

Participating UNA1 SDG HUB Chairs, Co-Chairs and Vice Chairs



UNA1 SDG3 HUB CHAIR

Prof. Hettie SCHONFELDT (University of Pretoria) is an advocate for nutrition research, promoting excellence through the creation, translation and dissemination of science-based information into policies and programmes, both nationally and internationally. She serves as a scientific advisor to AFROFOODS, a network on the African continent, forming part of IUNS/UNU/FAO INFOODS and represents the University of Pretoria at the United Nations Academic Impact Hub, previously for SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) and currently for SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being). She serves on the WHO expert panel developing food-based dietary guidelines for optimal intake of animal-source foods. She holds a Tier 1 South African Department of Science and Innovation / National Research Foundation Research Chairs Initiative in Nutrition and Food Security. Her group's research focuses on linking nutrient quantity and quality of foods to sustainable food systems for attaining nutrition and food security for all.

Schönfeldt's recent research has highlighted the importance of Indigenous foods in diversifying diets and addressing nutritional deficiencies, especially evidence-based policy interventions such as improved infant and school feeding practices to address child hunger.

Schönfeldt has been a member of the United Nations High-Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE-FSN) Steering Committee since 2023. She has led 4 Australia-Africa Universities Network (AAUN) projects. She is also a team member of the Bureau for Food and Agricultural Policy (BFAP), which provides a yearly Agricultural Outlook on African Food Systems. In 2013 she was invited by the United Nations Systems Standing Committee on Nutrition (UNSCN) to perform a descriptive review of food and agricultural policies in South Africa encouraging the advancement of the discussion on nutrition-sensitive agriculture towards informing the ICN2.



UNA1 SDG4 HUB CHAIR

Dr. Omar Suleiman ARABEYYAT

Associate Professor of Engineering Management - Dean, Al-Salt Technical College, Al-Balqa Applied University

Profile: Experienced academic and project manager with 20+ years of leadership in higher education, innovation, and international cooperation. Expert in entrepreneurship, social innovation, and sustainable development, with a proven track record of managing multi-million Euro EU, GIZ, KOICA, and USAID-funded projects.

Key Achievements: Project Manager/Coordinator of major international initiatives including: Interreg NextMed Digital Life 4 All & GreenStayMed (EU-funded), PRIMA Water4Med (sustainability and water management), INTERNISA ENI CBCMED (€3.8M), KOICA Technical Education Program (\$10M), Leadership roles at BAU: Dean, Director of International Relations, Vice Dean of Graduate Studies & Scientific Research, Head of Department.

Education: PhD, Management & Computer Engineering – Anglia Ruskin University, UK; MBA – Huddersfield University, UK; BSc, Mechanical Engineering – University of Jordan

5 GENDER EQUALITY



UNAI SDG 5 HUB CHAIR

Dr. Leena JAMES is a distinguished academic leader, researcher, and sustainability advocate with nearly two decades of expertise in management innovation, sustainability, and entrepreneurship. She currently serves as Professor of Management and Head of the SDG Cell at Christ University, India, and is the Chair of the SDG 5 Hub of the United Nations Academic Impact (UNAI).

Renowned for her contributions to sustainability, corporate social responsibility (CSR), and academic leadership, Dr Leena has received numerous awards. These include Women Change Maker of the Year at the Business and Education Conference (May 2025), the Women in Sustainability Award at the CSR & Sustainability Summit (Sept 2024), the Excellence in Teaching Award from Christ University (Sept 2024), and the International Sustainability Leadership Award (2023) presented by the former President of Sri Lanka in Colombo.

A passionate advocate for women's empowerment, she leads the Integrated Slum Development Programme as President of the World Council Women's Wing of Karnataka. Beyond her academic and leadership roles, Dr. Leena takes pride in empowering individuals to become advocates for sustainability and gender equality. As a researcher, academician, and motivational speaker, she has inspired and mentored thousands of students, scholars, and professionals worldwide.

6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION



UNAI SDG 6 HUB Co-CHAIR

Deepa HAZRATI

Lead, Sustainability, Office of the Vice-Chancellor, Shiv Nadar University, Delhi-NCR

Deepa Hazrati is the Sustainability Lead in the Office of the Vice-Chancellor, Shiv Nadar University, where she drives sustainability strategy, international rankings, partnerships, and awards. She has administered multi-institutional projects, such as the EU-funded E-QUAL initiative (€1.5 million) to enhance undergraduate education in India, and a unique program on Water and Policy funded by the IDRC.

Her work lies at the intersection of sustainability, higher education, and international collaboration, informed by her academic training in Environment Management, Sustainable Development, and Science Policy (M.Phil., Jawaharlal Nehru University). Her scholarship explores water, gender, traditional knowledge, and systems resilience; her M.Phil. research critically assessed how the World Bank finances irrigation technologies in India.

