

GLOBAL VIEW



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The United Nations 2030 Agenda: 17 Sustainable Development Goals to Transform Our World

<http://www.globalview.at>



Sustainable Development Goals

- Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere
- Goal 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
- Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
- Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
- Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
- Goal 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
- Goal 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
- Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
- Goal 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation
- Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries
- Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
- Goal 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
- Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
- Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
- 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
- Goal 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
- Goal 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

Dear Readers!



The United Nations not only celebrate their 70th anniversary, and Austria its 60th year as a Member State, in 2015 the 193 Member States of the United Nations agree on a new Sustainable Development Agenda that shall not only focus on the so-called development countries of the global south but aim at all countries and people in the world, and therefore are universal.

The predecessors of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which were adopted in 2000 and ended in 2015, show some success, such as the decrease of absolute poverty in fifteen years by half, the rise of the level of education from 83 to 91% in primary education, the increase of women in national parliaments by almost 50% in 15 years, the prevention of more than 6.2 million Malaria-causalities, and an almost 10% decrease of people living in slums in development countries.

However, as mentioned above, the new Sustainable Development Goals are universal and all Member States have the duty to try to achieve the goals, also in a way of multi-stakeholder collaboration in close cooperation with civil society, business, the scientific community and the UN system of agencies.

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets are adopted by all Member States of the United Nations and aim at tackling key systematic barriers to sustainable development, such as inequality, unsustainable consumption and production patterns, inadequate infrastructure and lack of decent jobs. The SDGs aim to end poverty, promote prosperity and people's well-being while protecting the environment by 2030.

In this issue we only focus on the SDGs, as we hope that they will be as or even more successful as the MDGs. In cooperation with the United Nations Information Service (UNIS) Vienna, we provide you with one professional article on each of the seventeen goals in this issue.

I hope you enjoy reading the articles and think carefully in which ways you can contribute to reach a better and stronger world. Please also feel encouraged to send us some feedback via globalview@afa.at

Yours,
Bernd Hermann

Editor's remark: These articles have already been published by the United Nations in New York (UN Chronicle) and are being reprinted (slightly adapted) in cooperation with the United Nations Information Service (UNIS) Vienna in order to inform the general public in Europe, especially Austria and the other client countries of UNIS Vienna (Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia). The photos for the articles have been chosen by Editor-in-Chief Bernd HERMANN.

Please also attend the variety of events of the Foreign Policy and United Nations Association of Austria (UNA-AUSTRIA) and the United Nations Youth and Student Association of Austria – Academic Forum for Foreign Affairs (UNYSA-AUSTRIA-AFA). More information available under <http://www.oegavn.org> and <http://afa.at>.

We welcome your thoughts and comments on this issue or your suggestions on further topics and issues. Please email the Editor-in-Chief Bernd HERMANN via globalview@afa.at.

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Event Highlights



photo: UNA-AUSTRIA

The Foreign Policy and United Nations Association of Austria (UNA-AUSTRIA) as well as the United Nations Youth and Student Association of Austria – Academic Forum for Foreign Affairs (UNYSA-AUSTRIA-AFA) very closely work together with the United Nations Information Service (UNIS) in Vienna and also with the United Nations in general.

UNIS Director Dr. Martin Nesirky not only often speaks for the guests of UNA-AUSTRIA and the students of UNYSA-AUSTRIA-AFA, but also works on deepening the relationship between the UNAs in the four client countries of UNIS, Austria, Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia. UNIS, UNA-AUSTRIA and the Permanent Representatives met in order to organize a networking meeting for UNAs and MUN organizers and a conference for UNAs and other NGOs, in order to discuss how to promote the SDGs.



photo: UNYSA-AUSTRIA-AFA

H.E. Kandeh K. Yumkella, the outgoing Chief Executive Officers of the Sustainable Energy for All (SE4ALL) Initiative, spoke for the students of UNYSA-AUSTRIA-AFA in the context of the Diploma Course Global Advancement Programme (GAP) in Vienna. The SE4ALL Initiative was founded in 2011 because the world faces two urgent and interconnected challenges related to energy. One is related to energy access. Nearly one person in five on the planet still lacks access to electricity. More than twice that number, almost three billion people, rely on wood, coal, charcoal or animal waste for cooking and heating. This is a major barrier to eradicating poverty and building shared prosperity. Where modern energy services are plentiful, the problem is different – waste and pollution. Emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases from fossil fuels are contributing to changes in the Earth's climate that are causing widespread harm to lives, communities, infrastructure, institutions and budgets. Climate change puts us all at risk, but it hurts the poor first – and worst.



photo: UNYSA-AUSTRIA-AFA

Yury Fedotov, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and Director-General United Nations Office at Vienna (UNOV), gave an interesting lecture for the students of UNYSA-AUSTRIA-AFA in context of the Diploma Course Global Advancement Programme (GAP) in Vienna.

The United Nations at Vienna have been located in the Vienna International Centre since 1979, however, the IAEA (1957) and the UNIDO (1967) had already moved to Vienna earlier but to a different location. In 1980 Vienna was established as a third United Nations Headquarter, after New York and Geneva but before Nairobi.

In context of the GAP Diploma Course of UNYSA-AUSTRIA-AFA students learn from experts in the areas of diplomacy, politics, economy and culture for one year.

End Poverty in All Its Forms Everywhere

Heads of State convene at the General Assembly of the United Nations to agree upon a set of sustainable development goals (SDGs). The first target of the first SDG proposed by the Open Working Group (OWG) of Member States is to “eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere” by 2030. The second target is to reduce at least by half the proportion of people living in poverty according to national definitions. These are noble and historic targets for global progress—they deserve their status at the top of the list. At the same time, they illustrate issues affecting a considerable number of the 169 development targets proposed by OWG, such as how do we measure them and are they plausible?

These two questions are linked. How we resolve the challenges of measurement will have a profound impact on the targets’ power to motivate as well as on the likelihood that those targets will be met. Poverty lines at the national and local level are frequently revised upward, and there are good reasons for this. This approach, however, risks the possibility that steady development progress will not yield poverty reduction, simply because the poverty line keeps moving too.

As OWG suggested, extreme poverty is “currently measured as people living on less than US \$1.25 a day”, although that is unlikely to be the case for long. The “official” extreme poverty line and the number of people living below it are calculated by a (well-meaning) cabal in the bowels of the World Bank headquarters. They are working on

a revision that could have a dramatic impact on the dollar consumption figure, declared as the “extreme poverty line”, as well as on the number of people living below that threshold.

In the past, the global extreme poverty line established by the World Bank was set to reflect the value of national poverty lines in the world’s poorest countries. The original 1990 “dollar a day” poverty line was “typical of low income countries” at the time. In 2008, it was updated to match the latest available average national poverty line of the world’s 15 poorest countries, converted at an exchange rate designed to reflect the different prices of the same goods and services across countries.

The World Bank is in the process of proposing a new global line and other poverty numbers

based on more recent national poverty lines, as well as on data from a 2011 global survey of prices. By the time the World Bank decides that it is ready to release the numbers—a process, which has previously taken up to two years—the global extreme poverty line may be at US \$1.75 a day or higher. The new data suggests, however, that the prices of goods in poor countries are lower than we thought. This in turn may suggest a dramatic decline in the number of people living in poverty—by as much as a third (from 1.2 billion in 2010, a number based on the old price data and poverty line, to below 900 million, a number calculated using the new data provided by the Brookings Institution).

One thing is clear: if we are to “eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere” by 2030, we will have to use an entirely different approach to setting the planetary extreme poverty line than that used by the World Bank in the past.

Imagine that we are in 2030, and we are looking at the national poverty lines of the world’s 15 poorest countries. How likely is it that they will all be set at a level below the consumption of their very poorest citizens? They shouldn’t be set that low. The idea that countries, which most optimistically will still have an average income that is a fraction of that of the poorest people in Europe or the United States of America today, would declare that they have no poor is simply ridiculous.

Under any international definition of extreme poverty based on the most recent national poverty lines of a number of countries, there will always be poor people in the world—including



SDG 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere

all of those living in poverty according to the national definition in the countries used to set the global “extreme poverty” line. This suggests that a zero poverty goal using the World Bank’s current methodology could never be met.

If we’re going to set a zero goal for global poverty in the post-2015 development agenda, it has to be an absolute goal, and not one set relative to national poverty lines, and the process of setting the new global poverty line should be open, transparent and participatory. For years the World Bank has kept secret the data it uses to measure global levels of income and consumption. The Bank decides when and how to incorporate data from income and price surveys, and it also chooses the method to calculate the poverty line. As part of the process of setting the sustainable development goals and the data revolution that must underpin it, shouldn’t the world’s poor and Governments of developing countries have some input into defining “what is poverty”? The process is also urgent: we will set the goal in September 2015, after all.

Could we meet a target to eradicate absolute poverty below a certain threshold? That depends on the level at which it is set, of course. A number of analysts, however, have attempted to calculate the likelihood of wiping out the US \$1.25 a day poverty line, using old prices and poverty numbers. If there was strong growth in the poorest countries over the next 15 years and those countries saw rapidly declining inequality, perhaps as few as 2 per cent of the population of the developing world would be left living below US \$1.25 a day by 2030. Of course it is far too optimistic to predict that every poor country will see rapid growth and declining inequality over the next 15 years—some will fall victim to bad governance, low commodity prices, or civil unrest that derails progress. Thus, the real number will be considerably higher.

The gap could still be overcome with transfers—simply giving money to families which saw aver-

age incomes below the US \$1.25 threshold. The definition of who is poor, however, changes rapidly over time, depending on seasons, weather, health care access, escalation of violence and just bad luck. Rather than the representative surveys currently taken every few years, maintaining a global \$1.25 consumption floor would take many surveys a year covering the entire global population at risk.

More plausible than an accurately targeted program is one that provides support to a far larger group at risk of falling below \$1.25 a day. That, however, would raise the price tag, of course. We would then have to find a way to transfer the money: mobile banking has spread rapidly, but most of the world’s poorest people still don’t have access to banking services. This is not to say that ending extreme poverty by 2030 is impossible, but rather that it would take an immense effort. In fact, to date, we haven’t even agreed upon a definition of “extreme poverty” that we could plausibly eradicate.

Meanwhile, there is a similar, if less severe measurement challenge with the second poverty target of reducing at least by half the proportion of people living in poverty in each country according to national definitions. How those definitions are calculated varies considerably across countries. In the United States, for example, the number is meant to reflect the same (inflation-adjusted) income over time. In many other countries, however, the poverty line

is explicitly or effectively a relative line. As average incomes increase, so does the income below which people are defined as poor. In those countries, halving the proportion of people living in poverty can only be accomplished through a dramatic reduction in inequality.

That’s not a bad thing, as inequality has been rising within countries across the world, and we should reverse the trend. The work, however, is yet to be done in order to show that the scale of inequality reduction required to halve the number of people living below a relative poverty line is plausible in most (or even many) countries.

The last thing we would want the SDGs to encourage is to “lower the bar” of national poverty lines, whereby countries would meet the SDG target by making their official poverty line a steadily smaller proportion of average incomes over time. That speaks to the potential advantage of setting an explicit relative target at the country level—reducing the gap between the bottom 40 per cent and the top 10 per cent in every country by 25 per cent, or closing the gap between the median income and the mean income by a third, as it might be.

Therefore, for the first two targets of the first of the Sustainable Development Goals, there is considerable work to do.

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Creating New Paths for Nutrition, Agriculture and Food Systems

The year 2015 presents a unique opportunity for the global development community to build on and strengthen the momentum initiated by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

While the MDGs started from ground zero, creating a baseline for global hunger and poverty targets, the sustainable development goals (SDGs) will hit the ground running, propelled by over a decade of lessons learned. Given this experience, the coming years offer unprecedented potential for human development.

With respect to nutrition, the current discourse and action are informed by a number of strategies and approaches which evolved over the course of the MDGs. Nutrition has captured global attention and has remained a featured agenda item for most development partners. A number of international initiatives, multi-stakeholder processes and commitments add fuel to the fire, including the Scaling Up Nutrition Movement (2009), the Global Nutrition for Growth Compact (2013), the United Nations Secretary-General's Zero Hunger Challenge (2012), and the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2).

Food Systems for Nutrition

Held jointly by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) in November 2014 in Rome, ICN2 convened almost 170 Member States to address the multiple challenges of malnutrition. The conference produced two outcome documents, the Rome Declaration on Nutrition, which outlines current challenges and commits to addressing them in the coming decade, and a complementary Framework for Action, which lists 60 actions that countries may select from to guide national nutrition strategies.

A key message from ICN2 was that food systems around the world are changing rapidly and becoming more complex. Recent trends in industrialization, globalization and commercialization have profound implications for what foods are being produced, the degree to which they are being processed, and how people are consuming them.



photo: UN Photo / Milton Grant

SDG 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

This message has been broadcast ever more loudly by the international nutrition community in recent years. It is in large part a reflection of mounting concern over the impact and sustainability of current consumption and production patterns. Although commercialization and specialization in agricultural production, processing and retailing have enhanced efficiency throughout the global food system, increasing year-round availability and affordability of a diverse range of foods (FAO, 2013, p. v), “double” or even “triple” burdens of malnutrition are also increasingly ubiquitous. Today, most countries suffer from some combination of stunting, anemia, and/or obesity and overweight.

