

From Science to Practice

**Research and Knowledge to Achieve
the Sustainable Development Goals**

**A CONTRIBUTION OF
INTERNATIONAL GENEVA
TO THE HIGH-LEVEL
POLITICAL FORUM**



**SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

Organizing partners



The United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) is an autonomous research institute within the UN system that undertakes multidisciplinary research and policy analysis on the social dimensions of contemporary development issues. Through our work we aim to ensure that social equity, inclusion and justice are central to development thinking, policy and practice.



Spanning boundaries between science and global policy. Backed by leading research institutions in Switzerland and Europe, the Geneva Science-Policy Interface (GSPI) is an independent, neutral platform that strives to enhance scientific engagement with global governance actors within the Geneva ecosystem. By supporting collaborations between scientists and policy actors, the GSPI contributes to facilitate the emergence of effective, evidence-informed policies and solutions to complex global problems.

THINK TANK HUB

The Think Tank Hub facilitates the involvement and evidence-based contributions of think tanks to policy discussions within International Geneva. The Think Tank Hub contributes to the International Geneva ecosystem with innovative formats and new angles to challenges multilateralism is facing. The Think Tank Hub is the point of reference for animating formats and fresh ideas in International Geneva and enables international think tanks access to global discussions.



The Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) Switzerland mobilizes universities, research centers, civil society organizations, and other knowledge institutions to create and implement transformative solutions to achieve the 2030 Agenda in Switzerland and beyond. SDSN Switzerland has the following objectives:

- Shape multi-stakeholder dialogue: Accelerate continuous exchange of ideas and experiences, and create thinking spaces for all stakeholders to foster systemic solutions, build commitment and mobilize action.
- Foster transformative solutions: Harness scientific and transdisciplinary knowledge to generate new evidence-based solutions, integrated policies and systemic change.
- Advise decision makers: Offer evidence-based advice to decision makers in politics, business and society to fill policy gaps and motivate normative change.



The SDG Lab is a multi-stakeholder initiative that contributes to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals by maximizing the added-value of International Geneva. It creates space for interdisciplinary and multisectoral collaboration while consistently testing assumptions and asking questions about what is needed to achieve the 2030 Agenda.

With the generous support of



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- Lichia Yiu, Centre for Socio-Eco-Nomic Development (CSEND)

*until end-2020



The Initiative

Geneva is a thriving ecosystem, home to a world-class concentration of academic institutes, think tanks, NGOs and international organizations conducting groundbreaking policy-relevant research with their global partners. Building on a series of events exploring how science can be translated into policy and action, a consortium of Geneva-based institutions has established a new channel through which research and knowledge from International Geneva can amplify its impact on global policy making, and help to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The United Nations Secretary-General has called for a Decade of Action to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. Progress towards the goals is reviewed in July each year at the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) that takes place in New York. Many Geneva-based organizations, including those dedicated to research on critical issues pertaining to the SDGs, participate in the HLPF typically through holding side events or contributing to panel sessions. However, this participation is not comprehensive or systematic, and further scope exists for bringing the evidence and knowledge created by International Geneva and its global partners into the HLPF.

In 2016 and again in 2019 the research community in Geneva held meetings to explore how research can most effectively influence policy and practice, particularly in the context of the SDGs. The next meeting, in March 2021, will continue the dialogue on research-policy uptake, but it will also consider the latest evidence created by actors in International Geneva and their partners that pertains to the SDGs under review at the upcoming HLPF. The meeting in March 2021 is situated within a longer process that collects and synthesizes the evidence submitted; and follows this with outreach events in Geneva and New York (April to July 2021) to ensure maximum traction on the HLPF. If successful in 2021, this is a format that could be replicated on an annual basis, focusing each year on the SDGs to be reviewed at the next HLPF.

Purpose

Ensure that the latest research on the SDGs conducted by organizations in International Geneva, and their global partners, is collected and delivered in a way that contributes to the thematic review segment of the HLPF. The material can further be used by partners to inform and support policy makers and the public.

Outcomes

- More comprehensive and higher quality thematic reviews at the HLPF.
- Greater visibility for organizations in International Geneva and their partners in the lead-up to and during the HLPF.
- Greater uptake of evidence in SDG implementation.

