

Governance for Sustainable Development Volume 4: Challenges and Opportunities for Implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is produced by the **Friends of Governance for Sustainable Development**.

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Foreword

Verena Klinger-Dering, Meriem El Hilali, Hyemi Kim, Samuel Victor Makwe, Cristina Popescu, David Banisar, Felix Dodds and Quinn McKew

The Friends of Governance for Sustainable Development was originally set up in 2010 to help Member States prepare for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20). It was re-established during the Open Working Group for the Post 2015 Agenda in 2014.

The Group of Friends has since then continued to host workshops on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The 2030 Agenda represents one of the most important sets of Global Goals that the international community has committed to. It is an unprecedented effort that embodies universal aspirations for achieving a more just, equitable, peaceful and sustainable future. It is an excellent example of successful multilateralism.

This ambitious and unique exercise represents a paradigm shift in policy-making for sustainable development. It gives a roadmap by which we all, the UN, governments and stakeholders can work together to address the most pressing global challenges. In this context, the rule of law, as well as effective, robust, participatory and accountable institutions are of the utmost importance to achieve the 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) and their 169 targets.

This is the fourth book that the Friends of Governance for Sustainable Development has produced in an effort to share widely the papers that have been presented at the workshops for Member States to discuss. The Group of Friends recognises that there is an inextricable link between good governance and sustainable development and that, as the 2030 Agenda is implemented, governance challenges will need discussion and action at all levels and by all institutions.

Mindful of these challenges, the governments of Germany, Morocco, Nigeria, Romania and the Republic of Korea, with the technical support of the Tellus Institute and the secretariat being provided by ARTICLE 19, have tried to create an informal space for Member States to discuss governance-related issues.

In 2019, the Group of Friends convened UN officials, experts, and representatives from government at three participatory workshops on governance and the 2030 Agenda implementation

and supported a fourth organized by Stakeholder Forum for a Common Future. The workshops were organized in partnership with UN-DESA Office of Intergovernmental Support and Coordination for Sustainable Development focusing on advancing the 2030 Agenda into the HLPF's Second Cycle, and lessons learnt from the first cycle.

The Group of Friends in 2020 will continue to be a place for discussions of the institutional architecture for the 2030 Agenda's implementation, follow-up and review.

We expect the present publication to be a useful input for the ongoing discussions about the institutional architecture for the 2030 Agenda. This agenda has already captured the imagination of this generation. We now know that sustainable development will only become a reality if we have the enabling environment for it to happen. Good governance will be pivotal for implementing, reviewing and improving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We hope that this publication contributes to addressing the challenges we will be facing over the coming years to 2030.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

| | |
|---------|--|
| A4SD | Action for Sustainable Development |
| AAAA | Addis Ababa Action Agenda |
| ACC | Administrative Committee on Coordination |
| ACF | Advocacy Coalitions Framework |
| ACCF | the Africa Climate Change Fund |
| AfDB | African Development Bank |
| ADC | Africa Data Consensus |
| AI | Artificial Intelligence |
| APF | Asia Pacific Forum |
| APRM | African Peer Review Mechanism |
| ATPS | Africa Technology Policy Studies Network |
| AU | African Union |
| AWS | Alliance for Water Stewardship |
| CBD | Convention on Biological Diversity |
| CBDR | Common but Differentiated Responsibilities |
| CBHR | Corporate Benchmarking on Human Rights |
| CEB | Chief Executives Board |
| CEDAW | Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women |
| CGD | Citizen-Generated Data |
| CIVICUS | World Alliance for Citizen Participation |
| CoD | Community of Democracies |
| CHB | Complementary Housing Benefit |
| CJN | Climate Justice Now |
| CLEW | Climate Land Energy and Water |
| CO2 | Carbon Dioxide |
| CR | Country review |
| CSA | Country self-assessment |
| CSD | Commission on Sustainable Development |
| CSO | Civil Society Organizations |
| DCF | Development Cooperation Forum |
| DEFRA | Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (UK) |
| ECESA | Executive Committee for Economic and Social Affairs |
| EEAC | Environmental and Sustainable Development Advisory Councils |
| EITI | Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative |
| EMG | Environmental Management Group |
| ESG | Environmental, Social and Governance |
| FAO | Food and Agriculture Organization |
| FfD | Financing for Development |
| FSC | Forest Stewardship Council |
| GAVI | Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization |
| GBP | Green Bond Principles |
| GHG | Green House Gass |

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|----------|--|
| GN-NCSD | Global Network of National Councils for Sustainable Development and Similar Bodies |
| GPEDC | Global Partnership for Effective Cooperation |
| GPEI | Global Polio Eradication Initiative |
| GRI | Global Reporting Initiative |
| GSA | German Sustainability Award |
| GSDR | Global Sustainable Development Report |
| GWP | Global Water Partnership |
| HLPF | High Level Political Forum |
| HPC | Hybrid Parliamentary Committees |
| IACSD | Interagency Committee on Sustainable Development |
| IAEA | International Atomic for Energy Agency |
| IATF | Inter-Agency Task Force |
| ICT | Information and Communication Technologies |
| ICSC | International Civil Society Centre |
| IDEA | Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance |
| IAEG-SDG | Inter-agency Expert Group on SDG Indicators |
| IEP | Institute of Economics and Peace |
| IFI | International Financial Institutions |
| IFLA | International Federation of Library Associations |
| IFSD | Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development |
| IGES | Institute for Global Environmental Strategies |
| IIED | Institute for International Environment and Development |
| IMF | International Money Fund |
| INDC | Intended Nationally Determined Contributions |
| IOT | input-output tables |
| IPCC | Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change |
| IPU | Inter-Parliamentary Union |
| IUCN | International Union for Conservation of Nature |
| JPol | Johannesburg Plan of Implementation |
| LAC | Latin America and the Caribbean |
| LDC | Least Developed Country |
| MDB | Multi-Lateral Development Banks |
| MDG | Millennium Development Goals |
| MDG-EIAG | Millennium Development Goals Expert Inter-Agency Group |
| MGoS | Major Groups and other Stakeholders |
| MID | Maurice Ile Durable (Mauritius) |
| MOI | Means of Implementation |
| MSP | Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships |
| NASA | National Aeronautics and Space Administration |
| NHRI | National Human Rights Institutions |
| NCSD | National Councils for Sustainable Development |
| NFFT | National Council for Sustainable Development (Hungary) |
| NOAA | National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration |
| NPEAD | New Partnership for Africa's Development |
| NPoAs | National Plans of Action |

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|-----------|--|
| NSDS | National Sustainable Development Strategies |
| NSO | National Statistical Offices |
| ODA | Official Development Assistance |
| ODI | Overseas Development Institute |
| OECD | Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development |
| OHCHR | Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights |
| OI | Open Institute Kenya |
| OWG | Open Working Group |
| PA21 | Philippine Agenda 21 |
| PDP | Philippine Development Plan |
| PMO | Prime Minister's Office |
| PrepCom | Preparatory Committee |
| PRI | United Nations Principles for Responsible Investment |
| PPP | Public Private Partnerships |
| QCPR | Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review |
| REEP | Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership |
| RNE | German Council for Sustainable Development |
| RTI | Right to Information |
| SAICM | Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management |
| SAIIA | The South African Institute of International Affairs: |
| SAP | Strategy and Action Plan |
| SDG | Sustainable Development Goals |
| SEA | Social Emergency Aid |
| SBP | Social Bond Principles |
| SDS | Sustainable Development Strategy |
| SDplanNet | Sustainable Development Planning Network |
| SDTF | Sustainable Development Transition Forum |
| SEB | Skandinaviska Enskilda Banken |
| SF | Stakeholder Forum |
| SHaSA | Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics |
| SIDS | Small Island Developing States |
| SMART | Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Resource-Based, With Time Based Deliverables |
| SSI | Sustainable Stock Exchanges |
| TAI | The Access Initiative |
| UCLG | United Cities and Local Governments |
| URU-Fogar | United Regions Organization |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNCAS | United Nations Convention Against Corruption |
| UNCED | United Nations Conference on Environment and Development |
| UNCTAD | United Nations Conference on Trade and Development |
| UNECA | United Nations Economic Commission for Africa |
| UN ECLAC | United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean |
| UNDESA | United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs |
| UNDPI | United Nations Department of Public Information |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNEA | United Nations Environment Assembly |

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| UNESCO | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization |
| UNESCO-IPDC | UNESCO International Programme for Development Communication |
| UNEP | United Nations Environment Programme |
| UNEP-FI | United Nations Environment Programme Finance Initiative |
| UNGA | United Nations General Assembly |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children's Fund |
| VI | Voluntary Initiative |
| VNR | Voluntary National Reports |
| WB | World Bank |
| WBA | World Benchmarking Alliance |
| WHO | World Health Organization |
| WSSD | World Summit on Sustainable Development |
| WTO | World Trade Organization |

Biographies

David Banisar, Senior Legal Counsel at ARTICLE 19. He has worked in the field of information policy for over 20 years and was previously Director of the Freedom of Information Project at Privacy International. He has authored books, studies and articles on freedom of information, freedom of expression, media policy, whistleblowing, communications security and privacy. He has also served as an advisor and consultant to numerous organizations, including the Council of Europe, the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the UN Development Programme and the Open Society Institute.

Banisar was a research fellow at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University and Policy Director of the Electronic Privacy Information Center in Washington, DC. He has a Juris Doctor in law and public policy from The Columbus School of Law, at The Catholic University of America in Washington, DC.

Jamie Bartram, Former Don and Jennifer Holzworth Distinguished Professor of environmental sciences and engineering at the University of North Carolina (UNC) Gillings School of Global Public Health and director of the School's Water Institute at UNC.

From 1998 to 2009, Bartram worked with the World Health Organization (WHO) in Geneva, primarily serving as its coordinator of water, sanitation and health and of its Assessing and Managing Environmental Risks to Health unit.

In 2004, he was elected chair of the United Nations (UN)-Water, a body that ensures coherence and coordination in the U.N.'s action on water and water-related issues, a position in which he served until 2006.

In 2004, he also was awarded the International Water Association 'Grand Award' for international leadership in the development and application of evidence-based policy and good practice.

Research interests focus on the connections between water (including sanitation and hygiene) and health -- especially the links between science, policy and practice, in both developing and developed countries. They include technologies for urban sanitation renewal; management systems for drinking-water safety and rural drinking-water supply; emerging issues (including water scarcity and climate change) and their impacts on system sustainability; health system activities on water and sanitation; and sector capacity issues such as monitoring, the costs and impacts of interventions and effective regulation and financing.

Marianne Beisheim, Renowned expert in the field of global governance and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Since 2010 she holds the position of Senior Researcher at the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, SWP). The SWP is an independent research center, charged with providing analysis and recommendations to the German Parliament and Federal Government on a wide range of international affairs. Previously, she worked as a Research Associate for the German Parliament and as Assistant Professor for International Relations at the Free University Berlin.

Steven Bernstein, Professor of Political Science at the University of Toronto and Co-Director of the Environmental Governance Lab alongside Matthew Hoffmann and Teresa Kramarz, at the Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy, University of Toronto. His research spans the areas of global governance and institutions, global environmental politics, non-state forms of governance, international political economy, and internationalization of public policy. Publications include *Unsettled Legitimacy: Political Community, Power, and Authority in a Global Era* (co-edited with William D. Coleman, 2009). He is a lead faculty member of the Earth Systems Governance Project and has consulted on institutional reform for the United Nations. Current major projects: “Legitimacy in Global Governance,” “Coherence and Incoherence in Global Sustainable Development Governance” (with Erin Hannah), and “Transformative Policy Pathways Towards Decarbonization” (with Matthew Hoffmann).

Claire Blanchard, Head of Global Advocacy at WWF. Prior to that she was Head of Advocacy and Policy for the Global Theme on Health and Nutrition at Save the Children International and before that she ran the campaign on Scaling up Nutrition (SUN) Civil Society Network Manager at Save the Children UK. She also worked as the Global Advocacy for Physical Activity (GAPA) (2009 to 2013) and a consultant for EuroHealthNew

Elizabeth Dirth, is a specialist on climate governance and governance for sustainable development, with seven years of experience in research and practice. She focusses on topics such as justice and inequality, future generations and 'futuring', and inclusion and participation, and their intersections with addressing climate change. In recent years she was a Fellow with Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies and a Researcher for the Copernicus Institute for Sustainable Development at Utrecht University. There she was also the founding Managing Editor of a new open access journal, *Earth System Governance*, and coordinator of the Planetary Justice Taskforce of the Earth System Governance project. Before moving into research, Elizabeth spent five years working on capacity building for sustainable development and climate change with local government, the public sector generally, and community groups in Scotland. Elizabeth is also a co-founder and former Chair of the 2050 Climate Group, and organisation focused on empowering young people to take action in climate change.

Felix Dodds, Adjunct Professor and a Senior Affiliate at the Water Institute at the Environmental Science and Engineering within the Gillings School of Global Public Health at the University of North Carolina. He is also Associate Fellow at the Tellus Institute. He was the co-director of the 2014 and 2018 Nexus Conferences on Water, Food, Energy and Climate at UNC.

Dodds was the Executive Director of Stakeholder Forum for a Sustainable Future from 1992-2012. He played a significant role in promoting multi-stakeholder dialogues at the United Nations and prosed to the UN General Assembly the introduction of stakeholder dialogue sessions at the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development.

He has been active at the UN since 1990, attending and actively participating in UNFCCC, UNCBD, the World Summits of Rio Earth Summit, Habitat II, Rio+5, Beijing+5, Copenhagen+5, World Summit on Sustainable Development and Rio+20, while also attending the UN Commissions for Sustainable Development and UNEP Governing Councils.

In 2011, he chaired the United Nations DPI 64th NGO conference – 'Sustainable Societies Responsive Citizens'. From 1997-2001, he co-chaired the UN Commission on Sustainable Development NGO Steering Committee.

Dodds has written, or edited, eighteen books, the most recent being *Stakeholder Democracy: Represented Democracy in a Time of Fear*. He is co-author of the *Vienna Café Trilogy* which so far has four books in its trilogy and counting, the most recent being *Negotiating the Sustainable Development Goals: A Transformational Agenda for an Insecure World* written with Ambassador David Donoghue and Jimena Leiva Roesch. Other books include: *Only One Earth: The Long Road via Rio to Sustainable Development* written with Michael Strauss and Maurice Strong; *From Rio+20 to a New Development Agenda: Building a Bridge to a Sustainable Future*; *The Plain Language Guide to Rio+20* written with Jorge Laguna Celis and Elizabeth Thompson.

He is also an International Ambassador for the City of Bonn.

Michael K. Dorsey, Recognized expert on global energy, environment, finance and sustainability matters. In 1997, in Glasgow, Scotland, Dorsey was bestowed Rotary International's highest honor, The Paul Harris Medal for Distinguished Service to Humanity.

Dr. Dorsey is a "Full member" of the Club of Rome and in 2013 the National Journal named him one of 200 US "energy and environment expert insiders". A graduate of the University of Michigan, Yale and the Johns Hopkins University, presently Dr. Dorsey is a limited partner in the Spanish-Japanese solar concern Univergy-CCC and a contributor to the Wall Street Journal. Dorsey was a task force member of President William Jefferson Clinton's Council on Sustainable Development. From April 2007 until November 2008, Dorsey was a member of Senator Barack Obama's energy and environment Presidential campaign team. In 2010, Lisa Jackson, the US Environmental Protection Agency (US-EPA) Administrator, appointed Dr. Dorsey to the EPA's National Advisory Committee (NAC).

Jorge Fernandez-Quintela, Delegate General of the Basque Country in the United States, based in New York City. As the Delegate, he is in charge of a team that covers trade and economic subjects, as well as political and institutional ones, within the transferred government competences from the Spanish federal government to the Basque regional one. In particular, he leads the relations with the United Nations in the different fora where the regions participate, follows all developments regarding the Agenda 2030-- one of the key government priorities, and the relations with the Spanish Permanent Mission to the United Nations, and other Member States and regions with presence in the city.

Previously, Jorge was the Director of Investment Projects of the Basque Trade and Investment Agency, where he led a team providing investment information and financial advice to corporate and individual clients and maintained knowledge of a wide range of Basque strategic sectors. He has also worked as the Government Delegate of this trade agency in Mexico and Poland for over a decade, aiding Basque companies in their market entry or development.

Prior to joining the government, Mr. Fernandez worked in the private sector as an international project manager and export adviser for large Basque manufacturing companies focused in the European and Asian markets.

Elisabeth Hege, is a research fellow in the Governance program at Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations. Her work focuses on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (comparison of national processes in European countries; role of NGOs). She also works on the evolution of societal demands in the context of European agricultural and food policies.

Meriem El Hilali, is a Diplomatic Counsellor at the **Permanent Mission of Morocco to the United Nations** in New York. She works closely on 2nd Committee topics with a special focus on the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development, Climate & Environment Action, South-South Cooperation and Economic related topics.

Before moving to New York, Meriem worked at the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) with the objective to advance the regional euromediterranean agenda of cooperation while developing regional initiatives and projects for the socio-economic integration between both shores of the Mediterranean. Her experience at the UfM was a key step to engage with the region's most urgent needs, especially the human/development dimensions and their social and economic triggers. During her works on euromediterranean cooperation, Meriem has always given particular attention to cooperation schemes that provide youth & women with a stronger role in society, paving the way for youth empowerment and gender equality.

Meriem had also worked as Vice Consul in Strasbourg on cooperation between the Kingdom of Morocco and the Council of Europe, Europe's leading human rights organization. This institution which is responsible for promoting human rights, democracy and the rule of law among its 47 Member States has developed a strong Partnership with Morocco, as a neighboring country in the fields of democracy and local governance.

Anne Kahl, Special Advisor, Governance and Sustaining Peace (UNDP) & Priya Sood, Coordinator of the Global Alliance for Reporting on Promoting Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies. Previously she has worked as a Senior Advisor in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark.

Hyemi Kim, is currently working as a Second Committee and ECOSOC affairs expert at the **Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations**.

Verena Klinger-Dering, counsellor for environment and sustainable development at the **Permanent Mission of the Federal Republic of Germany to the United Nations**. Prior to her posting in New York, she served as policy officer for the German Ministry for Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU) starting in 1992 in the area of public relations, focusing later in international coordination, global nature conservation policy, EU environmental policies and global water policy since 1992.

From 2008 to 2012, she was seconded to the Permanent Representation of Germany to the European Union in Brussels with a focus on environmental policies, legislative initiatives and strategies in the environment area at the EU level, and international environmental agreements. During her following assignment until 2017 with BMU, her priorities were the promotion of

international water cooperation and the mainstreaming of water issues into global initiatives and programs, i.e. the promotion of the water-energy and food security nexus in the follow-up process to the Bonn2011 Nexus Conference. During this period, she contributed to the works of the German Government on the Sustainable Development Goal on Water and Sanitation (SDG6), its indicator framework and the promotion of partnerships between the German Environment Ministry and the UN to facilitate the implementation of the water-related goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda.

Gary Lawrence, Principal Envirodynamix, which is part of an integrated team of professionals focused on helping clients of all types reduce all types of urban risks and benefit society through new strategies. He is also a former Vice President and Chief Sustainability Officer of AECOM and Planning Director for the City of Seattle.

Samuel Victor Makwe is a Counsellor (Desk Officer for 2nd Committee and ECOSOC issues) at the **Permanent Mission of Nigeria to the United Nations**, New York. He is saddled with bringing Nigerian, indeed, African perspectives to international discussions, particularly on issues related to the Macro-economic questions, the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development, Agenda 2063, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, and the Paris Agreement. Since joining the Mission in 2018, he has shown commitment toward the advancement of the work of the General Assembly and has served as either the Coordinator or a Co-coordinator/Facilitator for the following resolutions: A/RES/73/222, A/RES/73/231, A/RES/74/206, A/RES/74/199, and A/RES/73/336. He was one of the immediate past Vice Coordinators of the African Group (2nd Committee) in New York. Prior to his posting to New York, Mr. Makwe was First Secretary (Political, Education, and Cultural Affairs) and Head of Chancery/Charge d’Affaires (a.i.) at the Embassy of Nigeria in Cairo, Egypt. He has also served at Nigeria’s High Commission, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia where he handled Consular and Educational matters. At Nigeria’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Abuja, he has served as a Protocol Officer, Consular Officer and a Human Rights Desk Officer. He has attended several high-level meetings in the course of his diplomatic career.

Quinn McKew, Deputy Executive Director of ARTICLE 19, an international freedom of expression and information NGO. Quinn leads ARTICLE 19's global programs on ICTs, protection of human rights defenders and the campaign to incorporate transparency and good governance in the Post-2015 Development Agenda. She is responsible for global operations and governance at ARTICLE 19 including the integration of the 8 regional offices and 50+ regional partner organisations. Prior to joining ARTICLE 19, she worked for the largest non-profit management consultancy in Europe and was a campaign manager for leading environmental organisations in the United States. McKew has a Master’s of Business Administration from Georgetown University focusing on global non-profit management and a BA in International Relations and the Environment from Stanford University.

Felipe Morgado, Senior Manager at the UN Global Compact, the world’s largest corporate sustainability initiative. In this capacity, he is a leader in mobilizing Member States in support of the Global Compact, encompassing programmatic cooperation at global and local levels. Before joining the UN Global Compact, he worked at UNCTAD in the area of sustainable reporting and finance, advising Governments on best practices to enable the development of a

vibrant and sustainable private sector. He spent his early career in the private sector, focusing on corporate governance and investment banking in developing countries. Felipe holds a B.A. in Economics from Columbia University and a M.A. from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy.

Ingeborg Niestroy, since 2013, she has served as an associate at the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) and research associate at the Policy Assessment Group of the Environmental Policy Research Centre, Free University of Berlin. She was Secretary-General of the European network of advisory councils for environmental policy and sustainable development (EEAC) and has around 15 years' experience in European policy-making and multi-stakeholder relations. She conducted a comparative study on governance for SD in nine EU members states (2005), and well as on different models of environmental and SD councils (2007, with follow-ups).

Gastón Ocampo, Lead Advisor for the Americas at the Institute for the Promotion of Latin America and the Caribbean (IPDAL). IPDAL is a Portuguese non-profit fostering transatlantic partnerships and economic diplomacy. A native of Argentina, his work focuses on socioeconomic development in Latin America and Africa. He has also contributed to projects in Argentina, Turkey, Tunisia, Uganda, and the United States. Gastón holds a B.A. in International Relations and a B.B.A. in Business Administration from Roanoke College in Salem, VA, USA

Cristina Popescu, Permanent Mission of Romania to the United Nations, as delegate to the Second Committee (Economic and Financial) of the UN General Assembly and she is in charge of the development portfolio, ECOSOC coordination and the UN Funds and Programs active in the development field.

Her professional contribution is focused on bringing the national and the European vision to the current debate on supporting fulfilling the Sustainable Development Goals globally. The UN has to deliver on the 2030 Agenda – the universal framework document setting up 17 SDGs and 169 targets – and the Member States and the UN bodies have to ensure that humanity fully engage on a sustainable and resilient path, ensuring that no one is left behind.

Cristina Popescu had previously worked within the Embassy of Romania to Italy and the Embassy of Romania to the Czech Republic, in charge with the European affairs portfolio, she worked in various political directorates of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Romania and as an expert within the Department of European Integration, the Government of Romania.

She holds a PhD in Ethics of Conflict Negotiation from the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Bucharest, a Diplôme d'études approfondies in European Studies from the European Institute of the University of Geneva and a Master in International Relations from the Faculty of Political and Administrative Sciences of the University of Bucharest. She has a diploma in Political Science from the Faculty of Political and Administrative Sciences of the University of Bucharest.

Cat Tully, Founder of the School of International Futures (SOIF). SOIF helps leaders, communities and organisations engage with the future, to make better decisions today. SOIF runs projects and foresight retreats across the world and has 600 alumni in 50 countries. Cat advises on

and teaches strategic foresight, emergent strategy and system stewardship internationally, including at the UN and as a Visiting Professor in Malaysia.

Previously, Cat was Strategy Project Director at the UK FCO and Senior Policy Adviser in the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit. Before working in government, she worked in strategy and international relations across the not-for-profit and business sectors, including Christian Aid, Technoserve and Procter and Gamble.

Cat has degrees from Cambridge and Princeton Universities. She is a trustee for the Foundation for Democracy and Sustainable Development (FDSD); a Global board member of Academics Stand Against Poverty (ASAP); a member of United Nations Learning Advisory Council for the 2030 Agenda and a member of the Advisory Group of the British Foreign Policy Group (BFPG)

Felipe Victoria, is currently the Policy and Institutional Affairs Officer of the Delegation of the Basque Country in New York City. As such, Felipe is in charge of following all issues that relate to the Agenda 2030 at the United Nations, liaising with all relevant institutions and partners at the UN, in particular UNDESA, and with the Spanish Mission to the United Nations. He also manages and follows common programs and projects with other regions present in New York City, like Quebec and Flanders.

Prior to this role, he served as an international adviser at the Spanish Embassy in Cairo, Egypt, where he covered trade and economic issues in the Red Sea Basin region, namely Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia. He has also served as a guest lecturer to the Colombian War College and the University of the Andes in Bogota-Colombia, lecturing on regional challenges and security, the functioning of the UN System, and geopolitical hotspots; and serving also as a foreign affairs specialist at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Spain, dealing with multilateral affairs issues, particularly the UN System.

Ruben Zondervan, is the executive director of [Stakeholder Forum for a Sustainable Future](#). He is an experienced specialist in research management, science-policy, public affairs, research policy, and strategic communications and consultancy, and a policy analyst particularly in the area of governance and sustainable development and emerging technologies. He is deeply interested in the politics of science and the science of politics (and politics in general). In addition to his work with Stakeholder Forum, he also freelances as “mercenary for science and sustainability.” Ruben served as the Executive Director of the [Earth System Governance Project](#) – a global research alliance, from 2007 to August 2019.

Papers presented to the
Friends of Governance for Sustainable
Development workshops in 2019

Chapter 1

Justice, Peace and Inclusion for Sustainability or Climate Apartheid?

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Big Picture

All of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDGs) are integral to configuring, advancing and delivering the sufficiently robust multilateral response to confront and thwart the unfolding planetary climate emergency.

The 16th United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (UN SDG 16, or simply: SDG16) advances the idea that the *sine qua non* “for sustainable development,” is the ‘promotion of just, peaceful and inclusive societies’ as they can “provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels”.

If we are to abate and ultimately avert the unfolding climate emergency, we must leverage the spirit of SDG16 by building formidable institutions that marshal resources fit for purpose and scale of the crisis in an expeditious manner. Anything less may not only fail to stall the crisis, but much worse: mislead people and institutions into believing viable solutions are being deployed while the opposite is true. The foundational framework of the SDGs recognises the vital importance of the interlinkages between all of the different goals and targets and accordingly, in the case of, SDG16 it should be seen as fundamental to the delivery of all the goals and targets.

How Did We Get Here?

News headlines make it seem as if climate change and its underlying drivers—population dynamics; burgeoning urbanization; development and underdevelopment (particularly, in emerging markets like China and India); rising CO₂ and the accelerated greenhouse effect—are all relatively new phenomena. Contemporaneous hagiographies of the “godfather” of climate change: James Hansen abound. (Goodell, 2018) Yet the ongoing civil society battle against climate change is over a half century. While the science of climate change is older still, underway some two to three hundred years.

Many historians of science point to Swedish Svante Arrhenius (1859-1927), as the first to accurately measure the “greenhouse effect” or to what extent to which increases in atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO₂) will increase Earth's surface temperature. (Henning, 1997) Arrhenius, a Nobel laureate (1903), was actually building on work by Fourier, Pouillet and Tyndall—all working a generation before him. Indeed, many credit Fourier with discovering the greenhouse effect. (Crawford, 1997) Even in the US, a century before the climate “godfather”, Hansen, was born Eunice Newton Foote (1819-1888), a scientist and suffragette discovered the absorption of

thermal radiation by carbon dioxide and water vapour. She did so three years *before* John Tyndall, who is generally credited with this discovery—a cornerstone of our current understanding of the greenhouse effect, climate change, weather and meteorology (Jackson, 1856). When Newton Foote “presented” her findings to the American Association for the Advancement of Science it was done by a man – since the august Association did not allow women to speak. The findings, however, were published under her name and appeared in the 1856 issue of *The American Journal of Science*, titled “Circumstances affecting the Heat of the Sun’s Rays” (Foote, 1856). Whether for animus, ignorance or some (masculine) admixture: Tyndall never cited or credited her.

It is atop this multi-century old legacy and accumulated record that scientists in particular, and more recently policy makers, activists and growing numbers of citizens are sufficiently worried about the extent of the current climate crisis to deem it an emergency. (Crawford, 1997)

Modern scientific warnings of the unfolding climate crisis have been steadily made with increasing frequency, over nearly the past two generations (1960-2020). By the late 1960s, multilateral institutions came together to implement the World Weather Watch and the joint World Meteorological Organization and [International Council for Science](#) (WMO-ICSU) Global Atmospheric Research Programme or GARP as scientific concern was beginning to mount, reinforced by the increasing carbon dioxide concentrations evident from the early observations at Mauna Loa, that human activities could, in fact, already be starting to impact on the Earth’s climate at global scales. (Oreskes, 2019)

Another decade of data provided the mandate and foundation to call The First World Climate Conference. It took place in Geneva in 1979. Some 350 specialists gathered from 53 countries and 24 international organizations from, representing a wide range of disciplines including agriculture, water resources, fisheries, energy, environment, ecology, biology, medicine, sociology and economics (White, 1979). Conference delegates agreed that alarming trends for climate change made it urgently necessary to act.

Since then, similar policy alarms have been made through at the 1992 Rio Summit, the 1997 Kyoto Protocol negotiations, and the 2015 Paris Agreement talks, at scores of other global assemblies and by a long list of scientists’ explicit admonishments of insufficient progress. (SMIC, 1971)

Alas, greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, to this day, continue rapidly rising, with increasingly deleterious effects on the Earth's climate, ecosystems and livelihoods. Many poignantly make the case that an immense increase of scale in endeavors to protect and conserve our biosphere is urgently needed to further avoid untold suffering due to the climate crisis (IPCC 2018 & Ripple, et al. 2019).

It should come as no surprise then, for the first time in its 15-year history, the 2020 World Economic Forum’s [annual risks report](#) found that, the environment filled the top five places in the list of concerns likely to have a major impact over the next decade (World Economic Forum, 2020).

The report further notes that, “weak international agreements belie rising investor and popular pressure for action, against a backdrop of a multitude of natural catastrophes and indicators of longer-term disruptions.”

Empirically, 2019 not only was the second warmest year ever, it also marked the end of the hottest decade in recorded history. (Ripple, 2019)

As Gavin Schmidt, the Director of NASA’s Goddard Institute for Space Studies (GISS), put it:

“We crossed over into more than 2 degrees Fahrenheit warming territory in 2015 and we are unlikely to go back. This shows that what’s happening is persistent, not a fluke due to some weather phenomenon: we know that the long-term trends are being driven by the increasing levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.” (Dennis, 2019)

The NASA/NOAA data reveal by continent, the 2019 temperature rankings:

Australia (and Oceania): warmest year on record

Europe: 2nd warmest

South America: 2nd warmest

Asia: 3rd warmest

Africa: 3rd warmest

North America: 14th warmest (NASA, 2019)

It is no wonder then that the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has noted:

“Climate change is the defining human development challenge of the 21st Century. Failure to respond to that challenge will stall and then reverse international efforts to reduce poverty. The poorest countries and most vulnerable citizens will suffer the earliest and most damaging setbacks, even though they have contributed least to the problem.” (UNDP, 2007)

These factors, in part, are precisely why in 2018 to mark its 50th anniversary, the Club of Rome declared a planetary climate emergency –that is “a result of inaction, and represents an existential risk to humanity” and is a risk posing permanent, massively negative consequences which can never be undone. The Club of Rome echoes and builds upon the work of UNDP and a litany of other scientists, public agencies and research institutions globally, noting how and why increasing climate chaos is a reality. In the 21st Century, increasing climate chaos will dictate and constrain the long-term prosperity and security of nations, affect the lives of millions and the entire planet, more than any other issue. (Masters, 2019)

Vicissitudes of Centuries of Climate Science

Beyond the scourge of the unfolding climate emergency several factors further complicate this already grim picture. First, new data and studies indicate that scientists may be underestimating the extent of the climate crisis. This “consistent underestimation bias” highlights the need for even harsher and rapid institutional responses. Worryingly underestimating the extent of the climate crisis is being born out in the most recent empirical results—as well.

So-called climate deniers and skeptics, many of them funded by chief progenitors of CO₂ emissions: the fossil fuel industry, have variously argued climate scientists exaggerate the extent of climate change and the worsening crisis. (Club of Rome, 2019)

A team of American researchers from Harvard, Princeton and New York University (NYU), however, make a distinctly more urgent point for institutions trying to thwart the unfolding crisis:

“...[R]ecent updates, suggesting that climate change and its impacts are emerging faster than scientists previously thought, are consistent with observations that we and other colleagues have made identifying a pattern in assessments of climate research of underestimation of certain key climate indicators, and therefore underestimation of the threat of climate disruption. When new observations of the climate system have provided more or better data, or permitted us to reevaluate old ones, the findings for ice extent, sea level rise and ocean temperature have generally been worse than earlier prevailing views.” (Exxon, 2019)

Critically the researchers add:

“We found little reason to doubt the results of scientific assessments, overall. We found no evidence of fraud, malfeasance or deliberate deception or manipulation. Nor did we find any reason to doubt that scientific assessments accurately reflect the views of their expert communities. But we did find that scientists tend to underestimate the severity of threats and the rapidity with which they might unfold.” (Oreske, 2019)

Reasons for underestimation bias vary. Over the three century arc of climate science and even shorter mid-20th to early 21st century “modern” era, scientists have developed better instruments to monitor and share data about the crisis: notably satellites and the internet—the stuff of Jules Vernian scale science fiction during Eunice Newton Foote’s time, have led to major revisions of the variability in extent, speed and adverse impact of the unfolding climate crisis.

Additionally, scientific advancements driven by improvements in technology, improve empirical findings which in turn force reconfigurations of basic theoretical assumptions, which further push the development of new technology to better understand phenomena in an emergent process, that feeds back upon itself. At its apogee we might call this process: the development of knowledge. This process does not only apply to science writ large it applies to many fields and climate science in particular.

