Third Symposium on Sustainability Science: Towards Guidelines on Research and Education

UNESCO Headquarters - Room XIII (Bonvin Building)

31 May - 1 June 2017

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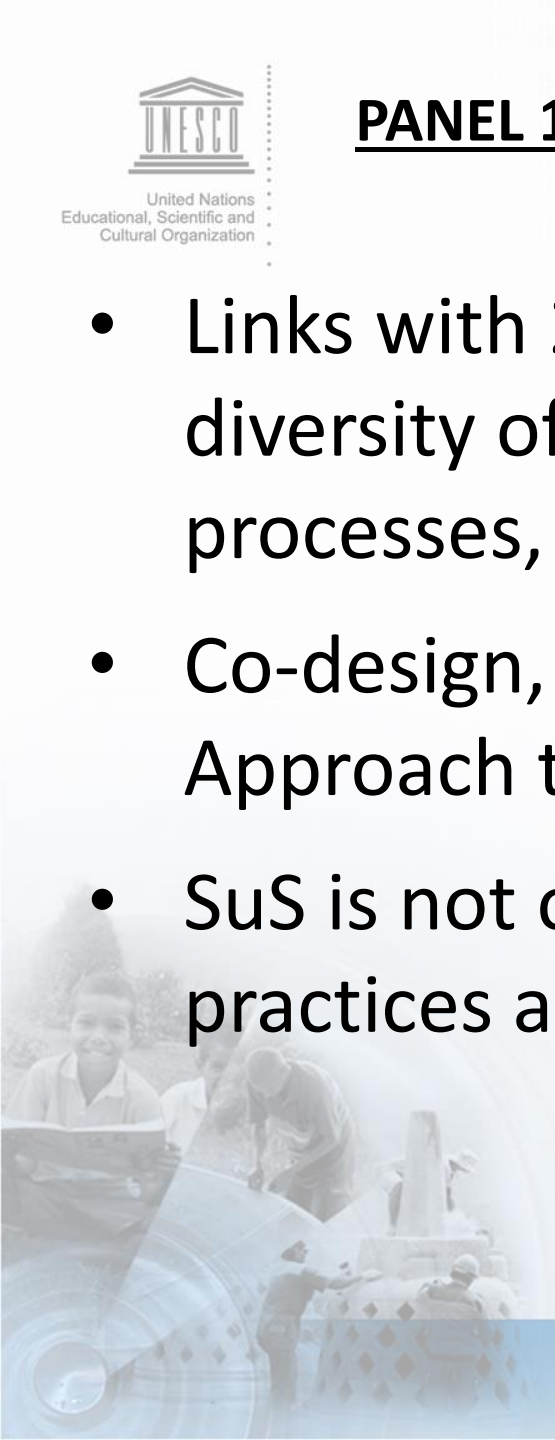
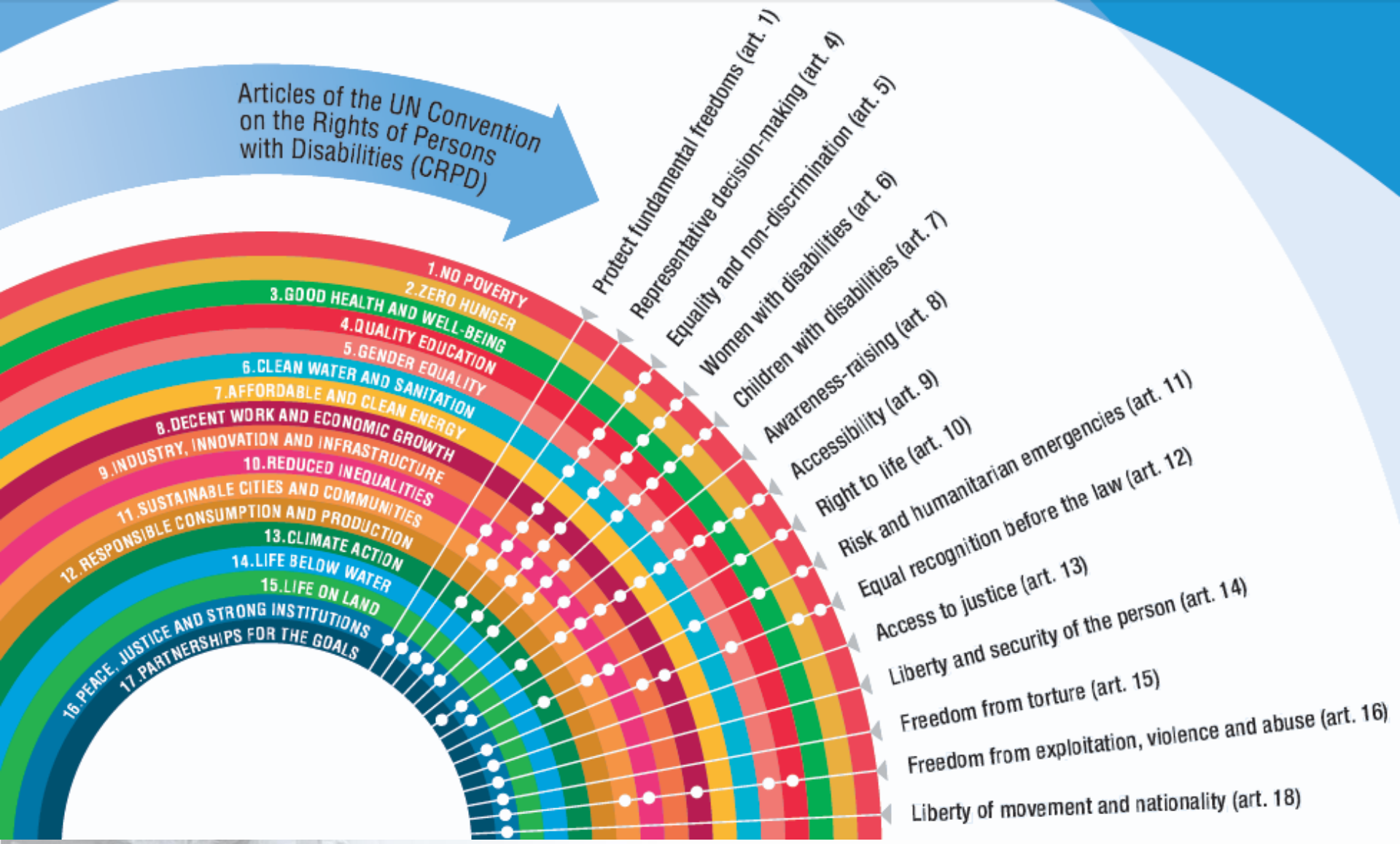
PANEL 1: Key Principles of Sustainability Science

