



## 2ND UNITAR INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH CONFERENCE UN BRUSSELS, BELGIUM — 3-4 DECEMBER 2024

### UN 2.0: Our Common Agenda and the Role of Higher Education in Conflict, Peace, and Development Research Conference

#### Environmental Sustainability Note: Promoting Sustainable Practices at the UN 2.0 Conference on Higher Education, Conflict, Peace, and Development Research

In alignment with the practices of the United Nations and other international and local organisations, we are providing this sustainability statement to highlight our commitment to reducing the environmental impact of the "UN 2.0: Our Common Agenda and the Role of Higher Education in Conflict, Peace, and Development Research" conference, hosted at UN House, Boulevard du Régent 37-40, 1000 Brussels, Belgium. While we recognise that organising an international event poses challenges in fully controlling environmental impacts, we are actively working to incorporate sustainable practices in all areas of the event. This conference reflects our collective responsibility to contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 13 (Climate Action), SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), and SDG 4 (Quality Education).

To further support sustainability, we are also offering an online modality to reduce the need for travel, in line with our goals of minimising the carbon footprint.

#### Venue

- The conference will take place at UN House in Brussels, a venue centrally located to encourage the use of low-carbon transport options, in support of SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities).

#### Transport

- Sustainable travel options: We recommend that participants minimize their carbon footprint by selecting direct flights and utilizing public transport or other low-emission options once in Brussels. The city's extensive public transport system, including trams, buses, and metros, supports SDG 11 by promoting sustainable urban mobility.
- Cycling options: Brussels offers eco-friendly alternatives through bike-sharing services such as Villo!, contributing to SDG 13 (Climate Action).



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#### Meals

- **Sustainable catering:** In line with SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), all meals will be vegetarian and vegan, focusing on reducing the environmental impact of food production. Local and seasonal ingredients will be prioritised to minimize food miles and support responsible consumption. Guest numbers for catering will be calculated as accurately as possible to eliminate surplus food.
- **Water refill stations:** To reduce the use of single-use plastics, water refill stations will be available at the venue, and participants are encouraged to bring reusable bottles. We will also provide a reusable bottle for each attendee, promoting waste reduction in alignment with SDG 12.

#### Waste Reduction

- **Recycling stations:** Throughout UN House, clearly marked recycling stations will be available to ensure proper waste sorting and disposal, supporting SDG 12.
- **Reducing printed materials:** Conference materials—including schedules, agendas, and research papers—will be distributed digitally, reducing the need for paper in line with SDG 12. Printed materials will be available upon request for accessibility purposes.

#### Gadgets and Materials

- **Eco-friendly materials:** We will make resources and stationery available to participants, but we encourage everyone to only take what they truly find useful and necessary. We also encourage participants to reuse these materials after the event to reduce waste. Additionally, leftover materials from previous events will be offered to minimize the production of new items, further supporting our efforts to reduce resource consumption. This practice aligns with SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), as it promotes mindful use of materials and reduces waste.
- **No additional badges:** We will not issue separate event badges, instead using official access badges provided by UN House, to reduce the use of single-use materials.



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#### Online Participation

- **Online modality:** As part of our sustainability initiative, we are offering an online participation option, reducing the need for travel and contributing to SDG 13 (Climate Action) by lowering the carbon emissions associated with international travel.

#### Online Platform

- **Efficient and Sustainable Platform:** To support the conference, we have developed a custom-built online platform using UNITAR's internal SharePoint system. Designed exclusively for registered participants—both online and in person—the platform features a streamlined layout that prioritises efficiency and accessibility. With minimal internet consumption, simple graphics, and quick loading times, it supports SDG 13 (Climate Action) by reducing energy demands. This thoughtful design underscores our commitment to sustainability and resource optimisation.

#### Environmental Awareness

- **Encouraging sustainability dialogue:** In line with SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals), we encourage participants to engage in discussions and share initiatives on how we can further reduce the environmental footprint of this and future events. By fostering collaboration and dialogue, we aim to continuously improve our sustainability practices.

This sustainability statement reflects our commitment to supporting the SDGs and minimising the environmental impact of this conference. While we recognize that not all factors are fully within our control, we are dedicated to implementing sustainable practices wherever possible. We thank all participants for their active contribution toward making this event as sustainable as possible and for supporting our efforts to reduce its environmental footprint.



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#### Conference Co-Organizing Members:

- ÇAĞ University (ÇAĞ Üniversitesi)
- Polytechnic University of Cartagena (Universitat Politècnica de Cartagena)
- Technical University of Sofia (Технически университет - София)
- Oxford Brookes University
- University of Derby
- Technical University of Cluj-Napoca (Universitatea Tehnică din Cluj)
- World Association for Disaster and Emergency Medicine
- Diplomats Without Borders
- National Institute of Administration (Instituto Nacional de Administração, I. P.)
- Irish Economic Association



#### Conference Committee Members:

- United Nations Institute of Training and Research (UNITAR)
- Technological University Dublin (TU Dublin)
- Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (Open University of Catalonia)