In 2021, the HLPF will review progress made towards the following Goals







OPEN CONSULTATION

Insights from International Geneva

Programme of events

Scientific research can make a critical contribution to addressing global challenges and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). However, translating the knowledge that comes from research into action on the ground remains a complicated task. Research often fails to find its way into policy making circles due to a number of technical, normative, cultural, political, institutional and financial barriers. With this in mind, a consortium of Geneva-based institutions established a new channel through which research and knowledge from International Geneva can amplify its impact on national and global policy. In this consultation meeting, we will present and discuss three draft thematic reports covering the SDGs that will be reviewed at the 2021 High-Level Political Forum (HLPF). We invite you to join the meeting and share your feedback on the findings, after which the papers will be revised and distributed for discussion by policy makers in the run-up to and at the HLPF.

Human Well-Being and Capabilities

 29 March
 14:00–16:00 CET



 [Read the draft paper](#)

 [Register to take part in the consultation](#) 



Good health, clean environments, freedom from poverty and protection from discrimination—enabled by strong democratic institutions and peaceful societies—are essential for realizing the capabilities of all people. Achieving this vision as set out in the 2030 Agenda will require an integrated, evidence-based and interdisciplinary approach. This report on human well-being and capabilities harnesses research from International Geneva to support this global effort.

Sophie Plagerson

Independent Consultant

Patricio Cuevas-Parra


World Vision International

Paola Ballon

Smith School of Enterprise and the Environment,
Oxford University

Thomas Biersteker

The Graduate Institute, [moderator](#)

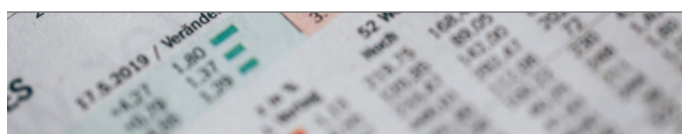
 With a workshop segment facilitated by

Maria Isabelle Wieser

Think Tank Hub Geneva, [foraus](#)

Sustainable and Just Economies

 30 March
 14:00–16:00 CET



 [Read the draft paper](#)

 [Register to take part in the consultation](#) 



Economic systems that promote an equitable distribution of benefits to the whole population—regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, age, citizenship status, or any other characteristic—and growth that preserves rather than profits off of the natural environment, are essential for building a more just, more sustainable world. This report draws on research from International Geneva to explore how to build sustainable and just economies, providing evidence-based recommendations for policy makers.

Joachim Monkelbaan

Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO) in Geneva

Denison Jayasooria

Asian Solidarity Economy Council (ASEC)


Marianna Leite

Human Rights Centre, Faculty of Law,
University of Coimbra

Raymond Saner

Centre for Socio-Eco-Nomic Development (CSEND),

[moderator](#)

 With a workshop segment facilitated by

Kali Taylor, SDG Lab

Insights from International Geneva

Programme of events

Food Systems and Nutrition Patterns

📅 31 March
🕒 14:00–16:00 CET



📄 [Read the draft paper](#)

📅 [Register to take part in the consultation](#) ➤



Ending hunger and malnutrition requires a transition to a sustainable global food system that minimizes environmental impacts, is resilient to shocks, and ensures all people equal access to a healthy diet, now and in the future. This report on food systems and nutrition patterns harnesses research from International Geneva in order to inform policy decisions towards this objective.

Neetu Choudhary

Amity University Patna (India),
Arizona State University

Kiah Smith

University of Queensland

Mary Ng'endo Kanui

International Rice Research Institute

Ahmad Mukhtar

FAO, *moderator*

✎ With a workshop segment facilitated by **Jorge Tamayo**, SDSN Switzerland

SPECIAL SESSION

Towards 2030: Navigating Complexity and Information Overload in Decision Making

📅 1 April
🕒 14:00–16:00 CET



📅 [Register to take part in the consultation](#) ➤

In 2020, more than 100,000 academic articles were published on Covid-19. The public, the media and civil society also covered the issue. Yet, international and national decision makers need to make decisions under time constraints and uncertainty. The problem is not just the speed of knowledge synthesis, it is also about how decision makers deal with the uncertainty that comes with such stressful situations. In this session, participants will learn about the current knowledge on how best to navigate complexity and information overload, based on behavioural insights to strengthen decision making.