This process of developing and revising climate science has happened over and over again—and will continue, *ad infinitum*. In mid-2019 the [UK’s Met Office](#) released the largest single update since 2011 to its widely used sea surface temperature (SST) record. The HadSST.4.0.0.0 or HadSST4 for short, is a monthly global field of the ocean’s surface on a 5° latitude by 5° longitude grid from 1850 to date. (Oreske, 2019) The 2019 update provides a more accurate estimate of SSTs in the period during and after World War II as well as over the past decade.

The Met Office’s update suggests that the world’s oceans have warmed by 0.1C *more* than previously thought since pre-industrial times. To the untrained eye this maybe meaningless drivel. Yet to those tracking the planet’s carbon budget—the allowable amount of additional emissions, we theoretically can use (emit) to avoid further or irreparable damage to the planet—revisions to

the Hadley SST record would reduce the carbon budget between 24% and 33%, if we want to limit average planetary warming to 1.5C, depending on how the budget is calculated. (Met Office, 2019) A smaller budget would mean humanity has fewer carbon emissions it can still emit before locking the world into 1.5C of global warming—if these current estimates are not underestimated, like the previous ones.

Paralleling the HadSST4 updates, and following the 2019 Madrid climate negotiations new climate models—which will underpin the 2022 revised UN temperature projections—developed in parallel by separate teams in half-a-dozen countries, indicate scientists have for decades consistently underestimated the warming potential of CO₂. (IPCC, 2019) This new modeling, a century on from the very same problem Eunice Newton Foote sought to understand, shows carbon dioxide is a much more potent greenhouse gas than previously understood. (Hood, 2020) This finding alone could push the Paris treaty goals for averting climate catastrophe well out of our reach. As the lead author of the first peer-reviewed assessment of the new generation of models, put it: “If you think the new models give a more realistic picture, then it will, of course, be harder to achieve the Paris targets, whether it is 1.5 or two degrees Celsius.” (Zelinka, M)

Thus underestimated science forecasts coeval with the ongoing improvement of scientific knowledge. Both can lead to suboptimal (or more dire) forecasts of the extent of the climate crisis—whether from the need for upward revisions to how much ocean temperature is increasing; further refinements in just how bad and fast CO₂ emissions may accelerate catastrophic warming; and myriad other refinements to a litany of climate variables. Such scientific updates place a large premium on the need for robust, national and multilateral institutions capable of responding at the requisite scale, in more hasty fashion, in line with the evolution of changing science and coincident empirical findings.

Some, like the director of the International Centre for Climate Change and Development, have expressed doubt in the prospect for such needed institutional response:

“my main reason for declaring the [United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change] process no longer fit for purpose is the fact that 2019 is the year that the reality of climate change all over the world overtook climate talks. Until now it was reasonable to meet every year in anticipation of being able to agree to take actions to prevent the worst impacts by both mitigation as well as adaptation actions.”

“Our failure to rise to this challenge, by assuming that we had plenty of time left, was clearly wrong and we are now entering the world of real loss and damage due to human-induced climate change that is clearly attributable to the emissions of greenhouse gases.” (AFP, 2019)

So, the ability to thwart the climate emergency is ever dependent on strong institutions that premise the ‘promotion of just, peaceful and inclusive societies’ as they can “provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels”. (We will return to this point below.)

Beyond course correcting scientific underestimates of the extent of the climate crisis, as the uneven continental warming shows above: the climate crisis does not unfold evenly across the planet. This

is especially true given the amazingly stochastic economic, social and political realities and injustices that define humanity's (under)development predicament to date. This nexus –where climate crisis intersects with uneven development—delineates the particularly thorny problem of climate injustice – and what some have gone as far to warn is its proverbial bastard step-child: climate apartheid. (Huq, 2019)

From Climate Injustice Towards Climate Apartheid

Over a decade ago, a group of researchers led, in part, by University of California public health professor Rachel Morello-Frosch published: “The Climate Gap: Inequalities in How Climate Change Hurts Americans & How to Close the Gap”. (Frosch, 2009)

The report detailed succinctly, that:

“Extreme weather events such as heat waves, droughts and floods as well as increased air pollution and higher prices for basic necessities will disproportionately impact people of color and the poor. For example, African Americans in Los Angeles are twice as likely to die from a heat wave as other residents, and the additional costs for air conditioning during heat waves are challenging, or unattainable for the poor.”

A decade on Morello-Frosch and colleague's updated results refine and reinforce their earlier findings:

“climate change will cause unprecedented harm to human populations, with the greatest burden falling on children, the elderly, those with underlying ill-nesses, and the poor, particularly poor women; and climate change will disproportionately affect low income countries, especially their coastal cities, and will also disproportionately affect poorer people within wealthier countries.” (Frosch, 2009)

Frosch, et. al., show the manner in which climate injustices play out in case after case around the world. The case of Hurricane Katrina is illustrative. In New Orleans the elderly, the disabled, the poorest segments of the population, and African Americans were least likely to have the means to evacuate the city of New Orleans before the storm. The greatest risk of death, property loss, and displacement fell on the poor and on African American residents of New Orleans. (Forman, 2019)

Similarly, researchers at the University of Miami Center for Disaster and Extreme Event Preparedness collaborating with scholars in the Bahamas found similar results. (Forman, 2019) Across the Caribbean region, for example, socioeconomically disadvantaged and marginalized populations sustain disproportionate harm and loss, with more hazardous storms exacerbating the inequity; and while the populations most vulnerable to Atlantic hurricanes, especially those in small-island states, contribute virtually nothing to climate change, they are among those most exposed to risks that are worsened by the carbon emissions from higher-income countries. (Shultz, 2019)

The last point is remarkable inasmuch as it is seen repeatedly across the globe whereby those harmed worst, most and often first from the unfolding climate crisis contribute the least to it. (Shultz, 2019) A late 2019 report by Christian Aid found that the 10 most food-insecure countries

in the world generate less than half a ton of CO₂ per person. Collectively, they generate just 0.08% of total global CO₂ –almost ten times less than the global average of 4.8 tonnes per person. (Roberts, 2001) More populous countries with some of the highest per capita emissions – and therefore some of the highest [total emissions](#) – are Australia, the United States and Canada. Australia has an average per capita footprint of 17 tonnes, followed by the US at 16.2 tonnes, and Canada at 15.6 tonnes –some 31-34 times those who generate the least yet suffer from a host of other (under)development calamities, the least of which is food insecurity. (Union of Concerned Scientists, 2019)

Is Multilateral Climate Governance Enough?

Coeval with researchers who have painstakingly sketched the empirical extent of climate injustices and so sounded the alarm to check the problem—surprising for some, others have consistently, perhaps worryingly or disturbingly (sheepishly and brazenly) openly downplayed the need to tackle such injustices, and instead, pretend as if the world was more akin to a laboratory setting where CO₂ emissions were seemingly, magically generated and distributed uniformly over the planet.

As Keohane put it “in world politics, turning justice into a standard of acceptability is in my view often unrealistic and may lead to mistaken rejection of institutional changes that represent valuable, if incremental progress.” (Ritchie, 2019) This line of reason builds on comments US climate negotiators have made.

As Pickering, et. al., noted near the conclusion of the 2011 UN climate talks in Durban South Africa:

“[US President Obama’s] lead negotiator, Todd Stern quipped: “If equity’s in, we’re out.” In other words, if the [negotiated texts] contained any references to the term “equity,” the United States would refuse to participate. As it transpired, the United States and like-minded countries succeeded on this point. The agreed upon Durban Platform for Enhanced Action contained no references either to equity or to the “common but differentiated responsibilities” of all parties for protecting the climate system. These omissions were notable since both are core principles of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC, Articles 3.1; Art. 4.2, Art. 4.4), under whose auspices the negotiations took place.”

So while the foundational climate accord (the UNFCCC) and its basic institutional infrastructures (the Conference and Meetings of the Parties, or COP and MOP) codified, from its outset, that nations have a common responsibility to avoid the climate crisis yet differentiated abilities to do so, certain powerful individuals, institutions and nations opt to advocate otherwise—and even go so far as to threaten to abandon accords if justice or equity-based solutions are premised, backed or legitimized. Such explicit (Stern) or implicit (Keohane) advocacy against justice is counterproductive at best and downright dangerous in the face of the burgeoning scientific findings and especially some of the worsening revisions. Anti-equity positioning and brinksmanship against delivering climate justice mark the genesis of climate apartheid and albeit, less common, yet still proffered proposals for forms of eco-totalitarianism.

The UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, Philip Alston, argues:

“Even if current targets are met, tens of millions will be impoverished, leading to widespread displacement and hunger ... We risk a ‘climate apartheid’ scenario where the wealthy pay to escape overheating, hunger and conflict while the rest of the world is left to suffer. ... Climate change carries immense implications for human rights, including to life, food, housing and water. It will also impact democracy as governments struggle to cope with climate consequences and persuade constituents to accept the major social and economic transformations required – rendering civil and political rights vulnerable. Most human rights bodies have barely begun to grapple with what climate change portends for human rights, and it remains one on a long laundry list of ‘issues’, despite the extraordinarily short time to avoid catastrophic consequences.” (Keohane, 2019)

Jorgen Randers, professor of “climate strategy” at BI Norwegian Business School (and a Club of Rome member) has openly advocated for such usurpations of civil and political rights. According to Randers, “Democracies are inherently biased towards short-term fixes, and therefore fundamentally unable to address long-term challenges such as climate change.” (UN, 2019)

Contrastingly, the UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, Alston, reminds us, “A robust social safety net will be the best response to the unavoidable harms that climate change will bring.” (Randers, 2012) For Alston such a safety net, in lieu of the suspension of democracy or the wayward imposition of a kind of climate crisis inspired martial law, could be a catalyst for nations to fulfill “long ignored and overlooked economic and social rights”, including access to food, healthcare, shelter, and decent work. (UN, 2019)

Road to Justice

The notion of climate justice is now a decades old name of and demand from a variety of multilaterally networked, social movements that fuses a variety of progressive political-economic and political-ecological currents to combat the most serious threat humanity and most other species face in the 21st century.

As colleagues and I have detailed previously:

“The climate justice lineage includes 1990s environmental anti-racism; the late 1990s Jubilee movement against Northern financial domination of the South; the 2000s global justice movement (which came to the fore with the December 1999 Seattle World Trade Organization protest); environmentalists and corporate critics who in 2004 started the Durban Group for Climate Justice (Lohmann 2006); the 2007 founding of the Climate Justice Now! (CJN) network; the 2009 rise of the European left’s Climate Justice Alliance in advance of the Copenhagen COP; the ongoing role of Malaysia-based Third World Network in amplifying the critique by both South states and radical civil society in COP and related negotiations; and much more.” (UN, 2019)

The inability of global elite actors to solve major environmental, geopolitical, social and economic problems puts added emphasis on the need for a climate justice based philosophy, ideology, principles, strategies and tactics. The time is opportune to dissect the socio-cultural basis of knowledge production and resistance formation against hegemonic climate policy making—especially those either openly or tacitly anti-justice.

One reason is the ongoing fracturing of elite power including acquiescence by large environmental non-governmental organizations (NGOs) - in an era of extreme global state-failure and market-failure.

One challenge along that route is to establish the most appropriate climate justice narratives, by identifying what gaps exist in climate justice constituencies, and which alliances are moving the politics of climate justice forward. This can be done, in part, through case studies that illustrate approaches to climate *in*justice spanning campaigns and institutional critique.

As Klinsky, et. al, offer:

“In a world characterized by vast disparities of wellbeing, it is naïve and dangerous to analyse climate policies (or the lack of them) without considering how humans in starkly different structural positions are affected by them differently. By excluding equity, we risk ignoring, or will fully omitting, the implications of decision-making on those who are most vulnerable and are most likely to face severe costs of any action (or inaction).” (Klinsky, 2017)

Configuring Climate Justice by Delivering Letter & Spirit of the SDGs

We can architect justice-based sustainability by leveraging the spirit and intent of all of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, emphasizing SDG16 in particular. In so doing, we can promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies that premise democracy, not subvert it as the *sine qua non* of both delivering sustainability and avoiding the looming climate catastrophe.

At barest minimum national governments and multilateral institutions must dramatically increase the monetary commitments to fighting the unfolding climate crisis. In the best cases tens-of-millions of dollars have been assembled to fight climate change, when even conservative estimate place the appropriate need at tens of billions, if not trillions per year. The Africa Climate Change Fund (ACCF), established by the African Development Bank (AfDB) in April 2014, is worryingly illustrative. Since its inception it has received some € 11.4 million—under €2 per annum. (Africa Development Bank, 2020) At the beginning of 2020 ACCF announced it approved seven new project proposals amounting to around \$4.7 million. (African Development Bank, 2020) To the untrained eye these sums may be deemed impressive. Yet just one climate intensified cyclonic event—Cyclone Idai—left more than \$2 billion in damages, by some estimates. The total ACCF to date then is less than 1% of the low end damage estimate of one catastrophic climate intensified event. In the face of such sums—gargantuan and paltry—it becomes impossible to overstate the case that more funds are desperately needed to deliver climate justice responses at the requisite scale.

Beyond money to fight climate intensified calamities be they cyclones; landscape size fire events—like those that plagued Australia from late 2019 into early 2020; or a litany of emergency events, the time has also come to urgently accelerate the exit from propping up industries that drive emissions, namely fossil fuels and simultaneously rapidly increase investments into and build out of renewable energy technologies—especially wind and solar resources.

Thus the ability to upend the planetary climate emergency will, at minimum certainly depend on strong institutions which premise the ‘promotion of just, peaceful and inclusive societies’ in order to “provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels”. Climate justice will also rest upon and derive from those institutions that marshal appropriately sized resources, urgently. Climate justice will spring forth from those that can ultimately facilitate and configure need changes in contraindicated economic and political policies and practices—sustained national and multilateral support for fossil fuel technologies in lieu of drastically increasing, for example—that drive us hastily away from climate emergencies toward climate justice for all.

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Chapter 2

Europe's approach to implementing the Sustainable Development Goals

By Ingeborg Niestroy, Elisabeth Hege, Elizabeth Dirth and Ruben Zondervan

This chapter summarizes a study by the authors entitled “Europe's approach to implementing the Sustainable Development Goals: good practices and the way forward” (EP/EXPO/B/DEVE/2018/01) commissioned and published by the European Parliament, Directorate General for External Policies of the Union in February 2019.

Introduction

The SDGs are intended to be universal, while at the same time allowing each country to develop its own approach to implementation – and thereby represents an opportunity for change in thinking about domestic and international development and the governance thereof.

In the study, commissioned by the European Parliament, and summarized in this chapter, we take stock of how the EU and EU Member States have responded to the challenges posed by the SDGs. The study analyses and compares the governance frameworks, institutions and mechanisms put in place in EU Member States and at the EU level to implement the SDGs. It in particular captures the roles and activities of national parliaments, and presents a policy-relevant assessment of the ‘readiness’ to achieve SDGs by 2030.

We provide a comprehensive and current (early 2019) overview of the existing and planned governance frameworks in all the 28 EU Member States based on a clear methodological approach present an in-depth overview of these governance frameworks through the lens of seven governance elements, highlight examples of good practices, and provide observations and reflections. For the EU level, we present an overview of the steps taken by the EU institutions for Agenda 2030 implementation, and an overview on how the seven governance elements feature at EU level. The report also takes stock of the activities by national parliaments in EU Member States.

It should be noted that we did not analyze the substantive decision-making or even specific policies rather focused on the architecture of governance for implementing and integrating the SDGs into national governance.

The study is based on desktop research, on existing surveys and studies at the country level, and performed interviews at national and EU level (altogether around 45). It also builds on our existing intelligence gathered on SDG matters in all EU institutions since the adoption of the Agenda 2030, on previous studies on internal governance mechanisms in the European Parliament, on experience in the Multi-stakeholder platform on SDGs of the European Commission, on a very good network of sustainable development (governance) experts and stakeholders in governments, civil society and academia, and on country level research and experience in sustainability governance by all team members, both in the domestic and external dimensions of the SDGs.

Methodology

We developed a unique analytical framework, collected data from a variety of sources, and assessed each Member State, and conducted our own empirical research by analyzing original data, surveys and reports and enhanced and verified this with the input of relevant experts and practitioners through interviews. For this empirical research, we developed an analytical framework (Table 1) which integrates various perspectives on governance for sustainable development, and elaborated an assessment scheme for the governance elements. These steps move beyond previous work on this topic as it offers both a comprehensive comparative overview of each Member State as well as an aggregated perspective and assessment of institutionalization.

The framework integrates five key governance elements and principles for sustainable development, corresponding Agenda 2030 principles and the OECD's building block for policy coherence, hence offering a comprehensive approach to understanding governance for sustainable development. Our analytical framework uses the seven key governance principles of commitment, horizontal and vertical coordination, participation, knowledge, monitoring and continuity and links them with Agenda 2030 principles: universality, interconnectedness, leave no one behind, and partnerships. Improving policy coherence for sustainable development ('PCSD', SDG target 17.14) across policy sectors, between internal (domestic) and external/international policies and law, as well as between levels of administration is essential to achieve the SDGs.

For the national level, a first round of desktop research on all 28 EU Member States took stock of the governance arrangements that have been put in place, both in terms of institutions as well as processes. Desk research was complemented by at least one interview in all Member States, including e-mail exchange about the analysis in many cases. This resulted in country fiches for each Member State (see Annex 1 in the original study) through which we mapped out governance mechanisms and procedures at national level.

At the EU level, the study applied the same assessment framework and was based on desktop research and interviews, and builds on information shared in the Multi-Stakeholder Platform on SDGs, including direct exchange with the Secretariat-General of the European Commission that serves as secretariat, as well as with other involved Commission services (e.g. DG International Cooperation and Development (Devco), DG Environment, and Eurostat).

Desktop research – We conducted desktop research focussed on three main data sources with broad coverage across all or many Member States about national level governance and implementation of the SDGs, as well as additional secondary data. These main data sources are the Voluntary National Reviews (VNR) of EU Member States, the European Sustainable Development Network (ESDN) Country Profiles and related reports, and the OECD Country Profiles for Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development (PCSD). We also used the SDG Index and Dashboard Report 2018's chapter on G20 countries by Bertelsmann and SDSN for three countries. A note on the VNRs: By the end of the 2018 High Level Political Forum, most EU Member States had published a Voluntary National Review (VNR) during any of the HLPF sessions. These reports constitute important input for the study, but they should be seen in context: self-reporting usually does not highlight the weaknesses of national approaches hence needed to be complemented and corroborated with other sources.

Interviews – The desktop research has been accompanied by interviews with one or two individuals per Member State, who are experts on the process nationally and capable to have a balanced view. These semi-structured interviews were initially conducted with one government representative from each Member State. A second round of interviews was conducted in four of the national parliaments that have mechanisms in place for mainstreaming the SDGs, as well as in the European Parliament with respect to cooperation with national parliaments.

Constraints: It is generally understood that there is no one-size fits all approach to implement the SDGs at national and subnational level, but there are lessons to be learnt between countries. While it is outside of the scope of this study to include detailed contextual considerations, the interview process and the background knowledge of the researchers allowed for some considerations of contextual information, such as how public administration and governance are organized, how parliaments, subnational governments and stakeholders are involved, how reforms are decided and implemented, and what might be typical strengths and pitfalls of SDG approaches chosen in each country. It is also beyond the scope of this study to provide a comprehensive picture of the vertical coordination with sub-national government across all Member States in order to identify coordination mechanisms or tools for policy coherence.

Assessment Scheme – Following the data gathering at the country level, the findings of the country fiches are captured and summarized by theme and across all countries, i.e. for the seven governance elements for sustainable development that structure this study. The assessment scheme for this is based on the assumption that a higher degree of institutionalization is positive for the implementation of the SDGs. This assessment scheme provides an indication only for where a country stands with respect to the governance elements analyzed in this study. Note that the scheme assesses, at a high granularity, the design of the governance framework. It does neither assess the effectiveness (functioning and quality) of the governance framework, nor the impact.

SDG implementation in EU Member States

Commitment, Strategy and its Monitoring and Review Process

The SDGs need a translation into the national context, which requires a strategic understanding of what the SDGs mean in that context. We looked at how countries integrate the SDGs in their national plans and strategies and their respective starting points, including previous commitments. We defined assessment criteria in which countries with currently no overarching, cross-sectoral strategy were graded with 0 points (UK and Portugal), countries which have some cross-sectoral long-term strategy in place, more or less linked to sustainable development graded with 1 point (Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, France and the Netherlands). The countries that have recently updated their sustainable development strategy or development plan or adopted a new one were graded with 2 points (Belgium, Greece, Lithuania, Malta, Slovakia and Sweden). The countries that signaled visible measures of operationalization of the adopted strategy or plan received three points (Czechia, Germany, Estonia, Italy, Latvia, Luxemburg, Romania, Slovenia and Spain) and those that in addition linked their strategy to the national budget received four points (Denmark and Finland). About half of the Member States are about to take measures to operationalize their

strategies or to link them to the budget: Croatia, Estonia, France, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Slovakia, Spain and Sweden.

The robustness of the monitoring and review framework has been assessed along the following criteria: Countries with no or no clear monitoring framework so far (Bulgaria, Austria, Greece and Spain) received 0 points. The countries that reported regular progress report but none of the other elements of a robust monitoring framework (Belgium, Croatia, Hungary, Malta, Portugal, Romania) received 1 point, and the ten countries that have regular progress reports and have updated their indicator sets since the SDGs (Czechia, Estonia, France, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Sweden and the UK) were graded with 2 points. In addition, a few countries have quantified and time bound targets. Those were graded with 3 points (Denmark, Latvia, Luxemburg, the Netherlands, Slovenia), unless they also have recently conducted an independent peer review of their strategy in which case they received 4 points (Finland, Germany).

The majority of EU countries has or did have at some point in recent history a sustainable development strategy. Eight countries adopted their sustainable development strategy in the years 2002 or 2003 as a result of the 2002 Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development (Germany, France, Italy, Poland, Austria, Slovakia, Lithuania and the Netherlands). Other countries followed between 2004 and 2007 (Finland, Estonia, Czechia, Malta, Portugal, Spain). The Portuguese SD strategy expired in 2015 and has not been updated yet. There are a few Member States that have a tradition of sustainable development strategies dating back even longer. Sweden, adopted a first sustainable development strategy in 1994, Ireland in 1997, Luxemburg and Romania followed in 1999, and Belgium in 2000. The UK is an interesting example because it was among the very early countries, adopting a sustainable development strategy in 1994 and 1999. They then changed the approach towards mainstreaming sustainable development into sectoral policies in 2011 after closing down the sustainable development commission. Bulgaria has a National Programme for Development that is linked to the EU 2020 strategy, and is planning a VNR in 2020, which might align this more with the SDGs.

We see that there are great discrepancies between the countries. The sometimes limited political weight of sustainable development strategies was and is a widely shared challenge, often because environment ministries were leading the efforts. A connected challenge is that too often sustainable development strategies lack clear measures of operationalization and have only limited impact on sectoral policy choices and budgetary arbitrations. Many countries integrate the SDGs into existing strategies rather than to create a new one. Some countries links the SDGs to national development plans (Croatia) or (green) growth programs (Greece) and these plans are often linked to the EU 2020 strategy. The majority of countries uses the SDGs to revise their sustainable development strategy (Finland, Germany). For some countries, the SDGs were an occasion to broaden their sustainable development approach that was very environmentally focused so far (Italy).

A robust monitoring and review framework is also crucial for an effective and operational strategy. Most of the countries (around 23) have revised or updated their indicators with the SDGs. The 2030 Agenda encourages countries to add national indicators to follow up on SDG implementation, so countries often mix UN indicators and EU or national indicators. Some

countries only use Eurostat indicators, either because of a lack of statistical capacity or because they find them more relevant. A few countries based the selection of national indicators on a participatory approach (e.g. France, Finland). Although the 2030 agenda emphasizes 'leaving no one behind', only very few countries (Denmark and Romania) have specifically mentioned efforts to take measures to implement this principle and a few countries attempt to improve the measurement of spillover effects (Germany, Spain). Only Finland and Germany have an independent review mechanism.

A number of countries have underlined the need of an EU wide SDG implementation approach, especially for the areas where EU competence is concerned or where competence is shared. A few countries seem to be waiting for an EU 2030 strategy as a follow up of EU2020 and that integrates the SDGs. Such a strategy would make it easier to steer the national dynamic.

Leadership and Horizontal Coordination

In order to have a truly integrated and indivisible approach to sustainable development, policy coherence must be a cornerstone of governance of sustainable development. Two important entry points for understanding, analyzing, and assessing policy coherence in EU Member States are to look at how and where leadership on this agenda takes place in government, and the mechanisms for horizontal coordination across government.

Leadership at the center of government has been promoted as beneficial for sustainability governance. Leadership and coordination are in themselves important aspects of sustainable development governance, but are inextricably linked. We have therefore evaluated these two aspects together. The assessment scheme awarded 0 points to countries with no ministerial lead or ownership, 1 point to leadership by 1 or 2 Ministries, 3 points to countries with leadership at the center of government, 4 points to those countries that in addition have coordination mechanism with clear engagement across ministries, and the full five points to those who also show improved coordination between external and internal implementation.

In 13 Member States we found leadership for the implementation and governance of the SDGs to be with the Heads of State and Government (Austria, Bulgaria, Czechia, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania and Slovakia). While this is an important indicator of the SDGs being a political priority, this level of leadership needs to be supported by sufficient coordination mechanisms at the working level in the Ministries. In every case of central leadership, such a coordination mechanism exists. In states where there is no central leadership on the SDGs, the coordination mechanisms which link ministries horizontally across government are the main mechanisms for policy coherence at the political level. Visible coordination mechanism with clear engagement across all ministries existed in 17 Member States (Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Netherlands, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden). In addition, every Member State except for the United Kingdom utilizes some kind of coordination mechanism, even where it does not engage with all ministries. In some cases, such as Ireland, Netherlands, Poland and Sweden, a new coordination mechanism has been created to specifically address horizontal coordination and policy coherence for the SDGs. There are a number of countries with designated focal points within Ministries to

support internal mainstreaming of the SDGs and collaboration (France, Slovenia and the Netherlands, Germany).

An additional aspect of coordination, which is a key part of policy coherence for the SDGs is the way in which coordination between external and internal implementation of the SDGs takes place. Few states had an explicit focus on bridging the gap between the domestic and international aspects of the 2030 Agenda. In some countries, steps to ensure coherence are taken through the coordination mechanism itself, or it is tackled as specific task.

Not all Member States have leadership at the center of government, and for some, leadership and ownership of the SDGs remains divided between environmental aspects and the development aspects, to the corresponding Ministries, even when there is a clear coordination mechanism in place. In such cases the division usually is between environmental ministries (or similar) dealing with internal aspects and the ministries of foreign affairs (or similar) dealing with external and international aspects. This is the case in 12 Member States (Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, France, Greece, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia and Sweden). In the United Kingdom, no leading ministry has been identified. One way to address this, is through a coordination where all ministries participate. However, some countries, such as Croatia, Malta, Poland, Portugal and the United Kingdom, do not require all ministries to participate in horizontal coordination.

While every Member State, except the United Kingdom, features some kind of coordination mechanism, not all are designed to overcome the longstanding rift between environmental policies and economic development policies – a schism that Agenda 2030 seeks to overcome.

Stakeholder Participation

Participation of stakeholders is integral to the implementation of Agenda 2030. Participation and inclusion of stakeholders is important to create ownership and hence foster that policies and targets are pursued across multiple levels of society. Aligning stakeholders and non-state actors with governmental policies, through meaningful participation, can be a way to ensure policy and goal coherence beyond the national government. In our assessment scheme, the higher the degree of involvement the higher the rating. Countries with just a consultation get 1 point, with an enhanced process and/or regular participation some kind of coordination mechanism, forum, or dialogue get 2 points, and countries with an institutionalized mechanism for multi-stakeholder participation, including those linked to or mixed with governmental coordination bodies, get 3 point. Countries that take additional step, such as direct involvement of CSOs in the HLPF, were assessed with 4 points.

Almost all Member States have some form of participation mechanism. Overall, we identified four different kinds of mechanisms for stakeholder participation: 1) through a – sometimes one-off – consultation, 2) through an enhanced process of participation, as forum or other informal body, 3) through an dedicated body, either established as independent sustainable development council, or as body intertwined with the government structure which also includes stakeholders. Some states have additional elements for participation, often in relation to a specific venue (like the VNR or HLPF) or aspect of policy. The difference between an independent council and an integrated body

is not necessarily a sign of further institutionalization, as the difference between the designs of these two different kinds of mechanisms is often the result of contextual factors.

Four countries do not have specific mechanisms for stakeholder participation (Cyprus, Malta, Spain and the United Kingdom, with Spain and Malta having plans). There are 18 countries where the national sustainable development strategy, before or after the SDGs, was done in consultation with society, and 12 countries who completed the VNR's with stakeholder participation or consultation. We found that a consultation process was not a precondition for other participation mechanisms. Some countries that do not have a specific consultation process for the development of their sustainable development strategies or policies, or for their VNRs, but have other forms of participation (Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Lithuania, Netherlands). Some have other participation mechanisms in the form of a bottom-up stakeholder led initiative, while others have institutionalized steps such as a committee or forum which exists either integrated within the national government context, as an independent council or advisor connected to the national government.

There are two ways in which more formalized participation mechanisms are designed to facilitate stakeholder participation: The first is through an independent council or forum and the second is through a body, which is integrated into the governance setting and includes government actors. These kinds of specialized institutions, indicating a deeper level of institutionalization of participation, do not all function in the same way, and the impact of these is largely dependent on contextual settings and governance norms. Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Portugal, Poland, and Sweden all have independent bodies, but no institution that is integrated within the government. These are councils or forums, which are independent of government, but participation is based on collaboration or advice to government bodies, rather than integration in decision making or planning. Sometimes this can be less, in particular in the case of Poland and Denmark, where the connection to government activities is not systematic. Alternatively, Czechia, Latvia and Slovakia, have integrated councils but not independent ones. Seven Member States have developed dual approach with on one hand a formal institutional setting for participation processes and is integrated with the national government as well as an independent body (Luxembourg, Lithuania, Ireland, Hungary, France, Finland and Croatia). Half of the Member States have complementary mechanisms to facilitate inclusion of diverse groups or further integration of stakeholders (Belgium, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Poland, Portugal and Slovakia). Some of these mechanisms include participation in Development Cooperation councils (as in Czechia), or youth participation mechanisms (as in Denmark and Finland). The decision to involve stakeholders has become a somewhat mainstream norm across Member States.

Knowledge input via science-policy interface, SDG budgeting and impact assessments

Integrating knowledge from different sources can foster reflexivity and learning, as well as evidence-based policymaking. Knowledge on interlinkages between SDGs is especially relevant in the context of the 2030 Agenda. . We evaluated three key tools for policy-making: 1) mechanisms to strengthen the science-policy interface, 2) SDG budgeting, and 3) impact assessments for sustainable development. In our assessment scheme we did not value one of these

tools higher than the other. Instead, we based our assessment on the accumulation of tools. The more tools for evidence-based and coherent policymaking a country has put in place, the higher it is ranked. We also accounted for more detailed aspects in the degree of institutionalization. For example, a country that involves science representatives in its sustainable development council is graded with a point, whereas a country that has developed a dedicated science-policy interface mechanism for sustainable development gets 2 points.

Four countries are most advanced in terms of the number of tools in use or in a pilot phase (Denmark, Finland, France and Latvia). They are followed by Germany, Greece and Italy. Six countries have at least one advanced tool in place (Belgium, Cyprus, Czechia, Slovakia, Sweden, United Kingdom). Most countries have a rather light version of tools in place (Croatia, Estonia, Hungary, Ireland, Lithuania, Luxemburg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain). Finally, Austria and Bulgaria have not signaled any of the three strategic tools. Altogether twelve countries are currently developing new tools and could potentially rank higher soon (Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, France, Ireland, Malta, Netherlands, Romania, with Slovakia and Spain planning the most comprehensive reforms).

Looking at our results, it seems that many countries recognize the important role science can play to inform policies towards sustainable development. Nine countries have specifically mentioned that they include representatives from science and academia in their sustainable development councils, commissions and other participatory mechanisms and two others plan to do so. In only a few countries, we observe a more institutionalized science-policy interface mechanism for the SDGs (Germany, Finland).

In terms of impact assessments for sustainable development it seems that, an increasing number of countries seize SDGs as an opportunity to better assess the impacts of policies. Nineteen countries mention that they use some kind of impact assessment as a tool for sustainable development, ranging from a broad (sustainability) impact assessment (SIA) across all dimensions of sustainable development (as in place at EU level) to a lighter sustainability checks as part of a system of regulatory impact assessment (RIA).

Integration of SDGs into budgetary processes is taken up by ten countries directly or indirectly (Croatia, Denmark, Finland, France, Ireland, Italy, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, and Sweden). There are several ways in which countries use or plan to use the SDGs as a tool for a more coherent budgetary process. The first method by which governments integrate SDGs is that they include qualitative—and more rarely quantitative—elements on SDG implementation in the budget documents they propose to parliament. However, very few countries signaled that they were using the SDGs in concrete way. Nevertheless, this idea is also gaining momentum globally. Of the 64 countries that submitted a national voluntary review during the 2016 and 2017 sessions of the High-level Political Forum, 23 mentioned ongoing or planned measures to link the SDGs to the national budget.