Ms. Hazrati is a Fulbright-Nehru Scholar and has also held key roles at the United States-India Education Foundation (USIEF), consulted with Networked Intelligence for Development (NID), Toronto, and the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA), Delhi. Her work integrates research, policy, and practice to advance sustainability through academic innovation, community engagement, and collaboration.



Wing Commander Anand Sharma (retd) is currently serving as Senior Director – Administration at Shiv Nadar Institution of Eminence, Delhi NCR, India, where he leads the operations of a 300-acre integrated smart University campus with a vibrant residential community of over 4,000 people. An alumnus of IIM Lucknow and a graduate in Electrical Engineering, he brings more than three decades of distinguished leadership spanning the Indian Air Force, corporate sector, and higher education.

During his 23 years of service in the Indian Air Force, Anand held varied responsibilities in guided weapon systems, demonstrating expertise in technology management, combat readiness, and operational excellence under high-stakes environments. Transitioning seamlessly into higher education administration, he has been instrumental in shaping sustainable operations, enhancing institutional infrastructure, and fostering safe, efficient, and future-ready ecosystems aligned with global best practices.



Dr. Gopal Das SINGHAL (Principal Investigator), Associate Professor & Associate Head Department of Civil Engineering

Dr. Gopal Das Singhal has been an Associate Professor and Associate Head in Civil Engineering at Shiv Nadar University since 2012. He earned his B.Tech. from MANIT Bhopal and M.Tech. & Ph.D. from IIT Roorkee, and was a Research Academic Visitor at the University of Nottingham, UK. His research focuses on water resources engineering and agricultural water management, particularly river hydraulics, food and water security, and water use efficiency using AI and remote sensing. He has led externally funded R&D projects, organized national workshops, and serves on BIS code committees. He is also a PIG member for the DST FIST-2022 grant, applying drone-based hyperspectral data for water-efficient irrigation. Currently, six PhD scholars are working under his supervision.



Claire HERBERT

Head of Digital Strategy for the Centre for Earth Observation Science in the Clayton H. Riddell Faculty of Environment, Earth and Resources

She is a freshwater biogeographer based in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. With a Bachelor of Science from the University of Manitoba, she has over two decades of experience in lake biology and data management. Her work focuses on the impacts of climate change on freshwater ecosystems, particularly in the Lake Winnipeg Basin. As the Field Program Manager for the Manitoba Great Lakes Program at the Centre for Earth Observation Science (CEOS), Herbert leads initiatives that bridge scientific research and community action. Her efforts aim to mobilize science into actionable tools for climate resilience. Herbert also serves as a co-chair of the United Nations Academic Impact Hub for Sustainable Development Goal 6, which focuses on clean water and sanitation. In this role, she collaborates with global partners to promote sustainable water management practices. Additionally, she contributes her expertise to the Lake Winnipeg Foundation's Board of Directors, where she advocates for water protection, data privacy, and the sustainable management of freshwater resources. Claire is committed to integrating scientific research with community engagement to foster environmental stewardship and address the challenges posed by climate change.

7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY



UNAI SDG 7 HUB Co-CHAIR

Tayo Julius AJAYI, PhD, MNIM, FNIT is a Professor of Linguistics and Communications at the Lagos State University, (LASU), Ojo Lagos. He had both his first and second degrees from the University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University) and his PhD in Linguistics and Communications from the Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais (UFMG), Belo Horizonte, Brazil. He also has a Professional Postgraduate Diploma in Education.

He has been involved severally in Planning / Supervision of Projects Development of Partnership Projects and Programmes and he is an Expert in Capacity Development Advocacy, Sensitization, Community Engagement, Research & Development and has facilitated several Cooperation Agreements between the Lagos State University and several Institutions abroad. He is a recipient of several prestigious academic awards like the Obafemi Awolowo University Fellowship Award, CAPRS-PEC-PG Brazilian Government Award and the Research Fellowship Award of the Instituto Camões, Portugal.



Prof. Dimitrios MAVRAKIS is the Director of KEPA (NKUA), Co-Chair of the UNAI SDG7 Hub; coordinator of: i) the “BSEC–Green Energy Network”; ii) PROMITHEASnet, the Energy and Climate Change Policy Network (academic institutes from S.E. Europe, Black Sea and Central Asia); Chief editor of the “Energy View of the BSEC countries”; Editor of the worldwide disseminated “PROMITHEAS newsletter”; Chairman of the annual international scientific conference on “Energy and Climate Change” (18th year); Initiator of the UNAI SDG7 Hub - Energy Community.

