



HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

SESSION #6:

PRACTICES AND APPROACHES ON QUALITY EDUCATION TOWARDS ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE.

TIME:

SESSION 6: Thursday, 11 July from 3:00 pm to 6:00 pm in conference room 5.

PARTNER INSTITUTIONS:

- International Federation of Social Workers
- International Science Council (ISC/ICSU)
- Harvard University - Zofnass Program for Sustainable Infrastructure

PANELISTS:

- **Prof. L S Shashidhara:** Professor, Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER), Pune, India.
- **Dr Lucilla Spini:** Senior Science and Policy Officer International Science Council (ISC).
- **Dr Boram Lee:** Senior Scientific Officer, World Climate Research Programme (WCRP), World Meteorological Organization (WMO)
- **Cristina Contreras Casado:** Research Associate, Harvard University Zofnass Program (ZP). (Session Moderator).
- **Judith Rodriguez:** Research Associate & Program Administrator, Harvard University Zofnass Program (ZP)
- **Michael Cronin, Ph.D:** Main Representative to the UN, IFSW Associate Professor Monmouth University.
- **Elaine Congress:** Representative to the UN, IFSW Associate Dean & Professor Fordham University.
- **Priska Fleischlin:** UN Commissioner (Geneva). CEO, WoBe AG, Care Farming for people with disabilities or mental illness.

AGENDA:

- **3:00- 3:10 pm:** Introduction to the workshop
- **3:10- 3:20 pm:** Self-introduction by the panelists
- **3:20 - 3:30 pm:** Ice breaking activity - Engagement with the audience
- **3:30 - 4:00 pm:** Representing institutions: IFSW, TROP ICSU, Harvard University
- **4:00 - 5:20 pm:** Presentation of a common case study from the perspectives of IFSW, TROP ICSU and Harvard University
- **5:00 - 5:15 pm:** Discussion in groups
- **5:15 - 5:45 pm:** Q&A between the audience and the panelists
- **5:45 - 5:55 pm:** Key lessons learned
- **5:55 - 6:00 pm:** Closing of the event



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SUMMARY OF THE SESSION:

Designing sustainable infrastructure, that is locally-relevant, but based on global science is the most critical challenge being faced today by policymakers and people working on this issue at Governmental and non-Governmental levels. Over the past 50 years, scientists, NGOs and many governmental organisations across the world have tracked the cause of climate change at the global level and environmental degradation at regional levels, leading to climate action initiatives such as innovative technologies to harness solar and other renewable energy sources, green businesses, environmental governance, conservation and restoration of biodiversity and its ecosystem function and services etc, ultimately aimed at achieving sustainable developmental goals. However, decelerating the trajectory of the Anthropocene in foreseeable future requires innovative solutions that promote a more harmonious coexistence with nature. Despite wealth of sound science, there has been little success in changing in the public mind-set about climate change. Social science research recognises many of the cognitive and cultural barriers that hinder popular acceptance of human-induced climate change. For example, distance and doom: the perception that climate change is something that happens physically and temporally too far away to be relevant, and/or it is too late to do anything about it.

To address this important challenge, we need a whole new generation of leaders in academia, civil society, government, industry, commerce, media and politics, whose education should start now. Existing cross-disciplinary collaborations between science must be broadened to assimilate inputs from the human and behavioral sciences, from law and politics, media and the creative arts, and social workers working within grassroots NGOs on environmentally just sustainable community development. New educational models and curricula, opportunities for experiential learning, etc are needed to inculcate environmental understanding in today's students and embed it more effectively in the wider consciousness of citizens. Success of these educational efforts will help the world to develop appropriate sustainable infrastructure.

This session brainstorm on variety of approaches that formal (curriculum, pedagogy, cross-disciplinary linkages) and informal (such as NGOs working at the grass-root level) education systems can adopt to promote trans-disciplinary thinking essential for public understanding of the science of environmental degradation and climate change and (ii) to ways to obtain feedback from the community to design environmentally just sustainable infrastructure at local levels and identify ways to reverse and mitigate climate change at global levels. We would take up one or two case studies and demonstrate how education at formal and informal levels is key to develop appropriate sustainable infrastructure and propose models for further expansion of these methods across time and space.

In summary, we envisage the people of all age groups and socio-economic sections of the society to gain first-hand understanding of human-caused detrimental effects on their surrounding areas, make environmental problems more real, and empower marginalized communities to be included in identifying solutions that are socially, politically and economically just. We envisage forging new interconnections—between human and environmental concerns; between urban and rural problems; between phenomena operating in different parts of the world, and thereby, clearly demonstrating the close synergies between people, place and planet.