

**UNESCO International Workshop on Sustainability Science for UN  
Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**

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**Keynote Address**

**“UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), South-South  
Cooperation and Sustainability Science”**

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## **1.0 The MDGs:**

**Goal 1: Eradicate poverty and hunger**

**Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education**

**Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women**

**Goal 4: Reduce child mortality**

**Goal 5: Improve maternal health**

**Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases**

**Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability**

**Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development**

**The MDGs are unambitious, silo-like and government-centric.**

**The MDGs adopted the soft issues of the World Bank and the global development policies of the West before the turn of the current century.**

**Such soft issues were education, health, gender and the environment.**

**MDGs did not concern themselves with building basic infrastructure like energy, water, waste water, transportation, housing education and health facilities as well as virtual connectivity through ICT. These will facilitate domestic, regional and international commerce and trade. The resultant direct foreign investment will lead to the spread of indigenous small and medium enterprises, leading to wealth and employment creation in South countries.**

**Above all, the MDGs were unambitious. Their goals were not the complete eradication of poverty and hunger as stated in Goal No. 1 but only reducing them by half. Similarly in the health related MDGs, the objective was also the reduction of the incidence of major diseases and maternal and infant mortality by half.**

**This was due to the developed world dictating to the developing world that the latter must be satisfied with what the former decided they deserved in aid.**

**In the context of UNESCO, the glaring example of lack of ambition is the MDG No 2 “Achieve Universal Primary Education” without mention of secondary and tertiary education in the developing world. Developing countries should be satisfied with achieving primary education by 2015!**

**Without ambition and confidence, many South countries are still offtracked in MDGs by the deadline of 2015.**

## **2.0 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**

**Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere;**

**Goal 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture;**

**Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages;**

**Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all;**

**Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls;**

**Goal 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all;**

**Goal 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all;**

**Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all;**

**Goal 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation;**

**Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries;**

**Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable;**

**Goal 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns;**

**Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts;**

**Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development;**

**Goal 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss;**

**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;**

**Goal 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.**

**Each SDG is associated with a number of targets, 169 targets in all.**

**<http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/focussdgs.html>**

**In contrast to the MDGs, the SDGs address all the issues of sustainable development. They boldly proclaim the end of poverty by 2030.**

**They are the result of an intensive multistakeholder global consultation process involving all UN member states, the entire UN system, experts, civil society, business and—most importantly-- millions of people from all corners of the globe, since Rio+20.**

**As end of 2014, UN Sec-Gen issued his Synthesis Report “The Road to Dignity by 2030: Ending Poverty, Transforming All Lives and Protecting the Planet” declaring the end of the Global Consultation on the SDGs**

**[http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/5527SR\\_advance%20unedited\\_final.pdf](http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/5527SR_advance%20unedited_final.pdf)**

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**The Synthesis Report states:**

**“The SDGs break new ground with goals on inequalities, economic growth, decent jobs, cities and human settlements, industrialization, energy, climate change, sustainable consumption and production, peace, justice and institutions. The environmental dimension of the agenda is articulated across the whole agenda. To achieve these ends, a transformational and universal post-2015 agenda is called for, buttressed by science and evidence. Member States will need to fill key sustainable development gaps left by the MDGs, such as the multi-dimensional aspects of poverty, decent work for young people, social protection and labour rights for all, and for inclusive, sustainable cities, infrastructure and industrialization.”**

### **3.0 The influence of South-South Cooperation on UN SDGS**

**The drastic transformation from MDGs to the SDGs has been brought about by the dramatic social and economic uplift since the turn of this century by South countries through infrastructure construction, manufacture, industrialisation and trade and commerce.**

**The most striking example has been China. The economic transformation of China has also helped other South countries weather the worst effects of the Asian Financial Crisis of 1997 and the Global Financial Crisis of 2008.**

**South-South Cooperation through BRICS and institutions like the BRICS Investment Bank, Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and Regional Economic Communities like ASEAN, EAEC, WAEC and MERCUSOR will be the principal engines for South countries to achieve the SDGs.**

## **4.0 The Relevance of Sustainability Science to UN SDGs**

**The UN SDGs represent a great step forward for Sustainability Science which advocates cross disciplinary problem solving of the world as demonstrated by their resonance with the following:**

**“Sustainability Science brings together scholarship and practice, global and local perspectives from north and south, and disciplines across the natural and social sciences, engineering, and medicine — it can be usefully thought of as a field defined by the problems it addresses rather than by the disciplines it employs; it serves the need for advancing both knowledge and action by creating a dynamic bridge between the two. At its heart, the field is based in the need to provide food, fuel, and fiber to current and future residents of planet earth”**

