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Topics for Discussion in Oral Communication Courses: A Proposal Based on the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 2023 Estado de la Nación Report

Temas para discusión en cursos de comunicación oral: Una propuesta basada en la Agenda 2030 de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo Sostenible y el reporte 2023 del Estado de la Nación

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Abstract

This paper documents the process whereby a proposal of topics for discussion in the oral communication courses of the Bachelor's degree in English of a Costa Rican public university was developed. More specifically, the manuscript describes how topics of national and international relevance were (a) inductively identified in the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, (b) further specified through both inductive and deductive thematic analysis of relevant segments and sections of the 2023 Estado de la Nación report, and (c) distributed across the six oral communication courses of the Bachelor's degree in English at the University of the Central Valley (UCV), with the least feasible disruption to existing syllabi and maximum possible overlap with other courses within the same block in the study program. The process resulted in the identification of 52 topics of international and national relevance (e.g., climate change and actions to combat it), the addition of six topics from the 2023 Estado de la Nación Report (e.g., threats to freedom of expression), the categorization of said topics under six macro-topics (e.g., vulnerable groups: issues and empowerment), and the distribution of these six macro-topics across the six oral communication courses of the BA in English at UCV.

Key words: Oral communication, higher education, Agenda for Sustainable Development, Estado de la Nación, curricular development and updating

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Resumen

En este artículo se documenta el proceso seguido para generar una propuesta de temas para discusión en los cursos orales del programa de Bachillerato en Inglés de una universidad pública costarricense. Concretamente, el manuscrito describe cómo (a) se identificaron inductivamente temas de relevancia nacional e internacional en la Agenda 2030 de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo Sostenible, (b) se especificaron más detalladamente estos temas a través del análisis inductivo y deductivo de segmentos y secciones del reporte del Estado de la Nación 2023 y (c) se distribuyeron los temas resultantes entre los seis cursos orales, procurando minimizar la disrupción a los programas de curso existentes y maximizar la superposición con cursos localizados dentro de un mismo bloque en el programa de estudio del Bachillerato en Inglés de la Universidad del Valle Central (UCV). El proceso resultó en la identificación de 52 temas de relevancia nacional e internacional (e.g., cambio climático y acciones para combatirlo), la adición de seis temas del Reporte del Estado de la Nación 2023 (e.g., amenazas a la libertad de expresión), el agrupamiento de estos temas en seis macro-temas (e.g., grupos vulnerables: problemas y empoderamiento) y la distribución de estos seis macro-temas entre los seis cursos orales del Bachillerato en Inglés de la UCV.

Palabras clave: Comunicación oral, educación superior, Agenda de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo Sostenible, Estado de la Nación, desarrollo y actualización curricular

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1. Oral Communication

Communication is a two-way process involving communicators, messages, a channel (e.g., a text message, face-to-face interaction), circumstances (i.e., characteristics of communicators and the context where communication unfolds), and feedback (responses or reactions to the communicative moves of co-interactants) (Sue Young & Travis, 2018). Experts often distinguish between written, non-verbal and verbal communication (Sue Young & Travis, 2018). In written communication messages are delivered in written form (Schwartzman, 2016). Non-verbal communication, on the other hand, involves the use of gestures, gaze, facial expressions, gestures, movement, and posture (Couper-Kuhlen & Selting, 2018). Finally, oral communication refers to a "complex and multifaceted" process wherein linguistic or verbal forms (e.g., words, phrases, clauses) and combinations thereof are used for the exchange of ideas, often in tandem with non-verbal resources (Couper-Kuhlen & Selting, 2018; Levis, 2018; Murphy, 2005, p.51; Siczek, 2022).

Though often neglected in other academic fields, oral communication has a central role in English as a foreign language (EFL) programs (Siczek, 2022). In such programs, oral communication courses serve to develop both oral communication skills generally and specific linguistics skills specifically (e.g., listening, pronunciation) through recurrent and controlled verbal exchanges of ideas about *focused* and *relevant* topics, ideally resulting in fluent, accurate, coherent, and intelligible foreign language speech (Levis, 2018; Murphy, 1991, 2005; Sue Young & Travis, 2018). This paper describes the development of a proposal of topics for

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discussion in the oral communication courses of the Bachelor's (BA) degree in English of a public Costa Rican university: the University of the Central Valley (UCV)[2]. An overview of the oral communication courses in said program is presented below.

1.2. The Oral Communication Courses at UCV

The study program of the BA in English at the Foreign Language Department at UCV comprises 140 credits distributed across 42 courses that students take over the course of four years. Six of these 42 courses (26 credits) correspond to the following oral communication courses: LE1230, Oral Communication I; LE1240, Oral Communication II; LE1351, Oral Communication III; LE1361, Oral Communication IV; LE1471, Oral Communication V; and LE1481, Oral Communication VI.

At a general level, the six oral courses aim at helping students to develop both non-verbal and verbal (speaking, listening, pronunciation, vocabulary) communication skills in English, with emphasis on verbal skills. At a more specific level and *in theory*, each course should focus on well-defined macro-topics, particular pronunciation contents, and specific communication techniques. To illustrate, in the second oral course from the second year of the major (i.e., LE1240, Oral Communication II), students talk about topics related to the media and

[2] Pseudonyms are used to refer to people and institutions.

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technology, study the English consonants, and learn to give informative speeches. See table 1 for the location of each oral course in the study program as well as the macro-topics, contents, and techniques studied in each course.

