

Title of Side Event

Aiming higher, unlocking tertiary education's potential to accelerate sustainable development and the transition to a fair and green economy

Organizing Partners - please list all organizing partners

- Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (USA, Canada)
- Australasian Campuses Towards Sustainability
- Educational (sic*) Association for Universities and Colleges (UK)
**This is a typo on behalf of the UNCD it should be Environmental Association for Universities and Colleges*
- Copernicus Alliance (Europe)
- Fondaterra – Fondation Européenne pour des Territoires Durables (France)
- Global University Network for Innovation (GUNI, international)
- Korean Association for Green Campus Initiative (KAGCI)
- Promotion of Sustainability in Postgraduate Education and Research network (ProSPER.Net Asia)
- China Green University Network
- United Nations Environment Programme – Environmental Education and Training Unit (international)
- Global Responsibility Leadership Initiative (GRLI)
- Conference des Grandes Ecoles (France)
- Conference des Présidents d'Université (France)

Invited Governments

Confirmed:

- Australia
- The Netherlands
- South Korea
- China
- Japan

To be confirmed

- France
- United Kingdom
- Austria

Invited

- National Union of Students UK (NUS)
(Representing 7 million students in tertiary education in the UK, with an extended invitation to the European Students Union representing students union across Europe)
- Latin American Continental Students Organization
- Australian Youth Climate Coalition

Endorsed and supported by UNESCO

We also anticipate that the participation of UNEP will also include participation by The Mainstreaming of Environment and Sustainability in African Universities (MESA) Partnership.

Short Introduction - Max 150 words

Tertiary education plays a critical role in shaping the future, as political, business and civil society leaders are likely to be university graduates and will prepare the skilled workforce needed for a green economy. This event will emphasise the important role tertiary education plays in realising sustainable development and the transition to a green economy. Hosted by a collaborative of tertiary education sustainability organisations, in collaboration with numerous governments, we will answer:

- How can governments, NGOs, businesses and tertiary education instigate the necessary shift towards sustainable development and the transition to a Green Economy?
- How do we unlock the potential of tertiary education sector to transform society?
- What role should tertiary education play in creating and participating in the institutional framework for sustainable development?
- What funding and support mechanisms will need to be provided to ensure the success of tertiary education in sustainable development efforts?

(150 words)

Detailed Description - Max 800 words

Please include thematic focus, speakers and potential contribution to the outcome of UNCSO/Rio+20.

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Focus

The side event will make the case for the important role that Tertiary Education has to play in realizing Sustainable Development and the transition towards a Green Economy. It will also propose a constructive way forward so institutions are supported in this important role.

Tertiary education has an important role to play in the lives of young people and their future. The collaboration is therefore keen to build on the Bandung Declaration (The Tunza International Children and Youth Conference on the Environment, 2011, §9.3) It identifies access to green jobs as critical for achieving a sustainable transition to the Green Economy. It states that, "In the next ten years, as the world's population passes 7 billion, we need to provide jobs for more than 1 billion young people - employment that will both enable them to live productive and worthwhile lives and to contribute to the transition to a just Green Economy." Tertiary education organisations and institutions have a pivotal role to play in helping to make these young people's vision a reality and ensure that students graduate with skills for the green economy. They also have a role in the development of that "green economy" through research, innovation and knowledge exchange and the realization of sustainable development.

There are many examples around the world that have shown the importance of tertiary education in sustainable development efforts. Continued support for expanding these efforts is critical.

The side event will answer four main questions:

- How can governments, NGOs, businesses and tertiary education instigate the necessary shift towards sustainable development and the transition to a Green Economy?
- How do we unlock the potential of tertiary education sector to transform society?
- What role should tertiary education play in creating and participating in the institutional framework for sustainable development?
- What funding and support mechanisms will need to be provided to ensure the success of tertiary education in sustainable development efforts?

Governments and student bodies will be invited to respond to the questions in the months leading up to the Summit. The side event will bring the aforementioned organizations together to present proposals, declarations, recommendations and initiatives in an open forum, with the active participation and engagement of attending governments and other delegates. It will showcase best practice of Tertiary Education Institutions across the world in research, innovation, knowledge transfer and education, to demonstrate the critical role the sector plays at a global level to realise sustainable development.

Structure of the side event and speakers

Consisting of a two hour format the event will present the case for the critical role of tertiary education in realising sustainable development by:

- Discussing how the transformation of tertiary education is an important part of its role in sustainable development.
- Presenting statements in response to the four questions.

- Giving an overview of recommendations/positions/ commitments relative to the themes of the conference and items already in the zero draft document.

Delegations from invited governments (see list organising partners for confirmations) and student bodies are invited to give short statements answering the above listed questions and join with our collaboratives and stakeholders in discussion.

The highlight of the side event will be a panel discussion including selected government representatives, student bodies and participating organisations. The focus of the panel is an open discussion presenting different arguments and evidence for why tertiary education is key to UNCSD objectives.

Indicative (2 hrs) programme outline

- 20 min Introduction by the host organisations
- 40 min Short Presentations by delegates from the governments (see list) and student bodies
- 45 min Panel discussion
- 15 min Summary and conclusion

Potential contribution to the outcome of UNCSD/Rio+20

The talking points will be summarized in a 1-2 page handout that will be provided to delegates. The handout will give an overview of recommendations and commitments and suggest the support/resources required to be successful and empower governmental delegates to address specific points that are in the zero draft document or points that should be included in the outcomes document.