International Association of Universities (IAU) and the priority HESD - Higher Education and Research for Sustainable Development

The International Association of Universities has fostered sustainable development for more than 25 years. In 1993, the Association adopted the IAU Kyoto Declaration on Sustainable Development, urging the higher education leaders and the HE community to engage with sustainable development. In 2014, the IAU adopted the Iquitos Statement on HESD, urging to connect knowledge and research systems from around the world. This latest Statement was one of the many IAU contributions to the UNESCO Decade on Education for Sustainable Development (UN-DESD, 2004 – 2015) and used by UNESCO for the Aichi Nagoya End of Decade Conference.

IAU was one of the key partners of the UNESCO Global Action Programme on education for sustainable development (GAP-ESD), and lead partner network for the steering committee of Partner Network 2 and now in the UNESCO ESD for 2030 programme. Since November 2019, IAU sits on the advisory board for the UNESCO Futures of Education Initiative and contributes to the UNESCO Global Education Coalition by monitoring and assisting higher education around the world to continue to provide quality education and research and to pursue the much needed community engagement activities during the time of the COVID-19 pandemic.

With the adoption of the UN Resolution “Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” in September 2015, the international community strongly confirmed the expanded scope of sustainable development to include social, economic and cultural sustainability. IAU shares the concerns and fosters, in particular, the importance of cultural diversity, the need for strong connection between research cultures from around the world and equal access to quality education and research opportunities.

Over the last two years, IAU developed a new richly diverse and intercultural project engaging Higher Education into the UN Agenda 2030 process, by fostering attention and work specifically on the SDGs: The IAU Global Cluster on Higher Education and Research for Sustainable Development (HESD). The Cluster brings together Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) from around the world and on equal terms, in order to jointly address the SDGs and enhance partnerships.
The IAU Global Cluster on HESD

The Cluster consists of 16 lead universities, each engaging more specifically on one of the SDGs, while connecting to the other SDGs as well. IAU leads the work on SDG 17 by fostering global HE partnerships. The lead universities, from all world regions, collaborate with 2 to 8 ‘satellite’ institutions, engage with a particular SDG and initiate concrete projects, also across all goals. Furthermore, the Cluster promotes the role and potential that HEIs globally have in order to achieve the SDGs and Agenda 2030. Universities engage with the SDGs in multiple ways, through teaching, research, leadership, and campus operations. The Cluster facilitates collaboration and a whole institution approach to the SDGs.

Within the overarching goal of “Accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” (UN SDG Summit 2019), the Cluster has two concrete objectives:

First, to serve as a resource and networking hub both for institutions already engaged in SD and moving more strongly to help address the SDGs locally and seeking innovative partnerships around the world, and for those starting to engage with the SDGs at their institutions. They turn to the Cluster for collaboration and guidance on best practices to advance on the SDGs in local, national and international contexts.

Second, the IAU Global Cluster serves as a global voice for higher education and sustainable development. IAU advocates for HESD at the UN, in particular at the High-Level-Political Forum, at IAU global Conferences, at Member workshops and other initiatives developed at the local and the regional level.

Current Activities

Since the IAU international Cluster workshop hosted at UNESCO in 2019, thanks in part to support received through the UNESCO Participation Programme (2018-19), the IAU Global Cluster on HESD and its Subclusters have been very active and developed joint projects in teaching, research, publications, events and more. The IAU HESD communication channels, mainly the IAU main website, the IAU Global HESD Portal, Twitter account and Blog have gained increased attention within but also beyond the Higher Education sector.

IAU takes part in the UN High Level Political Forum debates. In July 2019, IAU brought 18 Cluster lead representatives to the HLPF 2019 in New York and advocated strongly and successfully for better recognition of the role of HE in the UN 2030 Agenda implementation processes. The participation in the UN Forum reinforced the visibility of the IAU Global HESD Cluster and reaffirmed the position of higher education as a key stakeholder to reach the goals set in the UN Agenda 2030. At the IAU 2019 International Conference in Mexico, the Cluster work was presented, and the UN and UNESCO work highlighted.