- Links with 2030 Agenda – through the lenses of diversity of knowledge. Focusing more on the processes, rather than the targets.
- Co-design, co-production, co-implementation. Approach that links with SuS.
- SuS is not only about research. It is also about practices and relations.





CBM Infographic on SDGs and the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

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Economy

Society

Biosphere

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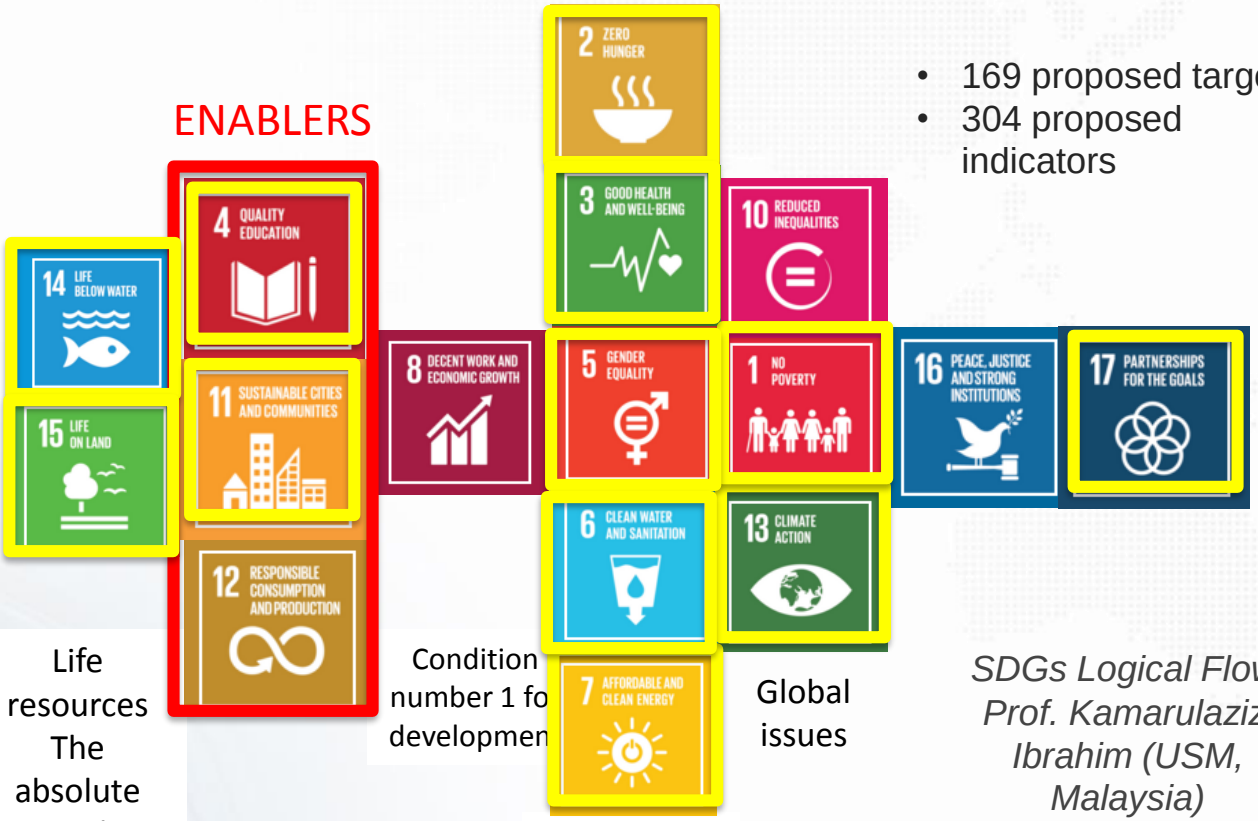
Sustainable Development Goals