As shown in Table 1, some oral courses do not focus on a specific oral communication technique (e.g., LE1481) while others center on more than one (e.g., LE1351). When it comes to pronunciation, some courses include a great number of contents (e.g., LE1361) whereas others seem to cover too little (e.g., LE1471). Lastly and most relevant to this paper, some courses have well-defined—yet perhaps too ambitious—topical foci (e.g., LE1230) while for others the focus topics are either unspecified (LE1361) or too encompassing (e.g., LE1351). Moreover, analysis of historical documents (Angulo & Ureña, in progress) and conversations with senior faculty (M. Ramírez, personal communication, May 23, 2024) have not provided evidence of neither a systematic process nor the application of specific criteria for the selection of topics for discussion in oral communication courses of the BA in English. The issues discussed hitherto have led the author of this paper along with other faculty to embark on a reform of the oral communication courses in the BA in English, starting with necessary changes in the topical foci of said courses. More concretely, the author has proposed that such topics be chosen based on their international and national relevance as revealed by an analysis of the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (hereafter the Agenda) and the 2023 Estado de la Nación report (hereafter the Estado), both of them described in the next section.

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Table 1

Oral communication courses and their foci

Year	Course	(Macro)-topics	Pronunciation Contents	Communication Technique
2	LE1230	Health The environment	Vowels	Unspecified[a]
2	LE1240	The media Technology	Consonants	Informative speech
3	LE1351	Violence; global and regional conflicts; human rights violation; resource exploitation; social responsibility	Consonants Lexical stress	Informative speeches Problem-solution group discussions
3	LE1361	Unspecified[b] controversial topics	Consonants Consonant clusters Stress, rhythm, and intonation	Persuasive speeches Debates
4	LE1471	The individual and society Interpersonal relationships	Intonation	None[c]
4	LE1481	Culture and types of culture; ethnocentrism and stereotypes; national identity; gender and culture; values and worldview; cultural awareness, adaptation,		None

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	dominance, and resistance

Note. [a] No specific technique is taught in this course and during the first semester of LE1240. [b] Since 2021, however, this course has focused on controversial issues related to education, literature, translation/interpretation, and the English major. [c] Students are expected to put their knowledge of techniques studied in previous courses into practice in presentations and other assessment tasks from LE1471 and LE1481.

1.3. The United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Approved at the UN's Headquarters in September 2015, the Agenda specifies 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) and 169 targets aimed at eradicating poverty worldwide, protecting the planet, and tackling inequalities (UN, n.d.). It was signed by the Heads of State and Government as well as the High Representatives that make up the UN and since then has worked as a "roadmap" for "economic growth, social well-being, and environmental protection" (UN, n.d.). In fact, just one year later, in 2016, Costa Rica became the first country to sign a national pact for the advancement of the Agenda's goals (Secretaría Técnica de los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible, 2024). This pact was relaunched in 2023 and signed by representatives of the three supreme powers, the Tribunal Supremo de Elecciones (Supreme Electoral Tribunal, if translated), and several organizations of the civil society (Secretaría Técnica de los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible, 2024). Among the civil society organizations belonging to the academic sector was UCV, which has consequently taken the Agenda into account in the formulation of its strategic institutional plan.

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Drawing topics for discussion in the oral communication courses from the Agenda may then not only help address the specific issues these courses present with but also contribute to the attainment of both the Agenda's goals and the UCV's objectives that are associated with it. The importance of accomplishing the Agenda's goals is undeniable, and, as suggested by Rodríguez (2020), higher education institutions in general can contribute to it by (a) raising awareness among students about the many environmental and socio-economic challenges society is facing, (b) proving tools to address such challenges in their corresponding disciplines, and (c) fostering the development of skills that will eventually enable students to lead socially and environmentally responsible professional practices. As for EFL programs in particular, several authors (e.g., Adams & Nakano, 2024; Cardiff et al., 2024; Jodoin, 2020; Nilüfer et al, 2022) have highlighted the symbiotic relationship that can be established between language education and the SDGs in the Agenda.

Regarding the role of EFL programs in the attainment of the SDGs, Cardiff et al. (2024) argue that "the English language classroom" is "a particularly suitable environment for integrating SDG topics" (p. 1011) because English itself is widely used to discuss sustainability issues at a global scale. The same authors claim that the integration of "meaningful SDG content" into the English curriculum could "elevate students' sustainability values, beliefs, and norms" (Cardiff et al., 2024, p. 1012. Findings from a study conducted by Jodoin (2020) lend support to this claim. More specifically, the researcher found that bringing the SDGs into the English classroom had a positive effect on learners' environmental values, beliefs, and

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norms (Jodoin, 2020). He then went on to propose a new field of study aimed at a better integration of EFL and Education for Sustainable Development: language education for sustainable development (Jodoin, 2020).

In relation to the benefits of SDG content for EFL programs, at least three have been identified. First is the potential of SDGs to increase student motivation. In this sense, based on results from a survey with 266 first-year university students in general education English classes, Adams and Nakano (2024) concluded that "for internationally minded students engaged in the study of English as foreign language, the SDGs could be a useful motivational tool" (p.244). The authors linked this increased motivation to the relevance and currency of the SDGs as well as to students' feelings of belonging and contributing to the solution of problems faced by the international community (global citizenship) (Adams & Nakano, 2024). A second benefit concerns the development of the so marked learning skills of the 21st century. Per Nilüfer et al. (2022), the SDGs are particularly well-suited to help learners hone their critical, creative, collaborative, communicative, and cultural skills. A third and last benefit of SDG content for EFL programs is the diversification of available resources, activities, and even methodological approaches. As pointed out by Cardiff et al. (2024), "a significant amount of SDG content is freely available and consistently updated in line with world events, providing material that is up to date and meaningful for both teachers and learners" (p. 1011). On a similar note, Nilüfer et al. (2022) have argued that the SDGs provide a platform for instructors and students to experiment with communicative activities (e.g., debates, role-plays of

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world summits) and new approaches to language education (e.g., challenge-based learning).

In sum, including topics from the Agenda in the oral communication courses at UCV may contribute to the attainment of both the SDGs and UCV's strategic objectives, while at the same time potentially increasing student motivation and widening the gamut of skills, resources, activities, and instructional approaches. Such is the purpose of the proposal discussed herein.

