

# PROGRAMME DETAILS

Association of Indian Universities (AIU), is one of the premier higher education institutions in India established in 1925. It plays a vital role in shaping Indian higher education by being a research-based policy advice institution to the Government of India in the field of Higher Education, Sports and Culture. One of the key activities of the AIU is to convene the Vice Chancellors' Meets at Zonal and National level to discuss various issues related to higher education. India being a country with large geographical area, for ease of reaching out, AIU has grouped the member HEIs into 5 zones—East, West, North, South and Central. Each zone is constituted of HEIs located in 5-6 States grouped in that Zone. Thus annually, 5 zonal Meets and one national Vice chancellors' meets are organized. These Meets are important platforms not only to discuss the significant issues of higher education but they also play a catalytic role in finding solutions for different problems of higher education through collective wisdom. Further, AIU carries forward the voice of the participating leaders of higher education to appropriate agencies and authorities for their dispensation. Every year in the Annual Vice Chancellors' Meet, a specific theme which is of topical significance for higher education community is taken up for discussion. As a run up, subthemes related to the main theme are discussed in the Zonal Vice Chancellors' Meets.

## **THEMES FOR THE AIU VICE CHANCELLORS MEET –2021**

India is placed at 120th rank in Sustainable Development Report—2021. This calls for an urgent action from all sectors of the country. Due to their unique position in the society, the HEIs have immense scope and potential to contribute towards achieving all the 17 SDGs and thereby accomplishing 2030 agenda. Rather, realizing the SDGs without the involvement of higher education sector is quite an impossible task. In India, there is a lot of tacit contribution of HEIs towards realizing SDGs but there is no data on classified efforts of HEIs on the same. In the impact ranking of Times Higher Education which assesses universities with reference to their contribution in realizing UN SDGs, only 2 public universities and 9 private universities could find place. This compels us to think whether the Indian Higher Education Institutions are responsible enough in their approach towards sustainability in delivering education. Most importantly, it makes us ponder why we are not able to tap the potential of HEIs in achieving SDGs. To apprise the Indian HEIs about their role, and to reinforce them to take up the task of accomplishing SDGs as their prime responsibility, AIU as a representative body of HEIs in India, has set-out to organize all the Zonal and National Vice Chancellors Conferences in 2021-22 on the theme '*Realising Sustainable Development Goals through Higher Education Institutions*'.

HEIs in India have displayed their potential during the COVID-19 crisis and demonstrated why their expertise and involvement matters in solving the crucial challenges. We are left with one decade only to accomplish 2030 Agenda. It is therefore, a crucial step at an apt

time, to gear the HEIs to dedicate themselves to contribute significantly in achieving those goals. Accordingly, in the Annual Meet, all the 17 SDGs will be taken up for discussion. In zonal meets a set of 4 closely related SDGs will be deliberated in each of the 4 Zonal Vice Chancellors Meets i.e., East, West, Central and North. In South Zone SDG—4, the goal related to education will be discussed exclusively.

## THE PRESENT MEET

The present Meet is the No Zone Vice Chancellors' Meet. The theme for this Meet is on *Realizing SDGs through HEIs for Ensuring Equality and Sustainable Society*. The theme is an overarching theme for the SDGs-5, 10, 11&12. The discussions will primarily address the role of HEIs in the perspective of their contribution. Besides, there will be stocktaking of global progress towards achieving these goals; share knowledge, success stories and good practices; identify particular areas of concern and main challenges; and suggest ways forward in terms of action Points for HEIs, government and other stakeholders. Action points for HEIs will be for all the three dimensions of HEIs i.e., Teaching, Research and Community Development and operational aspects in the administration of universities. The two-day event will include following 4 sessions:

**Session -1:** Contribution of HEIs in achieving gender equality and empower all women and girls' (SDG-5)

**Session -2:** Contribution of HEIs in reducing inequality within and among the countries' (SDG-10)

**Session -3:** Contribution of HEIs in making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable (SDG-11)

**Session -4:** SDG -12: Contribution of HEIs in ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns (SDG-12)

## FORMAT AND APPROACH

The Sessions will be of 1 Hour and 30 Minutes each. In each Session there will be experts from United Nations, NITI Aayog, Line Ministries in India and academicians. Presentations will be followed by interaction and Q and A. On the basis of deliberations, a commitment statement will be framed for the universities to further the cause of achieving the SDG. In addition to academic deliberation, capacity development initiative will be taken by forming a group of Vice Chancellors who will work on various dimensions of realizing the SDG through HEIs.

## SESSION DETAILS

**Session -1: Contribution of HEIs in achieving gender equality and empower all women and girls' (SDG-5)**

The achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls to reach their full potential is key to Goal 5. This goal requires the elimination of all forms of discrimination, violence and harmful practices against women and access to sexual and reproductive health and rights. Working towards this goal will also mean the achievement of gender parity in political, public and economic life. The deliberations in this session will therefore be on ---Role of HEIs in:

1. Developing strategies needed to end all forms of discrimination against women; improving the representation of women in leadership positions and senior academic roles while ensuring their full and effective participation at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life.
2. Creating safe campuses devoid of gender discrimination and threat for the students and employees.

### **Session -2: Contribution of HEIs in reducing inequality within and among the countries' (SDG-10)**

Goal-10 is about reducing inequality within and among countries and ensuring that no one is left behind achieving the sustainable development. Inequality within and among countries is a persistent cause of concern. In this session, there will be discussions on --- Role of HEIs in:

1. Developing strategies and affirmative actions needed to reduce persistent inequalities which are putting the country at risk of economics and political instability.
2. Creating a supportive, inclusive and safe working and learning environment for people of financially and socially disadvantaged backgrounds; people from rural and remote areas; people with disabilities, people of diverse genders and sexualities; and people from diverse cultural and religious communities; etc.

### **Session -3: Contribution of HEIs in making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable (SDG-11)**

Goal 11 aims to make cities and other human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable while stimulating innovation and employment. India is one of the fastest growing economies in the world and thus, it is one of the rapid urbanizing countries. The deliberations in this session will therefore be on --- Role of HEIs in :

1. In scaling up and delivering sustainable solutions to global challenges for the wider community and industry .
2. Devising strategies and mechanisms for ensuring pollution control, waste management processes and policies; creating green spaces; greater access to and provision of sustainable transport systems including public transport, etc.

## Session-4: Contribution of HEIs in ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns (SDG-12)

Goal-12 aims at ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns lack of which is the major cause of the continued deterioration of the global environment particularly due to industrialization. In India, the issue of resource use is glaringly high. This goal presents a challenge to produce and consume less, while meeting other goals related to inequalities in quality of life and consumption. Innovations around sustainable management of natural resources, a reduction in food waste, and an increase in recycling, reuse, prevention and reduction practices will be crucial to achieving this goal. In this Session, there will be deliberations on ---Role of HEIs in:

1. Creating awareness on complex challenges of sustainability and equipping people to work towards sustainable futures;
2. Promoting usage of alternate and renewable energy sources, minimizing wastage and encouraging sustainable consumption patterns.

## Participation and Organization

Vice Chancellors of Indian Universities, Experts from United Nations System, Line Ministries in Government of India, Apex Bodies of Higher Education, and Academia will be speakers and Session Chairs. Experts from the UN system and other international organizations will also be invited to contribute. Discussions will be conducted in English. Sessions will be through blended mode. The speakers, chairs and participants need to inform in advance about the mode through which they would attend the Meet.



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