

## How does the content of the 20th I.S.P.O. World Congress align with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals?

Rusaw, David F.; Chadwell, Alix; Hermansson, Liselotte; Houdijk, Han; Johannesson, Anton G.; Kyberd, Peter; Nilsen, Rune; Nolstedt, Pia; Plettenburg, Dick; More Authors

**DOI**

[10.1097/PXR.0000000000000468](https://doi.org/10.1097/PXR.0000000000000468)

**Publication date**

2025

**Document Version**

Final published version

**Published in**

Prosthetics and Orthotics International

**Citation (APA)**

Rusaw, D. F., Chadwell, A., Hermansson, L., Houdijk, H., Johannesson, A. G., Kyberd, P., Nilsen, R., Nolstedt, P., Plettenburg, D., & More Authors (2025). How does the content of the 20th I.S.P.O. World Congress align with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals? *Prosthetics and Orthotics International*, 49(3), 257-259. <https://doi.org/10.1097/PXR.0000000000000468>

**Important note**

To cite this publication, please use the final published version (if applicable).  
Please check the document version above.

**Copyright**

Other than for strictly personal use, it is not permitted to download, forward or distribute the text or part of it, without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), unless the work is under an open content license such as Creative Commons.

**Takedown policy**

Please contact us and provide details if you believe this document breaches copyrights.  
We will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

**Green Open Access added to [TU Delft Institutional Repository](#)  
as part of the Taverne amendment.**

More information about this copyright law amendment  
can be found at <https://www.openaccess.nl>.

Otherwise as indicated in the copyright section:  
the publisher is the copyright holder of this work and the  
author uses the Dutch legislation to make this work public.



# How does the content of the 20th I.S.P.O. World Congress align with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals?

David F. Rusaw<sup>1,a</sup> , Alix Chadwell<sup>2,b</sup> , Liselotte Hermansson<sup>3,a</sup> , Han Houdijk<sup>4,c</sup> , Anton G. Johannesson<sup>5,a</sup> , Peter Kyberd<sup>6,b</sup>, Rune Nilsen<sup>7,d</sup> , Pia Nolstedt<sup>7,d</sup>, Dick Plettenburg<sup>8,c</sup> , Erik Prinsen<sup>9,10,c</sup> , Stephen Seccombe<sup>11,b</sup> and Saeed Zahedi<sup>12,b</sup> 

When the members of the Local Organizing Committee (LOC) for the International Society for Prosthetics and Orthotics (I.S.P.O.) 20th World Congress initially formulated the theme for the Congress, we were faced with a difficult decision. Selection of the theme for a biennial, international, multidisciplinary event such as this needs to be selected with careful consideration to maximize the exposure of the topic to a larger audience and to increase the likelihood of future benefit for all involved. At the time, we were well aware of countless efforts to enact The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,<sup>1</sup> and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and how prosthetics and orthotics (P&O)—and assistive technology more generally—are integral in our efforts to contribute to attaining these goals.<sup>2</sup> It seemed fitting then to use this Congress as a means to increase awareness of the SDGs. In doing so, we hoped to be able to actively contribute by making use of this important event in attaining the objectives set out in The 2030 Agenda. This resulted in the 20th World Congress theme: “*Science in Practice, Practice in Science: Collaboration and innovation towards sustainable rehabilitation,*” which focuses on working toward sustainability across the field through sharing best practice, the development of novel devices, education, provision, and the interrelationships between science and practice.

From selecting the theme to developing the logo, the LOC worked with other I.S.P.O. (standing) committees, including the

Scientific Program Committee, Technical Track Committee, and World Congress Committee, to ensure that the theme was prominently featured throughout the program and organization. During the conference preparation process, we were interested in assessing how effectively the chosen theme was reflected in the program, possibly providing a useful metric to estimate the Congress’s impact on raising awareness and advancing fulfillment of the SDGs. To support this analysis, the LOC used the submitted abstracts and symposia as the source of data for this analysis. Peer reviewers who participated in the blind review of abstracts submissions indicated, as part of their scientific evaluation, which of the 17 SDGs were most closely associated with the content of each submission. There were 3 independent reviewers who conducted this review for each of the abstract’s submissions. When reviewing the symposia submissions, 2 members of the LOC conducted a similar analysis and indicated this SDG association. Each reviewer’s indicated SDG was then tallied to produce summary results, which are presented in Figure 1.

