



REPORT

2021-22

Sustainable Development Transformation Forum

Building back better from the COVID-19 pandemic and fostering the implementation of the 2030 Agenda

28 February – 3 March 2022

8:00pm (Seoul)

12:00pm (Geneva)

6:00am (New York)

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United Nations

Department of
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Incheon Communiqué

We, the participants of the 2021-22 Sustainable Development Transformation Forum issue this Communiqué to share our policy-relevant insights with the international community, national and subnational governments, and other stakeholders. The Forum was co-organised by the United Nations Office for Sustainable Development in Incheon, Republic of Korea, with the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF). It met virtually world-wide during the week of 28 February to 3 March 2022 to discuss the topic of “Building back better from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”. With the aim of contributing to the discussions preceding the High-level Political Forum in July 2022, the Forum reflected on progress toward sustainable development goals (SDGs) #4 on Quality Education, #5 on Gender Equality, #14 on Life Below Water, #15 on Life on Land, and #17 on Partnerships.


Relentless Global Crises. The halfway point to 2030 has seen a convergence of global crises that is impeding progress toward the 17 global sustainable development goals (SDGs). The Forum was poised to view the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic only to be confronted with a new threat to global peace and with that, the Forum’s acknowledgement that peace is a fundamental precondition for achieving the SDGs. The loss of life and hardship caused by the COVID-19 pandemic weighed heavily on the Forum, especially the impact on livelihoods combined with the higher cost of basic necessities which exacerbated the vulnerability of marginalized members of society including youth, women and girls, Indigenous Peoples, the poor, and among the billions of people who depend directly on the land and ocean for their survival.

SDG 4: Quality Education. Front line educators had to adapt on the fly during the COVID-19 pandemic to learn new all-encompassing skills and topics, revealing the importance of an agile education ecosystem led by champions at the staff level. The digital world created unique opportunities for learning during the pandemic; however, at least 463 million school children could not access remote learning, revealing the need to bridge the alarming digital divide. The digital world gave educators and students access to the best minds in the world. At the same time, the activities of the worst minds highlighted the need for oversight to guard against fake news, false information, and loss of local or traditional knowledge and skills.

Discussions at the forum also illuminated the importance of partnerships and coalitions to help ensure continuity of implementation of programmes in the face of political instability. Building resilience to shocks was considered an imperative, through such means as leveraging social capital and citizen-based science and delivering land-based education.

The relevance of the mantra, ‘we manage what we measure’, was stressed at the Forum. UNESCO’s Beyond Commitments report put forth an assessment framework including equity and inclusion to see beyond averages, creating content fit for sustainable development, advancing cross-sectoral collaboration and quality of learning to see beyond access, and consideration of lifelong learning and collaboration. The ASEF’s ARC8 Outlook Report and National Equity Policy Report outlined risks and opportunities to consider when advancing inclusion in higher education, and aligned with UNESCO’s framework, emphasized the importance of addressing the success of quality education to see beyond access, and engaging with civil society organizations as real partners in advancing equity.





SDG 5: Gender Equality. Evidence from the 2022 SDG Gender Index of Equal Measures 2030 and other indicators shows that progress on gender equality was off track even before the COVID-19 pandemic, stressing the need to “bend-the-curve” in relation to all targets. A trio of interlocking crises involving livelihoods, care, and the environment motivated UN Women’s Feminist Plan for Sustainability and Social Justice which calls for progress in key areas such as rebuilding local and global food systems with women food producers and vendors, investing in the care economy and in gender-responsive policies to mitigate and adapt to climate change. This approach also highlighted the crucial role of local communities with whom governments should seek to create partnership to realize progress in these key areas.


The COVID-19 pandemic amplified existing barriers and the uneven playing field that women and girls experience, necessitating the need for building forward better by transforming underlying structural barriers to catalyse a tipping point towards equality. Transformative strategies discussed for building forward better on gender equality included digital and educational behaviour change communication, feminist policies and budgets for equality in land tenure and care infrastructure, changing gender-blind data systems, transforming financial services to make banks more woman-able, and engaging men and boys as co-agents of change to spark ownership of shifting barriers to equality.

Forum discussions noted that as we strive for a more inclusive and sustainable future in the context of urban planning, it is critical that we understand the benefits and limitations to date of intersectionality in our work (i.e., race, caste, age, gender, etc.) so that we don't disregard the challenges of individuals who belong to multiple marginalized groups. In the context of global business, currently less than 1% of spending by large corporations and government goes toward women-owned businesses, highlighting a practical leverage point in promoting women entrepreneurs in procurement supply chains.

SDG 14: Life Below Water. Forum participants were reminded that over 80% of global trade is carried by the sea and that 12 million tonnes of plastic waste enter the oceans annually. Plastics are omnipresent in our air, water, soil and food, from the highest mountain tops to the deepest ocean trenches. Transformative change was considered an urgent need, to cut down our plastic consumption and production habits. Encouragingly, a chat message during the Forum delivered the news that the United Nations Environment Assembly had just passed its resolution to address plastic pollution.

There were other reasons for participants of the forum to feel optimistic about the future. Discussion around the Blue Economy highlighted steps for transformation including accurate valuation of oceanic resources, integrating ocean-based assets in national and local strategies, and smart fiscal initiatives. The Republic of Seychelles, an archipelago of 115 islands in the Indian Ocean, was a case in point, where its Marine Spatial Plan provides an integrated, multi-sectoral approach to address climate change adaptation, marine biodiversity protection, and support to the Blue Economy. The Blue Economy in The Seychelles enables citizens to earn a living, such as through emerging sectors like aquaculture, and all the while, paying attention to the preservation of the sea itself, through such initiatives as beach clean-ups where citizens are encouraged to not only clean up after themselves, but to also pick up at least five pieces of litter left by others. As well, the Northwest Pacific Action Plan administered by the United Nations Environment Programme, continues to support integrated coastal and river-basin management and assessment of the marine and coastal environment.

With 2022 being the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture, the critical role of this sector in promoting decent jobs and women entrepreneurs was also discussed. Importantly, macro-level



and bottom-up priorities need to be addressed to support women's change journeys, including stopping harmful fisheries subsidies, curbing illegal fishing, and investing in people and fair institutions, as well as sustainable production policies that promote fish for food and not for feed.

SDG 15: Life on Land. Food and food waste was a common theme across much of the discussion related to progress on SDG 15. As cited from the UN Environment Programme's Global Environment Outlook Geo-6 Healthy Planet, Healthy People, growing population will require 50% more food production this century while at the same time, land resources are diminishing. It was noted that globally, one-third of edible food is wasted and 77% of agriculture land is used for meat protein production, with many sources having significantly higher environmental impact compared to plant-based protein. Such evidence points to the reduction of food waste and dietary changes (shift away from Western-style diets, i.e., from animal-based to plant-based proteins) as two primary leverage points for transformation.

Emerging practices of Indigenous and local communities, among others, such as regenerative agriculture and agroecology, offer practical ways to achieve a circular economy to accelerate progress toward SDG 15. The Forum acknowledged that "we are what we eat" and highlighted the transformative potential of revisiting Indigenous Peoples' traditional food-systems, which are supporting collective well-being through a strong connection with the land and the environment to improve 21st century agricultural practices and ensure healthy land and healthy people. Further building on Indigenous traditional practices, nature-based solutions have (re)emerged as a practical and cost-effective means for delivering multiple benefits to climate and nature goals whilst promoting health and well-being.

At a specific policy level, the European Union's Green Deal was designed to deliver a new growth strategy, bringing together the environment, productivity, stability, and fairness; however, challenges exist in such areas as non-implementation of existing nature legislation, incoherence among agriculture and fisheries policies, and insufficient funding for specific conservation measures. The Forum also discussed challenges relating to protecting forest ecosystems. The brief reprieve from illegal logging pressure experienced in some parts of Africa during the COVID-19 pandemic is anticipated to give way to a gradual surge in global demand for precious logs, necessitating an immediate need for control measures including policing illegal timber movements, transboundary collaboration, and increased donor investment and national budget allocations for forest management. Sustainable solutions will also need to build partnerships with Indigenous and local communities, who have suffered financially during the pandemic, not only to avoid overexploitation of forest products, but also to realize long-term forest management through devolution and decentralization.

Incheon, Republic of Korea
28 February to 3 March 2022



Introduction

Mr. Jean D’Aragon, Senior Sustainable Development Expert with the United Nations Office for Sustainable Development, introduced the general objective of the 2022 Sustainable Development Transition Forum as closely linked to the High-level Political Forum (HLPF) which will take place in New York in July 2022. The 2021-22 Forum offers a platform for capacity building, policy dialogue, and knowledge sharing for building back better from the COVID-19 pandemic and advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. More specifically, this year’s Forum aims to achieve a better understanding of successes, challenges, lessons learned, and good practices related to the implementation of the SDGs 4 (Quality Education), 5 (Gender Equality), 14 (Life Below Water), 15 (Life on Land), and 17 (Partnerships for the Goals). It will also look at some of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the selected SDGs and across all the SDGs and seeks to identify potential responses and solutions that can also advance the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.


In previous years, the Sustainable Development Transformation Forum (SDTF) convened participants from all over the world to share their knowledge and experience over 3-4 days in Incheon City, South Korea. Unfortunately, the forum could not be held in person in 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and for the same reason this year again. Instead, two-and-a-half hour daily online sessions were convened over 4 days from 28 February through 3 March 2022. We strongly believe that the topics selected this year, the presentations of the excellent speakers, and the discussions will help fulfil the general objective and specific goals we set for this edition of the forum.

The 2021-22 Forum featured distinguished opening speakers and presenters of diverse backgrounds from across the world who are involved, in one way or another, in building back better from the pandemic and fostering the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Opening of the 2021-22 Sustainable Development Transformation Forum

In a video address, **Mr. Liu Zhenmin**, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, described how the forum is an opportunity to start discussing the state of the progress on the 5 SDGs that will be in focus at the forthcoming HLPF in July. The social, economic, and environmental impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs make the challenges we face greater than ever. Guided by the focus of the 2022 HLPF and drawing from the scientific assessments in the 2019 Global Sustainable Development Report, this forum considers opportunities for SDG achievement through the lens of governance, capacity building and education, policy and institutional coherence, and individual and collective behaviours.

Mr. Zhenmin emphasized that we cannot lose sight of our long-term commitments to building a more sustainable and equitable future. The pandemic has reversed progress toward the SDGs and has exacerbated the depths and severity of poverty and inequalities. Yet we have an opportunity to reimagine a better future and a fairer, more equal world through our response. The 2030 Agenda remains the best framework for doing that. To build back better, the UN is working to strengthen multilateralism and build



solidarity around sustainable development. For example, UNDESA works to support Member States in their efforts to accelerate the implementation of the SDGs and recovery from COVID-19. A few important areas include addressing poverty and inequality to leave no one behind; ensuring sustainable financing; continued improvement of data accessibility and application; and protecting our planet through fostering synergies between SDGs and climate action.

On behalf of the Republic of Korea, **H.E. Ms. Han Jeong Ae**, Minister of Environment, welcomed forum participants by video address noting that in order to build back better and more sustainably from COVID-19, the international community has raised the banner of carbon neutrality, stressing the importance of nature-based solutions (NBS), and envisioning a planet free from plastic and other pollutants. In this process, the world is making tremendous efforts to ensure fair access to education and gender equality for all.


The Republic of Korea, for its part, pledges its unwavering commitment to its 2030 greenhouse gas emissions reduction target, its action plans for a Korean circular economy, NBS implementation strategies, and to its various promises on carbon neutrality, circular economy, and protecting nature. Korea will also contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in peaceful cooperation and solidarity with the global community. H.E. Ms. Han Jeong Ae, conveyed her hope that the Forum serves as a meaningful opportunity to share best practices and collective wisdom, and that dialogues like these are successful in enabling us to take a step closer to a future that we all dream of.

Mr. Chun Kyoo Park, Head of Office for the UNOSD, noted how this is the second time this forum is convened online, a reminder that we are far from free of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is very unfortunate that we have entered the decisive decade under such dark clouds; the pandemic has disrupted much of the hard work done by the international community to fulfil the 2030 Agenda. Progress toward each of the Sustainable Development Goals has been slowed down or set back.