The negative environmental effects associated with these patterns of food system change include land degradation, unsustainable water use and heavy reliance on pesticides and fertilizers, to name a few. They present a major concern not only in regard to their obvious agroecological impact, but also with respect to increased risk of food insecurity and poverty, with subsequent

insidious implications for nutrition and health.

As such, the quality of global, national and local food systems is increasingly considered reflective of the integral role played by agriculture in food security and nutrition outcomes. Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2—end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture—is a clear acknowledgement of the links between these important components. It is also uncharted territory that offers unprecedented opportunities to tackle a range of challenges facing current food systems. These include increasing support to small-scale food producers, improving environmental sustainability, increasing resilience in production practices, and reducing food waste and losses.

Ensuring That Nutrition Does Not Get Lost

Of the 17 SDGs and 169 targets proposed by the United Nations Open Working Group, only SDG 2 includes a provision on nutrition. That said, the

fact that it embeds sustenance in the context of food security and sustainable agriculture is an achievement, as it acknowledges the crucial role played by food-based approaches to nutrition. Furthermore, consolidating nutrition, food security and agriculture into the same goal increases accountability with respect to health and environmental impacts of agricultural production practices and food system development.

The risk of the SDG 2 phrasing is that the concept of “improved nutrition” is conflated with the conventional hunger reduction construct, with the focus defaulting to food quantity and national calorie availability, as opposed to the quality of available foods and household or individual access to them. This is a common problem in food security discourse. Although the original 1996 World Food Summit definition of food security included “ensuring year-round access to adequate, safe, diverse and nutrient-rich foods for all”, over the years the concept has been reduced in many contexts to gross calorie availability. As a result, we now often talk about “food security and nutrition” to safeguard the latter from being forgotten.

How can we ensure that the nutrition component of SDG 2 is upheld and not overshadowed? Two suggestions, both based on the premise that consideration of food quality (as opposed to quantity) is key. First, agricultural productivity must pay attention to nutrient-dense foods. Second, countries must recognize that there are multiple entry points for improving nutrition through agriculture and food systems. There are many ways to improve the quality of foods available in a given food environment. Indeed, given the current rapid pace of commercialization and specialization in agricultural production, a wide range of opportunities are available.

Identifying Entry Points

The ICN2 Framework for Action includes a section on “Sustainable food systems for promoting healthy diets”, with more recommendations than almost any other section. These range from the promotion of crop diversification, to establishing national food or nutrient-based standards, strengthening local food production and processing, and exploring regulatory or voluntary instruments for promoting healthy diets. The broad scope of the recommendations

is indicative of all the different ways to increase the nutrition sensitivity of food and agriculture systems. That said, the trick is to identify which of these multiple entry points will provide the most leverage, given sociocultural preferences, the political climate, and the surrounding policy landscape.

While the former fall squarely under the purview of individual countries, international consensus is emerging on which policy areas offer the greatest potential for nutrition impact. These include: agricultural production policies, strategies designed to impact consumer purchasing power (e.g. cash transfers, consumer subsidies), policies pertaining to food transformation and consumer demand, and market and trade system policies such as import tariffs or bans (Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition, 2014).

Across the board, the emphasis is on using policy levers to increase availability and affordability of diverse, nutritious foods, thus making food systems more nutrition-sensitive. Environmentally-viable production practices which improve agricultural sustainability—with subsequent long-term positive implications for food security and nutrition—are an important part of the picture.

Measuring Progress

SDG 2 opens a wide door in terms of policy and programme entry points for improving nutrition through agriculture. However, in terms of nutrition monitoring and evaluation, the parameters are narrower. To date, there is broad consensus on which indicators best measure progress in critical nutrition outcomes. Recommended by the United Nations System Standing Committee on Nutrition (UNSCN) as a suite, these include

stunting, wasting, overweight, exclusive breastfeeding, low birth weight and anemia prevalence in women of reproductive age. These indicators are used to assess progress towards the World Health Assembly global nutrition targets and to estimate the percentage of national budget allocated to nutrition (UNSCN, 2014).

They are all being promoted for inclusion under SDG 2. Also included within the recommended suite of nutrition indicators agreed upon by UNSCN is the Minimum Dietary Diversity—Women (MDD-W), specified as “the percentage of women, 15-49 years of age, who consume at least 5 out of 10 defined food groups” (FANTA/FAO, 2014). This indicator is currently the only validated option for assessing adult diet quality at the individual level. It is a proxy for micronutrient adequacy of the diets of women of reproductive age. Women consuming at least five out of ten food groups have a greater likelihood of meeting their micronutrient needs than women consuming foods from fewer food groups. The MDD-W is a key indicator that links all the components of SDG 2 by highlighting nutritional quality of food intake, while emphasizing the role of agriculture in promoting good health (UNSCN, 2014).

It is important to note that overall, the development and validation of food-based indicators has lagged conspicuously behind other types of nutrition-related metrics. For the most part, these indicators have not fundamentally changed since the 1970s; they still measure availability and access to calories (Herforth, 2015), reflecting the reductionist food security view mentioned above. Increasing demand for and availability of globally comparable, routinely collected indicators of diet adequacy is imperative for holding agriculture and food systems to a higher, more health-centred standard. SDG 2 offers a tremendous opportunity in this regard.

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The SDGs and a Healthier 2030

Health is fundamental to human development. All people, regardless of social status, consistently rank good health as a top priority, and healthy people are critical to sustaining societies. It is therefore not surprising that four of the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) directly relate to health.

The MDGs were successful at focusing global attention and resources on specific, pressing world challenges, including hunger, maternal and child health, HIV/AIDS and malaria. These issues were placed at the top of the global agenda, inviting international agencies, Governments, non-governmental organizations and civil society, private firms, and other stakeholders to come together in order to achieve the goals. As a result, extreme poverty fell by half, there has been significant progress in the fight against malaria and tuberculosis, and over 2 billion people gained access to safer drinking water.

Nonetheless, as with many other global targets, alongside strengths and successes there are also challenges and weaknesses. Progress has been uneven, both within and across countries. Although chronic undernutrition, child and maternal mortality have fallen significantly, there is still much to be done. Public education and rapid diagnostic testing for HIV/ AIDS has reduced the number of new cases, and more effective treatments allow HIV-positive people to live longer. Yet access to treatment needs to become more widespread, new cases need to be prevented, and stigma and discrimination reduced.

The MDGs encouraged specific interventions benefitting subpopulations, namely pregnant women and children under 5 years of age, rather than all people. Some countries, however, sought to improve indicators through investments in their health systems to support the entire population, which resulted in dramatic progress in the health of all people at all ages. Other countries focused interventions on delivering health services largely to pregnant women and young children, and saw fewer improvements in the overall health of the general population. A new agenda is needed to prioritize equity in outcomes, and address health systems in addition to targeting specific diseases.

Further, the global burden of disease has shifted greatly in the past 30 years, increasing the need for a focus on health systems. Non-communicable diseases such as stroke, cancer and diabetes are responsible for a growing share of both mortality and morbidity in both developed and developing countries. In fact, rapid economic growth in many developing countries has left them facing a challenging dichotomy; in poorer, more remote areas there is much to be done on the MDGs agenda, while diabetes and heart disease are rising in more affluent cities. Even

within households, family dynamics may result in some family members suffering from caloric or micronutrient deficiency, while others are obese. Looking forward, we need a post-2015 agenda that can support countries in addressing all of these issues.

Medical research has shown that health issues once relegated to the back burner play a much larger role in our overall health and well-being. Mental health is one such issue. There is a growing consensus that we need to work more to reduce the stigma of mental illness and offer mental health services to people. Addressing indoor and outdoor air quality, water quality, and other environmental determinants of health is another example. Tackling these issues is critical to safeguarding global health, and needs to play a larger role in the post-2015 agenda.

We therefore recommend a post-2015 development agenda that both reaffirms commitment to the MDGs and expands beyond them to cover new issues that merit urgent global attention. The formulation of SDG 3—ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages—can easily accommodate such a broad agenda. The current text, which includes numerical targets for child and maternal mortality, can revitalize action to complete the MDGs agenda. Targets addressing non-communicable diseases, substance abuse, and environmental health will raise global awareness about the importance of these issues and spur progress.

Perhaps the most revolutionary aspect of the current goal is the target on universal health coverage (UHC). This is vulnerable to the critique of being too broad and therefore difficult to attain or to measure. However, ambitious targets are often needed to inspire progress. While the MDGs prioritized specific interventions for pregnant women and children under 5 years of age, UHC promotes healthier lives for all through investment in health systems. There is a growing



photo: UN Photo / Ferdin Waezi



SDG 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

body of evidence that investments in health systems are key to better health outcomes.

In brief, UHC strives to ensure that all people have access to needed, quality health services without suffering financial hardship. It supports increased equity in health outcomes, as it allows even the poorest people to afford needed care. It supports taking a life course approach by addressing health issues at all ages. When properly implemented, it meets demands for primary care for all people, and supports promotive, preventive, curative, palliative and rehabilitative services. Finally, UHC can be implemented in such a way as to capitalize on social and environmental determinants of health, including behavioural choices (diets, exercise, air quality, tobacco use, etc.).

A focus on UHC for the next 15 years could be truly transformative for both rich and poor countries. It is vitally important that health improvement accrue to everyone, not just certain groups. Causal analyses from 153 nations show that “broader health coverage generally leads to better access to necessary care and improved population health, with the largest gains accruing to poorer people.” The World Health Report 2010 demonstrated the catastrophic effects of

health care costs, with nearly 150 million people worldwide suffering financial hardship and 100 million being pushed below the poverty line as a result of out-of-pocket spending. UHC focuses attention and efforts on removing financial barriers to care, working towards universal access, and ensuring that no one forgoes needed treatment due to cost.

Of course, setting global goals and priorities can only go so far. The real test will be how the goals are implemented, and how progress is monitored and evaluated. Given the broad goal of ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all at all ages, Governments, international organizations, and other actors need to be pragmatic about how to implement policy and monitor progress. Agreement on global goals and tar-

gets, as with all policy decisions, will inevitably be a political as well as technical process, even with buy-in by participating stakeholders. The tension between the political and technical has to be managed for goals and targets to become implementable, so that it is possible to track and monitor implementation.

Discussion over what indicators to use and how to finance the SDGs is ongoing. The Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN, www.unsdsn.org) has proposed a framework of post-2015 indicators. They need to be clear and straightforward, selected with consensus from a diverse group of stakeholders, and based upon existing data sources. These indicators should measure outcomes as much as possible, and be disaggregated by a wide range of socioeconomic variables (age, gender, urban/rural, etc.) to ensure equal progress. In addition, Governments should support calls for a “data revolution” and move as much as possible towards annual reporting of publicly available data. New technologies such as mobile phones and remote sensing make it increasingly easy to rapidly collect and analyze high-quality data; the post-2015 agenda should take advantage of this.

We have been given an opportunity to establish an ambitious, equitable development agenda for the next 15 years. Global political processes are on track to deliver a meaningful outcome, which could be transformative for global health. As we move towards September 2015, stakeholders must hold Governments accountable to fulfil their promises for a substantial agreement, and begin working together to implement the SDGs.

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Education in the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda

A collective sigh of relief was heard from the international education community when the sustainable development goals (SDGs) proposed by the Open Working Group (OWG) of the General Assembly in July 2014 included a stand-alone goal on education.

Earlier on in the OWG process, there were genuine concerns that education might not emerge as a stand-alone goal, or that there could be a repeat of what happened in 2000 when the scope of the international agenda for education fell short of the ambition and the holistic approach set by the education community.

It was April 2000 when the world gathered in Dakar, Senegal, for the World Education Forum and adopted six Education for All (EFA) goals. It committed United Nations Member States to 1) expand early childhood care and education; 2) universalize primary education; 3) improve access to life-skill learning; 4) achieve 50 per cent improvement in adult literacy; 5) achieve gender equality; and 6) enhance the quality of education. A few months later, eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were established at the United Nations. Featured among the MDGs were universal access to primary education (MDG 2) and a target on gender parity in education, as part of the goal on gender equality and women's empowerment (MDG 3).

There is now a remarkable opportunity to provide a more aspirational vision for education in the post-2015 development agenda. Preparations began more than two years ago in 2012, when the international education community, co-led by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), began a broad and intensive consultation to define the future education agenda. This extensive process culminated in the Muscat Agreement adopted at the Global EFA Meeting in Oman in May 2014, representing a shared vision of education for the future.

The global education community was reassured that the proposed SDG 4, which calls for the international community to "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all", was closely

aligned with the proposed goal in the Muscat Agreement. Although there are some discrepancies between the targets in the Muscat Agreement and those proposed by OWG, the seven targets and three means of implementation under SDG 4 set forth an ambitious education agenda that will pave the way for a transformative and sustainable future.

As the specialized agency of the United Nations in education, UNESCO stands by the conviction that education is a fundamental human right inextricably linked to the realization of other rights. As such, it is a public good for all individuals and the foundation for human fulfilment, peace, sustainable development, gender equality and responsible global citizenship. As a catalyst for development, education is a key contributor to reducing inequality and scaling down poverty; and full access to quality education at all levels is an essential condition for accelerating progress towards the achievement of other sustainable development goals. In other words, sustainable development begins with education.