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the IAU Global Cluster activities are continued thanks to a swift move to online debates and collaboration. The Cluster Leads joined in a Global Cluster Leads’ Call in late March 2020 to discuss projects, challenges and opportunities to reaffirm the importance of the SDGs and SD in its full definition, especially in the current context. The Cluster is about to finalise a report on its activities, including for presentation at HLPF 2020 (on sight and if not online). Furthermore, the IAU develops a comprehensive communication strategy for the project.

IAU Global HESD Cluster Lead Institutions

List with Satellites (universities in Subclusters) can be found here: https://www.iau-hesd.net/en/contenu/4648-iau-global-cluster-hesd.html
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SDG</th>
<th>Lead University</th>
<th>Country</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SDG 1: No Poverty</td>
<td>Ghana University</td>
<td>Ghana</td>
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<tr>
<td>SDG 2: Zero Hunger</td>
<td>Antonio Nariño University</td>
<td>Colombia</td>
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<td>SDG 3: Good Health and Well-Being</td>
<td>UOC</td>
<td>Spain</td>
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<td>SDG 4: Quality Education</td>
<td>York University</td>
<td>Canada</td>
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<td>SDG 5: Gender Equality</td>
<td>University of Bologna</td>
<td>Italy</td>
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<td>SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation</td>
<td>University of Tehran</td>
<td>Iran</td>
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<td>SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy</td>
<td>Assam Don Bosco University</td>
<td>India</td>
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<td>SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth</td>
<td>Gothenburg University</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
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<td>SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure</td>
<td>Beirut Arab University</td>
<td>Lebanon</td>
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<td>SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities</td>
<td>University of Tsukuba</td>
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<td>SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities</td>
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<td>SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production</td>
<td>University of Regina</td>
<td>Canada</td>
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<td>SDG 13: Climate Action</td>
<td>University of the West Indies</td>
<td>Jamaica</td>
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<tr>
<td>SDG 14: Life Below Water</td>
<td>University of Bergen</td>
<td>Norway</td>
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</table>
**SDG 15:** Life on Land  
University of Costa Rica  
Costa Rica

**SDG 16:** Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions  
University of Nairobi  
Kenya

**SDG 17:** Partnerships for the Goals  
International Association of Universities (IAU)  
Based in France but global in scope

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**THE IAU GLOBAL HESD CLUSTER LEADERS AND THEIR SATELLITES (as of May 2020)**

1. **University of Ghana**  
   - University of Agriculture and Technology, Japan  
   - McMaster University, Canada
   - Universidade Federal do Paraná, Brazil

2. **Antonio Narro University, Colombia**  
   - Universidad de los Andes, Colombia
   - Western Sydney University, Australia
   - Catholic University, Indonesia

3. **The Open University of Catalonia**  
   - Karlstad University, Sweden
   - Västerås University, Sweden
   - University of the West Indies

4. **York University, Canada**  
   - Universidad Nacional de Cuba
   - University of Pretoria, South Africa
   - International Islamic University Malaysia, Malaysia

5. **University of Bologna, Italy**  
   - Assam Don Bosco University, India
   - Calcutta National University of India
   - Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, Malaysia

6. **Siam University, Thailand**  
   - Thammasat University, Thailand
   - Dhaipur University, Bangladesh
   - Universitas Mercu Buana, Indonesia

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**Contact:**  
Isabel Toman, Programme Officer, Sustainable Development,  
[Email](mailto:i.toman@iau-aiu.net)

**International Association of Universities (IAU)**  
UNESCO House,  
1, rue Miollis, 75732, Paris cedex 15, France  
[Website](http://www.iau-aiu.net)  
[Website](http://www.iau-hesd.net)  
[Twitter](https://twitter.com/iau_aiu)  
[Twitter](https://twitter.com/iau_hesd)