The challenges are enormous – because of the pandemic and other factors, we are behind on many of the SDG targets, and so we have to work harder to recover and build back. But let us remember that this is also an opportunity – COVID-19 gave us a small glimpse of what is possible. The world saw, briefly, the effects of less carbon-based economic activities and mobility on air quality. Digital transformation has accelerated. The global race to develop vaccines demonstrated to the world the importance of science, innovation, and public-private partnerships. Educators are breaking with the past to go beyond formal assessments and introduce new ways of learning.

This year, 2022, is an important one for a couple of reasons. It is the halfway point to 2030, since the SDGs were set up and the Climate Agreement adopted in 2015. We also mark the 50th anniversary of the United Nations Conference on Human Environment, which was held in Stockholm in 1972 - the world's first UN conference on sustainable development. We have come a long way from 50 years ago – we understand better the benefits of multilateralism and the role of global solutions to global challenges and interlinkages. Just as COVID-19 is a universal and complex challenge, the 2030 Agenda is also universal, integrated, and indivisible. It is this kind of systems approach that we need to find effective solutions to meet the Goals, including those for education, gender equality, life below water and on land, and global partnership.





Mr. Park conveyed his hope that the messages and findings this Forum shares with the world through the Incheon Communiqué, will be of service to all who are working for sustainable development today and tomorrow.

H.E. Ambassador Mr. Morikawa Toru, Executive Director of the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF), acknowledged the current global context surrounding the Forum by emphasizing that peace is the precondition for implementing all the SDGs; peace can only be realized through the pursuit of dialogue and violence is not the solution.

In relation to SDG 4, in July 2020 UNESCO invited higher education stakeholders to put the barriers of inclusion and equity on their recovery roadmap. ASEF responded to this call by conducting research, organizing conferences and capacity building workshops on diversity, equity, and inclusion in Asia and Europe. The outcome of these efforts was crystallized as ARC8 Outlook Report which analysed how universities and students can foster inclusion and diversity in the final decade for Agenda 2030.

On SDG 5, in the response to the pandemic, women have been playing a central role as frontliners and care providers, among others. Despite that, they suffered a disproportionate share of the economic repercussions through job insecurity. Crucially, women's rights and priorities are often not explicitly addressed in response and recovery measures. This is due to the chronic underrepresentation of women in leadership positions in all levels, both in private and public sectors.

On SDG 14, the pandemic has also led to an increased demand for single-use products, from disposable masks to takeaway boxes, undermining global efforts to tackle such wastes. In ASEF's research published last year, we found that businesses, especially SMEs have a crucial role in taking forward innovations to reduce single-use plastic. However, countries lack enabling policies which would support such businesses to scale up.

On SDG 15, while the world is recovering from the impact of COVID-19, parts of the world were additionally bombarded with bouts of extreme weather conditions from droughts and fires to severe flooding. While some of these were triggered naturally, it is undeniable that human actions ranging from deforestation to irresponsible agricultural practices play a huge role.

On SDG 17, it is important to acknowledge that the 2030 Agenda and its 17 goals deal with highly complex and interconnected issues. The pandemic highlighted the need for global cooperation, collaboration, and equally important: empathy. To enhance the dialogue among all the stakeholders with empathy is more important than ever to tackle such deep complexity; only then will we be closer to making the pledge "leave no one behind" a reality.

Quality Education – Advancing the 2030 Agenda through Education, Vocational Training and Capacity Building



Forum co-moderating and UNOSD consultant, **Mr. Darren Swanson**, introduced how [Sustainable Development Goal \(SDG\) 4](#) is to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. It comprises seven outcome targets and three means of implementation targets.

The United Nations describes overall progress on SDG 4 as “already slow and insufficient”, even before the COVID-19 pandemic, with the impact of the pandemic on schooling articulated as a “generational catastrophe.”

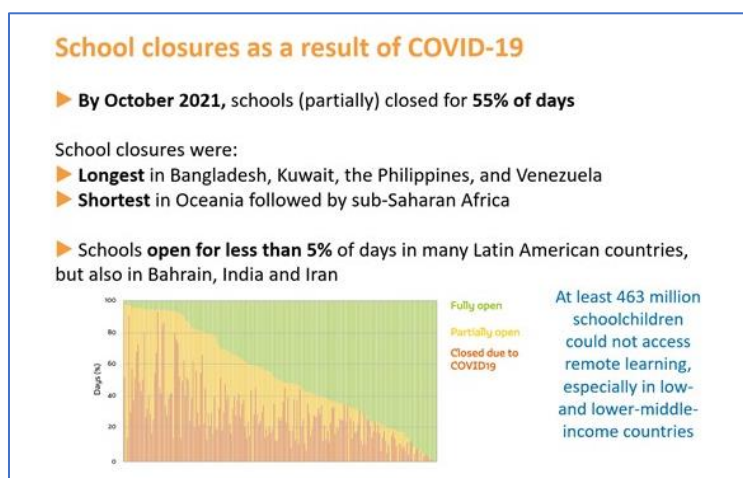
This session of the Forum was convened to take stock of current progress and to discuss ways for advancing the 2030 Agenda through education, vocational training, and capacity building.

Advancing the 2030 Agenda through education, vocational training and capacity building

Mr. Manos Antoninis, Director of the Global Education Monitoring Report at the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), provided a snapshot of progress on the headline indicators of SDG #4 on quality education. The Global Education Monitoring Report delivers an annual, independent review of education SDGs and strategy implementation as one mechanism for holding partners to account for progress. Among the statistics reported, the current minimum learning proficiency achieved is 51% for students at the end of primary education, with progress trending at a rate of 0.3 to 0.6 percentage points per year, on average. In the specific context of Africa, by the end of lower secondary education, only 1 in 4 students achieve minimum learning proficiency; and if you take into account the fact that a majority do not reach that stage, only 1 in 10 adolescents complete lower secondary school in time and achieve what is expected in terms of learning outcomes.

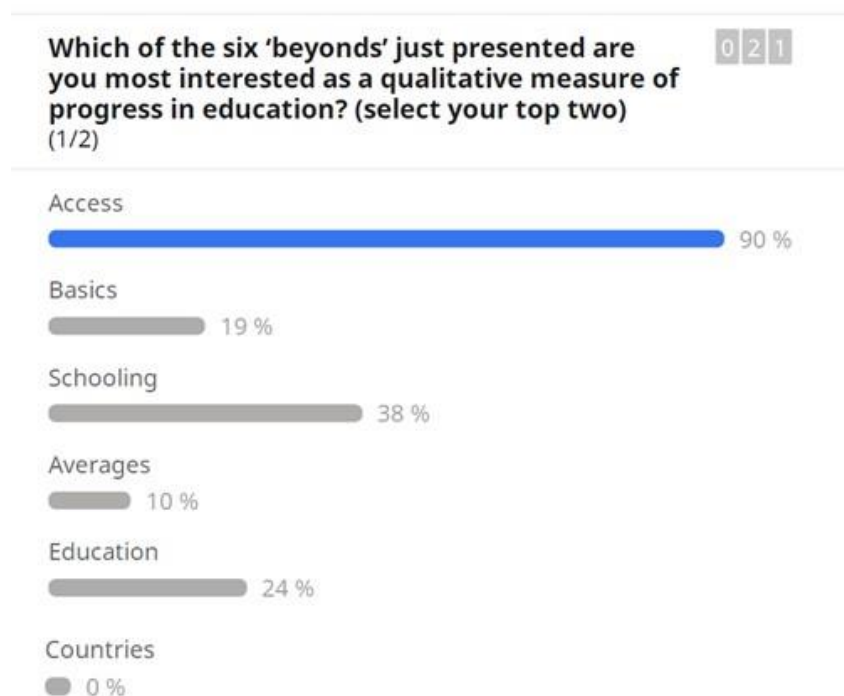
In the context of COVID-19, evidence shows that by October 2021, schools were closed partially for 55% of days during the pandemic, with at least 463 million schoolchildren not having any access to remote learning, especially in low-and lower-middle-income countries.

In 2019, UNESCO issued a special report to the High-level Political Forum entitled



[Beyond Commitments](#), featuring the different ways that countries have taken on the challenge of implementing SDG #4 in their policies. Based on the review, six areas of focus were recommended for aligning education plans and policies with international commitments and thereby, accelerating progress to 2030. This included **seeing: beyond averages – to focus on equity and inclusion; beyond basics – content fit for sustainable development; beyond education – to cross-sectoral collaboration; beyond access – to consider quality and learning; beyond schooling – to lifelong learning; and seeing beyond countries – to advance regional and global collaboration.**

In this regard, Forum participants were asked which of these six beyonds they would be most interested in as a qualitative measure of progress in education. 90% of respondents were most interested in beyond access, with 38% interested in measures focusing on beyond schooling.



Building forward: Effective, accountable and inclusive governance for quality education

Mr. Louis Meuleman delivered three recommendations for building forward through effective, accountable, and inclusive governance for quality education. Mr. Meuleman is currently Vice Chair of the United Nations Committee of Experts on Public Administration, a member of the Scientific Committee of the European Environment Agency and co-founder of the consultancy, Public Strategy for Sustainable Development.

In his first recommendation, it was suggested that **educations systems for the SDGs should prepare persons for street-level bureaucratic professions, such as teachers, police officers, and doctors and nurses, with skillsets that enable them to make decisions immediately and in new and undescribed situations, and with discretionary power.** Second, there exist [eleven principles for sustainable development](#) put forth by the UN Experts Committee on Public Administration, covering areas of

effectiveness, accountability and inclusiveness. In this context, Forum participants were asked which of these three should be the priority for building forward education in their home country. 59% of respondents described inclusiveness as their priority. Finally, digitalization is an important area of consideration as it can be a great accelerator of knowledge distribution, but also a distributor of fake news and underminer of democratic institutions. Therefore, **regulation of social media should be a priority to safeguard democracy and hold companies to account for their content.**

In your country, what do you think should be the first governance priority for building forward quality education?

0 2 2

Effectiveness



Accountability



Inclusiveness




Promise and perils of post-pandemic education

Mr. Oliver Liang, Head of the Public and Private Services Unit of the Sectoral Policies Department at the International Labour Organization (ILO), discussed the promise and perils of post-pandemic education, noting the relevance of the ILO and UNESCO international standards on the status of teachers and the 1997 UNESCO recommendations concerning higher education and teaching personnel. Mr. Liang reminded the Forum that the ILO was the only tripartite U.N. agency regrouping government, employer, and worker representatives discussing freely and openly to elaborate labour standards and policies. Among the areas covered by the standards is the right to freedom of association and collective bargaining, which is essentially about having a voice in determining their professional and working conditions. **Strategies for lifelong learning and skills will be essential for enabling individuals to adapt to rapidly changing needs and acquire skills and capabilities to be active members of the labour market, and in particular, digital skills and skills relevant to environmentally sustainable economies, including addressing the climate crisis.**

In addition, there will be increasing demands on teachers in the new education paradigm that is emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic. **Skills such as creativity, innovation, critical thinking and problem solving, communication, teamwork, will all be critical for the 21st century to address new issues like climate change, global citizenship, and even pandemic response.** On the latter, teachers during the pandemics were asked to take additional responsibilities beyond their areas of expertise and all of a sudden become responsible for dealing with many of the health responses arising in schools, necessitating new skills not only for addressing physical health, but also mental health, and sexual health among young people in the years ahead.





Digitalization leapfrogging occurred as a result of the pandemic, where countries that were once behind in such technology, invested massively in a short amount of time. But this has increased the workloads of teachers, as they suddenly had to not only prepare their lesson plans, but to deliver these in a new online format.

In his interaction with Forum participants, Mr. Liang posed two questions relating to how many teachers are there currently worldwide (including early childhood and tertiary) and how many more primary and secondary teachers will be needed to reach the 2030 education goals? The answers were startling. Presently there are approximately 94 million teachers worldwide, with an additionally 68 million teachers needed to achieve the education goals by 2030.

Inclusion as key to building back a better higher education system

In addressing the topic of inclusion as a key to building back a better higher education system, **Ms. Réka Tózsza**, leader of the Education Policy Programme at the Asia-Europe Foundation, and **Mr. Edizon Fermin**, Vice President for Academic Affairs of National Teachers College in The Philippines, co-delivered their presentation.

