



SDGs NEWSLETTER-UoM

October 2019 - 1st Edition

Welcome to the first edition of the UoM SDGs Newsletter

From the Editorial Team

"Sustainable Development is the pathway to the future we want for all. It provides a framework to generate economic growth, achieve social justice, exercise environmental stewardship and strengthen governance." -

Ban Ki-Moon

The United Nations Global Development Goals, also more commonly known as the Global Development Goals, were adopted in September 2015, with the aim of ending extreme poverty, promoting equity and opportunity for all, and protecting the planet.¹

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide a coherent framework to guide sustainable actions, and through its various categories a collaborative platform where concerted action can be taken to address the issues facing our people and the other elements of our ecosystem in the face of climate change and global warming. Although it cannot be ascertained that the categories laid down by the United Nations are exhaustive, and we could find other categories added to the 17 existing ones in the future, it is generally accepted that if we could address them, we would have done a lot towards achieving sustainability in society.

The University of Mauritius, as a tertiary education provider, with the prime role to produce the labour force needed across all segments of the economy, has been actively involved in integrating sustainability science and technology across its undergraduate and postgraduate curricula as well as extensively engaging in research work pertaining to sustainability issues of national importance. This newsletter has been launched to showcase the efforts, projects and outcomes underpinning sustainable development, with the main goal of furthering the concerted action the sustainable development goals themselves promote.

UoM SDGs Newsletter Editorial Team

¹ United Nations Foundation, 30 July 2015, accessible at <https://unfoundation.org/blog/post/7-un-quotes-to-get-you-inspired-for-the-new-global-goals/>

Towards a more prominent role of the UoM in addressing the SDGs

Professor D Jhurry, C.S.K., G.O.S.K.
Vice-Chancellor

To address the daunting challenges and risks facing mankind, member states of the UN have agreed in 2015 on 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets.

The SDGs include: ending poverty; ending hunger; ensuring good health and well-being; providing quality education; promoting gender equality; providing clean water and sanitation; promoting affordable and clean energy; providing decent work and economic growth; addressing industry, innovation and infrastructure; reducing inequalities; developing sustainable cities and communities; encouraging responsible consumption and production; taking action on climate change; promoting life below water; promoting life on land; working towards peace, justice and strong institutions; and creating partnerships to achieve SDG goals.



As part of a series on Transformative Leadership published by *University World News*, one article emphasizes the role University must play in leading the SDGs. Why Universities? Because Universities train the decision-makers of tomorrow; they are viewed as independent; they can shape behavior and they champion ethics and values; universities can deal with complex problems through research.

From that perspective, we can safely say the UoM is working towards the SDGs. Our priority research areas include agriculture and marine, energy, digital technologies, health and socio-economic issues, all of them closely linked to the SDGs. We have

institutionalized research and built research teams through Poles of Research Excellence and Poles of Innovation. We are addressing impactful research through a top-down approach that can help solve local problems. Through our Knowledge Transfer Office, we hope we can get closer to industry and engage more in innovation, all key issues of the SDGs. We have set up a cluster in IT and Digital technologies to precisely address the needs of industry in this growing sector of the Mauritian economy.

The institution of the Learner Centred Credit System (LCCS) equivalent to the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) which comprises a component of independent learning should help the students to develop their critical and analytical minds and be better equipped to tackle the various challenges at their workplace. Beyond knowledge



and skills, students should also be imparted ethics and values. We have been working closely with the Magna Charta Observatory to consolidate our values at the UoM. We are also working towards consolidating our on-going collaboration with the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC).

Other initiatives such as the e-library which is open to the Mauritian public enabling it to access knowledge and the Agri-tech Park where the University works closely with industry and the community are concrete examples of tackling the SDGs.

The successful organization of international conferences and workshops such as the WIOMSA Scientific Symposium in the field of marine science, the ACU Summer School on Public Health and the AAUN forum, all in July last, shows our strong commitment to addressing regional and global issues and contribute to the SDGs. Our international engagement with Africa, Australia, Asia, Europe and the US can but strengthen our initiatives.

The UoM is doing a lot to address the SDGs but our endeavors often get scattered. The setting-up of this SDG task force comprising of staff from all 6 faculties is to better structure our actions for enhanced impact. I look forward to your ideas and actions.