His main studies and activities are related with energy geopolitics, regional energy markets, energy interconnections, transcontinental energy corridors, climate policy instruments, interactions between climate policy tools, development and multi-criteria assessment of mitigation/adaptation policy mixtures, identification and assessment of behavioral barriers for energy and climate policy implementation. He was appointed as member of the Advisory Groups on Energy (AGE) of E.C. for FP6 and FP7 and was the Project Coordinator of FP6, FP7 and H2020 projects.

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



UNAI SDG 8 HUB CHAIR

Prof. Drew FRANKLIN is a Senior Lecturer in Marketing at The University of Auckland Business School and also serves as the Business School's Associate Dean of External Engagement. Drew serves as Associate Director Strategic Engagement at Business School research centre, *Juncture: Dialogues on Inclusive Capitalism* and leads the UNAI Hub for SDG8 on behalf of the University of Auckland. Before completing both his Master's and Doctoral degrees at Auckland University of Technology, Drew enjoyed a 12-year career in global business and marketing roles, including sales, marketing, and business development responsibilities in the North American, Western European, Australasian, and developed Asia markets. Drew's current research mainly focuses on business-to-business marketing, marketing strategy, and relationship marketing practice, specifically focusing on trust and trust repair. Drew is also interested in industrial marketing functions, such as professional selling and sales management, industrial pricing practice and business buying behaviour. Other current research projects Drew is involved in are seeking to understand the role of technology in business relationships, such as artificial intelligence (AI) and other automated or augmented technologies, and how best we can adopt these tools in practice.

Prof. Billie LYTHBERG is Associate Director of Research at the University of Auckland Business School research centre *Juncture: Dialogues on Inclusive Capitalism*, where she is focused on developing and advancing transdisciplinary research teams and programmes that demonstrate how capitalism can respond to both environmental imperatives and community well-being.

Billie's research exemplifies a genuinely transdisciplinary approach that bridges the social sciences, humanities, and STEM fields, collaborating closely with scientists and engineers as well as industry partners, iwi and community groups. This is evident in projects like her current investigation into nature-positive land use solutions on the east coast of New Zealand, which brings together ecological, geological, economic and cultural expertise to tackle pressing challenges in highly erodible landscapes and support decent work and sustainable economic growth. Throughout her career, she has secured substantial competitive funding from New Zealand's Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, the Royal Society of New Zealand, and the UK's Economic and Social Research Council, and has leveraged these to build robust, values-led research and implementation partnerships. She is especially known for her work exploring and advancing Moana Oceania economic praxis. Billie's postdoctoral research at the University of Cambridge laid a strong foundation for this globally connected, interdisciplinary scholarship. She has been an early contributor to online education, contributing to platforms such as Khan Academy, serving as an inaugural champion of the Business School's online postgraduate programmes, and producing multi-modal research outputs—including digital apps, well-funded television documentary series, and interactive resources—that extend the reach and influence of her scholarship far beyond traditional academic audiences.

11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



UNAI SDG 11 HUB CHAIR

Dr. Mark CHARLTON is an Associate Professor of Sustainable Development and leads the United Nations Academic Impact Global Hub Chair for Sustainable Development Goal 11, based at De Montfort University. Mark also teaches sustainable development politics in the department of Politics. His current research looks at efforts to tackle climate change in marginalised communities. He is also working with young people in the United Kingdom and beyond on projects to help understand the challenges faced by those affected by climate issues and forced migration. Much of Mark's work promotes just climate transitions, with a particular emphasis on supporting refugee populations and other vulnerable groups. His research also includes comparative studies with Germany, using ethnographic and citizen science methods to explore global challenges from a culturally nuanced perspective. Mark is passionate about driving systemic change through inclusive, sustainable, and democratic practices that empower marginalised voices.

12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION



UNAI SDG 12 HUB CHAIR

Zia Ur REHMANN is leading the sustainability office at the National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST) as a seasoned sustainability professional, implementing novel solutions, key strategies, and policies to achieve global ESG institutional standards. Zia is a sustainability professional, researcher, and climate change communicator with over 5+ years of experience in research, project management, stakeholder engagement, partnerships, sustainability initiatives, SDG impact evaluation and mapping, and research design. He represented Pakistan in COP29 and is an effective communicator who has managed both national and international projects, driving impactful change through scientific writing, publications, and stakeholder engagement, while maintaining strong academic connections.

Zia excels in project management, procurement, and building strategic partnerships that enhance sustainability efforts. He has secured over five impactful projects in gender and climate, women's resilience, eco-tourism, water management, and youth in climate action, serving as Principal Investigator on two and Co-PI on three others. With strong project management skills and expertise in scientific communication, Zia has advanced sustainability initiatives at national and international levels. His academic background in Environmental Sciences with a focus on membrane technology and the circular economy drives his innovative approach.

Additionally, he supports education through the "Learner's Assistance Society (LAS) Pakistan," reflecting his dedication to fostering sustainable development and impactful research.