Long-term perspective

While a long-term perspective is a core principle underpinning governance for sustainable development, and the concept of sustainable development itself, this is not always explicitly

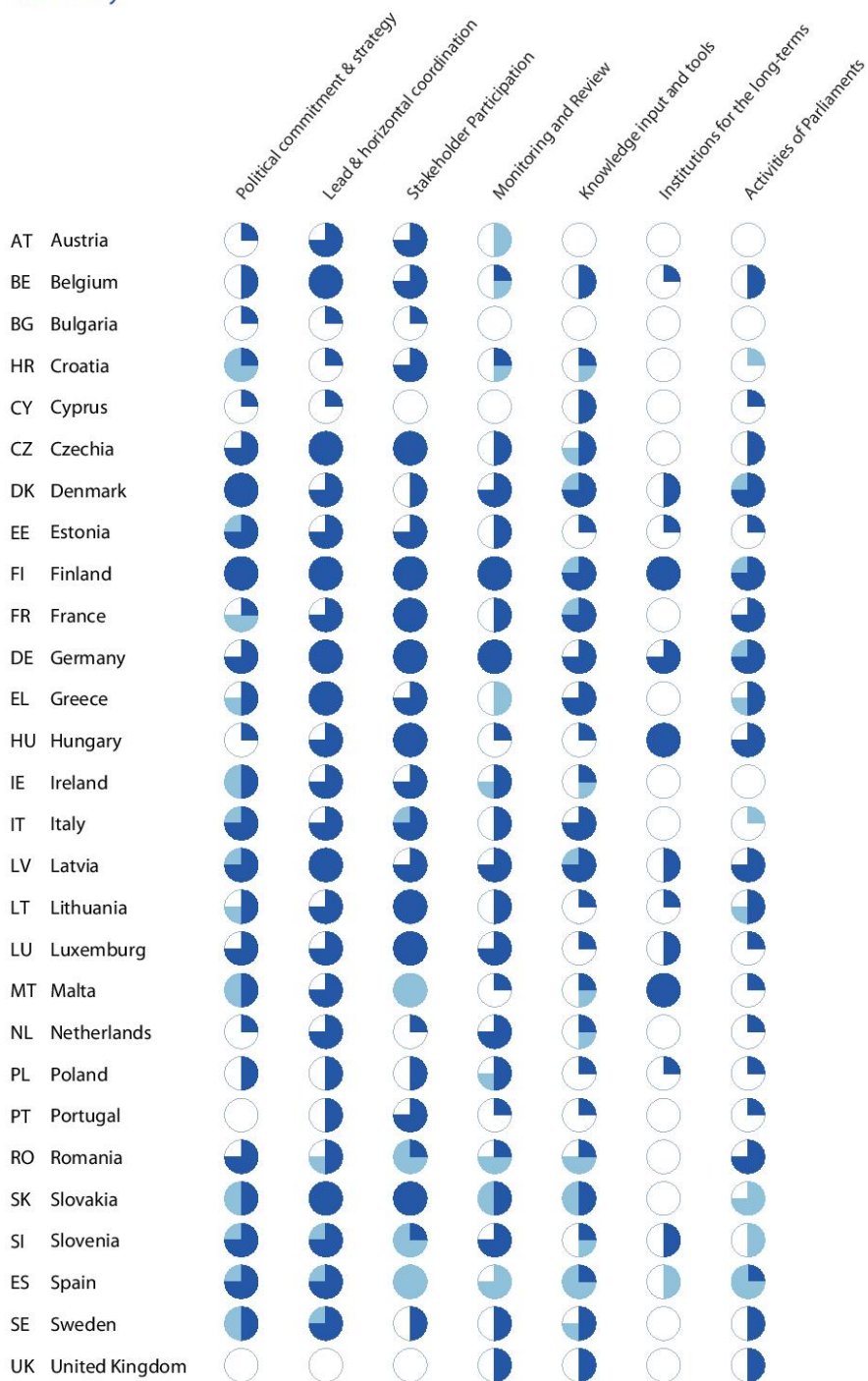
incorporated in governance architectures. We looked for a diverse range of strategies or policies, or new institutions that were understood to address this issue. Institutions, which deal with a long-term perspective, can be either 'future-focused', as in designed specifically about the future, or 'future-beneficial', related in some way to the future.

Graded with 0 points were such countries without any priority on future issues, a 1 point was awarded to those that stated a priority but undertook no steps. The 3 points went to countries that took measures but without an institutionalization and 4 points to countries with an explicit institutionalization of long-term future dimensions.

We identified that 13 Member States use a diverse range of mechanisms to try to account for the long-term perspective. These ranged across a wide spectrum of institutional settings and demonstrate varying amounts of institutionalization. Out of these, 4 (Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia and Poland) recognized the importance without further action taken, 4 others (Belgium, Denmark, Luxemburg and Slovenia) have developed at least one additional measure to facilitate a long term perspective. Germany has an institution with a specific remit, focus, or explicit priority for the consideration of a long-term perspective within an existing mechanism or structure in its Parliamentary Advisory Committee for Sustainable Development. This example demonstrates the way in which a long-term perspective can be anchored within the governance system without designing new institutions which might be too politically sensitive or require too many additional resources. Three Member States have developed institutions, which hold the specific remit of facilitating a focus on the long term in governance and sustainable development (Malta, Hungary and Finland).

One of the fundamental problems in governance is how to overcome the typical political short-termism of democratic systems to be able to sufficiently adhere to the underlying principle of sustainable development. This problem is crucially for policy coherence because we consider short-term targets for some sectors (economic, labor, etc.) and long term targets for others (environment). And one conclusion is that while specific institutions, can help to raise the priority of long-term thinking and inject some amount of influence on the policymaking process, as long as institutions such as this remain siloed their impact will remain limited.

Summary



Concept Ingeborg Niestroy | Design Katja Derr

■ implemented ■ planned

SDG implementation at EU level

In the full study for the European Parliament, we look at EU level activities and processes related to Agenda 2030 by the European Commission, Council of the European Union, European Parliament, and their main advisory bodies, the European Economic and Social Committee, and the Committee of the Regions, and provide a comprehensive overview per institution on a timeline from 2014 until 2018/2019. In this summary, we skip this, and refer to the original study. We do however present here the analysis of governance mechanisms at EU level for which we used the analytical framework as applied for the Member States.

Horizontal coordination and lead responsibility

The Commission is often commended for its explicit horizontal coordination approach which is more elaborated than in some Member States. The fact that the Commission is a College with makes joint decisions is favorable in this regard. In addition, the Commission is less political than national governments, hence less prone to short-termism and more time is dedicated to fact-finding. There is a clear lead role in the Commission (Note: we refer her to the Juncker Commission that was in function at the time of the study) with the First Vice-President assigned as horizontal coordinator for sustainable development at the political level. The Commission's coordination approach is hence more centralized than in most Member States where sectoral Ministers tend to have more a decision-making. The strong central control has the advantage of clarity of responsibility, but typically such situations are not beneficial to creating ownership in the policy departments, and there might be less of a balancing of interests. At the working level, so-called interservice groups are set up for cross-sectoral topics, which are led by the responsible directorates-general (DG) and open to all others. The Impact Assessment system helps ensuring that – and structuring how – different policy objectives can be weighed, made compatible and where conflicts arise, are reconciliated. Such an interservice group was also formed for the SDGs, with the Secretariat-General in the lead, which meets infrequently

In November 2017, the Council established an institutional innovation for horizontal coordination to bring together the external and domestic dimension in the form of a dedicated Council Working Party on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It aims to ensure proper follow-up, monitoring and review of the implementation at EU level, across internal and external policy sectors, of commitments under the 2030 Agenda. Its recommendations are forwarded to the General Affairs Council (GAC).

Since 2006, the EESC has an institutional arrangement for sustainable development in the form of the Sustainable Development Observatory. This body is more deliberative and does not have a horizontal coordination function – although there may be scope for such a function. The chair of the SDO participates on behalf of the EESC in the Commission's Multi-Stakeholder Platform. In the CoR, opinions on sustainable development issues are generally coordinated by the Commission for Economic Policy (ECON), which participates on behalf of the CoR in the MSP.

Vertical coordination

Agenda 2030 calls for a partnership approach to implement the SDGs; not only between public administration, business and civil society, but also among public institutions. The latter implies that the traditional coordination between different levels of administration should be supplemented with collaborative mechanisms. The EU and its Member States are a multi-level configuration with the 'acquis communautaire' including the Treaties providing a governance framework. For areas with limited EU competences, but the desire or need to coordinate and collaborate, coordination mechanisms are typically more inspired by soft law partnership approaches. A meanwhile well-established approach is the Open method of Coordination (OMC) as introduced in the Lisbon Strategy of the EU (2000) for economic policies. The key examples of SDG-relevant OMC-type two-level collaboration are the European Semester cycle of economic and social governance and the biannual Environmental Implementation Review process, together covering the three dimensions of sustainable development.

Stakeholder engagement

The European Commission has a long-standing tradition and experience with organizing public consultation on new policy and legislative proposals, even more extensive and earlier in the process since the introduction of its Impact Assessment mechanism some 15 years ago. In general, the Commission's level of public consultation is probably higher than in most Member States. The involvement of the public usually takes the form of online consultations, while broad dialogue meetings and alike – as have been conducted in Member States on Agenda 2030 – are missing.

Stakeholders are also involved in Commission expert groups in personal capacity or representing their organisations. Besides the many expert groups focusing on a specific policy area or piece of legislation, there are high-level expert groups advising on more strategic and cross-cutting themes (such as the High-Level Group on Sustainable Finance). Also, the Commission's Multi-Stakeholder Platform on SDGs is an example of the latter category. It is meant to support and advise the Commission on SDG implementation, as well as to promote exchange of best practice between different stakeholders.

The EESC, an EU institution that is established as 'the institution of organized civil society', offers a venue for broad debate and is very active in sustainable development, in particular through its Sustainable Development Observatory (SDO). The SDO is a cross-cutting body that aims to tackle sustainable development policies in a horizontal way and brings together people and organizations from a wide variety of interests and backgrounds that would otherwise seldom meet, in order to connect and explore new ways to address sustainable development issues.

The CoR represents the interests of regions and municipalities, who are essential links in the multi-level governance chain that prepares and implements EU policies and legislation. The members of the EESC and CoR are appointed by the Member States according to nationally determined processes. The institutional design of both advisory bodies does not ensure an effective exchange of good practices and encountered obstacles. Besides EESC and CoR, there are multiple networks of cities, regions, capitals, environmental and social NGOs, and business organizations advocating

for their concerns and interests in the Brussels arena. EESC and CoR offer a welcome venue and platform.

The European Parliament has established the good practice to invite stakeholder representatives to hearings, which precede the political debates on draft resolutions - and similarly many national parliaments. If this is done in a transparent way, it is a good practice for two reasons: it brings together specific expertise and ideas, and it creates an inclusive culture of dialogue on the SDGs.

Monitoring and review

Monitoring of SDG implementation at EU level is so far done with the Eurostat's annual indicator reports. Civil society groups, the EESC, the European Parliament, and the Multi-Stakeholder Platform criticized some key methodological aspects of the Eurostat report. The main deficit of the report, however, is rooted outside of the remit of Eurostat, namely in the fact that for many areas there are no EU targets.

Monitoring is best organized in a cyclical process and embedded in a dedicated governance framework. This is the case for the European Semester, which enables the EU member countries to coordinate their economic policies throughout the year and address the economic challenges facing the EU. While it was created for monitoring the implementation of the Europe 2020 strategy, which covers in principle the three dimensions of sustainable development, it has become increasingly narrow and focused on macro-economic aspects. There have been (repeated) attempts from several sides to widen it again, but the success has remained limited (inter alia, as it has been used as tool in the efforts to overcome the financial crisis). Since 2017, the economic focus of the Semester is broadened with a social dimension.

As it is a well-established governance mechanism, the Semester is an obvious instrument for monitoring the implementation of the SDGs. All involved actors, apart from the Commission, are recommending this and preferably would like to see it to be transformed into a Sustainability Review. There are also proposals for the formation of a new Sustainable Development Council to be placed between sectoral Councils and the European Council and composed of Ministers who are domestically in charge of SDG policy coherence.

Knowledge and tools

All three aspects of knowledge and tools considered in this study are relevant at the EU level. The EU's Impact Assessment (IA) system, which was introduced after the first EU Sustainable Development Strategy, is a globally appreciated merge of regulatory IA and sustainability IA. The EU is still considered a global leader on sustainability, but its own IA guidelines and IA practice are now lagging behind: economic impacts and considerations dominate environmental and social impacts and considerations.

An opportunity at the EU level to link the SDGs with the budgeting process is the ongoing negotiation on the Multi-Annual Financial Framework (MFF) 2020-2027. The High-Level Expert Group on Sustainable Finance, a temporary expert group established in 2016 to provide advice to the Commission, recommended to apply a 'think sustainability first' principle for EU policy-

making and in impact assessments. On the NGOs side, the 'People's Budget' campaign also asks for such a sustainability check in the budget process. None of this has materialized so far.

Efforts to improve the science-policy interface are partly covered under stakeholder participation, with the various high-level groups advising the Commission. The Commission also has its own 'in-house think tank', the European Policy Strategy Centre, which provides the President and the College with strategic, evidence-based analysis and forward-looking policy advice. Furthermore, the Commission has its in-house research service, the Joint Research Centre, which conducts applied research and tools on demand of the policy DGs and on its own initiative, with the motto: 'We are doing science for policy'.

Long-term orientation

There are no dedicated institutions or mechanisms to guard the long-term at EU level, but there is a tradition to work with comprehensive 10-year strategies such as The Lisbon Strategy and the Europe 2020 Strategy. Scenario techniques are increasingly used during policy preparation, with the JRC having developed supporting tools and expertise. Political discontinuity is a challenge for long-term orientation. Similarly, as was argued for the horizontal coordination, the Commission has a benefit over most Member States in that it historically – also because of institutional arrangements – has been significantly less prone to frequent or radical shifts in policy directions.

Role of Parliaments

In our study, we undertook an extensive review of the role of parliaments in relation to Agenda 2030 and present findings from the country level analysis on the activities of national parliaments to integrate Agenda 2030 in their work, and address what the European Parliament has done so far. We also discuss how the inter-parliamentary collaboration could be used and improved for Agenda 2030, and how the European Parliament could support national parliaments in their role in SDG implementation.

Parliaments in light of Agenda 2030 have three key roles and powers: A legislative function, budgetary power, and scrutiny and monitoring. The integration principle of the SDGs is more challenging for parliaments than for governments. This because the hierarchical structures within political groups or parties in parliament and the role of 'party whip', is much less forceful in comparison to hierarchical structures in the executive branch – although this differs quite much in different political cultures. In addition, the institutional setup and processes of parliaments is in general not structured in favor of overarching issues as the ones needed for sustainable development. Parliaments are typically structured around two axes: One along the political groups / fractions, and a second along the thematic committees, which more or less mirror the structure of the government.

Dealing with overarching issues requires leadership, and horizontal and vertical coordination. The 'problem' in parliaments (incl. European Parliament), is that they do not have a leadership on substance. There is typically a President or Speaker, but that role is representational and managerial. While substantive coordination mechanisms exist, these are often rather on procedure than on substance, different from comparable mechanism in government.

As in the analysis of Member States and the EU, our assessment of the parliaments follows the same approach and grades the three most relevant functions of parliaments: Putting the SDGs on the agenda and organizing a debate, often as one-off (1 point), placing one or two committees in charge of SDGs (2 points), establishing new institutional arrangement (3 points), and applying tools for one or more functions (scrutiny, legislative, budget) in a systematic way (4 points).

The systematic 4 points approach is currently only undertaken or planned in Germany, Finland, Denmark (and previously Latvia). In 22 national parliaments there have been efforts, in three countries there are planned activities (Croatia, Slovakia, Slovenia), and the three remaining national parliaments have no recognizable activities or plans (Austria, Bulgaria, Ireland). Overall, it can be said that the activities of parliaments have clearly increased since the adoption of the SDGs. The lowest degree of institutional response to Agenda 2030 by parliaments was found in six countries (Cyprus, Estonia, Luxemburg, Malta, Netherlands, Portugal), and one with plans (Croatia). Some countries mentioned that, for example, the VNR was discussed in the parliament, in plenary (Denmark), explicitly in two chambers (Czechia, and Spain), or in joint committee meetings (Belgium). More steps are taken in about seven countries (and planned in Slovenia). The case of one or more existing committees taking responsibility for Agenda 2030 applies to five countries (Czechia, Finland, France, Sweden, and UK), and more regular joint committee meetings or an explicit obligation to integrate the SDGs in all policy areas in two (Belgium and Greece).

There are clearly more activities of parliaments on Agenda 2030 than was the case for sustainable development before the adoption of Agenda 2030 and the Hungarian example for instance confirms the hypothesis that a certain degree of institutionalization provides for some continuity. There is little systematic approach to dealing with the SDGs in parliaments throughout the three functions of parliaments but parliaments also have, if they want, room for innovation and experiments.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Europe's approach to implementing the Sustainable Development Goals: good practices and the way forward" is the first study that not only compares but also assesses SDG implementation processes and governance mechanisms in all EU Member States. One of our main findings is that most EU countries have launched new strategies, coordination mechanisms and stakeholder participation processes for SDG implementation but that they need to go operational now and link strategies to their national budget. When it comes to monitoring, many countries have revised their indicators with the SDGs but only very few countries go as far as organizing an independent progress review.

We have also looked at parliament activities. An increasing number of parliaments have special committees or initiatives related to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Challenges remain when it comes to overcoming the silos of Committees and more tools could be invented to improve scrutiny and monitoring to advance SDGs.

At the EU level, we can say that the European Commission has not fulfilled its intention to mainstream the SDGs in all policies. As we have originally recommended in our study, the European Semester for economic monitoring presents a useful two-level governance mechanism

that could be harnessed for advancing the SDGs in a holistic manner. It is therefore a welcome development that the new Commissioner for the Economy is now in charge of coordinating the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in the context of the European Semester cycle of economic governance.

When we look at all the governance dimensions, we have analyzed and assessed in this study, we see a mixed picture when it comes to SDG implementation processes in the Member States, with an overall positive impression.

When it comes to commitment and strategy, only two countries have no overarching cross-sectoral strategy, six countries have one but without a recent update. Most of these countries plan to revise their sustainable development strategies or development plans with the SDGs. Seventeen countries already have updated national strategies. Only in around half of all the Member States, these strategies appear to be actually operational. And so far, only a few countries go as far as to link their overarching strategy to the national budget or to a financing plan.

Regarding leadership and horizontal coordination, half of the countries have put in place visible coordination mechanisms with clear engagements across all departments and often have moved SDG implementation leadership to the center of government. Most countries still struggle, however, to put in place effective coordination mechanisms between the external and internal dimension of SDG implementation.

Stakeholder participation varies widely between Member States. At the same time, it is the governance element where the highest number of countries, namely 8, rank in the highest category of the assessment scheme, i.e. where stakeholder participation is highly institutionalized and frequent. Extensive efforts are done to make SDG implementation processes inclusive in most countries. However, there are still two countries that show no signs of stakeholder participation (for Agenda 2030).

Concerning monitoring and review, most countries rank in category 2, which means that they have regular progress reports, and that they have updated their indicator set with the SDGs. Only a few countries have defined quantified, time bound targets to achieve the SDGs nationally (category 3), and only two countries have put in place an independent, external review mechanism. The independence of review mechanisms would be an important improvement of quality and an opportunity to stimulate public debate around SDG progress.

Knowledge and tools and Institutions for the long term seem to be the areas where countries are the least advanced. When it comes to the input of scientific knowledge through science-policy interface and tools like sustainability impact assessments or sustainability checks for national budgets, only a few countries have put more than one tool in place and most countries have only created very light versions of it. Institutions for the long term are not a priority in the vast majority of countries.

Finally, regarding activities of parliaments for the 2030 Agenda, we again see quite a variety. There is about an equal number of countries that have so far only organized parliamentary debates on SDGs, and those that have one or two committees dealing with the Agenda 2030 or have created

new institutional arrangements. To include the SDGs in all core parliamentary functions - to scrutinize implementation of the SDGs, to integrate them in legislation and in the budget, is still the exception.

Chapter 3

The Misaligned SDG targets: how to handle target dates before 2030

By Felix Dodds, Jamie Bartram and Gastón Ocampo

Abstract

Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted by the 193 Member States of the United Nations in September 2015. It includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are accompanied by 169 targets, 107 of which are considered output targets and 62 are designated ‘means of implementation’.

While the SDGs are associated with the period 2016 – 2030, twenty-three targets (14%) have dates for completion before 2030. For twenty of those targets the date is 2020 and for the remaining three it is 2025. The affected targets are associated with 232 individual indicators. Not addressing the issues that arise because of this has the potential to create two classes of targets.

In most cases other UN processes will recommend continuation, modification, abandonment or replacement of expiring targets outside the SDG framework. The updating of targets outside the SDG framework and therefore the emergence of two classes of targets has the potential to threaten the overall cohesion of the SDG enterprise; and there is some risk that resources will benefit one class of targets, those within the SDG framework, over the other, regardless of whether target conditions have been achieved.

The time window to prepare for the earliest-expiring target (2020) is short. We identify four option-types and summarize their pros and cons. None is perfect and some blend of them may be preferable. For all affected targets, monitoring is in hand within the SDG framework and in several cases established or potential processes would facilitate analysis and decision making as to abandonment, renewal, modification or replacement of targets and associated indicators.

“Sustainable development is the pathway to the future we want for all. It offers a framework to generate economic growth, achieve social justice, exercise environmental stewardship and strengthen governance.” (Ban, 2013)

Introduction

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the predecessors to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), were not adopted through a single intergovernmental agreement. The Millennium Declaration (UN, 2000), adopted at the Millennium Summit in 2000, contained a statement of values, principles and objectives for the international community for the twenty-first century. The UN Administrative Coordination Committee (ACC) of the UN Secretary General, now known as the United Nations System Chief Executives Board (CEB), set up an interagency committee to develop the outcomes from the Millennium Summit into what became the MDGs and their associated targets and indicators (UN, 2001).

The MDGs were established for the period 2001 to 2015 and, according to the final MDG Report: “the 15-year effort has produced the most successful anti-poverty movement in

history:

- “Since 1990, the number of people living in extreme poverty has declined by more than half.
- “The proportion of undernourished people in the developing regions has fallen by almost half.
- “The primary school enrolment rate in the developing regions has reached 91 percent, and many more girls are now in school compared to 15 years ago.
- “Remarkable gains have also been made in the fight against HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis.
- “The under-five mortality rate has declined by more than half, and maternal mortality is down 45 percent worldwide.
- “The target of halving the proportion of people who lack access to improved sources of water was also met.” (UNDP, 2015)

Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted by the 193 Member States of the United Nations in September 2015. It includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), accompanied by 169 targets, 107 of which are considered output targets and 62 are designated ‘means of implementation’.

One of the critical differences between how the MDGs and SDGs were developed was that the SDGs emerged from a global consultation involving governments, UN Agencies and Programmes, and stakeholders. The process included two high level panels set up by the UN Secretary General.

One of these, the High-Level Panel on Global Sustainability, established in August 2010 and publishing its report, *Resilient People, Resilient Planet: A Future Worth Choosing* in January 2012 as input to the UN Conference on Sustainable Development - known as Rio+20, recommended that:

“Governments should agree to develop a set of key universal sustainable development goals, covering all three dimensions of sustainable development as well as their interconnections. Such goals should galvanize individual and collective action and complement the Millennium Development Goals, while allowing for a post-2015 framework. An expert mechanism should be established by the Secretary-General to elaborate and refine the goals before their adoption by United Nations Member States.” (UN, 2012)

The second high-level panel was the Secretary-General's High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, set up in July 2012 and which reported on the 30th of May 2013 put forward some suggestions about what those SDGs might look like and proposed 12 goals which will be found in Table 1.

The Rio+20 Conference held in June 2012 played a critical role in establishing the argument for the SDGs. The establishment of the Open Working Group (OWG) is outlined in the Rio+20 outcome document titled “The Future We Want” was poignant in the creation of the SDGs:

“248. We resolve to establish an inclusive and transparent intergovernmental process on

sustainable development goals that is open to all stakeholders, with a view to developing global sustainable development goals to be agreed by the General Assembly. An open working group shall be constituted no later than at the opening of the sixty-seventh session of the Assembly and shall comprise thirty representatives, nominated by Member States from the five United Nations regional groups, with the aim of achieving fair, equitable and balanced geographical representation. At the outset, this open working group will decide on its methods of work, including developing modalities to ensure the full involvement of relevant stakeholders and expertise from civil society, the scientific community and the United Nations system in its work, in order to provide a diversity of perspectives and experience. It will submit a report, to the Assembly at its sixty-eighth session, containing a proposal for sustainable development goals for consideration and appropriate action.” (UN, 2012)

The Open Working Group would have 70 countries sharing the 30 seats and would meet 13 times to agree 17 goals and 169 targets. In 2015 the formal work of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) would then absorb these into the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which Heads of State would agree to in September 2015.

During this whole process there was also the most extensive input the UN has seen from stakeholder conferences, workshops and reports – all of these informing Member States as they started to negotiate. There were a number of key reports that in addition to the High-Level Panel put forward a set of suggested Sustainable Development Goals.

Perhaps the most significant event was the United Nations Department of Public Information 64th Non-Governmental Conference held in Bonn in September 2011 called Sustainable Communities Responsive Citizens. The conference occurred only two months after Colombia had proposed the idea of the SDGs at an intergovernmental workshop in Solo, Indonesia. The UNDPI NGO Conference proposed 17 sustainable development goals. These can be seen in Table 1.

The other major contribution was through the Sustainable Development Solution Network (SDSN). The SDSN has been operating since 2012 under the auspices of the UN Secretary-General. SDSN mobilizes global scientific and technological expertise to promote practical solutions for sustainable development, including the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Climate Agreement. Its report published in June 2013, *An Action Agenda for Sustainable Development*, suggested 10 SDGs – see Table 1.

TABLE 1: Sustainable Development Goals

| Sustainable Development Goals – 17 Goals September 2015 (UN, 2015) | Sustainable Development Solution Network – 10 Goals June 2013 (SDSN, 2013) | High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda - 12 Goals May 2013 (UN, 2013) | UN Department of Public Information NGO Conference - 17 Goals September 2011 (UNDPI, 2011) |
|---|---|--|--|
| 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere | 1. End extreme poverty and hunger | 1. End Poverty | 1. Sustainable Livelihoods, Youth & Education |
| 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture | 2. Increase agricultural production in an environmentally sustainable manner, to achieve food security and rural prosperity | 2. Ensure Food Security and Good Nutrition | 2. Sustainable Agriculture |
| 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages | 3. Achieve health and wellbeing at all ages | 3. Ensure Healthy Lives | 3. Basic Health |
| 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all | 4. Ensure learning for all children and youth | 4. Provide Quality Education and Lifelong Learning | |
| 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls | 5. Achieve gender equality and reduce inequalities | 5. Empower Girls and Women and Achieve Gender Equality | |
| 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all | | 6. Achieve Universal Access to Water and Sanitation | 4. Water: |
| 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all | 6. Curb human-induced climate change with sustainable energy | 7. Secure Sustainable Energy | 5. Clean Energy |
| 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all | | 8. Create Jobs, Sustainable Livelihoods and Equitable Growth | 6. Subsidies and Investment: |
| 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation | | 9. Create a Global Enabling Environment | |
| 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries | | | 7. New Indicators of Progress: 8. Environmental Justice for The Poor and Marginalised |
| 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable | 7. Make cities productive and environmentally sustainable | | 9. Green Cities |
| 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns | 8. Achieve development and prosperity for all without ruining the environment | | 10. Sustainable Consumption and Production |
| 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts* | | | 11. Climate Sustainability |

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| 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development | | | 12. Healthy Seas and Oceans (Blue Economy) |
| 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 | 9. Protect ecosystems and ensure sound management of natural resources | 10. Manage Natural Resource Assets Sustainably | 13. Biodiversity 14. Healthy Forests |
| 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 | 10. Improve governance and align business behavior with all the goals | 11. Ensure Good Governance and Effective Institutions 12. Ensure Stable and Peaceful Societies | 15. Access to Redress and Remedy 16. Public Participation 17. Access to Information |
| 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development | | | |

The 2030 Agenda recognized and honored several processes that were parallel to or preceded the SDG negotiations. These included the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (UN, 2015); the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (UN, 2015); the existing target in the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) for the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) (UN, 2002), and targets agreed in the processes around the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity's Aichi Biodiversity Targets for the period 2011-2020 (CBD, 2010).

While the SDGs are associated with the period 2016 – 2030, twenty-three targets (14%) originating in these other processes have dates for completion before 2030. For twenty of the targets it is 2020 and for the remaining three it is 2025. While processes that will lead to recommendations concerning some of these are underway, there is no consistent approach to decision-making about their continuation, modification, abandonment or replacement within the 2030 Agenda.

In this paper we describe the targets affected, review how analogous circumstances have been handled previously and describe the principal options available to policy makers. The paper is based on consultations with Member States, the UN system and stakeholders. We hope to assist Member States thinking and options they might have how to address these targets.

Status of affected goals and targets

Table 1 lists the affected goals and targets, summarises associated monitoring and reporting activities, and notes for which targets a process to deliberate on post-target date activity has been identified. While five of the affected targets are nominally MoI (4b, 8b, 9c, 11b, 13a) their wordings more closely resemble outcome targets (Bartram, Bradley, Muller and Evans, 2018).

All of the affected targets are subjects of monitoring and reporting. However, baseline information was available on the United Nation's Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform to inform the initial formulation of the SDGs and associated targets (UN, 2016). The availability of the associated insights and of experience accrued with the monitoring efforts themselves will give Member States baseline data and information on progress to inform discussion and to assist in determining whether these targets and their associated indicators should be continued, modified, abandoned or replaced with new ones.

Adoption of indicators for SDG targets was overseen by the United Nations Statistical Commission which “*created the Inter-agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDGs), composed of Member States and including regional and international agencies as observers. The IAEG-SDGs was tasked to develop and implement the global indicator framework for the Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda. The global indicator framework was developed by the IAEG-SDGs and agreed upon, including refinements on several indicators, at the 48th session of the United Nations Statistical Commission held in March 2017.*” (UN 2018). This framework was adopted by the UN General Assembly (UN, 2018). The indicators are classified into three tiers:

Tier 1: Indicator is conceptually clear, has an internationally established methodology and

standards are available, and data are regularly produced by countries for at least 50 per cent of countries and of the population in every region where the indicator is relevant.

Tier 2: Indicator is conceptually clear, has an internationally established methodology and standards are available, but data are not regularly produced by countries.

Tier 3: No internationally established methodology or standards are yet available for the indicator, but methodology/standards are being (or will be) developed or tested. (UN, 2017)

There are 244 indicators however nine of the indicators are repeated under two or three targets so there are only 232 unique indicators. Of the 232 indicators associated with the affected targets 93, 66 and 68 are Tier I, II and III respectively.

TABLE 2: SDG Goals and targets with target dates for completion other than 2030; associated monitoring and reporting and plans for management of the interim period

| GOAL | TARGET | ADDITIONAL INFORMATION | PROCESS PLANNED AS OF JANUARY 2018 | INDICATOR TIER |
|--|---|---|------------------------------------|---|
| Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture | 2.1 By 2020, maintain the genetic diversity of seeds, cultivated plants and farmed and domesticated animals and their related wild species, including through soundly managed and diversified seed and plant banks at the national, regional and international levels, and promote access to and fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge, as internationally agreed. | | Nothing planned | TIER I 2.1.1 Prevalence of undernourishment 2.1.2 Prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity in the population, based on the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES) |
| | 2.2 By 2030, end all forms of malnutrition, including achieving, by 2025, the internationally agreed targets on stunting and wasting in children under 5 years of age, and address the nutritional needs of adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women and older persons | | Nothing planned | TIER I 2.2.1 Prevalence of stunting (height for age <-2 standard deviation from the median of the World Health Organization (WHO) Child Growth Standards) among children under 5 years of age 2.2.2 Prevalence of malnutrition (weight for height >+2 or <-2 standard deviation from the median of the WHO Child Growth Standards) among children under 5 years of age, by type (wasting and overweight) |
| Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all | 3.6 By 2020, halve the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents | The new United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) resolution reiterates the call to intensify national, regional and international collaboration, with a view to meeting the ambitious road safety-related targets in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. | UNGA resolution A/72/L.48 | TIER I 3.6.1 Death rate due to road traffic injuries |
| Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all | 4.b By 2020, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States and African countries, for enrolment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programmes, in developed countries and other developing countries. | | Nothing planned | TIER I 4.b.1 Volume of official development assistance flows for scholarships by sector and type of study |
| Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable | 6.6 By 2020, protect and restore water related ecosystems, including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and lakes | | | TIER II |

| | | | | |
|--|--|--|-------------------------------------|---|
| management of water and sanitation for all | | | | 6.6.1 Change in the extent of water-related ecosystems over time |
| Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all | 8.6 By 2020, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training | | Nothing planned | TIER I 8.6.1 Proportion of youth (aged 15–24 years) not in education, employment or training |
| | 8.7 Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms | | Nothing -planned | TIER II 8.7.1 Proportion and number of children aged 5–17 years engaged in child labour, by sex and age |
| | 8.b By 2020, develop and operationalize a global strategy for youth employment and implement the Global Jobs Pact of the International Labour Organization | | Nothing planned | TIER III 8.b.1 Existence of a developed and operationalized national strategy for youth employment, as a distinct strategy or as part of a national employment strategy |
| | 9.c Significantly increase access to information and communications | | Nothing planned | TIER I |
| Goal 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation | technology and strive to provide universal and affordable access to the Internet in least developed countries by 2020 | | | 9.c.1 Proportion of population covered by a mobile network, by technology |
| Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable | 11.b By 2020, substantially increase the number of cities and human settlements adopting and implementing integrated policies and plans towards inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters, and develop and implement, in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, holistic disaster risk management at all levels | | Nothing planned | TIER I 11.b.1 Number of countries that adopt and implement national disaster risk reduction strategies in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 |
| | | | | TIER II 11.b.2 Proportion of local governments that adopt and implement local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with national disaster risk reduction strategies |
| | 12.4 By 2020, achieve the environmentally sound management of | | Strategic Approach to International | TIER I |

| | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|--|
| Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns | chemicals and all wastes throughout their life cycle, in accordance with agreed international frameworks, and significantly reduce their release to air, water and soil in order to minimize their adverse impacts on human health and the environment | | Chemicals Management (SAICM) Conference in 2020 The second meeting of the intersessional process was held in Stockholm, Sweden, from 13 to 15 March 2018, hosted by the Government of Sweden. In this meeting, the Strategic Approach towards 2020 and beyond was discussed the third meeting will be in early 2019. | 12.4.1 Number of parties to international multilateral environmental agreements on hazardous waste, and other chemicals that meet their commitments and obligations in transmitting information as required by each relevant agreement TIER III 12.4.2 Hazardous waste generated per capita and proportion of hazardous waste treated, by type of treatment |
| Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts | 13 a. Implement the commitment undertaken by developed country parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to a goal of mobilizing jointly \$100 billion annually by 2020 from all sources to address the needs of developing countries in the context of meaningful mitigation actions and transparency on implementation and fully operationalize the Green Climate Fund through its capitalization as soon as possible | UNFCCC Paris text | 53. Oceans Conference is 2020? | TIER III 13.a.1 Mobilized amount of United States dollars per year between 2020 and 2025 accountable towards the \$100 billion commitment |
| Goal 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development | 14.1 By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution | Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) 8: "Goal 8. Maintain capacity of ecosystems to deliver goods and services and support livelihoods - Target 8.1: Capacity of ecosystems to deliver goods and services maintained - Target 8.2: Biological resources that support sustainable livelihoods , local food security, and health care, especially of poor people maintained." | CBD in 2018 in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt will discuss preparation for the follow-up to the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. The new targets will be set at the CBD meeting in China in 2020. | TIER III 14.1.1 Index of coastal eutrophication and floating plastic debris density |

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|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 14.2 By 2020, sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts, including by strengthening their resilience, and take action for their restoration in order to achieve healthy and productive oceans | Combined elements from CBD 6,11,15 | CBD in 2018 in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt will discuss preparation for the follow-up to the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. The new targets will be set at the CBD meeting in China in 2020. | TIER III 14.2.1 Proportion of national exclusive economic zones managed using ecosystem-based approaches |
| | 14.4 By 2020, effectively regulate harvesting and end overfishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and destructive fishing practices and implement science-based management plans, in order to restore fish stocks in the shortest time feasible, at least to levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield as determined by their biological characteristics | Elements from CBD 2,3,4,6,7,12,19 | CBD in 2018 in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt will discuss preparation for the follow-up to the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. The new targets will be set at the CBD meeting in China in 2020. | TIER I 14.4.1 Proportion of fish stocks within biologically sustainable levels |
| | 14.5 By 2020, conserve at least 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, consistent with national and international law and based on the best available scientific information | Elements from CBD 5,11 | CBD in 2018 in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt will discuss preparation for the follow-up to the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. The new targets will be set at the CBD meeting in China in 2020. | TIER I 14.5.1 Coverage of protected areas in relation to marine areas |
| | 14.6 By 2020, prohibit certain forms of fisheries subsidies which contribute to | Elements from CBD 3,4 | CBD in 2018 in Sharm El-Sheikh, | TIER II |
| | overcapacity and overfishing, eliminate subsidies that contribute to illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and refrain from introducing new such subsidies, recognizing that appropriate and effective special and differential treatment for developing and least developed countries should be an integral part of the World Trade Organization fisheries subsidies negotiation | | Egypt will discuss preparation for the follow-up to the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. The new targets will be set at the CBD meeting in China in 2020. | 14.6.1 Progress by countries in the degree of implementation of international instruments aiming to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing |
| Goal 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 | 15.1 By 2020, ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, in particular forests, wetlands, mountains and drylands, in line with obligations under international agreements | Elements from Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) 4,5,7,11,14,15 | CBD in 2018 in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt will discuss preparation for the follow-up to the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. The new targets will be set at the CBD meeting in China in 2020. | TIER I 15.1.1 Forest area as a proportion of total land area 15.1.2 Proportion of important sites for terrestrial and freshwater biodiversity that are covered by protected areas, by ecosystem type |
| | 15.2 By 2020, promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests and substantially increase afforestation and reforestation globally | Elements from CBD 4,5,7,14,15 | CBD in 2018 in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt will discuss preparation for the follow-up to the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. The new targets will be set at the CBD meeting in China in 2020. | TIER I 15.2.1 Progress towards sustainable forest management |
| | 15.5 Take urgent and significant action to reduce the degradation of natural | Elements CBD Target 4,5,15 | CBD in 2018 in Sharm El-Sheikh, | TIER I |

| | | | | |
|---|--|----------------------------|---|--|
| | habitats, halt the loss of biodiversity and, by 2020, protect and prevent the extinction of threatened species | | Egypt will discuss preparation for the follow-up to the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. The new targets will be set at the CBD meeting in China in 2020. | 15.5.1 Red List Index |
| | 15.8 By 2020, introduce measures to prevent the introduction and significantly reduce the impact of invasive alien species on land and water ecosystems and control or eradicate the priority species | Elements from CBD 11,14,15 | CBD in 2018 in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt will discuss preparation for the follow-up to the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. The new targets will be set at the CBD meeting in China in 2020. | TIER II 15.8.1 Proportion of countries adopting relevant national legislation and adequately resourcing the prevention or control of invasive alien species |
| | 15.9 By 2020, integrate ecosystem and biodiversity values into national and local planning, development processes, poverty reduction strategies and accounts | Elements CBD 5,12 | CBD in 2018 in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt will discuss preparation for the follow-up to the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. The new targets will be set at the CBD meeting in China in 2020. | TIER III 15.9.1 Progress towards national targets established in accordance with Aichi Biodiversity Target 2 of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 |
| Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development developed countries and small island developing States, to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts | 17.18 By 2020, enhance capacity building support to developing countries, including for least developed countries and small island developing States, to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts | | Nothing planned | TIER III 17.18.1 Proportion of sustainable development indicators produced at the national level with full disaggregation when relevant to the target, in accordance with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics TIER II 17.18.2 Number of countries that have national statistical legislation that complies with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics TIER I 17.18.3 Number of countries with a national statistical plan that is fully funded and under implementation, by source of funding |

To help in the development and assimilation of new forms of data to support better indicators and monitoring, the UN Secretary General set up an Independent Expert Advisory Group on a Data Revolution for Sustainable Development. It presented its report “A World That Counts” in November 2014. One of its recommendations was the establishment of a “*World Forum on Sustainable Development Data to bring together the whole data ecosystem to share ideas and experiences for data improvements, innovation, advocacy and technology transfer.*” (UN, 2014).

