

No 'fancy suits and long speeches' at UN-backed sustainable development festival in Bonn

A United Nations forum showcasing the latest innovations, tools and approaches that will make sustainable development a reality wrapped up in Bonn, Germany, on Friday.

Some 1,500 participants from more than 100 countries attended the three-day [Global Festival of Action for Sustainable Development](#).

The gathering sought to inspire action to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)) aimed at ending extreme poverty and hunger while also ensuring a healthy environment for all people and the planet.

Billed as "a new type of UN conference" devoid of "fancy suits and long speeches," the festival featured various immersive experiences such as a virtual reality zone showing the human stories behind development challenges, in addition to workshops, demo sessions and film screenings.

Those who could not travel to Bonn were encouraged to follow the activities on UN Web TV and social media, with more than 30,000 watching the livestream while #SDGglobalFest trended across the world.

Among the festival highlights was the presentation of the [UN SDG Action Awards](#), celebrating individuals and organizations from all regions who are working to implement the 17 goals, which have a deadline of 2030.

The awards covered seven categories, including mobilizer, storyteller and connector.

"I'm going to learn from these seven other people to create a movement and change the world," said one of the winners, Foluke Michael of Nigeria, founder of Creative Youth Initiative Against Corruption, speaking at the closing ceremony.

His organization won the innovator category for its "Corruption Busters" campaign which targeted the general public and focused on corrupt practices associated with everyday life and how they have an impact on individuals and society.

This was the second edition of the Global Festival of Action for Sustainable Development which was hosted by the [UN SDG Action Campaign](#) with the support of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development.

Discussions revolved around five main key themes: innovative approaches, citizen engagement, communicating the SDGs, mobilizing action, and multi-stakeholder engagement.

“The world is facing tremendous challenges, and for the first time there is an innovative plan to solve them,” said Mitchell Toomey, the Global Director of the UN SDG Action Campaign.

“But we can’t do this alone, we need everyone to be part of it. We are very excited to once more bring together different key players from governments, civil society, UN agencies, cities, business, and academia in this dynamic, inclusive and innovative festival.”