**The UN Sec-Gen's Synthesis Report echoes Sustainability Science by stating: "with our globalized economy and sophisticated technology, we can decide to end the age-old ills of extreme poverty and hunger. Humankind has achieved impressive progress in the past seven decades. We see how new technologies can open up more sustainable approaches and more efficient practices. Innovation and investments in sustainable and resilient infrastructure, settlement, industrialization, small and medium enterprises, energy and technology can both generate employment, and remedy negative environmental trends. South-South cooperation and the significant efforts of solidarity by emerging economies is encouraging. We live in a period of unprecedented technological innovation and change. New technologies are unlocking possibilities for sustainable development.**

**“Large amounts of public resources are allocated to military budgets, while comparatively less is spent on research and development for public good. Public funding often subsidizes private sector research, at times leading to the public being priced out of the benefits through disadvantageous licensing and patent. Furthermore, we have a long way to go to reach the necessary level of participation of women and girls in science, technology (including ICTs), engineering, and mathematics for the world in the 21st century. Achieving our sustainable development goals will similarly require solution-driven technology partnerships among a variety of actors, sharing the costs for the Research, Development, Demonstration, and Diffusion (RDD&D) for new technologies across all stakeholders: public, private, civil society, philanthropic, and other sectors, and inclusive of indigenous knowledge. We must facilitate access to the benefits of technology for all.”**

**In emphasizing technology rather than science, the UN realizes that the eradication of absolute poverty by 2030 through the SDGs would urgently depend on the application of available and affordable technology on the ground in South countries.**

**I would suggest the SDGs provide an unparalleled opportunity for us to apply sustainability science to assure their achievement by 2030.**

**May I urge all to realign your programmes to the needs of the SDGs.**

## **5.0 The Role of ISTIC**

**As an example, I would like to share with you what ISTIC intends to do to realign its programmes to the SDGs.**

**ISTIC was one of the successful outcomes of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Summit of China+G77 in Doha 2005. The Summit urged UNESCO to balance initiatives on the supply side of science, technology and innovation (STI) with more initiatives on the demand side for the benefit of peoples in South countries. UNESCO approached Malaysia to host ISTIC as a Category II Centre in 2006. UNESCO Category II Centres are funded by the host nations. Malaysian government agreed. ISTIC was formally launched in Kuala Lumpur on 22 May 2008. [www.istic-unesco.org](http://www.istic-unesco.org)**

**Emphasizing institutional and human resources capacity building in South countries,**

**ISTIC priority programs have to date focused on:**

- Promoting national STI Policy formulation, implementation and monitoring;**
- Enhancing the role of women in STI;**
- Strengthening Inquiry Based Science Education (IBSE)/Science, Engineering, Technology and Mathematics (STEM) Education;**
- Promoting accreditation of tertiary engineering education qualifications to international standards;**
- Promoting indigenous capacity building in the maintenance of infrastructure;**
- Providing technopreneurship training for young scientists and engineers.**

**As ISTIC is undoubtedly the most successful UNESCO Centre for South-South Cooperation, ISTIC would focus on two SDGs that are most relevant to UNESCO, namely:**

**Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all;**

**Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.**

**Taking advantage of the visit of UNESCO Director General Irina Bokova to Malaysia, ISTIC and UNESCO Jakarta will be holding “ISTIC/UNESCO International Conference/Forum/Seminar” on 25-27 May 2015 in Kuala Lumpur.**

- **25-26 May 2015, 2<sup>nd</sup> ISTIC International Conference themed “Harnessing Women’s Talents in Science, Technology and Innovation”**
- **26-27 May 2015, ISTIC/UNESCO/FEIAP Asia Pacific High Level Policy Seminar on “Accreditation of Engineering Education Qualifications to International Standards and Mobility of Engineers, Technologists and Technicians in Asia and the Pacific”**
- **26-27 May 2015 International Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) High Level Policy Forum on “Evidence Based Science Education in Developing Countries”**
- **27 May 2015 Strategic Networking Meeting of UNESCO Chairs and Category II Centres (Natural Sciences) in Asia and the Pacific**
- **25 May 2015, ISTIC 2015 Governing Board Meeting**
- **26 May 2015, IAP SEP 2015 Global Council Meeting**

**The deliberations of the above consultative forums will form the basis for both the ISTIC Governing Board and the IAP SEP Global Council to align their respective agenda to the UN SDGs 2016-2030, especially SDG No 4 and UN SDG No5.**

**ISTIC also look forward to the deliberations of this International Workshop to guide us to realign our programmes.**

**THANK YOU**