This initiative was embraced by the UN Statistical Commission as a platform for intensifying cooperation with professional groups, such as information technology, geospatial information managers, data scientists, users and stakeholders.

The first United Nations World Data Forum was hosted from 15 to 18 January 2017 by Statistics South Africa in Cape Town, South Africa. The second was hosted by the Federal Competitiveness and Statistics Authority of the United Arab Emirates from 22 to 24 October 2018 in Dubai.

Comprehensive review of indicators will happen in stepwise, in 2020 and in 2024 after the Heads of State Reviews of progress in delivering the SDGs in 2019 and 2023 (Institute for European Environmental Policy, 2018).

Options Analysis

Identifying a future course of action for each affected target will depend in part on SDG-wide policies and approaches; and in part on target-specific context, such as the existence of a treaty or other process. Alignment between these two influences will vary target-by-target.

One of us (FD) consulted the UN Agencies and Programmes listed in Table 2 and presented an earlier version of this table to the government Friends of Governance for Sustainable Development (FGSD, 2017) workshop on November 2nd 2017 to solicit their thinking on what to do with the affected targets. The four-principal option-types, there and associated principal advantages and disadvantages, and target-specific options described here are synthesized from that process.

Option 1: That no updated targets will be added to the SDGs to replace those that have expired and monitoring and reporting will conclude at the date of the target.

Pros: The agreement on the SDGs and their targets was one that had balanced the interests of all Member States and reopening this could cause that balance to be fractured.

Cons: Some of the targets will be updated by other forums and so then there will be reflection of progress reported to the HLPF in line with the new target. This will be particularly relevant to the CBD and SAICM targets.

Option 2: That no updated targets will be added to the SDGs to replace those that have fallen but there will be continued monitoring of the indicators, and reporting on progress if the target conditions have not been achieved.

Pros: The agreement on the SDGs and their targets was one that had balanced the interests of all Member States and reopening this could cause that balance to be fractured. It also allows reporting on the targets even if other forums have changed them.

Cons: These not updated targets will not have been absorbed into the SDG targets and so it creates two classes of targets. One which is in the SDGs and one that isn't. In particular this is true for the CBD and SAICM targets. It may impact on the level of commitment to the new targets if they are not absorbed into the SDGs.

Option 3: Any updated target would need to be agreed through the UN General Assembly if it was to replace an expiring target.

Pros: This option recognizes that the UN General Assembly had agreed the SDGs and their targets so it is the only 'official body' that can update them.

Cons: This could see the whole agreement reopen unless Member States agree to recognize the agreements made in other forums. This still doesn't address the targets that do not have other forums to set new targets. In these cases, option 2 could continue.

Option 4: That any updated target agreed by a relevant UN body substitutes the old target without going through renegotiation in the UN General Assembly. Where there is no authoritative UN body then it is done through the UN General Assembly.

Pros: This would address all of the targets that are going to finish in 2020 and 2025

Cons: This would open up the SDG targets negotiations to Committee 2 of the UNGA to address those that have no plans to be replaced, and this could be a difficult negotiation.

| TABLE 3: Target-specific competencies (UN, 2018) (UN, 2015) | | | |
|--|--|----------------------|--|
| GOAL | TARGET | TARGET DATE | COMPETENT AGENCY |
| Goal 2 End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture | 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.a, 2.b, and 2.c | 2020 and mostly 2030 | The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) 2021 and The World Health Organization (WHO) |
| Goal 3 Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages | 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7, 3.8, 3.9, 3.a, 3.b, 3.c, and 3.d | 2020 and mostly 2030 | WHO, UN Population Division, The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), World Bank, The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS (UNAIDS), The Vaccine Alliance (GAVI), UN Habitat, and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) |
| Goal 4 Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning | 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.a, 4.b, and 4.c | 2020 and mostly 2030 | The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Governing Conference 2019 or 2021, UNICEF and World Bank |
| Goal 6 Ensure access to water and sanitation for all | 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5, 6.6, 6.a, and 6.b | 2020 and mostly 2030 | WHO/UNICEF (Joint Monitoring Programme), CBD, the Conference of the Parties (COP), FAO, and UNEP |
| Goal 8 Ensure access to water and sanitation for all | 8.1, 8.2, 8.3, 8.4, 8.5, 8.6, 8.7, 8.8, 8.9, 8.10, 8.a, and 8.b | 2020 and mostly 2030 | International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, The United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), and the International Labor Organization (ILO) |
| Goal 9 Build resilient infrastructure, promote sustainable industrialization and foster innovation | 9.1, 9.2, 9.3, 9.4, 9.5, 9.a, 9.b, and 9.c | 2020 and mostly 2030 | World Bank, International Telecommunication Union (ITU), The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), and Inter Agency Expert Group on the SDGs and the Statistical Commission |
| Goal 11 Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable | 11.1, 11.2, 11.3, 11.4, 11.5, 11.6, 11.7, 11.a, 11.b, and 11.c | 2020 and mostly 2030 | UN-Habitat, Global City Indicators Facility, World Bank, The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), FAO, WHO, CRED and World Conference on Disaster Relief (Possibly in 2025) |
| Goal 12 Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns | 12.1, 12.2, 12.3, 12.4, 12.5, 12.6, 12.7, 12.8, 12.a, 12.b, and 12.c | 2020 and mostly 2030 | The Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), UN Global Compact, FAO, UNEP's Ozone Secretariat, The World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD), The Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), The International Integrated Reporting Council (IIRC), and The Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICEM) |
| Goal 13 Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts | 13.1, 13.2, 13.3, 13.a, and 13.b | 2020 | The International Energy Agency (IEA), OECD's Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC), and The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) |

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| Goals 14 Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, marine resources | 14.1, 14.2, 14.3, 14.4, 14.5, 14.6, 2020, 2025, and 2030 14.7, 14.a, 14.b, and 14.c | | The UN Environment World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC), The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), FAO, CBD, and UNFCCC's Conference of the Parties |
| Goal 15 sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, halt biodiversity loss | 15.1, 15.2, 15.3, 15.4, 15.5, 15.6, 15.7, 15.8, 15.9, 15.a, 15.b, and 15.c | | |
| Goal 17 Revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development | 17.1, 17.2, 17.3, 17.4, 17.5, 17.6, 17.7, 17.8, 17.9, 17.10, 17.11, 17.12 17.13, 17.14, 17.15, 17.16, 17.17, 17.18, and 17.19 | Several steps to be undertaken until 2030 | IMF, OECD, OECD- DAC, The Bank for International Settlements (BIS), The International Accounting Standards Board (IASB), International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS), IMF, The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), WTO, United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), World Bank, Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN), and the Inter-Agency Expert Group on the SDGs and agreed through the Statistical Commission |

Conclusions

The existence of diverse target dates within the SDG package is a consequence of a process that recognized and honoured the diversity and richness of inputs to the SDG process and long-established mechanisms that pursue the SDG ambition. In most cases, there are processes that will recommend continuation, modification, abandonment or replacement of expiring targets. If this is outside the SDG machinery, it will see the emergence of two classes of indicators. This has the potential to threaten the overall cohesion of the SDG enterprise.

There is some risk that resources will benefit one class of targets over the other, regardless of whether target conditions have been achieved. Inaction will tend to favour this and the time window before preparations towards the earliest-expiring target (2020) is short. We identify four option-types and summarize their pros and cons. None is perfect and some blend-determined case-by-case may be preferable. For all affected targets monitoring is in hand and in several cases established or potential processes would facilitate analysis and decision making as to abandonment, renewal, modification or replacement of targets and associated indicators.

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Chapter 4

Options for the SDG Environment Targets Maturing In 2020

By Claire Blanchard

Introduction

In September 2015, the Member States of the United Nations agreed the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which includes the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs are 17 goals and 169 targets, which aim to achieve sustainable development in a balanced and integrated manner.

Most of the 169 targets have a deadline of 2030. However, 21 of these targets will mature in 2020 (or have no explicit deadline). The reasons for these 2020 deadlines vary but most of these targets are aligned with other UN agreements or plans which have 2020 timeframes.

In particular, there are 12 targets that integrate elements of the Aichi Biodiversity targets. The Aichi targets were agreed under the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and are set to end in 2020. In 2020, Parties to the CBD are expected to agree, at their 15th Conference in China, a new set of targets with a deadline of 2030.

Given that most of the SDG targets in question are lagging behind in progress and will most likely not be achieved by 2020 (UN, 2018), a clear process is required to extend efforts to 2030 and ensure the integrity of the overall SDG framework is maintained. Without a strong environmental pillar, we will not succeed in achieving Agenda 2030. Conversations on these targets need to start well ahead of 2020 to ensure buy-in from stakeholders and decision-makers.

This discussion paper provides an analysis of five potential options and relevant decision-making milestones for reviewing the 12 SDG targets which are linked to the Aichi biodiversity targets.

The 2020 environment targets are critical to the success of the SDGs

The 12 SDG environment targets (Note 1) maturing in 2020 fall within five goals: SDG 2 (Food security), SDG 6 (Water and Sanitation), SDG 12 (Consumption and Production), SDG 14 (Life in Water) and SDG 15 (Life on Land).

These targets are critical to the success of the SDGs because they ensure action on maintaining and restoring natural resources that we depend on to survive. The ecosystem services provided by nature, which underpin human survival and well-being, are at immense risk. Each year, around US\$125 trillion worth of ecosystem services are provided to the global economy through drinkable

water, food, fresh air, heat absorption, productive soil, and forests & oceans that soak up carbon dioxide (CO₂).

Given the value of these targets to the success of the SDGs, decisive action is needed. A clear decision-making process agreed by relevant parties is critical to ensure coherent transition on the targets maturing in 2020 so that they align with the ambition and deadline of the 2030 Agenda. Without effective engagement on the maturing 2020 environment targets, the delivery of all the other SDGs is threatened.

Timeline and process to 2020

The Parties to the CBD, one of the Rio Conventions alongside the UNFCCC and the UN CCD, adopted the Aichi Biodiversity Targets in October 2010 as part of the 2011-2020 Strategic Plan for Biodiversity.

At the 15th Conference of the Parties to the CBD (CBD COP-15) in China in October 2020, Parties are expected to agree on a post-2020 framework that will include a set of targets to succeed the Aichi Biodiversity targets. Simultaneously, in the lead up to 2020, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) has to agree how the SDG targets maturing in 2020 will be aligned with the overarching Agenda 2030 deadline.

A decision on the process to review the 2020 SDG targets would need to take place at the High Level Political Forum under the auspices of the 74th General Assembly in 2019 (Note 2).

Ensuring coherent and integrated decision-making

Alignment with existing UN agreements is an important feature of the SDGs and supports greater policy coherence and integration across UN frameworks.

For example, in 2015, SDG negotiations were ongoing while the Paris Agreement under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was still taking shape. The SDG negotiators did not want to preempt the discussions under the UNFCCC, or derail agreement on the rest of the SDGs while the climate change negotiations unfolded. They managed to resolve the situation by creating the space to ground the outcomes of the Paris Climate Agreement in the SDGs by inserting an asterisk in SDG 13 (Climate Change) which links to a statement acknowledging that “*the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is the primary international, intergovernmental forum for negotiating the global response to climate change.*”

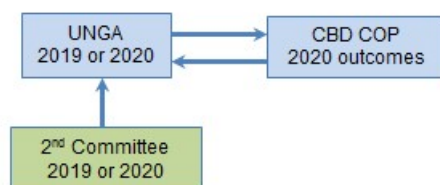
Such a two-pronged approach between UNGA and the CBD is needed to ensure that coherent and integrated global targets for environment are put in place for 2030.

Decision-making modalities under UNGA

Depending on the sequencing between the two processes (the 2019 and 2020 UNGA sessions and the 2020 CBD COP), UNGA could follow one of the following two decision-making modalities:

- A. Centralise the decision in UNGA only, with optional input from CBD
- B. Take the decision in UNGA based on a meaningful consultation at HLPF under the auspices of ECOSOC, with optional input from CBD

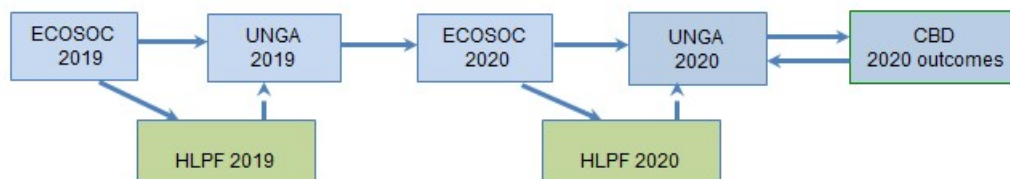
A. The Centralised Approach – UNGA is the only necessary decision-making body in regards to the SDGs and it could elect to centralise decisions on post 2020 SDG targets. An UNGA resolution on post 2020



SDG targets, prepared via its Second Committee, could be agreed in either 2019 or 2020. Input from the CBD could be drawn upon.

B. Consultative Approach – While UNGA has the mandate to make decisions relating to the SDGs on its own, it could decide to include the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) and the Economic and Social Committee (ECOSOC) in discussion on post 2020 SDGs targets. This could be achieved through an HLPF Heads of State declaration in 2019, a ministerial declaration in 2020, and/or an ECOSOC resolution (which could adopt the HLPF declaration).

While the centralised approach will take less time and administrative effort, the consultative approach would be more inclusive and engage all of the key parts of the UN system to help ensure integration across fora and processes. The HLPF remains the forum that holds the most knowledge on the SDGs and its input is considered to be essential.



Options for action on the 2020 environment targets

There are several options for action on the maturing targets:

1. **Non-option:** Do Nothing
2. Extend delivery date

3. Agree content of extended and updated targets
4. Agree process to extend and update targets
5. **Non-option:** Reopen the SDG framework

UNGA and its associated mechanisms can drive Options 1-4 alone (Note 3). However, under Option 4 (and to a lesser degree Option 3), UNGA would defer power to influence the decision-making to the CBD negotiations on the new CBD targets. While the CBD will pursue its own agenda regardless of the option chosen by UNGA, it can reinforce an integrated approach (such as Option 4). WWF believes to ensure continued alignment between international conventions, the selected option should ensure a strong link and cross-discussions between CBD and UNGA. Table 1 below outlines and analyses the five options (Note 4) listed above. The analysis is based on considerations around efficiency gains, timelines, political acceptance, overall contribution to SDG outcomes etc.

Notes

1. Please see Annex B for a list of the 21 SDG targets maturing in 2020.
2. Article 87 of the UNGA resolution A/RES/70/1 clearly states that Meeting every four years under the auspices of the General Assembly, the high-level political forum will provide high-level political guidance on the Agenda and its implementation, identify progress and emerging challenges and mobilize further actions to accelerate implementation. The next high-level political forum under the auspices of the General Assembly will be held in 2019, with the cycle of meetings thus reset, in order to maximize coherence with the quadrennial comprehensive policy review process.
3. UNGA would also be the forum to pursue Option 1, but that is considered to be a non-option for this discussion.
4. It is important to note that these options represent a simplification of real processes and complex negotiations for the purpose of driving conceptual discussion.

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Table 1 – Description and Analysis of Options for 2020 SDG Environment Targets

| No | Option | Process/ Actors ¹ | Required Action | Outcome | Arguments for | Arguments against |
|----|--|---|--|--|--|---|
| 1 | <u>Do Nothing</u> Leave the targets as they are and stop working on the SDG targets when they expire in 2020 | None | None | Pursuing this option will require least action, and will likely result in the environmental dimension of the SDGs being neglected. This will lead to incomplete implementation of the SDGs as they all rely on a thriving environment. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Procedural “easy option” that requires no action, but would raise questions of governments’ commitment and accountability as well as integrity of Agenda 2030. + Potentially defensible approach if 2020 targets were successfully delivered (which is highly unlikely). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Likely to result in the environmental dimension of the SDGs being neglected, thereby contrary to the aim of the SDGs to integrate social, economic and environmental aspects of development - SDGs 14 and 15 (and thereby all SDGs) cannot be achieved if countries were to stop working towards many of their targets - SDGs will have failed at their first test given that the 2020 targets are off track, undermining the credibility of the 2030 Agenda as a whole - This would undermine the achievement of the overall Agenda 2030 as a result of foundational environmental SDGs at risk |
| 2 | <u>Extend delivery date for unchanged targets</u> Continue reporting on current targets thereby effectively extending their deadline to 2030, without changing target content | UNGA, Second Committee of UNGA, UNGA President [HLPF under auspices of ECOSOC or UNGA] | UNGA resolution by 2020 to amend the deadlines in the SDGs Framework from 2020 to 2030 [HLPF provides guidance in ministerial or HoS declaration] | Pursuing this option will likely result in unambitious environment targets under the SDGs and a potential gulf between new, more ambitious CBD targets and the SDGs. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Would accommodate the fact that most of the targets are unlikely to be achieved by 2020 + Would not require a reconsideration of indicators + Probably the easiest compromise politically, but would still raise questions of commitment and ambition. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Risks division between the new CBD targets and the SDGs which could lead to policy incoherence - Inefficient allocation of resources caused by two different sets of environment targets - Inhibits integrated approach to governance and implementation across SDGs and CBD - Represents a ‘missed opportunity’ to strengthen delivery of the SDGs 14 and 15 and their targets. - Risk to SDG credibility and could create an unhelpful precedence |
| 3 | <u>Agree content of extended and updated Targets</u> In 2020, review the relevant targets and agree on updated version based on anticipated outcomes of CBD and other relevant frameworks. | UNGA, Second Committee of UNGA, UNGA President [HLPF under auspices of ECOSOC or UNGA] | UNGA resolution via Second Committee by 2020 to amend the deadlines and content of the targets. CBD to advise on | Pursuing this option will result in new environment targets under the SDGs, but the risk of misalignment with the new CBD targets needs to be mitigated (see precedence of Climate SDG agreed before Paris COP) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Simpler and quicker process that allows seamless continuation of SDG implementation. + Could allow to update all SDG targets that expire in 2020 in one step + Follows precedence of SDG13 on climate, that was agreed with the caveat that it depends also on the final outcome of the Paris Climate COP + Could allow UNGA to draw on CBD expertise and to base suggested targets on best available knowledge of likely outcomes on the new CBD framework. + In keeping with the spirit of Agenda 2030 which strives to meaningfully | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Risks misalignment between the new CBD targets and the SDGs which could lead to policy incoherence - Trying to predict updates on a target by target basis could become messy and risk re-opening the whole SDG framework for discussion - If the SDG targets have a lower ambition level, it could lower the bar for CBD targets - Could distract resource and attention from CBD process |
| | | | the content of the updated targets [HLPF provides guidance in ministerial or HoS declaration] | | link the SDGs with other UN frameworks. | during one of CBD’s most critical decision-making moments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If the SDG and CBD targets diverge too much, it could inhibit integrated approach to governance and implementation across SDGs and CBD - Could require updated indicators |

| No | Option | Process/Actions | Required Action | Outcomes | Arguments for | Arguments against |
|----|---|--|---|--|--|--|
| 4 | <u>Agree process to extend and Update Targets</u> First agree by 2020 on process for updating targets. At a later date review and update the relevant targets in alignment with the new CBD and other frameworks, once they are agreed. | UNGA, Second Committee of UNGA, UNGA President [HLPF under auspices of ECOSOC or UNGA] | GA resolution agreeing on process CBD reaches agreement on new CBD targets GA confirms amended content and deadlines of targets [HLPF and ECOSOC providing guidance through ministerials or a HoS declaration.] | Pursuing this option would entail two steps: First UNGA agrees on the process according to which the targets will be extended and updated, which includes agreement to align updated targets with the new CBD framework. Once the CBD framework is agreed, the targets will be updated and formally confirmed by UNGA. | + Enables a universal approach to updating targets under the SDGs targets that is not limited to the environment targets only + In keeping with the UN approach to agree the process before discussing the content + Would ensure that updated SDG targets align with ambition levels and content of new CBD framework + Enable greater integration and policy coherence with CBD and therefore the broader UN System + Reduces the strain on resources and experts, focusing dedicated attention on the CBD process as the alignment happens after the crucial decision-making moment + In keeping with the spirit of Agenda 2030 which strives to meaningfully link the SDGs with other UN frameworks | - Requires an additional step to actually update the targets - Will create a time gap between the deadline of the 2020 targets and the agreement on the updated targets which can delay efficient SDG implementation - Reliant on CBD, and risks a 'no deal' situation for biodiversity targets if CBD negotiations fail - Could require updated indicators |
| 5 | <u>Re-opening SDGs Framework</u> It is a non-option to open the entire SDGs Framework for renegotiation and update via the Second Committee of the GA. | UNGA, Second Committee of UNGA, UNGA President [HLPF under auspices of ECOSOC or UNGA] | GA resolution agreeing to change in SDGs Framework [HLPF provides guidance in ministerial or HoS declaration] | Pursuing this option may or may not result in the integration of the CBD targets as new SDGs environment targets, and risks endangering SDGs | + Would allow for a comprehensive revisiting of all SDGs targets, not just the 2020 targets | - Contravenes the clearly expressed wish of Member States not to re-open the SDG framework for discussion - Risks weakening the SDGs as Member States may see this as an opportunity to renegotiate challenging SDGs which would go against the principle of non-regression - Risks incoherence across UN system if processes and outcomes such as CBD targets are not taken into account - Threatens the credibility of targets set under the UN system - Will require updated indicators |

Conclusion

The deadline of 21 SDG targets in 2020 represents the first real political challenge to the landmark agreement that is the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The decision on updating these targets ultimately lies with UN Member States meeting in the General Assembly.

It is crucial for the continued credibility, integrity and ambition of the SDGs and the UN system, as well as the prospects of achieving sustainable development, that there should be a clear transition from 2020 to 2030 targets which builds on the integrated decision-making approach adopted during the Agenda 2030 negotiations.

For the 12 targets maturing in 2020 that are linked to the Aichi biodiversity targets, the relationship between the UNGA process and the CBD post-2020 negotiations must be clarified as early as possible to avoid misaligned CBD and SDG targets post-2020.

We have briefly outlined two decision-making modalities, centralised and consultative, that the UNGA could pursue as its members work on addressing the maturing 2020 SDG targets.

We have also outlined and analysed five options, of which two are non-options, negotiators can pursue in order to update the environment SDG targets maturing in 2020.

Regardless of the option and decision-making modality that is pursued, **it is critical that the process discussions start as soon as possible**. Only if governments agree early on the process, will it be possible to have a well-prepared roadmap when the targets mature in 2020.

We suggest that scenario pieces like this one could be the basis for an inclusive discussion between the HLPF, ECOSOC, UNGA and CBD leading to a decision on the way forward by UNGA 2019 at the latest.

Ultimately, the challenge of agreeing how to handle the maturing 2020 targets will be a test of whether the UN system can deliver on the principles of integration and coherence agreed under the 2030 Agenda. Failure to agree a coherent process early may well threaten the successful establishment of post-2020 environment targets under the SDGs. Without these targets, the achievement of all the other SDGs is impossible as a strong environmental pillar is the foundation for humanity's survival and wellbeing.

Side Note: Non-Environment 2020 SDG Targets

We recognise that other stakeholders may also have recommendations for other targets with a 2020 deadline. For example, there are 2020 targets on road traffic accidents, education, youth employment, universal internet access, disaster resilience, climate change financing, trade and data capacity building. As many of these targets connect to or impact the environment targets, we would welcome a discussion with stakeholders working on these targets to investigate options for a unified approach to updating the 2020 SDG targets.

Annex A – Relevant Actors for 2020 SDG Targets

| Actor | Mandate | Relevant Output |
|--|--|--|
| The UN General Assembly (UNGA) | UNGA is the main deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the UN. Its powers are to oversee the budget of the UN, appoint the non-permanent members to the Security Council, receive reports from other parts of the UN and make recommendations in the form of General Assembly Resolutions. It has also established numerous subsidiary organs. | GA Resolution |
| The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) | ECOSOC is the UN's central platform for reflection, debate, and innovative thinking on sustainable development, and serves as the central mechanism for the activities of the United Nations system and its specialized agencies, and supervises the subsidiary and expert bodies in the economic, social and environmental fields. | ECOSOC Resolution |
| The High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) | The HLPF is the main United Nations platform on sustainable development and it has a central role in the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs at the global level. The Forum meets annually under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) for eight days, including a three-day ministerial segment and every four years at the level of Heads of State and Government under the auspices of the UNGA for two days. | Ministerial Declaration (ECOSOC) Heads of State/Government Declaration (UNGA) |
| The 2 nd Committee of UNGA | 2 nd Committee is one of the six main standing committees of UNGA. The Second Committee deals with issues economic growth and development such as macroeconomic policy questions; financing for development; sustainable development; human settlements; globalization and interdependence; eradication of poverty; operational activities for development; agriculture development, food security and nutrition; information and communications technologies for development; and towards global partnerships. | Report to UNGA |

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| The Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD) | CBD is an international legally-binding treaty with three main goals: conservation of biodiversity; sustainable use of biodiversity; fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the use of genetic resources. | Decisions by the Parties on strategic plans, goals and targets and protocols |
|--|--|--|

Annex B – List of maturing 2020 SDGs Targets

[21 targets – those highlighted are the 12 environment targets discussed in this paper]

Targets highlighted have been identified as lagging behind in progress¹ according to the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

- 1) 2.5- by 2020 maintain genetic diversity of seeds, cultivated plants, farmed and domesticated animals and their related wild species, including through soundly managed and diversified seed and plant banks at national, regional and international levels, and ensure access to and fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge as internationally agreed.
- 2) 3.6 - by 2020, halve global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents
- 3) 4.b - by 2020, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships for developing countries, in particular LDCs, SIDS and African countries for enrolment in higher education, including vocational training, ICT, technical, engineering and scientific programmes, in developed countries and other developing countries
- 4) 6.6- by 2020, protect and restore water-related ecosystems, including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and lakes
- 5) 8.6 - by 2020, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training
- 6) 8.b - by 2020, develop and operationalize a global strategy for youth employment and implement the Global Jobs Pact of the ILO
- 7) 9.c - significantly increase access to ICT and strive to provide universal and affordable access to the internet in LDCs by 2020
- 8) 11.b - by 2020, substantially increase the number of cities and human settlements adopting and implementing integrated policies and plans towards inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters, develop and implement in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, holistic disaster risk management at all levels
- 9) 12.4 - by 2020, achieve environmentally sound management of chemicals and all wastes throughout their life cycle, in accordance with agreed international frameworks, and significantly reduce their release to air, water and soil to minimize their adverse impacts on human health and the environment

¹ https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/18277CBD_input_to_2018_HLPF.pdf

- 10) 13.a - Implement the commitment undertaken by developed-country parties to the UNFCCC to a goal of mobilizing jointly \$100 billion annually by 2020 from all sources to address the needs of developing countries in the context of meaningful mitigation actions and transparency on implementation and fully operationalize the Green Climate Fund through its capitalization as soon as possible
- 11) 14.2 - by 2020, sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts, including by strengthening their resilience, and take action for their restoration in order to achieve healthy and productive oceans
- 12) 14.4 - by 2020, effectively regulate harvesting, and end overfishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and destructive fishing practices and implement science-based management plans, in order to restore fish stocks in the shortest time feasible, at least to levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield as determined by their biological characteristics
- 13) 14.5 - by 2020, conserve at least 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, consistent with national and international law and based on best available scientific information
- 14) 14.6 - by 2020, prohibit certain forms of fisheries subsidies which contribute to overcapacity and overfishing, and eliminate subsidies that contribute to IUU fishing, and refrain from introducing new such subsidies, recognizing that appropriate and effective special and differential treatment for developing and least developed countries should be an integral part of the WTO fisheries subsidies negotiation²
- 15) 15.1 - by 2020, ensure conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, in particular forests, wetlands, mountains and drylands, in line with obligations under international agreements
- 16) 15.2 - by 2020, promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests and substantially increase afforestation and reforestation globally
- 17) 15.5 - take urgent and significant action to reduce degradation of natural habitats, halt the loss of biodiversity and, by 2020, protect and prevent the extinction of threatened species
- 18) 15.8 - by 2020, introduce measures to prevent the introduction and significantly reduce the impact of invasive alien species on land and water ecosystems and control or eradicate the priority species
- 19) 15.9 - by 2020, integrate ecosystems and biodiversity values into national and local planning, development processes, poverty reduction strategies and accounts

² Taking into account ongoing WTO negotiations and WTO Doha Development Agenda and Hong Kong Ministerial Mandate

- 20) 17.11 - significantly increase the exports of developing countries, in particular with a view to doubling the LDCs' share of global exports by 2020
- 21) 17.18 - by 2020, enhance capacity building support to developing countries, including for LDCs and SIDS, to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location, and other characteristics relevant in national contexts

Chapter 5

From numbers to action - how to leverage the 2030 Agenda reporting structure to accelerate SDG 16 implementation.

By Anne Kahl

Introduction

Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 on Peace, Justice and Inclusive Institutions breaks new ground in development thinking. For the first time Peace, Justice and Inclusion issues are being addressed in an explicit global development goal with detailed targets. It is also recognized that SDG 16 is both an outcome and an enabler of sustainable development as SDG 16 is closely interlinked with other SDGs. Without peace, justice and inclusion, ending poverty, ensuring education, and promoting economic growth can be difficult or impossible (Note 1).

Today, 70.8 million people are forcibly displaced as a result of persecution, conflict and violence; 650 million children lack proof of legal identity. Civic space is shrinking across the globe with 181 restrictions having been imposed on civil society organizations in 82 countries since 2013 (Global Alliance for Reporting on Progress on Peace, Justice and Inclusive Societies, 2019). The risk of failure to address these challenges, and the lack of investment in SDG16+, are worsening violence, injustice and exclusion. This will reverse development gains across all SDGs, including education, health and climate action. Political and financial investment in SDG 16+ needs to be amplified to accelerate progress on SDG 16+ and to achieve the whole of Agenda 2030 (Global Alliance for Reporting on Progress on Peace, Justice and Inclusive Societies, 2019).