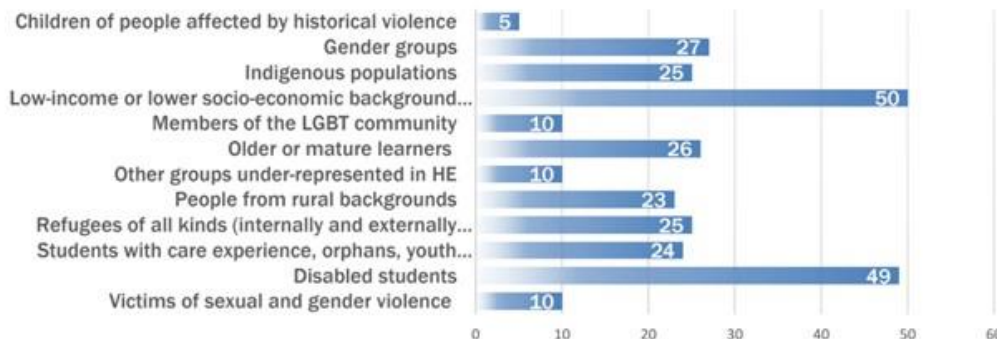
Based on an Asia-Europe Meeting report on [Equity Policies in Higher Education](#), three spotlight areas were outlined for how to build back a more inclusive higher education system, including: (1) focusing on student diversity; (2) equitable access and success in times of disruption; and (3) collection of data. In the context of student diversity, it was concluded that supporting equitable access without addressing issues of success and quality, is just not enough. **Policymakers should introduce performance agreements for equitable access and success and universities should recognize that students from minority and disadvantaged majority backgrounds are a distinct category and provide opportunities for students to shape the institutional approach to equitable access and success.** To support equitable access in times of disruption, **policymakers should support higher education systems to develop and build up resilience to manage future external disruptive forces.** And in the area of data collection, there exist major gaps in understanding equitable access and success in Asia and Europe; therefore, **policymakers should examine the potential for advancements in information technology, integration with national social surveys and incentivize HEIs to improve data collection.**

At the institutional level, in order to enable access to success during and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic, **attention must be paid to the social aspect of ESG practices** (environmental, social and governance). A way forward in this regard could consist of four actions, namely: (1) **Establishing structures for sustained conversations with learners, families, and school staff;** (2) **Promoting diversity and inclusion as institutional metrics of transformation and impact;** (3) **Institutionalizing a learning recovery plan mindful of changing employability requirements;** and (4) **Balancing monetary and non-monetary instruments for inclusion and wellness.**



Spotlight 1: Focus on Student Diversity

Most common equity target groups are lower income/socio-economic background students and students with disabilities



Pathways of change for education and resilience in Peru and Latin America

Ms. Alicia Quezada, Latin America Regional Director of the organization, Practical Action, based in Peru, described a number of resilience challenges in the rural and border areas of Latin America including floods and earthquakes in coastal and basin areas, landslides in the lower and middle basin areas, and deforestation and biodiversity loss in the Amazon region. Smallholder farmers are also struggling with climate change, food insecurity, and a lack of opportunities.

Various pathways of change for education and resilience were presented. **Clean energy** and clean cooking solutions are part of the strategy that allows access to new technologies and learning tools, together with bio-gardens to contribute to a balanced diet. A focus on **water and sanitation, including solar water heating**, will protect student's health. Furthermore, **educational apps programmed in Indigenous languages can enable students to have access to new, dynamic learning materials and improve their handling of new technologies**. And finally, **teachers and communities can be strengthened through ongoing training**.

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, Ms Quezada described how complex challenges are found in rural and remote areas where children have basically lost two years of education due to the pandemic and where schools are in bad condition. Around 30,000 schools in rural Peru already lacked water, electricity, and/or Internet access. To help address such challenges, Practical Action is collaborating with the Ministry of Education for the development of a comprehensive strategy for rural border areas. Specifically, **the pandemic opened a political window of opportunity to put on the agenda investment in rural communities as a priority because children didn't have any Internet access for interacting with their teachers**.



Improving people's lives, gender and resilience



Forum discussion page: SDG #4 on quality education

Participants were invited to share their perspectives on quality education on the Forum's discussion webpage at https://padlet.com/envforum/SDTF_D1. This knowledge sharing exercise included sharing good practice examples for achieving quality education and lessons learned during implementation, as well as sharing their understanding of how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted quality education and how society could build back better to advance quality education. The results of the discussion are summarized below.

Good practice examples and successes for achieving quality education include:

- The move towards a blended learning approach needs to come with an increased capacity for independent learning, not just replicate classroom teaching in the virtual medium. (see <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10671-020-09285-3>).
- The Asia-Europe Meeting report on National Equity Policies in Higher Education presents several good practices and recommendations (see https://arc.asef.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/211029_ASEM-Equity-Policy-Report-V2.pdf).
- Marcus Rashford's free school meal campaign during the pandemic to support students' well-being is a good practice example (see <https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/54862230>).
- Education technology often assumes one has access to it (see McKinsey & Company article on new global data revealing education technology's impact on learning, <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/education/our-insights/new-global-data-reveal-education-technologys-impact-on-learning>).



- Model United Nations Assemblies are great opportunities for high school and university students to build skills for consensus-building and negotiation of complex issues (for example, see www.WinnipegMUNA.ca).

Implementation challenges and lessons learned for achieving quality education include:

- Gender inequality, gender roles, child-headed households and child labour all place barriers against quality education implementation.
- Bottom-line approach in higher education: "universities [...] are run like businesses rather than learning institutions[...]. Tenured professorships are down, gig-working adjunct professors and teaching assistants are on the rise, while their pay is down ... but tuition is somehow increasing." (see <https://www.vulture.com/2020/06/hasan-minhaj-college.html>)
- A challenge is ensuring minority groups, such as students with disabilities in developing countries, can access and have equal education opportunity, especially in this uncertain situation.

How has COVID-19 pandemic impacted progress toward quality education?

- The pandemic has shown us the great divide between the academic institutions in the urban areas versus those found in the rural areas in the Philippines. There is a lot of work needed to address those challenges.
- The pandemic measured how resilient our education system is, particularly the abrupt transition from conventional learning modality to distance learning. The majority of the learning modalities are made possible through digitally wired tools/gadgets, thus requiring teachers to be upskilled and learners to be technologically enhanced and engaged. The new normal paves the way also to tap parent engagement since, in the absence of direct monitoring from the teachers, parents have played this active role. School leaders were also tasked to develop policies and guidelines for a flexible learning environment – in order for education to be catered to all – even those learners who faced the digital gap due to several concerns, particularly financial constraints.

How can society build back better to advance quality education?

- Inclusive return to school for children with disabilities (see <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Ensuring%20an%20inclusive%20return%20to%20school%20for%20children%20with%20disabilities%20-%20UNICEF%20East%20Asia%20and%20Pacific%20Region%20COVID-19%20technical%20guidance.pdf>)
- Offer higher quality (1) training for teachers and (2) school conditions as discussed in Mr. Oliver Liang's presentation and the Aydin and Kaya (2017) paper (See <https://doi.org/10.1080/14675986.2017.1336373>).
- Consider COVID-19 and education in emergencies (see <https://www.educationcannotwait.org/covid-19/>).
- Interesting development in USA: providing universal and free preschool for all 3- and 4-year-olds, representing the largest expansion of universal and free education since the states and communities across the country established public high school 100 years ago (see <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/10/28/president-biden-announces-the-build-back-better-framework/>).



SDTF 2022 - Day 1/Session 1: Quality Education (SDG 4)

Advancing the 2030 Agenda through Education, Vocational Training and Capacity Building

Good Practice Examples & Successes for Achieving Quality Education (policies, programs, tech, ...)

Implementation challenges & lessons learned for achieving Quality Education

How has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted Quality Education?

How can society build back better to advance Quality Education?

The move towards a blended learning approach needs to come with an increased of capacity for independent learning, not just replicate classroom teaching in the virtual medium.



Timely change and timeless constants: COVID-19 and educational change in Singapore - Educational Research for Policy and Practice

1 | Add comment

https://bit.ly/ASEM_Equity_2021

ASEM National Equity Policies in Higher Education

Anonymous 10d
Gender inequality, gender roles, child-headed households and child labour all place barriers against quality education implementation.

1 | Add comment

Anonymous 10d
Bottom-line approach in higher education



"universities [...] are run like businesses rather than learning institutions[...] Tenured professorships are down, gig-working adjunct professors and teaching assistants are on the rise while their pay is down ... but tuition is somehow increasing."

1 | Add comment

Anonymous 10d
Sometimes, that could revolutionise learning and possibly get people engaged instead of making it through the lecture.

1 | Add comment

Anonymous 10d
Ensuring minority groups such as students with disabilities in developing countries can access and have equal education

Anonymous 10d
The pandemic has shown us the great divide between the academic institutions in the urban areas versus those found in the rural areas in the Philippines.

There are a lot of work needed to address those challenges.

1 | Add comment

Anonymous 10d
I believe education should be better prioritised. The future of the next generation depends on how the challenges will be addressed.

1 | Add comment

ipconsing 10d
Resilient education

The pandemic measured how resilient our education system is- particularly the abrupt transition from conventional learning modality to distance learning. Majority of the learning modalities are made possible through digitally wired tools/gadgets - thus requiring teachers to be upskilled and learners to be technologically enhanced and engaged. The new normal pave the way also to tap parent engagement since, in the absence of direct monitoring from the teachers, parents have played this active role. School leaders were also tasked to develop policies and guidelines for a flexible learning environment - in order for education to be catered to all - even those learners who faced the digital gap due to several concerns, particularly financial constraints.

Anonymous 10d
Inclusive return to school for children with disabilities



PDF
<https://tinyurl.com/52rv73z3>

1 | Add comment

Anonymous 10d
Creating inclusive schools where kids can learn from each other with respect is crucial for system transformation.

1 | Add comment

Anonymous 10d
Offer higher quality (1) training for teachers and (2) school condition as discussed in Mr. Oliver Liang's presentation and the Aydin and Kaya (2017) paper
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14675986.2017.1336373>

1 | Add comment

Anonymous 10d
I think the issue is not just lack of training. There is a need to mindset shift on how we design the education system and create an enabling platform for educators that should be seen as mentors and coaches, not just teachers.

1 | Add comment



Gender Equality – A Gender Perspective on Building Back Better from the COVID-19 Pandemic



The session's co-moderator and ASEF representative, **Ms. Grażyna Pulawska**, introduced that the intent of [Sustainable Development Goal \(SDG\) 5](#) is to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. It comprises six outcome targets and three means of implementation targets.

In terms of progress, the COVID-19 pandemic has “adversely affected recent progress on gender equality”, particularly in relation to violence against women and girls and increased care work at home. “Swift action” is being called upon to “get back on track”.

This session of the Forum was to discuss the nature of “swift action” and provide a gender perspective on building back better from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Beyond COVID-19: A feminist plan for sustainability and social justice

Ms. Sarah Hendriks, the Director of the Policy, Programme and Intergovernmental Division at UN Women, led off the Forum session with a pre-launch presentation of UN Women's new [Feminist Plan for Sustainability and Social Justice](#). The plan was predicated on the current reality that only one of the SDG 5 targets is close to being on track and that the world is experiencing a trio of interlocking crises including a jobs and livelihoods crisis, a global care crisis, and an accelerating environmental crisis.

These interlocking crises are deeply rooted in an economic system that fails to value, protect, nourish, and invest in what's essential. A number of key levers were identified for accelerating progress. **In relation to livelihoods, the levers include creating new jobs in sustainable sectors, investing in universal gender-responsive social protection systems, and rebuilding local and global food systems with women producers and vendors.**

In the context of putting care at the centre of a sustainable and just economy, **investments to address care deficits is essential, as are partnerships between governments and communities to strengthen access to and quality of care services.** In relation to the accelerating environmental and climate crisis globally, **investments in gender-responsive policies to mitigate and adapt to climate change are urgently needed, as is empowering local communities for gender-just transitions in energy and agriculture.**

Finally, **progressive and feminist politics is paramount for the post-COVID world, to boost women's representation and influence in politics, supporting women's rights organizations, building coalitions and working across silos to resist backlash, and filling gender data gaps for greater accountability.**





Building forward better: Why pandemic recovery needs to embrace transformation to achieve equality

Ms. Cynthia McDougall, Senior Research Fellow at the Stockholm Environment Institute in Bangkok, addressed the question of why pandemic recovery needs to embrace transformation to achieve equality. In one of the most striking visuals of the Forum, the unlevel playing field of development was described, with specific note that the pandemic, and measures to address it, took place in socio-economic contexts that were already unequal and inequitable.

