innovation studies, empirical work, activities, case studies and research projects);
- ii. to foster the exchange of information, ideas and experiences acquired in the implementation of sustainability research, especially successful initiatives and good practice;
- iii. to discuss methodological approaches and projects that aim to offer a better understanding of how sustainability can be considered and mainstreamed into teaching, research and outreach at universities;
- iv. to network with participants and provide a platform for them to explore possibilities of future cooperation.

Last but not least, a further aim of the event will be to document and disseminate the wealth of global experiences on implementing sustainability research available today. To this purpose, papers which have been accepted, presented and discussed at the event may be submitted for consideration in a **special issue** of the **International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education**, published by Emerald Publishing (UK), that is presently the world’s leading journal on sustainability within the context of higher education:  
<http://www.emeraldgrouppublishing.com/ijshe.htm>.

## Profile of participants

Delegates attending the Symposium “**Accelerating the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in Africa**” will come from a cross-sectoral range of areas. These are:

- i. research and teaching staff
- ii. student groups;
- iii. members of university administrations;
- iv. project officers and consultants;
- v. other people interested in the field.

It is believed that this wide range of participants will help to outline the need for integrated approaches towards sustainable development research and, hence contribute towards advancing this field of work even further.

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## Structure of the event

The Symposium will be organised around two main threads:

### Thread 1: the posters

Participating universities will be able to put-up posters describing their works and research projects, and to distribute the relevant information to the participants. The posters will allow close, one-to-one contacts between the participants and the exhibitors.

### Thread 2: the presentations

A set of presentations, divided into two main sections will be organised, dealing with issues of strategic value in reviewing the state of the art of sustainability research today. These are:

**Session 1:** Research on sustainability principles, theory, policy and practice

**Session 2:** Research on the role of higher education in the implementation of sustainable development

The papers will be classified in one of two of the above sessions. Innovation and links to the SDGs are cross-cutting issues of all the sessions.

## Terms and conditions of participation

The events organised as part of the “**Accelerating Sustainable Development Series**” are high level events, that rely on active participation of interested colleagues and vibrant discussions. Therefore, it is important to note that the submission of papers to the event and their subsequent consideration for the **International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education** are subject to the following condition: only papers from researchers who have registered, attended, presented and discussed their work at the event will be considered for the special issue. Submissions that do not meet this criteria, will not be considered.

## Schedule and Location

The Symposium will be held in Pretoria, South Africa and will be hosted by the University of South Africa (Unisa), a mega open, distance and e-learning institution. Founded in 1873 as the University of the Cape of Good Hope, the institution became the first public university in the world to teach exclusively by means of distance education in 1946. Unisa currently has more than 400 000 students and consists of eight colleges. Courses are offered in

the humanities, business and management, law and criminal justice, agriculture and environmental sciences, and science, engineering and technology. Study choices range from short courses and certificate programmes to three- and four-year degrees and diplomas. Postgraduate studies are offered up to doctoral level.

The schedule is as follows:

5 <sup>th</sup> March 2020	6 <sup>th</sup> March 2020
<p><b>Morning:</b> Arrival and set-up of displays</p> <p><b>Plenary Session</b> Exhibition and visit to displays</p> <p><b>Parallel Sessions</b></p> <p><b>Afternoon:</b> <b>Parallel Sessions</b> Exhibition and visit to displays</p> <p><b>Evening:</b> Reception</p>	<p><b>Morning:</b> <b>Plenary Session</b></p> <p><b>Parallel Sessions</b> Exhibition and visit to displays</p> <p><b>Afternoon:</b> <b>Parallel Sessions</b> Exhibition and visit to displays</p> <p><b>Plenary Session</b></p> <p><b>17:00 – Close</b></p>

In order to ensure an efficient use of the time, delegates are kindly asked to organise their travel in a way that allows them to travel back on or after 17:00 on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2020, so they can take fully part on the event.

## Deadlines

Deadline for submission of abstracts: 17th November 2019

Deadline for submission of papers: 30th January 2020

Deadline for registrations: 30th January 2020

Since the special issue of IJSHE will be produced soon after the Symposium, the deadlines need to be followed.