SDG 16 uplifts the human rights agenda and demonstrates that sustainable development cannot be achieved without civil and political rights. At the same time, unlike many other thematic areas of the 2030 Agenda, governance remains a relatively new domain in official statistics with few international standards defining its measurement.

The Voluntary National Reviews presented during HLPF 2019 highlight that several countries are challenged by the lack of robust data to monitor progress against SDG 16 targets (White & Case, 2019). Too few countries have truly inclusive monitoring systems that engage a broad range of stakeholders and are built on a consensus of what is important to measure and how.

Institutional mechanisms at the national and local levels to gather data and monitor policy efforts and impact of SDG 16+ are weak. One estimation shows that it will take at least 5 years before data becomes available for many of the missing indicators for many countries and especially the many population survey-based measures. (Institute for Economics and Peace, 2019) The question is how to fill the data gaps on SDG 16?

Data informed reporting is important – and possible

The Global Alliance for Reporting on Promoting Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies brings together diverse stakeholders - Member States, civil society, private sector and UN agencies - to

support effective and meaningful reporting on the achievement of SDG 16. During the HLPF 2019, the Global Alliance launched an evidence-based SDG 16+ Report entitled "[Enabling the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda Through SDG 16+: Anchoring Peace, Justice and Inclusion](#)". The Report is based on inputs received from 6 regional multi-stakeholder consultations, more than 25 case studies showcasing best practices of SDG 16 actions, a global eConsultation and existing research in the field. One of the key findings of the report is that measuring progress in achieving SDG 16 is politically, technically and financially possible and would enhance implementation of the SDGs. The report makes three key recommendations (Global Alliance, 2019) related to measurement and reporting on SDG 16+:

Firstly, ***political and financial investments in SDG 16+ data and statistics are required***. Countries need to promote and fortify the independence of National Statistical Offices (NSOs) to fulfil their dual roles as primary generators of data and as coordinators of national monitoring. This must be done in an impartial manner and in line with international standards, including respect for human rights of those who have shared their information. Countries need to ensure that NSOs are adequately resourced and have the capacity to develop and implement monitoring and accountability frameworks. Countries also need to be more engaged in producing data that covers issues related to SDG 16 and to overcome resistance in the production and use of official statistics on sensitive topics, i.e. pertaining to governance and human rights, and those that are perceived difficult to measure. The UN should support countries by developing international methodologies to ensure measurability and comparability of data.

National governance statistics give policymakers the means to conduct their own analysis of the situation and its evolution over time, instead of using international governance indicators that may not always fit the specificities of their country. However, statisticians explain that the resources needed to collect, analyse and quality-assure SDG 16 data are acutely lacking. A UNDP/SAIIA report launched in 2019 showed that only 16% of government survey respondents across 38 countries in Africa said their country had allocated national funding specifically for the production of SDG 16 data. (UNDP, 2019)

Secondly, a ***broad range of data producers must be involved to address existing data gaps***. NSOs and governments can benefit from a broad range of non-statistical data sources, including non-official data to track SDG 16. The UNDP/SAIIA study referred to above, shows that, at least in Africa, traditional barriers between official and non-official data producers remain in a majority of countries. While less than a third (32%) of respondents said their country was able to report on ‘more than half’ of the 23 global SDG 16 indicators, only 27% said that unofficial data was being used when official sources were lacking.

Civil society organizations, academia and the private sector are all producing data which can provide valuable information. Engaging in public-private partnership on data collection is encouraged, if it is done in an ethical way. The UN should also encourage Member States to support institutional cooperation between National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) and NSOs to include groups that are at risk of being excluded in data collection efforts. Member States and other stakeholders should also adopt complementary human rights indicators, as for example those that are part of internationally recognised human rights mechanisms to reinforce the linkages between human rights and SDGs.

Thirdly, *data disaggregation is required to ensure no one is left behind*. Countries need to invest in data sources such as surveys, census and administrative data to better understand disparities across population groups to ensure no one is left behind. This includes auditing the availability and quality of data that is disaggregated to ensure the visibility of vulnerable groups. Countries should moreover consider if targeted data collection tools are needed to cover those furthest behind, including those forcibly displaced, refugees and stateless persons. Countries could also strengthen – or establish – collaboration between NSOs and National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) to leverage the institutional independence and mutually reinforcing monitoring of these state institutions. This could help ensure that key population groups are not further marginalised by SDG-related data collection and data management efforts.

Current initiatives to strengthen SDG 16 monitoring and reporting

Several global initiatives and organizations are working with national stakeholders to address the data gap and enhance reporting on SDG 16. UN Agencies, civil society organizations, private sector partners and others are working to leverage partnerships to develop tools, methodologies and approaches to advance reporting on SDG 16.

One of the initiatives aimed at strengthening national efforts to collect and manage SDG 16 data is the **SDG 16 Survey Module**, developed jointly by UNDP, UNODC and OHCHR. The goal of this initiative is to offer ready-made survey modules for National Statistical Systems to produce data for 10 SDG 16 indicators of which very few countries have data. Population surveys presents numerous advantages – including high data quality and the possibility to produce indicators disaggregated by demographic and other variables. The modules can be included by NSOs in on-going household surveys for regular reporting on SDG 16 indicators and will enable the collection of nationally representative and internationally comparable statistics. The SDG 16 modular questionnaire is currently being piloted in a diversity of country contexts and will be ready for global roll-out by June 2020.

Another important initiative is the **Handbook on Governance Statistics** currently being developed under the auspices of the Praia Group on Governance Statistics (Praia, 2019), which was established in 2015 by the UN Statistical Commission and mandated to develop “a handbook on governance statistics for national statistical offices”. It is a collaborative effort of national statistical offices, international organizations and civil society organizations. The purpose of the Handbook, which will be launched in March 2020, is to provide a foundation for the development of international statistical guidance and standards in all areas of governance statistics. It takes stock of existing practices in governance data collection and proposes guidelines for the improved production and compilation of governance, peace, security, human rights and rule of law indicators. To this end, it conceptualizes and systematizes the various dimensions of governance statistics, takes stock of and qualifies existing practices in governance data collection, highlights the most important metrics in each dimension of governance statistics, and discusses the way forward required to achieve international statistical standards in each dimension. It is intended as a guide for those wishing to understand, produce and analyze governance statistics, and is primarily targeted towards national statistical agencies.

Led by UNDP, with support from other Global Alliance partners, the **SDG 16 National Monitoring Methodology** supports national reporting processes by engaging a diverse group of

national stakeholders to establish country relevant monitoring systems for SDG 16. The initiative is built on a three-step methodology that countries adapt to their national context. The three steps include:

1. Definition of indicators and baseline data collection. In consultation with national statistical offices (NSOs), drawing from sub-national, national, regional and international and national (official and non-official) indicators and data sources.
2. Multi-stakeholder consultations and review of progress. Joint reviews by government and civil society of the indicator framework including baselines and progress and joint formulation of policy and program responses.
3. Periodic scorecards. Periodic tracking of progress based on open and accessible data reporting platforms.

Launched in 2017, the methodology has been applied in 14 countries to establish reliable, objective and independent monitoring systems of Goal 16 indicators and to promote the integration of indicators into national planning process. One key focus has been on sharing experiences between participating countries through a virtual community of practice on the SDG 16 hub (Note 2). The SDG 16 monitoring initiative has just been relaunched to include additional countries.

The Voluntary National Reviews – An Opportunity to Effect Real Change on SDG 16

An increasing number of countries are reporting their progress on SDG implementation through the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs). The number of VNR submissions has increased every year and the number of VNRs submitted in 2019 was more than double the number of VNRs submitted in 2016 (White and Case, 2019).

There is a trend for countries to report for a second time with more comprehensive reviews. Looking at SDG 16 reporting across the VNRs, countries now have more **detail on progress**, while most Member States note that **SDG 16 data availability and statistical capacities at country-level is challenging**. Strategic approaches that cover the broader thematic aspects of SDG 16 and its interlinkages are rare. Countries are asking for guidance on how SDG 16 principles can be used to guide the process of developing the VNR and its follow up but also how to best document progress. (Partners for review, 2019) Most countries continue review progress goal by goal rather than looking at the interlinkages across goals. Only one country has referred in their VNRs to the importance of approaching SDG 16+ from an interlinked perspective. While the 2019 VNR reports list many independent initiatives that contribute to SDG 16, strategic approaches to the overall thematic aspects – peace, justice and inclusion - and the enabling feature of the Goal are rare (Partners in Review, 2019).

All 47 reporting Member States in 2019 declared that their VNRs were the result of an inclusive and participatory process with various stakeholders. While Member States might view the importance of inclusivity these voluntary statements could be further vetted by citizen led inputs and civil society “shadow” reports (White and Case, 2019).

While the VNR drafting process provides a good opportunity to reflect on and report on the status of SDG 16, a VNR cannot be an end in itself. It needs to be an effective tool to maintain the

momentum and accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the sub-national and national levels. The VNR report itself needs to feed into the national planning and budgetary processes to ensure advancement in achieving the SDGs and to ensure that peace, justice and inclusion are addressed holistically. Member states need to fully own their respective VNR findings and focus on actioning them. One civil society actor who was part of his country's delegation at the HLPF said it best *“Most of the value of the VNR process lies in the preparations at the national level and how it feeds into SDG implementation, not in the 15-minute presentation in New York.”* (UNDP, 2019)

With the increasing number of countries reporting more than once, there is a great opportunity to strengthen VNR and post-VNR processes as a tool for improved monitoring and action on SDG 16+. The VNR processes provide an opportunity for inclusive public policy dialogue and support to civil society in demanding accountability for action.

Looking Forward

As we move into the Decade of Action we need to continue to fill the data gap and amplify reporting efforts on SDG 16 to enhance impact. The global SDG 16 community will need to focus efforts on the following elements to realize the 2030 Agenda:

1. Emphasize to Member States that accountable reporting on SDG 16+ is essential for overall SDG implementation.
2. Support Member States in strengthening collection of quality data, including unofficial and citizen driven data to fill data gaps and the inclusion of marginalized and vulnerable groups at risk of being left behind.
3. Strengthen quality reporting on SDG 16 in VNRs and develop overview of best practices for post VNR processes.
4. Undertake concerted advocacy for governments to make concrete and ambitious commitments on SDG 16+, mobilize resources and be accountable for implementation.
5. Promote sharing of knowledge, resources, learnings, successes and challenges on SDG 16+ monitoring and reporting.

Notes

1. [Thematic Review of SDG 16 at the High-Level Political Forum \(HLPF\) in 2019](#)
2. SDG 16 Hub www.sdg16hub.org

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Chapter 6

How can the UN and the High-Level Political Forum identify and deal with new and emerging issues to meet the 2030 Agenda?

By Cat Tully

Introduction

As we arrive at 2020, one-third of the way to the SDGs deadline, questions are rightly being asked about the achievability and credibility of the SDGs. Strategic foresight equips policymakers at the UN agencies and delivery partners with the tools to reframe their thinking about the world of 2030 and consider emerging threats/opportunities for the SDGs in a systemic and comprehensive way. It helps us begin to see not just a clearer path towards a (realistic) vision for 2030, but also – vitally – how to get there in spite of global volatility and uncertainty in the decade ahead.

The High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) was set up not only to address the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) but also new and emerging issues as they relate to the delivery of the 2030 Agenda. My comments point to ways in which the 2020 HLPF can do this and proposes some key issues it could explore.

Why Strategic Foresight?

I warmly welcome this discussion of how the HLPF and wider United Nations system can play a stronger role in spot emerging issues that could impact on delivering the 2030 agenda. Instead of feeling that we're caught in the tailspin of a wave, strategic foresight (the practice of systematically and rigorously thinking through future issues and their impacts) allows us to get ahead of the curve, anticipate, and adapt. This is more vital than ever as we reach 2020 - a critical milestone in establishing the credibility and achievability of the SDGs. One-third of the way to 2030, questions will be asked (within the UN system, in capitals and more broadly) about the SDGs' value and measurable evidence of progress in achieving the shift from 'business as usual' to transformative outcomes. Stakeholders will ask, too, what more should be done in the remaining ten years to shift from development interventions focused on present conditions to exploring how to achieve even great impact by systematically harnessing the opportunities and preparing for the downsides of upcoming changes, from new technology to climate shifts and geopolitical alliances,

Strategic foresight is a big part of the answer: scanning the horizons, understanding emerging drivers of change, lassoing programmatic interventions together in a tighter, coherent framework of effort at country and regional levels requires collective goal-setting and strategic drive, and a sense of direction – which only a clear view of the future, or 'foresight', can provide.

In the face of a daunting task to deliver on an already ambitious agenda, it may be tempting to think that adopting foresight approaches to spot and respond to new or emerging issues is a luxury; a distraction from urgent current demands, a diversion of valuable resource. In fact, the opposite is the case: it is a must-have for effectively and efficiently getting to the 2030 outcomes reflected in the SDG agenda. By reframing our view of the operating timeframe in which we are operating and opening our understanding about the world of 2030 – which will, without question, be radically different to the world of 2015 – we can begin to see a clearer, more innovative and path towards a (realistic) vision, as well as how to get there.

Just as the SDG framework was conceptualised as a shift away from business as usual towards a universal, indivisible, systematic framework for global development, so we must consider emerging threats/opportunities for the SDGs in a systemic and comprehensive way – finding a structured way of talking about a 2030 world.

Foresight is partly about exploring, and thus better preparing for, alternative futures driven by emerging issues, by taking a ‘systems approach’ to future change. But it also has a broader impact: encouraging practitioners to consider and map complexity in a comprehensive way, thus encouraging – as I wrote for UNDP’s Global Centre for Public Service Excellence in 2015 – a ‘system stewardship’ approach, in which governments plan for sustainable collective benefits instead of short-term political advantage.

Role of the HLPF: The Need for Ambition

The level of global volatility and the unprecedented pace of change demand an energised, stepped-up response to meeting the SDGs. We cannot predict the 2030 world with any certainty – but we can engage constructively with it through foresight techniques that allow us to consider alternative futures (scenarios). We can harness the positive potential of change if we are nimble and systematically use foresight skills to look ahead – but we also need to be live to threats, unintended consequences and the complex impacts of even ostensibly positive developments.

So I urge colleagues to be ambitious and rigorous in adopting foresight approaches to planning for the SDGs, both at the level of the UN institutions and Member State delegates to bodies such as the High Level Political Forum (HLPF). The 2020 gathering has a major role to play in this area, since participants and delegates to the HLPF - both from Member States (at Head of State, ministerial and official level) and the UN institutions, as well as participants in relevant side-events - could:

1. Look beyond the obvious technological developments or innovations that might impact on delivery of specific SDG indicators to explore the biggest, often most unpredictable trends and mega-trends unfolding in the decade to come. These will include demographic change, contested global values, disruptions from climate change, and the accelerated decline of multilateralism. Once we have appreciated the sheer scale and complexity of the changes that we may see over the coming ten-year horizon, we can then work through all the implications for achieving the SDGs framework – as a whole, and on key indicators.
2. Be rigorous in considering both the upsides and downsides (threats and opportunities) of future trends, as well as both direct and indirect impacts on SDG outcomes or indicators. The world can be divided into pessimists and optimists, but futurists need to be both.
3. Support the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) to provide a horizon-scanning function within the HLPF Secretariat - building on scanning work happening elsewhere across the UN system. Use horizon-scanning tools to ensure that ‘weaker signals’ are picked up, offering valuable early warning on slow-burning issues typically neglected by short-termist policymaking. And note, too, that not all key issues

will be ‘new’ or ‘emerging’ - as futurist Jim Dator observes, the future is full of (i) existing trends that change, (ii) historic trends that re-emerge, and (iii) novelties.

4. Be sceptical of linear beliefs about the future (reliant on projections based on past data, or dominant ‘official’ narratives about probably futures held dear within institutions). Critically interrogate trends or issues put on the table – for example, challenging whether an issue really is ‘high probability’ or ‘low impact’, as assumed. So often through history, the impact of new trends has been critically under- or over-estimated, with real implications for the response. Trends are not linear: they can take decades to fully surface, and their direction is always unpredictable.

Priority emerging issues for the period to 2030

A ‘starter for 10’ list of interesting issues to explore in the decade ahead, as the 2030 deadline nears, could include: hyper-inequality (including between countries); regulation of new technologies and their impacts, including data ownership, geoengineering and transhumanism; the potential of synthetic biology to address malnutrition and food security; the future of gender rights in the face of changing values intersecting with technology; the impacts of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) including the distributive benefits for small-scale innovators/entrepreneurs in hitherto less connected places; and the rise of a ‘splinternet’ with profoundly unequal freedom of expression. Some of these themes still seem futuristic, but with the pace of change they could become ‘live’ very fast. Some feel already present: Graham Molitor pointed out that megatrends can play out over 50-80 years.

However, developing a comprehensive understanding of potential future threats and opportunities which may impact on delivery of the SDGs needs to be a participative exercise drawing in analysts, expert leads, in-country practitioners and citizens (see ‘*Recommendations*’ below). We need participative foresight - by which I mean, to collectively think about our future, bringing in perspectives and interests that are typically marginalised - to offset group-think and build a sense of ownership in achieving a shared future.

Championing existing UN work

Foresight needs to be mainstream if the UN is to achieve its ambitious 2030 agenda. Let’s recognize and celebrate and joining together what is already being done in this field/area across the UN system. Although interesting work is happening, it is often seen as niche and siloed off from mainstream activity: it also tends to follow a pattern where innovative units and approaches get closed down, only to reemerge again elsewhere. The HLPF should advocate for and help profile the work of units and teams applying a ‘foresight mindset’ and futures techniques, such as:

- UNESCO’s network of foresight chairs and work on futures literacy. World Food Programme and FAO. UNDP, particularly its 60 Accelerator Labs and its recreated former Global Centre for Public Service Excellence; notable are its 2018 Foresight Manual “Empowered Futures for the 2030 Agenda”, and my 2015 UNDP paper on applying foresight to the UN Development Assistance Framework. UNICEF’s past experience and units and ILO’s emerging work on foresight (including in the Turin Centre).

- Work done in regional bodies, like ECLAC, whose planning unit, ILPES, supports an excellent government and non-government network of foresight innovators.
- The focus on foresight and an emerging network chaired by UNESCO at the HLCP, as well as other earlier networks like the UN Strategic Planning Network and UN Innovation Network.
- Building on the specific reference to the need for foresight in the “enhanced leadership development package” for training Resident Coordinators and UN Country Teams.

As I’ve argued elsewhere including in the OECD DAC report 2018, we need to put foresight at the heart of development planning approaches.

Specific Recommendations

I have made recommendations elsewhere around integrating foresight across the UN system (see Annex A: *Strategic foresight at the UN*). I would put forward in particular for senior consideration (at Ministerial level within/at the HLPF) the following recommendations, which would go some distance towards normalizing and mainstreaming foresight within the UN system:

1. Using strategic foresight thinking to facilitate multi-stakeholder dialogues on how to achieve the SDGs amid fast-paced change, perhaps during future UN conferences on achieving the SDGs.
2. Giving clear public signals that the UN is thinking about global futures – as part of the UN’s commitment to continue the level of participation/inclusion that has made the SDGs so different to the top-down approaches that went before. These public signals could include:
 - a. A major UN conference on the 2030 future: setting the agenda and energizing the UN system, governments and delivery partners for the ‘final push’ over the next decade – this would be deeply participative and designed to explore uncertainties, disruptions, and emerging issues including technology.
 - b. A major 2020 launch event for published, accessible scenarios on ‘The roadmap to our global future, 2030’. The scenarios should be visually appealing and accessible – similar in feel to the graphics for the SDG Trackers online. This launch would show that the UN is leading the way on developing and sharing scenarios work. (Note that leading practitioners of futures work, such as Shell, make their findings public in order to guide others within their sector.)
 - c. Using the UN75 dialogue to start a conversation about UN100.
3. Partnering with external (non-UN) organisations on assessing and responding to the challenges to the SDG agenda from a foresight perspective. Units at OECD, the World Bank and the IMF are working on foresight; the philanthropic sector too are increasingly interested in strategic foresight, as my article for Alliance Magazine attests.

To members States I recommend:

1. That they adopt realistic but achievable ‘2030 visions’ and longer-term planning, including in Voluntary National Reviews. Some governments already ‘do foresight’ well (think of Finland or Canada); but we at the School of International Futures (SOIF) are seeing strong demand for stronger foresight capabilities from governments in Rwanda, Portugal, Palestine, Jordan, Chile, Malaysia, Mozambique, the United Kingdom, Oman and Cambodia, and many more.
2. That donor and recipient governments should link up their national-level visions for 2030 with a global perspective on ‘our 2030 world’, as Costa Rica has done. Donor countries must avoid pigeonholing work towards the SDGs into ‘something other countries need to do’; this is a universal framework equally applicable to all countries in shaping their policies.
3. That all countries - not just recipient countries - understand SDG 16 (focused on good governance) as being the key to moving away from business as usual. I was in the room when the Chisinau outcome statement was developed in 2015 on *Strengthening Capacities and Building Effective Institutions*. And we haven’t seen enough progress in this area yet. The SDGs’ success hinges on governments opening up and transforming themselves with “accountable, inclusive and effective institutions” (16.6) and greater participation and inclusion in decision-making (16.7).

Beyond 2030

Finally, let’s not forget that while 2030 is a hugely important target date, the UN must look beyond 2030 – and that may become harder to do the closer those 2030 targets loom. How will the world look in 2045, at the centenary of the UN’s founding? Keeping this kind of thinking at the heart of the UN system is vital to staying relevant through the middle of the 21st century and beyond.

Annex A: Strategic foresight at the UN looking beyond 2030

Definition: ‘Foresight’ means a form of strategic planning that enables us to think about futures in order to make better decisions and better adjust to inevitable change. It helps us understand the complexity of interlocking trends and the drivers of change; build resilience to change, shocks and risks; and set strategic direction.

This short provocation paper proposes that the UN system needs to deepen its use of strategic foresight, without delay, in order to (i) attain the SDGs; (ii) put in place a robust post-2030 framework; and (iii) retain relevance and flexibility at the centenary marker-point of 2045. From a UN perspective, foresight is particularly valuable in bringing together the key concepts of prevention (in line with the SG’s current agenda) and achieving positive transformation (in-country and in the lives of beneficiaries of programmes and policies).

Timing/Urgency:

1. Amid significant global volatility and change, the UN must continue to evolve to remain relevant and to achieve the transformative network-wide shift to a ‘systems approach’ to

development in order to achieve the SDGs. The UN needs to make far deeper and more systematic use of strategic foresight in order to:

- a. Plan for both programme delivery and outcomes on longer time horizons than traditional planning cycles have allowed for.
 - b. Factor in, and have impact across, a dense network of interlinked issues.
 - c. Better understand and better adapt to future change.
2. This need is already recognised within the UN, with specific reference to the need for foresight in the “enhanced leadership development package” for Resident Coordinators and UNCTs; the decision that from 2019 ECOSOC will look at future trends and scenarios in its ‘high level segment’; last summer’s UNDP high-level political forum (HLPF) on the Use of Strategic Foresight for Adaptive Future-Ready SDG Strategies; and the Chief Executives Board for Coordination. But interest still remains fragmentary and often tentative. These skills need to be embedded at every level (country, regional and global), with mechanisms to join up foresight across these levels. That is the proposal set out in this paper.
3. The UN is exposed to change and volatility to an exceptional degree, with a uniquely large global network and seeking to resolve some of the world’s most complex and uncertain issues. Future trends and mega-trends will thus have more impact on its work than for any other single global actor, right across security, humanitarian, development, prosperity, justice and wellbeing issues. To name a few on the 10-20 year horizon: major geopolitical shifts, rising populations in some of the poorest parts of the planet, ever more dispersed security threats (from radicalisation to bioterrorism), climate change and environmental depletion bringing humanity right up against the planet’s boundaries, radical new technologies that impinge on every area of life and work, hyperglobalisation and biological inequality. These trends, all with different and uncertain trajectories, combine to produce both huge positive consequences (upsides), and major downsides.
4. While the UN does not and cannot ‘fix everything’ globally, it is the only organisation with the global reach and operations in all the relevant fields to examine and steer a truly global policy response to this unprecedented level of uncertainty. It is right that it should lead in showing ‘applied vision’ to help achieve a better future under such complex pressures. For this to happen, several changes are needed. The UN system needs to:
 - a. more systematically consider alternative futures (scenarios), understanding at every level (country, regional and global) the drivers and trends of change, and
 - b. develop policies and programmes resilient and flexible enough to weather future change in conditions of complexity and uncertainty.
5. 2020 brings the five-year marker since the introduction of the SDGs. One-third of the way to 2030, questions will be asked (within the UN system, in capitals and more broadly) about:
 - a. their value and measurable evidence of progress in achieving the shift from ‘business as usual’ to transformative impact.
 - b. what more should be done in the remaining ten years to shift from ad hoc and disparate interventions. Strategic foresight is a big part of the answer: lassoing together disparate efforts in a tighter, coherent framework of effort at country and regional levels requires collective goal-setting and strategic drive, and a sense of direction – which only a clear view of the future, or ‘foresight’, can provide.

6. The SDGs need to be one expression of, and spur to, a wider step-up in UN strategic vision and planning. The rigorous, strategic approach taken to pursuing them should be a springboard to further progress on mainstreaming foresight elsewhere. In particular, amid today's challenges and crises we cannot lose focus on the need to build a post-2030 agenda, not just for development but for the UN's role in an ever-more fragmented, pressurised world. Foresight will be vital to designing post-2030 objectives framed around a clear understanding of future need, introducing strategic planning of policy responses and programmes with regular review points to factor in change and uncertainty.
7. While 'insiders' will take a close interest in tracking mechanisms such as the SG's annual progress report, the GSDR, and the IAEG-SDGs indicators, 2020 should also be seen as an opportunity to demonstrate that the UN is working towards the SDGs as part of a comprehensive approach to understanding, planning for, and shaping the future.
8. A stronger and practical focus on foresight will be essential both on the glidepath to 2030 and in the next phase as the organisation looks ahead to its centenary in 2045 – when questions around legitimacy and effectiveness are bound to spike. The UN will need to show it remains relevant both as a multilateral forum and in addressing collective global issues of security, human rights and development well into the middle of this century.

Implementation

This paper offers a rubric for applying foresight to the UN system. In my work with various UN agencies, including UNDOCO, the GCPSE, and training RCs in country/regional offices, I've found a broad recognition that foresight is needed to help the UN carry out its ambitious global mandate, but less clarity on who is responsible for 'picking up' foresight and making it mainstream practice. Foresight needs to be systematically ingrained and applied at three levels:

1. Country level, led by Resident Coordinators (RCs). Training and capability-building in foresight for RCs, as planned under the refresh of the RCs system, is the first step to ensuring foresight is used on the front-line to bring UN strategic policy coherence, coordinate donors and support host governments in developing policy capacities and strategies. Recommended RC actions:
 - a. Use foresight skills to improve strategic governance in 'host' governments: coordinating donors to help governments strengthen policy planning; using a 'whole of government' and long-term, trends-based approach to ensure governments develop and implement genuinely strategic workplans, with staffing/structural changes where needed; working with PM/Presidential offices to ensure follow-through.
 - b. Use UNDAF processes to design 2030 country scenarios, bringing in donors as well as UN staff to this participative process to ensure diversity of perspective. Use (and help host governments to use) scenarios for strategic navigation and stress-testing policies/programmes against future change. Revise scenarios in existing planning cycles.
 - c. Lead an ongoing scanning process, led by a transversal core group (representatives from different agencies/seniorities, including a 'Next Generation' group) and refreshed annually.

2. At regional level: UN regional offices/agencies such as the Regional Economic and Social Commissions, Bangkok, Geneva, Santiago, Beirut etc, as well as the Regional Coordination Mechanisms and the Regional UNDG Teams are best placed to observe supranational, regional trends and draw out the implications for policy/programmes.
Recommended actions:
 - a. Establish regional ‘observatories’ to scan for forthcoming issues impacting on UN work at the regional level; scan for both short-term and long-term issues; follow up findings by reviewing policies/programmes. The steering group/senior audience would be the regular joint meetings of Regional UNDGs and Regional Coordination Mechanisms (RCMs).
 - b. Develop regionalised scenarios flowing from global scenarios work; feed insights into existing regional strategy development processes and share with regional organisations such as the AfDB/ADB / EBRD.
 - c. Share experience regularly across the regional hubs and RCMs to support ‘futures culture’ becoming the norm, and long-term thinking the default operational mindset.
 - d. Build capability of government foresight/strategic planning units by promoting peer-to-peer learning by regional governments, through joint horizon scanning and strategy discussions, short-term interchange/secondment opportunities and shadowing.

3. At HQ, enhance foresight functions within the UNSG’s office (EOSG), to help develop the SG’s Prevention initiative, as well as thinking through the big-picture issues such as the future of multilateral governance and future security threats. Recommended actions:
 - a. Within EOSG, strengthen foresight functions for the Strategic Planning and Monitoring Unit, or an equivalent permanent foresight standing group/unit, to be overseen, mandated by and reporting to the ASG for Strategic Coordination. Its functions should be:
 - i. To unify and bring together existing scanning work, identify emerging issues, and support cross-system and cross-agency foresight capability building.
 - ii. To convene senior officials/practitioners from across the UN system for foresight conferences and workshops to explore futures, set vision and agree plans.
 - iii. To communicate and digest the results and implications of foresight conferences and scanning exercises, to ensure they are acted upon across the system.
 - iv. To feed into executive decisions on policy and resource.
 - v. To conduct deep-dive analysis, as commissioned by the senior leadership, on emerging or under-researched topics with operational implications.
 - vi. To cultivate existing cross-UN networks of likely supporters of foresight work, such as the UN Strategic Planning Network.

- b. Establish an annual horizon scanning process led by the central foresight unit/standing group, with each scan leading to a conference of senior-level UN leadership from across key programmes/funds/agencies, as well as regional webinars on the top issues identified. Ensure that key parts of UN system already thinking about global futures are brought together for conference (e.g. UN University, UNSSC/Staff College, and UNITAR).
 - i. Make foresight discussions a standing item for the six-monthly Chief Executives Board, with the standing foresight unit acting as the secretariat to the Board and pushing ‘futures’ issues up for consideration (e.g. long-term, emergent/underexamined issues, or those where the UN needs to boost its strategic capability to meet future demand/threats).
 - ii. Develop robust and sophisticated global scenarios for 2030/2045; future-proof planning against those scenarios.
 - iii. Strengthen the existing networks with a Foresight interest, such as the UN Innovation Network and UN Strategic Planning Network; ensure that Young UN / a ‘next generation’ group are represented to help challenge ‘official futures’.

Important Note

The recommendations in this paper do not (all) require new resources to be delivered. The emphasis should be on building on existing workstreams, discussions and structures. There are also ‘heavier’ and ‘lighter’ touch options for many recommendations – for example, the EOSG standing unit could be permanently-staffed or an ad hoc grouping taking up 5% of staff time from other roles; horizon scans can be detailed and research-based or quicker exercises based on insights ‘in the room’ at a two-hour meeting. The more in-depth options will produce more meaningful and comprehensive results to help steer into the future with confidence, but the lighter touch versions are also hugely worthwhile, generating a surprising number of insights for the time dedicated and switching staff on to thinking more about futures in their day-jobs. For any foresight work, the ultimate saving will of course be in the form of avoiding unforeseen costs, threats, and risks to organisational success.

Summary

More systematic use of foresight tools will help the UN:

Achieve the SG’s ‘Prevention’ agenda, with the potential to speed up response times and reduce spend in humanitarian crises, conflict situations and on human rights violations, by making far better use of predictive tools to anticipate future shocks and trends. Traditional futures methodologies (such as horizon-scanning, scenario development) are now complemented by sophisticated new technologies (predictive analytics, big data). [See separate SOIF thinkpiece on foresight and prevention].

1. Mobilise member states around a UN vision of future success that is both ambitious and achievable, in the context of complex, interconnecting development, humanitarian and peace & security challenges, and ‘multilateralism in retreat’.
2. Re-commit to a narrative underlining how the SDG 2030 agenda makes a difference, helping mobilise will and resources in the decade ahead.

3. Better cope, globally, regionally and locally, with ‘wicked problems’ and emerging ones such as climate change, violent extremism, and biological inequality that challenge traditional sectoral /agency boundaries.
4. Become an agent of better, responsible ‘futures thinking’ globally by showcasing best practice in-country and to other actors (civil society, governments and citizens).

Conclusion

With multilateralism under fire, being on the front foot in anticipating and preparing for future systematic challenges is more important than ever – not just to UN programmes and policies, but to the UN’s legitimacy and integrity, and its prospects in 2045 and beyond.

Chapter 7

Sustainable Development Goals: Creating more actionable process outcomes

By Gary Lawrence

Introduction

I recently had the opportunity to listen and provide reactions to some important work being done by the Friends of Governance for Sustainable Development (FGSD) on the Sustainable Development Goals¹ in preparation for progress reports and subsequent meetings. My specific task was to react to presentations on *“what issues for global sustainability not currently addressed in SDG work might emerge from technological change?”*

Ways to frame investigations of this question were well addressed by foresight (1) and scenario planning (2) process examples from the Canadian government and the UK’s School of International Futures. Their papers are found on the Friends of Governance for Sustainable Development website: <http://friendsofgovernance.org>

On the chance they are of interest, I am here providing thoughts and suggestions on some broad topics:

- Foresight and scenario planning process’ power and limitations when applied to the SDGs
- Likely barriers to effective, actionable and meaningful outcomes in the SDG process and what might be done to make the process more effective in addressing our shared futures, and
- Some thoughts by people much smarter and wiser than me on the relationships between scientific knowledge and the choice to act differently.

Tech Innovation and the future

There are, every day and everywhere, large “bets” being placed on the value of innovation in energy, synthetic chemistry, medicine, robotics, information technology, communications, new forms of currency and artificial intelligence. In some cases, the innovations are following demonstrated need and illustrating how the power of information can solve existent problems. In other cases, the technology is being deployed to shape consumer expectations and demand as the combination of venture capital and technologists create

Solutions to problems that we didn’t know we had. In almost every instance, the innovators are not accountable for the largely unpredictable ripple effects of the innovation. (3)

In farming, for instance, the multitude of innovations in genetic engineering for disease resistance, nutrient effectiveness, water management, thermal imaging drones, GPS-enabled

equipment and supply chains with electric unpiloted electric vehicles suggest that increasing populations can be well-nourished. These innovations are largely silent on economic dislocation for those whose lives have been associated with rural vocations. Nor do they address the possible problems of a mismatch between population size, location and carrying capacity.