The internationally agreed education goals of EFA and the MDGs have made far-reaching gains over the past 15 years. Countries have used these goals as targets and standards to rally domestic political will to reform and improve their education systems, while donors have used them to align their development aid policies and priorities in education with the international goals and targets.

Since 2000, the international community has made tremendous progress in expanding educational opportunities and has made education and learning a reality for millions of children and adolescents. Despite rapid population growth, the number of primary school age out-of-school children dropped by 42 per cent between 2000 and 2012, with the number for girls seeing an even greater drop of 47 per cent. The number of out-of-school adolescents also reduced by

31 per cent between 1999 and 2011; while during the same period, the pre-primary education gross enrolment ratio increased from 33 to 50 per cent. Among 161 countries with data, the number of countries which achieved gender parity increased from 91 in 1999 to 101 in 2011.

These extraordinary successes demonstrate that achievable and measurable solutions are within reach, to unlock the potential in all learners and to create a prosperous, healthy, just and equitable world. The international community must build on the achievements and lessons learned over the past 15 years, while continuing to identify innovative solutions and approaches to tackle the unfinished business of the Education for All Agenda.

For while we have come a long way, there are still an estimated 58 million children who are not going to school and around 100 million children who do not complete primary education. The poor quality of education at the primary level has resulted in some 250 million children leaving school without learning to read, write or count, while an estimated 782 million adults, 64 per cent of whom are women, still lack basic reading and writing skills.

The plight of these hundreds of millions of children, adolescents and adults who are being deprived of their right to education must not be neglected or forgotten. The post-2015 education agenda must effectively address both the persistent barriers to education and learning, as well as the new and emerging global challenges we now face.

The world is at a tipping point. Global crises threaten to reverse progress and undermine future achievements. We are seeing increased environmental degradation and the intensifying impacts of climate change, worsening job prospects for young people, growing migration and urbanization challenges, and prolonged global

economic downturn and violent conflicts. It is time to build and shape sustainable development goals that will tackle these burning challenges in the post-2015 era.

Further, today's technology-driven world is placing increased demands on learners, teachers, businesses and even Governments. Knowledge-based economies call for new types and levels of skills and competencies, while insufficient opportunities to access higher levels of learning and acquire skills in information and communications technology are resulting in a knowledge divide among and within countries, with major economic and employment consequences.

UNESCO is unequivocal that the best way to meet these vast challenges is through an aspirational, transformative and inclusive post-2015 education agenda of universal relevance applicable to all countries, irrespective of their development status. UNESCO also strongly advocates for a humanistic and holistic vision of education that is rights-based with a broad lifelong learning perspective to empower people to realize their right to education and to learn throughout life.

As the intergovernmental process moves forward at the United Nations in New York and in anticipation of the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda at the Special Summit in September 2015, the international education community is preparing the groundwork to support the operationalization of the future education agenda at the country level.

UNESCO, jointly with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), UNICEF, UN-Women, and the World Bank Group, will convene the World Education Forum (WEF) 2015, to be hosted by the Government of the Republic of Korea, from 19 to 22 May 2015 in the city of Incheon. It will provide a unique platform for global leaders in education, policymakers and representatives of civil society, teachers, experts and the private sector to take stock of achievements and shortfalls in the implementation of the EFA goals and education-related MDGs, and to agree on a joint



photo: UN Photo / Milton Grant

SDG 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

position for the education goal and targets in the post-2015 development agenda. It will also provide an opportunity for the international education community to chart the way forward for the implementation of the post-2015 education agenda through a Framework for Action.

Fully cognizant that strong national systems are indispensable to the effective delivery of inclusive and equitable quality education, UNESCO and its partners in the United Nations system and beyond will continue to strengthen international technical cooperation to support countries most in need. UNESCO will also continue to support countries in reinforcing their national monitoring capacities while leading the global coordination and monitoring of the implementation of the education agenda in the post-2015 framework. By building on the existing EFA Global Monitoring Report, which it has published annually for the past 12 years with data support from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, regular

and independent monitoring to track progress at the global level will be sustained.

The international community has come a long way since the worldwide movement for Education for All was initiated in Jomtien, Thailand, in 1990 and reaffirmed in Dakar in 2000. While unprecedented progress has been made, the journey to achieving Education for All is not over. The road from Incheon in May 2015 via New York in September 2015 to 2030 stretches before us. Galvanized by a much more ambitious and transformative agenda, the international community must strive to do much better, much more and work much harder if it is to proclaim that education for all has been truly achieved by 2030.

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Achieving Gender Equality and Empowering Women and Girls: Is SDG 5 Missing Something?

In a paper entitled “No empowerment without rights, no rights without politics”, that was written for a Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) assessment project, we argued that: “...progress towards gender equality and women’s empowerment in the development agenda requires a human rights-based approach, and requires support for the women’s movement to activate and energize the agenda. Both are missing from Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 3.

Empowerment requires agency along multiple dimensions—sexual, reproductive, economic, political, and legal. However, MDG 3 frames women’s empowerment as reducing educational disparities. By omitting other rights and not recognizing the multiple interdependent and indivisible human rights of women, the goal of empowerment is distorted and “development silos” are created...”.

We also drew attention to “women’s organizations...[as] key actors in pushing past such distortions and silos at all levels, and hence crucial to pushing the gender equality agenda forward. However, the politics of agenda setting also influences funding priorities such that financial support for women’s organizations and for substantive women’s empowerment projects is limited” (Sen and Mukherjee, 2014, p. 188).

Much has changed since the MDGs were first formulated soon after the Millennium Declaration in 2000. Or has it? It is undoubtedly true that, as compared to the formulation of the MDGs, the sustainable development goals (SDGs) has been a more open and more inclusive process driven by United Nations Member States, and generating intense and wide debate. And yet, when it comes to gender justice, the goals sound eerily similar. MDG 3 committed to “Promote gender equality and empower women”; SDG 5 (as agreed thus far through the process of the General Assembly’s Open Working Group (OWG)) (United Nations, 2014) calls to “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”.

However, two important differences at this level are the explicit inclusion of girls, and of the word “all”, which can be used to address the chal-

lenges faced by the most marginalized and oppressed. More differences appear at the level of the targets under the goal: whereas MDG 3 had a single target focused on education, SDG 5 proposes a range of targets to end discrimination, violence and harmful practices, recognize and value unpaid care work, participation and leadership in decision-making, and universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights. How SDG 5 and its proposed targets will finally translate into indicators, and whether these will be effective and usable for monitoring (where the rubber hits the road) remains to be seen.

Nonetheless, despite advances over the MDGs, there is still a worrying limitation to SDG 5: the absence of a clear recognition of the human rights of women and girls. This piece is being written even as the battle over the affirmation of women’s human rights and the role of women human rights defenders has been bitterly fought at this year’s meeting of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). What happens at the CSW is important because it is an established institution for review and monitoring, and because it is under the aegis of UN-Women, which will be the main operational arm for meeting SDG 5.

The Political Declaration of the CSW (United Nations, 2015), which is the main outcome of the meeting, includes human rights in a non-operational chapeau; once more in paragraph 2 where it recognizes that the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women are mutually reinforcing for the realization of the human rights



SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

of women and girls; and again in paragraph 5 where human rights of women are listed as one of the 12 critical areas of concern (of the BPFA). The attempt to thread human rights throughout the document did not succeed, although neither did the attempt to remove all mention. But the main operational paragraph (paragraph 6) where Governments pledge to take action contains nothing explicit on human rights, nor does any other paragraph.

Even the limited mentions of human rights in the Political Declaration were only agreed upon after protracted negotiations against arguments such as those of an observer State that women's human rights are only one among the 12 areas of the BPFA and should not be given special mention. That the human rights of girls and women should be contentious 15 years after the Millennium Declaration, and 20 years after the Fourth World Conference on Women, is a product of backlash.

This backlash attempts to roll back the advances and very real changes in norms and frameworks for realizing women's human rights, agreed by consensus among Member States during the United Nations conferences (at Vienna, Cairo and Beijing) of the 1990s. While funding to translate these norms and frameworks into practice has been woefully inadequate as noted by Sen and Mukherjee in their articles, the norms themselves are essential to have in place.

Human rights are contentious because, unlike policies and programmes, they are often more clearly justiciable, and can be used to hold Governments and others to account for their acts of commission or omission. The backlash against women's human rights has been led by Member (and observer) States of the United Nations with poor records on discrimination against women, as well as laws, policies and practices that sustain gender inequality across a wide spectrum of issues. A telling reminder of who is principally



behind the backlash was the Political Declaration's refusal to recognize the key role of women's human rights defenders who often risk their liberty and their lives to protect and advance the human rights of girls and women at risk. However, the fault is not only here. The refusal by other Member States to recognize that economic, social and cultural rights are interlinked and inseparable from civil and political rights is also a serious challenge to advancing towards the fulfilment of SDG 5.

Finally, one also has to ask the question: where's the beef? Each SDG (as enunciated in the OWG's report) has its attached targets and means of implementation. Those linked to SDG 5 mention

legal reforms and technology (5.a, 5.b and 5.c), but there is no reference made about funding. Given that a major weakness in the fulfilment of MDG 3 was the inadequacy of funding, the challenge of funding SDG 5 will remain as a major stumbling block unless it becomes central to its means of implementation.

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Rising to the Challenge: Enabling Access to Clean and Safe Water Globally

Access to clean, safe and secure water resources is an essential prerequisite for communities to prosper. While access to water and sanitation is often taken for granted in developed countries, this basic right is denied to many across the globe every day.

Sustainable development goal (SDG) 6, as formulated by the United Nations Open Working Group, presents an ambitious, yet achievable mission for the next two decades: “Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.” We propose that this goal can be achieved by applying four principles: 1) Separating drinking water from wastewater; 2) Accessing and treating drinking water to remove chemical and biological contaminants; 3) Protecting and restoring freshwater ecosystems; and 4) Guaranteeing water access and water rights.

Separating drinking water from wastewater

Historically, the single biggest factor contributing to the increased longevity of humans was the separation of drinking water from wastewater. Building sanitary infrastructure has enabled communities—and in turn, economies—to flourish, free from the burden of waterborne disease. Yet, today a staggering 1 billion people still do not have access to improved sanitation, in spite of the fact that it would reduce disease and infant mortality. There are many examples of successful sanitation projects in the developing world when financial resources and engineering are available. They demonstrate that it is possible to separate water for drinking from wastewater in regions that traditionally have lacked this infrastructure. Although many challenges remain to ensuring adequate sanitation for all, building sanitary infrastructure is a critical step needed to achieve SDG 6.

Accessing and treating drinking water

Having water available at home or within short distances obviates the need to cart it from other sources, often over long distances. A direct result of greater water accessibility is a substantial

increase in time available for productive work, attending school, developing a business, or raising a family. This is particularly relevant for women and children who spend significant time gaining access to water when it is not piped to their home. Ultimately, water will require treatment before drinking, but this challenge can be overcome with adequate resources for filtration and disinfection. In particular, point-of-use devices that are robust, reliable, require low maintenance and are widely available are needed to enable treatment for small drinking water systems. In tandem with principle 1 above, this will ensure there are multiple barriers to pathogens, offering greater protection to consumers.

Protecting and restoring freshwater ecosystems

We must also be cognizant of the relationship between ecosystem well-being and human health. Most of the world’s fresh waters have already been degraded due to unsustainable withdrawal, contaminants, climate change, nutrient pollution (eutrophication), and other human activities. The net result of human misuse and mismanagement of fresh waters is decreased water quality and inadequate quantity for consumption. Preserving and enhancing the ecological integrity of our freshwater lakes, rivers, wetlands and groundwater is critical for ensuring that pollutants and pathogens do not contaminate drinking water supplies. Functioning freshwater ecosystems have many built-in mechanisms that help naturally clean water that we need for drinking (e.g. riparian buffers that absorb stormwater run-off). As with principles 1 and 2 above, developing sanitary infrastructure is pivotal for protecting fresh waters from eutrophication, which is one of the greatest challenges to functioning freshwater ecosystems. Balancing the maintenance of natural capital

and the provision of ecosystem services with development and increased productivity is the key to ensuring the future sustainability of our water resources.

Guaranteeing water access and water rights

Economic development inevitably requires water resources. However, it is imperative that planners and Governments are considerate of the needs of diverse water users, including communities, agriculture, industry, mining and the environment. All development and land use changes have consequences. For example, land clearing will alter river flows, increasing the risk of flooding. Similarly, deforestation will decrease evapotranspiration, reducing precipitation needed for agriculture downwind. As the need for water for agriculture and industry increases, it is critical that we develop water-sharing agreements to ensure equitable access for all water users, including the environment. These agreements will require negotiations across local, regional and national boundaries and must include participants representing all stakeholders, such as community and industry leaders, and scientists. While these discussions may be difficult, they are not impossible and will help ensure adequate water access for all.

Implementing the United Nations Post-2015 Development Agenda

Tremendous progress has already been made towards meeting SDG 6. As nations have become more prosperous, they have undertaken sanitation and drinking water improvement programmes. Nevertheless, the astonishing statistics regarding the number of people who still lack sanitation and access to safe drinking water emphasizes that this problem remains one of the greatest humanitarian challenges.