1.4. The 2023 Estado de la Nación Report

Published since 1994, the Estado de la Nación Report is a yearly document elaborated by the Estado de la Nación Program (PEN) of the Consejo Nacional de Rectores (National Council of Rectors; CONARE), in association with Costa Rica's Defensoría de los Habitantes (Office of the Ombudsman) (PEN-CONARE, 2023). It aims to contribute information about topics in need of attention, thereby enabling strategic decisions to guarantee the sustainability of human development throughout the nation (PEN-CONARE, 2023). The report analyzed for this study presented data about Costa Rica's relationship with nature, strengthening of democracy, patterns of multidimensional inequalities, equity and social integration, as well as economic opportunities, stability, and financial capacity, during 2022 and the first six months of 2023 (PEN-CONARE, 2023). As mentioned below, analyses of the Estado allowed the researcher to both further specify the topics of international relevance drawn from the Agenda and identify other topics of national

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relevance not included therein. In so doing, the researcher hopes to maximize the potential of the topics to be discussed in oral communication courses to increase student motivation, environmental awareness, and feeling of belonging in the national and global community, while simultaneously contributing to the development of their linguistic, intercultural, creative, and collaborative skills.

The methodological procedures implemented to develop the proposal discussed in this paper are described below.

2. Methodological Procedures

The present study drew on inductive and deductive thematic analysis (TA; Braun & Clarke, 2021) to systematically analyze The Agenda and the Estado and eventually identify and categorize topics of international and national relevance. Defined as "a method for developing, analyzing, and interpreting patterns across a qualitative dataset", TA unfolds in several phases including the researcher's familiarization with the data, coding, generating themes, developing and reviewing themes, refining, defining and naming themes, and writing up the investigative report (Braun & Clarke, 2021, pp.34-35). The stages of TA implemented to develop the proposal presented in this paper are described in more detail below. Grosso mode they comprised: data collection and familiarization with the dataset, and inductive and deductive data analysis.

2.1. Data collection and familiarization with dataset: The Agenda and the Estado were downloaded from the official websites of the United Nations and the Programa

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Estado de la Nación. Both documents were then uploaded to Atlas.ti, a qualitative research tool, where they were inductively coded; see below. Once in Atlas.ti, the documents were read multiple times for the researcher to become familiar with their content.

2.2. Data analysis: Data analysis proceeded as follows. Firstly, the list of 17 goals specified in the Agenda and their associated targets were submitted to inductive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021) to identify internationally relevant topics. Secondly, key terms were extracted from the targets associated with each goal. Such key terms were then translated into Spanish and used as search terms to locate segments of text from the Estado that might be associated with the internationally relevant topics identified in the first stage of analysis. The retrieved extracts were afterward inductively analyzed to further specify the internationally pertinent topics that were also relevant at a national level. Next, select sections of the Estado were read in full to inductively recognize any nationally relevant topic that, though not addressed in the Agenda, still warranted attention and discussion in oral courses. Finally, the topics were subsumed into categories or macro-topics and distributed along the oral courses, taking account of UCV's strategic institutional plan, current contents of each oral course, and contents studied in parallel courses.

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3. Findings

The Agenda and the Estado were analyzed to develop a proposal of nationally and internationally relevant topics for discussion in the oral communication courses of the BA in English at UCV. The results of the analysis are presented below.

3.1. Identification of internationally relevant topics and key terms from the Agenda's targets: Inductive analysis of the 17 goals of the Agenda and their associated targets led to the identification of the topics of international relevance listed in Table 2.

Table 2

Topics of international relevance identified through inductive analysis of the 17 goals of the Agenda and their associated targets

Goal	Topics of International Relevance
1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere	Poverty, resilience of vulnerable groups, poverty-eradication actions, social protection systems, measures, policies, and programs 7
2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture	Hunger, food security, improved nutrition, sustainable agriculture 4
3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages	Health, well-being 2
4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all	Inclusive education, equitable education, quality education, lifelong learning 4
5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls	Gender equality, female empowerment 2

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6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all	Water availability, sustainable water management, sanitation 3
7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all	Affordable energy sources, reliable energy sources, sustainable energy sources, modern energy sources 4
8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all	Economic growth, full employment, productive employment, decent work 4
9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation	Resilient infrastructure, inclusive industrialization, sustainable industrialization, innovation 4
10. Reduce inequality within and among countries	Inequality within and among countries 1
11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable	Inclusive human settlements/cities, safe human settlements/cities, resilient human settlements/cities, sustainable human settlements/cities 4
12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns	Sustainable consumption and production patterns 1
13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts	Climate change and actions to combat it 1
14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development	Conservation of the ocean, seas, and marine resources; sustainable use of the oceans, seas, and marine resources 2
15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss	Protection, restoration, and sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems; sustainable forest management, desertification, land degradation, biodiversity loss 5

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16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels	Promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies, access to justice, effective, accountable and inclusive institutions 3
17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development	Global partnership for sustainable development 1

3.2. Extraction and Translation of Key Terms from the Agenda's Targets: Due to space restrictions, it is impossible to list all the key terms extracted from the Agenda's targets and their corresponding translation in this section. The terms extracted and translated from Goal 2 will serve to illustrate the type of result arrived at during this stage of the analysis. For a list of key terms extracted from other goals and their associated translation, readers are referred to Appendix 1.

Goal 2 from the Agenda reads "End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture". Analysis of the eight targets associated with this goal resulted in the identification of the key terms in Table 3. The Spanish translation of such key terms is shown in Table 3 as well.