Nicolas Seidler

Geneva Science-Policy Interface (GSPI)

Chiara Varazzani

OECD

Maxime Stauffer

Geneva Science-Policy Interface (GSPI)

Jill Rutter

Institute for Government, United Kingdom

Priyanka Saksena

WHO, Tunisia

David Mair

European Commission's Joint Research Centre

Maira Faul

NORRAG, *moderator*

This session is organized by the Geneva Science-Policy Interface



DIRECTORY



Paola Ballon

Paola Ballon is a Research Associate at the Smith School of Enterprise and the Environment, Oxford University. An econometrician with more than 10 years of expertise, she is specialized in the measurement and statistical analysis of multidimensional poverty, human development, female empowerment and water security. Paola has been an international consultant for the World Bank, UNDP, UNICEF and the ILO, and was a Technical Adviser to the Ministry of Economics and Finance in Mozambique. She is the Associate Editor of *Oxford Development Studies*.

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Maggie Carter

Maggie Carter is a Research Analyst in the Transformative Social Policy Programme at UNRISD. She is co-coordinator of the projects “From Science to Practice: Research and Knowledge to Achieve the SDGs” and “Overcoming Inequalities in a Fractured World: Between Elite Power and Social Mobilization.” She is the co-editor (with Katja Hujo) of the forthcoming volume *Between Fault Lines and Front Lines: Shifting Power in an Unequal World* (Zed books/Bloomsbury). Her research focuses on spatial inequality, citizenship and social policy.

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Moira Faul

Moira Faul is the director of NORRAG—Network for International Policies and Cooperation in Education and Training. Previously, she was the Deputy Director of the Public-Private Partnership Center at the University of Geneva. Originally from Zimbabwe, Moira’s expertise and publications span the areas of education and international cooperation, as well as organizational development and management in the private and voluntary sectors. She successfully led a UK Research Councils-funded programme on knowledge exchange between research and policy at the University of Cambridge.

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Thomas Biersteker

Thomas Biersteker is Gasteyer Professor Honoraire at The Graduate Institute, Geneva. He is former Director of The Graduate Institute’s Programme for the Study of International Governance (Global Governance Centre), and of the Watson Institute for International Studies at Brown University in the US. He is the author/editor of 11 books, including *State Sovereignty as Social Construct* (1996), *The Emergence of Private Authority in Global Governance* (2002), *Targeted Sanctions: The Impacts and Effectiveness of United Nations Action* (2016), and *Informal Governance in World Politics* (forthcoming). He was the principal developer of UNSanctionsApp, a tool to increase access to information about targeted sanctions for policy practitioners at the UN.

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Neetu Choudhary

Neetu Choudhary is an Associate Professor at Amity University Patna (India) and Adjunct Faculty at the School of Human Evolution and Social Change, Arizona State University. Her research interests include food insecurity and malnutrition, gender, water and health, and informal workers. Neetu has several peer reviewed publications in these areas and her work has been recognized on various international platforms.

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Denison Jayasooria

Prof Datuk Dr Denison Jayasooria is currently an Associate Research Fellow at the Institute of Ethnic Studies, National University of Malaysia (KITA-UKM). He is Head of the secretariat for the All Party Parliamentary Group Malaysia on Sustainable Development Goals, Co-chair of the Malaysia CSO SDG Alliance, and member of the National SDG Steering Committee established by the Economic Planning Unit, Prime Minister’s Department, Malaysia. In 2017 he received the UN Award for his contribution to the mobilization of different stakeholders in Malaysia, particularly representatives of vulnerable groups, towards ensuring inclusion and participation in line with the 2030 Agenda.

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Eva Bortolotti

Eva Bortolotti currently works as Private Sector Specialist at UNDP Geneva, where she focuses on the role of social entrepreneurship and SDG-aligned finance in the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and the reduction of inequalities in developing countries. She has worked as consultant for different UN agencies and research centers, including UNRISD, the United Nations 75 Initiative (UN75), and the Centre for International Environmental Studies (CIES). Her recent work includes interdisciplinary research on sustainable development, social and environmental policy, sustainable finance, and the extent and effectiveness of policy responses to Covid-19 for vulnerable people and communities.

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Patricio Cuevas-Parra

Patricio Cuevas-Parra is the Director for Child Participation and Rights at World Vision International. He has a keen interest in adopting cutting edge advocacy tools and models to enhance children’s engagement in decision making. Patricio’s work focuses in particular on children and young people’s perspectives on violence and abuse; children’s rights and participation in public policy and decision making; child-led research, methodologies and impact; and children and young people’s identities and inequalities.