Transformation in progress toward SDG 5 will demand a mix of **“shallow” approaches for enhancing what women do** (i.e., roles, capacities, participation in programs) along with **“deeper approaches” that break down underlying structural barriers** in terms of how society says women and men should behave and how society values people of different genders and identities.

Two insights were offered for moving ahead on gender equality. The first is to **build forward better, instead of build back better: using this period of time as an opportunity to surface what was not working in the normal/previous conditions and to break pre-existing, locked-in constraining structures and engender resilience via transformation.** The second insight is to **level the playing field at multiple scales to create a tipping point for change.** In this regard, there are a number of emerging transformative strategies that are possible, including: **digital and educational behaviour change communications; feminist policies and budgets for equality in land tenure; changing gender blind data systems; transforming financial services; and advancing gender transformative approaches such as by engaging men and boys as co-agents of change to spark awareness and ownership of shifting barriers to equality.**



Underlying structural barriers



Shocks take place in the already unlevel playing fields of development

- Pandemic and measures to address it took place in socio-political, economic contexts that were **already unequal and inequitable**
- Not causing, but revealing and worsening inequalities because of the **underlying barriers** 'built into' societies, markets, and development
- Deeply embedded, **naturalized** inequitable and constraining 'rules of the game':
 - Policies (& formulation, translation)
 - Systems (e.g., statistics/data, finance, innovation)
 - Social and gender norms
- **Create and re-create inequalities...**
- 'Weak link in the development chain': In the face of shocks, underlying barriers drive societies and markets at all scales towards worsening intersectional gender inequalities

Forum participants were asked what they believed were the most important first steps they could take to start addressing underlying structural barriers, with responses including aspects such as equal pay, talking about gender equality more, and actions for climate justice.





We just discussed the need to address underlying gender barriers, including norms, data, finance, and policies. What do you think is the most important, first step that you could take to start addressing such barriers? (in four words or less)


017



Gender Equality – A gender perspective on building back better from the COVID-19 pandemic

Ms. Angela Mwai, Chief of the Human Rights and Social Inclusion Unit at UN-Habitat global headquarters in Nairobi, provided a range of gender perspectives on building back better from the pandemic. It was described that the pandemic disproportionately impacted vulnerable communities, while highlighting the gendered effects of crises and emergencies, with women and girls experiencing exacerbated effects simply by virtue of their gender. Furthermore, findings from the World Bank reveal the disproportionate impact the pandemic had on cities and the reality that interventions in cities can have the biggest impact going forward given that more than two thirds of the global population are expected to live in cities by 2050.

In response to rapid growth of urban populations, it was described that governments are being pushed to design cities that are small, inclusive, interconnected, and integrated. However, it was also noted that the ability of cities to be inclusive and fully integrate vulnerable groups into economic, social, and political life is jeopardized in the face of rapid urbanization. In this context, gender equality is not being fully mainstreamed in urban planning, legislation, and economic development.



One of the key lessons learned through work at UN-Habitat was that in continuing to advocate for and contribute to gender equality is **the crucial need to incorporate an intersectional approach to deepen the learning and understanding of perspectives from diverse groups while influencing opportunities, resources, services, and how different people cope and demonstrate resilience in difficult situations.** This introspection is essential for comprehending how we interact with others and how our own assumptions influence or shape those interactions.

Through its work with cities, UN-Habitat aims to advance gender equality by ensuring that women have: **more diverse employment opportunities to increase financial independence; greater ease in accessing education at different levels; better access to healthcare; more opportunities to socialize outside the home; more prospects to take up community or political leadership roles; and more possibilities to redefine the traditional roles of men and women.**

We're making progress... but far too slowly'

Ms. Amanda Austin, Head of Advocacy & Partnerships for Equal Measures 2030, elaborated to Forum participants that the world is making progress on gender equality, but far too slowly. **Even before the pandemic, the global community was not on track on key gender equality issues relating to family planning, secondary school completion by girls, women representation in government, workplace gender equality laws, and women's perception of safety in public places.** In particular, data show that as of 2020, 2.1 billion girls live in countries that are not on track to meet targets in any of these five areas by 2030.

To build on the mantra, "we manage what we measure", Equal Measures 2030 will be launching a new SDG Gender Index comprising 56 key indicators from 144 countries and covering 98% of the world's girls and women. The SDG Gender Index is meant to provide a gender lens across each of the SDGs, including the many that lack such a lens in the official framework, or where no data are reported at present. It will complement the SDG indicators with a wide range of data sources to provide timelier and more comprehensive picture of progress, including by tracking legal frameworks that address gender, along with global survey data that capture women's views about their lives and societies and other data collections that are conducted by research organizations.

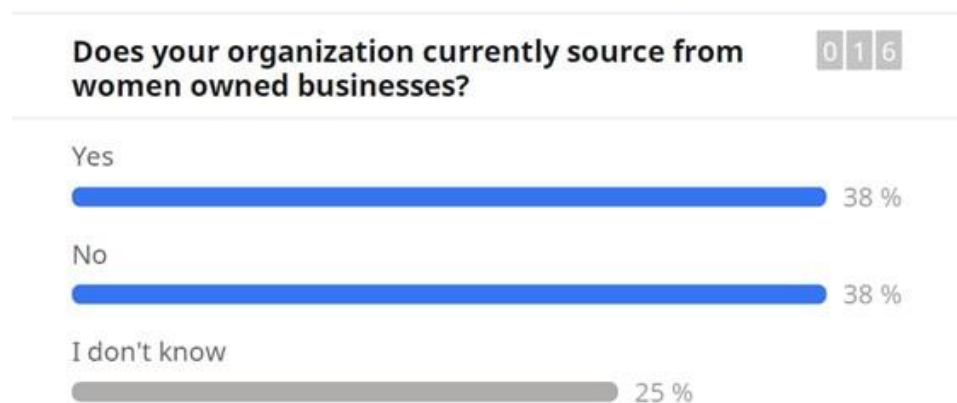
The business case of buying from women-owned businesses

Ms. Mrinalini Venkatachalam, Regional Director for South East Asia and Oceania at WEConnect International, described to Forum participants the business case for buying from women-owned businesses. In setting the global context, it was noted that **women control \$20 trillion in annual consumer spending and make 85% of consumer purchasing decisions. However, today, less than 1% of large corporate and government spending worldwide goes to women-owned businesses.**

Forum participants were asked if their organization currently sourced from women-owned businesses. Responses showed an even split among those who currently do and those organizations that don't, with 25% being unsure. This backdrop demonstrates the **space for improving the level of purchasing from**



women-owned businesses to support the procurement and supply chain needs of corporations and businesses.



A range of actions are being implemented at WEConnect to promote women-owned businesses, including to: Identify current women-owned suppliers; Determine current spend and establish baseline; Develop annual diverse supplier spend objectives; Identify and engage company advocates; Identify procurement opportunities; Access WECommunity to find potential women suppliers; Leverage WEConnect International staff as resource; and Measure success.

[Forum discussion page: SDG #5 on gender equality](#)

Participants were invited to share their perspectives on gender equality on the Forum's discussion webpage at https://padlet.com/envforum/SDTF_D2. This knowledge sharing exercise included sharing good practice examples for achieving gender equality and lessons learned during implementation, as well as sharing their understanding of how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted gender equality and how society could build back better to advance gender equality. The results of the discussion are summarized below.

Good practice examples and successes for achieving gender equality include:

- Policy in Thailand restricting gender discriminating contents in education curricula.
- Pañuelo Verde (Green Scarf) - Symbol of contemporary Latin American feminist movements and solidarity.
- #HeForShe - encourages not only women but also more men to participate in gender equality conversations and efforts (see <https://www.heforshe.org/en>).
- Gender-aware Curricula - Promotion of gender equality in education funded by the EU and the Government of Turkey (see <https://www.britishcouncil.org/society/womens-and-girls-empowerment/our-work/promoting-gender-equality-education-turkey>).
- Empowering Women in Technology (see <https://www.womenwhocode.com/>).

Implementation challenges and lessons learned for achieving gender equality include:

- Impact of climate change on unproductive labour such as collecting food and water, particularly for indigenous communities and low-income families in developing countries become more difficult.
- As reflected during the COVID-19 pandemic, numerical and quota-based changes do not fully reflect the stability and the long-term implementation results of gender equality progress.
- Climate policies and campaigns that particularly target individual changes in higher-income countries (recycling, plant-based meals, eco-friendly bags, conscious consumption for example) face barriers due to social norms that reinforce "inherent" gender-based characteristics (what is referred to as masculine vs feminine).
- Women in informal sector leads to even unequal access to support and social safety nets (see <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/09/waste-pickers-are-slipping-through-the-cracks-covid-19-informal-sector-essential-workers-support/>).
- Tinker, tailor or transform: Gender equality amidst social-ecological change (see <https://www.sei.org/publications/tinker-gender-equality-social-ecological-change/>).

How has COVID-19 pandemic impacted progress toward gender equality?

- Refer to UN Women's 'A Feminist Plan for Sustainability and Social Justice' (see <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2021/09/feminist-plan-for-sustainability-and-social-justice>).
- As mentioned in the presentations, gender-based violence increased since the pandemic began. There is a strong link between unemployment (which rose as a result of COVID-19) and the perpetuation of gender-based violence.
- More women forced into the private sphere increased difficulty in tackling gender-based and domestic violence, and disproportionately reduced women's social participation and economic autonomy.
- Aggravated impacts of COVID-19 for women already living on the economic margins (see <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/04/policy-brief-the-impact-of-covid-19-on-women>).
- Increased work burden particularly for women performing unproductive labour.

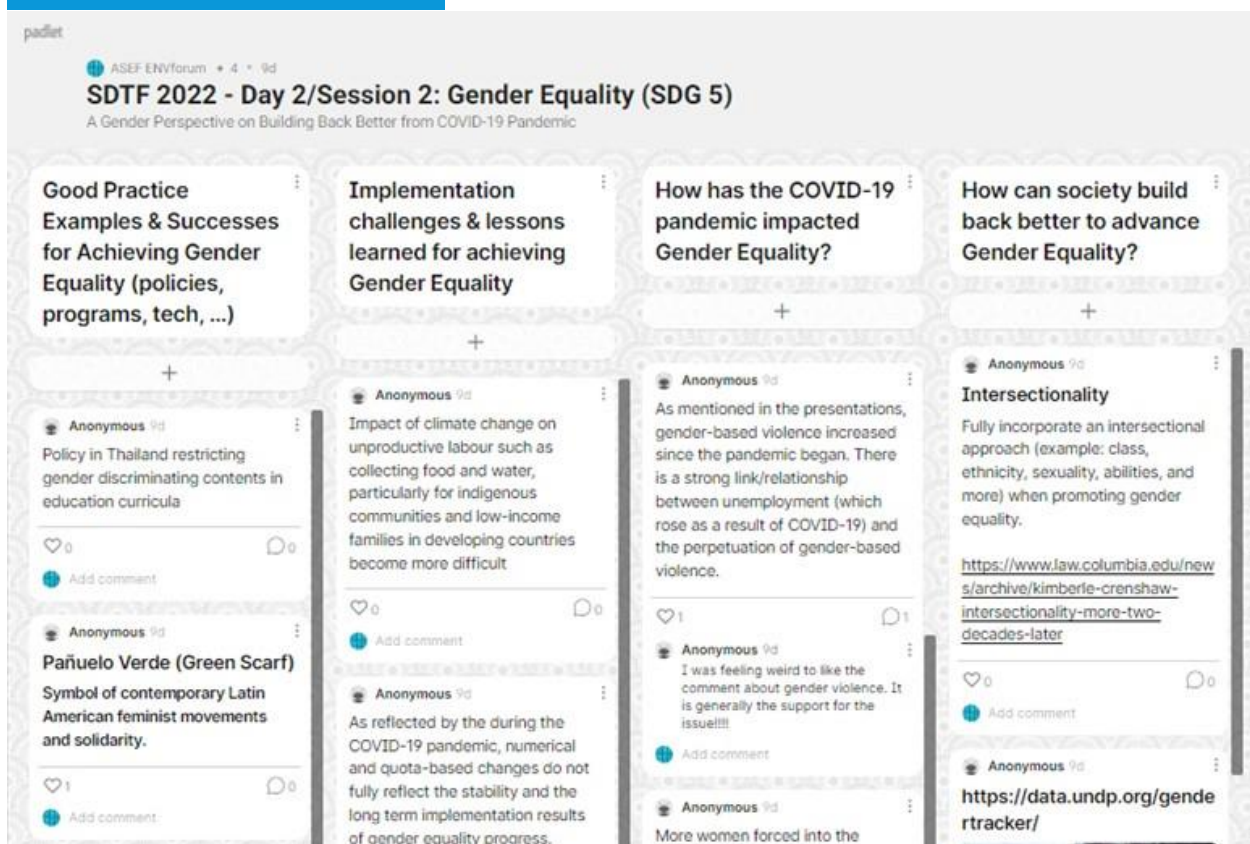
How can society build back better to advance gender equality?

