



HESI 2023 Global Forum

**17 July 2023, 10.00 AM – 01.00 PM, Conference Room 2, United Nations
Headquarters, New York**

Introduction

The [Higher Education Sustainability Initiative](#) (HESI) is a partnership between several United Nations entities and the higher education community, currently chaired by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) and the Sulitest Association - a non-profit organization and online platform aimed at improving sustainability literacy for all. Other UN partners include UNESCO, UN Environment Programme, UN Global Compact's Principles for Responsible Management Education initiative, UN University, UN-HABITAT, UNCTAD, UNITAR, UN Office for Partnerships and UN Academic Impact.

The Vision Statement by the Secretary-General on Transforming Education, "*Transforming Education: an urgent political imperative for our collective future*" – the formal outcome of the Transforming Education Summit¹ held in 2022 – notes that education is a great enabler, but today, in many cases, it is also the great divider. The Vision Statement further notes that education is in crisis and requires our immediate, mid-term and longer-term responses including a fundamental rethinking of the purpose and content of education, grounded in two principles of a new social contract for education, namely ensuring the right to quality education throughout life and strengthening education as a public endeavor and a common good.

Each year, HESI organizes a global forum as a special event to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF)² – UN's main platform for the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the global level - to highlight the critical role of higher education in achieving sustainable development. In 2023, HLPF (10-19 July 2023, New York) will be held under the theme "*Accelerating the recovery from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at all levels*". It will also review in-depth Goals 6 on clean water and sanitation, 7 on affordable and clean energy, 9 on industry, innovation, and infrastructure, 11 on sustainable cities and communities, and 17 on partnerships for the Goals, and include 41 Voluntary National Reviews by member States on their implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

¹ <https://www.un.org/en/transforming-education-summit>

² <https://hlpf.un.org/>

The HESI 2023 Global Forum, which will be held on 17 July 2023 as an in-person event at UNHQ, will place a particular focus on understanding the challenges and opportunities to accelerate the recovery from COVID-19 and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda at all levels, in line with the theme of HLPF in 2023.

The Forum aims to:

- Provide a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities in higher education to accelerate the recovery from COVID-19 and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda at all levels.
- Build a higher education sector that is accessible to all and leaves no one behind.
- Highlight and boost key higher education initiatives that drive implementation of the 2030 Agenda through education, teaching, and learning - particularly around SDGs under review at HLPF (Goals 6 on clean water and sanitation, 7 on affordable and clean energy, 9 on industry, innovation, and infrastructure, 11 on sustainable cities and communities, and 17 on partnerships for the Goals,).
- Spotlight the levers of sector transformation, including cross-institutional partnerships or evolving practices in higher education quality metrics, academic publications, or increased demand for green jobs.
- Convene an evolving and action-oriented conversation on the critical role of higher education in achieving sustainable development.

Participation

The HESI 2023 Global Forum is open to all relevant stakeholders, both in-person and virtually. All participants that are attending HLPF can attend the HESI Global Forum without registering. For stakeholders not attending HLPF and in need of a special event ticket, registration is required and available on the HESI website (registration now closed).

Draft programme

Time	Session
10.00 AM – 10.20 AM	Opening remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Ms. Maria-Francesca Spatolisano, Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs of United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Stefania Giannini, Assistant Director-General for Education of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) <i>(virtual)</i> <p>Keynote address</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professor Tshilidzi Marwala, Rector and Under-Secretary-General, United Nations University - <i>Transforming higher education in a disruptive digital era (virtual)</i> <p>Facilitated by Ms. Lotta Tähtinen, Chief, Outreach and Partnership Branch, Division for Sustainable Development Goals,, UN DESA</p>
<p>10.20 AM - 11.15 AM</p>	<p>High-level panel with university leaders - <i>The role of higher education in accelerating the recovery from COVID-19 and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda at all levels</i></p> <p>Moderated by Mr. Nikhil Seth, United Nations Assistant Secretary-General, Executive Director, UNITAR</p> <p><u>Panelists</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mr. Ángel Cabrera, President, Georgia Institute of Technology 2. Ms. Julia Christensen Hughes, President and Vice-Chancellor, Yorkville University 3. Ms. Romeela Mohee, Commissioner of the Higher Education Commission, Mauritius <i>(virtual)</i> 4. Ms. Susan Rundell Singer, President, St. Olaf College 5. Ms. Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi, Chancellor, Nelson Mandela University <i>(virtual)</i> <p><u>Guiding questions</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are challenges and opportunities in higher education to accelerate the recovery from COVID-19 and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda at all levels? 2. How can we build a higher education sector that is accessible to all and leaves no one behind? 3. How does the faculty role and skill set needs to change? 4. How can universities assess their performance through the lens of sustainable development?

