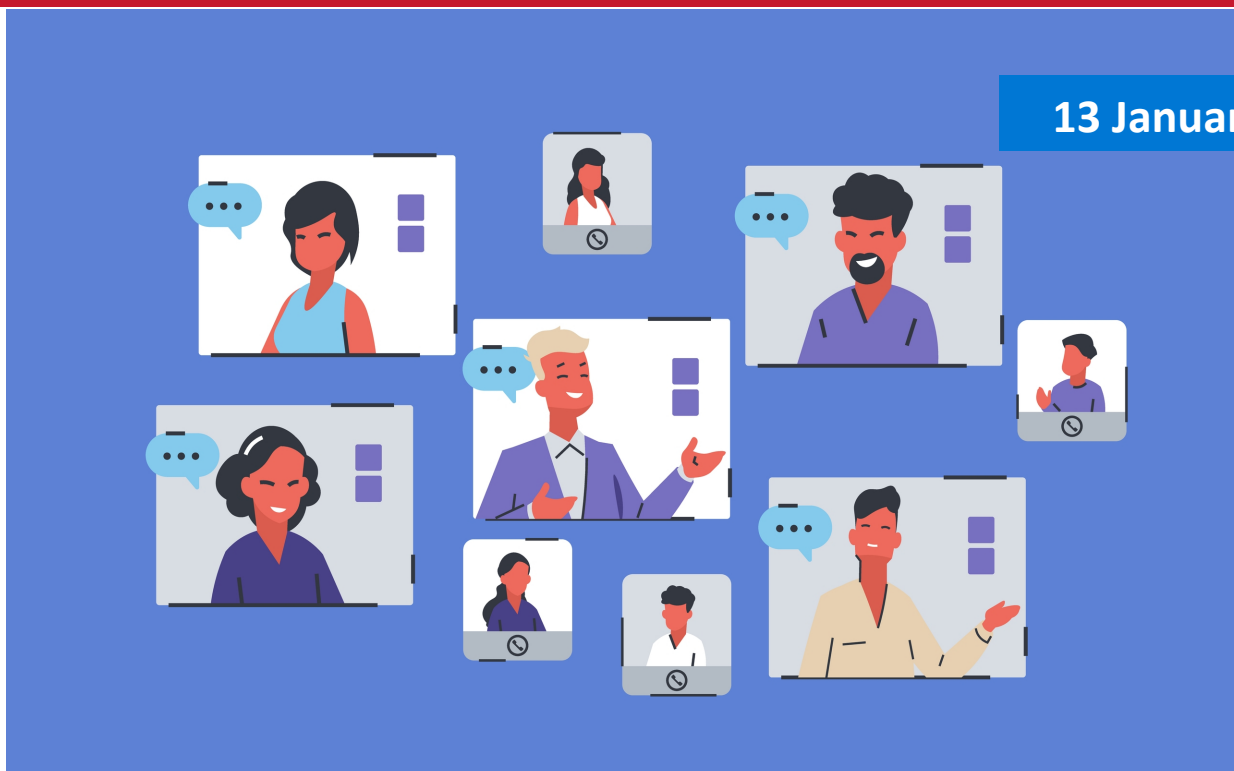




13 January 2022



Organizational arrangements

Date and time: Thursday, 13 January, 15:00 – 16:00 (CET)

Format: Zoom webinar. Prior registration is required

Registration link: https://unesco-org.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_NEKS6iUeSDmx7qXmqKrFw

Target audience: Policy makers and higher education stakeholders

Language: English

Background

Universities and higher education institutions more broadly have long played a significant role in society. They have an ability to act as paramount mechanisms in our society, economy and environment, at local and even international levels, for example through the implementation of the [Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education](#).

As important sites for knowledge production, research, innovation, and the education of the future workforce, these institutions have a strong role and impact on the society that we live in. In face of the 2030 Agenda, this important role of universities remains essential. But what does that mean? How can and should universities and higher education institutions help to address the world's greatest challenges?

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as identified by the United Nations lay out a framework of transformations towards a more sustainable future for all. Higher education has the ability to support the achievement of these goals, and also in employing more systemic approaches that recognize the cross-cutting nature of these goals and their targets. As such, there is a need to deeply understand how these institutions can best contribute to the SDGs in terms of research and curricula, as well as their role

outside of the walls of the academia.

In 2020, UNESCO partnered with the University of Bergen to establish the Global Independent Expert Group on the Universities and the 2030 Agenda ([EGU2030](#)) to address these themes. Their report will become available online in early 2022 and provide reflections on the necessary transformations and what the contributions of universities towards the 2030 Agenda might look like.

It has become increasingly clear that the international community must speed up its efforts to transform higher education to tackle global challenges and contribute to the SDGs. As noted in the [Futures of Education Report](#) recently launched by UNESCO's International Commission, universities and higher education institutions must be active in every aspect of building a new social contract for education. It is essential to understand what this means, and how these institutions can best amp up their support towards the achievement of the SDGs.

Objectives and Agenda

This is the third in the series of Higher Education Conversations in the leadup to the [3rd World Higher Education Conference](#) (Barcelona, 18 – 20 May 2022). It aims to bring together policy makers and higher education stakeholders to discuss how higher education must transform itself to contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals laid out by the 2030 Agenda.

Key questions to be examined:

- How can universities and other higher education institutions gear up their activities (teaching, research, community engagement, etc.) to tackle global challenges? What should their focus be?
- What new knowledge, research, and education strategies are needed to generate the necessary transformations for the 2030 Agenda?
- What are the necessary transformations required within universities in order to contribute to the achievement of the SDGs? What barriers stand in the way of these transformations?
- What can universities and other higher education institutions do to ensure more inclusive and sustainable futures for all, both within their institutions and within broader society?

| Thursday, 13 January 2022 | |
|---------------------------|--|
| 15:00 – 15:05 | Opening Ms Vibeke Jensen, Director of the Division for Peace and Sustainable Development, UNESCO |
| 15:05 – 15:25 | Discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mr Dag Olav Hessen, Professor in Biosciences and head of Centre of Biogeochemistry in the Anthropocene, University of Oslo; EGU2030 co-chair• Ms Sylvia Schmelkes, Academic Provost, Universidad Iberoamericana in Mexico City; EGU2030 co-chair• Mr Seeram Ramakrishna, Professor and Chair of Circular Economy Taskforce, National University of Singapore; member of EGU2030 Moderator: Ms Phoebe Kirkup, Secretariat of the 3rd World Higher Education Conference, UNESCO |
| 15:25 – 15:55 | Question and answer session |
| 15:55 – 16:00 | Wrap up Ms Phoebe Kirkup, Secretariat of the 3rd World Higher Education Conference, UNESCO |

Information on upcoming conversations: <https://en.unesco.org/news/higher-educationconversations>