Pro Vice-Chancellor's (Academia) Office

*Professor (Dr) S K Sobhee
Pro Vice Chancellor (Academia)*

Over the past two years, but particularly for the Academic Year 2018/19, the Pro Vice-Chancellor's (Academia) Office has been a catalyst in promoting and processing research projects geared towards sustainable development. These were either internally or externally funded and pertain to different areas of disciplines involving academics from all the 6 Faculties and centres. As the term sustainable development is broad and multi-disciplinary, the funded projects involved researchers working together from different departments and areas of focus. Moreover, these projects roped in researchers from the industry, public sector and foreign universities or research centres.

The major thrusts that relate to sustainable development vary widely across disciplines - from pure to social sciences encompassing engineering and IT. To cite, some key areas that bear testimony to this endeavour are climate change (with multifaceted aspects), coastal and marine resources sustainability, ocean economy studies, sustainable livelihoods, food security, smart agriculture, green engineering and sustainable infrastructure, energy conservation, green transport systems, projects involving broadly abatement of CO₂ emissions, sustainable tourism, water conservation, renewable energy, corporate social responsibility amongst others.

The UoM website provides more details on these projects and their funding magnitudes as well as the multidisciplinary team members involved. It cannot be overemphasized that these are major projects pertinent to the Mauritian society at large. It is also worth noting that all of them involve a significant dissemination component on the research findings either through the UoM Research Week platform or international conferences and workshops held and attended. Poster sessions have been very demonstrative of doctoral students' achievements in their research milestones at the last Research Week Editions, 10 and 11.

The establishment of both the Poles of Research Excellence and Poles of Research in the year 2017 has greatly facilitated in regrouping academic researchers. By pooling their areas of expertise altogether and tapping into the earmarked funding schemes, our academics were much better placed in addressing evidence-based sustainable development issues beside academic advancement of knowledge.

The Pro Vice-Chancellor's (Academia) Office has also been instrumental in reviewing several contracts and Research Collaborative Agreements in internationalizing projects within this theme.

To ensure continuous capacity building and the transmission of knowledge across generations on topics involving sustainable development, emphasis is strongly being laid on the recruitment and involvement of early career academics as doctoral students and post-doctoral fellows on such projects.

Internationalization of Higher Education within Africa to address SDGs

Associate Professor M I Santally
Pro Vice Chancellor (Planning and Resources)

Higher education has long been considered as a means to reduce social and economic inequality. It enables individuals to gain knowledge, skills and competences that allow them to access better paid jobs and positions that are higher up the social ladder. Now more than ever, universities worldwide have come to understand the centrally important role that they play in delivering a better and more sustainable future for all. Higher Education has a key role in pursuing the SDGs and it also forms an important part of other goals related to poverty (SDG1); health and well-being (SDG3); gender equality (SDG5) governance; decent work and economic growth (SDG8); responsible consumption and production (SDG12); climate change (SDG13); and peace, justice and strong institutions (SDG16)¹

In the wake of globalisation and the exigencies of the new higher education landscape, the University Council has

1 Higher education and the Sustainable Development Goals, accessible at <https://en.unesco.org/themes/higher-education/sdgs>

approved in August 2017, the Internationalization Strategy and the setting up of an International Affairs Office (IAO) at the University of Mauritius. The key objective is to drive and implement actions and initiatives to strengthen the University's activities especially in relation to SDGs, as we seek to engage in international partnerships and collaboration of strategic value. The University has also devised scholarship Schemes for international students coming from SADC/COMESA/AU regions to the University of Mauritius to open access by making higher education affordable to students from developing countries.

There are many opportunities for UoM and African universities to collaborate on teaching, research and information exchange and dissemination through bilateral and multilateral agreements that incorporate public and private partners throughout the African continent. Internationalization within Africa across African borders, is an important tool to overcome inequalities between developed and developing nations. Such initiatives have to ensure that the projects that are being undertaken are effectively addressing the SDGs and funding agencies need to put up the appropriate schemes for funding but most importantly, to come up with a proper Monitoring and Evaluation framework to assess impacts and outcomes of such projects.

The 2030 Agenda

A D Nivault
Public Relations Officer

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development clearly spells out the inclusion of persons with disabilities as active contributing members of society who must not be left out or behind in the Society.