- Legislating gender quotas in parliament (see <https://www.idea.int/data-tools/data/gender-quotas/database>).
- Fully incorporate an intersectional approach (example: class, ethnicity, sexuality, abilities, and more) when promoting gender equality (see <https://www.law.columbia.edu/news/archive/kimberle-crenshaw-intersectionality-more-two-decades-later>).
- COVID-19 Global Gender Response Tracker (see <https://data.undp.org/gendertracker/>).
- Gender and city recovery in EU - Let's put gender equality at the heart of building back better (see <https://urbact.eu/gender-equality-building-back-better>).
- From — Michelle Obama's *Becoming*: "For every door that's been opened to me, I've tried to open my door to others. And here is what I have to say, finally: Let's invite one another in. Maybe then we can begin to fear less, to make fewer wrong assumptions, to let go of the biases and stereotypes that unnecessarily divide us. Maybe we can better embrace the ways we are the same. It's not about being perfect. It's not about where you get yourself in the end. There's power






in allowing yourself to be known and heard, in owning your unique story, in using your authentic voice. And there's grace in being willing to know and hear others. This, for me, is how we become."



Life Below Water – How the Oceans can help us fight against, and recover from COVID-19 and deliver the SDGs

[Sustainable Development Goal \(SDG\) 14](#) is to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development. It comprises seven outcome targets and three means of implementation targets.



Notably, more than 3 billion people rely on the oceans for their livelihoods, and more than 80% of trade (by volume) is carried by sea. Life below water is described as being “under constant threat from pollution, warming, and acidification that are disrupting marine ecosystems and the communities they support.”

This session of the Forum gathered expert speakers and participants from around the world to discuss how oceans can help fight against and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and deliver the SDGs.

Video address by Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries (MOF) of the Republic of Korea

Mr. Kim Hyun-tae, Director General for International Cooperation Policy Bureau of the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries of the Republic of Korea, addressed the Forum via recorded video. He appropriately set the context for the session, noting that the world is facing an unprecedented number of crises including the COVID-19 pandemic, climate crisis, and biodiversity loss. Mr. Kim also noted the importance of the world’s oceans for international trade and livelihoods, but that plastic pollution is 10 times more severe now compared to the 1980s.

The oceans provide a tremendous opportunity for transboundary cooperation, especially knowing that 95% of the ocean still remains unexplored. Mr. Kim challenged everyone to ask themselves an important question: Have we taken our oceans for granted all this time? Fortunately, more and more people are beginning to recognize what the oceans mean for humanity, including for example, regulating global warming. But the oceans are very sick and require action. Advancing the **Blue Economy** is an approach for doing so. In this context, the Republic of Korea’s Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries announced its **2050 carbon neutrality framework** and have committed to reducing the nation’s marine plastic litter to a zero-level by 2050. Additionally, there will be a focus on blue carbon resources by making the most of tidal flats and creating sea forests to enable the marine ecosystem to absorb significant greenhouse gas emissions.

Mr. Kim concluded by emphasizing that the oceans hold our future and wished the Forum participants well in its deliberations.

Perspectives from the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Mr. Sai Navoti, Chief of the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Unit, at the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), provided a SIDS perspective on ocean commitments, the Blue Economy, and the importance of partnerships.

In particular, Mr. Navoti elaborated on four SDG 14 targets that had 2020 commitments including Target 14.2 on protecting marine and coastal ecosystems, Target 14.4 to regulate harvesting and overfishing, Target 14.5 to conserve at least 10% of coastal and marine areas, and Target 14.6 prohibiting certain forms of fisheries subsidies which contribute to overfishing. The [2020 Sustainable Development Goals Report](#) summarized progress on these targets, noting red status for Targets 14.2 and 14.4 (no progress or moving away from target), amber status for Target 14.6 (progress made, but insufficient), and with Target 14.5 having been exceeded already.

The Blue Economy approach was elaborated for its potential to accelerate progress toward targets and help recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. **Among the policy options for a blue economic transformation are: accurate Valuation of Oceanic Resources; integrate oceanic assets in national and local development strategies; develop adequate human and institutional capital; ensure policy coherence and build Partnerships; and develop smart fiscal incentives.**



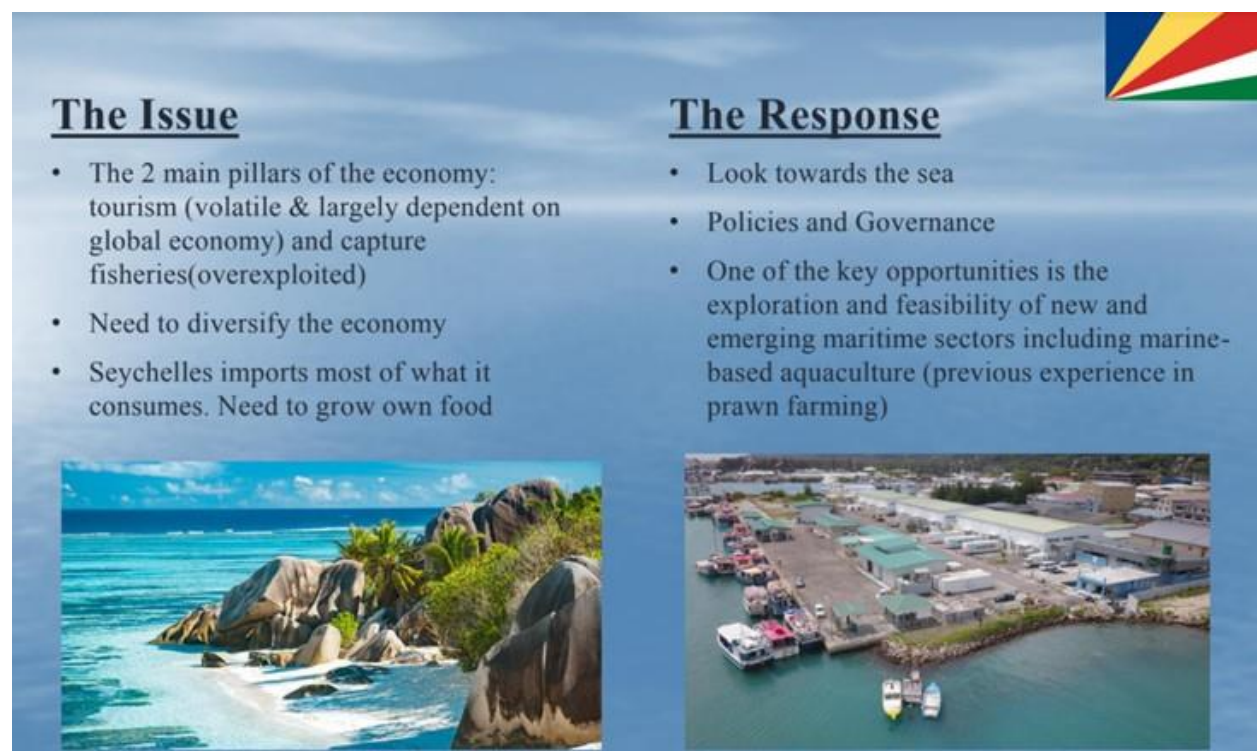
Partnerships were emphasized as a critical aspect for SIDS. For example, the [Abyssal Initiative for Blue Growth](#), a 2017 UN Ocean voluntary commitment, was a collaboration among the International Seabed Authority and UNDESA to help build capacity for nations to comply with their seabed obligations and to assist with the creation of necessary governance structures and mechanisms. UNDESA’s [Partnership Accelerator for SIDS](#) is another means for supporting partnerships among SIDS and beyond, including, for instance, for the Atlantic, Indian Ocean and South China Sea and the Pacific.

Perspectives from the Republic of Seychelles

Honourable Andy Labonte, Member of the National Assembly in the Republic of Seychelles, described the importance of the ocean to livelihoods and way of life in the archipelago of 115 islands. Tourism is the Seychelles most important industry with fisheries being a driver of the economy. The challenge, however, is that tourism is volatile and largely dependent on the global economy, as the COVID-19 pandemic brought into stark relief, and that fisheries is are becoming overexploited.

In responding to these challenges, the Republic of Seychelles looks to the sea with a **suite of policies and governance to explore new and emerging sectors, such as aquaculture, and to conserve and sustainably use marine resources**. In particular, the country is embracing a Blue Economy approach through **The Seychelles Marine Spatial Plan (SMSP)** which began in 2014. The SMSP focuses on planning for and management of the sustainable and long-term use and health of the Seychelles’ ocean. It is an **integrated, multi-sector approach to address climate change adaptation, marine biodiversity protection, and**

support the Blue Economy and other national strategies. Additionally, the SMSP process deploys a robust stakeholder engagement framework to develop a comprehensive plan, engaging all major sectors of the Seychelles including commercial fishing, tourism and marine charters, biodiversity conservation, renewable energy, port authority, and maritime safety.



The Issue

- The 2 main pillars of the economy: tourism (volatile & largely dependent on global economy) and capture fisheries(overexploited)
- Need to diversify the economy
- Seychelles imports most of what it consumes. Need to grow own food

The Response

- Look towards the sea
- Policies and Governance
- One of the key opportunities is the exploration and feasibility of new and emerging maritime sectors including marine-based aquaculture (previous experience in prawn farming)

As a large ocean state, Life Below Water is a way of life for the Republic of Seychelles. In championing the Blue Economy, the government has also engaged in a suite of environmental protection laws and several policies and initiatives. Regular beach clean-ups are undertaken in all the island, by groups and by individuals, and the use of balloons and different types of decorations are banned along the beach. Navy capacity has been enhanced by using technology such as GPS and drones to help protect 30% of the ocean allowing the restoration of marine habitats and their biodiversity. Also, a number of fisheries management plans have been set up to allow the restoration of certain species.

Importantly, **The Seychelles have surpassed the 10% SDG target of conservation of marine areas, aided by dividing marine protected areas into 3 zones including areas of high biodiversity protection, areas of medium biodiversity protection, and areas of sustainable use.**

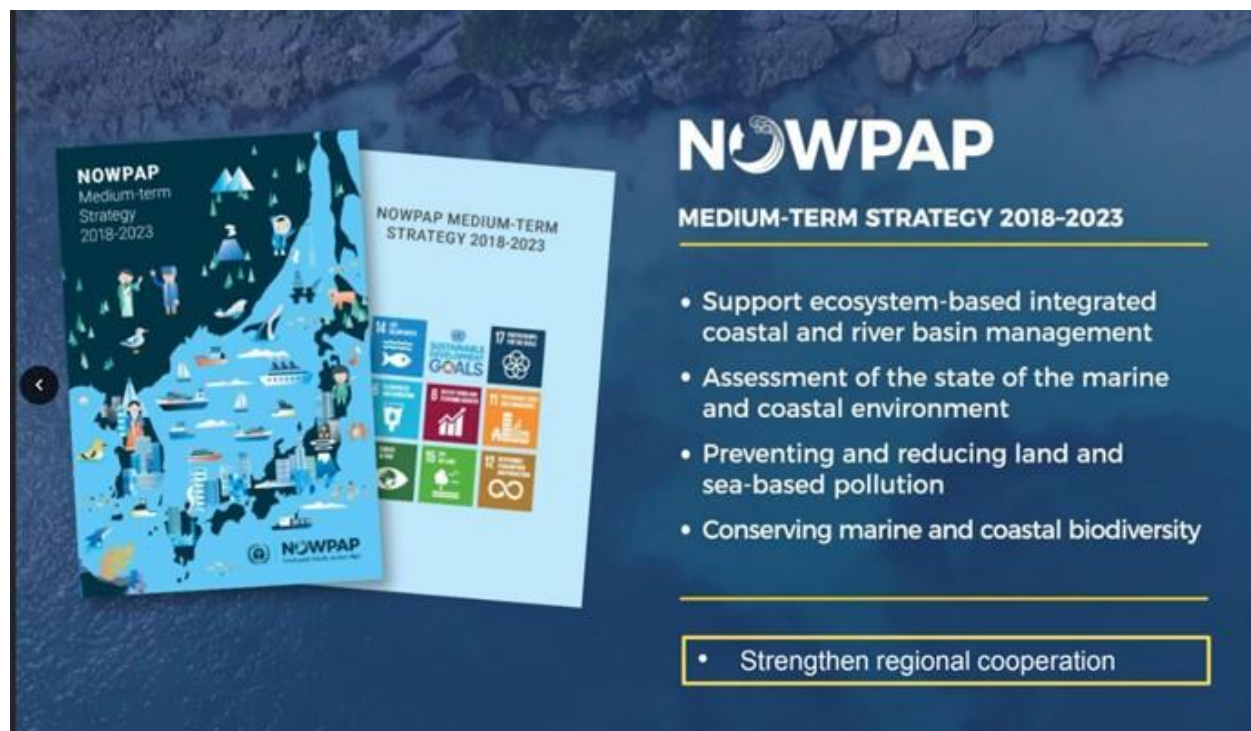
Northwest Pacific Action Plan and the SDGs

Dr. Yegor Volovik, Coordinator of the **Northwest Pacific Action Plan (NOWPAP)** within United Nations Environment Programme in Japan, reminded participants of The Regional Seas Programme that was launched following the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment. This provided a

legally binding framework for 146 countries to protect the marine environment through 16 Regional Seas Conventions and two action plans.