Table 3

Key terms extracted from the targets of Goal 2 of the Agenda and their corresponding translation

Goal	Key Terms	Translation
2	Hunger, food security, nutrition, sustainable agriculture, access to food, malnutrition, nutritional needs, agricultural productivity, sustainable food production systems, resilient agricultural practices, adaptation to climate change, extreme weather, drought, flooding, soil quality, genetic diversity of	Hambruna/hambre, nutrición, agricultura sostenible, acceso a los alimentos, desnutrición, necesidades nutricionales/alimentarias, productividad agrícola, sistemas sostenibles de producción de alimentos, prácticas agrícolas resilientes, adaptación al cambio climático, clima extremo, sequía, inundaciones, calidad de la tierra, diversidad genética de semillas,

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seeds, cultivated plants, farmed animals, domesticated animals, seed/plant/gene banks, genetic resources, traditional knowledge, rural infrastructure, agricultural research, agricultural productive capacity, trade restrictions, trade distortions, agricultural markets, agricultural export subsidies, food commodity markets, food reserves, market information, food price volatility	plantas cultivadas, animales de granja, animales domesticados, bancos de semillas/ plantas/ genes, recursos genéticos, conocimiento tradicional, infraestructura rural, investigación agrícola, capacidad de producción agrícola, restricciones comerciales, distorsiones del mercado, mercados agrícolas, subsidios para la exportación agrícola, mercado de alimentos, reservas de comida, información de mercado, volatilidad/inestabilidad en el precio de los alimentos

3.3. Extraction and Analysis of Segments from the Estado: A total of 223 segments related to the 17 goals of the Agenda were identified and retrieved from the Estado for inductive thematic analysis with the aim of *further specifying* the globally relevant topics that were also of national interest. To illustrate, Goal 5 of the Agenda ("Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls") refers to the general topics of gender equality and female empowerment. Multiple searches in the Estado, using the Spanish key terms specified in Appendix 1, retrieved 13 segments closely associated with Goal 5. Among these 13 segments were the ones listed in Table 4. English translations are provided.

Table 4

Sample segments from the Estado associated with Goal 5 of the Agenda

Goal	Segment from the Estado
5	"Las mujeres experimentan más barreras de acceso al mercado de trabajo que los hombres, pese a tener mejor perfil educativo"/ "Women experience more barriers to the job market than men despite their better educational profile" (p.309). "(…) se estima que 455.000 mujeres no participan del mercado laboral por atender obligaciones familiares, mientras que solo 18.000 hombres está en esas condiciones"/ "It

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> is estimated that 455,000 women do not participate in the job market due to family-related commitments, while only 18,000 men are in this situation" (p.310).
>
> "En el año 2007 se promulgó la Ley de Penalización de la Violencia contra las Mujeres. Desde esa fecha y hasta el 2022 se han contabilizado en total 425 femicidios. En el último año ocurrieron 20 casos"/ "The Law of Penalization of Violence Against Women was passed in 2007. Between that year and 2022 there have been 425 femicides. Twenty of these femicides occurred last year" (p.95).

Inductive analysis of the 13 segments associated with Goal 5 allowed the researcher to further narrow the general topics of the Agenda (gender equality and female empowerment) to the following subjects highlighted in the Estado: women's access to quality jobs; asymmetries in access to skills and competencies between men and women; domestic work and care as barriers to female insertion and permanence in the job market; strategies for increasing female access and permanence in the workplace (e.g., universalization of the *Red de Cuido*); domestic violence against women and children; and femicides in Costa Rica. Appendix 2 presents the topics of international relevance associated with each of the remaining 16 goals of the Agenda along with sample specific topics arrived at after inductively analyzing relevant segments from the Estado.

3.4. Recognition of Nationally Relevant Topics Not Addressed in the Agenda: The procedures described in the section above enabled the researcher to further specify the topics included in the Agenda, and in so doing, focus on the aspects of those topics that might be more relevant at the national level. The Estado might have, however, also highlighted topics that are not in the Agenda, despite their

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national relevance. To rule out this possibility and eventually identify such topics, the researcher analyzed Chapter 1, the *Hallazgos Relevantes* sections, and the conclusions chapter of the Estado. The analysis led to the recognition of the following additional topics: the Dollar/Colón exchange rate, the decrease in the quantity of land dedicated to the cultivation of basic grains, the reduction in citizen participation in national elections, the lack of stability within the executive power, the decline in citizen participation in social activism, and threats to freedom of expression.

3.5. Organization of Topics into Macro-topics and Distribution Along Oral Courses: The last stage of this study comprised two parts. First, the national and internationally relevant topics identified in the previous analytical stages were compared to group them into macro-topics. Then, the macro-topic—and their associated topics—were distributed across the six oral courses. As a matter of example, the macro-topic “Health: Global and National Issues” emerged from comparing the health-related topics identified in the Agenda and the Estado, as partially illustrated in Figure 1. See Table 5 below for more examples of topics and the macro-topics under which they were subsumed.

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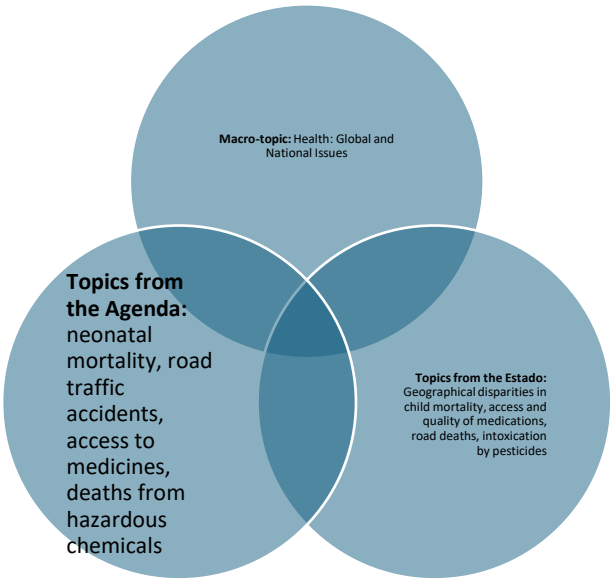
Figure 1

Topics under Health: Global and National Issues



During the second part of this stage of analysis, the macro-topics arrived at during the first part were distributed across the six oral courses. Two criteria guided this distribution: (1) the maximization of overlap between the macro-topic, its related topics, and other topics studied in parallel courses, and (2) the minimization of disruption to the existing syllabi. For instance, currently health-related topics are studied—with much less detail than proposed here—in LE1230, Oral Communication I, as shown in Table 1. In this proposal, all such topics were included within “Health: Global and National Issues”, and the macro-topic was displaced from

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the first semester of second year to the first semester of third year. More specifically, health-related contents were moved from LE1230, Oral Communication I, to LE1351, Oral Communication III. In the latter course, students deliver informative speeches and participate in problem-solution group discussions. The change is intended to tap into the overlap among (a) the proposed version of LE1351, Oral Communication III; (b) LE1051, English Rhetoric I, which focuses on problem solutions essays; and (c) LE0360, Translation III, which centers on medical translation. See Table 5 for other examples of the intended maximization of overlap between courses within the same block in the study program.