As shown, most submissions (~67% of abstract, ~66% of symposia) have been identified as addressing the 3rd SDG: Good Health and Well-being.<sup>3</sup> Perhaps this is no surprise given ISPO’s mission<sup>4</sup> and it is certainly encouraging to see such a large percentage of contributions in this important area. Equally encouraging is the contribution made in other areas of the SDGs.

<sup>1</sup>School of Health and Welfare, Jönköping University, Jönköping, Sweden

<sup>2</sup>School of Healthcare Enterprise and Innovation, University of Southampton, Southampton, United Kingdom

<sup>3</sup>Department of Prosthetics and Orthotics, Faculty of Medicine and Health, Örebro University, Örebro, Sweden

<sup>4</sup>Department of Human Movement Sciences, University of Groningen, University Medical Center Groningen, Groningen, the Netherlands

<sup>5</sup>ForMotion Clinics, Stockholm, Sweden

<sup>6</sup>UCL Institute of Orthopaedics and Musculoskeletal Science, University College London, Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital, Brockley Hill, Stanmore

<sup>7</sup>Sophies Minde Ortopedi, Oslo Norway

<sup>8</sup>BioMechanical Engineering Department, Delft University of Technology, Delft, the Netherlands

<sup>9</sup>Roessingh Research and Development, Roessingh, Center for Rehabilitation, Enschede, the Netherlands

<sup>10</sup>Department of Biomechanical Engineering, Faculty of Engineering Technology, Technical Medical Centre, University of Twente, Enschede, the Netherlands

<sup>11</sup>Blatchford Limited, Basingstoke, United Kingdom

<sup>12</sup>Blatchford Technology Centre, Basingstoke, United Kingdom

<sup>a</sup>Swedish ISPO National Member Society

<sup>b</sup>UK ISPO National Member Society

<sup>c</sup>Netherlands ISPO National Member Society

<sup>d</sup>Norwegian ISPO National Member Society

Corresponding author:

David F. Rusaw, PhD, Jönköping University School of Health and Welfare Box 1026, Jönköping 55111, Sweden (david.rusaw@ju.se).

Copyright © 2025 International Society for Prosthetics and Orthotics

DOI: 10.1097/PXR.0000000000000468

Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure (SDG 9), which aims to “build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation”<sup>5</sup> represented approximately 8% of the abstracts and symposia. Whether these submissions are for or from industry is unknown, but perhaps irrelevant, as it is not who submitted, but what SDG the submission addresses that is pivotal. Industry cooperation is a necessary factor to ensure that the SDGs are attained<sup>6,7</sup> and that this representation appears to be significant is encouraging and a confirmation of this collaboration in the P&O field. Although it is unknown what level of contribution would be considered sufficient, we cannot deny that there appears to be considerable contribution present in the Congress program.

