



Varaždin Development and Entrepreneurship Agency & University North

In cooperation with:

Institute for Scientific Work in Varaždin of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts

Faculty of Management - University of Warsaw

Faculty of Law, Economics and Social Sciences Sale - Mohammed V University in Rabat and ENCGT -  
Ecole Nationale de Commerce et de Gestion de Tanger - Abdelmalek Essaadi University

invite you to join us for an

## Interdisciplinary Panel Discussion on UN Sustainable Development Goals

**Tuesday, November 21, 2023, starting at 4pm (Croatian local time)**

**Unlocking the Potential of Collaboration:**

A unique panel discussion uniting minds across disciplines and continents to pave the way for sustainable development on both local and global levels. Witness the intersection of expertise as we tackle the UN Sustainable Goals from multiple angles.





University North is hosting a hybrid interdisciplinary panel on the UN Sustainable Development Goals with renowned international experts in different scientific fields. Join us for a panel discussion where experts from diverse fields converge to explore innovative solutions for achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Discover the power of interdisciplinary collaboration in addressing the world's most pressing challenges.

## GLOBAL GOALS TALKS

### **Moderator:**



**Associate Professor Tomislav Meštrović, MD, PhD, University North, Department of Nursing**

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Tomislav Meštrović graduated from the Faculty of Medicine, University of Zagreb in 2007, specializing in Medical Microbiology in 2013, earning a Doctorate in Biomedicine in 2014, an MSc in Public Health from the University of London in 2018, and he also completed Harvard Medical School Training in Clinical Trials in 2019. As an Associate Professor at University North, he teaches Microbiology, Epidemiology and Public Health, mentoring over 140 theses and holding positions at global universities while leading interdisciplinary research.

His accomplishments include authoring 150+ highly cited scientific articles, recognized among the top 2% scientists globally by Stanford University, publications in prestigious journals, as well as notable contributions in microbiology and public health. He actively contributes as a reviewer in 50+ scientific journals, serves as an expert evaluator for EU projects, and participates in WHO working groups.

Assoc. Prof. Meštrović received prestigious accolades such as the Fulbright scholarship, served as President of the 'Young Leaders Circle' of the American Society for Microbiology (ASM), represented



Croatia in global health initiatives, and received renowned scholarships. He also holds memberships in the Global Young Academy and is a Fellow in health associations.

His efforts in promoting science involve extensive scientific journalism, organizing health awareness initiatives, and leading educational workshops. Additionally, he held key positions in Croatian associations, showcasing notable leadership roles in his field.

### **International panelists (Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup>, 4pm-5pm)**



#### **Bridging the Gap: Group B Streptococcus, Vaccine Development and the Pursuit of Sustainable Development Goals**

*Associate Professor Tatiana Castro Abreu Pinto, PhD - Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ)*

A dynamic relationship between the infectious burden of Group B *Streptococcus* and the ongoing development of vaccines will be explored, positioning these advancements within the broader context of Sustainable Development Goals. Ensuring equitable distribution of vaccine against Group B *Streptococcus* once it is developed can be viewed as paramount for achieving global health equity, as it not only safeguards vulnerable populations but also fosters a more resilient and inclusive healthcare landscape worldwide. The lecture aims to inspire a thoughtful discussion on creating sustainable and resilient healthcare solutions to combat the impact of Group B *Streptococcus* globally.



### **"An Overview of Climate Change and Public Health: From Understanding to Adaptation"**

Professor Margaret Handley, PhD, MPH - Center for Vulnerable Populations at the University of California San Francisco (UCSF)

This talk will provide an overview of the intersection between climate change and its impact on health outcomes and delve into key strategies aimed at both anticipating and mitigating climate-induced public health crises. Potential avenues through which implementation science can play a pivotal role in devising interventions that foster adaptation to climate change while safeguarding public health will also be explored. The discussion will encompass various methods through which the principles of implementation science can be harnessed to formulate effective strategies for addressing the intricate challenges arising from the intersection of climate change and public health.



### **"Geospatial Applications for Sustainable Development Goals"**

Associate Professor Suraj Kumar Singh, PhD - Head, Centre for Sustainable Development, Suresh Gyan Vihar University, Jaipur

Geospatial applications are pivotal in advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). With the power of spatial data and technology, we can monitor progress, detect vulnerabilities, and drive informed decision-making for sustainable development. Geospatial tools enable us to map and analyze critical factors such as climate change impacts, resource management, disaster risk reduction, and access to essential services, fostering resilience and equitable development. By harnessing the spatial dimension, we can better understand our planet, effectively target interventions, and work collaboratively towards a more sustainable, inclusive, and environmentally conscious future, as the United Nations' SDGs envisioned.



### **"An Overview of Sustainable Development"**

Dr. Wilfred Angie Abia, PhD, IGFS, SBS, Queens University Belfast, UK; Integrated Health for All Foundation (IHAF) & Depa't of Biochem, FS, University of Yaounde 1, Cameroon

This talk will provide an overview of the conceptual framework of the sustainable development theories and practices, its pillars, and objectives for a more sustainable world. Furthermore, it will duel on the importance of sustainable development vis-à-vis economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental protection to ensure the survival of our societies and our shared planet. Finally, a few examples shall be discussed ascertaining that it's all about the making the right choices that we all can and should.



