



ISDRS Kathmandu Communiqué 2024 – Draft

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The International Sustainable Development Research Society (ISDRS) successfully concluded its 30th Annual Conference in Kathmandu, Nepal, held between June 10-14, 2024. In collaboration with Nepal's newly established public universities and several national and international organizations, ISDRS convened a global community of over 250 scholars, students, and practitioners. This hybrid conference, while facilitating participation from over 50 countries and all time zones celebrated, presented, and debated research themes on sustainability and sustainable development.

The conference featured 220 abstracts, categorized into 10 tracks: Sustainability and science; Education for sustainability; Biodiversity and ecosystem services; Climate change and energy; Sustainable production, consumption and innovation; Sustainable cities and communities; Socio-economic aspects of sustainable development; Social foundations for sustainability; Governance and institutional frameworks; and Special themes on sustainability of the Himalayas.

The most important theme that emerged from the conference was the interconnectedness and multifaceted nature of sustainable development. This emergent theme highlighted the necessity of understanding and addressing the complex interactions between different sustainability dimensions—environmental, social, economic, and institutional. Key aspects included the importance of inter- and transdisciplinary research, stakeholder engagement, and the recognition of both synergies and trade-offs in pursuing sustainable development goals while undergoing climate change.

The need for localized and context-specific sustainability strategies, the integration of circular economy principles in education, knowledge co-creation, the use of innovative technologies for sustainable water and land management, and the critical examination of sustainability discourses were additional significant research work that emerged. These studies underscore the growing emphasis on practical, place-based solutions and systemic change across sectors.

However, significant gaps in knowledge remain. There is a clear need for more comprehensive models that link UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with planetary boundaries, as well as a deeper understanding of the socio-economic dimensions of sustainability, particularly equity, inclusivity, and the impacts of sustainability transitions on vulnerable populations. Additionally, there is a demand for enhanced understanding of sustainability discourses, better methodologies for assessing and reporting sustainability performance, particularly in developing robust, participatory approaches that reflect the diverse priorities and challenges of different communities.

A particularly notable outcome of the conference was the strong representation and contributions from scholars in the Global South, which provided unique and context-specific insights into sustainability. The research presented highlighted the contextual uniqueness of sustainable development themes in these regions, emphasizing the importance of local perspectives in the



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global sustainability debate. Moreover, nearly half of the presenters were women, reflecting the increasing participation and contributions of women scholars in the field of sustainability.

In Nepal, the host country of the 30th conference, there was a call for a more robust research culture and expanded scope for the newly established universities. The conference also identified the need to build a platform and mechanism for collaboration between major actors in sustainable development in the Global South and emerging economies, emphasizing their roles and responsibilities in achieving the SDGs. Moreover, the conference emphasizes the importance of appropriate science communications.

Overall, the conference underscored the necessity for continued research and collaboration to fill existing gaps and advance the field of sustainable development in a meaningful and impactful way. The collective message was clear: achieving sustainability and sustainable development requires collaborative efforts, scientific research, innovative solutions, and comprehensive policy frameworks that consider the diverse and interconnected challenges faced by communities globally.

By emphasizing homegrown initiatives and leveraging its collective academic strength, ISDRS ensures that its vision yields tangible benefits for society for the foreseeable future. The commitment of ISDRS to training and mentoring emerging and current scholars, equipping them with the skills needed to grow and lead current and future sustainability initiatives should remain one of its cornerstone efforts.

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