	<p>5. What are the opportunities and challenges for higher education in the disruptive digital era, including diversified modes of delivery and skills and knowledge universities should equip our students with?</p>
<p>11:15 AM – 11:50 PM</p>	<p>Rapid presentations on levers of sector transformation – <i>Featuring key higher education initiatives and action groups that drive implementation of the SDGs, particularly for Goals under review at HLPF in 2023</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Education for Green Jobs HESI Action Group, <i>Ms. Debra Rowe, Co-Chair, HESI Education for Green Jobs Action Group (virtual)</i> 2. Ratings, Rankings and Assessments HESI Action Group, <i>Mr. Duncan Ross, Co-Chair, HESI Ratings, Rankings and Assessments Action Group</i> 3. SDG Publishers Compact HESI Action Group, <i>Mr. Chirag Jay Patel, Head of Sales, Americas Human+AI, SDGs, Science Communications, Cactus communications</i> 4. Sulitest, <i>Mr. Aurélien Decamps, Managing Director and Co-Founder, Sulitest</i> 5. Voluntary University Reviews, <i>Ms. Jayashri Wyatt, Chief Education Outreach at United Nations Department of Global Communications and United Nations Academic Impact</i> 6. HESI Partner Programme, <i>Mr. Ola Göransson, Sustainable Development Officer, Outreach and Partnerships Branch, DSDG, UN DESA</i> <p>Moderated by: Mr. Jean-Christophe Carteron, President, Sulitest, co-chair of HESI</p>
<p>11:50 AM – 12:55 PM</p>	<p>Student & youth led panel – Harnessing the creativity, passion and innovation of students and young people for driving implementation of the SDGs</p> <p>Moderated by Mr. Brighton Kaoma, Global Director, SDSN Youth</p> <p><u>Panelists</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ms. Eliane El Haber, Ambassador, Higher Education For Good Foundation (Website)

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Ms. Benedicta Neysa Nathania, LearningPlanet Youth Fellow, LearningPlanet Alliance (Website) 3. Ms. Ellen Dixon, Project Lead, The SDG Students Program (Website) 4. Ms. Iman Cumberbatch, PRELS Scholar XR Lead at Computational Sensory Laboratory; and Project Manager at PSEG Institute for Sustainability Studies (PSEG ISS) (Website) 5. Ms. Anoushka Sinha, Girls Belong Here Ambassador, Plan International Canada (Website) 6. Ms. Veronica Dzeagu, Chief Technical Officer, All-Africa Students Union (Website) (<i>virtual</i>) 7. Mr. Horia Onita, Vice President, Vice President of the European Students' Union (Website) (<i>virtual</i>) <p>Student viewing party participation - organized by the United Nations University, represented by Mr. Bright Osei Yeboah</p> <p><u>Guiding questions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How can universities better prepare students for roles in sustainable development? ● How can universities prepare students for and utilize changing technologies? ● What is needed to ensure an equitable, quality education is available to all? ● How can the higher education system protect the mental health of students?
12.55 PM – 01.00 PM	<p>Closing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mr. Sam Barratt, Chief, Environmental Education and Youth Unit, United Nations Environment Programme, Co-Chair of HESI

International Green Gown Awards Ceremony

HESI invites all interested participants to attend the International Green Gown Awards Ceremony, which takes place virtually at 01.30 PM on 17 July.

More information and registration available at: <https://www.greengownawards.org/international-awards-ceremony>