Part of the Regional Seas Programme, The Northwest Pacific Action Plan (NOWAP) was established in 1994 among China, Japan, the Republic of Korea, and Russia with the overall goal to protect the marine environment in the region. **NOWAP operates through four regional activity centres focusing on Special Monitoring and Coastal Assessment, Data and Information, Marine Environment Emergency Preparedness and Response, and Pollution Monitoring.**

NOWAP's current medium-term strategy for 2018-2023 is designed to **strengthen regional cooperation to: support ecosystem-based integrated coastal and river basin management; assess the state of the marine and coastal environment; prevent and reduce land and sea-based pollution; and conserve marine and coastal biodiversity.**



People on change journeys for implementation

Ms. Cornelia E. Nauen, head of the international non-profit organization, Mundus maris, brought the Forum discussions to the grass-roots level describing examples of people on change journeys for implementing actions for the sustainable development of artisanal fisheries. Crucially, Ms. Nauen described how the ocean is suffering, and thereby, so are people who earn their livelihoods from the ocean. In particular, the ocean's megafauna is dramatically reduced compared to a few hundred years ago, aggravated by the onset of industrial fishing after World War II, including the harmful effects of bottom trawling—a good part of which is used for animal feeding—and fisheries subsidies.




Working with a local academy put on by Mundus maris, **micro-fish vendors learned how to map out change journeys for sustainable livelihoods**. One micro-fisher from Yoff, Senegal, for instance, began her with a vision of happy life and collective action with her family, neighbourhood, and community to bring about change in practice. Based on her vision, she developed a visual action plan for a change journey towards an objective she felt she could achieve within one year (to increase marketed crates of fish from one to three per week). By reducing some of her expenditures, she was able to achieve her objective within six months, and within a year, she was able to market six crates per week, diversify her products, and improve the roof on her house. Overall, women micro-fishers gained confidence in business planning and were able to improve their livelihoods as well as take on leadership roles within the academy they participated in.

But change journeys at the grass-roots level also require support and **investment through macro and bottom-up priorities, including stopping harmful subsidies and curbing illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing that deprive legitimate operators of their livelihoods and nations from the tax base**. Ms. Nauen is hopeful that through successful negotiations for the 30x30 campaign to protect 30% of the world's oceans by 2030, and through peace cooperation among nations, that ecosystems can recover and sustainable livelihoods achieved for small-scale fisheries. Ms. Nauen also insisted on the need to fish for food and not for feed.

A deep dive into the world of plastic and its effects on SDG-14

Mr. Harmen Spek, Innovation & Solutions Lead at the Plastic Soup Foundation, took Forum participants on a deep dive into the world of plastic and its effects on SDG 14. He delivered an informative and impassioned plea to change the systemic approach to the use of plastics, noting how a plastic revolution occurred in 1933 with the invention of polyethylene (the first soluble and flexible plastic), ushering in a 'throw away culture' celebrated by the 1950s. Today, plastics are omnipresent in our air, water, soil and food, from the highest mountain tops to the deepest ocean trenches. And the health impacts of microplastics, including from fibre loss, paint, cosmetics, and car tire wear, are only just now being understood with more research needed.

In 2015, primary plastic waste globally reached 311 megatonnes, with about half consisting of packaging. By 2050, plastic waste could reach as much as 1124 megatonnes, a volume that would simply be unmanageable. Insight from the COVID-19 pandemic show how nature is resilience and always eager to



Take home for action - IYAF2022

At the macro-level top priorities are

- WTO to stop harmful fisheries subsidies (14.6), no loopholes
- Curbing IUU fishing, improving records, research & management
- Conclude negotiations about 30x30 successfully for recovery
- United against climate change through peaceful cooperation



**INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF
ARTISANAL FISHERIES
AND AQUACULTURE
2022**

Bottom-up priorities are

- Invest in people - education, health, gender equity - and fair institutions, fish for food not for feed
- Connect immediate needs with macro-level political agendas for greater citizen engagement and empowerment
- Implement the SSF Guidelines to support sustainable futures



restore balance; however, the balance in the context of plastics and nature has been skewed for a very long time and balance must be restored.



Against this backdrop, change is needed to help cure the world's addiction to plastic. Mr. Spek outlined a number of necessary changes including: **cutting down on our plastic consumption habits wherever possible; development of safer materials that are closer to natural processes and lifespans (or use existing materials that do); stop the narrative of plastic waste as a 'solvable' business case; stop the plastic trade and each take responsibility for our own waste; and create plastic regulations that respect the environment and living conditions.**

Forum discussion page: [SDG #14 on life below water](#)

Participants were invited to share their perspectives on gender equality on the Forum's discussion webpage at https://padlet.com/asefenvforum/SDTF_D3. This knowledge sharing exercise included sharing good practice examples for protecting life below water and lessons learned during implementation, as well as sharing their understanding of how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the oceans and how society could build back better to protect life below water. The results of the discussion are summarized below.

Good practice examples and successes for protecting life below water include:

- Electric Ferry Pioneers (see <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-50233206>).
- Smart technology is helping to combat overfishing (see <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/11/overfishing-sustainable-technology-innovation/>).



- Education for sustainable development with a systemic approach in blue economy and green economy
- No more paper/plastic, no more pollution in classrooms (see <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/a2943c399288408789bc252f30383fa7>).
- Coral Triangle Initiative in Southeast Asia
- Stop plastic pollution (see <https://www.iucn.org/resources/issues-briefs/marine-plastic-pollution>).

Implementation challenges and lessons learned for protecting life below water include:

- The pandemic has revealed once again how vulnerable the ocean is to our production and consumption and therefore the urgent need for us to have a more reliable and effective waste management and recycling infrastructure.
- Drivers and barriers for the reduction of single-use plastics in the member countries of the Asia-Europe Meeting (see <https://asef.org/publications/drivers-and-barriers-for-the-reduction-of-single-use-plastics-in-the-member-countries-of-the-asia-europe-meeting-asef/>).
- Singapore and SDG 14 progress (see <https://www.singstat.gov.sg/find-data/sdg/goal-14>).
- UNGA to conduct a high-level review of the Samoa Pathway in 2019 (see <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sids/samoareview>).

How has COVID-19 pandemic impacted progress toward protecting life below water?

- How to stop discarded face masks from polluting the planet (see <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/article/how-to-stop-discarded-face-masks-from-polluting-the-planet>). How the masks are really discarded everywhere - it really creates the question on why they end up in the sea. There is really something wrong with the waste management systems.
- Pandemic made 2020 'the year of the quiet ocean', say scientists (see <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/apr/17/covid-pandemic-made-2020-the-year-of-the-quiet-ocean-say-scientists>).
- Pandemic-associated plastic waste (increased face masks, single-use disposable products, delivery packages) polluting the ocean.

How can society build back better to protect life below water?

- UN plastic treaty to tackle production, packaging design - draft resolution (see <https://www.reuters.com/business/sustainable-business/exclusive-un-plastic-treaty-tackle-production-packaging-design-draft-resolution-2022-02-28/>).
- Why not focus more on transforming plastic production and market over individual consumption?
- Fully acknowledge indigenous communities' rights by taking into account what the ocean and marine life stands for within different communities.
- Mapping out macro and, if there are, micro plastic recovery global projects/technologies to analyse efficiency and financial needs. This comes alongside best practises to curb marine pollution. The One Ocean Summit in Brest, France, last month has highlighted culprits, like industrial ocean pollution through container shipping, illegal fishing and unsustainable fishing practises. Plastic pollution from land to ocean.
- Education for sustainable development with a systemic approach in blue economy and green economy (see for example: <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/a2943c399288408789bc252f30383fa7>).



- Ocean governance – who is in charge? With no transparent governance, it is impossible to address most challenges. How one can protect the biodiversity if there is no one to handle the issue? (see <https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/oceans-and-the-law-of-the-sea/>).
- I think having a strong governance could help to address the issue - if all is responsible – no one takes the initiative. (see <https://www.weforum.org/events/virtual-ocean-dialogues-2020/sessions/the-high-seas-operating-within-the-global-commons/>).

padlet

aseferyforum + 9 · 8d

SDTF 2022 - Day 3/Session 3: Life Below Water (SDG 14)

How the Oceans can help us fight against, and recover from COVID-19 and deliver the SDGs

Good Practice Examples & Successes for protecting Life Below Water (policies, programs, tech, ...)

Implementation challenges & lessons learned for protecting Life Below Water

How has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted Life Below Water?

How can society build back better to protect Life Below Water?

Anonymous 8d

bbc.com

Plug-in and sail. Meet the electric ferry pioneers

<https://www.bbc.com/news/business-50233206>

2

Add comment

Anonymous 8d

The pandemic has revealed once again how vulnerable the ocean is to our production and consumption and therefore the urgent need for us to have a more reliable and effective waste management and recycling infrastructure.

5

Add comment

Anonymous 8d

Drivers and barriers for the reduction of single-use plastics in the member countries of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM)

Alfonso Navarro Carvalho 8d

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/article/how-to-stop-discarded-face-masks-from-polluting-the-planet>

nationalgeographic.com

How to stop discarded face masks from polluting the planet

3

Anonymous 8d

how the masks are really discarded everywhere - it really creates the question on why they end up in the sea?? there is sth really wrong with

Anonymous 8d

Treaty on plastic

reuters.com

EXCLUSIVE UN plastic treaty to tackle production, packaging design - draft resolution

2

Add comment

Anonymous 8d

Why not focus more on transforming plastic production and market over individual consumption?



Life on Land – How COVID-19 recovery and 2030 Agenda can only be fully achieved through addressing SDG 15



[Sustainable Development Goal \(SDG\) 15](#) is to protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss. It comprises nine outcome targets and three means of implementation targets.

The United Nations system notes that “the world fell short of 2020 targets to halt biodiversity loss” which is of grave concern as the COVID-19 pandemic has shown that “by threatening biodiversity, humanity threatens its own survival.”

This final session of the Forum reflected on how COVID-19 recovery and the 2030 Agenda can only be achieved through addressing SDG 15.

Life on Land: where does your food come from?

Mr. Pierre Boileau, Head of the Global Environment Outlook programme at UN Environment, tackled the critical issue of land and food to kick off discussion among Forum participants on SDG 15. In particular, food production was described as using 50% of habitable land, with a need for 50% more food to feed the 10 billion people on the planet in 2050. Unfortunately, it is also the case that a third of edible food is wasted globally and that land and water resources are diminishing due to climate change, desertification, and competing uses for biofuel production, reforestation and biodiversity protection. Furthermore, the overuse or unmanaged use of chemicals, fertilizers, and pharmaceuticals, along with intensive farming practices are making food production environmentally unsustainable.