The logical flow

- 169 proposed targets
- 304 proposed indicators



SDGs Logical Flow, Prof. Kamarulazizi Ibrahim (USM, Malaysia)

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PANEL 1: Key Principles of Sustainability Science

- Sustainability results from inter-dependencies between societal, economic, environmental and cultural drivers, and imply contradictions and dilemmas, not only technical problems to solve.

- SuS is about knowledge, technology, innovation and convergent understanding of global and local challenges.

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- SuS can be disciplinary, interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary, but it is user-driven, and user-inspired building from integrated knowledge and territories-based integrated experiences.
- SuS specifically addresses dependencies and complexities, engaging scientists and practitioners, involving knowledge, attitudes, values, life forms and narratives, based on the diversity of cultures.
- UNESCO programmes, including academic chairs and category 2 centers, are a major tool to foster SuS, engaging sciences, humanities and society.

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Challenges and opportunities:

1. Broadening appreciation for complementary evidence (Problem →questions → type of evidence → evaluation criteria)
2. Critical view and historical understanding to development
3. System thinking with political ecology perspective

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Plenary discussion and proposals from Member States

- Knowledge is not enough – we have to convince people why SuS is important.
- The need for awareness-raising.
- How can developing countries take ownership of SDGs and SuS?
- Need to pay due attention to the issues of gender equality.

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PANEL 1: Key Principles of Sustainability Science

UNESCO's Role

- Trans-disciplinarity – research and policy nexus
- Values/normative criteria – addressing the central characteristic of SuS – value pluralism.
- Methodologies of resolving deeply entrenched and complex (wicked) problems
- UNESCO's programmes that add value:
  - MAB
  - MOST (Schools, IPL)

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PANEL 2: Strategic Funding for Sustainability Science in Research and Education

- Scarcity of public funding – Competitive Frameworks, Crowdfunding.
- Need for finding trade-offs in particular situations.
- Various challenges (institutional, time-frames) for funding sustainability science research. Funders do not usually like transdisciplinary projects

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PANEL 2: Strategic Funding for Sustainability Science in Research and Education

- SDGs – not easy to find integrated agenda.
- 2030 Agenda and SDGs provide framework for moving forward at the global level. They cannot be addressed piece-meal, in a fragmented way. Implementation of the SDG will require flexibility and diversity: research landscape, funding structure, and knowledge platforms.
- The need for greater integration and transformation from silo based research to trans-disciplinarity. Research community for many years been organized into Silos, and will continue to be so.

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PANEL 2: Strategic Funding for Sustainability Science in Research and Education

Lessons learned:

- Importance of “Glue money”
- Fundraising and research activity is synergetic.
- Sustainability science helps us avoid fragmentation in the implementation of the SDGs.
- How to approach funders – Framing the issues
- Limitations of funding (sometimes money is not the most important factor for impact)

PANEL 3: Mainstreaming Sustainability Science in Higher Education

National Perspective on ESD at Universities

Key stakeholders/beneficiaries for the Guidelines:

- Higher Education Institutions
- Individuals Researchers and Teachers
- Governments
- Society and Community

*University as a protected space.

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PANEL 3: Mainstreaming Sustainability Science in Higher Education

ESD and Higher Education: UNESCO's role

- ESD Literacy should be essential for all professionals; SD should be established as a central academic and organization focus (whole-institution approach)
- UNESCO Awards; Networks/COPERNICUS Alliance/Global Universities Partnership/African Network, etc. ESD Goals Publication. Moocs. Open Educational Resource. UNESCO Chairs/Networks.
- Question of expanding the scope of ESD in the guidelines. Action on other levels of education (other then high education – early childhood education onwards)

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PANEL 3: Mainstreaming Sustainability Science in Higher Education

North-South Cooperation issues

Currently, cooperation is lacking.

In the future, this is set to improve due to:

- Growth of scientific enterprise in the South
- Increasingly global scope of economic, environmental and social problems
- The growing role of internet and e-based learning
- Untapped potential for South-South cooperation

Thank you!