SDG 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

Leadership is required at every level to implement water reform: within the household, within municipalities and within Governments. The solutions for supplying potable water and sanitation vary depending upon the available resources, the size of the communities and the scale of the desired improvement. We advocate both “top-down” and “bottom-up” approaches. Top-down water quality improvement and water allocation may appear as an imposition, but are often accompanied with more resources and provide the legislative framework necessary for sustainable development. “Bottom-up” improvement is also desirable as communities take responsibility and stewardship for the water resources and land for which they are custodians.

Education is the common prerequisite for water quality improvement. In developing nations, educating women and children in every household on the benefits of hygiene and sanitation is a fundamental first step for building awareness and implementing change. Advancing water quality in villages, towns and cities requires engineering, but also understanding of the close links between water quality and quantity, and

land management. In developed nations with more advanced water treatment infrastructure, the educational focus should be on improving water sustainability and developing policies required for water reform.

Human water use across the globe is coupled with social and natural systems, both by the globalized economy, trade and capital, as well as by the global water cycle and climate systems. Therefore, local and regional water use cannot be managed in isolation. The responsibility of developed nations is not just to provide financial aid, but also to assist developing countries in building human capital with the skills necessary to improve water quality and sanitation. Developed nations can help research and advance

new water treatment technologies, providing sustainable solutions for water management. Investment of time and resources to the development of low-cost, robust and reliable point-of-use devices is urgently needed.

Water reform needs to address the protection of water quality through prudent land management and the allocation of water between different users. Equitably sharing water resources between human consumers, the environment, industry, and agriculture is complex and requires strong water governance and policy so that the needs of both upstream and downstream users are met. This is further complicated by the fact that rivers flow across local, regional and national boundaries. Integrated water-trading markets are one tool that enables water to be bought and sold as a tradable commodity. This practice, however, does not consider water for the environment, which needs protection through policy and legislation.

Conclusion

Water sustains life, but clean, safe drinking water defines civilization. Achieving SDG 6 promises dramatic improvement to the quality of life and longevity in some of the world’s poorest nations. If we declare that access to clean, safe drinking water is a basic human right, then providing the necessary education, infrastructure and support to ensure the success in achieving SDG 6 is the responsibility of us all.

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Ensure Access to Affordable, Reliable, Sustainable and Modern Energy for All

The sustainable development goals (SDGs) proposed by the Open Working Group of the General Assembly of the United Nations recognize the importance of the natural environment and its resources to human well-being. As a whole, it is definitely a worthy charter for the twenty-first century, as it addresses the diverse challenges that we face as a global community.

SDG 7—to “ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all”—is a challenge confronting every country, that touches everyone. To understand the necessity of meeting this goal, and what is required to do so, we should unpack the statement of the goal itself. The four dimensions of SDG 7 are affordability, reliability, sustainability and modernity. These different dimensions are not mutually exclusive. They overlap, and in some cases even entail each other.

Consider what it means to have access to affordable energy. The heterogeneity of energy use across the world is due largely to different natural resource endowments and purchasing power. For example, a country with large coal deposits will likely make wide use of this resource to industrialize its economy. The people living within this country will likely use it as the primary means of power generation.

On the other hand, people living in places without ready stocks of fossil fuels may rely on more primitive methods of combustion, such as wood fibers or perhaps even animal dungs. Indeed, this is the condition that prevailed for the vast majority of humankind throughout its history, and continues to be the condition for many parts of the developing world. For instance, approximately 2.7 billion people (about 40 per cent of the world's population) now rely on traditional biomass fuels for cooking. Such low-quality fuels can be a major source of indoor air pollution. Even with the expansion of energy accessibility and economic development, the annual death toll from indoor air pollution will still be over 1.5 million people—a higher rate than that from both malaria and tuberculosis.

As globalization continues to bind the world in deeper networks of trade, countries can aug-



photo: UnPhotoAltaire Rumery

SDG 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

ment and diversify their energy endowments by import. However, if the development level of a country is low and the costs of energy—which are increasingly determined by global financial forces—are high, then people will lack access to energy no matter how large or diverse its country's endowment. Thus, an essential condition of affordability is raising income levels (and hence purchasing power) and controlling the impacts that impersonal economic forces operating at global levels have on the costs that people face on an everyday basis.

Affordability is meaningless, however, if energy provision is unreliable. In many parts of the developing world, energy sources are often scarce and their supply intermittent. Today, 20 per cent of the world's population still lacks access to electricity, and a larger share suffers from persistent power failures. In 2012, the massive, nationwide blackout that struck India affected nearly 700 million people, paralyzing transportation and communication systems and causing an unknown number of fatalities. This disaster was caused not just by supply issues, but also by mismanagement and an underdeveloped ener-

gy infrastructure. Thus, basic economic activity depends on a steady supply, robust governance, and an efficient and stable distribution system. There are multiple socioeconomic dimensions of energy reliability.

Electricity, automated transportation and information technology are essential to economic development. They are also basic features of modern society, and thus energy sources and systems that meet these needs reliably and affordably can be considered as “modern”. Population growth will continue in India, sub-Saharan Africa, and other parts of the developing world. Per capita economic consumption will also increase, creating much greater demand for the services described above, and consequently for access to modern energy. Over the next quarter century, about 90 per cent of the growth in energy demand will come from countries that are not members of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), i.e., countries outside of the rich Western economies and Japan. Meeting this rising wave of energy demand will be one of the paramount challenges of the twenty-first century, and is a reason why

it occupies such a central place in the SDGs. It also brings us to the final dimension of SDG 7: sustainability.

Energy should generate a consistent stream of power to meet basic human needs, maintain and improve social functioning, and advance living standards. It should also fulfill these functions as sustainably as possible—that is to say, the power generated by energy use should be much greater than the resulting waste and pollution. All sustainable energy must be modern, although not all forms of modern energy are sustainable. Coal is perhaps the most important case in point. Historically, coal has been indispensable to industrialization and the advancement of human well-being. If more of the world's people enjoy previously unimaginable living standards today, it is in large part because of coal. Offsetting its many virtues—for instance, abundance, wide distribution, and ease of use—is a long list of serious problems, however. In an age of population growth and environmental decline, this list is still growing.

Today, coal still provides about 40 per cent of the world's electricity and nearly the same fraction of global carbon emissions. Coal is also inefficient, with a low mass-to-energy ratio, and creates enormous pollution. Thus, coal is neither sustainable at the global scale because of its contribution to anthropogenic climate change, nor at the local scale because it is a threat to public health and ecological conditions (in addition to the polluting by-products of combustion, the process of coal mining creates myriad environmental problems). Given the scale of the use of coal, and the emergence of a global economy powered largely by fossil fuels, what can be done?

These are challenges that require a pragmatic, multi-faceted approach. Solutions need to be found at the global scale, where Governments and agencies must work together. International climate change agreements are the most visible fruits of such efforts. The SDGs have also



Photo: UN Photo / R. Kohler

helped set the tenor for cooperation and contributed to an emerging consensus on priorities. In terms of policies, the transfer of clean energy technologies to developing countries is an important example. Indeed, international climate change agreements—such as the clean development mechanism (CDM)—explicitly provide for such transfers. This is not enough, however. Solutions must also be developed locally. There is evidence that benefits from CDM, while necessary and net-positive generally, do not always reach the local level, particularly in impoverished rural areas. Development should be sensitive to local conditions, and identify unintended consequences of energy policies. The heedless pursuit of biofuels at the global and regional levels may result in unintended yet severe environmental degradation. The countless acres

of land deforested for palm oil undermine local well-being, and provide a stark reminder of the complexity of the energy problems that we face.

Access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy is integral to global development in the twenty-first century. Not all the solutions needed to meet this challenge are yet available, and those that are may not be apparent. Figuring out these solutions and aligning them across scales will be difficult. Yet the task is achievable if international organizations have sufficient vision, if Governments can work together, and if communities and individuals are offered the right incentives and the necessary means. SDG 7 is, at the very least, an important step in that direction.

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Parsing Goal 8 on Decent Work for All

After a two-year blizzard of consultations, debates, task forces and reports, the General Assembly of the United Nations started its final round of negotiations on 19 January 2015 to finalize the global post-2015 development agenda, a follow-up to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The main document of discussion was a proposal for 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) and 169 targets. Goal 8 seeks to “promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.” With unemployment set to increase over the next five years—over 212 million more people are likely to be out of a job by 2019 and many more trapped in vulnerable and precarious jobs—this goal reflects the concerns of Governments and people all over the world.

For the International Labour Organization (ILO) Goal 8 includes the following priorities:

- full and productive employment and decent work
- the gender pay gap youth unemployment
- ending all forms of child labour formalizing the informal economy
- entrepreneurship and micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises

- protecting labour rights and promoting safe, secure working environments
- migrant workers

Decent work priorities are also included in other goals. Technical and vocational skills are covered under Goal 4 on education, and social protection floors are discussed in Goal 1 on poverty.

Will all this actually translate into real changes in the realm of work? Despite amazing progress in certain areas, the preceding MDGs have a mixed record. So can the SDGs do better? The answer is that they must.

Showing results will be vital to sustain and advance the idea of multilateral cooperation. The new agenda will remain non-binding and voluntary. Nevertheless, it will influence key areas of policy, orient public opinion, steer official development assistance (ODA) and other development spending, and provide some bench marks to gauge and review Governments’ choices. It

will also set the direction for programming activities within the United Nations development system.

In terms of Goal 8 and the decent work agenda, what should we focus on? Here are some thoughts on three key areas:

Policy Changes at the Country Level

While the goals are global, each country will set its own national targets. Success will depend largely on action at the country level, driven mainly by the willingness of Governments to prioritize the goals and targets and adjust their policies. ILO advice will be available to inspire better policy design.

Demand will be strong in those areas that are singled out under the targets of Goal 8: social protection, skills, small and medium-sized enterprises, youth employment, child labour, labour rights, safe working conditions and migration. Comprehensive and effective national strategies for Goal 8, including employment and decent work, will also require diagnostic tools, solid indicators and new wisdom about trade-offs and synergies across different policy areas.

Strengthening national capacities and institutions will be important, starting with better collection and analysis of labour market statistics. A “data revolution” demands innovative public and private initiatives to improve large-scale collection and dissemination of development statistics. ILO will be a player in this area.

Building competent and accountable national bureaucracies, as well as effective labour market institutions and organizations, must also be an ILO and post-2015 priority. It is now clear that multilateral cooperation works better when international agencies and Governments work



SDG 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

alongside other bodies, such as civil society organizations, the private sector, local authorities and other stakeholders.

Representative organizations of employers and trade unions need to be involved in implementing the new agenda in order to ensure sound policy design and genuine monitoring, evaluation and accountability.

Global Partnerships

A supportive international environment will be essential to advance the post-2015 agenda, especially in the poorest countries. Yet global partnerships remain a delicate affair, an area where the MDGs have visibly failed.

The international context has changed, however. There are signs of a shift to a multipolar power constellation and innovations in institutions of global governance, such as the new role of the G20 and the proposed New Development Bank (formerly referred to as the BRICS Development Bank). ODA will remain essential to some developing countries and some sectors, but equally important will be improvement in the development orientation of the international frameworks for trade, finance, investment, technology, taxation, migration and the environment.

A significant move away from narrow Washington Consensus views is ongoing, and the economic and empirical arguments for this are compelling. Orthodox economists can no longer ignore the reasons for financial regulation, industrial policy, minimum wages, social security, progressive taxation and managing aggregate demand within a framework of long-run fiscal sustainability. However, this is not fully translating into tangible changes in national policy and political agendas, nor into more active global macroeconomic management.

ILO is purposely engaged in the policy debate within the G20. The post-2015 agenda should be seen as an additional arena, a supplementary



photo: UN Photo - Martin Peret

channel to reach out to technocrats, politicians and the public at large. Regular thematic reviews of global progress in key areas will be one component of the future framework for the agenda's implementation. This should open the door to work with sympathetic agencies to forge a solid consensus for the promotion of inclusive, sustainable and job-rich economic growth.

“Delivering as one”

Closer cooperation on the SDGs with sister agencies and perhaps international financial institutions will be a nitty-gritty preoccupation and will renew efforts to deliver as one United Nations system.

ILO's tripartite nature sets us apart from the rest. We will have to adapt the way we operate while helping the wider United Nations system to appreciate the value of our distinctive approach. The experience gained so far in mainstreaming decent work shows that there is much to be gained and built upon, for both our global advocacy and our country-level operations.

To conclude, the potential of decent work as a driver of inclusive and sustainable development is well recognized in the post-2015 agenda so far. ILO will play an active role to ensure it leads to concrete changes.

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A Sustainable Future of Infrastructure

UNOPS has a key role to play in building resilient infrastructure, promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialization and fostering innovation.

Investing in basic, sustainable infrastructure is essential to improving the living standards for communities worldwide. When we speak of the basics, we mean the fundamentals. These are issues which comprise common human needs all over the world. Just because these are basics, however, does not mean that addressing such concerns correctly is a simple task. In the case of infrastructure it requires coordinated, long-term planning that stretches across geographic, political and cultural boundaries.

