



## MANAGING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ISSUES AND DIMENSIONS IN DEVELOPED AND DEVELOPING NATIONS

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### **Abstract**

*The sustainable development is the serious issue in front of all the nations. For this issue relevant steps are taken like United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) in 2012, where all UN member nations showed their commitment towards economic progress, social development and environmental protection for the benefit of all. For this purpose the member nations are asked to develop a set of universally applicable sustainable development goals (SDGs) that carefully balance the environmental, social and economic dimensions of sustainable development. This Paper is to study the difference of issues in developing and developed nations for sustainable development or environmental sustainability and also to provide advice and guidance on how environmental sustainability can be incorporated in the SDGs of developed and developing nations. This research is important because a universal set of SDGs will be incorporated by UN for member states which will address the difficulties of global and intergenerational burden sharing in future.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

UN has been working on sustainable development of the world for a long time. In the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) the focus of UN was on developing countries for the issues ranging from halving extreme poverty to halting the spread of HIV/AIDS and providing universal primary education, all by the target date of 2015 as agreed to by all the world's countries and the entire world's leading development institutions. They agreed to make collaborative efforts to meet the needs of the world's poorest.

By 2015, the world will have met some of the MDGs' key targets, such as halving the poverty rate, and will get close to completing primary education for all children; but achieving the health goals looks difficult and Africa lags behind, despite the substantial progress it has made since 2000. Overall, the MDGs have been remarkably successful in focusing attention and mobilizing resources to address the major gaps in human development.

The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development - or Rio+20 - took place in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil on 20-22 June 2012. In the Rio+20 process, SDGs were formally raised by Colombia's and Guatemala's proposal to avoid political commitments to sustainable development becoming reduced to generalities. This need is not new, but it arose with particular emphasis and urgency as progress towards already agreed-upon goals and targets has been, at best, uneven, with only three Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) related to slums, poverty and water having been met by 2012.

The one important outcome of the Rio+20 summit was the agreement to develop a new set of goals to succeed the millennium development goals (MDGs) in 2015. In Rio, Member States decided to launch a process to develop a set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which will build upon the Millennium Development Goals and converge with the post 2015 development agenda. The world's governments came together in Rio to declare "a pathway for a sustainable century". To secure a set of global goals that are truly universal, that integrate development and the environment, and confront the root causes of our current crises.

At the close of the Rio+20 Earth Summit, heads of state and ministers from more than 190 nations signed off on a plan to set global sustainable development goals and other measures to strengthen global environmental management, tighten protection the oceans, improve food security and promote a "green economy".

After more than a year of negotiations and a 10-day mega-conference involving 45,000 people, the wide-ranging outcome document – The Future We Want – was lambasted by environmentalists and anti-poverty campaigners for lacking the detail and ambition needed to address the challenges posed by a deteriorating environment, worsening inequality and a global population expected to rise from 7bn to 9bn by 2050.

But the UN secretary general, Ban Ki-moon said the document would guide the world on to a more sustainable path: "Our job now is to create a critical mass. The road ahead is long and hard." US secretary of state Hillary Clinton said it was a time to be optimistic. "A more prosperous future is within our reach, a future where all people benefit from sustainable development no matter who they are or where they live."

So after building on the MDGs, the global community is moving beyond meeting basic human needs and promotes dynamic, inclusive and sustainable development. Future goals will reach beyond traditional development thinking to become sustainable one-world goals that will apply to poor and rich countries alike.

At present, there is an incredible amount of confusion around this within the UN, governments and civil society, because MDGs were clearly defined but now the SDGs have to be decided by nations and have to be incorporated by UN for member states which will address the difficulties of global and intergenerational burden sharing in future.