As for the *minimization of disruption*, to date any technology-related topics have been studied in LE1240, Oral Communication II. To avoid making too many changes to the extant syllabi, this proposal suggests that the course continue to focus on technology and only widens the scope to include the closely related topics of "science" and "innovation". See Table 5 below for other examples of the minimization of disruption. The table lists the macro-topics currently studied in each oral course, the proposed macro-topics, sample topics covered by each macro-topic, and the overlap between the macro-topics and other topics studied in other courses within the same block.

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Table 5

Current and proposed macro-topics, sample topics, and overlap with other courses

Year	Course	Current Macro-topic(s)	Proposed Macro-Topic	Sample Topics	Overlap
2	LE1230	The environment Health issues	The environment: Global and National Topics	Energetic transition in transportation Wastewater treatment Sustainable tourism	No
	LE1240	Technology Media	Technology, Science, and Innovation: Global and National Topics	Brain drain Women in science Cybercrime	With LE0359, Translation I (technical translation)
3	LE1351	Violence, global and regional conflicts, violation of human rights, exploitation of natural resources, social responsibility	Health: Global and National Issues	Road traffic accidents Medications: access, quality, and development Sexual and reproductive healthcare services	With LE1051, English Rhetoric I (problem/solution essays); LE0360, Translation III (medical translation)
	LE1361	Not specified	Various national and global issues	Poverty Food and nutritional security Employment, unemployment, and underemployment	With LE1061 (persuasive essays on global and national issues)

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4	LE1471	The individual and society Interpersonal relationships	Vulnerable Groups: Issues and Empowerment	Violence against women Empowerment of people with disabilities Exploitation of the immigrant workforce	With LE1221, American Literature (activist literature)
	LE1481	Culture and types of culture, ethnocentrism and stereotypes, national identity, gender and culture, culture and conflict, worldview and values, cultural awareness, cultural adaptation, domination and resistance	Professional/Research Seminar on the Professions: Literature, Translation/Interpretation, and Foreign Language Teaching/Learning	Teacher qualifications Research in literature Professional careers in translation/interpretation	With LE1081, English Rhetoric IV (research projects and written reports), and LE0357, English Grammar VI (lexico-grammatical structures in academic writing)

In closing this findings section, it is necessary to highlight that the proposal presented herein will next undergo a two-phase process of socialization with different stakeholders. More concretely, the proposal will first be shared with an ad hoc committee featuring the author's research assistant, two representatives from the student union, and instructors with varying levels of experience teaching oral courses (i.e., senior and junior faculty). The purpose of this first phase is to get

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feedback on proposal's perceived thoroughness, feasibility, validity, groundedness in relevant literature, and consistency with the students' maturational and linguistic level. During the second phase, the proposal will be shared with the full body of oral communication instructors to get more feedback on the aspects just mentioned. Such feedback will be used to make final improvements before presenting the proposal for approval by the tenured faculty who make up the Department's assembly.

Conclusion

The oral courses of the BA in English at UCV present with an imbalanced distribution of macro-topics, lack of clarity regarding topical foci, and absence of systematic criteria to choose such macro-topics. This paper discussed the process followed to address those issues through the development of a proposal of topics drawn from the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 2023 Estado de la Nación report. More specifically, the manuscript documented how topics of international relevance were identified inductively the Agenda, further specified through inductive and deductive analyses of relevant segments and sections from the Estado, and distributed across the six oral communication courses of said program, with the least possible disruption to existing syllabi and maximum overlap with parallel courses. It is hoped that the process herein described can be replicated by individuals in other post-secondary institutions, who are interested in both better aligning their specific study programs with the goals of Agenda and the

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needs of the Costa Rican society identified in the Estado, and reaping the benefits of integrating SDG content in the English curriculum.

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Appendix 1

Key terms from the Agenda's targets and their translation into Spanish

Goal	Key Terms	Spanish Translation
1	Poverty, extreme poverty, dimensions of poverty, social protection systems/policies, resilience, basic services, land ownership, land control, inheritance, financial services, climate-related extreme events, environmental disasters, poverty-eradication actions	Pobreza, pobreza extrema, dimensiones de la pobreza, sistemas/políticas de protección social, resiliencia, servicios básicos/financieros, tenencia de tierras, herencia, eventos extremos relacionados con el clima, desastres ambientales, acciones para la erradicación de la pobreza
2.	Shown in text	Shown in text
3.	Healthy lives, well-being, maternal/neonatal/premature mortality, death of newborns/children, epidemics, AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, hepatitis, water-borne/communicable/non-communicable diseases, substance abuse, narcotic drug use, harmful use of alcohol, road traffic accidents, universal access to sexual and reproductive healthcare services, family planning, reproductive health, universal health coverage, essential health-care services, access to medicines/vaccines, deaths from hazardous chemicals, health financing, health workforce, global health risks	Vidas saludables, bienestar, muerte materna/prematura/de recién nacidos/de niños/de neonatos/ por contacto con químicos, epidemias, SIDA, tuberculosis, malaria, hepatitis, enfermedades de transmisión por agua/contagiosas/transmisibles/no transmisibles, abuso de sustancias, uso de narcóticos, consumo nocivo de alcohol, accidentes de tránsito, acceso universal a servicios de salud sexual y reproductiva, planificación familiar, salud reproductiva, cobertura universal de los servicios de salud, servicios de salud esenciales, acceso a medicamentos/vacunas, financiamiento de la salud, personal de salud, amenazas globales a la salud
4.	Inclusive/quality/equitable education, lifelong learning, primary/secondary/preparatory/college/ tertiary/higher/technical/vocational education, childhood development, technical/vocational skills, employment, decent jobs, entrepreneurship, gender disparities in education, equal access to education, literacy, numeracy, education for	Educación inclusiva/equitativa/continua/permanente/primaria/preesccolar/secundaria/universitaria/erciaria/técnica/vocacional/de calidad/para el desarrollo sostenible/para la igualdad de género, aprendizaje continuo, desarrollo infantil, habilidades técnicas/vocacionales, empleo, desempleo, empleos decentes, emprendimiento, disparidades de género en la educación, acceso igualitario a la educación, alfabetismo/alfabetización, analfabetismo, aritmética, matemáticas, alfabetización matemática, cultura de paz,