For too long infrastructure has been understood and evaluated solely by the presence of a building or a completed roadway. We know, however, that a hospital cannot function without a solid waste system, and a waste system, in turn, cannot function without the acquired and applied knowledge, institutions and underlying resources necessary to manage it. Yet when we talk about infrastructure, this understanding beyond the immediate is still too often overlooked. We need a shift in this thinking.

Quite simply, without infrastructure we would not have a healthy society. Essential services such as health care and education require infrastructure. For communities and businesses to operate and thrive, they need access to goods and markets. Infrastructure must respond to societal needs, but it also should be evaluated for its long-term outcome, including the resources required to ensure longevity.

Many of the proposed sustainable development goals (SDGs) will require solid, functional and sustainable infrastructure if they are to be reached. Reliable forms of energy, the availability of potable water, education, safety and security, social and economic services—all of these are made possible through resilient infrastructure.



SDG 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

However, this very reliance creates significant challenges. We must consider the bigger picture, both in terms of the opportunities and the risks. We must support development, but what if something goes wrong? What is the environment in which we are operating? What are the issues in today's world? With climate change, for example, comes an increase in the frequency of natural disasters. So sustainable infrastructure not only supports development, but is essential for post-disaster recovery as well.

With our mandate within the United Nations system to lead on infrastructure, and our 20 years of experience developing infrastructure projects, the success of any infrastructure goal requires learning the lessons from practical experiences. We have this at the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS). The international community and industry must

work together to ensure that investment in infrastructure considers risk, placing security and resilience at its core.

At UNOPS our experience is broad and built upon partnerships. We work with the United Nations system, Governments, non-governmental organizations and the private sector. Our model encourages private investors to prioritize sustainable development. And right now, increased investment is needed to improve the security and resilience of critical infrastructure in developing countries.

The destruction caused by recent natural disasters in communities around the world highlights the need for a risk-based approach to sustainable infrastructure. Our work covers these areas. For example, in response to the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, UNOPS supported the

United Nations Development Programme and the International Labour Organization in a wide range of post-disaster activities, including the construction of shelters for the affected populations and managing the vast quantities of debris. We have also supported the Government of Brazil in constructing earthquake and cyclone resistant community hospitals, which incorporate environmentally friendly infrastructure such as external solar lamps and rainwater harvesting. There are many more such examples.

Existing infrastructure is also an important consideration. Assessments should be conducted seeking to understand how the structures already in place can be serviced and repaired. How do various developments interact with existing water treatment facilities, roads, bridges and utility grids, wherever they are in the world? It sounds simple, yet in many cases and in many parts of the world this factor is of ten overlooked.

Where risks cannot be eliminated, we need to improve management and mitigation. Disaster risk reduction aims to reduce the damage caused by natural hazards through prevention. There is a direct correlation between risk and resilience—a reduction in risk contributes to an increase in resilience. In turn, effectively managing risk in our projects will contribute to more sustainable infrastructure development. This connection also needs to be better understood. Whereas the resilience of infrastructure can be seen as the ability to absorb stresses caused by natural hazards—for example, how a building responds to an earthquake—the sustainability of infrastructure looks at the impact of that building on the environment. Sustainability helps reduce the footprint of a development, while resilience allows infrastructure to better withstand environmental impacts.

There are many principles and complexities within these issues. Ultimately, what is clear is



Photo: UN Photo / Million Grant

that infrastructure systems must be developed in a way that supports essential services over the long term, beyond political cycles.

Without consideration of all of these factors, sustainable infrastructure will always be just a horizon we never reach. Which is why as we set the future agenda, we must not forget that truly sustainable development is reliant on its foundations, on the infrastructure upon which success can be built.

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Why Addressing Inequality Matters?

The Rio+20 negotiations began amidst the fallout from the 2008 financial crisis, which made it abundantly clear that the economic, social and environmental imbalances that had built up recently could no longer be tackled separately, sequentially, or by countries acting alone.

Despite rapid export growth, strong capital inflows and high commodity prices in the developing world, the resulting income gains had been unevenly distributed, and many poorer countries and communities remained vulnerable to shocks and reversals. Crisis came in the wake of slow growth, massive income redistribution in favour of the top 1 per cent and an explosion in private debt, provoking not only a degree of moral soul-searching but also raising concerns about the fragility of the social compact.

It was recognized that the sustainable development goals (SDGs) would have to be more universal and more inclusive than the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), to address a wider range of socioeconomic differences around which inequalities had emerged and grown.

The Scale of Inequality

Compared to 30 years ago, income inequality has risen in a startling number of countries and is at its highest level in most member countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) since the end of the

Second World War. Moreover, income inequality has been compounded by wealth inequality, particularly in countries with already high inequality levels such as the United States of America. Other traditionally more egalitarian countries, such as Germany, Denmark and Sweden, have also seen the gaps between rich and poor increase.

Economists have been making the connection between globalization and income convergence, and closing income gaps across nations appears to be a clear trend, reflecting the growth slowdown in rich countries and sustained rapid growth in China and later in India. However, the trend is less secure than many had initially envisaged (The Economist explains, 2014). Moreover, recent growth spurts in developing countries have themselves coincided with rising levels of inequality, in some cases as or even more pronounced than in advanced economies.

Combining these intra/inter-inequality trends is no easy task, though overall, the global Gini coefficient has, on some estimates, dropped slight-

ly over the last 20 years (Lakner and Milanovic, 2013), in no small part because wage earners in the advanced countries have seen their incomes squeezed. Even so, and except for the few most unequal countries, it is still greater, and by far, than inequality within countries.

Understanding inequality dynamics and their links within and across countries is one of the biggest challenges facing analysts and is also at the heart of the post-2015 development agenda.

Why Inequality Matters?

It is clear that inequality can be a serious threat to social and political stability. There is a growing recognition, however, that it can also threaten sustained growth. A study by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) showed that greater equality of income increased the duration of countries' economic growth spells more than free trade, low government corruption, foreign investment, or low foreign debt (Berg and Ostry, 2011). There is literature exploring the links between growing inequality and economic shocks and crises (Bordo and Meissner, 2012), a connection that appears to be closely associated with the greater economic and political weight of unregulated financial flows and markets (UNCTAD, 2012).

Inequality jeopardizes the achievement of the overarching economic goals proposed by the Open Working Group (OWG) of the General Assembly on Sustainable Development Goals, such as eliminating extreme poverty, boosting decent work and transforming economic structures. Inequality is not a matter of fate or chance and can be reversed through policies and reforms, a point made recently in the path-breaking research of Thomas Piketty. While solutions rest with national and regional policy makers, collec-



SDG 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries

tive actions and measures at the international level also have a crucial role to play.

SDG 10: Reduce Inequality within and among Countries by 2030

The OWG on SDGs proposed a stand-alone goal on inequality with seven targets and three means to achieve them. The first target calls for the income of the bottom 40 per cent of the population to grow faster than the national average; the second—for the empowerment, social and economic inclusion of all, irrespective of race, ethnicity or economic status; and the third—for ensuring equal opportunity and reducing inequalities of outcome, including through eliminating discrimination by means of appropriate policies and actions.

Four other targets focus on progressively adopting policies to promote greater equality, including fiscal policies, regulation and monitoring of global financial markets and institutions, policies to promote the orderly, safe, and responsible migration and mobility of people, and the long-standing issue of fair representation and voice of developing countries in the global governance system.

Proposed means of implementation are more vague and more difficult to quantify and to develop indicators that will help measure progress towards reducing inequalities. Further thinking is needed. Specific proposed means include: 1) upholding the principle of special and differential treatment for least developed countries (LDCs); 2) directing official development assistance and encouraging financial flows, including foreign direct investment to countries in special situation such as LDCs, African countries, small island developing States, and landlocked developing countries; and 3) reducing the cost of migrant remittances transfers to below 5 per cent.

Can We Achieve this Goal by 2030?

Whether the targets and means under SDG 10 and SDG 17 will reduce inequalities by 2030, de-

pends on the robustness of indicators selected to guide and monitor progress, the presence of political will for regional and international cooperation to rebalance the global system, and strengthened policy coherence.

Tackling within country inequalities will require increased policy and fiscal space at the national level to enact the country-specific mix of policies needed to lift all boats and, in particular, to increase the income of those at the bottom. Two crucial variables will be jobs and wages. Job creation remains the only assured way of tackling poverty on a sustained basis, in particular where the labour force is expanding rapidly. But rising wages are also necessary to expand domestic demand, increasingly seen as an essential component of more sustainable growth (UNCTAD, 2013). Countries will thus have to build the kind of infrastructure and productive capacity that lead to a more diversified economy, moving away from dependence on commodities and achieving some degree of success in more sophisticated industrial activities, which relies on industrial policy.

Addressing imbalances arising from the international economic system will require global reforms of financial, investment, trade, monetary and fiscal system in order to reduce volatility. International conventions against tax avoidance and evasion to stem the use of tax competition and tax havens to circumvent fiscal responsibilities would help ensure sufficient financing for long-term investment projects of the kind that are required to achieve the inclusive and sustainable development paths. Between 8 and 15 per cent of the net financial wealth of house-

holds is held in tax havens, resulting in a loss of public revenue amounting to between US \$190 and US \$290 billion annually. Half of it is from developing countries, which may also be losing over US \$160 billion annually through misuse of “transfer pricing” and “thin capitalization” for shifting accounting profits to low or no-tax jurisdictions. Making mandatory and extending the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative would also help mobilize domestic resources.

While global reform will be slow, greater stability at the regional level can be generated by building up alternative rules and institutions to provide a degree of protection from financial shocks, requiring significant amount of capacity-building, South-South and triangular cooperation and also a fiscal cooperation space. For example, China’s success has relied on selective capital controls, countercyclical fiscal policy and active monetary policies aimed at stable exchange rates, as well as a full range of active industrial policies instead of solely focusing on GDP growth (UNCTAD, 2013).

Finally, an integrated policy framework that reflects all development models and ensures policy coherence across goals will be needed to assure that social, economic and environmental goals are mutually supportive.

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Cities Will Play an Important Role in Achieving the SDGs

A vision for cities has never been more important than it is today. More than half of the world's inhabitants live in cities and this migration trend is expected to continue. By 2050 more than two-thirds of the world will be urban dwellers. India alone is expected to double the number of city dwellers by adding 404 million new people to cities over the next 35 years.

Therefore, it will be under the auspices of cities where we will succeed or fail in achieving our goals of poverty eradication, equality, climate change reduction, and ensuring healthy lives. It will be the cities that determine if we achieve inclusive economic growth or yield to greater inequality. It is in cities where people will seek opportunities for higher education and employment. And, it will be cities that determine if we will continue our steadily increasing usage of the world's resources or if we can realize a more sustainable path. This is why sustainable development goal (SDG) 11, "Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable", is so important.

Success in achieving the targets under SDG 11 sets the stage for achieving targets in many of the other SDG goals. We can examine just two of the targets as an example.

Target 11.2: By 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons.

Transportation is a key development issue and target 11.2 is important to achieve safe, resilient and sustainable cities. However, achieving target 11.2 will also be necessary if we are to address some of the targets in SDG 3 (Ensure healthy lives) including reducing non-communicable diseases (NCDs). Active transport can help achieve the NCD target by providing safe, comfortable, and attractive places to walk and cycle.

City dwellers can walk or cycle to destinations in order to achieve the necessary physical activity that reduces their risk of NCDs. Walking and



SDG 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

cycling are both affordable and accessible ways for the vulnerable, including women and the poor, to move about cities. In addition, active transport can contribute to achieving the target of halving the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic collisions. Fully 65 per cent of the 1.2 million deaths that occur each year worldwide due to road accidents involve pedestrians; 35 per cent of those deaths are children. Providing safe spaces for pedestrians will therefore significantly reduce this number.

While the benefits to health are obvious, sustainable means of transportation will also determine how easy it is to access other key services in the city, such as education and employment, and is therefore connected indirectly to SDG 1 (Eradicate poverty) and SDG 4 (Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education). Finally, efficient transportation systems can support SDG 5 (Gender equality) by ensuring that they meet the unique needs of women.

Unfortunately, the transportation systems in cit-

ies are often built to address the needs of men with little consideration of the needs of women. When compared to men, women move about cities at different times, for different reasons, in different ways, and have fewer financial resources; they are less able to afford many of the transportation options available to them. A well-designed transportation system that supports walking, cycling and public transit use will allow all people to fully participate in community life and creates safer, cleaner, healthier, and more social places.

How we achieve target 11.2 is important. The focus of the target is on expanding public transit. Public transit is a necessary component to moving people throughout a city. However, it is disappointing that the two most sustainable, healthy, affordable and accessible forms of transportation were not specifically included: walking and cycling. Shorter distances, where many of people's day-to-day activities are conducted, can easily be walked or cycled if safe and comfortable infrastructure is provided. In 2012

the world's largest development banks made a funding commitment of US \$175 billion over 10 years for sustainable transportation. This is a key investment commitment and it is important that a portion of that funding be allocated to walking and cycling infrastructure either as part of public transit projects or as stand-alone projects.

