



Sunrise over rice terraces in Yunnan, China. Alex Goh Chun/500PX/National Geographic Creative

Background

In the face of escalating global challenges that hinder societal progress and could jeopardize human existence, it is essential to shift away from unsustainable development practices and embrace a transformative approach. As emphasized in “[Reimagining our Futures Together](#)’: A New Social Contract for Education’ (UNESCO 2021), if education can serve as a powerful catalyst for change, we must *transform* education. Higher education, situated at the nexus of knowledge and practice, has a pivotal responsibility to promote international cooperation, especially in the Global South, among diverse stakeholders across education sub-sectors and broader society, addressing critical issues for sustainability.

Higher education institutions play a crucial role in driving innovation and leading actions to harness the potential of education, knowledge, and research for sustainability, especially through diverse forms of international cooperation such as South-South cooperation, Public-Private Partnership, etc. Jointly coordinated among higher education institutions and affiliated partners, knowledge, drivers and actions

can be contextualized and diversified in supporting sustainability initiatives through evidence-oriented, exchange-based, intersectoral, cross-regional, and multistakeholder approaches.

In celebration of the World Earth Month - an internationally annually recognized month to encourage extended support for environmental protection in the spirit of the [International Mother Earth Day](#) on April 22 - and to further promote higher education's leadership in contributing to sustainability, please join researchers, future thinkers and action-takers from higher education along with UNESCO IESALC, National Geographic Learning, United Nations of South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC), Global Student Forum, UNESCO Chairs and UNITWIN Networks, the Rector Network for Sustainable Development and Transformative Alliances, the United Nations South-South University Cooperation Network and other partners for a day of inspiring discussions on tools, practices, and strategies to act on strengthening international higher education cooperation for sustainability.

Fostering collaboration and joint work is essential to advance the Greening Education agenda promoted by UNESCO, allowing the creation of knowledge networks, the exchange of experiences and the consolidation of an educational approach that integrates ecological awareness at all levels of education. Through this meeting, we seek to inspire and mobilize efforts to build a more sustainable, resilient and inclusive future.

Objectives

This event seeks to promote a global educational transformation through international cooperation in higher education, bringing together academia representatives, students, private sector representatives, youth, civil society, and key actors in intergovernmental spaces to reimagine knowledge, teaching, and research with a firm commitment to sustainability. In response to the escalating global challenges, the conference aims to foster a transformative approach to education that drives the sustainability agenda forward. With a special focus on the Global South, we aim to inspire collaborative actions that create a real impact in building a more just, resilient, and sustainable future for generations to come. Our Objectives are:

- To engage higher education leaders, scholars, and other stakeholders in conversations about strengthening international cooperation, particularly in the Global South, to support sustainability.
- To provide concrete tools and share best practices for driving higher education's contribution to sustainability through transdisciplinary and multi-stakeholder collaborations.
- To host workshops on a whole-institution approach to designing and implementing tools that support sustainability through international cooperation, with a focus on the Global South.

The overarching aim is to foster collaborative efforts among higher education institutions and key stakeholders to transform education, knowledge, and research toward global sustainability, especially in the Global South.

Provisional Agenda (9H00 AM – 18H00 PM)

Time	Item
9h00-10h00	Registration
10h00-11h30	High-Level Opening and Session 1: International Higher Education Cooperation for Sustainability – Policies, Practices, and Networks
11h30-13h00	Break
13h00-15h00	Session 2: International Cooperation for Greening Higher Education – Multistakeholder OER on Sustainability by UNESCO IESALC and NGL
15h00- 15h30	Break
15h30-17h30	Session 3: Whole-Institution Approach Workshops for Sustainability through International Cooperation
17h30-18H00	Closing and Ways Forward

Disclaimer

Please note that this concept note is a draft and subject to further changes.