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	sustainable development/lifestyles, education for gender equality, culture of peace, global citizenship, appreciation of cultural diversity, education facilities, inclusive/effective learning environments, scholarships, vocational training, information and communication technology, qualified teachers, teacher training	ciudadanía global, apreciación de la diversidad cultural, instituciones educativas, planta física, ambientes de aprendizaje inclusivos/efectivos, becas, tecnologías de la información y la comunicación, docentes/profesores(as)/maestros(as)calificados(as), capacitación/entrenamiento/formación docente
5.	Discrimination/violence against women, gender equality, trafficking, sexual exploitation, unpaid care, domestic work, shared responsibility, opportunities for leadership, universal access to sexual health, universal access to reproductive health, reproductive rights, empowerment of women, harmful practices	Discriminación/violencia contra las mujeres, igualdad de género, trata de blancas, explotación sexual, cuido no remunerado, trabajo doméstico, responsabilidad compartida, oportunidades de liderazgo, acceso universal a servicios de salud sexual/a servicios de salud reproductiva, derechos reproductivos, empoderamiento de las mujeres, prácticas dañinas
6.	Water availability/management/quality/pollution/reuse/recycling/scarcity/harvesting, drinking water, water-use efficiency, water-related ecosystems/activities, desalination, mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers, lakes, wastewater, sanitation, sanitation management/related activities, participation of local communities	Disponibilidad/manejo/calidad/contaminación/reutilización/escasez/ recolección del agua, agua potable, eficiencia en el uso del agua, ecosistemas acuáticos, actividades relacionadas con el agua, desalinización, mantos acuíferos, montañas, bosques, humedales, ríos, acuíferos, lagos, aguas residuales, saneamiento, servicios de saneamiento, manejo de sistemas de saneamiento, actividades relacionadas con el saneamiento, participación de comunidades locales
7.	Energy, access to energy services, renewable/clean energy, energy efficiency, clean energy research/technology, advanced/cleaner fossil-fuel technology, fossil fuels, energy infrastructure, modern/sustainable energy services, alternative energy sources	Energía, acceso a servicios de energía/energéticos, energía renovable/limpia, eficiencia energética, investigación sobre energías limpias, tecnología relacionada con energías limpias, tecnologías avanzadas/limpias para el uso de combustibles fósiles, combustibles fósiles, hidrocarburos, infraestructura energética, servicios modernos/sustentables de provisión de energía, fuentes alternativas de energía
8.	Sustained/sustainable/inclusive economic growth, full employment, productive employment, decent work, per capita economic growth, gross	Crecimiento económico sostenido/sostenible/inclusivo, empleo pleno, empleo a tiempo completo, empleo productivo, empleo/trabajo decente, crecimiento económico per cápita, producto interno bruto, productividad

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	domestic product, economic productivity, technological upgrading, technological innovation, diversification, development-oriented policies, productive activities, job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, micro-enterprises, medium-sized enterprises, financial services, equal pay, forced labor, modern slavery, human trafficking, child labor, child soldiers, labor rights, migrant workers, precarious employment, sustainable tourism, youth employment	económica, mejoramiento tecnológico, innovación tecnológica, diversificación, políticas orientadas al empleo, actividades productivas, creación de empleos, emprendimiento, creatividad e innovación, micro empresas, pequeñas empresas, medianas empresas, servicios financieros, pago igualitario, trabajo forzado, esclavitud moderna, tráfico de seres humanos, trabajo infantil, niños soldados, derechos laborales, trabajadores inmigrantes, empleo precario, turismo sostenible, empleo juvenil/para la juventud
9.	Resilient infrastructure, inclusive/sustainable industrialization, innovation, affordable credit, value chains, value markets, resource-use efficiency, adoption of clean technologies in the industry, domestic technology development, industrial diversification, universal access to internet	Infraestructura resiliente, industrialización inclusiva/sostenible, innovación, crédito accesible, cadenas de valor, mercado de valores, eficiencia en el uso de los recursos, adopción de tecnologías limpias en la industria, desarrollo doméstico/local de tecnologías, diversificación industrial, acceso universal al internet
10.	Income growth, social/economic/political inclusion, equal opportunities, discriminatory laws/policies/practices, monitoring of global financial markets, representation of developing countries, migration of people, mobility of people	Crecimiento del ingreso, inclusión social/económica/política, igualdad de oportunidades, leyes/políticas/prácticas discriminatorias, monitoreo de los mercados financieros mundiales, representación de los países en desarrollo, migración, movilidad
11.	Inclusive cities/settlements, safe cities/settlements, sustainable cities/settlements, resilient cities/settlements, adequate/safe/affordable housing, safe/affordable/accessible/sustainable public transport systems, inclusive/sustainable urbanization, human settlement planning/management, water-related disasters, air quality, waste	Ciudades/asentamientos inclusivos, ciudades/asentamientos seguros, ciudades/asentamientos sostenibles, ciudades/asentamientos resilientes, viviendas adecuadas/seguras/asequibles, sistemas de transporte público seguros/asequibles/accesibles/sostenibles, urbanización inclusiva/sostenible, planificación/gestión de asentamientos humanos, desastres relacionados con el agua, calidad del aire, gestión de residuos, acceso

