



## The Sustainable Development Goals **A SUCCESS IN THE MAKING?**

**The UN Sustainable Development Goals are criticised, among other things for being too many. This is not necessarily the problem.**

Ban Ki-moon has presented his Synthesis Report on the Post-2015 Agenda for sustainable development. Entitled 'The Road to Dignity by 2030: Ending Poverty, Transforming All Lives and Protecting the Planet', the report presents 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) within the framework of six overall 'Essential Elements', proposed by the Open Working Group.

The goals are the result of a process of global consultations and negotiations, which is still ongoing. For some, the number of goals and targets is too

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Detailed proposals are needed for the upcoming 'Financing for Development' Conference in Addis Ababa.
- Country data collection lacks coordination across sectors and is weak at sub-national levels. Detailed national studies of data systems and gaps are needed now to enable strong evidence-based monitoring of the SDGs.
- The sustainable development goals need to be popularized now to assure influence for citizens, shareholders, donors and civil society organisations.

### THE 6 ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

Dignity – People – Prosperity

Planet – Justice – Partnership

many. For practical or political reasons they want the number reduced. 17 goals do seem a lot – there were only 8 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). But that is exactly the point: the 17 SDGs have learnt from the MDGs, including their shortcomings. For example, the MDGs focused primarily on the social sectors, while the SDGs now elevate production and economic growth to the level of goals. The MDGs focused on poverty, while the SDGs focus on poverty and inequality between and within countries. The MDGs had strong indicators, but they lacked adequate data for monitoring; the Report calls for strong, credible and not least disaggregated data to strengthen monitoring and thereby accountability.

There is a need for simplicity in communicating the goals, but this is where the 6 Essential Elements come in. These are broad, but as a means to secure broad based and not least popular buy-in and support, this is an important step forward. They also support the

transformational thinking underwriting the SDGs in a concise and aspirational form. There are three immediate priorities to build on this success:

- 1. Sustainable Financing:** bilateral, multilateral, national, private and philanthropic finances all need to be mobilised for and around the SDGs. Notably the Report highlights taxation and improved financial management regulations as important sources with great potential; but detailed proposals are needed for the Financing for Development Conference in Addis Ababa.
- 2. Effective and full accountability:** it needs monitoring and good monitoring needs disaggregated data. The Report recognises this need, but country data collection lacks coordination across sectors and is weak at sub-national levels. Detailed national studies of data systems and gaps are needed now to enable strong evidence-based monitoring of the SDGs.
- 3. Breadth and depth in support:** The MDGs mobilised interest which provided leverage to hold governments accountable to their commitments. The more that SDGs are popularized, the greater the influence for stakeholders, but it must be pushed now.

### THE PROPOSED SDGs

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

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