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Unitar Online Catalogue

E-learning Course: Harnessing Climate & SDGs Synergies

Accelerating SDG Implementation

Deadline: 2 Aug 2023

Type:	Course
Location:	Web Based
Date:	6 Jul 2021 to 31 Aug 2023
Duration of event:	5 Weeks
Programme Area:	Climate Change
Specific Target Audience:	No
Website:	http://www.learnatunitar.org
Price:	No Fee
Event Focal Point Email:	tianyi.zhao@unitar.org
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BACKGROUND

This eLearning course is developed by UNITAR, UNDESA and UNFCCC and builds on outcomes of the Climate and SDGs synergies conference in 2019 and online consultations in 2020-2021 on this topic. The course consists of three part, which are briefly described below:

Part I: The Global Challenges: Poverty and Inequality, Climate Change, and the Pandemic

The world community faces multiple crises at the same time.

First, there is continued poverty in many of the developing countries, mainly in least developed and land-locked

developing countries, and in many of the low-income Small Island Developing States. Socio-economic disparities and inequalities have widened in many countries, threatening to leave destitute and vulnerable communities behind.

Secondly, recent reports on continued growth in global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions are alarming scientists and development policy makers. Without more ambitious climate action, the world community may not be able to reach the main goals of the Paris Agreement on keeping climate change and global temperature increases in check.

And thirdly, the global COVID-19 public health crisis is worsening in many countries, causing terrible loss of life, human suffering, and economic and social stress. By the end of February 2021, the World Health Organization had reported more than 110 million infections and 2.4 million deaths worldwide.[1] Many countries enforced strict economic lockdowns and border closures to prevent the spread of the virus. In addition to the immediate costs in the health sector, there were widespread economic losses in 2020, and prospects for 2021 and beyond remain uncertain.

Around the world, COVID-19 responses and relief efforts have demanded large amounts of financial resources, causing reduced liquidity and increased debt. The full impact of the pandemic is still unknown, yet it has already made climate action much more difficult.

Part II: The Universally Agreed Global Vision: Agenda 2030 and the Paris Agreement

Since 2015, the world community has had a common vision for sustainable development. At the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit held in September 2015, world leaders adopted Agenda 2030, including its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In December of the same year, 196 State Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change adopted the UNFCCC Paris Agreement, with the goal of "holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above preindustrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C", recognizing that this would significantly reduce the risks and impacts of climate change.

Agenda 2030 includes Sustainable Development Goal 13, which calls for "urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts". Article 2 of the UNFCCC Paris Agreement, in turn, aims for collaborative climate action "within the framework of sustainable development and poverty eradication". Clearly, sustainable development and combatting climate change are seen as inextricably linked. Lowering the risk and impact of climate change is a precondition for sustainable development, whereas sustainable development is needed to mobilize the human, technical, and financial resources necessary to master the transition to a low-carbon future.

Both the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) within the framework of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement have voluntary actions; in the case of the Paris Agreement, these are based on nationally determined targets. The SDGs are a call to action endorsed by the world's leaders at the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit 2015, while the Paris Agreement is an agreement reached by Parties to the Convention. The climate change commitments that countries have made in the context of the Paris Agreement (nationally determined contributions (NDCs)) are not themselves legally binding, though countries are required to maintain their NDCs and monitor and report on progress in meeting them, as well as to scale up ambition over time.

Part III: Need to increase the level of ambition on climate change

There is an urgent need to increase the level of ambition on climate change. Measurements published by the United States National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) on 14 January 2021, suggest that 2020 was the second hottest year on record, and that the seven hottest years ever recorded were all between 2014 and 2020.[2]

Since the adoption of the Paris Agreement, some 190 State Parties to the Convention have formulated and communicated their first Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).[3]

Although there has since been some significant momentum and engagement, the current level of commitments and contributions is still seen as greatly insufficient. As mandated by the State Parties to the Convention, the UNFCCC secretariat more recently published an interim Synthesis Report reflecting the status of NDCs as of 31 December 2020.[4] Although the report provides only an interim snapshot and is based on only NDC communications from 75 countries representing 30 per cent of global GHG emissions, it also shows that according to current commitments the world community would only achieve a global emission reduction of 1 per cent below 2010 levels by 2030, whereas the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) had indicated that a reduction of 45 per cent by 2030 was needed to achieve the Paris 1.5°C temperature goal.

In accordance with the Paris Agreement, State Parties have committed to a process of step-by-step increases in ambition and commitment every five years. A second global round of updated NDC Reports is due for the by 2020-2021 period, in time for the 26th Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC, which is to be held in Glasgow, Scotland, under the Presidency of the United Kingdom. In many countries, updates and new NDC Reports are currently under preparation and COP-26 is expected to assess the most recent trends and determine additional climate action that may still be needed.

[1] World Health Organization Coronavirus Disease Dashboard (25 February 2021): https://covid19.who.int/

[2] NOAA: https://www.noaa.gov/news/2020-was-earth-s-2nd-hottest-year-just-behind-2016

[3] UNFCCC Interim NDC registry: https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/NDCStaging/Pages/All.aspx

[4] United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Bonn (Advance version, 26 February 2021): Nationally determined contributions under the Paris Agreement, Synthesis Report by the secretariat (Document FCCC/PA/CMA/2021/2) https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cma2021_02_adv_0.pdf

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Suggest refining objectives. Is this intended for general public? I would assume the target audience is more Policymakers and practitioners?
- What is meant here by industry?
- Educate the public on the positive relations between pursuing climate goals and implementing SDGs.
- Introduce new sustainable business opportunities and possibilities for stakeholders by making the case for synergies.
- Introduce the tools used to identify and harness climate & SDG interlinkages, provide practical guidance on the industry level.
- Elaborate on the strategies to overcome implementation challenges. Eventually, the course aims to turn the pursuit of positive climate impact and the achievement of SDGs an industry and policy standards.

METHODOLOGY

The course will be conducted in English over a period of 6 months period, organized in modules on different topics. The course will be delivered via UNITAR's e-Learning platform. This pedagogical tool will help participants meet the course's learning objectives through a self-paced study routine supported by multimedia, optional and required readings, discussion forums, assessment quizzes, and a wealth of other information.

TARGETED AUDIENCE

Beyond diplomats, government officials and representatives of international organizations, the course will also benefit professionals from the private sector, students, and other interested individuals.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

General Requirements

Have a good command of the English language
Be computer literate

Technical Requirements

UNITAR recommends the following as a minimum in hardware and software to take our e-Learning courses. Please consult your Network Administrator or Systems person to ensure that you have the following:

Platform: Windows 95, 98, 2000, NT, ME, XP or superior; MacOS 9 or MacOS X; Linux
Hardware: 64 MB of RAM, 1 GB of free disk space
Software:

Adobe Acrobat Reader (click here to download for free)
Adobe Flash Player (click here to download for free)
Microsoft Office (Windows or Mac) or Open Office (click here to download for free)

Browser: Internet Explorer 7 or higher (click here to download for free); it works better with Firefox 3.6 or higher (click here to download for free)
Note that JavaScript, Cookies and Pop-ups must be enabled

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