UoM has at heart the inclusion of Students with disabilities. Over years persons with disabilities have been often overlooked in mainstream education but those students who have secured a seat at the UoM have always benefited from the inclusive policy of the institution. Indeed the University has always catered for the special needs of registered students by creating an enabling environment. Pathways have been made for ease of access to the library and other areas regularly visited by disabled students who use wheelchairs. Ramps placed so that physically handicapped students can easily climb the stairs. Disabled friendly toilets have been designed. Wheelchairs manual and electric were provided to the users.

Recently with the agreement signed with the Global Rainbow Foundation, a donation of equipment, the Orbit reader, the Rupees Checker, Talking Calculators, Story books in braille, walking frames and manual wheelchairs have added to the disabled friendly atmosphere of the Space reserved for Students with disabilities at the UoM library.

Thus UoM's enabling environment helps to enhance the unknown potential of students with disabilities and to be in line with the overarching principle of an Inclusive Society in conformity with SDG 4, which is to "ensure inclusive and equitable Quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all."



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How is the University addressing the SDGs and What Should Universities in Africa need to do?

Dr Fareeda Khodabocus
Director Quality Assurance

Over the past two decades, the University of Mauritius has not been insensitive to the pressing concerns and challenges of Sustainable Development and its impact on the society, environment and economy. Academics and Researchers of the institution, have been striving to address pressing and urgent national concerns, through regular reviews of programmes teaching and research objectives. Increasing collaborative interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary initiatives have been undertaken to tackle issues of: 1. Climate Change, through teaching, Learning and Research and 2. Poverty Reduction, through better education of our graduates, thus equipping them with updated employable and transferable skills in need on the job market. In line with Statutory policies, key stakeholders of the institution regular-

ly meet for ongoing discussions with external stakeholders from the public and private sectors for emerging needs, collaborative exchanges and other community engagement projects. At the International level, UoM programmes are externally examined by professionals from highly reputed Universities to ensure alignment with international Standards. Over the past five years, there has been an increasing number of collaborations scoping for research, students and staff exchanges, to address regional and international professional development in emerging areas. Teaching and Research have constantly been updated to address pressing concerns of the 4th Industrial and technological revolution. To sum up, as a leading public institution, we have continuously been providing a quality education to

our students to enable them so serve our Society at large. Upon being requested to contribute to an Article in *University World News*, I was lead to reflect on “**What should Universities in Africa need to do, to further address the SDGs?**”

Through this SDG task force recently set up by the Vice Chancellor, June 2019, we must be able to report on how we are planning and innovating to address the SDGs 2030 targets. It is noteworthy, that the UoM through its broad mandate, has a continuing role to play in the transformation of our Society, Environment and Economy to contribute to a better World for the next generation. All members of the task force look forward to your contribution in this Newsletter.

Guide to Authors- SDG Newsletter

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and Ms K Appadoo
Members of Editorial Team

Aims and scope

The *Sustainable Development Goals* Newsletter aims to highlight the contribution of the UoM in implementing the 17 SDGs. Postings will include information on research, discovery, knowledge creation, capacity building and community outreach activities related to the SDGs.

The Newsletter will be published online every 3 months (on a quarterly basis) by the University of Mauritius. It will be available UoM website and accessible to everyone.

Script requirements

- Articles must be between 300-500 words
- Name of author(s) should be in bold letters with font size 12 (Times Roman)
- Contact details of the main author e.g. email address
- All material should be typed in single spacing (or 1.5) with font size 12 (Times Roman).
- Headings(Title) should be in bold with font size 14 (Times Roman).
- Name of Department and email address of main author should be in italics with font size 10 (Times Roman).

- Tables and Figures (with brief and self-explanatory captions) should be clearly shown.
- Photographs should be clear with acceptable resolution so it is easier for the reader to analyze. The magnification should be indicated by an internal scale.
- The Harvard system (author and date) should be used for citation in the manuscript and in the list of references.
- Corresponding SDG should be specified at the bottom of the article.

Decisions regarding content and inclusion in the newsletter will be the responsibility of the editorial team. **Priority will be given to projects or activities that have been completed or are close to completions.** Some submissions may go in future/subsequent issues, even if the deadline is met. Multiple simultaneous submissions from the same author will not be considered for publication in the same newsletter. Writing style should be inclusive of a broad readership, to cater for those individuals who may not be familiar with the subject matter. All articles should clearly state the SDG addressed, the link between the activities and the SDG as well as the benefits.

Authors should send their manuscripts to the following email: sdg@uom.ac.mu in order to be considered for publication in the next edition by January 2020.