

Sustainable Development Goals: Introduction



What are Sustainable Development Goals?

The 17 “Global Goals” are the heart of the new policy framework for sustainable development for the years 2015-2030 adopted by all member states of the United Nations in the document “Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” adopted at the UN General Assembly Summit on Sustainable Development on September 25, 2015. Beginning this year, states will be adopting new national and local regulations and laws to achieve the Global Goals or SDGs through measurable targets and reporting on their progress.

Until 2015, the Millennium Development Goals spurred activity in developing countries to alleviate conditions of suffering for many, but the MDGs were not universal and did not create significant change worldwide except in a few areas. The new Sustainable Development Goals attempt to go well beyond the MDGs to ensure the survival of life on Earth. The SDGs mandate states to act no later than 2030, the planet’s cut-off date for reversal of pollution, over-exploitation of non-renewable resources, and solutions to the severe inequalities that destroy security and stability around the world. The goals are based on scientific estimates of the destructive effects of human activities worldwide that will limit prospects for future generations if human behavior does not change in the near term.

To achieve the eradication of poverty and equality for all, the United Nations has expanded decades of work on the concept of sustainable development, meaning a balance of economic growth, environmental protection, and social inclusion. The SDGs are an ambitious transformative agenda identifying basic human needs for clean water, shelter, food and decent jobs for all, clean transportation and energy, sustainable cities, good governance and the rule of law, protection from violence and abuse of vulnerable populations, and climate justice.

What Are The Targets and Indicators?

Specific tasks have been identified in targets associated with each of the 17 goals. Each of the 169 targets, in turn, will be measured by standardized data to be collected and analyzed on subjects called “indicators”. On various websites like <http://www.sustainabledevelopment.un.org>, click on each one of the SDGs to see the associated targets, and then click again to find the indicators selected for measurement.

Concrete means of implementation of the 17 goals within a framework of human rights and gender equality, leaving no one behind, have been outlined in 169 “targets” associated with the 17 SDGs. Each target, in turn, will be measured and results compared across many dimensions using disaggregated data to be collected on a series of “indicators” determined by statisticians as evidence of effectiveness in each area. The SDGs form an integrated web or network which will require unprecedented cooperation, holding all states, civil society, other stakeholders and the private sector accountable. States cannot pick and choose one goal over the others, as the negotiations leading up to the adoption of the SDGs made clear; none can be achieved in isolation from the others, and no one state alone can achieve sustainable development.

What Are the T.I.I.L.O. Blogs About?

In a series of blogs beginning on May 11, 2016, each of the 17 SDGs will be explored via daily Twitter posts from the Tinker Institute on International Law and Organizations (T.I.I.L.O.). The blogs are also posted on the website of the Tinker Institute on International Law and Organizations at <http://www.tiilo.org>. The 17th SDG blog will appear before May 30, 2016, the first day of the UN DPI NGO conference in Gyeongju, Republic of Korea, on the theme of “Education for Global Citizenship: Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals Together.”

The daily posts will lead up to a workshop led by T.I.I.L.O. called **“Making a Difference: Good Governance, Rule of Law and Compliance with the SDGs’ Policy Framework for Sustainability and Growth.”** The focus of the workshop will be on SDG Goal 16 and the role of the private sector, governments and civil society in establishing conditions for sustainable development through good governance, access to information, transparency and anti-corruption measures, and an end to violence and egregious practices like child soldiers and trafficking. Speakers are lawyers and NGO representatives. Participants are appearing virtually and live at the conference, with live inter-

active discussion of questions linked from around the world via technology and social media to the audience in the conference room in Korea.

During the workshop, tweet your likes and your discussion questions or observations to participate from anywhere in the world. Your questions will be answered during the workshop or in follow-up tweets.

Means of Implementation

SDG Goal 17 addresses means of implementation for the entire set of the 17 goals, targets and indicators to be used. In addition, through the discussions and debates at the United Nations, states and stakeholders together included means of implementation in specific Global Goals to emphasize their importance in making the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda a reality. The urgency of the measures needed to address threats to the survival of the planet, its people and ecosystems requires such attention. All stakeholders will need to be involved in achieving the goals and monitoring the progress towards this end on all levels, from local communities to state and regional levels and the international level through the UN's High Level Political Forum annual meetings.

Is This Possible?

The implementation of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals as a single package will be necessary to ensure that no one is left behind and sustainable development will be a reality globally. This includes *allowing for sustainable economic growth to permit an effective process of wealth creation and distribution, employment and insurance in the present and future.* It also includes *social protection and environmental protection in balance with growth for present and future generations.*

States have begun improving the quality, coverage, and availability of disaggregated data to ensure that every person is reached and their advancements are monitored at a national, regional, and global level. This data will be analyzed and compared to see who is affected and what success has been achieved towards each goal. Individual states report to the UN's High Level Political Forum (HLPF), a body created to monitor the SDGs under the auspices of both the UN General Assembly and ECOSOC, with the first reports in July 2016.

Ultimately the success of the SDGs will be at local level through accountability. Individuals and businesses must change patterns of consumption and production

with the cooperation of governments, the private sector, civil society and NGOs on every level.

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