Mr. Boileau articulated a possible way forward through a number of areas, including: **transitions in consumption, production, access and environmental management; transforming food systems by reducing food waste and making dietary changes; and going beyond incremental policies to wide-ranging and systemic innovations and transformative change that realize policy coherence and synergies (i.e., plant-based diets can create health benefits).**

Forum participants were asked what individual actions they believe they could take that would have the biggest impact on preserving life on land? 85% of respondents believed that reducing the amount of food waste would have the biggest impact, with 50% stating that a shift to a plant-based protein diet would also be a leverage point for preserving life on land.



What individual actions can you take that would have the biggest impact on preserving life on land? (select the top two) 020

Shift to non-ruminant meats (more chicken, pork....less beef, lamb, goat)

20 %

Shift to a plant-based protein diet

50 %

Support conservation efforts

25 %

Reduce the amount of food you waste

85 %

EU's SDG Implementation: European Green Deal for SDG 15

Ms. Ingeborg Niestroy, Director of the think-tank and advisory network Public Strategy for Sustainable Development (ps4sd) and former Secretary-General of the European Network on Advisory Councils for Environmental Policy, together with **Mr. Raphael Weyland**, Head of Office for the German Nature Conservation Union, provided an overview of the European Union's implementation of the Green Deal for SDG 15. In prefacing their overview, the two experts elaborated that SDG 15 and the biosphere are fundamental to sustainable development as life on land and in the oceans provide the natural resource base upon which production and consumption and human well-being rely.

From a specific policy perspective, **the European Union's Green Deal represents a new growth strategy that puts sustainability and the well-being of citizens at the centre of action**, bringing together the environment, productivity, stability, and fairness. **With its Farm to Fork Strategy, Biodiversity Strategy, and its various Nature Directives, the EU Green Deal is seen as much more than just a narrative.**

The EU Biodiversity Strategy, in particular, was described as a potential gamechanger through its **Protected Area Target** (30% of EU land/sea), its **focus on the drivers of impact** (including 50% reduction in agriculture pesticides and 25% organic agriculture), and its **attention to nature restoration** (including peatland, grassland and forests).

Overall, challenges remain in the EU Green Deal that are impeding progress, including non-implementation of existing nature legislation, incoherent policies such as the Common Agriculture and Fisheries Policies, and insufficient funding for specific conservation measures.





The Asia-Europe Environment Forum and regenerative agriculture

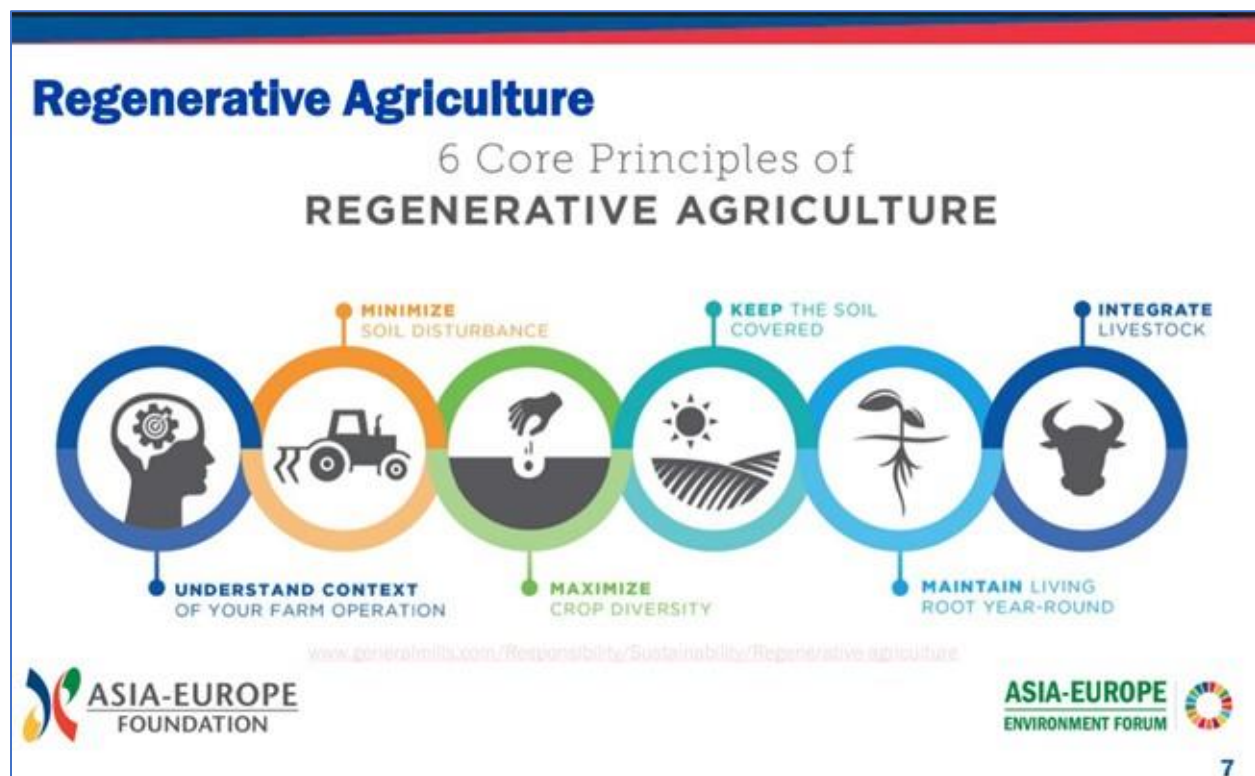
Ms. Grazyna Pulawska, Acting Director of the Sustainable Development & Public Health Department with the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF), and **Ms. Riko Kimoto**, Manager of ASEF's the International Public Health, Sustainable Development & Public Health Department, described the efforts of ASEF and the Asia-Europe Environment Forum in fostering inter-regional cooperation, research, knowledge exchange, and capacity building.

Circular food systems and regenerative agriculture were emphasized as a means for recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic and achieving the 2030 Agenda. It was noted that agriculture practice is responsible for 25% of greenhouse gas emissions, 70% of biodiversity loss, and 80% of deforestation. **Regenerative agriculture can help achieve sustainability in agriculture through six core principles, namely: understanding the context of farm operations; minimizing soil disturbance; maximizing crop diversity; keeping the soil covered; maintaining a living root year-round to maximize carbon storage and feed the soil; and integrating grazing livestock wherever possible.**

From a policy perspective, a range of solutions were suggested. In **adjusting subsidies to agriculture**, this should be based on net contributions to climate change and provision of ecosystem services. **More evidence is needed on the performance of alternative food and production systems** to inform the way forward and **more institutional support** is needed towards regenerative agriculture and agroecology. In addition, it is important to find ways for **conveying evidence in a form that is useful to support**



polycymaking and transitioning towards a **trans-disciplinary and problem-oriented approach** to research and polycymaking.



Build back better with nature-based solutions

Dr. László Pintér, Professor and Department Head of Environmental Sciences and Policy at the Central European University and Private University in Austria, described how to build back better using nature-based solutions. Nature-based solutions are described as deliberate interventions that are inspired or supported by nature and include a range of practices such as green areas for roofs, indoor spaces, water management, community gardens, connecting to grey infrastructure, and including blue areas.

A number of practical tools were featured in the talk emanating from a four-year research project entitled 'NATURVATION' involving 14 institutions across Europe and funded by the EU Horizon 2020 Programme. The initiative's [Urban Nature Atlas](#) features a collection of 1000 inspiring nature-based solutions by European cities and beyond. In addition, [Urban Nature Explorer](#) is an online tool that helps champions of nature-based solutions to identify challenges, set sustainability goals and plan projects.

A key advantage of nature-based solutions is that they provide a range of co-benefits including habitat and biodiversity, climate change mitigation and adaptation, economic development, health and well-being, social justice and cohesion, and improved governance. While nature-based solutions can deliver co-benefits, the ownership of these benefits are often scattered among different actors, leading to



coordination challenges, necessitating an **integrative business case approach to determine the benefits and actors involved**. In addition, a number of pathways exist for mainstreaming nature-based solutions and contributing to the SDGs, including: **engaging a wide-spectrum of actors; strengthening the local level; addressing multiple sustainability objectives at the same time; making institutional arrangements for integrated sustainable development; and monitoring and assessing sustainable urban transformation.**



Recovering our ancestors' foodways: Indigenous traditions as a recipe for living well

Ms. Mariaelena Huambachano, Professor of Environmental Humanities and Indigenous Studies at Syracuse University, described to the Forum how Indigenous traditions can be a recipe to all for living well. Colonization and industrial food systems have been a major disruptor of traditional Indigenous agroecology, biodiversity, foodways, and right to food. Food sovereignty, according to the 2007 La Via Campesina Declaration of Nyeleni, "is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems." **Indigenous food sovereignty recognizes cultural, social, economic, political, and spiritual "kinships relationships" embodied in growing, producing, sharing, and recirculating food.** It also underscores cultural responsibilities to nurture and respect those relationships to land-based foods, economies of well-being, and political systems.

Indigenous thinking of the Maori peoples in New Zealand and the Quechua peoples of Peru ascribe to the belief that **"if the land is healthy, our foods, and ourselves will be healthy."** Progress toward SDG 15, as well as toward SDG 3 on good health and wellbeing, could be accelerated by **rematriating holistic and**



collective wellbeing through Indigenous traditions, traditional ecological knowledge, agroecology, economies and environments of wellbeing, and through Indigenous cuisine (chefs and recipes). For instance, Indigenous calendars, such as the Aortearoa, Inti and Kill, Mayan, and the Menominee calendars, were all synchronized with the growing season, and thereby, inherently provided economies of well-being for its peoples.

In the broader sustainable development context, recovering ancestral foodways with Indigenous traditions can be a recipe for living well and a pathway to achieving SDG 15 to preserve and protect life on land and help deliver health benefits and sustainable communities at the same time.

**DISRUPTION OF “TRADITION FOODS/FOODWAYS”
Colonization and industrial food production**



- Indigenous agroecology
- Biodiversity
- Foodways
- Right to Food


≠



- GMOs and dumping policies,
- Food monopolies
- Disregards histories & relationships to food.

Africa's forest ecosystems and COVID 19: How do we build back and forward better?

Ms. Gertrude Kenyangi, Executive Director of Support for Women in Agriculture and Environment in Uganda, spoke to the Forum about the good and bad effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the forest sector in Africa. Forests cover 21% of the land area on the African continent, representing 16% of the world’s forest cover.



In regard to negative effects, regional policy dialogues on illegal forest exploitation were cancelled along with other international meetings. At the national level, critical funding for basic forest management were lost to other priorities, consequently, national forest institutions have run out of funds for their management activities and local forest staff are not able to patrol forests. The resulting job losses in the sector have adversely affected the livelihoods of local communities, who are now tempted to extract as much as possible to supplement for lost incomes, particularly thru charcoal burning. Going forward, a gradual surge in demand is anticipated for precious logs to feed the global wood industry as African forests will be viewed as a cheap means of recovery from the economic downturn. Overall, the risk of overexploitation of forests is at an unprecedented high.

Not all effects of the pandemic on the forest sector were negative. Notably, the rate of illegal timber harvesting plummeted to zero due to the drop in international demand for logs. But the challenges that are now faced are significant, requiring action at all levels, for example:

- **Increased investment in the forestry sector to speed up recovery;**
- **Enhanced cooperation, coordination, coherence, and synergies on forest-related issues;**
- **More active involvement of local communities in forest management through devolution and decentralization;**
- **Legal trade in timber and other forest products must be part of international agreements;**
- **Regional and transboundary collaboration in support of national response mechanisms to deal with the trade in forest products.**
- **Continued collaboration with the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the United Forum on Forests (UNFF);**
- **Empowered police and military checkpoints to monitor and stop illegal timber movements; and**
- **Continued operation of forestry personnel during public emergencies and lockdowns to avoid undue exploitation of forests.**

[Forum discussion page: SDG #15 on life on land](#)

Participants were invited to share their perspectives on gender equality on the Forum’s discussion webpage at https://padlet.com/asefenvforum/SDTF_D4. This knowledge sharing exercise included sharing good practice examples for protecting life on land and lessons learned during implementation, as well as sharing their understanding of how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted life on land and how society could build back better to preserve and protect nature. The results of the discussion are summarized below.