The “Law of Unintended Consequences” (4) applies to every innovation as well as the policy framework that intends to meter its effects. These consequences may be positive, negative or merely neutral, but they veer off from the intent of the initial action.

It may be the case that the SDGs will be best served not by trying to anticipate innovation but by tracking the consequence of the innovation through the 17 goals so that the negative consequences can be mitigated before undesirable futures are too deeply embedded.

Advances in Artificial Intelligence (AI) may provide ways to more quickly recognize both the positive and negative consequences of innovation. While there may be good reasons to fear the invasion of privacy and socially manipulative uses to which AI could be put, there is also amazingly powerful good that could come from the tool’s ability to do fast data mining to identify causal relationships so that investment of scarce resources can be prioritized at the triggers of problem cascades.

“In a study published in Nature on July 3, researchers from the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory used an algorithm called *Word2Vec* sift through scientific papers for connections humans had missed.” (12) Imagine having such an algorithm created to sift through all the research being compiled on discrete research investigations to ferret out connections that humans might miss. This would go a long way toward answering the yet unanswered questions about “how this relates to that” and “if we were to solve this complex problem that transcends so many issues, where would be best start?” Is there an academic/industry partner out there to create such a tool?

A key question, perhaps the key question for the SDGs is, given that there are dependent relationships within and across each of the 17 goal areas, what ought to be the priorities? There are groups looking at relationships but, so far, not at primacy. It is often said in management literature that “*if you have more than three priorities you really don’t have any priorities.*” For a variety of reasons related to the robust democracy of constituents for every part of every goal, it is likely that the effect of the knowledge being created will be diffuse rather than focused, making the process less effective than it otherwise might be. If the question of the SDGs was “Given what we know today about the present and future trends, what three problems we would try to solve first?” then, perhaps, scenario planning processes could be effective.

Foresight/Scenario Planning (6)

I should begin by saying that there remains within the literature substantial debates over the utility of scenario planning processes (7). It would seem that, as often the case, they will work if the people involved want them to.

In general, and everything about this is much more complicated than I represent here. These processes have to do with:

- **Acknowledgment** that *planning for the present is a fool's choice* no matter how comforting it feels. Change is the status quo. It is time that makes the present seem permanent
- **Acceptance** that though *the future is somewhat constrained by the past, it is mostly indeterminant, random and uncertain* but that is no excuse to not prepare for what is most likely to happen when weighted probabilities can be assigned.
- **Recognition** that no change of substance happens independently. Each change bumps up against other things within its own system and adjacent systems and changes them to some degree. *Single system thinking will never manage change effectively.*
- **Scanning knowledge horizons** to determine when the *relevant unknowable emerges as knowable so that action can be taken* to manage downside risk and optimize upside outcomes is the most cost effective and socially responsible way to address the future.
- Based upon an assessment of likely consequences of change for key determinants of future, **prepositioned adaptation and resilience strategies for the most critical issues is the only sustainability responsible position to take.**
- Those strategies need to be **technically feasible, economically viable & politically acceptable** for those that need to act.

In military intelligence, scenario planning has to do with protecting national security by anticipating new threats, preparing to overcome those threats, and hopefully trying take steps to diminish the threat or maximize opportunities. In business it has largely to do with managing relatively narrow-band risk related to protecting shareholder and stakeholder value. The SDG's, concerned as they are with manageable global and distributed human existential risks (5) within and across natural and human-created systems, will certainly test the capacity of any scenario planning process.

Changing weather complicates national defense planning and drives up capital costs. Within national governments and treaty organizations such as NATO national defense and mutual aid planning incorporates many SDG topical areas into its threat assessments. Organizations such as the US's CIA *Center for Climate & Security* (8) are engaged in research like that being pursued within the SDG process but focused on their own priorities. The US Navy along with General Services Administration are addressing emergent sea level and storm surge risks for dockside, warehousing, fueling and base housing, etc. The increased power of ocean storms is a great problem for national defense aviation where air bases are in coastal zones or alluvial plains...and associated tidal waves are also beyond our control. But we can predict them within reason and take steps to avoid the worst outcomes through land use and design decisions, so they are in my terms manageable. Not managing makes them existential threats.

In the business and organizational development world the most notable example of effective foresight was done by Royal Dutch Schell in the 1970's. The structure of the effort was based upon methodologies the Rand Corporate developed for the Department of Defense. Again, very simplistically, Shell was trying to answer the question "With regard to resource supply

and demand, and societal variables, how probable is it that a specific thing that affects us might occur and what plans should we put in place for probable events of greatest consequence?”

Shell’s leadership invested in prepositioning plans and strategies to address potential possible futures because preparation provided first mover advantage when the future became real. The costs of doing plans for something that didn’t occur paled in comparison to the financial benefits of having strategies in place to address new realities. Getting agreement among their leadership and the various constituencies within the corporation to spend resources preparing for unknowable possibilities cannot have been free of conflict. Given the largely unified corporate culture and shared objectives of the Shell enterprise however, getting agreement on need, process and investment in managing outcomes must have been easy compared trying to do something within the UN system.

Shell and other private sector scenario planning examples makes little sense for the SDGs. National Defense examples don’t work either. In both of those types of examples the scope of the considerations is narrow, authority to assign priorities exist, and decisions on investment are not diffused. To put it another way, scenario planning works within defense and business because within each is someone with the power to finally decide where to focus when making hard choices. This is one of the things that so confuses the private sector about the UN – they know who the leaders are, but the decision-makers may be less easy to find.

The SDG Question

Unlike the relative narrow questions considered in typical scenario planning, the *SDGs are attempting to take on a combined and distributed existential problem. How ought human societies and the subsystems that enable and constrain their well-being change if the species to survive in conditions better than one can reasonably predict today?*

Un-asked, but underpinning the enormity of the question, is ...*And, in this change, who will be the relative winners and losers?* While it is possible for everyone to be better off it seems impossible that everyone will be equally well off. As I once heard (can’t remember where) equity has to do with distribution. Equality has to do with getting fair access to a game where most of the winnings have already been taken off the table. For the SDGs to be effective as a framework for understanding the present and constructively reacting to conceivable possible futures that create more just human and economic systems they need to be understood as political and moral issues.

Because the United Nations is an association of national interests and communities of interest, if the SDGs are to substantively matter then people will need to authorize and insist that their institutions act in different ways than they currently do. Majorities of interests will need to see themselves as being well served through the changes necessary to reduce the risk that human society will not fare well in the currently likely futures. And, current “winners” in the global game will need to see themselves as continued winners in futures even where benefits are more equitably distributed or they will use their power to block needed change.

Constituency maps based in the battle over the primacy of pronouns will need to be reweighted. The current “I” vs “They” structure of most societies (I am harmed, they are the cause, they should change) needs to better empower “We” pronoun, as in “if we can’t work together to solve the most important of our existential threats, even if it is not the threat in which my constituency has the greatest interest, then we, collectively, are screwed.”

I think the SDG process needs to rethink itself. None of the work would need to change. The research and science are critical. But, for the SDG to have real, actionable meaning for human society it needs to be a political/moral process with scientific/technical attributes rather than a scientific/technical process with the potential for political consequence and different ethical choices.

A Framework for Informing Political Choice

In 1620 the English natural scientist and philosopher Francis Bacon (9), considered by many the founder of empiricism and the scientific method, published his Novum Organum: True Directions Concerning the Interpretation of Nature. In Part 1 he sets out a series of aphorisms that describe why, in his view, we are so blind to objective reality. Aphorism 49 is particularly relevant to our time as we move further toward **I vs They** conflicts in which there is no room for doubt and all that matter are subjective certainties. In it he says the following:

*“The human understanding is no dry light, but receives an infusion from the will and affections; whence proceed sciences which may be called “sciences as one would.” **For what a man had rather were true he more readily believes** (emphasis added). Therefore he rejects difficult things from impatience of research; sober things, because they narrow hope; the deeper things of nature, from superstition; the light of experience, from arrogance and pride, lest his mind should seem to be occupied with things mean and transitory; things not commonly believed, out of deference to the opinion of the vulgar. Numberless in short are the ways, and sometimes imperceptible, in which the affections colour and infect the understanding.”*

In other words, interpretations of facts are always shaped by emotions and prejudices and one should assume that no matter how rigorous the peer reviewed science of the SDG research, once it is in the public domain it will be interpreted with bias. Not only the bias of others but bias within your own group as well. To not understand this is to not understand the amount of anger and mistrust extant about the need to rethink how we should proceed as a human society. Any group - be they environmental, political, social, economic, religious or otherwise - that sanctifies its own interpretation of truth regarding the root of dangerous changes in natural systems is playing the “I vs They” game.

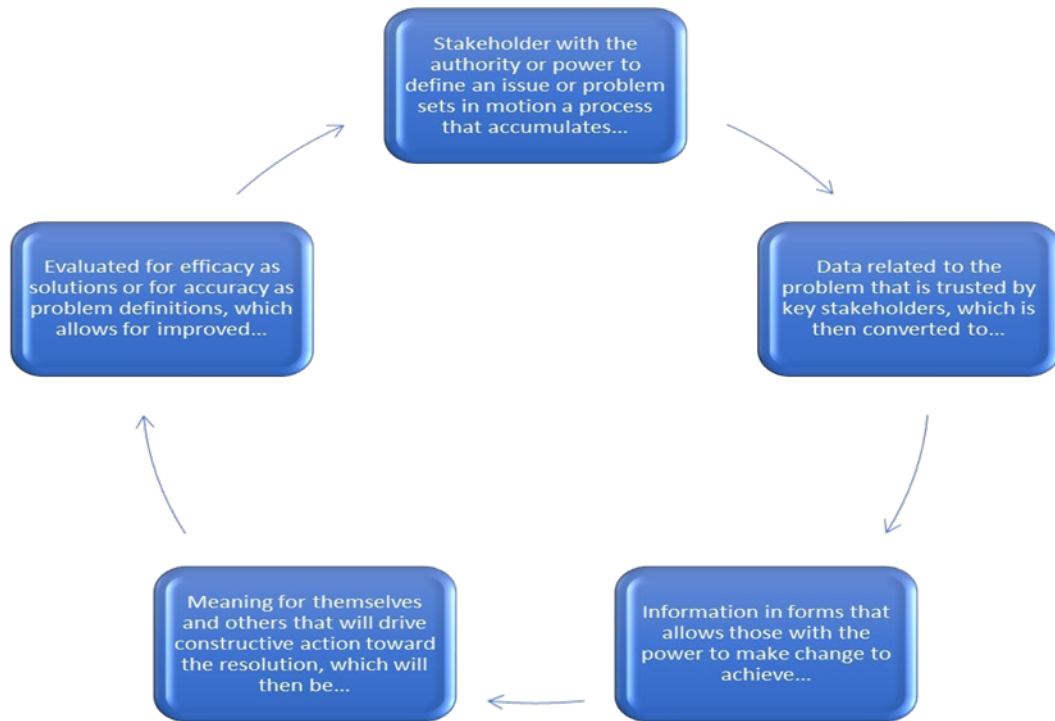
As the Nobel Laureate Physicist said Richard Feynman said, *“It is imperative in science to doubt; it is absolutely necessary, for progress in science, to have uncertainty as a fundamental part of your inner nature. To make progress in understanding, we must remain modest and allow that we do not know. Nothing is certain or proved beyond all doubt. You investigate for curiosity, because it is unknown, not because you know the answer. And as you develop more information in the sciences, it is not that you are finding out the truth, but that you are finding out that this or that is more or less likely.”* (10)

For me, this means that that any SDG process must have as a fundamental attribute the ability to test ideas and interventions, admit error and make changes even if the need to change is embarrassing. In financial terms it is far less expensive to admit mistakes and change than it is to continue doing things that clearly don't work even though the political cost can be high.

Another issue needing to be addressed in the SDG process (and life in general) is referred to by Richard Barnard as a problem of privilege. More pervasive than financial or status privilege, this has to do with the belief that because of whom one is they have the right to decide what is open to question. One key question is "what won't we talk about." Lest one think this is an issue only for entitled conservatives and political elite, every powerful interest group engaged in the SDG process has its own individuals and organizations that reserve the privilege to define what is to be talked about and how the terms of the conversations are to be defined. Social justice and environmental organizations are not exempt from this. It is necessary that the question "who decided that this isn't something to talk about and why" be asked. ² At least two Ph.D. thesis have been written about this but they are pretty dry.

One way to look at the look at the political/moral translation of the SDGs is through a process that links queries to data to information to meaning to action to evaluation and so on. I learned to use this approach when I was an urban planning director.

In the City of Seattle planning struggles I was regularly frustrated because I was not smart enough to see that no matter how much I wanted to tell the public what data ought to mean to them and what they ought to do in response would always be rebuffed. Being too smart for them me, they reserved the right to make their own decisions. And, being as pluralistic as anywhere else, their meanings were highly diffused and subjective. Eventually we worked with them to use data that they trusted as well as our own so they could arrive at their own shared meanings. Only then were we able to get a majority to act in the same direction.



Notes

- (1) Processes intended to improve the ability to predict or the action of predicting what will happen or be needed in the future
- (2) Scenario planning may involve aspects of systems thinking, specifically the recognition that many factors may combine in complex ways to create sometime surprising futures (due to nonlinear feedback loops). The method also allows the inclusion of factors that are difficult to formalize, such as novel insights about the future, deep shifts in values, unprecedented regulations or inventions. – Wikipedia
- (3) https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/neagpb/ai-trained-on-old-scientific-papers-makes-discoveries-humans-missed
- (4) Robert K. Merton in 1936. The Unanticipated Consequences of Purposive Social Action, which covers five different ways that actions, particularly those taken on a large scale as by governments, may have unexpected consequences.
- (5) Existential and manageable key notions not well addressed in the SDGs. i.e. probabilities can be assigned to cataclysmic asteroid strikes that make human continuance improbable. Because we are currently ill equipped to intervene, they are both existential and not

manageable per se and not discussed as a sustainability issue except by a few. Substantial seismic events

- (6) I will use the more generic term scenario planning
- (7) <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/strategy-and-corporate-finance/our-insights/overcomingobstacles-to-effective-scenario-planning>
- (8) <https://climateandsecurity.org/>
- (9) Yes, another dead white guy
- (10) From one of his John Danz lectures collected in the book The Meaning of It All.
- (11) At least two Ph.D. thesis have been written about this but they are pretty dry.
- (12) https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/neagpb/ai-trained-on-old-scientific-papers-makes-discoveries-humans-missed

Chapter 8

The Role of the German Council for Sustainable Development (RNE)

By Günther Bachmann

Checking in on the unexpected

More and more, human influence is coming to shape our epoch in Earth's history. The evidence is overwhelming, scientifically, and more importantly, also in terms of what people can feel and live – or suffer through. The situation is urgent. Neither will global warming just “go away” nor is sustainable development “just another gimmick”. By the hundreds of millions people are suffering from poverty, malnutrition and hunger while biodiversity and natural food systems are under dramatic stress. The time - line adds to the new dimension. In terms of other areas, deliberately delaying political action often is an option. With climate change and biodiversity losses it is different: Postponing exacerbates the issues.

Appropriate action must come in the form of risk management, emergency response and precautionary measures. The UN's Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda, consider new ways to deal with the Anthropocene as Paul Crutzen once suggested to call our times. Some of these are on the horizon, others not yet. Some are simply demanding that we finally do what we already know needs to be done while others demand new out-of-the-box thinking and deep research. Still others will prove to be non-linear or cannot be planned ahead of time. And some will come with new technologies and/or unprecedented changes in societal and behavior and attitudes.

Of utmost importance for more sustainable pathways are the rule of law, the division of power and the representative democracy, as we know them. There is also a case for partnerships beyond silos and for collaboration that functions in spite of conflicts of interest. A strong civil society, an innovative research community and a competitive market economy are facing uncharted territory.

That is why enabling our imaginations to rise to the challenges ahead needs, among other things, sound policy advice, and most certainly a new type of advice. No one has a blueprint for navigating the Anthropocene, and we all must come up with ideas and actions that enable a decent way of life within the planetary boundaries for contemporary and future generations.

The uphill struggle

The German government uses the Council for Sustainable Development as a kind of political pathfinder. Almost twenty years of practice have yielded a fair amount of insight into what works and what would probably not deliver, as well as into the shades of grey that lie between those poles.

For the Council members, the starting position was in no way a comfort zone. In the early 2000 years, in Germany, sustainable development was a well-contested concept. Campaigners for human rights and those fighting on behalf of the environment did not even like the wording because to them its comprehensiveness seemed to impinge upon clear-cut mono-topical campaign motifs. It would give

entrepreneurs and the economy at large too much say, environmentalists feared. They tend to misapply the concept as just another wording that would cover just the same purely environmental demands. Economists and the business community misused the concept for greenwashing “same-same” attitudes. The Greens (in the sense of the German political system), at that time junior partners in the red–green government coalition, mostly opposed the concept because they perceived it to be in competition with their “green” identity. None too few other parliamentarians denounced the concept as a nanny-state socialistic planning economy. They declared it doomed to fail. The general public heard not a word about sustainable development.

Even today, the process of adapting to the challenges of the SDGs is slow and meandering. In Germany, the youth protest movement has helped immensely to speed up the realisation we need in order to recombine line organisations, networks and grassroots practice with market-relevant corporate governance and make them part of the solution for sustainable development.

This article aims to give an overview of Council’s the mandate and shed light on how this mandate is being leveraged. The composition of Council is key, too, as is the operative capacity embodied by the office and the role of the Secretary-General. Right from the first day, the role of the Council has essentially been twofold: for the government the Council is an adviser and facilitator while for large segments of the public and non-governmental institutions the Council plays the role of a gatekeeper of deep sustainability thinking.

This is the context in which the German Council for Sustainable Development works as a multi-stakeholder body mandated to advise the government on all issues of sustainability policy. The Council was first established in 2001 and is being re-mandated every three years, partly taking on new members. A total of some fifty eminent representatives of stakeholder groups have sat on the Council. [1]

Mandate

In the 1990s, prior to establishing the Council, German politics failed to agree a sustainable development strategy via conventional line (sectoral) department governance. Insufficient governance was at the heart of this failure. The political system had “translated” sustainability as a primarily environmental task and made the ministry for the environment responsible for delivery of a cross-sectoral strategy. This invited vetoes from players in the other line departments, and the draft for the national sustainability strategy never even reached cabinet level.

The Federal Cabinet, newly elected into office in 1998, decided to change the arrangement. The underlying reasoning was that one a) needed a decision-making structure within the administration (what then became the role of the State Secretaries’ Committee, chaired by the Chancellery’s chief of staff and with subsequent working capacities in the central and line departments); that one b) had to continuously facilitate the top level leadership (and would have to deliver tools and results the top level would take an interest in, including public resonance and the policy cycle); and c) for this to happen, the government would need “outside the box” advice that resonated both inside and outside

of government. This advice would have to come from a new advisory structure, which then became the Council for Sustainable Development.

The government's mandate asks the Council to a) give advice on request, b) come up with projects, advice and/or recommendations on its own motivation as well, c) address the public by underlining the importance of sustainable pathways and emerging urgencies.

Consequently, it was the Council who first drafted a full framework of 20 national goals and indicators, which the government subsequently transformed into the first-ever national Sustainability Strategy in 2002 [2]. The Council's accompanying message was threefold: a) a strategy has to be ambitious, long term and meaningful as well as underpinned with the metrics of targets and timetables. (In 2001, for quite a number of politicians that sounded a lot like socialism, but that argument was won.) b) Regulation is needed, but would have to go far beyond the common understanding of just passing a couple of laws; the Council encouraged the federal government to link up with all levels of public (federal) responsibility and – most importantly – to engage multiple stakeholders in a constructive action-oriented dialogue. (Although this sounds fairly self-evident, it is not an easy task as the claims of stakeholders and local or regional actors are often overlapping and intertwined.) c) Systemic and global interdependencies require any German strategy to consider footprints and material issues that go far beyond German borders. (Only with the 2030 Agenda, was the Council able to anchor this principle of universality by introducing the triad of implementing SDGs *within* Germany (housekeeping), *with* German help abroad (development cooperation and foreign policies), and *by considering* Germany's global impact, both in terms of problematic footprints and solution oriented handprints.)

The Council can only live up to the expectations if properly institutionalised and equipped with substantial office capacities. The working modality of an office to the Council is the most important governance tool. In the German case, the office works on a politically independent basis and is led by a Secretary-General, who is accountable for all proceedings associated with the Council. Such an institutionalised, responsible and independent structure of a Council's office is needed to perform several high-performance tasks, inter alia: to function as an interface for the central government and line departments, to translate productive Council deliberations into concrete recommendations, to manage the multi-stakeholder governance, to secure science-based inputs, to address the public and interested parties, to facilitate peer reviews and other international advisory features, and to perform all this in a way that substantiates the creative and think-outside-the-box approach the quest for a sustainable development so urgently needs. From the very first day, the RNE office displayed a significant work commitment and high-level calling power, and it has only increased its performance ever since. The way in which the Council facilitates dialogue and reaches out to society – and how this is communicated – is just as important as the substance of recommendations to the government themselves.

Since 2001, the Council has advised six governments, with four different political “colours” and formed by three different types of coalition. No government changed the mandate substantially. However, the Council's array of projects and operational excellence has evolved quite significantly. In that sense, the Council's role has changed.

This learning curve is empowered by practice. Over the years, the Council has added value to its advisory role by acting as gatekeeper. The role of a trusted gatekeeper requires, *inter alia*, the building up of a significant calling power and networking capacity. It also requires expertise and insights into how the administration works and what is material for private sector businesses.

Composition

It is important to note that the Chancellor appoints high-ranking eminent Council members. Some of them had held minister positions in the federal and Länder governments before, or were still in leading roles at corporations, hidden-champion family businesses, or joined the Council in their capacity as elected presidents of powerful lobby groups such as Friends of the Earth Germany, Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Union, or consumer rights groups, and last but not least trade unions and churches. Researchers representing the academic community continuously played an important role on the Council.

The RNE's role, status and self-image and its political effectiveness were the subject of early discussions, as they continue to be now. The members and the Council office are permanently checking relevance and impact and self-adjust their work modalities accordingly. This is perhaps the single most important reason why, after nearly twenty years, more and more eminent personalities are eager to serve on the Council. With no substantial impact, that would hardly be the case.

The modality of an SD council would need, so goes the thinking, to go beyond the logic of both purely academic advice or public campaigning. Instead of delegates (bound to simply repeating preexisting decisions of the institutions they represent), the Chancellor appoints Council members in an *ad personam* function. Even without a formal gender quota the composition of the Council is quite gender-balanced.

The membership term is three years and members can be re-appointed. Members come from civil society, environmental and development NGOs, the private sector, churches, local communities, the academia, research and education, and all kind of other public interest communities.

The Council's design is founded on a couple of rules of thumb: a) the larger the number of members, the weaker the will of policymakers to actually use the Council's results. Fifteen is a fair indicator for political relevance. b) Limiting the seats on the Council incentivises community work and helps maintain political momentum in the constituencies and in politics because the number of some fifteen seats is not representative in terms of "all" important stakeholders. c) In order to be attractive to a larger number of relevant and interested groups and sectors, the Council must try to work "outside the box" and "beyond the usual echo chambers". The limit of fifteen members and their *ad personam* assignments provides a fair chance of reducing otherwise obstructive turf wars or showboating, though it naturally cannot exclude them entirely.

Within the German governance system, the three-year appointment term means that every government will be involved at least once with deciding on the Council's composition. The German Sustainable Development Strategy follows a four-year policy cycle that corresponds to that of the

legislative period. It features reporting on the statistics of the 64 German indicators every two years, the process of reviewing and dialoguing, and it allows for new work items and the required commissioning of research. It is also aligned with the rhythm of the United Nations' ECOSOC High-Level Political Forum. Aside from this, the Strategy is open for intermediary sectoral sub-strategies, such as for organic farming and regarding the future of the food sector, education for sustainable development, research campaigns into certain topics related to sustainable development, and others.

The three-year appointment helps members to reconcile jobs, positions and other obligations. The chair and vice-chair of the Council are voted into their position by the members on the occasion of the constitutional meeting, convened by the Chief-of-Staff of the German Chancellery. At this meeting, the Chancellery and members also agree on the rules of procedure drafted by the Council's Secretary-General.

The operative arm

Council members are not being paid an honorary for their advisory function. The federal government, however, provides an office, and its staff is fully paid. For Council members, and for the RNE as an institution, the operative capacity provided by the office is of utmost importance.

At the end of every term of office, both maintaining the high level of commitment and retaining the top-ranking eminence of members is a political challenge. The transition between two terms may result in a gap between the previous term ending and new members being appointed for the next term

This happened frequently in the past. In this case, the RNE office secures the continuity and impact of the RNE externally as well as the transition of projects and work lines.

Services for the office's legal and contracting matters are provided by a third party, which, since 2008, has been the German development aid company, Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit, GIZ. Recruitment of office staff is the sole responsibility of the Secretary-General, a position which is filled in close consultation with the Chancellery.

The Secretary-General has a political role. The Secretary-General does not have voting power on the Council, though does have the right to make suggestions for the agenda of Council meetings and is responsible for communicating and following up on the RNE policies, for drafting and fact-checking the recommendations, think papers or any other output of the Council, including communication in social media. He/she facilitates the debate between Council members and the government or other stakeholders. In particular, he/she is the main liaison between the federal government and the Council, in particular on emerging topical issues. Governance issues, line department topics such as the energy transition, mobility, sustainable finance, (big) data sovereignty and its relevance for advanced solutions, corporate reporting, agriculture and food systems are currently ranking very high on the topics list, as well as cross-sectoral challenges in terms of public procurement, innovative environmental precautionary principle, education and science-policy interfaces.

The Secretary-General represents the Council as a permanent guest on the State Secretaries' Committee for Sustainable Development, alternating attendance with the Council Chairperson. He/she and the staff also engage the line departments and the Council's European and global networks with regard to the multilateral 2030 Agenda. He/she is further tasked with functioning in the community as an information broker and network hub. For this task RNE runs and facilitates a number of networks and platforms.

As the Council is committed to functioning as an "honest broker" between the new and the old, pioneers and those catching up, grassroots and corporate leaders, also between different parts of the line departments, and between top down and bottom up ideas, this is mainly carried over into the task of the office. Classic dichotomies such as regulation versus voluntary action, go-to-chances versus no-go-risks, gloom and doom dystopia versus visionary thinking ahead, knowledge versus action may sometimes be valid, but more often prove to be not overly helpful. Leadership, as expressed by navigating the deep waters of sustainability is a crucial element of any state governance for national sustainable development strategies or plans. The Council thus augments that which the federal government can potentially achieve in implementing SDGs.

There is a case for governance via non-governmental action and institutions in the form of networks, cooperations, partnerships, data economy, reporting and non-legal responsibility (licence to operate). This type of governance has long been neglected and needs to be looked at much more exhaustively.

The Council has so far worked on a trial-and-error basis and experimented with new formats of action, each of them targeting communities of practitioners in different areas:

- *Private sector*

For addressing the private sector, the Council developed a transparency tool that allows companies to report back on their non-financial aspects, such as ecology, human rights and social dimensions, including in the value chain. This was well before the relevant European legislation. The Sustainability Code has created a community of practitioners. Off-shoots of this tool are now available in several languages and are attracting the attention of companies and stakeholders in other countries. Its application is voluntary, and a database is made available by the Council. The Sustainability Code can be applied by all companies that are required by European legislation to disclose their non-financial performance data. It is worth noting that the majority of reports have so far come from companies that are not legally required to do so. They are perhaps intrinsically motivated, or they see a good reputation as a market driver and a bonus when it comes to attracting young staff. Established in 2010, the Code has gained momentum, both nationally and internationally. A number of other nations access adapted forms of the Code. The Council continuously improves the Code and e.g. enables it to explicitly cover SDG commitments. [3]

In a recent move, the Council has begun bringing together politicians, financial capital agents and civil society organisers to engage in dialogue on the upcoming issues of sustainable finance. As a multi-stakeholder engagement structure, the Council's Hub for Sustainable Finance successfully triggered governmental action as well as raising awareness among market actors.

- *Local communities*

In order to contribute to localising the SDG implementation the Council facilitates mainly two processes: a) the dialogue of city mayors, with all German pioneer cities and a total of more than 30 mayors participating, is advancing the local top-level political leadership, advocating participatory processes and demanding more support from the federal government, and b) the Council runs a network of four hubs that network sustainability issues on a regional scale (covering northern, western, southern and central Germany). These hubs are civil society- and action-based, rather than being part of the regular federalist decision-making institutions. For a federalist country, this is an important aspect to mention. In addition, the Council hosts an annual grassroots action week.

- *Culture*

Having in mind the important role of culture and the arts and facilitated by monies provided directly by the Parliament, the Council runs a programme of seed money grants directed at projects and initiatives that embed sustainability in everyday cultural practice related to eating, housing, being mobile and fashion.

Gatekeeper role and facilitating Peer Reviews

The Council has grown into a gatekeeper role. The Council and its office are a sought-after partner for design thinking, brainstorming new ideas and for deliberating new policy choices. The number of meetings, public hearings or contributions to conferences is ever increasing.

The Council has adapted the concept of peer reviews to the needs of sustainability policies. In 2017 the federal government has invited senior international experts to subject the German Sustainable Development Strategy to a peer review. Peers are asked for a close scrutiny and to provide impulses to the government for sharpening focus and governance of the strategy. It is the task of the Secretary-General to design the work process and to suggest an assembly of eminent peers. The Chancellor appoints the Chair of the peer group whereas the members of the group are selected in close consultation between the Chair, the Council and the government. The RNE office checks facts and findings, provides documentation and in-depth analyses where requested, and organises stakeholder debates as well as providing managerial process competences.

Out of some 60 national indicators, 29 evidence gaps and non-delivery. The statistics say that we are off target. The recent international peer review, chaired by Helen Clark, encourages Germany to be more ambitious. The Peers also pointed out that even more is needed in order to deal with emerging new challenges, e.g. those associated with digitalisation, geopolitics and climate neutrality. [2]

The Council further provides strong support for the German Sustainability Award, GSA. This dates back to the initial debate on what an award of this kind would be about. Today, the GSA is a cutting-edge event. It features pioneering businesses and cities, outstanding examples of sustainable architecture, research and global partnerships. With a total of around 2,000 attendees, the GSA is a two-day congress followed by the award ceremony and an aftershow event. Among others, it cooperates with the federal government, the German Council for Sustainable Development, local

organisations, business associations, research institutions and civil society organisations. The RNE's Secretary-General chairs the grand juries and is one of the anchor presenters.

Impact

Two decades of practice have been amassed which now function as a trove of practitioners' insights that enrich the role of the Council. Progress has most certainly been made, including progress that would not have come about without the Council. The Council has successfully kept the issue of sustainable development on the political agenda, and even raised political awareness both cross-sectorally and vertically/horizontally.

There are no recipes for a silver-bullet cure, and even sub-nationally or in smaller line sectors, approaches vary. Differences in the political culture, materiality of issues and budget constraints – even the habits of leaders and leadership styles – are likely to need differentiated answers. At a minimum, the Council's advisory and gatekeeper role complements the conventional campaigning and watchdog activities of organised civil society. Members of the Council may change “hats”, moving between the civil society role of their home institutions and their council member role. This, too, can create a very constructive momentum.

The multi-stakeholder composition does not work of its own volition, however; rather, it must be orchestrated adequately and within clear and deliberate spaces that are known to all involved. It can motivate members and governmental addressees to discuss complex issues from various angles in order to identify pathways that are far richer than the lowest common denominator. As with advice on the German Sustainable Development Strategy itself or on energy, finance, agriculture, public procurement, innovation or regional networking, recommendations are not necessarily always to the immediate liking of the current government, nor to organized civil society much less to vested interests.

With progressive and nuanced statements and its array of projects and initiatives, the Council has significantly influenced societal and political debates and awareness for key issues. Although it has left deep imprints on political and societal debates, it comes as no surprise that a fair number of the RNE's ambitions have failed to deliver. These are the most significant failures: a) in the early 2000 years, the Council failed to deliver a recommendation on taxation issues. After exhaustive deliberations between Council members representing the three key stakeholder groups (environment, economy, academia) and after having jointly found a fair solution, the final approval debate in the Council completely lost its way and ceded to outsider arguments; b) on the topic of mobility, the Council missed the mark as a result of deep insider knowledge from Council members that could not be disclosed; c) the German decision to phase out nuclear energy would have been unthinkable without the input and commitment of key RNE players. However, the RNE itself never communicated this as a major issue. As a result, the German public is experiencing the energy transition as primarily a technical issue. The current lack of consistent storytelling (narrative) impedes the energy transition as a whole and works against public acceptance, for instance when choosing sites for new wind energy or transmission lines.

The Council has brought and still brings stakeholders, grassroots activists, political leaders, scientists and business leaders into contact with the idea, strategy, ways and means of sustainable development. Some of these may not previously have had the opportunity to come into contact with sustainability thinking. In German politics, sustainability is on a positive trajectory. It is increasingly accepted as a fundamental and guiding principle for all fields of expertise and areas of life. Acceptance, however, does not mean that everyone is already observing the principle, much less pursuing creative implementation. It still is an uphill battle.

The better is the enemy of the good. Introducing a 360° circular economy, changing the fossil fuel and nuclear energy system, zeroing land degradation, ending self-destructive consumerism, entering into a fair and inclusive economy that helps to end hunger and poverty worldwide – all that goes far beyond what is happening today. But they matter for the people, for jobs and for a sense of life purpose. They increasingly attract the hope and curiosity of many, and this will incubate new competences and catalyse skills that most actors didn't even know they would have.