Target 11.7: By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities

Public and green spaces offer opportunities to enrich health and the quality of life for all people living in cities. Improving our physical and psychological health, strengthening our communities, and making our cities and neighbourhoods more attractive places to live and work are just some of the benefits. Target 11.7 will contribute to the NCD target in SDG 3 (Ensuring healthy lives) by providing places for people to be physically active.

Green spaces, in particular, can help contribute to SDG 7 (Ensure energy for all) by lowering city temperatures. The increase in hard surfacing and the reduction of green spaces is resulting in higher temperatures in cities than in the surrounding countryside. Green spaces help to balance this effect by cooling the air, providing shade, and absorbing air pollutants. Lastly, green and public spaces provide the physical places necessary for the poor to earn a living through vending products and services, which contributes to SDG 8 (Economic growth).

In spite of the important role that green and public spaces play, they are often threatened by the migration to cities. As land becomes more precious, green and public spaces are converted to residential housing and businesses. This is why target 11.7 that addresses green and public spaces is so important. Without strong commitment from Governments to preserve, protect, and value these spaces they will be lost forever. There are many challenges ahead in achieving



photo: Private Archive of Bernd Herrmann

SDG 11. Cities will need solid implementation plans and support in order to realize the targets. Innovative solutions are needed to help create people-centred cities where citizens are involved in influencing how they live and interact with their community. Civil society can play an important role in bringing together local people and Governments. For example, HealthBridge's partner in Hoi An, Viet Nam developed a community engagement process to design and build parks and playgrounds, which resulted in both community fundraising and participation in building new playgrounds. The lessons learned from this process are forming an integral part of the Parks Master Plan being developed by the city. SDG 11 can go a long way towards contrib-

uting to the SDGs. Like many other goals, the identified targets need to be tangible, concrete and measurable. We'll need to clearly define what is meant by "access to green space" and determine how "access for all" to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transportation systems is to be measured. The targets have the potential to impact real change across many of the SDGs—let's make sure they have the power to make a difference.

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Ensuring Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns: An Essential Requirement for Sustainable Development

Goal 12 of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) proposed by the Open Working Group (OWG) of the General Assembly of the United Nations is aiming at ensuring sustainable consumption and production (SCP) patterns. Why is this an imperative for sustainable development?

By 2050, the world population will reach 9.5 billion, 70 per cent of which will live in resource-intensive urban areas. Three billion middle class consumers will join the global economy by 2040. While the global poverty line of US \$1.25 a day in 2010 was less than half the 1990 rate, 1.2 billion people are still living in extreme poverty. To respond to these challenges within the carrying capacity of the Earth system, the adoption of sustainable patterns of consumption and production is an imperative, as it conserves through resource efficiency the basis for future development.

This has been a consistent message from the international community since 2002. The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) of the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), and “The future we want” outcome document of the Rio+20 Conference in 2012, both recognized that “poverty eradication,

changing unsustainable and promoting sustainable patterns of consumption and production and protecting and managing the natural resource base of economic and social development are the overarching objectives of and essential requirements for sustainable development”.

Today, the inclusion of SDG 12 in the proposed SDGs recognizes the essential and cross-cutting role of SCP in sustainable development. Targets in 12 of the other SDGs are also oriented towards the achievement of SCP patterns.

The High-level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, commissioned by the Secretary-General of the United Nations in 2013, designated SCP as one of the four key areas on which progress is needed to achieve their post-2015 vision: “to end extreme poverty in all its forms...and to have in place the building blocks of sustained prosperity for all”.

The High-level Panel recognizes that transforming economies for jobs and inclusive growth requires a rapid shift to sustainable patterns of consumption and production. The Panel found that the world’s consumption and production patterns need to be managed in a more sustainable and equitable way and that only by mobilizing economic, social and environmental action together, can we irreversibly reduce poverty.

Indeed, SCP, by its cross cutting nature, addresses inter-linkages and adopts a holistic approach, taking into account the economic, social and environmental aspects of sustainable development in a balanced and integrated manner. Consumption and production activities are the basis of the global economy, but current patterns are fast depleting natural capital, degrading ecosystem services and undermining the capacity of countries to meet their needs in a sustained way. The shift to SCP patterns implies increasing efficiency and productivity throughout the supply chain and the life cycle of the products, now and over the long-term.

Goal 12 on SCP and SCP in Other Goals

SDG 12 covers both the efficiency in use and management of natural resources (target 12.2), environmental impacts such as waste management (target 12.5), and release of contaminants, especially chemical substances (target 12.4). The goal engages all actors to contribute to sustainable development, including the private sector (target 12.6). The importance of consumer information and education for sustainable development and lifestyles is highlighted (target 12.8).

The role of the public sector through sustainable public procurement (target 12.7), as well as the shift towards SCP in the food system



SDG 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

photo: UN Photo / Tim McKulla



(target 12.3) and the tourism sector (target 12.b) are identified too. The need for policies for SCP is underlined through the implementation of the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production patterns (10YFP) (target 12.1), while finance and capacity- building (target 12.a) are presented as means of implementation, including by addressing fossil fuel subsidies (target 12.c).

Consumption and production are at the core of the global economy. Yet current unsustainable production and consumption patterns lead to deforestation, water scarcity, food waste, and high carbon emissions, and cause the degradation of key ecosystems. Accomplishment of the SCP goal will create synergies and support attainment of other goals on food, water and energy, while also contributing to climate change mitigation.

What is SCP?

Everything we produce and consume has either a positive or negative impact on the economy, the environment and social development. Achieving sustainable consumption and produc-

tion patterns secures efficiency and productivity gains, ensuring that human activities remain within the carrying capacity of the planet, while respecting the rights of future generations.

SCP means doing more and better with less. It is about “the use of services and related products, which respond to basic needs and bring a better quality of life while minimizing the use of natural resources and toxic materials as well as the emissions of waste and pollutants over the life cycle of the service or product so as not to jeopardize the needs of future generations”.

SCP encompasses the objective of a systematic decoupling of economic growth from escalating resource use and environmental degradation, in order to do “more with less”. Decoupling will be

achieved through reduction of material/ energy intensity of current economic activities and reduction of emissions and waste from extraction, production, consumption and disposal. By using the life cycle approach as a tool to achieve SCP, actions will be taken to influence both supply and demand of sustainable products, and avoid burden-shifting between different stages of product life cycles.

How to implement SCP?

The 10YFP was adopted at Rio+20, and is a global framework for collaboration and capacity-building for the shift towards SCP. The 10YFP will enhance international cooperation to accelerate the shift towards SCP patterns in both developed and developing countries, delivering that support at regional and national levels in accordance with local needs and priorities. The current six programmes of the 10YFP are on: Sustainable tourism, including ecotourism; Sustainable lifestyles and education; Sustainable public procurement; Consumer information; Sustainable buildings and construction; and Sustainable food systems. Implementation of the 10YFP is included as target 12.1 of the SCP goal.

In conclusion, SDG 12 is essential in achieving the SDGs, as it enables many of them and is a requirement for sustainable development. The shift towards sustainable consumption and production patterns has already started in many parts of the world, and urgently needs to be accelerated and scaled up, through the 10YFP and other broad and sustained initiatives and policies.

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Taking Urgent Action to Combat Climate Change—SDGs and the Paris Climate Agreement

The year 2015 marks a defining moment in the global quest for a sustainable future for 7 billion people, rising to over 9 billion by 2050. Governments define their vision for a post-2015 development agenda by agreeing upon a set of sustainable development goals (SDGs). Meanwhile, under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), these same Governments ink a new universal agreement in December 2015 in Paris at the United Nations Climate Change Conference to both address the threat of climate change and deliver on the opportunity of combating it.

These two pathways, though coming from two different backgrounds and having their own dynamics and challenges, must be mutually supportive and interrelated, if poverty is to be eradicated, livelihoods are to be improved, prosperity is to be fostered and a healthy, functioning world is to be passed onto the next generation. This essential relationship has been recognized by Governments and society in general. The 17 proposed SDGs include SDG 13: “Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts”.

Crucially, proposed SDG 13 underlines that the task is being advanced under the UNFCCC in order to minimize the duplication of efforts and optimize finite resources.

The Paris agreement, which for the first time will bring together all nations in common cause, has the target of limiting the global temperature rise this century to below 2°C. In order to achieve this, the new treaty needs to put in place policies, pathways, technologies and financing to ensure that global emissions peak in no later than 10 years, trigger a deep decarbonization of the worldwide economy, and deliver climate neutrality in the second half of the century. Climate neutrality, sometimes referred to as carbon neutrality, zero net or net zero, is nothing short of restoring the balance of the planet, in terms of emissions in and emissions out, to its previous state that prevailed one and a half centuries ago.

It is going to require a significant increase in clean and renewable energies, and the sustainable management and restoration of healthy ecosystems—such as forests, soils and wetlands—that are capable of both absorbing what greenhouse gas emissions remain, while



photo: UN Photo / Esin Der Debebe

SDG 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

assisting communities and countries to adapt to some level of climatic impacts that will now be unavoidable.

All of these measures and actions can directly support the achievement of the SDGs in perhaps some surprising ways. Current action to combat climate change, including under the 10 year-old Kyoto Protocol, has assisted in catalyzing rapid growth and tumbling costs for renewable energies, such as wind and solar.

This is in direct support of SDG 7—“Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all”. Perhaps less obvious is that this also supports proposed SDG 8, which includes the promotion of “full and productive employment and decent work for all”.

In the United States of America, for example, employment has risen by more than 115 per cent in the solar industry in the past two years and jobs related to energy efficiency have in-

creased by over 50 per cent. In China, more than 1.7 million people are already employed in the renewable energy sector. Furthermore, by some estimates, 7 million additional jobs could be created if government targets for wind, solar and hydro-power are met.

Today more people are employed in the renewable energy industry globally than in the oil and gas sectors. In fact, worldwide, an estimated 5.7 million people were employed directly or indirectly in the global renewable energy industry in 2012—a figure that could triple by 2030. Investing in forests or smart agriculture, including organic farming, can also improve environmental sustainability, combat climate change, generate jobs and deliver further support for the SDGs.

South Africa’s Expanded Public Works Programme generated 1 million employment opportunities during its first five-year phase and aims to swiftly create 4.5 million more. In addition to renewable energy production, the programme

emphasizes wetland and forest rehabilitation and fire management. The programme even addresses social inclusion, since many of those employed come from vulnerable groups, such as single mothers. Conversely, the aspirations and underpinning targets of the proposed SDGs feed and nurture national and international ambitions to address climate change and its impacts.

SDG 9—“Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation”—speaks in part to the urgency of infrastructure designed to cope with, among other things, extreme weather events or sea level rise. It also speaks to the urgency of developing cleaner and more efficient industrial processes that use far less natural resources and generate far less pollution, including greenhouse gases.

SDG 11 on cities and human settlements sets targets for 2030 on sustainable transport, resource-efficient urban areas and ones with greater resilience, echoing the forthcoming Hyogo Framework for Action on disaster risk management.

Several goals, including the SDG 12 on sustainable consumption and production and promoting sustainable lifestyles, support Article 6 of the UNFCCC in respect to education, training and public awareness.

SDG 14 on conservation and sustainable management of seas and oceans specifically calls for the sustainable management and protection of marine coastal ecosystems by 2020; by some estimates, the world’s seagrasses, saltmarshes and mangroves are absorbing around half the current global transport emissions.

Meanwhile, SDG 12 calls for halving the per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer level, and for reducing food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses. This goal addresses not only an absurd waste of resources in a world of too much hun-



photo: UN Photo / Mark Garten

ger, but also reveals an often underrated source of greenhouse gases. Estimates by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations indicate that if food wastage was a country, it would be the third largest emitter of greenhouse gases after the United States and China.

The ways in which action under the United Nations climate convention and the forthcoming Paris agreement dovetail inexorably with the SDGs is long and legion. They both represent an extraordinary mobilization of understanding that the way humanity has been managing the world needs a radical reset if the future is to be one of promise and opportunity for the many rather than the few. Unchecked climate change threatens to undermine nearly two decades of development gains as a result of increasing and more intense extreme weather events such as droughts, floods and storms. Indeed, achieving

the SDGs will be almost impossible if average global temperatures are allowed to rise above the 2°C limit.

Both the SDGs and the Paris agreement also convey an understanding that there are no quick fixes and that we need to be all together in this sustainable development endeavour over the long haul.

The proposed SDGs are aimed at success and full achievement by 2030. By then the Paris climate agreement should have catalyzed global action leading to a peaking of global greenhouse gas emissions en route to a climate neutral future. The year 2015 may go down in the history books as a time when humanity turned the corner in respect to poverty and pollution, and took the bold and courageous steps needed to achieve true and long-lasting sustainable development.

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Conserve and Sustainably Use the Oceans, Seas and Marine Resources for Sustainable Development

“Oceans are the point at which planet, people, and prosperity come together. And that is what sustainable development is about. It is about all of us as shareholders of Earth, incorporated, acknowledging and acting on our responsibility to the planet, to the people, and to its bloodstream, the oceans.”, Elizabeth Thompson, Co-Executive Coordinator for the Rio+20 Conference, at Oceans Day at Rio+20, 16 June 2012

As the General Assembly of the United Nations considers the recommendations of the Open Working Group (OWG) on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), it is essential that SDG 14 on oceans, seas and marine resources retains a central place in the post-2015 development agenda.