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	management, universal access to green and public spaces, disaster risk management, sustainable/resilient buildings	universal a espacios verdes y públicos, gestión del riesgo de desastres, construcciones sostenibles/resilientes.
12.	Sustainable consumption, production patterns, , development, developing countries, sustainable management, natural resources, global food waste, food losses, production and supply chains, post-harvest losses, management of chemicals, life cycle, international frameworks, air, water, human health, environment, waste generation, prevention, reduction, recycling, reuse, large/transnational companies, sustainable practices, sustainability information, reporting cycle, public procurement practices, lifestyles, scientific/technological capacity, sustainable patterns of consumption/production, monitor, sustainable tourism, jobs, local culture/products, inefficient fossil-fuel subsidies, wasteful consumption, market distortions, national circumstances, restructuring taxation, environmental impacts, poor/affected communities	Consumo sostenible, patrones de producción, países desarrollados, desarrollo, países en desarrollo, gestión sostenible, recursos naturales, desperdicio global de alimentos, pérdidas de alimentos, cadenas de producción y suministro, pérdidas postcosecha, gestión de productos químicos, ciclo de vida, marcos internacionales, aire, agua, salud humana, medio ambiente, generación de residuos, prevención, reducción, reciclaje, reutilización, empresas grandes/transnacionales, prácticas sostenibles, información de sostenibilidad, ciclo de informes, prácticas de contratación pública, estilos de vida, capacidad científica/tecnológica, patrones sostenibles de consumo/producción, monitorear, turismo sostenible, empleos, cultura/productos locales, subsidios ineficientes a los combustibles fósiles, consumo derrochador, distorsiones del mercado, circunstancias nacionales, reestructuración fiscal, impactos ambientales, comunidades pobres/afectadas
13.	climate change, resilience, adaptive capacity, climate-related hazards, natural disasters, climate change measures, national policies/strategies/planning, education, awareness-raising, human/institutional capacity, mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction, early warning, commitment, the United Nations, meaningful, mitigation, actions, transparency, implementation, capitalization, mechanisms for raising capacity, least developed countries, small island	cambio climático, resiliencia, capacidad de adaptación, peligros relacionados con el clima, desastres naturales, medidas de cambio climático, políticas/estrategias/planificación nacional, educación, sensibilización, capacidad humana/institucional, mitigación, adaptación, reducción de impactos, alerta temprana, compromiso, las Naciones Unidas, significativo, mitigación, acciones, transparencia, implementación, capitalización, mecanismos para aumentar la capacidad, países menos desarrollados, pequeños estados insulares en desarrollo, mujeres, jóvenes, comunidades locales/marginadas

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	developing States, women, youth, local/marginalized communities	
14.	oceans, seas, marine resources, sustainable development, marine pollution, land-based activities, marine debris, nutrient pollution marine/coastal ecosystems, resilience, restoration, healthy/productive oceans, ocean acidification, scientific cooperation, harvesting, overfishing, illegal/unreported/unregulated fishing, destructive fishing practices, science-based management plans, fish stocks, maximum sustainable yield, coastal/marine areas, national/international law, fisheries subsidies, overcapacity, overfishing, World Trade Organization fisheries subsidies negotiation, small island developing States, least developed countries, marine resources, management of fisheries, aquaculture, tourism, scientific knowledge, research capacity, marine technology, ocean health, marine biodiversity, small-scale artisanal fishers, marine resources, markets, sustainable use of oceans and their resources	océanos, mares, recursos marinos, desarrollo sostenible, contaminación marina, actividades terrestres, desechos marinos, contaminación de nutrientes, ecosistemas marinos/costeros, resiliencia, restauración, océanos saludables/productivos, acidificación oceánica, cooperación científica, captura, sobrepesca, pesca ilegal/no declarada/no reglamentada, prácticas destructivas de pesca, planes de gestión basados en la ciencia, existencias pesqueras, rendimiento máximo sostenible, áreas costeras/marinas, ley nacional/internacional, subsidios pesqueros, sobrecapacidad, sobrepesca, negociación de los subsidios pesqueros de la Organización Mundial del Comercio, pequeños estados insulares en desarrollo, países menos desarrollados, recursos marinos, gestión de pesquerías, acuicultura, turismo, conocimiento científico, capacidad de investigación, tecnología marina, salud oceánica, biodiversidad marina, pescadores artesanales a pequeña escala, recursos marinos, mercados, uso sostenible de los océanos y sus recurso
15.	terrestrial ecosystems, forests, desertification, land degradation, biodiversity loss, conservation, restoration, sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, forests, wetlands, mountains, drylands, deforestation, degraded forests, afforestation, reforestation, degraded land/soil, drought, mountain ecosystems, biodiversity, sustainable development, degradation of natural	ecosistemas terrestres, bosques, desertificación, degradación del suelo, pérdida de biodiversidad, conservación, restauración, uso sostenible de los ecosistemas terrestres y de agua dulce y sus servicios, bosques, humedales, montañas, tierras áridas, deforestación, bosques degradados, forestación, reforestación, tierras/suelos degradados, sequía, ecosistemas de montaña, biodiversidad, desarrollo sostenible, degradación de hábitats naturales, pérdida de biodiversidad, extinción de especies amenazadas, utilización de recursos genéticos, caza furtiva, tráfico de especies protegidas de flora y fauna, demanda/oferta de