Notes

[1] Members of the Council reviewed the mandate, results and perspective of their engagement in an open review after 15 years of advising the government. See “15 Years of the RNE. A Review of Insights with a Foreword by the Council’s Secretary-General, Prof. Dr Günther Bachmann”, https://www.nachhaltigkeitsrat.de/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/20170911_15_years_RNE_reflection_exzerpt_for_Peer_Review.pdf

[2] In 2002 the German government presented its first national sustainable development strategy titled "Perspectives for Germany – Our Strategy for Sustainable Development". A programme of measures adopted in 2010 specified the tasks ahead. Since 2016, the German Sustainability Strategy is aligned with the UN's 17 sustainable development goals. In November 2018, the government adopted an update, considering in a first move the result of the Peer Review 2018. In October 2019, the government started its policy and dialogue cycle that is expected to end in the second half of 2020 with a re-worked strategy. The actual and previous strategy documents can be retrieved from <https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-en/issues/sustainability/germany-s-national-sustainable-development-strategy-354566>

[3] The Sustainability Code is an internationally applicable reporting standard for topics relating to sustainability. The German Council for Sustainable Development adopted the Code in 2011 following a comprehensive multi-stakeholder process. <https://www.nachhaltigkeitsrat.de/en/projects/the-sustainability-code/>

[4] Helen Clark (New Zealand, former UN DP Administrator), Adolfo Ayuso-Audry (Mexico, government), Karl Falkenberg (Brussels), Julie Gelfand (Canada, Supreme Auditing Body), Virginie Helias (Switzerland, Procter & Gamble), Lailai Li (China, World Resources Institute), Namhla Mniki-Mangaliso (South Africa, African Monitor), Joost Oorthuizen (The Netherlands, Sustainable Trade Initiative), Teresa Ribera (Spain/France, IDDRI), Jan-Gustav Strandenaes (Norway, UN Major Groups expert, Pure Consultancy), Farooq Ullah (United Kingdom, UK Stakeholders for Sustainable Development), 2018: The 2018 Peer Review on

the German Sustainability Strategy, https://www.nachhaltigkeitsrat.de/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/2018_Peer_Review_of_German_Sustainability_Strategy_BITV.pdf

Chapter 9

The Basque Sustainable Bonds

By Jorge Fernandez-Quintela

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

The debt market may play an essential role in the funding of projects that contribute towards social and environmental sustainability. The development of the market for green bonds, social bonds and sustainable bonds is vital for this.

The first green bond emerged on the market in 2008 as a result of a joint initiative between the World Bank and the Swedish financial group, Skandinaviska Enskilda Banken (SEB)¹. Since then, there are more and more investors who devote part of their portfolios to supporting environmental, social and good governance projects. Green bonds guarantee that the money associated to their purchase will be used to fund projects with a positive environmental impact.

Over the years, the concept of green bond has been extended to other themed bonds, such as social bonds (to support social causes), blue bonds (to support fisheries and sustainable marine projects) or sustainable bonds (to support social and environmental projects). Sustainable bonds are any type of debt issued by public and private institutions whose revenue will be used exclusively to fully or partially finance or refinance new and/or existing green and sustainable projects that contribute towards the fulfilment of the Sustainable Development Goals.

In June 2018, the Basque Government issued sustainable bonds for a total value of 500 million Euros on the Bilbao Stock Exchange. These bonds are valid for 10 years and will accrue annual interest of 1.45%. The funds will be used to finance projects aligned with the Agenda Basque Country 2030, which reflects the degree of alignment and contribution of the Government Programme to the goals and objectives related to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Issues of green bonds, social bonds and sustainable bonds follow the Green Bond Principles (GBP) and the Social Bond Principles (SBP) established by the International Capital Market Association. The principles that this type of bonds must fulfil include the drafting of annual reports on the allocation of funds and impact.

1.2. Project Goals

The aim of this project is to draw up the 2018 Report on the allocation of resources and the economic, environmental and social impact of the Basque Country sustainable bond. The impact has been assessed using a dual approach. First of all, the individual impact of each project financed has been assessed using economic, social and environmental impact indicators (common practice within the context of the assessment of this type of bonds). Secondly, the total impact of the bond on production (economic dimension), income and employment (social dimension) in the Basque Country has been assessed using input-output tables (IOT).

2. Context

2.1. Global Situation

In its eleven years of history, the market for this kind of bonds has moved from being dominated by **multilateral bodies**, such as the World Bank, to become a market in which **governments** and **public companies** and **private organisations** participate. In the whole of Europe, there are more than 50 agents who have issued green bonds. A total of 15 agents have opted for social bonds and 24 have issued sustainable bonds. Table 2.1 shows the agents that issue this type of bonds in Spain.

Table 2.1 Agents issuing bonds in Spain

| Type of Bond | Agent |
|-------------------|--|
| Green Bonds | ACS SCE |
| | ADIF – High Speed |
| | Banco Bilbao Bizkaia Argentaria (BBVA) |
| | Gas Natural Fenosa |
| | Iberdrola |
| | Repsol |
| Social Bonds | Community of Madrid |
| | Official Credit Institute |
| | Kutxabank |
| Sustainable Bonds | North Rhine |
| | Banco Bilbao Bizkaia Argentaria (BBVA) |
| | Basque Government |
| | Caja Rural de Navarra |
| | City of Barcelona |
| | Community of Madrid |
| | Telefónica |

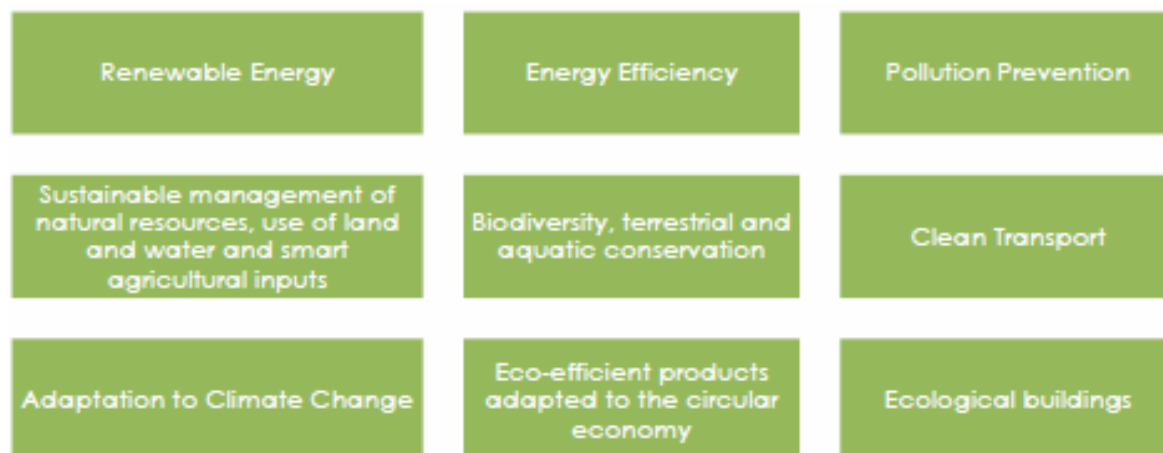
Source: International Capital Market Association (consulted on 2nd May 2019)

Issues of green bonds, social bonds and sustainable bonds follow the **Green Bond Principles** (GBP) and the **Social Bond Principles** (SBP) established by the International Capital Market Association.

Principle 1: User of funds. The funds should be allocated to projects with clear sustainability benefits. These projects should be evaluated and, when feasible, quantified by the issuer. In the event that all or a proportion of the funds is used for refinancing, it is recommended that the issuers provide an estimate of the financing percentage over that of re-financing. The type of projects most commonly funded by social bonds are:



As for green bonds, the most commonly funded projects are:



Principle 2: Assessment process and project selection. The issuer of the bonds must notify investors of the sustainability objectives, the process which determines the way in which the projects fit into the previous categories and the eligibility criteria, including, where appropriate, the exclusion criteria and any other process that serves to manage risks and costs associated with projects. Therefore, they must be transparent and allow external evaluation.

Principle 3: Management of funds. The funds must be controlled by the issuer in an appropriate and transparent way and formally confirmed by the issuer. The issuer will allow the complementary review by an auditor or a third party in order to verify the monitoring method.

Principle 4: Reports. The issuer must annually update information on the use of funds and the sustainability benefits obtained. It must include a list of projects to which the funds have been allocated as well as a brief description of the projects and the amount allocated. The **use of qualitative indicators** (and quantitative indicators where possible) regarding the performance of the bonds is recommended.

Table 2.2 includes the typical indicators used in the impact report of some governments, private companies and multilateral bodies. In all cases, the **indicators are static**, or in other words, they refer to the year of issue of the bond to be evaluated and the evolution of the indicator in previous years is not taken into account. However, in some cases, the reduction of issues associated to specific projects is estimated for the useful life of the project.

Table 2.2: Typical indicators used in impact reports

| Institution/ Region | # beneficiaries | Jobs created | CO2 avoided | Energy Production | Others |
|-----------------------|-----------------|--------------|---------------|-------------------|-------------|
| North Rhine | (1) | (1) | (1) and (2) * | | |
| Adif** | | | (2) | | |
| Community of Madrid | (1) | | | | (1) and (2) |
| Flanders | (1) and (2) | | (1) and (2) | | (1) and (2) |
| Ile-de-France Region | (1) and (2) | (1) and (2) | (1) and (2) | | |
| Nordea*** | | | (2) | (2) | |
| IFC | | | (2) | (2) | |
| Caja Rural de Navarra | (1) and (2) | | | | |
| World Bank | (2) | | (2) | (2) | |

Notes: (1) Social Bonds; (2) Green Bonds; * Estimated emissions savings for the modernisation of buildings and projects intended to promote the use of public transport or bicycles; ** Includes specific indicators for trains (time savings and external costs avoided); *** Norwegian financial group

The most used indicator in the impact reports by different levels of **governments** to report the results of the social bonds is the number of agents benefiting from the project. Reports such as those from the Community of Madrid, Flanders, Ile-de-France Region or NRW use indicators such as families with social housing or the number of students that receive subsidies for studies. Other indicators used are the number of special education schools, the number of public schools or the number of clean vehicles bought.

Table 2.3: Some indicators

| Examples of indicators | Regions using them |
|---|-----------------------|
| Social Bonds | |
| Social housing (families) | Community of Madrid |
| Aid for vulnerable families | Community of Madrid |
| Number of education centres with subsidies | Flanders |
| Creation of jobs for disadvantaged people | North Rhine |
| Number of students with subsidies / grants | Flanders, North Rhine |
| Number of students who will attend the new school | Ile-de-France Region |
| Number of homes to which a new project will supply energy | Ile-de-France Region |
| Number of special education schools | Community of Madrid |
| Number of public schools | Community of Madrid |
| Number of clean vehicles bought and charging points | Community of Madrid |
| Green Bonds | |
| Recycled material (t) | Flanders |
| Material savings (t) | North Rhine |
| Water savings (m3) | North Rhine |
| Land with subsidies for sustainable use (ha) | North Rhine |
| Emissions savings* | North Rhine |

*Emissions savings are limited to specific questions, such as restoration of buildings, change in the use of means of transport or energy transition (energy efficiency and renewable energy).

3. The Agenda Basque Country 2030

Traditionally, the sub-national governments have been key components in the implementation of sustainable development solutions, and more specifically, have played a fundamental role in localizing and implementing so far the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the territorial sphere that is closer to its citizens.

The Agenda 2030 is thought as a solution for a global scenario, but at the same time its commitment to the promotion of the territorial dimension and the adaptation at the local and regional level is one of its innovative features.

Both the United Nations and the European Commission have highlighted the important role of sub-national governments in the implementation of the SDGs, and have stipulated that each territory should follow in this path with due regard to its own local circumstances, and adapting it to their own reality.

With the elaboration and release in April of 2018 of the Agenda Euskadi-Basque Country 2030, the aim is to lead and continue to encourage the participation of other regions and sub-national governments in their own SDG implementation. This approach was deemed ideal by the Basque Government because of the proximity and specific knowledge of the society's needs, as well as the skills and resources needed to ensure the best possible outcome.

Euskadi (the name of the territory in the regional language)/ Basque Country is a region in the north of Spain bordering with France of just over 7,000 km² and nearly 2.2 million citizens, with its own language, culture and identity, and a high index of sustainable human development. The Basque Government represents a region that enjoys a broad and unique way of self-government (with a high degree of autonomy and power in areas such as economy, education, industry, culture, health, security and social services).

The main contribution of the "Agenda Euskadi-Basque Country 2030" initiative to the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, is to generate a favorable environment in the understanding and implementation of the SDGs to achieve the great objective of "leaving no one behind", through the building of broad partnerships.

The Euskadi-Basque Country 2030 Agenda constitutes the Basque Government's determination to put forward its public policies in the light of the challenges of the United Nations Agenda 2030, and also establishing a link with the strategic approach adopted by the European Commission in the work for sustainable development, which focuses on the use of instruments to ensure that current and future policies take into account social, environmental and economic factors.

3.2 Effectiveness of the Basque Country Agenda 2030

The 15 regional objectives for the 2016-2020 term focus on the "5 Ps" included by the UN in its SDGs: Prosperity (1-7), People (8-13), Planet (14-15), Peace (16) and Partnerships (17).

Thus, the Euskadi-Basque Country 2030 Agenda:

- Covers the three dimensions of sustainable development (social, economic and environmental).
- Is inter-sectoral: it affects all policy areas of the Basque public sector.
- It has Policy Coherence for Development, which is a key tool for the success of Agenda 2030 because it reinforces the idea that we are moving in the same direction. In this sense, it has assessed and taken into consideration the Framework of Reference for Policy Coherence for Development, approved by the Governing Council in April 2016.
- It is specific: it focuses on issues and commitments in which the Government has the competencies, power and capacity to act.

The Agenda Euskadi-Basque Country 2030 reflects how the different Basque sectoral policies help in the implementation of the 17 SDGs. Specifically, the Agenda includes 93 commitments, 80 planning instruments, 19 legislative initiatives, and 50 indicators to help advance the SDGs in the 2016-2020 period. These are the eight main pillars of the Agenda Euskadi-Basque Country 2030:

- a) Integrating and indivisible:** covering three dimensions of sustainable development (social, economic and environmental issues).
- b) Transversal:** covers all areas of public policy and has an impact on them.
- c) Time-based:** notwithstanding the foregoing, the initiatives to be developed are divided into 4 year-periods, coinciding with the legislative period of the Basque Government.
- d) Specific:** focused mainly on the issues and commitments on which action can be taken.

- e) **Clear:** it is a simple, clear, and easy to use tool.
- f) **Participatory:** permanently open to multilevel and multi-stakeholder participation.
- g) **Adaptable:** a "living" and adaptable Agenda, open to changes and adaptation in a process of continuous improvement.
- h) **International:** a universal, global and international plan.

4. The Sustainable Bonds

To understand Sustainable Bonds, it is important noting that the Basque Country has had its own tax system for the last 150 years. The so-called Economic Agreement is a structure of bilateral tax and financial relations between the Basque Country and Spain. That means having an own autonomous internal revenue system through full management power, levying and collection of practically all taxes. Once collected by the autonomous internal revenue service of the region, an agreed amount (quota) is transferred to the Federal Government for the services it provides to the Basque Country region (Armed Forces, Justice, Diplomatic, etc.). In short, to carry out its public policies, the Basque Government has two financing channels: the collection of taxes and the bond issuance that.

4.1 Allocation of the bond

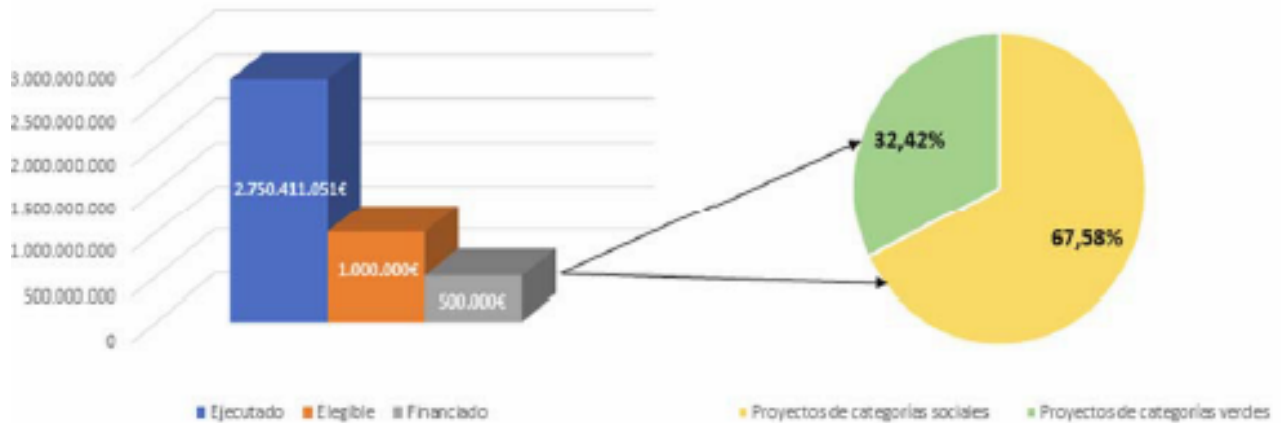
In 2018, the Basque Government **spent** a total budget of €2,750,411,051 in projects corresponding to categories eligible and susceptible to being financed by the sustainable bond, of which €2,575,286,218 were allocated to social projects and €175,124,832 to green projects. Of the total budget spent, the projects that fulfil the **eligibility** criteria and were therefore financed with the Basque Country sustainable bond, €337,921,206 (67.58%) was allocated to social projects and the remaining €162,078,794 (32.42%) went to green projects.

Allocation reporting will be available to investors within one year from the date of the Sustainability Bond issuance and annually until the bond proceeds have been fully allocated. The reporting will produce insights into the total amount provided to the various eligible budgetary programmes and the total of each eligibility category. The allocation reporting will be made available on the Basque Government's website.

The Basque Government will provide a dedicated Sustainability Bond impact report for investors within one year from the issuance date and annually until the bond proceeds have been fully allocated, with estimates of the main environmental or social impacts or outputs of the eligible programmes, where feasible. Some case studies of projects may be provided to illustrate the positive impact.

Figure 3.1 shows the total eligible projects, the budget spent on project categories susceptible to being financed through the sustainable bond and the amount finally financed by means of the sustainable bond. Within the projects financed with the bond, the proportion of green projects and of social projects financed is shown.

Figure 3.1: Eligible projects, budget spent and budget (green and sustainable) financed through the Basque Country sustainable bond



The total amount of the Basque Country sustainable bond (€500,000,000) has been used to finance part of the budget spent on eligible green and social projects. To select the projects and the proportions of each one to be financed by the bond, the level of alignment with the SDG was taken into account and hence, the goals of the Government Programme.

Social Projects: priority was given to fostering the promotion of investment over expenditure and, within the investments made, priority was given to projects that address the following Government Programme goals: Reduce the poverty rate by 20%; Increase the birth rate; Reduce the school drop-out rate to below 8%; Reduce unemployment to below 10%; Become one of the top 4 counties in gender equality. These objectives are in turn aligned with the following SDGs: SDG 1 (end to poverty), SDG 2 (zero hunger), SDG 3 (health and wellbeing), SDG 4 (quality education) and SDG 5 (gender equality).

Figure 3.2: Relationship between some of the main goals of the Government Programme and the SDG



Source: Metroeconomica

Eligible categories and projects are included in the General Budget and corresponding budgetary programmes of the Basque Government and will always be part of the current budget of the fiscal year of issuance date of each Sustainability bond.

To be eligible for the Sustainability bonds proceeds, the projects must have one or more environmental and / or social objectives under the eligible categories that are detailed below.

a) Affordable housing

Use of proceeds: The proceeds will be used to promote and increase the availability and access to social housing in the Basque country.

Eligible projects include, but are not limited to:

- (i) Construction of new social housing in a rental regime and new rental accommodations (ADA).
- (ii) Financing of the Bizigune Program to ensure that privately owned homes, which are uninhabited within the Autonomous Community of Euskadi, are placed on the rental housing market, giving advantages to the owners of these dwellings, as to the current and future tenants. The owners benefit from the guarantee of rent collection, and the tenants benefit from a rent subsidy, so that it does not exceed 30% of their income;

(iii) Financing of the Complementary Housing Benefit (CHB) and the Social Emergency Aid (SEA) for people with monthly incomes lower than the monthly amount of the Guaranteed Income (RGI), depending on the number of household members (coexistence unit);

(iv) Financing of the CHB for people who do not have the economic resources or means necessary to obtain a home and whose annual income is less than 9,000, 12,000 and 15,000 euros depending on the units of coexistence are 1, 2 or 3 or more members, respectively;

(v) Financing of the Gaztelagun Program that provides direct rent assistance to young people between 23 and 34 years old, covers up to 50% of the monthly rent for up to three years, for maximum rents of 600 euros and 750 euros in towns and cities, respectively.

(vi) Rehabilitation and / or renovation of homes and buildings, to improve access and mobility of people, including materials and labour costs.

b) Access to essential services: Education and Healthcare

1a. Education

Use of proceeds: Proceeds of the bond will be allocated to support public educational programmes for young people between 14 and 25 years old and to support the successful integration of disadvantaged groups in the education system. Disadvantaged group refers to young people in a situation of greater vulnerability because they have not finished Compulsory Secondary Education (ESO).

Eligible projects include, but are not limited to:

(i) Development of day-care centers;

(ii) Financing of programmes to improve the performance of students with language barriers or who perform below average specific educational reinforcement Programmes, Complementary Education Programs, as well as the territorial programs for the eradication of absenteeism and de-schooling;

(iii) Programs that guarantee an adequate education for migrant students within inclusive and intercultural schools, such as incorporating the needs of linguistic reinforcement centers that teach to migrant students who do not speak the languages of the schools, specific intervention programs, etc.;

(iv) Programmes that improve access of young people in a situation of greater vulnerability to vocational training and boost their transition to employment;

(v) Construction, renovation and maintenance of schools and public education centers for professional training;

(vi) Financing the development and maintenance of public universities;

- (vii) Acquisition of equipment to ensure quality education in public education schools;
- (viii) Attraction of research talent to integrate it into the Basque University System through the hiring of research teaching staff;
- (ix) Financing of educational programmes and professional training for young people at risk of exclusion (for example, functional dysfunction and other minorities) or unemployment;
- (x) Programmes that support the integration of students with special educational needs derived from motor, cognitive disabilities, etc., and improve the quality of their education;
- (xi) Financial support to university students and non-university students (exclusive to relevant target groups, such as students who require this support based on socioeconomic criteria, such as income and equity level, or students with disabilities);
- (xii) Construction and development of educational infrastructures;
- (xiii) Financing the RENOVE plan for educational centers (renovation of buildings and centers);

1b. Healthcare

Use of proceeds: Proceeds of the bond will be allocated to projects aimed to guarantee universal access to quality public health care for the citizens of the Basque country (including, but not limited to, vulnerable groups).

- (i) Development, maintenance and modernization of the facilities (infrastructure) integrated into the public health service system (hospitals, health centers, mental health centers, etc.);
- (ii) Financing the RENOVE plan for health centers (renovation of public buildings and centers);
- (iii) Provision of health care in under-served areas or vulnerable populations, to guarantee universal accessibility to health services by eliminating physical and transport barriers due to the functional diversity of people, gender barriers, barriers due to social stigma caused by certain diseases and disorders, and social, cultural and economic barriers;
- (iv) Financing of medical equipment or provision of diagnostic services for public health and mental health centers and hospitals;
- (v) Programs and financing plans for the promotion of health or to prevent and treat specific diseases;
- (vi) Financing activities to prevent and treat addictions;

c) Socioeconomic advancement

Use of proceeds: Proceeds of the bond will be allocated to projects that maintain and foster the Basque income guarantee model and promote social inclusion in the Basque country.

Eligible projects include, but are not limited to:

(i) Financing the Guaranteed Income (Renta Garantía de Ingresos –RGI) which provides financial aid to cover the basic needs of the beneficiaries. The following table shows the amounts of the RGI according to the configuration of the family cohabitation unit;

| Type of complement of ordinary units | nº of people at home | Euro / month |
|--|--|--------------|
| Basic amount by cohabitation unit | | 450 |
| Complements by adults in the cohabitation unit | Bearer | 200 |
| | Couple | 160 |
| | Other adults (máx. 4 adults) | 100 |
| | First dependent child | 120 |
| Complements by dependent child in the cohabitation unit | Second dependent child | 84 |
| | Third & Four dependent child | 60 |
| | Fifth and subsequent | 48 |
| Other complements | Single parenthood, disability or gender violence | 100 |
| Maximum amount for any family composition | | 1,200 |
| Source: Document of basis for the improvement of the RGI and own elaboration | | |

(ii) Financing of the Social Emergency Aid programmes;

(iii) Financing support services for families with children;

(iv) Financing programs to guarantee equal opportunities after childbirth and guarantee their well-being;

(v) Financing of expenses related to the provision of goods and services to support victims of gender violence;

d) Employment generation

Use of proceeds: Proceeds of the bond will be used to support employment generation in the different economic sectors and to finance programs that support unemployed people in education and training, in order to reduce the unemployment rate below 10% by the end of the term.

Eligible projects include, but are not limited to:

(i) Support programmes for employment in local commerce, the local primary sector and the tourism sector, including training courses;

(ii) Support programmes that foster the social economy, entrepreneurship, self-employment and micro-entrepreneurship;

(iii) Support for the development of District Employment Plans in areas of the Basque Country that exceed 12.4% of unemployment (current average of the Basque Country, 11.1%);

(iv) Financing of the Lehen Aukera Program (programme to foster the employability of young or unemployed people through a labour contract for the purpose of obtaining a first work experience);

(v) Financing programmes of dual training that support educational-labour transition, including programmes to develop employment plans for young people;

(vi) Renovation programs;

(vii) Financing programmes for employment, including but not limited to programmes for youth return to education/ working market and training for employment;

e) Renewable Energy

Use of proceeds: Proceeds of the bond will be allocated to projects and programmes aimed at promoting the increase of renewable energy in the Basque Country. Proceeds will be used to finance the renewable energy priorities included in the Euskadi Energy Strategy 2030 (“Estrategia Energética de Euskadi 2030”); Wind, Biomass (waste to energy), Solar Photovoltaic, Geothermal and Marine renewable energy.

Eligible projects include, but are not limited to:

(i) Support programmes that increase the use of biomass (Energy from waste and residuals of agroforestry) for public services;

(ii) Finance programmes that encourage the use of renewable energy in households, public and private buildings and the industry (solar, wind and geothermal);

(iii) Financing measures and implementation programs that increase the availability of renewable energy, including investments in biomass energy (waste to energy) utilization facilities, investments in geothermal utilization facilities and investments for the demonstration and validation of emerging marine renewable energy technologies;

(iv) Financing of new low-power installations, including the installation and renovation of land and marine wind farms and biomass (waste energy) plants;

(v) Programs to promote the use of renewables in the primary sector;

f) Clean transportation

Use of proceeds: Proceeds of the bond will be used to reduce the dependence on fossil fuel transport in accordance with the lines of action included in the Master Plan for Sustainable Transport of Euskadi 2030.

Eligible projects include, but are not limited to:

- (i) Programmes that promote the progressive decarbonisation of transport (Financing measures and implementation programs that support electric vehicles, e.g. electric taxis in cities, electric vehicles for public buses, RKARGA program, which offered free reloads of electric vehicles for taxi drivers, companies and self-employed individuals to promote electric vehicles.);
- (ii) Finance the development and implementation of the Comprehensive Electric Mobility Plan,
- (iii) Programmes that promote sustainable mobility and the use of more efficient modes of transport, such as electric buses, trams, trains, etc.;
- (iv) Programmes that promote the renewal of the fleet of vehicles, both light and heavy, with hybrid and electric vehicles;
- (v) Financing of grants programs to encourage energy savings and energy efficiency projects in transport, boosting the deployment of electric vehicles;

g) Pollution prevention and control

Use of proceeds: Proceeds of the bond will be used to improve the quality of water, air and soil, managing environmental risks and reducing human diseases related to environmental determinants, in accordance with the lines of action set out in the Environmental Framework Programme 2020 and the Biodiversity Strategy of the Basque Country 2030.

Eligible projects include, but are not limited to:

- (i) Programmes that aim to protect and restore ecosystems;
- (ii) Development, construction and maintenance of wastewater management infrastructure, including sewage treatment plants, etc.;
- (iii) Implementation of an intelligent spatial planning that prioritizes higher population densities enhances the combination of uses (work, leisure, housing) and the optimization of land consumption, prioritizing the reuse and regeneration of the same through projects such as consulting service for land management guidelines, etc.;
- (iv) Ensure air quality and improve the management of contaminated soils;
- (v) Programmes to enhance ecosystem services through the restoration of degraded areas, such as recovery of industrial land for new uses;
- (vi) Promotion of the prevention, reuse and recycling of urban waste by establishing alternatives to landfilling;

(vii) Programmes that foster a circular economy through projects that contribute decisively to create business opportunities from the circular economy by establishing new value recycling solutions for secondary materials, manufacturing products based on secondary materials, repair and remanufacturing of parts or components, products or equipment, as it is included in the Waste Prevention and Management Plan 2020 of Euskadi;

(viii) Activities and equipment to monitor, prevent and manage environmental risks, such as environmental impact assessments;

h) Sustainable water and wastewater management

Use of proceeds: Proceeds of the bond will be allocated to projects and programmes that will support the protection and improvement of the ecological state of water masses; projects and programmes that will support not only the improvements of water quality and its supply, but also the sanitation and urban sewage treatment. Additionally, proceeds of the bond will be allocated to resolve water scarcity, waste minimization of water consumption, or recycling to alleviate sewage water generating.

Eligible projects include, but are not limited to:

(i) Maintenance and restoration work of water channels to improve water quality;

(ii) To obtain a good state of surface and underground water bodies by controlling, for example, landfills ;

(iii) Monitoring the status of water masses to ensure water quality;

(iv) Collaborations with water services bodies related to supply, sanitation and purification;

(v) Programmes to ensure quality long-term water supply and quality and deploy demand management instruments.

i) Terrestrial and aquatic biodiversity conservation

Use of proceeds: Proceeds of the bond will be allocated to projects and programmes aimed at promoting protection and restoration of ecosystems in the Basque Country as it is included in the Biodiversity Strategy of the Basque Country 2030.

Eligible projects include, but are not limited to:

(i) Studies to improve knowledge on wild flora and fauna, updating the Basque Catalogue of Endangered Species and improvement of its conservation;

(ii) Monitoring and Evaluation of the Natural Heritage of the Basque Country (including the “Red Natura 2000”);

(iii) Financing of actions and educational activities to enhance and to promote the involvement of the community, public awareness and knowledge of biodiversity and its protection;

j) Energy efficiency

Use of proceeds: Proceeds of the bond will be used to build a low carbon energy model and anticipate the risks of climate change following the guidelines and lines of action foreseen in the 2030 Euskadi Energy Strategy and 2050 Climate Change Strategy Basque Country (Klima 2050).

Eligible projects include, but are not limited to:

(i) Programmes that promote energy savings and management in the industry, including financing of grants programs to encourage energy savings and energy efficiency projects, through e.g. upgraded equipment, smart meters, etc.;

(ii) Finance the improvement of energy efficiency and demand management, development of smart grids and promotion of cogeneration;

(iii) Programmes to promote energy improvements in commercial and residential buildings and homes (Promotion of the improved insulation in buildings, upgrading of energy-consuming equipment and promotion of the implementation of renewable energies in buildings);

(iv) Programmes to promote energy efficiency in public administration buildings and public housing, e.g. financing of upgrades in equipment and renovation that increases the energy efficiency of the building;

5. Process for Project Evaluation and Selection

The process to select and to evaluate potential eligible projects and programmes from the General Budget is performed by the Basque Government Sustainability Bond Committee. Each Department carries out an ex - ante evaluation of the impact indicators of the projects, in addition to the environmental impact assessment, and other actions foreseen in the regulation. This Committee comprises four representatives of the Department of Finance and Economy, and a representative of each of the following departments: Environment, Territorial Planning and Housing; Employment and Social Policies, Health and Education, Economic Development and Infrastructure. In addition, the Sustainability Bond Committee will request the participation of other representatives from other departments of the Basque Government or those previously mentioned when it appreciates the need for additional knowledge or specific expertise.

The Basque Government Sustainability Bond Committee will select eligible projects or programmes from the sections of the General Budget that align with the eligibility criteria defined in this Sustainability Bond Framework.

As not all activities in the selected budget programmes might be eligible according to the Sustainability Bond Framework, the Basque Government will provide investors with information

regarding the percentage of each eligible budget programme that was eligible for each Sustainability Bond issuance.

6. Management of Proceeds

The proceeds of the Sustainability Bond will be allocated to eligible budgetary programmes in the General Budget of the Basque Government, corresponding to the fiscal year of the Sustainability Bond issuance. The total expenditures required for the eligible programmes will equal or exceed the net Sustainability bond proceeds. This will ensure compliance even when eligible programmes or budgets are impacted unexpectedly.

The proceeds from the Sustainability bond issuance will be directly allocated to the eligible projects at settlement. In the event the whole proceeds cannot be allocated, the Basque Government will temporarily keep the unallocated funds in any form of cash or liquidity position or time deposits with banks. This event would be monitored by the Financial Department of the Basque Government's Financial Policy Department and reviewed by the Sustainability Bond Committee.

The Basque Government has internal systems in place to track proceeds of its bonds, and to account for all eligible programmes. Thus, the Committee will monitor and prevent any such double allocation of proceeds.

In the case of any selected eligible program becomes ineligible or has been cancelled, the Basque Government will re-allocate the proceeds of the bond to another eligible programme.

7. External Review

7.1 Second Party Opinion

The Basque Government has hired Sustainalytics to provide a Second Party Opinion on the Basque Government Sustainability Bond Framework. Sustainalytics has reviewed the Sustainability Bond Framework and its alignment with the four pillars of the Green Bond Principles, Social Bond Principles and the Sustainability Bond Guidelines 2017.

8. Conclusion

The 2030 Agenda, and specifically the Agenda Euskadi-Basque Country 2030, represents an excellent opportunity to improve, implement, and deliver better public policies in service of the whole world, and in this case, of the Basque society.

The innovative characteristic of the Agenda 2030 is that specifics steps of the Agenda are not mandated from top-to-bottom, but allows the flexibility for every country, region, and municipality to work and implement within its own government sphere of action, taking into consideration every reality and context at every level.

It is important to open a period of reflection about the role and participation of local and regional governments in international fora, specifically when it comes to the implementation of the Agenda

2030. Although the UN System has given many steps to open this participation moving away from NGOs to the Major Groups and other Stakeholders, it is crucial to consider that 60% of the implementation of the Agenda relies on local and regional governments.

With the opening of a more participatory role of the regional and local governments their Voluntary Regional Reviews can become more relevant and can be also an incentive for the implementation and sharing of good practices at the local and regional level in a more active and constant basis. In this sense, it is also important to highlight that one of the advantages of these regional reviews is that, if done properly, they are elaborated with specific data and relevant indicators that avoid overall national averages that usually mask the reality and disparities that exist within countries.

So, for a successful implementation of this Agenda at all levels, the focus is about sharing experiences, and making visible in this case the Basque Government's commitment to generate a favorable environment of joint-ownership of the SDGs to make a reality the great objective of "not leaving anyone behind".

Chapter 10

Mobilizing business action to advance the 2030 Agenda: harnessing the potential of the UN Global Compact

By Felipe Morgado

Introduction

“I propose that you, the business leaders... and we, the United Nations, initiate a global compact of shared values and principles, which will give a human face to the global market.”

