

Knowledge in Action: Bridging Policy and Practice through Scientific Research for SDG Localization

Side Event at the Twelfth Session of the World Urban Forum

8 November 2024, 13:00-14:30 (Egypt time), One UN Room A

Concept Note

Background

Currently, according to UNESCO, around 250 million students are enrolled in universities worldwide, marking a meaningful increase from 100 million in 2000. A significant number of these students come from Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean. While the importance of higher education and scientific research is recognized worldwide, the knowledge generated by universities is not sufficiently valued in policy-making. As we strive to achieve the goals set for 2030, we still face challenges in engaging actively academic knowledge and the potential of the most qualified young researchers to make policies that lead to sustainable and resilient development.

To fill this gap, the Knowledge and Scientific Network (KSN) has been developed as a key initiative anchored to the Local2030 Coalition, the UN system-wide platform and network aimed at supporting and accelerating the localization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The KSN objective is to close the gap between university knowledge and real-world policy-making by integrating insights from academia with the practical needs of decision makers. The KSN reaches across the world, involving various continents and fields of study, with a specific focus on interventions in two pilot countries, Jordan and Tunisia. This network doesn't just store information but actively works to bring research-based ideas from local contexts to the big picture of global policy dialogues.

At the core of the KSN's mission is to engage a wide array of researchers. These researchers, especially young people from Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean, join forces in global and regional networks to bring new ideas and relevant solutions into policy-making. The KSN supports these efforts with many activities, such as setting up academic training CV on SDG Localization in Jordan and Tunisia and leading research labs that help turn academic discussions into actual policy ideas and concrete proposals to orient strategies.

The upcoming event will provide an opportunity for local and national policymakers, people from around the world, and a lively group of PhD students to discuss the requirements for research and policy to effectively make SDGs a reality locally. It will serve as a platform where academic ideas converge with real policies. By addressing these topics on an

international level, the event aims to blend academic theories, policies, and real-world actions. This meeting is not just a conversation, but an attempt to push for local action based on global knowledge.

This event is meant to be a significant momentum for everyone involved; it marks the beginning of a new approach to policy-making that understands local issues while aiming for the SDGs, involving clusters of PhD students. It is about planning for a sustainable future, guided by global objectives but nurtured by local understanding.

Key Objectives

- Highlight the integral role of academia and research in shaping sustainable development across all levels, underscoring the transformative potential of academic knowledge when deftly woven into the policy fabric, shaping strategies that are both resilient and grounded in evidence.
- Presentation of the Local2030 Knowledge and Scientific Network, a component of the Local2030 Coalition. This initiative embodies the confluence of academic rigor and policy pragmatism, aiming to enhance the impact of scholarly insights on sustainable policy frameworks.
- The event will act as a fulcrum for synergistic partnerships, presenting a concrete framework and case study for a design and engagement process in which the qualified youth component of the university (in particular, the PhD students) takes the lead in the co-creation of SDG Localization solutions, by mobilizing a community of various and complementary stakeholders. By bringing together a mosaic of scientific community (academia/research centers), local policy makers and civil society organizations, starting with those from Jordan and Tunisia, it aims to foster a fertile dialogue and drive momentum for the KSN's pilot projects. It will also create opportunities for exploring the different challenges and solutions that all actors face when interacting on SDG localization, including data flows, resources mobilization, planning and policy coherence.

Supporters

- Local2030 KSN
- UN-Habitat
- FAO
- Local2030 Coalition
- CeSPI ETS
- Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation

Format

The event will be in-person and web-streamed.

Language

English, with interpretation available in Arabic

Programme and Speakers

8 November 2024 – From 13:00-14:30 (Egypt time)	
Time	Session
Master of Ceremony: Pietro Ceppi, Project Manager, Local2030 Knowledge and Scientific Network	
Opening (30 min)	
13:00 – 13:10	<p><u>Opening remarks (10 min)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Luigi Diodati, Chief of Office, General Directorate for Development Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Italy (5 min) • Mr. Sebastien Vauzelle, Head, Local 2030 Secretariat, Local2030 Coalition (5 min)
Presentation of the Knowledge and Scientific Network and other similar initiatives linking policy making and scientific research (20 min)	
13:10 – 13:35	<p><u>Keynote on the KSN</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Marco Zupi, Scientific Coordinator, Local2030 Knowledge and Scientific Network (10 min) • Dr. Olívia Orquiza de Carvalho Zara, Professor and Coordinator on SDG11, Araucaria Foundation, Brazil (5 min) • Ms. Hasanaton Nisa Thamrin, Programme Manager, Urban Governance Initiative, Kota Kita Foundation (5 min) • Ms. Mara Cossu, Deputy Head, Unit IV – Tools and technologies for sustainable development, Former Directorate for Circular Economy, Ministry for Environment and Energy Security, Italy (5 min)
Panel discussion – From knowledge to impact. Linking research and policy in the Tunisian and Jordanian context for SDG Localization (40 min)	
Moderator: Ms. Lucia Graf Rojo, Portfolio Support and Knowledge Management Associate, Local2030 Coalition Secretariat	
13:35 - 14:15	<p>Presentation of the Irbid development contexts, efforts and challenges for the implementation of the SDGs at the local level.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Nabeel Al-Kofahi, Mayor of Greater Irbid Municipality, Jordan (5 min)

	<p>Interaction with two PhD students of the Local2030 Knowledge and Scientific Network. The students will present their research in relation to the mentioned SDG localization efforts and challenges. (15 min)</p> <p>Researchers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mr. Abdulrahman Abu Hamdeh, The University of Jordan; - Ms. Amal Malkawi, Jordan University of Science and Technology; <p>Presentation of the Tunisian development contexts, efforts and challenges for the implementation of the SDGs at the local level.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Soumaya El Kamel, Head of Networks and Participatory Approaches, FNCT <p>Interaction with two PhD students of the Local2030 Knowledge and Scientific Network. The students will present their research in relation to the mentioned SDG localization efforts and challenges. (15 min)</p> <p>Researchers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ms. Sana Smadah, University of Manouba; - Ms. Khouloud Annabi, University of Sousse;
<p>Q&A and Closing (15 min)</p>	
<p>14:15 – 14:25</p>	<p><u>Question and Answer session with the public (10 min)</u></p>
<p>14:25 – 14:30</p>	<p><u>Sum up of the discussion and relevance for the national pilots</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Marco Zupi, Scientific Coordinator, Local2030 Knowledge and Scientific Network (5 min)