Good practice examples and successes for protecting life on land include:

- Education for sustainable development with a systemic approach in blue economy and green economy (see <https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/39188/>).
- Nature-based solutions for the SDGs. “We have more than a decade of experience and knowledge on designing forest solutions for people, climate and nature through REDD+,” says Tim Christophersen, head of UNEP’s Nature for Climate branch and coordinator of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration. “Now we can apply that knowledge to other ecosystems, to ensure that climate investments in nature have a high integrity and impact.” (see



<https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/five-ecosystems-where-nature-based-solutions-can-deliver-huge-benefits>).

- Future of food - solutions for circular food systems (see <https://asef.org/projects/future-of-food/>).
- How to reduce food waste” 15 quick tips for reducing food waste and becoming a food hero (see <https://www.fao.org/fao-stories/article/en/c/1309609/>).

Implementation challenges and lessons learned for protecting life on land include:

- Drilling Rights Push in Alaska - This NYT article gives a summary on how capital-driven activities affecting Life on Land directly impact indigenous communities and dismiss their rights and beliefs (see <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/16/climate/trump-oil-drilling-alaska.html#:~:text=The%20Trump%20administration%20on%20Monday,of%20leases%20just%20before%20Jan>).
- Global Environment Outlook 6 (see <https://www.unep.org/resources/global-environment-outlook-6>).

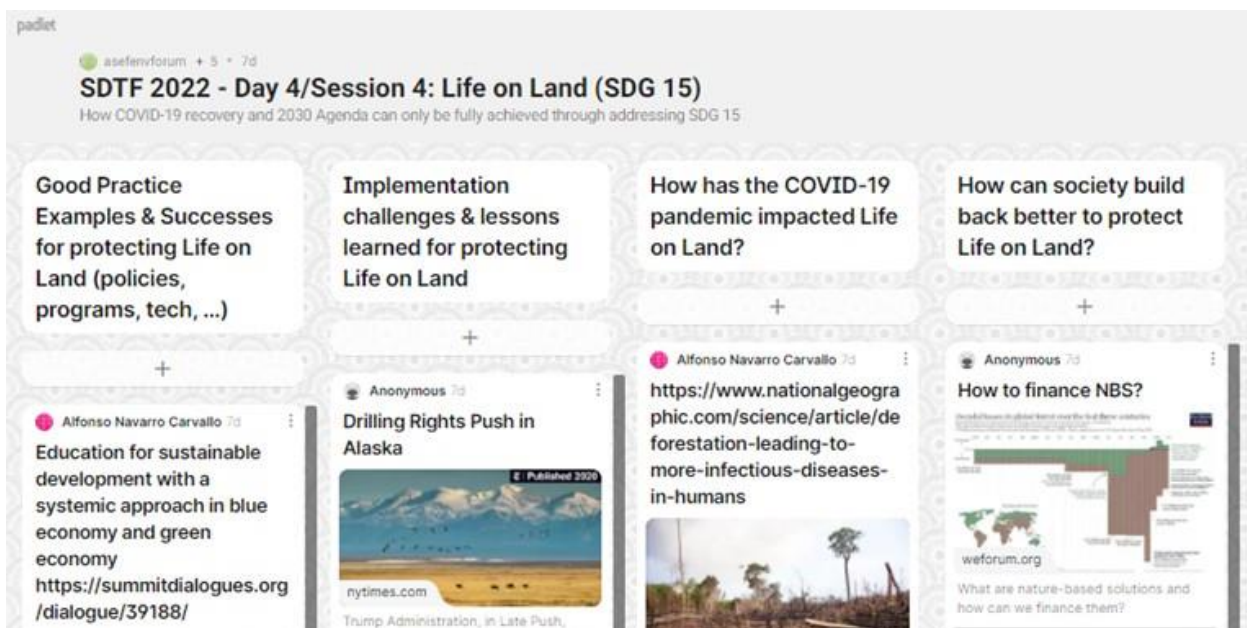
How has COVID-19 pandemic impacted progress toward protecting nature?

- Deforestation is leading to more infectious diseases in humans - As more and more forest is cleared around the world, scientists fear that the next deadly pandemic could emerge from what lives within them. (see <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/science/article/deforestation-leading-to-more-infectious-diseases-in-humans>).
- In Assam, the Indigenous Peoples are facing a lot of problems. Biodiversity is in crisis. The deforestation is continuing. The temperature is very high. There is diminishing land from floods. The indigenous foods are not protected, yet indigenous foods are healthy and hygienic. The Indian government has no policy in this regard. In this situation, what shall we do? How can the UN or World Communities help us?

How can society build back better to protect life on land?

- What are the nature-based solutions and how can we finance them (see <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2022/02/nature-based-solutions-finance-ecosystems/>).
- Enabling urban nature-based solutions (see <https://naturvation.eu/>).
- The urban nature explorer – a scenario game to address sustainability challenges through nature-based solutions (see <http://www.urbannatureexplorer.com/#/>).
- We need to put more focus on transforming production over consumption. While making individual changes can be impactful, they are nevertheless heavily dependent on one's income level. Bottled water, plant-based food, and most eco-friendly products for example are often more costly than their counterparts, and are choices that can only be made under the luxury of having open access to food and nutrition (in the case of plant-based food choices). Recycling is also mostly reliant on the public waste management infrastructure and fundings.





A View to 2023


In reflecting on the deliberations of the 2021-22 Sustainable Development Transformation Forum, **H.E. Ambassador Mr. Léon Faber**, Deputy Executive Director of the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF), summarized how the four daily sessions addressed the different goals on Quality Education, Gender Equality, Life Below Water and Life on Land. The SDGs are interrelated, but we also know that within each SDGs there are issues that we need to tackle.

On Quality Education we heard about promoting lifelong learning opportunities; we talked about achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls. Life Below Water – ocean, seas, and marine resources are under constant threat disrupting marine ecosystems and the communities they support. During the final session on Life on Land – we learned that we need to look at issues like meat production, waste of food, and biodiversity, and also about the EU Green Deal and the issue of agreeing on a common agricultural policy and the different strategies they are pursuing. The Forum also heard about regenerative agriculture and nature-based solutions and the Urban Nature Atlas tool, which tell us that we cannot just copy paste everything, but rather, we can duplicate and adapt solutions according to local context. On food sovereignty, we learned that it is extremely important how we look at food and production patterns. Lastly, we heard about the importance of forests for human beings and ecosystems in general.

On behalf of ASEF and the UNOSD, H.E. Ambassador Mr. Léon Faber thanked all Forum speakers and participants for bringing a holistic view of nature to the fore.

In looking forward to the next Sustainable Development Transition Forum, **Mr. Jean D’Aragon**, Senior Sustainable Development Expert with the UNOSD, articulated that despite the pandemic and other major





issues, the Forum was able to convene virtually and shed further light on SDGs 4, 5, 14, 15, whilst integrating aspects of SDG 17 on partnerships in each of the four sessions.

The profound transformations that are needed to achieve sustainable development, will come, of course, from collective action. However, it starts at the individual level, from within rather than from outside where we are now at this point in time. As insignificant as our actions initiated at an individual level may seem at first sight, they can, when added together with others, create the most powerful and unstoppable movement of transformation possible. If we want to deliver the 2030 Agenda as a global community in the few years left, we need to continue our common reflection, conversation and exchange on transformative actions needed for the SDGs, and this Forum is one of the significant tools available to us to do so.

The Forum will produce a publication about the topics spoken during this week at this 2021-22 Sustainable Development Transformation Forum, which you can find on the UNOSD website.

Mr. D’Aragon extended thanks on behalf of the UNOSD to Forum partner, ASEF, and to all participants, speakers, moderators, and the UNOSD staff for a successful event. The UNOSD looks forward to hosting the next Forum in person in Incheon City when the situation allows it.

Annex

- Forum Agenda



Annex A: SDTF 2022 Agenda

Day 1 (28 February 2022)

Theme: Quality Education – Advancing the 2030 Agenda through Education, Vocational Training and Capacity Building

Opening Remarks:

- Moderator: Mr. Jean D'Aragon, Senior Sustainable Development Expert, UNOSD
- Mr. Liu Zhenmin, UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs (video)
- H.E. Ms. Han Jeoung Ae, Minister of Environment, Republic of Korea (video)
- Mr. Chun Kyoo Park, Head of Office, UNOSD
- H.E. Ambassador Mr. Toru Morikawa, Executive Director, Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF)

Speakers:

- Moderator: Mr. Darren Swanson, UNOSD Consultant
- Mr. Manos Antoninis, Director of Team, Global Education Monitoring Report Team, UNESCO
- Mr. Louis Meuleman, Committee of Experts on Public Administration (CEPA), Founder/Director, Public Strategy for Sustainable Development and visiting professor at the Public Governance Institute of the University of Leuven, Belgium
- Mr. Oliver Liang, Head, Public and Private Services Unit, Sectoral specialist: education, culture, media, sport, Sectoral Policies Department, International Labour Organization (ILO)
- Ms. Reka Tozsa, Senior Project Manager, Higher Education Programme, Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF); Mr. Edizon Fermin, Vice President for Academic Affairs, National Teachers College, The Philippines
- Ms. Alicia Quezada, Latin America Director, Practical Action, Peru

Day 2 (1 March 2022)

Theme: Gender Equality – A Gender Perspective on Building Back Better from the COVID-19 Pandemic

Moderators:

- Mr. Darren Swanson, UNOSD Consultant
- Ms. Grażyna Pulawska, Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF)

Speakers:

- Ms. Sarah Hendriks, Director, Policy, Programme & Intergovernmental Division, UN Women
- Ms. Cynthia McDougall, Senior Research Fellow, Stockholm Environment Institute



- Ms. Angela Mwai, Chief, a.i. Human Rights and Social Inclusion Unit, Urban Practices Branch, Global Solutions Division, UN-Habitat
- Ms. Amanda Austin, Head of Policy and Advocacy, Equal Measures 2030
- Ms. Mrinalini Venkatachalam, Regional Director, Southeast Asia, East Asia and Oceania, WEConnect International

Day 3 (2 March 2022)

Theme: Life Below Water – How the Oceans can help us fight against, and recover from COVID-19 and deliver the SDGs

Moderators:

- Mr. Darren Swanson, UNOSD Consultant
- Ms. Grażyna Pulawska, Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF)

Speakers:

- Mr. Kim Hyun-tae, Director General of International Cooperation Policy Bureau, Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries, Republic of Korea (video)
- Mr. Sai S. Navoti, Chief, SIDS Unit, Division for Sustainable Development Goals, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, New York, USA
- Hon. Mr. Andy Labonte, Member of the National Assembly, Republic of Seychelles
- Mr. Yegor Volovik, Coordinator, Northwest Pacific Action Plan (NOWPAP), Regional Coordinating Unit, Ecosystems Integration Branch, Ecosystems Division, United Nations Environment Programme, Toyama City, Japan
- Ms. Cornelia E. Nauen, President, Mundus maris – Sciences and Arts for Sustainability, Brussels
- Mr. Harmen Spek, Innovation & Solutions Lead, Plastic Soup Foundation

Day 4 (3 March 2022)


Theme: Life on Land – How COVID-19 recovery and 2030 Agenda can only be fully achieved through addressing SDG 15

Moderators:

- Mr. Darren Swanson, UNOSD Consultant
- Ms. Grażyna Pulawska, Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF)

Speakers:

- Mr. Pierre Boileau, Head, Global Environment Outlook, UN Environment
- Ms. Ingeborg Niestroy, Project Leader, Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS); Mr. Raphael Weyland, Head of Brussels Office, Nature And Biodiversity Conservation Union (NABU)
- Ms. Grażyna Pulawska, Acting Director, Sustainable Development & Public Health Department, Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF); Ms. Riko Kimoto, Manager for International Public Health, Sustainable Development & Public Health Department, Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF)
- Mr. Laszlo Pinter, Head, Department of Environmental Sciences and Policy, Central European University

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- Ms. Mariaelena Huambachano, Professor Environmental Humanities and Indigenous Studies, Syracuse University, NY, USA
 - Ms. Gertrude Kabusimbi Kenyangi, Executive Director, Support for Women in Agriculture and Environment (SWAGEN), Uganda

Closing Remarks:

- Moderator: Mr. Jean D'Aragon, Senior Sustainable Development Expert, UNOSD
- H.E. Ambassador Mr. Léon Faber, Deputy Executive Director, ASEF
- Mr. Jean D'Aragon, Senior Sustainable Development Expert, UNOSD

