

# Global Leadership Training Programme for Sustainable Development in Africa

9 January – 6 February 2026

## Course Overview

This intensive course is designed for postgraduate students in the field of international development and sustainability with an interest in Africa. It is conducted by UNU-IAS in collaboration with New York University and the University of Johannesburg. This online certificate course will provide an opportunity to learn from African leaders about innovative leadership, democracy, civic engagement and public policy. It includes lectures, workshops and activities developed by scholars and practitioners in a range of fields (e.g., health, education, technology, engineering, environmental studies, governance, law/human rights) from the public and private sectors across Africa. A variety of online teaching modalities and resources will enable participants to consider diverse leadership approaches and strategies to strengthen community and civil society engagement, advance human rights, and contribute to sustainable development across the continent.

## Course Objectives

- Create opportunities to engage with African leaders across fields and disciplines (health, education, environment, governance, technology, human rights, etc.) to learn from their leadership skills and understand the strategies they employ to promote sustainable development initiatives, particularly the SDGs.
- Build a network of Asian and African development practitioners (faculty, researchers, staff and graduate students) and facilitate collaboration between organizations on both continents to advance progress on the SDGs and key research priorities.
- Create learning opportunities for all participants to discuss best practices in governance, community mobilization, public management and social innovation, assess their relevance in a range of African contexts and apply as appropriate.
- Build agenda-setting, strategic-planning and community-engagement skills to foster ethical, relevant and context-specific development practices, while advancing participants' learning and addressing key development planning needs.

## **Course Schedule at a Glance**

The course consists of eight modules with content provided through an online learning portal (Moodle). Each module will include a variety of downloadable materials (e.g., topical videos, presentations with audio lectures and relevant readings). Participants will also meet online (Zoom) approximately three times per week for a two-hour synchronous session led by the co-instructors and with guest presenters from various countries and industries.

17:00–19:00 in Tokyo (JST)

10:00–12:00 in South Africa (UCT/GMT+2)

## **Tentative Programme Overview**

*Subject to change*

Week 1: 9 January	<b><i>Innovative Leadership and Sustainable Development: SDGs for Africa</i></b>
Week 2: 12,14,16 January	<b><i>Sustainable Development: Research and New Technologies for Sustainability</i></b>
Week 3: 19, 21, 23 January	<b><i>Leadership, Human Rights and Participatory Governance</i></b>
Week 4: 26 January 6 February	<b><i>Building Strong, Inclusive and Participatory Communities: Proposals for the SDGs</i></b>

The courses content draws heavily from the expertise of a range of professionals and interdisciplinary development practitioners across the African continent, combining insights from education, health, environmental studies and government. The sessions will examine the realities faced by African leaders in leading their organizations in various contexts, cultures and countries. The synchronous sessions will be highly interactive and draw on the experiences of the participants and presenters, and explore the opportunities, challenges and successes in each area in their sector and country. The goal is for the participants to learn not only from faculty and guest presenters, but also from each other. In addition to team building, the course will provide practical skills to enable development practitioners to

work with and support initiatives that promote civil societies, engaged communities and flourishing locally sustainable economies.

## **Programme Requirements and Grading**

Regular attendance and participation as well as thorough reading of the materials is required. Active engagement during lectures and on the Moodle discussion board is also expected. Participants will be asked to write a five-page interdisciplinary research concept note or project proposal based on the lectures and readings, and with input from at least two professionals in their area of work. They are encouraged to collaborate with other participants on the concept note or project proposal.

The Certificate of Completion will be based primarily on the following criteria and activities:

1. Participation in all lectures (a minimum of seven out of nine sessions is required).
2. Submission of weekly video or written contributions to the discussion board.
3. Obtaining information and/or advice on the project proposal from at least two professionals in the field or scholars in the programme.
4. A five-page concept note or project proposal developed with team members.
5. Presentation of group proposal at the end of the course.

## **Weekly Themes and Topics**

*Speakers to be confirmed*

### **1st Week: Introduction to Innovative Leadership and Innovative Development**

- 9 January Leadership for Sustainable Development: SDG Agenda for the Continent (Prof. Spreen and Prof. Vally)

### **2nd Week: Sustainable Development: Research and New Technologies for Sustainability**

- 12 January 4IR: Technology and Higher Education Transformation in Africa — Lessons and Challenges (UNU Rector, Professor Tshilidzi Marwala, South Africa)
- 14 January African Leadership for Environmental Sustainability (Professor Philip Osano, Kenya)

- 16 January Intellectual History and Political Economy of Africa: Land and Peoples (Prof. Natasha Shivji, Tanzania)

### **3rd Week: Leadership, Human Rights and Participatory Governance**

- 19 January Human Rights Based Approaches to Development (Hon. Hanif Vally, South Africa)
- 21 January Social Change and Development: Gender, Migration and Sustainable Livelihoods in the Informal/Formal Sectors (Prof. Faisal Garba and Yao Graham, Ghana)
- 23 January Rural Development, Environmental Policy and Gender Equality: A Feminist Political Economy Approach (Prof. Hibist Kasa, Ethiopia)

### **4th Week: Building Strong, Inclusive and Participatory Communities: Proposals for the SDGs**

- 26 January Group Presentations
- 6 February Feedback and Closing; Awarding of the Certificates