The Centrality of Oceans for All Three Pillars of Sustainable Development.

The oceans are the most prominent feature on the planet, covering nearly three quarters of the Earth, and are essential for planetary survival. Just as a person cannot live without a healthy heart and lungs, the Earth cannot survive without healthy oceans and seas. They serve as the Earth's respiratory system, producing oxygen for life and absorbing carbon dioxide and waste. The oceans provide storage and absorb 30 per cent of the world's carbon dioxide, while marine phytoplankton generates 50 per cent of the oxygen needed for survival. The oceans regulate the climate and temperature, making the planet hospitable to diverse forms of life.

The oceans and seas are essential for national and global economic well-being. The global ocean economic activity is estimated to be between US \$3 trillion to US \$6 trillion, contributing to the world economy in many important ways, such as:

- 90 per cent of global trade moves by marine transport.
- Submarine cables carry 95 per cent of all global telecommunications.
- Fisheries and aquaculture supply 4.3 billion people with more than 15 per cent of annual consumption of animal protein.
- Over 30 per cent of global oil and gas produced is extracted offshore.
- Coastal tourism is the largest market segment in the world economy, comprising 5 per cent of the global gross domestic product (GDP) and 6 to 7 per cent of global employment.
- Expanding knowledge on marine biodiversity has provided breakthrough advances in sectors such as pharmaceuticals, food production, and aquaculture.
- 13 of the world's 20 megacities are coastal.

- Tides, waves, currents, and offshore wind are emerging sources of energy that have significant potential to contribute to low-carbon energy in many coastal countries.

The oceans and seas are essential for social well-being. Over 40 per cent, or 3.1 billion, of the world's population lives within 100 kilometres of the ocean or sea in about 150 coastal and island nations. Regardless of whether a country is landlocked, or has a coastline, all nations are directly connected to the oceans and seas through rivers, lakes and streams. Nations have placed significant importance on the benefits that are provided by the oceans and seas, comprising over 60 per cent of the global gross national product (GNP). In particular, coastal economic activity is the lifeblood of coastal and island nations.

Through activities such as sustainable fishing, renewable energy production, ecotourism, and “green” shipping, nations have been able to increase the rates of employment and good sanitation while decreasing poverty, malnutrition and pollution. Ocean-based economies provide more opportunities for the empowerment and employment of women, who make up the majority of the secondary activities workforce in marine fisheries and aquaculture. The results of increased female employment include the strengthening of the economic vitality of small and isolated communities and the enhancement of the status of women in developing countries.

At the same time, coastal and island populations are some of the most vulnerable to climate change impacts. Oceans, seas and coastal areas experience an increased frequency and intensity of climate extremes, including stronger hurricanes, typhoons and cyclones. They are also subject to ocean acidification, sea level rise and fluctuations in ocean circulation and salinity. These changes will be felt not only along coast-



SDG 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

lines, but inland as well due to the widespread influence of ocean currents on weather systems.

By 2050, it is estimated that 50 million to 200 million people worldwide will be displaced due to the negative impacts of climate change, threatening food security, livelihoods and social stability not only in coastal and island nations, but in all countries that will be assisting displaced populations. Mitigation and adaptation must be further enhanced to provide increased support for emergency preparedness and disaster response, as well as early warning systems, observations, and coastal planning and management.

Oceans and Seas in the Post-2015 Development Agenda

Oceans and seas were centrally emphasized in the Rio+20 outcome document, “The future we want”. However, since oceans and seas had hardly figured in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), when the work of the OWG began in 2013, there was a need for extensive mobilization of Member States and civil society to articulate the centrality of oceans for sustainable development. Some viewed oceans and seas as mainly an environmental issue, not fully aware of their economic and social importance. Starting in summer 2013, a strong push by Member States, led by the Pacific Small Island Developing States and Timor-Leste, and supported by civil society, including the Global Ocean Forum, articulated the need for an oceans goal for planetary survival and for global and national economic and social well-being. The many opportunities for civil society input afforded by the co-chairs of the OWG of the United Nations, who ran a truly “open process”, contributed to the adoption of SDG 14, which came to be supported by a very large number and range of nations—developing and developed, coastal and inland, small islands and continental nations.

The package of ocean and seas issues reflected in SDG 14, “Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development”, with its seven targets and

three provisions on means of implementation is a very important one. The goal itself, its targets and means of implementation reinforce and give renewed focus and urgency to existing international prescriptions on oceans and seas emanating from the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development, the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which came into force in 1994.

Especially noteworthy is target 14.7 which urges “By 2030 increase the economic benefits to small island developing States (SIDS) and least developed countries (LDCs) from the sustainable use of marine resources, including through sustainable management of fisheries, aquaculture and tourism”. This emphasis on enhanced benefits to SIDS and LDCs is long-overdue and will cause a profound shift in consideration of ocean management decisions to highlight their economic and social impacts.

While there could be minor “wordsmithing” to improve some of the provisions of SDG 14, in my view, the package is quite good and could be adopted, largely as is, by the General Assembly of the United Nations. An important addition, if appropriate, would be a provision to strengthen ocean governance, e.g., reinforce ocean and coastal decision-making processes, including through the enactment of ocean and coastal laws and through capacity development.

Several other SDGs, as well, are related to and can be used to help achieve SDG 14 on oceans and seas, including proposed SDG 1 (on pov-

erty), SDG 2 (on food security), SDG 6 (on water and sanitation), SDG 7 (on energy), SDG 8 (on economic growth), SDG 9 (on infrastructure), SDG 10 (on reduction of inequality), SDG 11 (on cities and human settlements), SDG 12 (on sustainable consumption and production), SDG 13 (on climate change), SDG 15 (on biodiversity), and SDG 17 (on means of implementation and partnerships). This is exactly as it was intended in the OWG proposal, as noted in the introduction to the document: “These goals constitute an integrated, indivisible set of global priorities for sustainable development ... The goals and targets integrate economic, social, and environmental aspects and recognize their interlinkages in achieving sustainable development in all of its dimensions”.

Intergovernmental negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda will continue until August 2015, when revisions and changes to the package could take place. The adoption of the set of global goals, targets and means of implementation, that will profoundly influence the future course of all matters related to sustainable development, will take place at the United Nations Summit dedicated to the post-2015 development agenda in September 2015. It is, therefore, important for Member States and civil society to continue to articulate their support for the SDGs, especially for SDG 14 on oceans and seas, and to begin planning for their implementation.

With thanks to Miriam Balgos, Alexis Martin and Erica Wales.

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Seeing the Forest for the Trees—Making the Most of Synergies to Achieve SDGs in a Constrained Environment

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are the result of extensive negotiations undertaken by United Nations Member States in order to agree on the world we want by 2030. The 17 goals span a number of economic, social and environmental dimensions. Achieving these goals will require an unprecedented level of cooperation necessary to leverage available financing and knowledge resources as well as implementation modalities. An integrated, interdisciplinary approach within and across goals is required.

A case in point is SDG 15 which aims to “protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss”. It is accompanied by 10 targets, which include integrating ecosystem and biodiversity values into national and local planning, development processes, and poverty reduction strategies and accounts, and a target to mobilize and significantly increase from all sources financial resources to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity and ecosystems.

Tackling deforestation, land degradation, desertification and the protection of biodiversity cannot be treated in isolation: healthy ecosystems are the bedrock of poverty reduction efforts, resilient and productive farming, and

water systems that underpin development and growth. Many agriculture, health and water experts are aware that deforestation and sub-optimal land use could seriously impair plans to ensure healthy lives (SDG 3), end hunger (SDG 2) and supply water (SDG 6). If narrow sectoral approaches remain the norm, and negative spillover effects remain unchecked, the space for long-term development will become increasingly constrained. Intersectoral approaches, on the other hand, can help deliver on multiple goals in a more far-sighted and effective manner.

Governments will be committing to meet the SDGs at a time when resources around the globe are already severely depleted, threatening their ability to deliver on social and economic opportunities. It is estimated that close to 50 per cent of all jobs worldwide are linked to ag-

riculture, fisheries and forests. Three quarters of the world’s 115 top crops depend on animal pollination, and more than 50 per cent of all medications are based on medicinal plants, yet animal and plant biodiversity is receding fast in the wake of deforestation and forest fragmentation. About 1 billion people rely on fish as their primary source of animal protein, yet major fish stocks are in decline. Mangroves are being lost at the alarming rate of 2 to 7 per cent annually, and with them key habitats for fisheries and storm protection.

In this context, the post-2015 agenda also has significant implications for the World Bank Group. Its goals of ending extreme poverty by 2030 and boosting shared prosperity for the bottom 40 per cent of the population in a sustainable manner are well aligned with the SDGs. Because SDG 15 proposes to protect, restore and enhance natural ecosystems, it is central to the Bank’s work in rural areas where 78 per cent of the world’s extreme poor still live, and to the long-term economic growth prospects on behalf of future generations. It proposes no less than to safeguard the planet for tomorrow.

Results from local reforestation efforts to full-fledged green growth strategies show that wins are possible and within reach. For example, the experience of the Republic of Korea following the 2008 financial crisis demonstrated that it is possible to both boost jobs and gross domestic product (GDP), while also reducing pollution and carbon emissions. This was achieved by shifting from carbon-intensive industries to innovative low-carbon technologies.



photo: UN Photo / John Isaac



SDG 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

Simple interventions, such as better managing livestock to allow natural regeneration of plants and trees, have allowed rural communities under stress to rebound, increase their yields and enjoy better standards of living, everywhere from Albania to Colombia, China and Ethiopia. Sharing these experiences from one country to another will be crucial to ensure that nations do not start from scratch and that they help each other deliver on their ambitious vision.

Climate finance funds have been instrumental in efforts to deliver solutions that target multiple sectors. Financing from the BioCarbon Fund, the Forest Investment Program and the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility, for example, have been used to pilot policy changes in agriculture and livestock management to combat deforestation and sequester more carbon. Managed together, these forest funds will provide a seamless line of support for our client countries. Building public-

private partnerships (PPPs) with large multinational companies to support deforestation-free supply chains for key commodities, such as palm oil, soy, beef, and others, is also part of the overall approach. Such PPPs offer immense opportunities to scale up investments and technical support to farmers in far greater sums than public investments alone can otherwise achieve.

Finally, natural capital accounting approaches encourage Governments and businesses to take into consideration the state and sustainability of

their natural assets in their planning. Initiatives such as the Wealth Accounting and Valuation of Ecosystem Services partnership and other programmes are helping a growing number of countries see beyond GDP and integrate “ecosystem and biodiversity values into national and local planning, development processes, poverty reduction strategies and accounts” (target 15.9). Natural capital accounting can help countries focus on a dashboard of indicators to monitor the assets countries need for long-term growth and ensure that progress on one SDG does not come at the expense of another. A lot more could be done on this front. Data gaps and remedies are sure to figure prominently in the months ahead as the United Nations gets ready to share an indicative road-map of indicators for consultation.

With the imminent launch of the SDGs agenda, the World Bank Group is actively preparing to support its implementation by helping countries identify and prioritize actions that reinforce virtuous links between healthy ecosystems and development. Interventions in forests, rural landscapes and oceans must meet a multitude of country needs, from economic growth, to nutrition and food security, and climate change objectives. Investments in jobs, competitiveness, and clean air and water also build resilience and reduce emissions. We stand ready to work alongside partners in advancing integrated, multisectoral solutions that will be imperative for achieving SDG 15—and indeed all the SDGs—in an increasingly interconnected, constrained and committed world.

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Ensuring Peace in the Post-2015 Framework: Adoption, Implementation and Monitoring

Debates on the post-2015 agenda so far have consistently agreed that the new development framework must advance not only sustainability and poverty reduction, but also, crucially, peaceful societies, justice and good governance.

The Open Working Group (OWG) of the General Assembly on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has agreed on an outcome document, which includes SDG 16 on peaceful and inclusive societies, the African Union has included peace and security as one of the key pillars in its Common African Position (CAP) on the post-2015 Development Agenda and the Secretary-General of the United Nations recently reaffirmed the importance of the peace agenda in his Synthesis Report.

Although the majority of States have backed an agenda for sustainable peace, the inclusion and framing of SDG 16 on peaceful and inclusive societies remains sensitive for some Member States. Attaining genuine political buy-in to the peace agenda among these States will therefore be key to adopting, implementing and monitoring an effective post-2015 framework over the next 15 years.

Why is Peace in the Post-2015 Agenda so Important?

We cannot achieve poverty eradication and sustainable development without tackling conflict and insecurity: there is a large and increasing gap in MDG performance between States affected by high levels of violence and other developing countries. Strikingly, all of the seven countries unlikely to meet a single MDG by the end of 2015 have been affected by high levels of violence in recent years.

However, violence and insecurity are universal issues affecting people's well-being in all nations, not just conflict-affected ones: For example, in Brazil, the homicide rate is one of the highest in the world with 56,000 people violently killed in 2012; in South Africa, the murder rate from 2014 was around five times higher than the 2013 global average; and in the United States of America, the number of homicides in 2013 was 4.9 per 100,000 (compared to the average homicide rate of below 0.8 per 100,000 in developed countries). It is often those in the most

marginalized sectors of society who are affected by violence. For many of the poorest countries in the world, it is impossible to reduce poverty significantly and achieve economic growth as long as violence and insecurity prevail—by 2030, 75 per cent of people in extreme poverty will be living in countries at risk from high levels of violence.

