
Preface

The United Nations Summit, held on 25–27 September 2015 in New York, adopted the post-2015 development agenda and a set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which are outlined in the document “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”. This Agenda, according to the UN, is a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity, which seeks to strengthen universal peace in larger freedom. It contains 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets, which demonstrate both a vision and an ambition. It seeks to build on the Millennium Development Goals and complete what these did not achieve. The document “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” also clearly shows the need for an integrated handling of the three main dimensions of sustainable development: the economic, social and environmental.

There is a world consensus in relation to the fact that Sustainability Science—i.e. a branch of science concerned with an integrated view of the three main dimensions of sustainable development—can provide an important contribution in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Even though in the past, the potential of Sustainability Science has been largely overlooked—some say underestimated—it is clear that it can provide a key contribution to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and, more specifically, the realisation of the vision set at the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

It is based on the perceived need to explore and present concrete case studies which illustrate how Sustainability Science and Research can help to achieve the many goals listed in the document “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, that the “World Symposium on Sustainability Science and Research: Implementing the 2030 United Nations Agenda for Sustainable Development”, that this “Handbook of Sustainability Science” has been prepared.

The book contains a set of papers presented and discussed at the first “World Symposium on Sustainability Science: Implementing the UN Sustainable Development Goals”, jointly organised by the Hamburg University of Applied Sciences (Germany) and Manchester Metropolitan University (UK), in cooperation with various UN bodies, government offices and authorities, universities, enterprises, NGOs and grassroots organisations from across the world.

This book is structured in three main parts. Part I addresses the political, social and economic dimensions of sustainable development, and provides a

comprehensive overview of the many influences these areas provide to the global sustainability debate.

Part II is concerned with the environmental, social and technological dimensions of sustainable development. Here, an emphasis is given to the connections between environmental technologies and environmental protection efforts on the one hand, and the social implications of their implementation on the other.

Part III focuses on holistic approaches, stakeholders engagement and education for sustainable development, combining three important elements sustainability science, and illustrating how effective they may be. One chapter, prepared by the team working at the UN Development Goals Secretariat in New York, describes how Private–Public Partnerships may assist in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, with experiences from the SDG Fund.

A short, final chapter, presents some perspectives on sustainability science and introduces the World Sustainable Development Research and Transfer Centre, outlining its activities for the period 2017–2030. All in all, this handbook provides a timely contribution towards fostering awareness and offers basic knowledge on sustainable development, and on both individual and organisational sustainability and responsibility. We hope this may prove useful in supporting organisations to pursue one or more of the Sustainable Development Goals.

We thank the authors for their willingness to share their knowledge, know-how and experiences, as well as the many peer reviewers, which have helped us to ensure the quality of the manuscripts.

Enjoy your reading!

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