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## Fees and Charges

A fee of Euro 200 will be charged to delegates to offset the preparation costs. The reduced fee for students is Euro 100. The fees includes **free lunches and coffee breaks on 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> March 2020 and an evening reception**. Registrations fees may be refunded (with a 50% processing charge) in case of cancellations until 30 days before the event. After that, no refunds are possible.

## Registration and Conditions of Participation

Registrations are now open and are possible until 30<sup>th</sup> January 2020. Regrettably, registrations after the deadline may not be possible. Since the space for displays and the time for presentations is limited, **delegates are advised to submit their abstracts and register as soon as possible**. The organisers will notify any interested delegate or organisation in case there are any limitations with time for presentations, or in respect of space for displays. Registered delegates will then receive further details on the payment of the fees and updated information on the preparations for the event. The decision as to which papers will be accepted for presentation will be taken by the Chairperson, following consultation with the organising committee.

## Organisers

- University of South Africa (Unisa)
- Hamburg University of Applied Sciences, Germany
- Inter-University Sustainable Development Research Programme
- World Sustainable Development Research and Transfer Centre

## Chairpersons

- Prof. Walter Leal (BSc, PhD, DSc, DPhil, DL, DLitt), Hamburg University of Applied Sciences (Germany) and Chair of Environment and Technology, Manchester Metropolitan University (UK)
- Prof, Rudi Pretorius (PhD), Department of Geography, Unisa

## Organising Committee

Prof. Melanie Nicolau, School of Human and Ecological Sustainability, Unisa  
Dr. Muchaiteyi Togo, Department of Environmental Sciences, Unisa  
Mr. Graeme Wilson, Department of Environmental Sciences, Unisa  
Ms. Hellene Steenkamp, Department of Geography

## Contacts

**All questions related to the logistical details in South Africa should be sent to:**

Ms. Hellene Steenkamp  
Email: [steenhe@unisa.ac.za](mailto:steenhe@unisa.ac.za)

**All questions related to scientific inputs and strategic partnerships, as well as the special issue at IJSHE should be sent to:**

Professor Walter Leal (BSc, PhD, DSc, DPhil, DEd, DLitt, FSB, FRGS, FLS)  
E-mail: [iusdrp@ls.haw-hamburg.de](mailto:iusdrp@ls.haw-hamburg.de)

**All questions related to registrations and abstracts should be sent to:**

Dr. Mihaela Sima, Inter-University Sustainable Development Research Programme:  
[simamik@yahoo.com](mailto:simamik@yahoo.com).

## How to submit an abstract

An abstract should be up to 200 words, it should describe the rationale and aims of the paper, and some of its results. General descriptions of broad contexts should be avoided. The full contact details about the author(s) need to be provided. Abstracts should be written in the third person and not in the first or second one (e.g. I, me, or my paper). Please see below a sample abstract. Authors whose abstracts have been accepted, will receive further details about how to submit their full papers, and further logistical information.

### **SAMPLE ABSTRACT –PLEASE MAKE SURE ALL CONTACT DETAILS ARE PROVIDED WHEN YOU SUBMIT YOUR ABSTRACT. PLEASE SEND YOUR ABSTRACT TO:**

Dr. Mihaela Sima, Inter-University Sustainable Development Research Programme  
E-mail: [simamik@yahoo.com](mailto:simamik@yahoo.com)

### **Campus Greening: Using Living Labs to Foster Education for Sustainable Development in Higher Education Institutions**

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#### **Abstract**

The use of university campuses as learning and research areas is not as widely made as it should. Part of the problem lies on the fact that facilities are often not well structured or organized, which makes it difficult to use them for teaching, learning, or for research purposes. This paper presents a the results of a study aimed at identifying the extent to which higher education institutions are using their campuses for teaching, learning and for research, and at describing the various modalities of use. A special attention is paid to the role that campuses can play as “living labs, where the integration of sustainability issues in higher education can be demonstrated. Finally, some concrete steps which may be undertaken in order to allow universities to better take advantage of university campuses as learning and research areas, are outlined. This paper will be useful to anyone interested on using university campuses as bridges between the theory and practice of sustainability in higher education institutions, across the world.