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	habitats, loss of biodiversity, the extinction of threatened species, the utilization of genetic resources, poaching, trafficking of protected species of flora and fauna, demand/supply of illegal wildlife products, invasive alien species, priority, poverty reduction strategies, financial resources, sustainable forest management, trafficking of protected species, local communities, sustainable livelihood opportunities	productos ilegales de vida silvestre, especies exóticas invasoras, prioridad, estrategias de reducción de la pobreza, recursos financieros, manejo forestal sostenible, tráfico de especies protegidas, comunidades locales, oportunidades de sustento sostenible
16.	peaceful/inclusive societies, sustainable development, justice, effective/accountable/inclusive institutions, violence, death rates, abuse, exploitation, torture, children, equal access to justice, illicit financial and arms flows, stolen assets, organized crime, corruption, bribery, responsive/inclusive/participatory/representative decision making, developing countries, global governance, legal identity, public access to information, fundamental freedoms, national institutions, international cooperation, terrorism	sociedades pacíficas/inclusivas, desarrollo sostenible, justicia, instituciones efectivas/responsables/inclusivas, violencia, tasas de mortalidad, abuso, explotación, tortura, niños, acceso igualitario a la justicia, flujos financieros y de armas ilícitos, activos robados, crimen organizado, corrupción, soborno, toma de decisiones responsiva/inclusiva/participativa/representativa, países en desarrollo, gobernanza global, identidad legal, acceso público a la información, libertades fundamentales, instituciones nacionales, cooperación internacional, terrorismo
17.	domestic resource mobilization, international support, developing countries, tax/other revenue collection, Developed countries, development assistance commitments, gross national income, financial resources, long-term debt sustainability, debt financing/relief/restructuring, external debt, highly indebted poor countries, debt distress, investment promotion regimes, technology, North-South/South-South/triangular/regional/international cooperation, science, innovation,	movilización de recursos internos, apoyo internacional, países en desarrollo, recaudación de impuestos/otros ingresos, países desarrollados, compromisos de apoyo para el desarrollo, ingreso nacional bruto, recursos financieros, sostenibilidad de la deuda a largo plazo, financiamiento/ alivio/reestructuración de la deuda, deuda externa, países altamente endeudados y pobres, sobreendeudamiento, regímenes de promoción de la inversión, tecnología, cooperación Norte-Sur/Sur-Sur/triangular/regional/internacional, ciencia, innovación, intercambio de conocimientos, mecanismo mundial de facilitación tecnológica, desarrollo/transferencia/difusión de tecnologías ambientalmente sostenibles, tecnología de la información y comunicación, fortalecimiento de capacidades, Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible,

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knowledge sharing, a global technology facilitation mechanism, development/transfer/dissemination/diffusion of environmentally sound technologies, information and communications technology Capacity-building, Sustainable Development Goals, Trade, trading system, exports, market access, imports, Systemic issues, Policy/institutional coherence, global macroeconomic stability, policy space, leadership, poverty eradication Multi-stakeholder/partnerships, expertise, society partnerships, Data monitoring/accountability, income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location, gross domestic product	Comercio, sistema comercial, exportaciones, acceso a mercados, importaciones, problemas sistémicos, coherencia de políticas/instituciones, estabilidad macroeconómica global, espacio político, liderazgo, erradicación de la pobreza, asociaciones multiactor/participación, asociaciones con la sociedad, monitoreo de datos/rendición de cuentas, ingresos, género, edad, raza, etnia, estado migratorio, discapacidad, ubicación geográfica, producto interno bruto

Appendix 2

Goals for sustainable development, associated general topics of international relevance, and sample specific topics after inductive analysis of relevant segments from the Estado

Goal	General Topics	Sample Specific Topics
1.	Poverty, resilience of vulnerable groups, poverty-eradication actions, social protection systems, measures, and programs	Poverty among children and teenagers, household vulnerability to poverty, increase in extreme poverty, decrease in social public investment, geographical disparities in poverty
2.	Hunger, food security, improved nutrition, sustainable agriculture	Income-related disparities in access to food, food price volatility, effects of climate change on food and nutritional security, malnutrition among children, sustainable agricultural practices

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3.	Health, well-being	Access to early childhood health services, geographical disparities in child mortality, intoxication by plaguicides, increasing social violence, access and quality of medications
4.	Inclusive education, equitable education, quality education, lifelong learning	Geographical disparities in access to education, differences in literacy and numeracy across socioeconomic groups, the male-female gap in access to education, college dropouts, the educational blackout
5. See text above.	See text above.	See text above.
6.	Water availability, sustainable water management, sanitation	Decrease in access to drinking water, water pollution with wastewater, geographical disparities in access to drinking water, stagnation of sanitation services, decreasing wastewater treatment
7.	Affordable energy sources, reliable energy sources, sustainable energy sources, modern energy sources	Dependence on fossil fuels, negative effects of climate change on energy services, carbon neutrality, transition to greener sources of energy
8.	Economic growth, full employment, productive employment, decent work	Household movement in and out of poverty, income inequality, negative correlation between production and job availability, free trade zones, geographical disparities in production/productivity, challenges to survival of tourism and construction businesses

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9.	Resilient infrastructure, inclusive industrialization, sustainable industrialization, innovation	Vulnerability to climatic events, inequalities in access to financial services, disparities in access to internet
10.	Inequality within and among countries	Negative perceptions of immigration, geographical disparities in bilingualism, poverty among people with disabilities, governmental immigration policies
11.	Inclusive human settlements/cities, safe human settlements/cities, resilient human settlements/cities, sustainable human settlements/cities	Disparities in access to housing, lack of home insurance, lack of access to green infrastructure in cities, increasing crime rate
12.	Sustainable consumption and production patterns	Slow transition to clean energies and sustainable agriculture, lack of territorial planning, little enforcement of environmental policies, dependence on fossil fuels
13.	Climate change and actions to combat it	Decreasing capacity of forests to mitigate climate change, forest degradation, reduced participation of activist groups
14.	Conversation of the ocean, seas, and marine resources; sustainable use of the oceans, seas, and marine resources	Increase in number of threatened species, overfishing, economic development of coastal areas, unsustainable fishing practices, ocean acidification
15.	Protection, restoration, and sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems; sustainable forest management, desertification, land degradation, biodiversity loss	Deforestation, wetland loss, illegal hunting and mining, shark finning

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16.	Promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies, access to justice, effective, accountable and inclusive institutions	Civil insecurity, social violence, increasing homicide rate, drug dealing, delinquency
17.	Global partnership for sustainable development	Tax collection issues, cutdowns in social protection, incoherence between policy and governmental action

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