



DRAFT CONCEPT NOTE

2023 Executive Training Course for Policymakers on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Incheon, Republic of Korea, 5-8 September 2023

Background

The United Nations Office for Sustainable Development (UNOSD) was established in 2011 in Incheon, Republic of Korea as a project office of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA). With support from the Government of Korea, UNOSD plays a crucial role in assisting Member States in achieving Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through capacity building, knowledge sharing, policy advisory, and partnership. Among its notable initiatives, UNOSD organizes the annual Executive Training Course for Policymakers on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This training course is designed to equip policymakers from developing countries with the necessary knowledge, skills, and tools to effectively implement the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs at the national level.

As we reach the halfway mark on our journey towards 2030, it is evident that the world is significantly off track in achieving the majority of the SDGs. According to the report of the Secretary-General (special edition) entitled “Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals: Towards a Rescue Plan for People and Planet”, a preliminary assessment of approximately 140 targets with available data shows that nearly half of the targets are considered moderately or severely off track and approximately 30% of the targets have shown no movement or have regressed¹. Among the five major recommendations to rescue the SDGs, the report calls for urgent action on strengthening public sector capacity to make SDG delivery a central focus for national planning, oversight mechanisms and domestic budgets.

With an aim to build capacity of public servants in developing countries to achieve the SDGs, the Executive Training Course for Policymakers on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development regularly takes place in Incheon, Korea, where around 70 participants gather every year. For the last two years, however, this flagship activity of the UNOSD was held online due to the coronavirus (COVID19) pandemic.

Recognizing the interconnected nature of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, the Executive Training Course for Policymakers aims to assist UN Member States in adopting a systems-thinking approach to SDG implementation. In addition, as the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) plays a pivotal role in monitoring and reviewing the SDGs on a global scale, the HLPF meetings generally serve as a useful backdrop to the organization of UNOSD’s Executive Training Course for Policymakers on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

¹ <https://hlpf.un.org/sites/default/files/2023-04/SDG%20Progress%20Report%20Special%20Edition.pdf>

Objectives

The main objective of the 2023 Executive Training Course is to enhance the knowledge, skills, mindsets, and overall capacities of member states in implementing sustainable development planning, policymaking, and policy shaping through an integrated approach. The course aims to achieve the following key objectives:

- Strengthen practical knowledge and skills for implementing the 2030 Agenda and SDGs with a specific focus on SDG 1, 2, 13, 16, and 17.
- Facilitate networking and the exchange of proven practices and case studies among public policymakers.
- Foster peer-to-peer collaboration and enhance partnership-building capacities across sectors, government entities, and Member States.

Structure and Methodology

The 2023 Executive Training Course for Policymakers on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development will take place in-person in Incheon, Korea. Some of the speakers may join online.

The course will centre around the theme of the 2024 HLPF², which emphasizes "Reinforcing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and eradicating poverty in times of multiple crises: the effective delivery of sustainable, resilient, and innovative solutions." During the training, participants will delve into the five SDGs that will receive special attention at the 2024 HLPF: Goal 1 (End poverty in all its forms everywhere), Goal 2 (End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture), Goal 13 (Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts), Goal 16 (Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all, and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels), and Goal 17 (Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development).

The course will consist of several interrelated modules, structured around ensuring accelerated actions for the Decade of Action. Emphasizing the importance of a 'whole-of-government' and 'whole-of-society' approach, the modules will build upon each other to equip participants with practical yet transformative policymaking skills for the SDGs. Each module will cover concepts and issues of 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, complemented by concrete policy practices and country cases. It will consist of presentations by international experts, scholars, and practitioners followed by Q&A and discussions. It will also include group work on simulations and role playing that feed back to plenary sessions. Preparatory reading and assignments will be requested of participants. Finally, a half-day site visit to illustrate the Korean experience in implementing the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs is foreseen.

Target Audience

The 2023 Executive Training Course for Policymakers on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development targets senior government officials from developing countries who are responsible for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at national levels.

International experts, scholars, practitioners, and representatives of regional and international organizations, including the United Nations, and of civil society and private sector may be invited to act as resource persons, presenters, speakers and discussants.

² UN General Assembly decision A/77/L.57, <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/LTD/N23/061/05/PDF/N2306105.pdf?OpenElement>

Language

The 2023 Executive Training Course for Policymakers on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development will be conducted in English.