

Is North-East Asia Ready to Implement the SDGs?
– Policy Challenges, Research Agenda and Sub-regional Cooperation
- Views of Knowledge Institutions based on the SDG Index and Dashboards 2018

North-East Asia SDSN Forum on the SDGs

Co-organized by National SDSNs in North-East Asia
Hosted by the National University of Mongolia and the Future Earth Mongolia Committee
Supported by the UNESCAP

09:00am-12:30pm, 2018, Friday, September 7, 2018,
At the National University of Mongolia, Ulaanbaatar

Concept Note: Provisional
August 9, 2018

Background

On July 9, this year, the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) and the Bertelsmann Stiftung jointly released the 2018 SDG Index and Dashboards online¹. This third edition of the annual overview of countries' performance on the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) covers for the first time all 193 UN member states and presents data on change over time in SDG indicators. The data in this report shows that countries in North-East Asia invariably face persistent challenges over many SDGs, with long distances left to overcome by 2030 toward the achievement of a number of the Goals in each country. And the analysis of countries' trends by the Goal shows that on some Goals by country, they are showing no progress at all thus far toward Goals or even regressing away from. The report also surveyed the state of national implementation mechanisms for the SDGs in G20 countries and reported a large variation among them regarding how the SDGs are embraced by the political leadership and translated into institutional mechanisms, pointing to the need for further work to ensure effective institutionalization of the SDGs in countries to accelerate progress.

The UN SDSN² has been operating since 2012 under the auspices of the UN Secretary-General and the leadership of its Director, Prof. Jeffrey Sachs, Special Advisor to the UN Secretary-General, to mobilize scientific and technological expertise to promote practical solutions for sustainable development, including the implementation of the SDGs and the Paris Climate Agreement. Supported by the UNESCAP and the National University of Mongolia, the national or local SDSNs of the Republic of Korea, Japan, and Hong Kong, as well as the Tsinghua University Institute for Sustainable Development Goals (TUSDG) and the Institute of Sustainable Development at the National University of Mongolia have agreed to convene this forum to discuss the findings in the 2018 SDG Index report to identify major challenges and action priorities for governments and

¹ www.sdgindex.org

² www.unsdsn.org

knowledge institutions in North-East Asia in order to facilitate the implementation of the SDGs in the sub-region..

Objectives

The main objective of this Forum is to hold a discussion among the representatives of the respective national or local SDSNs, the knowledge institutions, the civil societies and international organizations (IOs), all sharing interest in the promotion of global sustainable development by the SDGs, in order to identify priority tasks for governments and the research communities in North-East Asia in facilitating the implementation of the SDGs. It is hoped that the outcome from this discussion will serve as an input to the governments, IOs and knowledge institutions in their planning of future actions on the SDGs. The 2018 SDG Index and Dashboards prepared by the SDSN and the Bertelsmann Stiftung will serve as the main background material for this discussion.

For this objective, the Forum will specifically explore the following issues:

1. How is the state of implementation of the SDGs in the respective countries, do trends indicate difficulties in achieving some Goals by 2030, and what are priority problems, tasks, and recommended solutions?
2. To what extent have the respective governments institutionalized the SDG implementation mechanism in terms of dedicated coordination unit, strategies and action plans, and accountability systems?
3. Is there room for fruitful international cooperation between countries in the sub-region on some Goals in terms of policy actions and joint research?

Provisional Program

09:00-09:15 Opening Remarks, by Prof. Lan Xue, Co-chair, UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) Leadership Council & Dr. Soogil Young, Emeritus Member, UN SDSN Leadership Council

09:15-09:30

- **Welcoming Remarks**, by Ya. Tumurbaatar, President, National University of Mongolia and D. Regdel, President of the Mongolian Academy of Sciences
- **Congratulatory Remarks**, by Dr. Sangmin Nam, Acting Director, UNESCAP-ENEA

09:30-11:40 Panel Discussion, co-chaired by Professors Lan Xue and Soogil Young

- Prof. Xue Lan, Director, Tsinghua University Institute for SDGs (TUSDG); Dean, School of Public Policy and Management, Tsinghua University Director of TUSDG, China
- Prof. Kazuhiko Takemoto, Secretary-General, SDSN Japan; Director, United Nations University Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability; President, Overseas Environmental Cooperation Center, Japan (OECC)

- Dr. Soogil Young, Chairman, SDSN Korea & Director, Institute of Sustainable Development, State University of New York (SUNY) Korea & Prof. Sung-jin Kang, Steering Committee, SDSN Korea; Director of Institute on Sustainable Development, Korea University
- Prof. Chuluun Togtokh, Director of the Institute of Sustainable Development, National University of Mongolia
- An Academic from the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (TBD)

11:40-12:20 Open Discussion

12:20-12:30 Wrap-up, by Co-chairs

12:30-13:30 Post-Forum Luncheon, hosted by NUM

For participation: contact:

- Professor Young Soogil, Chairman, SDSN Korea (sdsn_korea@korea.kr, sgy@sunykorea.ac.kr);
- Prof. Chuluun Togtokh, Director, Institute of Sustainable Development, National University of Mongolia (CHULUUN.TOGTOKH@colostate.edu)