

Jena Declaration on Cultural Sustainability signed

06.09.2021

The signatories call for a change in strategy to achieve the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals through a new approach that takes into account the regional cultural and historical context of human activity to help develop effective solutions.

On January 1, 2016, the so-called 2030 Agenda of the United Nations came into force. In it, member states pledged to do their utmost over the next 15 years to achieve 17 Sustainable Development Goals for the world - including ending poverty, education and healthy lives for all, and achieving sustainable modes of production and consumption. Meanwhile, more and more experts are pointing out that despite immense political, legal and financial efforts, the global community is about to miss the last chance to achieve these United Nations Sustainable Development Goals in time. Simply stepping up existing resources does not seem to be enough to implement the 2030 Agenda, and top-down measures to address global challenges that have dominated so far cannot sufficiently take into account the diversity of cultural and regional differences.

A network of renowned international institutions such as the Club of Rome, the World Academy of Arts and Sciences, Academia Europaea, and the German and Canadian UNESCO commissions is therefore now calling for a clear change in strategy through a new cultural approach. On the initiative of Prof. Dr. Benno Werlen of the UNESCO Chair on Global Understanding for Sustainability at the Friedrich Schiller University in Jena, more than 30 institutions have signed "[The Jena Declaration](#)" in which they define a new cultural approach through which the Sustainability Goals can still be achieved.

Garry Jacobs, president of the World Academy of Arts and Sciences and one of the Declaration's first signatories, explains the signatories' overriding concern:

"It will take a broad-based global social movement to shift thinking and action in ways that enable the transition to a globally just, inclusive, and sustainable life. This requires careful alignment with local and regional needs and conditions."

To accelerate and deepen the necessary societal change, the United Nations and policymakers must reach out more directly to the key agents of change: namely, citizens with their everyday routines and habits. The goal of "The Jena Declaration" is to draw greater attention to the cultural, regional, and historical embeddedness of human action. Building on this, the signatory network calls on everyone to develop inclusive solutions tailored to local conditions. This calls first for a respectful appreciation and valuing of cultural diversity.

Prof. Uwe Cantner, Vice President for Young Academics and Equality at Friedrich Schiller University, emphasizes:

"The fact that young people worldwide are assigned a central role in the realization of the program of the Jena Declaration on Cultural Sustainability is particularly noteworthy and, in my view, absolutely necessary. For without the ideas, the demands and the commitment of tomorrow's generation, it will not be possible to overcome the major social challenges. Today's generation is obviously finding it very difficult to do so. Therefore, young and old, hand in hand for sustainable improvement, that can be the key."

Accordingly, the Declaration's program aims to reach people of all ages - but especially younger generations - and of diverse cultural, social and regional backgrounds, and to make it easier for them to act locally in the spirit of global sustainability.

The Declaration is implemented along three program lines: "Art," "Education," and "Civil Society." These are coordinated by a World Secretariat established at the University of Jena in cooperation with the Max Weber Kolleg of the University of Erfurt and the Hochschule für Musik FRANZ LISZT Weimar.

On September 9, 2021, 3:00 p.m., a digital launch event for the Jena Declaration will take place, attended by the Co-President of the Club of Rome, Mamphela Ramphele, the President of the World Academy of Arts and Sciences, Garry Jacobs, as well as important co-signers of the Declaration such as Prof. Hartmut Rosa, the Secretary General of the German UNESCO Commission, Dr. Roman Luckscheiter, the President of the Leibniz Association, Prof. Matthias Kleiner, as well as the German climate activist Luisa Neubauer and artists from Afghanistan, Iran, South Africa and other countries.

To read

- Friedrich Schiller University Jena (03.09.2021): [Jena Declaration on Sustainability](#)

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