



INSIGHTS SUMMARY

BUILDING SYSTEM-LEVEL PARTNERSHIPS FOR TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE

GLOBAL GOALS / FIRESIDE CHAT / 21 SEPT 2023

We would like to thank the following speakers:

Imme Scholz, Co-Chair of the Independent Group of Scientists, **Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR)**

Ambuj Sagar, Deputy Director, Strategy & Planning and Vipula and Mahesh Chaturvedi Professor of Policy Studies, **Indian Institute of Technology Delhi**, and Co-Author, **GSDR**

Interviewer: Ilze Melngailis, Senior Director, Business Council for the UN and Private Sector Engagement, **UN Foundation**

During this fireside chat, two authors of the [2023 Global Sustainable Development Report \(GSDR\)](#) entitled “[Times of Crisis, Times of Change: Science for Accelerating Transformations to Sustainable Development](#)”, highlight some of the key actions needed to achieve progress towards the SDGs.

The nexus between science, policy and societal change remains an area of profound importance when considering transformative shifts on a global scale. The dialogue centred on this topic delved deep into the essence of system-level collaborations, yielding five pivotal insights to shepherd the journey ahead.

1. DESIGN LOCAL SOLUTIONS WITH CULTURAL NUANCE

True transformative change necessitates a granular examination of local contexts, inclusive of distinct cultural landscapes, historical backdrops and native knowledge bases. Such solutions, developed from an immersive understanding of ground realities, promise not only efficacy but also a profound resonance with the cultural nuances of respective regions. The synergy between science, policy and society, especially during the evaluation of innovative approaches, becomes vital to ensure this resonance.

2. EMPOWER SCIENCE IN DEVELOPING NATIONS

One cannot underscore enough the need to nurture scientific frameworks within low- to middle-income nations. It's pivotal for these countries to wield the apparatus necessary to sculpt their transformative trajectories. This minimises dependency on generic blueprints, which might not always harmonise with their specific needs, and encourages self-reliant, context-aware problem-solving.

Give countries a chance to design their own strategies, their own transformative strategies, and not be dependent on blueprint approaches – which take a lot of effort anyway to attempt to be adapted to local conditions.

Imme Scholz, Co-Chair of the Independent Group of Scientists, **Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR)**

3. ELEVATE SCIENCE AS A CONDUIT TO SHARED UNDERSTANDING

The realm of science transcends problem-solving; it offers an insight into the very anatomy of challenges. Especially with omnipresent concerns like climate change, science becomes instrumental in demystifying intricacies and crafting a common narrative. Amidst an era clouded by misinformation, leaning on science helps converge diverse perspectives towards a collective comprehension.

4. BUILD CAPACITY FOR ACCELERATED TRANSFORMATION

Transformation thrives on strategic precision. It beckons a comprehensive policy engagement, ensuring that transformative undertakings are methodical, well-orchestrated and oriented towards enduring impact. Merging this with an acumen to discern business prospects stemming from such transformations elevates the scope and reach of change initiatives.

5. HARNESS OPPORTUNITIES VIA SYSTEMATIC POLICY STRATEGIES

A pivotal facet of the discourse was the undeniable need for tailored capacity-building to champion transformative ventures. This not only implies grasping the problem's nature but also entails moulding a collective vision of the

challenge, devising appropriate solutions and orchestrating their broad-based deployment. Such a robust foundational capacity anchors and streamlines the transformation odyssey, making it both structured and impactful.

IN SUMMARY

While the path towards sustainable progress teems with intricacies, the insights delineated offer a lucid blueprint. By cultivating system-level alliances that harmoniously interlace science, indigenous acumen and astute policy design, there lies the promise of ushering in profound, lasting transformations that resonate across society's diverse strata.

Science actually is key in helping us really unpack the nature of the problem. And this is where disinformation becomes absolutely key. Because if there is not a common agreement on the nature of the problem, then it's difficult to take this, what you may call the whole-of-society approach.

Ambuj Sagar, Deputy Director, Strategy & Planning and Vipula and Mahesh Chaturvedi Professor of Policy Studies, Indian Institute of Technology Delhi, and Co-Author, GSDR

So the report leans incredibly heavily into the value of science, this beautiful notion of developing science from within less-developed and middle-income countries – which is a transformation in and of itself, and something that people need to get behind.

Ilze Melngailis, Senior Director, Business Council for the UN and Private Sector Engagement, UN Foundation

RESOURCE

- The 2023 Global Sustainable Development Report, "[Times of Crisis, Times of Change: Science for Accelerating Transformations to Sustainable Development](#)"