Peace, justice and effective governance are increasingly seen by people as not only development enablers but development outcomes in their own right. In fact, according to the more than 7 million people, including those from sceptical countries who participated in My World, a global United Nations survey, protection against crime and violence and an honest and responsive government rank among the top six development priorities.

What Kind of Peace Should Be Included in the Post-2015 Framework?

In light of the above, the post-2015 framework should put people at the core of the peace agenda—everyone, not only those in conflict-affected States, should be able to lead peaceful, fulfilling lives, free from violent conflict and insecurity. The international community must focus on ensuring a positive, sustainable peace and not solely “negative peace”—the mere absence of violence—as it can often mask latent instability. Ultimately, all countries are at risk from violent conflict and people across the world face insecurity in their daily lives. In order to ensure a positive, sustainable peace, all States would need to reduce the risks of violent conflict and insecurity by promoting issues such as reduction of corruption, equal access to justice and security, and political inclusiveness for all social groups.

What Are the Main Concerns about the Inclusion of Peace?

Although their scepticism can be partly attributed to negotiating tactics, some of the concerns



photo: UN Photo/Martine Peret

SDG 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

raised by Member States with regard to the inclusion of SDG 16 are substantive. We need to take these concerns seriously, discuss them, and provide reassurances to mitigate them if States worldwide are to join hands in implementing the post-2015 framework rather than only grudgingly accepting it.

One of the most common concerns is that the inclusion of peace will lead to a “securitization” of the development agenda, with aid being used to advance the national security agendas of particular States, rather than to promote development for people. Member States could mitigate this concern by agreeing on a common set of principles—for example, that SDG 16 is about people's security and peace within society and not primarily about national security or international peace and security between States. Some States also fear that the inclusion of peace might lead to the violation of countries' sovereignty. However, the post-2015 agenda is non-binding, preventative and focuses on how countries themselves can improve their situation rather than what the international community can impose on them.

In addition, some States have argued that development enables peace and not vice-versa. Nonetheless, while inclusive development can

certainly help address the root drivers of violent conflict and insecurity, the over whelming evidence tells us that the relationship between the two is two-way. Apprehensions have also been voiced that peace- related targets could translate into new aid conditionalities and that peace cannot be measured. However, these concerns are not well founded, since the risk of conditionalities is equally low for all targets in the post-2015 framework and although capacity gaps currently exist, peace is already being measured in a number of contexts.

Is the OWG Outcome Document a Strong Basis for Peace?

There are many reasons to be positive about the OWG outcome document. First and foremost, Member States have recognized peace as a priority issue, which needs to be addressed at a goal level. Additionally, the proposed targets in SDG 16 broadly reflect the key issues necessary to achieve a positive and sustainable peace. In addition to two targets on reducing violence, SDG 16 also includes targets that focus on the most important drivers of conflict including justice, corruption, transparency, fundamental freedoms and participatory decision-making. It is also positive that global drivers of conflict—including flows of arms and illicit finance—are addressed, as they will require global action and coordination.

Lastly, peace will need to be addressed across the whole development agenda to make a difference for people on the ground. It is therefore significant that targets on gender-based violence are included in SDG 5 and that horizontal inequalities between groups are dealt with in SDG 1 and SDG 10.

Is There Room for Improvement?

Although the current targets are promising, there is room for technical fine-tuning, which could be performed by experts within the United Nations system in order to preserve the delicate political balance that the OWG outcome document represents. Making the target language more quantifiable and consolidating the

framework by cutting down the number of targets will make it more feasible to implement the framework on a universal basis and to monitor development progress over the next 15 years. Some of the language could also be improved to meet existing international commitments.

Many of the targets would benefit from having a clear focus on actual outcomes rather than on capacities and processes. Some targets even risk leading to coercive approaches to security such as target 16.a, which commits to “building capacity at all levels...to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime”.

How Can A Truly Universal Post-2015 Agenda Be Achieved?

In order for the post-2015 framework to have an impact, universality is essential. A non-universal framework would make it very difficult to hold Governments to account to meeting the targets to which they have agreed. Therefore, we need a global set of shared indicators that motivate action and allow for cross-country comparison. At the same time, however, a universal framework must still be context sensitive. This can be achieved through more context-specific indicators that complement the universal set of global indicators and that are agreed upon at a national or even regional level. Furthermore, unless stated within the universally agreed targets, benchmarks and the pace of progress should be defined at the national level.

How Should the Post-2015 Framework be Implemented?

Although a renewed and strengthened global partnership for mobilizing the means of imple-

mentation is necessary, the implementation of the post-2015 framework should not overlook the many existing global initiatives to build more peaceful societies. For example, the Geneva Declaration—endorsed by over 100 States—aims to achieve measurable reductions of armed violence in conflict and non-conflict settings. Presented and widely endorsed at the Fourth High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan, Republic of Korea, on 30 November 2011, the “New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States” proposes five key peacebuilding and State-building goals as a focus for cooperation between 19 conflict-affected States, development partners and international organizations. Indeed, through this New Deal process, conflict-affected States are starting to pilot the use of 34 common indicators to measure progress across five peace goals, which can inspire and inform the post-2015 indicator framework. In addition to these global processes, there is a wide range of national-level initiatives and experiences from which other countries will be able to draw as they plan their own paths to meeting the targets in SDG 16. In this regard, creating partnerships and enabling cross-country learning should be a key component of implementation.

In conclusion, with 50 million people currently displaced by violence and conflict around the world, global collective responses to addressing the root causes of violence and insecurity are necessary. The post-2015 development framework represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to ensure multilateral action—grounded in development and focused on people—to prevent violent conflict.

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Enabling a Sustainable Future through the Joint Action of Countries and Communities: A Revitalized Global Partnership for Sustainable Development

The year 2015 is seminal for the development agenda at the United Nations. Financing sustainable development is the main subject of an anticipated agreement in Addis Ababa in July 2015. Later, in September of the same year, a global summit adopts an outcome document containing the post-2015 development agenda, and expectations are high that in December 2015 an ambitious and far-reaching agreement will be achieved on climate change in Paris at the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 21) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

This array of agreements will frame transformative actions, directions and approaches for people and for our fragile planet.

Most significant is the conceptual evolution of these sustainable development agreements, which are more strongly focused on an integrated framework and on implementation based on robust engagement. The Secretary-General has said that 2015 will provide “a much needed opportunity to integrate the broader United Nations agenda, with its inextricably linked and mutually interdependent peace and security, development and human rights objectives”. Equally important is the willingness to look at the universality of efforts, embracing actions in both rich and poor countries.

The prosperity, security and sustainability of our world can no longer be preserved by the application of concessional flows from the rich to the poor, but rather need to be based on multiple actions undertaken by all, across the globe. Domestic policies of richer countries become an integral part of their support for the realization of the development agenda. The ongoing quality engagement of Governments, United Nations institutions, the private sector, civil society and academia will determine the success or failure of the new agenda. This is the basis of a revitalized global partnership for sustainable development.

Sustainable development goals (SDGs), which form the foundation for the post-2015 sustainable development agenda, comprise a far-reaching set of 17 goals and 169 targets proposed by the General Assembly Open Working Group. While the SDGs will carry forward to 2030 the development torch lit by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and use the existing goal-target-indicator structure, they are broader

in scope than the MDGs and engage peoples and nations across geographic and economic boundaries.

Taken together, the 17 SDGs and the 169 targets are designed to ensure a beneficial physical and economic environment for people everywhere, providing adequate education and work opportunities, and making sure that our youth will become healthy and productive citizens. The SDGs focus on reducing inequalities, ending poverty, and restoring and protecting the environment, as well as on creating peaceful and just societies. Most importantly, they outline the means of implementation, including finance, aid, trade, debt, technology and capacity-building through a revitalized partnership (SDG 17), without which none of the other goals could be realized. The revitalized global partnership for development embodied in SDG 17 implies a common shared vision among countries and communities regarding sustainable development and a strong commitment to providing the technological and financial means to make that vision a reality.

The financial and technological requirements of this transformation will be at the heart of all development-related considerations. Funding—public, private, national and global—has to be substantial to meet the demands of this new agenda. Equally important will be the ability to put science and technology in the service of the poor and on behalf of sustainable development. The new partnership will build up on the experience of MDG 8 (Develop a global partnership for development), asset out in the Millennium Declaration and at the 2002 International Conference on Financing for Development in Monterrey, Mexico, as well as at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa.

SDG 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

MDG 8 has helped to galvanize support for the MDGs and to mobilize resources, primarily by highlighting the responsibility of traditional donors. In addition, the growth of South-South cooperation has offered viable opportunities for developing countries in transition in their individual and collective pursuit of sustained economic growth and sustainable development. At the same time, MDG 8 perpetuated a “donor-recipient” type of relationship and did not pay sufficient attention to mobilizing development financing other than aid. Additional shortcomings included insufficient commitments on a range of issues, such as aid, trade, debt relief, access to essential medicines, and information and communications technology. The lack of a robust accountability mechanism associated with MDG 8 to ensure delivery on commitments was another weakness.

In the post-2015 era, development cooperation must become more effective. The quality of available resources must be made the centre of attention. They must become more stable, predictable and free from conditionality. The principles of effective development cooperation, in fact, must be further codified at the international level. Accordingly, the revitalized global partnership must build on the 2011 Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation. It must promote a shared vision for effective development cooperation firmly grounded in national development policies and processes, as well as an understanding of criteria for “effective” development cooperation in all countries. The integrated nature of development challenges today calls for moving beyond the historical

North-South divide of providers and recipients of development assistance. The global partnership certainly requires more steady official development assistance (ODA), as a vital source of development financing, particularly for the most vulnerable countries. The commitment of realizing 0.7 per cent of gross national income as ODA to benefit these countries must be fulfilled speedily.

Simultaneously, the global partnership must also rely on domestic and foreign investment and innovative finance, ensuring sustainable debt levels, building skills and competencies, promoting and providing access to trade, and allowing countries the freedom to set their own economic policies.

The revitalized global partnership must also include a broad range of actors in both the public and private sectors, as well as within civil society. The partnership needs to account for the interests of all key actors, including those who have limited access to national and global decision-making forums. It should be fully managed and driven by countries and communities that must have voices in its shaping and implementation. The partnership must ensure policy coherence in regard to development, to include a range of sources for development financing and address the larger issues that underpin sustainable development for all. It must effectively support sharing of resources, as well as knowledge and capabilities.

In the post-2015 period, development priorities and resources should be targeted towards increasing the capacity of developing countries to mobilize domestic resources; expanding economic infrastructure; improving domestic production capacity; expanding high-quality basic social services; addressing the effects of climate change; promoting rapid and inclusive economic growth; ensuring food security and the eradication of poverty; and promoting peaceful and just societies. As partners with a shared purpose, yet different strengths and resources, all coun-

tries and communities must respect each other more and focus on the world's common agenda as reflected in "The future we want" outcome document of the Rio+20 conference held in June 2012 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

The implementation of the revitalized global partnership should be based upon the existing evidence of achieved results. Statistical and data-gathering capacity in developing countries must be strengthened to enable the national monitoring of progress and accountability for development commitments. Citizens must be empowered and robust mechanisms for their engagement should be reinforced. Globally, the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, meeting under the auspices of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, is expected to play a key role in monitoring progress and enabling accountability for development commitments.

Finally, in furthering the global partnership for development, public and private stakeholders need to promote partnerships at all levels that are complementary and not duplicative. Global and regional partnerships must rely upon the vibrant hubs of knowledge and information that are springing up within the United Nations system and beyond, where actors connect according to their interests and offerings, in order to forge and strengthen their commitments for sustainable development at all levels. Some of these multi-stakeholder partnerships brought together to work on specific issues have proven tremendously successful. The Global Fund, the GAVI Alliance, Every Woman, Every Child, and Sustainable Energy for All are just a few examples of the current energy behind issue-based

coalitions. This mode of collaboration needs to expand to embrace the wide spectrum of issues addressed by the SDGs agenda.

The new partnership for development established to tackle the problems of our contemporary world calls for many shifts. It requires a shift from North-South interaction to universal actions, a shift from creating a new policy framework to implementing the agreements to be reached in 2015, a shift towards stronger monitoring and review, and a shift towards trust and mutual benefits.

Central to these challenges is a willingness to undertake evidence-based monitoring and review. Nothing short of a revolution in data and analysis is called for which builds on the tools and data at hand, strengthening such capacities needed in every country. All multilateral institutions must first focus upon an analysis of existing data and the information gaps therein. A critical effort needs to be made to build the capacities to gather, process and use the data to strengthen the decision-making of national Governments and multilateral institutions. The SDGs, their targets and indicators will provide the overall framework for these efforts at regional, national and global levels.

We do not need more international institutions, rather we must transform the way our current institutions do business. Integration, implementation, evidence-based decision-making, as well as consideration of finance and technology needs should be the basis for agenda setting, legislative actions and operational activities at the national level, along with enhanced multilateral cooperation.

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