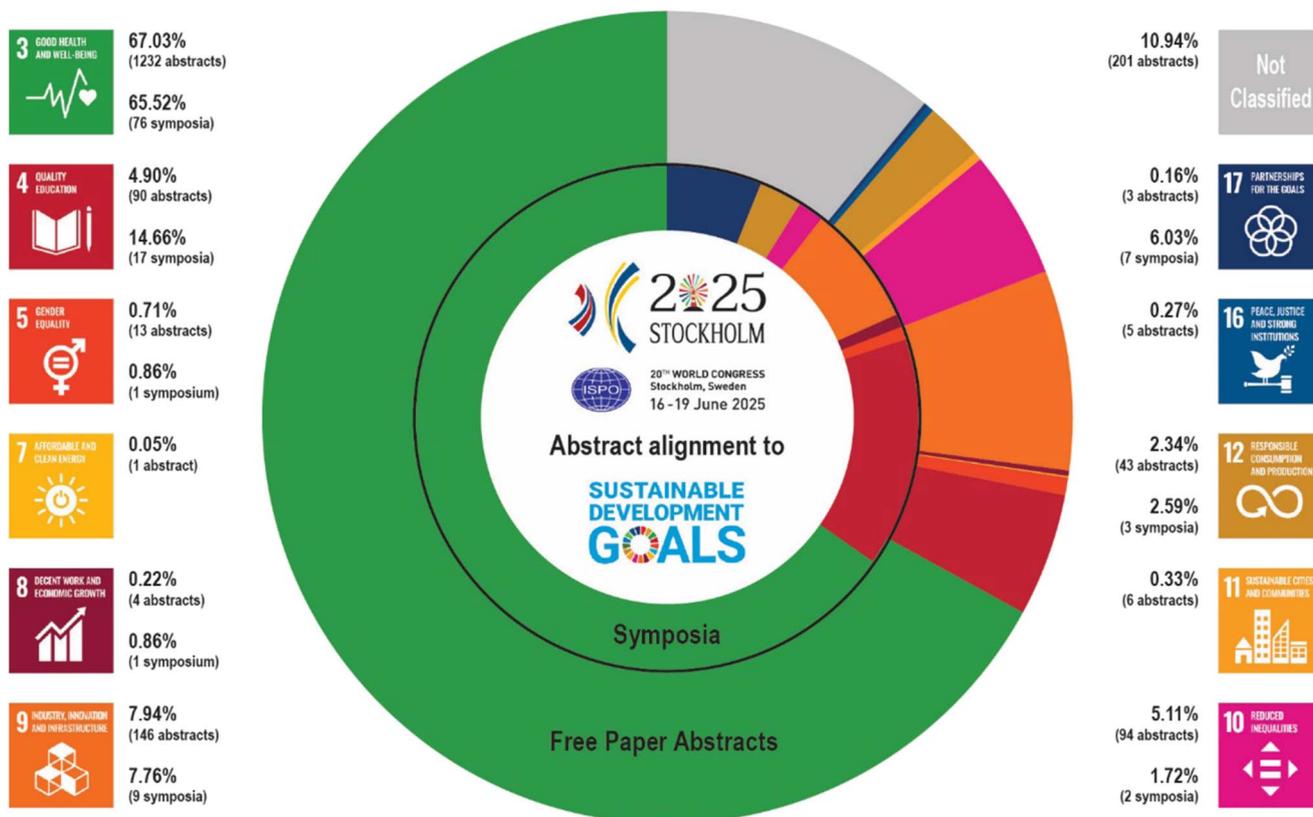
Reducing inequalities (SDG10)<sup>8</sup> for those among us with disabilities is absolutely critical for the realization of the Goals.<sup>7,9</sup> Given ISPO’s Vision and Constitution explicitly name “A world where all people have equal opportunity for full participation in society”<sup>10</sup> and “To enhance the quality of life for everyone who may benefit from prosthetic, orthotic, mobility and assistive devices...,”<sup>11</sup> to see that ~5% of abstracts and 2% of symposia addressed this is once again encouraging and well-aligns with the goals of ISPO.

Access to quality education (SDG4)<sup>12</sup> is often limited for individuals with disabilities. It is also challenging to access education that addresses the shortfall in meeting international needs, a problem that is most pronounced in lower to middle income countries. Although we acknowledge a potential ambiguity

in the SDGs’ intent in the reviewer extraction process, whereby access to education for professionals was equally weighted with access to education for people with a disability, it highlights the important role of education within the broader P&O context. ISPO has long worked to increase access to quality P&O education internationally. Notably, the ISPO Education Standards specifically address accessibility for individuals with disabilities (Standard 15) and local needs.<sup>13</sup> Given the other international efforts to make education in the AT sector more accessible for all, this presence in Stockholm (~5% of abstracts, ~15% of symposia) is once again promising for the future.<sup>14</sup>

Responsible Consumption (SDG12)<sup>15-17</sup> addresses the urgent need to stem the crises of climate change, nature loss, and pollution. Efforts within the P&O sector to minimize contributions during processes such as manufacturing and shipping are needed and welcome within the program, representing ~2% and 3% of abstracts and symposia, respectively.

Our intention in exploring the link between the submissions and SDGs has been to raise awareness within the Congress program and to promote a sustainable and equitable future for all, not specific to only those SDGs we have reflected on in this editorial, but a hopeful acknowledgment of their contribution to the overall goals. We hope that in doing so, we have lifted the value of the I.S.P.O. World Congress from a specific focus on our P&O field, to an overarching impact on a sustainable and equitable future for all. In line with the Congress logo, a lighthouse emitting a spectrum encompassing the SDG colors, we hope that this editorial has



