

Overview

During the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) convened by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in July 2019, which focused on a review of 6 SDGs including SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 13 (Climate Action) and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals), there was an urgent call for accelerated action and renewed commitment if the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is to be achieved. More substantively, the unique role played by universities in producing research, data and innovative development solutions to tackle the interconnected social, economic and environmental challenges faced by societies across the globe, was underscored.

Indeed, universities as the drivers of knowledge, skills and innovation, are pivotal to nurturing the human and social capital upon which the success of the 2030 development agenda rests. To achieve this, partnerships with purpose and action need to be activated and sustained. The Global University Consortium on SDG 13 (GUC) has answered that call.

Within the framework of the International Association of Universities' (IAU) Global Cluster on Higher Education and Research for Sustainable Development, The University of the West Indies (UWI) was nominated in 2019 to lead the Global University Consortium on SDG-13 and has brought together 10 universities from across the globe, committed to deepening the role of academia in achieving the 2030 development agenda. Focused on Climate Action and its interlinkages across the SDGs, the GUC in its first year has worked steadfastly to advance knowledge exchange, research collaborations, advocacy, South-South and triangular cooperation.

Current GUC Members include:

	Caribbean	The University of the West Indies (Convenor)
Africa	Ghana	University of Ghana
	South Africa	University of Witwatersrand
Asia & the Pacific	India	TERI School of Advanced Studies
	South Pacific	The University of the South Pacific
Europe	Norway	University of Bergen
	U.K.	University of Bristol
Latin America & the Caribbean	Aruba	University of Aruba
	Colombia	Universidad de los Andes
North America	Canada	University of Waterloo
	U.S.A	State University of New York

For 2019-2020, outputs of the GUC have included:

- ❖ Confirmation of member universities across various geographic regions;
- ❖ Launching an online platform to facilitate collaboration, knowledge brokerage and public awareness around SDG 13;
- ❖ HLPF: A Symposium on Research and Innovation for Climate Action during the HLPF (July 2019) in collaboration with UNDESA;
- ❖ UNGA: A Symposium on Global Partnerships for Climate Action at the SUNY-UWI Center for Leadership and Sustainable Development in Manhattan, NY (September 2019) to coincide with the UNGA and Climate Action Summit;
- ❖ International Seminar on Climate Action organized in collaboration with the UWI Institute for Sustainable Development, the SDSN Caribbean Chapter, the SDG Center of Universidad de los Andes

(Colombia) and the Inter-American Development Bank was held on March 4 & 5, 2020 at the UWI Mona Campus, Jamaica.

This Seminar brought together academics and development partners from across Latin America and the Caribbean and focused on the following thematic areas: (1) Renewable Energy; (2) Climate Services; (3) Adaptation and Resilience; (4) Hurricanes and Development in the Caribbean.

- ❖ Regional LAC workshop on the implementation of the findings of the UN Global Sustainability Report (in collaboration with UNDESA and GIZ (March 17-19, 2020) – has been postponed due to COVID-19.
- ❖ Building a solid foundation for joint academic programmes, online courses, faculty exchange and student mobility to deepen learning and the cross fertilization of ideas to tackle the global challenge of climate change.

Through its virtual meetings and inter-institutional discussions, GUC members have begun shaping dynamic partnership frameworks that will drive the delivery of the Consortium's outputs in 2020 and beyond. Looking ahead to 2021, the GUC will continue to build momentum with a view to maximising synergies across Consortium member institutions. Discussions are underway to explore offering joint online courses and mobilize faculty and students from at least 4 Consortium member institutions to engage in ocean science research by participating in a Sustainability Voyage led by the University of Bergen in 2021. However, there is an urgent need to secure funding that would provide dedicated support for the ongoing coordination, knowledge exchange and sustainability of the Global University Consortium on SDG 13.

Motivated by the call for accelerated action to help countries achieve the SDGs by 2030, the GUC is committed to working with universities, multilateral development agencies, civil society as well as the public and private sector to strengthen the role of academia as we execute the global 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development together.

For more info, visit www.universities4climateaction.org

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