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Paul Ladd

Paul Ladd became Director of UNRISD in October 2015. Before taking up this position he worked at UNDP, where he was director of the team supporting consultations and technical inputs for the 2030 Development Agenda and of the UNDP policy team on “inclusive globalization”. Before moving to New York, Paul was a Policy Adviser on international development for the UK Treasury, Chief Economist and acting Head of Policy with UK charity Christian Aid, Economic Adviser at the UK Department for International Development and Financial Adviser with the Central Bank of Guyana.

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Marianna Leite

Marianna Leite is an international human rights lawyer, researcher and activist. Over the past few years, she has been primarily concerned with gender, business and human rights. This work is linked to analysis of structural systems such as (neo)colonialism, patriarchy and neoliberalism. Until December 2020, she was Women's Rights Strategic Adviser at Christian Aid. Prior to that, she was Christian Aid's Global Lead on Gender and Inequality, working on the development of holistic approaches to gender and intersecting inequalities that ensure equality of outcomes and rights for all.

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Joachim Monkelbaan

Joachim Monkelbaan is Representative for Sustainable and Just Economic Systems at the Quaker United Nations Office (QUUNO) in Geneva, and a professor in sustainability governance at International University in Geneva. Joachim has previously worked with UN Environment, IUCN, International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD), WHO, Climate-KIC, and the European Commission (DG Trade). He is the author of *Governance for the Sustainable Development Goals: Exploring an Integrative Framework of Theories, Tools, and Competencies* (Springer, 2019).

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Jill Rutter

Jill Rutter is a former British civil servant. She is now a senior fellow at the Institute for Government (IfG) in the UK, where she previously directed work on better policy making and Brexit as well as more general civil service issues. Jill's writing is frequently in the media, and she is a regular commentator on radio and television.

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Mary Ng'endo Kanui

Mary Ng'endo Kanui is a social scientist, currently working as a gender and youth specialist at the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) in Tanzania and Kenya. Prior to this, Mary worked as a poverty and equity consultant for the World Bank, a nutrition-sensitive agriculture consultant for the German Corporation for International Cooperation (GIZ), and a food and nutrition security postdoctoral scientist at the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF). Mary is trained in Environmental Geography, Environmental Science, and Nutrition Biochemistry.

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Ahmad Mukhtar

Ahmad Mukhtar is an economist focusing on trade and food security in the Geneva office of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). Ahmad has over 20 years of experience in the areas of international economic and trade policy, commercial diplomacy, bilateral and regional trade issues, and implementation of trade and investment policies in the public, private and international development sectors, including with UNCTAD and UNDP, as well as with Pakistan's Permanent Mission to the WTO, Ministry of Commerce, and Board of Investment, and with donor projects of USAID and the EU Technical Assistance.

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Priyanka Saksena

Priyanka Saksena is a Health Systems Adviser with the World Health Organization's Country Office for Tunisia, where she is responsible for supporting overall health policies in the country. Priyanka has been working for the WHO since 2008 and was previously based in Geneva and New Delhi. Previously she worked for the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and the International Labour Organization. Priyanka has degrees in economics, public health and law.

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David Mair

David Mair works in the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission, where he is Head of Unit responsible for research, tools and training on the use of scientific evidence for policy making, collaboration and knowledge-sharing, and citizen engagement/deliberative democracy ("Knowledge for Policy: Concepts and Methods"). Previously he was responsible for the JRC work programme on science advice to policy and foresight; and he was Head of Unit for consumer market monitoring and analysis in DG Health and Consumers. Before the Commission he worked for the UK Treasury, in the City of London as a corporate financier, and in the British Army.

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Sophie Plagerson

Sophie Plagerson is a Visiting Associate Professor at the Centre for Social Development in Africa at the University of Johannesburg. She is currently based in the Netherlands and working as an independent consultant. Her background is in research and advocacy, working in academic and non-governmental organizations on social development and health issues in Africa, Southeast Asia and Latin America. An interest for social justice underpins her research across a number of topics, including intersectoral policy linkages, inequality, social protection, welfare regimes; gender and work, social contract theory and informal workers.

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Raymond Saner

Raymond Saner is a Titular Professor in the Department of Economics and Management, University of Basel, and also teaches at the Center for Sustainability, Leuphana University of Lüneburg. He is a founder of CSEND, an ECOSOC-accredited research NGO. His research interests span a range of sustainable and social development topics, including trade, employment and poverty reduction, social economy, education, climate change and PPPs. His numerous publications include 7 books, 30 co-authored books, 8 book chapters and 34 refereed journal articles.