### **"Ironies of Climate Change Action: A Very Australian Example"**

Dr. Binoy Kampmark, former Commonwealth Scholar at Selwyn College, Cambridge, currently lecturer at RMIT University in the School of Global, Urban and Social Studies, Australia, contributing editor for CounterPunch and a columnist for The Mandarin

While not entirely unique, Australia presents a remarkable example of how pursuing climate action (the 13th UN Sustainable Development Goal) policies can find themselves seemingly at odds, even ironically so, with other objectives. This is particularly so regarding the transition from the fossil-fuel reliant economy to one more heavily shaped by renewable sources. While the current Albanese government, which won office in May 2022, has adopted a more ecologically aggressive program of reducing greenhouse gas emissions than its predecessor, it continues to approve mining projects that risk falling short of projected "net zero" targets. This policy has agitated an increasingly influential ecological lobby within



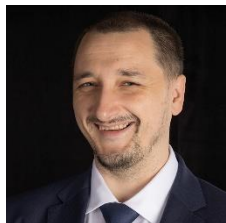
the Parliament, dominated by the Greens Party and various independent parliamentarians. The tension between pursuing the 8th SDG of decent work and economic growth premised on full employment, and that of feasible climate action, has been laid bare.

The list of ironies is considerable for any researcher in this field. Australia, the mining-giant that finds it hard to relent in opening more mines; the mining-giant that, for the sake of developing cleaner technologies such as battery-powered Electric Vehicles, will also pursue mining of such rare minerals as lithium, nickel and cobalt, which also comes with its costs. These costs are not merely environmental; they are also areas of political and strategic competition between China and the United States, with the latter seeing Australia as a US “domestic resource” within the meaning of its defence interests.

Then come such environmental projects such as wind turbine construction, seen as an important part of the energy transition away from commodities, which has been attacked as endangering whale populations (the scientific evidence on this is nigh non-existent), thereby galvanising conservative and right-wing opponents commonly linked to the mining lobby. The spectacle of having a pro-mining advocate such as Queensland Senator Matt Canavan endorse the cause of whale protection over wind turbine production, and, unwittingly, the 14th SDG goal, is a striking, if risible one indeed.

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### University North panelists (Tuesday, 21<sup>st</sup> 5pm-5.30 pm):



#### **“Changes of mycotoxins occurrence - solutions in UN Sustainable Development Goals”**

*Associate Professor Bojan Šarkanj, PhD, Head of the Department of Food Technology*

Climate change has become a reality of the 21st century, with far-reaching implications for global health, agriculture, and environmental sustainability. The intricate relationship between climate change and the occurrence of mycotoxins—a group of naturally occurring toxins produced by fungi—in various ecosystems worldwide is currently widely explored, and several prediction models have been developed. By employing an integrated approach that combines insights from the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), namely Zero Hunger (SDG 2), Good Health and Well-being (SDG 3), and Climate Action (SDG 13), we explore the multifaceted impact of climate change on mycotoxin levels and how sustainable development can mitigate that problem.





### **“Taking meaningful action to address climate change”**

*Professor Petar Kurečić, PhD, Departments of Economics, Department of Communicology, Media and Journalism, Subdepartment of Media and Communication*

With the extreme rise of temperatures predicted for 2024, the World Health Organization has declared that this is one of the largest threats to global threat. While some action is taking place through international forums such as COP, the pace and intensity of the activities planned needs to quicken before lasting harm is done to our environment. Significant investment into clean energy could also aid in generating new jobs, furthering our society and making our world sustainable. Without strong political resolve to address the challenges we currently face; inaction is the most probable outcome. From previous attempts such as the Kyoto Protocol or the Millennium Development Goals, we need to learn that non-binding proclamations and voluntary targets are not a meaningful solution. Despite the fact that climate change is one of the global challenges that truly impacts each and every individual, it has been hard to find consensus on a solution. Only with a clear path ahead and binding targets can we hope to address the crisis we all face.



### **“Water & Energy Nexus vs Climate Changes – reality or science fiction?”**

*Associate Professor Bojan Đurin, PhD, Department of Civil Engineering*

The rising world population number goes “hand-in-hand” with the rising energy and water consumption. Extreme weather events more often occur than 30 years. Does it cause human or natural activity? This is a very hard and unpleasant question, where discussions are the only form of the answers. We cannot waste our time on this; we should give solutions for the problem-solving. This presentation will show potential solutions for the mentioned problems. From the civil engineering and geodesy aspects, mechanical, energy, and electrotechnical point of view... Solutions exist.



## "Artificial Intelligence in Healthcare: Trusting Machines to Treat Us"

*Assistant Professor Dumić-Čule Ivo, PhD, Department of Nursing*

Artificial intelligence (AI) is playing an increasingly significant role in healthcare, from advanced diagnostics to personalized treatment. AI as a tool in the treatment process has been developing for some time, and today both doctors and patients use AI-based tools in their daily lives. Doctors need to understand AI capabilities and limitations through education, enabling them to effectively utilize AI for patient care. Adequate data access, ethical principles, and legal guidelines are essential to protect patient data. AI plays a significant role in healthcare, but the human aspect should not be ignored. Trust between doctors, patients, and AI is crucial and can be established through education, transparency, and clear guidelines. AI should be viewed as a tool complementing human expertise rather than replacing it entirely. By combining AI and human interaction, high-quality, patient-centered care can be achieved.

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**International interdisciplinary panel discussion: Tuesday, 21<sup>st</sup> 5.30 pm-6.00 pm**

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