Experience: Head of Sustainability, Assistant Manager Sustainability, Research Assistant, Research Fellow



UNAI SDG 14 HUB CHAIR

Mr. Sverre Ole DRØNEN is a Senior Adviser currently working at the university of Bergen in Norway. He is also part of the Division of Research and Innovation that has for years focused on reasearching what is under the ocean.

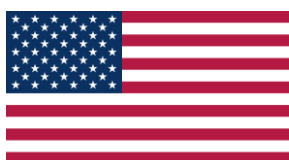
His Work: Global partnerships and science communications; Science policy adviser; Science communications adviser; Impact and communications adviser;

Policy brief adviser; International collaborations and partnerships; International university networks and alliances; Science/research communications; ommunications on scientific advice and science diplomacy; Text and editing; Communications and media advice; Social media

Outreach: Senior adviser on science-policy communications; Science/research communications; Text and editing; Communication and media advice; Social media.

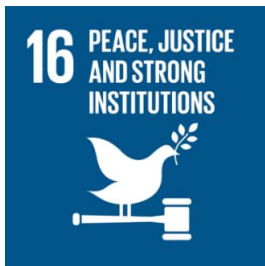
Briefs: Hviding, Edvard; Bettencourt, Joao P.H.; Drønen, Sverre Ole (2024). Ocean Futures 2023: Science and Diplomacy for Ocean Governance – Our Common Ocean. Policy Brief #1.

Lectures: Hviding, Edvard; Drønen, Sverre Ole (2024). Communicating science diplomacy: How do you communicate on the science-policy nexus in high-level diplomatic settings?.



UNAI SDG 16 HUB CHAIR

Prof. Alpaslan ÖZERDEM is Dean of the Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter School for Peace and Conflict Resolution and professor of peace and conflict studies. Prior to his appointment as Dean in August 2019, Dr. Özerdem was Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research at Coventry University in the UK. Dr. Özerdem specializes in conflict resolution, peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction. With over 20 years of field research experience in Afghanistan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, El Salvador, Indonesia, Kosovo, Lebanon, Liberia, Nepal, Nigeria, Philippines, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan and Turkey. Dr. Özerdem has undertaken numerous research projects that were funded by the UK's Economic & Social Research Council (ESRC); British Academy, US Institute of Peace, and various US and European Union funding schemes. Dr. Özerdem has published extensively (14 books and numerous journal articles, book chapters and op-eds) and amongst others, is author of Post-war Recovery. Dr. Özerdem has also taken an active role in the initiation and management of several advisory and applied research projects for a wide range of national and international organizations such as the United Nations and international NGOs. He also runs tailor-made and in-country professional training programs for a wide range of audiences from humanitarian aid practitioners to civil servants and policy makers. Dr. Özerdem is a frequent speaker and workshop leader for events organized by the private sector, higher education institutions, international organizations and governmental authorities. He is a member of the Anna Lindh Foundation Scientific Committee, and received his Professor Extraordinary in Politics title by Stellenbosch University in 2017 and visiting professorship to the Jiangsu University and Coventry University in 2019.



UNAI SDG 16 HUB Vice CHAIR for Outreach and Partnership

Dr. Maurício VIEIRA is currently Assistant Professor and Chair on Countering Illicit Trade and Preventing Transnational Organized Crime at the University for Peace. He holds a PhD in International Politics and Conflict Resolution from the University of Coimbra (Portugal), a Master's degree in International Relations from the University of Coimbra (Portugal) and a Bachelor's degree in Journalism from the Universidade de Fortaleza (Brazil). In addition to his current position, he is an Associate Researcher at the Observatory of Nationalities, associated with the Ceará State University and at the Laboratory for the Study of Conflict and Violence of the same university.



UNAI SDG 17 HUB CHAIR

Prof. Jian ZHANG is Vice President of the Institute of Climate Change and Sustainable Development at Tsinghua University, Executive Director of the Low Carbon Energy Laboratory at Tsinghua University, and Deputy Secretary General of the Global Alliance of Universities on Climate. His research interests include global climate governance, climate adaptation, sustainable development, as well as climate solutions innovation. He is lead for multiple research projects including China's healthcare decarbonization pathway program, Tsinghua Global Adaptation Joint Action Initiative. He is author of the Chinese version of "A Clean Planet for All: A European Long-term Strategic Vision for a Prosperous, Modern, Competitive and Climate Neutral Economy", and a number of research articles. He is member of the Academic Committee of the International Finance Forum (IFF), member of the Academic Committee of Beijing ESG Institute, Deputy Chief-editor for Sustainable Development Blue Book, working group member of UN's STI4SDG taskforce, and member of the Climate and Health Committee under the Chinese Environmental Mutagen Society. He is also UNAI's Hub Chair for SDG 17.