**Figure 1.** Counts and percentage of each of the identified SDGs as part of the review process. Where alignment to none of the SDGs were identified, the abstracts are “Not Classified.” Counts are of the individual reviewer’s identified SDG, with 3 (n = 3) reviewers per abstract and 2 (n = 2) per symposium. % represents the total percentage of all reviews pertaining to individual SDGs. Only one SDG was identified per review. SDG, Sustainable Development Goal.

helped to shine a light on the impact of the Congress. Although we need to be modest in our suggestion of broader impact, we feel that in exploring the link between the SDGs and the program, we can offer an objective framework which discussion specific to P&O can progress. Given the alignment between the vision of ISPO and the SDGs, we hope that readers and attendees of the Congress are at least conscious of the potential contributions the P&O sector contributes toward the Goals, both today and in the future.

### Funding

The authors disclosed receipt of the following financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article: The authors disclosed that they received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

### Declaration of conflicting interest

The authors disclosed the following potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article: The authors declare no potential conflicts of interest regarding the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

### Acknowledgments

The authors would like to acknowledge the other (standing) committees involved in organizing the 20<sup>th</sup> I.S.P.O World Congress, including the World Congress Committee, Scientific Program Committee, and Technical Track Committee. Without the broad collaboration among these groups, the work toward the theme of the Congress would not have been possible.

### ORCID iDs

D.F. Rusaw:  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0220-6278>  
 A. Chadwell:  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9101-5202>  
 L. Hermansson:  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4247-2236>  
 H. Houdijk:  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7069-1973>  
 A.G. Johannesson:  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8729-458X>  
 R. Nilsen:  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9022-6748>

D. Plettenburg:  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1022-5855>

E. Prinsen:  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7376-0236>

S. Zahedi:  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6959-632X>

### References

1. General Assembly. *A/RES/70/1—Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*; 2015.
2. *Global Report on Assistive Technology*. 2022. <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240049451>.
3. *Goal 3*. Department of Economic and Social Affairs. <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal3>. Accessed March 31, 2025.
4. *Discover ISPO—ISPO*. <https://www.ispoint.org/discover-ispo/>. Accessed March 13, 2025.
5. *Goal 9*. Department of Economic and Social Affairs. <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal9>. Accessed March 31, 2025.
6. ATscale the GP for AT. *Assistive Products Market Report 2024*. <https://atscalepartnership.org/assistive-products-market-report>.
7. Tebbutt E, Brodmann R, Borg J, MacLachlan M, Khasnabis C, Horvath R. Assistive products and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). *Glob Health* 2016;12:79.
8. *Goal 10*. Department of Economic and Social Affairs. <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal10>. Accessed March 31, 2025.
9. Shi G, Ke S, Banozic A. The role of assistive technology in advancing sustainable development goals. *Front Polit Sci*. 2022;4.
10. *Discover ISPO—ISPO*. <https://www.ispoint.org/> and <https://www.ispoint.org/discover-ispo/>. Accessed March 31, 2025.
11. *ISPO Constitution 2021*. [https://www.ispoint.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/1\\_ispo\\_constitution\\_2021\\_upd.pdf](https://www.ispoint.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/1_ispo_constitution_2021_upd.pdf). Accessed March 31, 2025.
12. *Goal 4*. Department of Economic and Social Affairs, n.d.
13. International Society for Prosthetics and Orthotics. *ISPO Education Standards for Prosthetic/Orthotic Occupations*; 2018. [https://www.ispoint.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/ispo\\_standards\\_nov2018\\_sprea.pdf](https://www.ispoint.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/ispo_standards_nov2018_sprea.pdf).
14. World Health Organization, Human Resources for Health. *Transforming and Scaling up Health Professionals' Education and Training: World Health Organization Guidelines*. 2013;122. <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/transforming-and-scaling-up-health-professionals%E2%80%9999-education-and-training>.
15. *Goal 12*. Department of Economic and Social Affairs. <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal12>.
16. HI HIF. *Environmentally-sustainable Practices: A Guide for Field Teams*; 2017. [https://www.hi.org/sn/uploads/document/environmentallysustainablepractices\\_pg23.pdf](https://www.hi.org/sn/uploads/document/environmentallysustainablepractices_pg23.pdf).
17. Oldfrey B, Barbareschi G, Morjaria P, et al. Could assistive technology provision models help pave the way for more environmentally sustainable models of product design, manufacture and service in a post-COVID world? *Sustainability* 2021;13:10867.