United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan (1997-2006)

The UN Global Compact was founded in 2000 as a special initiative of the Secretary-General “to give a human face to the global market”. Its very name emphasized the global scope and ambition of the initiative, at a time when the United Nations and Governments grappled with the risks and opportunities afforded by globalization and markets. To provide a framework for business to fulfill a new role as a force for good, the Secretary-General outlined a set of universal principles, drawing on United Nations conventions and declarations in the areas of human rights, labour, the environment and anti-corruption.

The creation of the UN Global Compact was a major milestone in the relationship between the United Nations and the private sector. Sagafi-Nejad (2008) provides an exhaustive account of how this relationship has evolved drastically over time, “from Code of Conduct to Global Compact”. In particular, the author analyzes trends in Member States’ views, from the establishment of the Commission on Transnational Corporations in 1974, which was mostly skeptical of the private sector’s objectives, to an increasingly partnership-oriented and multi-stakeholder perspective that was ultimately crystallized in the UN Global Compact.

In addition to the global dimension, as early as 2002 country-level “chapters” or organizations claiming to support the UN Global Compact began to be established. These grass-roots organizations, anchored in different institutional contexts, eventually came to be known as Global Compact Local Networks. Rasche & Kell (2010) provide a first-hand account of the early history and debates surrounding the creation of the UN Global Compact, including achievements, trends and challenges in the development of these Local Networks.

Almost twenty years later, the UN Global Compact has grown into the world’s largest corporate sustainability initiative, with almost 10,000 member companies based in over 160 countries, across all regions, representing nearly every sector. Participating companies must make a commitment to the Global Compact’s principles and are given a platform to communicate on their progress. With the advent of the 2030 Agenda, companies are also encouraged to pursue opportunities that advance the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Global Compact Office, headquartered in New York, coordinates the overall initiative with a mission to mobilize “a global movement of sustainable companies and stakeholders to create the world we want”.

The 2030 Agenda and the repositioning of the United Nations Development System emphasize the country-level dimension in sustainable development and are raising the level of ambition for Local Networks. As Member States seek to ensure the broad mobilization of all stakeholders, including the private sector, Local Networks are increasingly becoming valuable partners in enabling partnerships for the SDGs. Today, almost 70 Local Networks exist in all continents, translating the Global Compact into local public-private partnerships, and embedding corporate sustainability in national policy dialogue.

This chapter begins by providing background and data on how Local Networks of the UN Global Compact have progressively become more involved in national SDG coordination mechanisms and Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs). It then proceeds to analyze challenges and opportunities in mobilizing the participation of the private sector in these processes, considering both normative and capacity gaps in the “offer” and “demand” for partnerships. As a conclusion, the chapter considers the way forward on the UN Global Compact’s strategy for engagement in national SDG processes, as we enter the Decade of Action on the SDGs.

I. Anchoring the UN Global Compact in national policy dialogue

1. From letting a thousand flowers bloom to “Making Global Goals Local Business”

During the early years of the UN Global Compact, country-level support grew organically, reflecting myriad institutional arrangements – such as employers’ organizations, sustainability non-governmental organizations or academic institutions, among others. While these entities were not formally under oversight of the United Nations, they began to establish links with the Global Compact Office in New York through a series of legal agreements. Thus were born the “Local Networks” of the Global Compact. The Global Compact Office’s initial strategy was akin to letting a thousand flowers bloom, allowing local private sector communities to create and grow Local Networks with significant flexibility, as part of an impetus to extend the reach of the initiative at country level. The agreements between Local Networks and the Global Compact Office consisted essentially of measures to safeguard the name and emblem of the United Nations, clarifying Networks’ legal status as independent entities.

The Global Compact Office soon realized that such agreements did not sufficiently mitigate the integrity risks associated with the operations of Local Networks. A more robust set of “quality standards” was necessary to ensure that Local Networks could effectively and credibly support the UN Global Compact. Such quality standards would come to encompass a wide range of areas, from policies on conflicts of interest between Local Networks and host entities, to requiring a board governance structure, among others. The progressive implementation of these quality standards globally also led to a significant increase in Local Networks’ capacity to engage more meaningfully with programmatic initiatives in the four areas of the Ten Principles. Examples include the establishment of working groups convening sustainability professionals, as well as workshops to build capacity in specific areas, from human rights due diligence to anti-corruption compliance, localizing this content in national contexts.

The 2030 Agenda represented a paradigm shift for the United Nations. It established a framework of SDGs, to be implemented and measured by all Member States in partnership with all

stakeholders, including the private sector. Due to their universal reach, the SDGs are also progressively emerging as the common language of corporate sustainability, enabling companies from all sectors and geographies to coordinate sustainability efforts, amongst themselves and with other stakeholders. This stands in stark contrast to a corporate sustainability landscape that has otherwise often been fragmented, with competing frameworks that might be industry- or issue-specific, and not conducive to promoting multi-stakeholder dialogue or partnerships. The SDGs also contributed to a paradigm shift in the private sector, from the concept of “corporate social responsibility” towards the more contemporary idea of “corporate sustainability”.

To achieve this transformational agenda, Member States also agreed to the 2016 quadrennial comprehensive policy review and a bold agenda of repositioning of the United Nations Development System, both of which underscore the central importance of the country-level dimension in development. The reform agenda raised the level of ambition for Local Networks and the UN Global Compact to enable and enhance partnerships locally. Increasingly, Local Networks are expected to engage with Resident Coordinators, UN Country Teams and Governments on policy dialogue or other projects related to the SDGs. This includes, for instance, increased interest in the participation of Local Network representatives on national SDG commissions, or in the contribution of private sector data and insights to VNRs. In its 2019 “Towards Global Partnerships” Resolution, the General Assembly recognized Local Networks’ role in supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda locally.

This shift towards a more robust role for Local Networks is not just an external demand. It also reflects the Global Compact Office’s strategic focus on articulating the global and country-level dimensions, as reflected in the campaign “Making Global Goals Local Business”, launched in 2016 and which continues to be implemented, in coordination with Local Networks. In addition, a new Theory of Change developed in 2018 clearly identified Local Networks’ role in disseminating sustainability at scale as being central to the organization’s mission. Building on this understanding, in 2019 the Global Compact began to launch a number of “Global Impact Initiatives” – programmatic activities that build capacity in corporate sustainability, designed by the Global Compact Office, and to be delivered by Local Networks, to scale-up impact across business in different geographies. Rather than just a rebranding exercise, these initiatives represent a significant paradigm shift, as the UN Global Compact redirected its focus and resources towards corporate sustainability at the country level to advance progress on the SDGs.

2. Local Networks’ engagement in national policy processes (2015-2018)

The 2030 Agenda emphasizes the national ownership of Member States in reviewing progress on the SDGs, developing coordination mechanisms for sustainable development, and engaging in VNRs at the regional or global levels. While the United Nations has a mandate to support Member States in these endeavours, the outcome is that different countries have developed different institutional arrangements for national policy-making on the SDGs, consisting in some cases of National Councils for the SDGs, inter-ministerial coordination mechanisms housed in Ministries of Planning, as well as SDG focal points within the office of the Head of State or Government. Different institutional arrangements have also translated into different approaches to engagement of the private sector in VNRs.

Analysis of VNR reports submitted to the 2019 High-level Political Forum indicates that there have been varying levels of engagement of the private sector (Partners for Review 2019). This has included surveys among the private sector (e.g. Liechtenstein, Rwanda, Serbia), the establishment of SDG-related platforms or networks (e.g. Indonesia, Mauritius, New Zealand, Turkey), and coordination of input by Chambers of Commerce (e.g. Azerbaijan, Chile, Croatia). Other 2019 VNR reports mentioning participation of the private sector include Cambodia, Cameroon, Guyana, Iraq, Kuwait, Lesotho, Mongolia, Pakistan, the Philippines, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, Sierra Leone, Tanzania and Timor Leste.

The engagement of the UN Global Compact and the Local Networks also reflects the variety of national institutional arrangements. The publication “Accelerating National SDG Implementation” (UN Global Compact 2018) takes stock of these diverse experiences and provides both an analytical perspective and country case studies, articulating Local Networks’ record across five key areas:

1. Awareness raising: helping business understand SDG risks and opportunities
2. Capacity-building: mainstreaming a principle-based approach to the SDGs
3. Recognizing leadership: providing inspiration through good business practices
4. Policy dialogue: engaging responsible business on national SDG action plans and policies
5. Multi-stakeholder partnerships facilitating collaboration and collective action

Focusing on the policy dialogue angle alone, Local Networks engaged in 205 policy dialogue initiatives, involving over 6,000 companies in discussions with national and local governments. Combining 2017 and 2018, 42 Local Networks contributed to their respective national processes for the implementation of the SDGs, including 29 Local Networks that made direct contributions to VNRs presented at the High-Level Political Forum in those years. Some examples include:

- **Argentina:** The Local Network engaged in dialogue with the national SDG coordination body, the *Consejo Nacional de Coordinación de Políticas Sociales*, which led to the inclusion of a chapter on the role of the private sector as part of the country’s VNR report. The President of the Local Network was welcomed to take part in the official national delegation to the High-Level Political Forum in New York.
- **Spain:** The Local Network facilitated dialogue between the government’s High-Level Group for the 2030 Agenda and the business community, providing a contribution to the VNR and also for the implementation of a 2030 Agenda action plan. This policy engagement translated led to concrete deliverables, including a set of recommendations on sustainability for public procurement consistent with the SDGs.
- **Australia:** The Local Network developed a website, in collaboration with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, to raise awareness on the 2030 Agenda among the public at large. It also collected private sector input into the country’s VNR, and participated in discussions regarding national SDG coordination.

In addition to these examples of formal participation at VNRs and national SDG coordination bodies, Local Networks are reported to have engaged in a large number of activities related to the SDGs at country. This has included over 1,500 awareness raising and capacity-building workshops and events, which have engaged at least 14,000 companies.

The UN Global Compact's 2019 Progress Report, launched at the opening of the 74th General Assembly, also provides extensive brand new data about the private sector's work in advancing the SDGs, at both the global and local levels. In the area of policy dialogue, it casts light on Local Networks' engagement in a variety of multi-stakeholder initiatives related to aspects of the 2030 Agenda, such as the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, the Science-Based Targets initiative, the Katowice Climate Change Conference (COP 24), or the Women's Empowerment Principles, among others.

II. Raising the level of ambition in partnerships for the SDGs

The multi-stakeholder approach enshrined in the 2030 Agenda explicitly calls on Member States to build partnerships with the private sector to advance progress on the SDGs. However, national SDG coordination mechanisms and VNRs have not systematically engaged the private sector in a meaningful way. To understand why this has not been the case, this chapter proposes a simplified model for the “offer” and “demand” of such partnerships, considering both normative and capacity gaps. By normative, we mean the different guidances and recommendations that exist on the preparation of VNRs by Member States, arising from the intergovernmental process of the 2030 Agenda or prepared by other organizations. Capacity refers to different stakeholders' knowledge and ability to fulfill the expectations embedded in the 2030 Agenda. Given that the review of the SDGs is led by national governments, the demand for partnerships comes from the government, while the offer emanates from different stakeholders, in this case the private sector.

1. Enabling a meaningful contribution of the private sector

On the offer side, despite the progressive mainstreaming of corporate sustainability, many companies are not yet engaged in the 2030 Agenda, or necessarily aware of the SDGs. They may not realize their role within the development partnerships ecosystem, and view eventual “corporate social responsibility” initiatives with a philanthropic lens, if at all. They do not yet speak the language of development, and may not be sufficiently equipped to provide a meaningful contribution to policy dialogue on the 2030 Agenda, especially when we look at the country-level dimension. This is also often the case for business organizations that may have an institutional role in liaising with governments on public policy matters, such as chambers of commerce or employers' organizations – even though their global umbrella organizations may work on such themes, in the case of the International Chamber of Commerce or the International Organization of Employers.

This significant capacity gap stands in contrast to the advanced normative tools that inform current practices in corporate sustainability. Since 2000 the UN Global Compact has been standing at the forefront of such efforts, beginning with the articulation of the Ten Principles as a framework for sustainable business. With the 2030 Agenda, the UN Global Compact developed a number of frameworks that enabled companies to assess their performance and impact on the SDGs, such as the SDG Compass. The UN Global Compact has also built partnerships with the sustainability reporting industry, to develop a framework for companies to be able to provide stakeholders with sustainability reports aligned with the SDGs. Working closely with the Global Reporting Initiative, the Action Platform on Reporting on the SDGs developed a series of publications, providing a list of indicators for SDG reporting, as well as a practical guide to integrate the SDGs into their

reporting cycles. Such broad “SDG business” guidances complement a wide range of other documents focusing on specific SDGs, across all areas, and prepared by the UN Global Compact or by a wide range of other organizations that are part of the partnerships ecosystem. Recognizing the large number of existing normative initiatives, the UN Global Compact has sought to position itself as a “platform of platforms”. To companies, a key element of the UN Global Compact’s value proposition is precisely this ability to convene and curate sustainability frameworks, and build capacity.

To increase the “offer” of meaningful partnerships, Local Networks can play a significant role in bridging the capacity gap by implementing concrete initiatives, such as awareness-raising training and workshops, and whenever relevant further localizing this material to embrace specific country-level issues, including legal and regulatory aspects. This is especially relevant when considering participation in national SDG processes, or in the case of companies that engage with the Global Compact essentially at the country level, which is overwhelmingly the case for small and medium-sized enterprises. By doing so, Local Networks can provide a critical mass of companies that not only have an understanding of the 2030 Agenda, but are also ready to engage in national SDG policy processes and VNRs in a meaningful way. It also provides a space for companies to mobilize in a more institutional and coordinated way.

Based on conversations held with Global Compact Local Networks, a potential normative gap has been identified in the provision of guidance on how the private sector community can engage with national SDG coordination processes and VNRs, in a language that is accessible to this stakeholder group, with concrete examples. Many of the existing guidances are geared towards government officials, or are too abstract and not easily actionable for the private sector. In other cases, guidances may focus on broader multi-stakeholder engagement, which encompasses a wide range of stakeholders, for instance as reflected in the Agenda 21’s “Major Groups” (Business and Industry, Children and Youth, Farmers, Indigenous Peoples, Local Authorities, NGOs, Scientific and Technological Community, Women, and Workers and Trade Unions). As a result, they may not address issues that could be of particular interest to the private sector, and are less effective in conveying the value of private sector engagement in VNRs.

2. Institutional channels to galvanize partnerships at country level

On the demand side, Governments find themselves faced with the challenge of identifying which private sector voices are legitimate or relevant to VNRs, while avoiding situations that could lend themselves to the appearance of favouring one company or industry over another. For instance, there may be multiple chambers of commerce or industry associations, with competing interests and membership, and potential integrity issues, owing to the awareness issues mentioned previously in this chapter. Given the large amount of national coordination work required to produce a meaningful VNR, which may include the establishment of standalone SDG coordination bodies, these challenges in easily identifying the adequate private sector stakeholders may lead governments to deprioritize stakeholder engagement. To date there is no systematic approach for private sector engagement in VNRs or for stakeholder engagement more generally.

Given the diversity of public administrations, as well as the fact that not all countries have presented a VNR yet, assessing eventual capacity gaps necessarily leads to generalizations.

Additional research into public-private partnerships for sustainable development could yield relevant insights to address eventual normative or capacity gaps. Just like the private sector community may have a limited understanding of the language and institutional context of the 2030 Agenda, it is likely that governments may have limited awareness of the potential of the private sector as a force for good, or at least a stakeholder interested in advancing the SDGs.

The UN Global Compact plays a role in raising awareness of this potential and promoting dialogue between governments, the UN and the private sector, for instance through the SDG Business Forum or the ECOSOC Partnership Forum. In 2019, the Global Compact Office organized a number of events, both in New York and at country level as part of the “Making Global Goals Local Business” campaign.

Considering that several positive experiences of Global Compact Local Networks’ engagement in these processes have taken place in the context of standalone SDG coordination bodies, it appears that this kind of institutional setting is prone to enhancing private sector participation in a more meaningful way. Local Networks have flagged that such institutional “pre-conditions” are a critical enabler of private sector participation in VNRs. Initiatives to share good practices on establishing these bodies, such as the Global Forum for National SDG Advisory Bodies, have the potential to increase the demand for partnerships with the private sector. They are also consistent with the strategy of Global Compact Local Networks, which can catalyze a critical mass of companies and private sector representatives that are “partner-ready” for policy discussions on the 2030 Agenda with all other stakeholders, though national SDG coordination entities.

Conclusion

Recognizing the need for enhanced exchange between the Global Compact Office and Local Networks on the topic of VNRs, in 2019 a project began on filling the normative gap that currently exists in the “offer” of private sector partnerships in VNRs. Throughout 2019, this project is gathering learnings from Local Networks’ experiences, government input, and the SDG knowledge community with the ultimate goal of preparing an actionable guide for Global Compact Local Networks. On the demand side, the UN Global Compact also sought to raise awareness among governments of the value of the Local Networks, on the occasion of the 2019 High-Level Political Forum, and more generally by working with Local Networks on building connections with their respective national SDG coordination bodies. The Global Compact Office plans to develop a guidance package on private sector contribution to VNRs in 2020, including a plan for capacity-building of Local Networks, and an awareness-raising toolkit for Member States, so that they are more systematically aware of this partnership opportunity. It is expected that this package will operate considering a short-term horizon, the 2020 High-Level Political Forum in July 2020, and a more long-term horizon, leading up to 2030.

Global Compact Local Networks are uniquely positioned to fill existing gaps by providing an alliance of “partner-ready” companies that are educated on the 2030 Agenda and follow a mandatory integrity requirement to communicate on their sustainability performance. At the same time, as entities that have a formal link to the Global Compact, they can benefit from the visibility needed for Member States to activate them at the early stages of their VNR preparation, when stakeholder input can be more meaningful.

The Secretary-General has identified 2020-2030 as a critical Decade of Action to accelerate progress on the SDGs and fulfill the aspirations of the 2030 Agenda. To achieve this, all stakeholders need to significantly increase their level of ambition. This includes scaling up business action, moving from ad hoc corporate social responsibility projects towards transformational partnerships anchored in corporate sustainability. It also requires a qualitative leap in the private sector contribution to VNRs and SDG review processes, with more meaningful and data-driven participation. The UN Global Compact will play an essential role in mobilizing the private sector in support of the 2030 Agenda.

Note

The findings, interpretations and conclusions contained in this chapter are those of the author, and do not necessarily represent the views of the United Nations Secretariat or any other institution. The geographic and functional designations employed in this paper do not imply the expression of any opinion concerning the legal status of any country, territory, frontiers or authorities.

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Chapter 11

The High-Level Political Forum Review 2020: An Opportunity to Fulfill the HLPF's Mandate

By Marianne Beisheim and Steven Bernstein

Reviewing the HLPF

The ambitious mandate of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) is not yet matched by its ability to provide “political leadership and guidance” – its core mission – for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda (UNGA, 2015) and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Doing so is especially important as we enter the “decade of action and delivery,” declared at the UN’s SDG Summit in 2019. The HLPF Review, officially launched in February 2020 at the United Nations, is an opportunity to take that mandate seriously and enable the HLPF to lead an evidence-based, coherent, and action-oriented agenda. The current political climate will not make that easy.

The HLPF is the main UN entity responsible for the follow-up and review of the SDGs. Given the centrality of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs to the UN’s entire work, the 2013 resolution launching the HLPF gave it a suitably ambitious mandate: political leadership, guidance and recommendations; follow up and review progress in implementing the SDGs; enhancing the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development in a holistic and cross-sectoral manner, including through coordination and coherence across the UN system and at all levels of governance; having a focused, dynamic and action-oriented agenda; ensuring the appropriate consideration of new and emerging sustainable development challenges; enhancing civil society participation and evidence-based decision making; and providing a platform for partnerships (UNGA, 2013).

Assessments of the lessons learned during the HLPF’s first four-year cycle since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda identify several *strengths*, including its provision of a platform for stocktaking and peer learning, especially the high level of participation in the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) (Amanuma et al., 2019; Beisheim, 2018; De Burca, 2019; Hege, 2019; UNDESA, 2019a). Because the 2030 Agenda focuses on national action, VNRs are a key mechanism for promoting bottom-up, country-driven processes to implement the SDGs.

These same assessments identified several *weaknesses*. Chief among them are the need to 1) improve evaluation and analysis of evidence-based inputs to better draw out policy lessons; 2) better promote interlinkages and coherence; and 3) provide better leadership and action-oriented recommendations. Although a major overhaul of the HLPF’s organization and format is unlikely, several viable steps can help to better match its ambition with results. While there are many proposals being debated, here we focus on specific recommendations in the three areas highlighted above (for a more comprehensive assessment of proposals see UNDESA, 2019b, and Beisheim, 2020).

Better Evaluation of Data before and after the HLPF

Review procedures and (statistical) reports from UN bodies, functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), and other intergovernmental bodies and forums provide useful data to the HLPF. However, *analysis and evaluation* of the data for the specific purpose of informing policy-relevant discussions at the HLPF and (ultimately) the implementation of the SDGs could be improved. As a result, “reports” are being presented rather than “reviews” that require analysis and evaluation. This applies, unfortunately, for the Thematic and SDG Reviews, and the VNRs.

The *Thematic Reviews* are an important feature of the HLPF but have been very uneven in practice. They provide amongst the best opportunities to analyze gaps, trade-offs, interlinkages and cross cutting issues. They also aim to link these analyses to the themes and values that underpin the SDGs, including leaving no one behind, human rights, financing and other principles of the 2030 Agenda. Although designed to provide an opportunity to support policy making and other measures, these reviews are not living up to their potential, especially in highlighting interventions that effectively manage relevant interlinkages.

There has also been unevenness in the individual *SDG Reviews*. As pointed out during the Expert Group Meeting in 2019 evaluating the first cycle of the HLPF (UNDESA, 2019a), these reviews should be prepared more systemically, drawing from various inputs to ensure discussions are evidence-based. They should also avoid diluting technical reviews of specific SDGs. Reviews that seemed to have worked best have been timed to link to processes, events or conferences in other parts of the system. Examples are the review of SDG 14, linked to the Oceans conference or of SDG 11, linked to the review of the “New Urban Agenda” taking place every four years (Beisheim, 2018). Here the analytical and preparatory work provided strong inputs and also a follow-up to the HLPF’s deliberations.

Hence, one problem is *effective sequencing*. As of 2019, the one-day Integration Segment of ECOSOC is held directly prior to the HLPF to process reports from ECOSOC’s subsidiary bodies and other inputs on the annual theme – but one day is not enough for such a complex task. The ECOSOC Review, taking place jointly with the HLPF review, provides a political opening to remedy this problem. For example, member states could adjust the ECOSOC calendar and reporting arrangements of its subsidiary bodies, an idea we build upon in our proposals below.

Moreover, there is also a disconnect between the existing preparatory meetings, such as Expert Group Meetings (EGMs) and other inputs listed above, and the review *panels* taking place during the HLPF. The panelists and panel discussions do not necessarily build on the preparatory meetings’ outcomes and recommendations. More generally, the panels have not focused enough on interlinkages and recommendations. In addition, new and emerging issues should be given more prominence. The result is that the good analytical and preparatory work being done (albeit still with areas for improvement including better use of country data) is not feeding into HLPF efficiently. These problems are a lost opportunity on many fronts, but especially for learning, mobilizing resources or drawing attention to key action items.

The *VNRs* also produce valuable data on implementation, as do regional forums or other expert or stakeholder reports, including data on who is left behind. The uptake of VNRs has exceeded expectations (158 VNRs so far, conducted by 142 countries, with 50 more VNRs expected in 2020, among them 27 first-time, 22 second-time and one third-time presenter/s). This high-level of participation is perhaps not surprising, though, given the prior decision by member states to not engage in a more formal, accountable, or systemic review processes (see also Karlsson-

Vinkhuyzen et al. 2018). While there has been some peer learning, the ability for other countries to learn about transformative measures or assess needs or interlinkages has been limited. There is also wide variation in the openness of the VNR processes and the ability of stakeholders to engage with them more generally. As there is still little interest in having more robust – or actual peer – reviews amongst most member states, the question is how to best utilize reviews and encourage reporting countries to focus more on successes and challenges in realizing integrative and transformative practices. Moreover, it is also essential to better evaluate the VNRs *after* they have been presented so as to draw out positive and negative lessons, identify areas where additional resources would benefit countries, or to match those needs to possible partners, financing or technology.

In sum, the annual HLPF meetings are failing to adequately consider inputs, the schedule is too packed, and the ideas and learning that goes on at regional meetings or other inputs from the system are not taken up sufficiently, especially into the HLPF's reviews and outcomes. Various analyses and stakeholders raised these concerns from the very beginnings of the HLPF as options for its form and function were debated (see Bernstein, 2013). It is thus not surprising these problems have come to pass (UNDESA, 2019a). However, from what we have observed in discussions and meetings with officials, diplomats, and stakeholders – despite many appearing to support a stronger and more relevant HLPF – only a few member states show political interest in extending the time devoted to meetings. Thus, we propose instead that options should be considered to improve integration and linkages with other parts of the system (ECOSOC's functional and regional commissions, funds and programs, other bodies and entities, specialized agencies, Forum on Financing for Development; and also reaching out to the international financial institutions) to improve the division of labor and to find ways to de facto improve workflows and provide more time for analysis and integration before the formal HLPF meetings.

Three proposals for how to achieve more effective preparatory and follow-up processes

1) Member states could decide, for example, to split the HLPF's sessions and hold a '*Spring Meeting*' earlier in the year. The results of this HLPF Spring Meeting could then feed into the negotiations of the Ministerial Declaration in June, which could include substantial recommendations to be discussed at the ministerial level during the July HLPF. Doing so would not necessarily require extending overall meeting time – a politically unpopular proposition – but instead foresees splitting the existing meeting days to better fulfill the HLPF's mandate.

For the Spring Meeting, the main messages of the Secretary-General's SDG report, the reports from the UN system, and from the VNRs should be available. The preparatory meeting could then focus more on evaluative reviews. The HLPF meeting in July would have panels building upon these reviews and the resulting recommendations in the Ministerial Declaration.

The discussions in July could then be more integrative and focus on cross-cutting issues, interlinkages, bottlenecks, and links to resources and other parts of the system. The July meetings could also invite presentations to showcase good practices coming out of regional meetings and discuss emerging challenges that need action. Splitting the meeting days in this way would also allow the July meeting to give greater consideration to what member countries and stakeholders find most useful based in part on what emerges from the Spring Meeting, thereby also facilitating more action-oriented outcomes.

2) A ‘*Sherpa*’ for each main panel of the HLPF could be designated to curate an all-year preparatory process and bring relevant input and findings to the attention of panelists as they prepare (see Beisheim, 2020, building on the results of an expert workshop in early December 2019). The Sherpa could be a renowned scientist (e.g., from the Global Sustainable Development Report Independent Group of Scientists) or a former diplomat with a high level of expertise and standing in the field (like Ambassador Peter Thomson of Fiji for the 2017 review of SDG 14). He or she could support the process by taking up the results of the UN System’s preparatory work and, on that basis, curate the development of the panel and its work by, for example, helping to identify and brief suitable panelists. For such a proposal to succeed, Sherpas would have to be appointed sufficiently in advance.

During the HLPF, the Sherpa could serve as a well-prepared panel moderator. In the interest of the “decade of action and delivery,” the Sherpa should insist that invited panelists take note of all relevant reports to the HLPF and, based on them, discuss policy-relevant recommendations. Doing so would militate against previous practice that saw many panelists focusing instead on their own topics and interests. Moreover, the Sherpa could also help produce a “digestible” one-page note for each main panel in advance. It would help UN missions to consult with their capitals to get meaningful guidance for negotiating the Ministerial Declaration in June and prepare fit-for-purpose inputs for the HLPF’s interactive debates in July. On this basis, member states and stakeholders could also be invited to share good practices (also through UNDESA’s existing database) and make suitable commitments. The Sherpa could also work to facilitate an action-oriented follow-up *after* the HLPF.

3) Governments who prepare VNRs could first present emerging conclusions at *regional forums* where there is more time and opportunity for peer learning among countries in similar situations. Doing so would allow for more focused “how to” discussions about the tools and frameworks that facilitate progress in shared areas of concern. Given the very limited time at the HLPF in July, VNR countries should focus their presentations on sharing a “best of” their good practices that would benefit other countries and their most pressing challenges where they would benefit from external support.

Building on the VNR’s findings, other smaller innovations can maximize learning opportunities, enabling the more dedicated stakeholders to deepen, apply, and then share their knowledge. Starting in 2018, UNDESA organized *VNR labs* where participants could discuss interlinkages and country experiences in a focused way. Building on this idea, others have suggested similar events at regional meetings where countries in similar circumstances can learn directly from each other (Amanuma et al., 2019). The UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) has already implemented a similar idea in the form of a ‘VNR Learning Café.’ We suggest encouraging such labs to focus especially on transformative implementation measures proven to be successful and on highlighting challenges that require partners or additional resources. Then UNDESA could follow up with efforts to match states with partners, or other forums (such as the FFD or STI Forum or the Partnership or Business Forum) where there are opportunities to match supply and demand, for example with technologies, financing or investment.

Aiming at Policy Coherence

At their core, the SDGs require integrative and coherent policies that avoid siloed thinking and take interlinkages into account. More broadly, coherence requires the systematic promotion of mutually reinforcing policies and institutional or governance arrangements that reflect legitimate social purposes. Since the SDGs define those legitimate social purposes in the 2030 Agenda, coherence reflects calls for mutually reinforcing policies across the three dimensions of sustainable development (environmental, social and economic) and the 17 SDGs.

The 2019 *Global Sustainable Development Report* (GDSR) (Independent Group of Scientists, 2019) is potentially game-changing in providing a scientific basis on which to address synergies and trade-offs to promote a coherent transformation required to make progress on the SDGs. It also identifies mechanisms, resources and governance arrangements at global, national and local levels to achieve transformative change. The HLPF could utilize this report to further improve coherence when carrying out the Thematic and SDG Reviews.

Member states could decide to adopt the GDSR's core logic of identifying "entry points" and "levers" for the next cycle of these reviews. Each annual HLPF could, for example, be organized around two of the six entry points laid out for the six transformative pathways that the GDSR discusses (i.e., Human well-being and capabilities; Sustainable and just economies; Food systems and nutrition patterns; Energy decarbonization and universal access; Urban and peri-urban development; Global environmental commons). SDGs that are central to the selected combination of entry points could be reviewed in-depth, while focusing on relevant interlinkages to *all* other SDGs (Beisheim 2020, see Chart 1 on page 12, building on the results of an expert workshop in early December 2019). Criteria for the combinations in each year could be: 1) distance to SDG targets (i.e., entry points with the highest distance to the associated SDG targets could be considered early in the HLPF four-year cycle); 2) alignment with relevant other international processes; 3) coverage of all three dimensions of sustainable development each year; and 4) the overarching theme should reflect relevant interlinkages.

The HLPF panels could then be tasked with discussing the four levers identified in the GDSR (i.e., governance, economy and finance, individual and collective action, and science and technology). This innovation would allow for greater coherence in the selection of themes and individual SDGs to be reviewed, following a *systems approach*, covering all SDGs and their interlinkages each year, while still mobilizing the respective communities of practice.

The latter point is essential. Past experience has shown that these SDG Reviews are important for mobilizing communities around individual SDGs *and* making these different communities to meet, exchange, and collaborate at the HLPF. Thus, we need to find ways to encourage those communities to keep coming and engaging with the HLPF. At the same time, the HLPF must preserve its value added of focusing on interlinkages and coherence more broadly, which can only come through discussing all or groups of SDGs through themes or cross-cutting issues, interlinkages and synergies.

Other existing analytical work can be drawn upon to improve coherence, including the OECD's detailed recommendations on policy coherence (OECD, 2019a). The OECD's Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development section, for example, has announced the creation of a "Global Hub on the Governance for the SDGs," in cooperation with UNDP. It has also published a report on governance as an accelerator for the SDGs, which promotes a whole-of-governance approach, with several case studies (OECD, 2019b). This is exactly the kind of tool the HLPF can promote and integrate. It can provide more guidance by disseminating or promoting these best practices more consciously. The UN could also encourage VNR countries to report on *how* these practices are

working or not and to promote integration instead of only highlighting measures to implement particular SDGs. Moreover, the VNR processes could learn from OECD Peer Review processes that include consideration of a theory of change, clear methodology, and clear roles and responsibilities of stakeholders, all of which would benefit the HLPF review processes (see also Beisheim, 2015; Bernstein, 2013). Building on these lessons and insights, member states could consider using a template for the VNRs – or at least for the 700-word ‘Main Messages’ (with principal findings) that DESA collects until the end of April – as this would greatly help the secretariat and outside experts to better synthesize trends across reviews, identifying best practices, bottlenecks, and potential for action or need for innovative approaches, additional efforts and resources. It is hard to develop good case studies or draw out lessons and good practices with a huge amount of variation across VNRs.

Political Leadership and Guidance

Splitting the HLPF meetings and having Sherpas – as we propose – could also go a long way to enhance *political leadership and guidance*, the core mandate of the HLPF and one of two principal areas where the HLPF needs to do better according to a stakeholder survey conducted by UNDESA (the other being bringing science to bear on policy) (UNDESA, 2019c). Many valuable insights are being generated through the VNRs and Thematic and SDG Reviews. However, little is coming back down to guide countries and others when implementing the SDGs, or to mobilize resources or action items, or encourage linkages with other parts of the system. The early and more integrative reviews enabled by these changes would assist the negotiation of a more action-oriented Ministerial Declaration with recommendations to guide countries and mobilize resources. Good preparatory work would also permit more time for the ministerial segment in July to decide upon accelerated and transformative action, measures to improve coherence, and initiatives to mobilize additional resources. In terms of creating a feedback loop, it might be sensible to have a slot to report on those follow up actions at the next HLPF meeting.

The official process for the HLPF and ECOSOC review launched in February 2020. The co-facilitators want to finish the process by June 2020, but this will largely depend on how ambitious member states want to be; at the time of writing, positions are far apart. Rather than radical reform, the proposals here are in the spirit of ensuring the HLPF builds momentum to live up to its mandate. Doing so is needed to keep the support of civil society and many member states who recognize that moving beyond business-as-usual is necessary to achieve the SDGs. Such momentum is especially crucial given the 2030 Agenda and SDGs are rare exceptions to the current strains on multilateralism. An HLPF review that supports their delivery through enabling effective action by coalitions of the willing presents a key opportunity in this difficult political environment.

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