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Nicolas Seidler

Nicolas Seidler is the Executive Director of the Geneva Science-Policy Interface (GSPI), launched by the University of Geneva with the support of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs in October 2018. Backed by leading research institutions in Switzerland and Europe, the GSPI is an independent, neutral platform for collaborations between scientists and policy actors to facilitate the emergence of effective, evidence-informed policies and solutions to complex global problems. Nicolas was previously Senior Policy Advisor at the Internet Society, where he led the organization's policy implementation in the fields of Digital Rights and the Internet of Things.

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Jorge Tamayo

Jorge Tamayo is Co-Director of SDSN Switzerland. SDSN Switzerland is a platform that mobilizes universities, research centers, civil society organizations and businesses to create and implement transformative solutions to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals in Switzerland and beyond. He is a lawyer with over 10 years of project management experience, in-depth expertise in building, leading and strategically developing NGOs and NPOs, and broad knowledge and experience in the fields of education, integration, sustainable consumption and production, and food systems.



Maria Isabelle Wieser

Maria Isabelle Wieser is the Deputy Director and Head of foraus-Forum on Foreign Policy romandie and Think Tank Hub Geneva. Before taking up her current position, she co-founded the foraus Gender programme (May 2017), and worked as an academic associate for the Swiss Embassy in Washington, D.C. (2016-2017) She was named one of the 100 most influential personalities of Suisse romande in 2019, and in 2020 one of the "15 under 40" who make International Geneva, both by the newspaper Le Temps.

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Kiah Smith

Kiah Smith is a Senior Research Fellow in Sociology (Environment, Development) at the School of Social Science, The University of Queensland (Australia). Her research and publications explore food security, sustainable livelihoods, financialization, ethical trade, gender empowerment and food justice, in Australia and internationally. She is currently lead investigator on an Australian Research Council DECRA project on Fair Food Futures, Civil Society and the SDGs, a study that involves significant community and policy engagement. Kiah is also a Future Earth Fellow, and has contributed to international processes around the SDGs and the right to food.

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Kali Taylor

Kali Taylor is known for wearing many hats in the Geneva sustainability community. In her role as a policy advisor at IISD, she coordinates the Building Bridges initiative that aims to foster collaboration between the financial sector and the international community to advance financing of SDGs. Before this, she spearheaded and led the Geneva 2030 Ecosystem, and helped to create the SDG Lab at the UN in Geneva. Previously Kali co-founded and ran Student Energy, a youth-focused NGO working on energy and climate issues; completed an internship with the Green Growth Knowledge Platform; and held several positions in the energy industry focused on climate change and sustainability.

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Samir Yeddes

Samir Yeddes is currently the focal point at the Swiss Mission to the UN in Geneva for academic institutions, think tanks, Geneva platforms and science diplomacy. He holds an MA in international relations from The Graduate Institute in Geneva, and studied international law at the University Panthéon-Assas in Paris. He previously worked with the United Nations and the International Organization of La Francophonie. His fields of interest include digitalization, science diplomacy and transformations of global governance.

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Maxime Stauffer

Maxime Stauffer is a science-policy officer at the Geneva Science-Policy Interface (GSPI) and a founding CEO of the Simon Institute for Longterm Governance in Geneva. He is also a co-founder of the Social Complexity Lab and of Effective Altruism Geneva, where he still serves on the board. Maxime was previously a researcher at The Graduate Institute (Geneva) and advised the European Commission's Joint Research Centre on evidence-based policy-making. With a background in international relations and computational mathematics, his research interests revolve around decision-making in the face of complexity, including bounded-rationality and collective decision-making in policy contexts.

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Chiara Varazzani

Chiara Varazzani leads the OECD Public Governance work on behavioural insights, steering and overseeing technical contributions in applied behavioural science and evidence-based public policy. A behavioural economics expert, Chiara has set up and managed units in government, designing and running interventions across different public policy areas. She is experienced in training academics and staff. She has global public and private sector experience in behavioural economics. She holds a Ph.D. in Behavioural Neuroscience from Sorbonne University, a M.Sc. in Cognitive Sciences from the École Normale Supérieure and a M.Sc. from the School for Advanced Studies in Social Sciences.

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