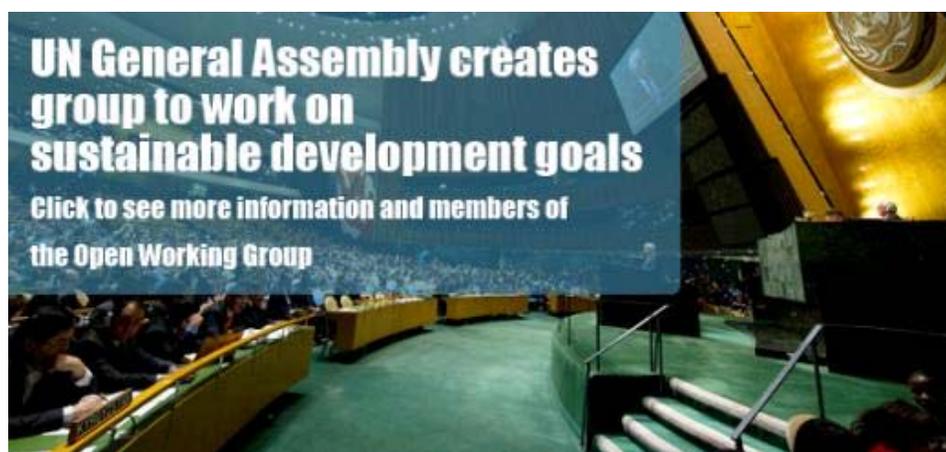# Sustainable Development in Action
Leading the way to the Future We Want

The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, Rio+20, was an action-oriented conference focusing on implementation of sustainable development.

This newsletter aims to highlight the work carried out by Member States, United Nations system, Major Groups and other relevant stakeholders in implementing sustainable development and leading the way to the Future We Want.

General Assembly creates Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals

The United Nations General Assembly took an important step towards implementing a key Rio+20 recommendation on 22 January 2013 by establishing an "open working group" that will develop a set of sustainable development goals.

Countries agreed at Rio+20 that a set of "action-oriented, concise and easy to communicate" goals could help drive the implementation of sustainable development and called on the General Assembly to establish a group to help develop the goals.

The Rio+20 outcome document, **"The Future We Want,"** also calls for the goals to be integrated into the UN's development agenda beyond 2015. Participation on the 30-member working group would be facilitated by an innovative rotational procedure within the regions.

Sustainable development goals | **Open Working Group**

Featured action network: Higher Education Sustainability Initiative (HESI)

Higher Education Institutions play a key role in building more sustainable societies. On the occasion of Rio+20, leaders of the international academic

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- **General Assembly creates Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals**
- **Featured action network: Higher Education Sustainability Initiative (HESI)**
- **HESI Achievements**
- **The Intergovernmental Committee on an Effective Financing Strategy for Sustainable Development**
- **Google+ Hangout on Rio+20. Join the conversation!**

Share your Sustainable Development in Action story with us at dsd@un.org, for consideration of upcoming Newsletter issues. **Deadline for next issue:** February 15, 2013.

Action network by registry

- **Rio+20 Conference website**
- **SE4All**
- **Global Compact**
- **HESI**
- **Every Woman Every Child**
- **Partnerships for SD (WSSD)**
- **Green economy policies**

Action network by topic
- **Sustainable cities**

community were therefore asked to commit to the development of sustainable practices. An impressive 325 institutions have signed up to a **Declaration** by which they agree to teach sustainable development concepts, encourage research on sustainable development issues, green their campuses, support sustainability efforts in their local communities, as well as engage with and share results through international frameworks.

The implementation of the plans will be monitored through reporting to the various higher education networks of UNEP, UNESCO, UN Global Compact, UN-PRME and UNU.

What does the Initiative aim to achieve?

The Initiative seeks to improve sustainability programs of cities and towns through their cooperation with local universities and the resulting increased access to technical expertise. Numerous technological innovations are expected to be shared between academic and scientific institutions around the world, and new partnerships formed with the private sector for commercialization and diffusion of new technologies.

A further objective is for HESI to lead to hundreds of university campuses being equipped with resource efficient buildings, sustainable transport options, and green supply chains, as well as for thousands of university students across multiple disciplines to have acquired knowledge of sustainability concepts that can be applied in the marketplace and to living more sustainable lifestyles.

Higher Education Sustainability Initiative

HESI Achievements

A delegation from one of the first signatories of the Initiative, **Beijing Normal University (BNU)**, visited UN Headquarters in New York on 21 January. It showcased its new Green Development Research Centre, an initiative which successfully integrates sustainable development in pedagogy and research and is a good example of the impact a focus on sustainable development in higher education can have on multiple levels.

The Centre works with major Chinese energy, mineral and water companies to benefit underserved and resource-scarce regions. It reports on the implementation of green development at the provincial level, and pursues work that informs policy making at the national level. Furthermore, the Centre supports regional training and assessments for developing countries and has started an English language program on sustainable development.

Having introduced an elective course on sustainable development three years ago, Lehigh University (USA) significantly expanded the scope of its teaching on sustainable development this year by establishing an interdisciplinary **"Program on Sustainable Development".** Lehigh is planning to further strengthen its teaching on this issue across various disciplines.

Another example of successful academic cooperation for sustainable development was the launch of the **UN Office for Sustainable Development** in Incheon, Korea. Supported by Yonsei University—one of the oldest universities in the Republic of Korea—UNOSD functions as a knowledge and training hub to support governments in implementing sustainable development through research and policy analysis, capacity development, and partnerships.

More information

Intergovernmental Committee on an Effective Financing Strategy for Sustainable Development

On 10 January the President of the General Assembly, Vuk Jeremic, appointed the Permanent Representatives of Kazakhstan and Norway to facilitate the process of establishing an intergovernmental committee on an effective sustainable development financing strategy **(letter of appointment).**

Member States agreed at Rio+20 to establish an intergovernmental process under the auspices of the General Assembly, with a view to preparing a report proposing options on such a strategy. Its aim is to facilitate the mobilization of resources and their effective use in achieving sustainable development objectives. An intergovernmental committee, comprising 30 experts nominated by regional groups, with equitable geographical representation, will implement this process. The committee will conclude its work by 2014 and update the General Assembly on the progress of its work before the beginning of the sixty-eighth session.

More information

Google+ Hangout on Rio+20 - Join the conversation!

"Sustainable Development in Action"
Post-Rio+20 Google+ Hangout

Tuesday, 12 February
12:00 PM (EST)
Hosted on UN Google+ Account

Tweet your questions to @SustDev
using #SDinAction

As part of the ongoing follow-up of Rio+20, the United Nations Division for Sustainable Development and UNDESA will host a Google+ Hangout on Tuesday, 12 February at 12 PM EST, featuring key experts from the UN system and civil society on Rio+20 and sustainable development. The first in a series of **Google+ Hangouts** aim to highlight major outcomes of the Conference, and the key processes that followed.

Panellists for the first "Sustainable Development in Action" Google+ Hangout include Nikhil Seth, Director of the UN's Division for Sustainable Development and the Rio+20 Secretariat; Elizabeth Thompson, Executive Coordinator for the Rio+20 conference; Kimo Goree, Vice-President of the International Institute for Sustainable Development Reporting Services (IISD); and Jacob Scherr, Director of global strategy and advocacy for the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC.)

The Google+ Hangout will also feature a 20-minute live Q & A session with the panellists. Tweet your questions for panellists to @SustDev using #SDinAction, post your questions on the Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform Facebook page or **submit your question here** .

Join the Google+ Hangout

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