#### MAIN DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MDGs AND SDGs

- The MDGs and their associated indicators applied only to developing countries, but the SDGs will apply to develop ones as well. This not only increases the diversity of perspectives, but also the complexity of the process. How and where decisions will be made, the composition of decision-making bodies, and whose perspectives will be accepted as relevant and legitimate are potential sources of conflict. As SDGs become more influential in the post-2015 development agenda, harder negotiations are to be expected.
- At the conceptual level, the main issue is the framework for SDGs. Although sustainable development as a concept and field of practice has been around for over two decades, its definition, interpretation and framework remained fluid. As the political mandate for the SDGs did not clarify the framework, the task was left to the subsequent intergovernmental and/or science-policy process. The development of a common framework itself can be an important part of social learning; however, differences in value-systems, worldviews and strategic interests may make reaching consensus politically and procedurally complicated. The challenge is well known from over two decades of practice focused on developing sustainability or similar indicator systems that often had to tackle this question early in their process.
- From the scientific point of view, the core challenge is grounding SDGs not only in disciplinary science as it relates to individual SDGs. Collectively, SDGs will also have to represent the structure and interlink ages of complex socio-ecological systems (SES) and build on evolving branches of science that consider issues at a systemic level. Selecting and interpreting indicators, defining critical thresholds and tipping points, and developing transition pathways that connect current conditions to SD goals and targets in the future will all require an interface with scientific and science policy discourses.
- As far as technical challenges are concerned, they are related most importantly to availability and quality of data. While data for the MDGs was mostly statistical, SDGs must make full use of remote sensing data collected through Earth Observation programs. Due to serious and persistent capacity gaps (mostly, but not exclusively, in developing countries), data gaps continue to exist and mechanisms to systematically address them will be required. Statistical agencies and other data collection and monitoring bodies are engaged in a review of the system of national accounts and other ways to improve data availability, but the process will take time and require significant investment.

As all the countries have different priorities so they want different goals to be included in the six major goals which have to be implemented in post-2015 goals, which is clear from the following table on which one side shows the priorities of world at large and other side shows priorities of India as a country:

Priorities Stated in My World Survey of UNITED NATIONS	World Rank	India Rank
A good education	1	1
Affordable and nutritious food	5	7
Support for people who can't work	10	9
Better job opportunities	3	3
Freedom from discrimination and persecution	9	11
An honest and responsive government	4	5
Equality between men and women	8	6
Phone and internet access	13	15
Access to clean water and sanitation	6	4
Better transport and roads	12	12
Action taken on climate change	16	16

Reliable energy at home	15	13
Better healthcare	2	2
Political freedoms	14	14
Protecting forests, rivers and oceans	11	10
Protection against crime and violence	7	8

#### SO THIS PROBLEM NEEDS A CLOSER LOOK BEFORE FORMING UNIVERSALLY ADOPTED SDGs:

- **Forming Consensus on all goals:** The design of a new set of ambitious, global goals that will apply to all countries and help orient international attention – and resources – towards tackling some of the world's most pressing problems. To do this, UN will have to bring together governments who disagree on issues such as women's rights, diplomatically fend off demands from NGOs and campaign groups insistent that their issue takes priority, and grapple with country blocs and bureaucratic, inter-governmental processes.
- **Rich and Poor have to be addressed equally:** So far, discussions have stayed close to poverty, hunger, water and other topics covered by the millennium development goals (Mugs) – the UN's flagship development campaign set in 2000 and structured around eight goals to be met by 2015. Now this new set of goals will apply to rich and poor countries and has to be built on progressive, negotiated agreements by UN member states, he says
- **Contribution from all for all:** There is a growing realisation that we are all in the same boat. On some of these issues – biodiversity, climate, and environment – there is no getting away from the fact that everyone has to contribute, though rich countries did initially seem a bit surprised, and a little sceptical about goals applying to them as well. There remains "a bit of a wait and see approach" from some governments.
- **Wide range of issues:** Issues on the table range from trade and debt, through to human rights and conflict, to biodiversity, oceans and forests.
- **Every country wants to have an upper hand:** The Middle East, being oil-rich, energy-rich, cash-rich, they see challenges radically differently than least developed countries. While rich industrialised countries face their own challenges. Asian countries are "on a different trajectory and feel extremely optimistic about the future, though recognise that the technology that they continue to base their transformation on ... is doing infinite damage to the environment, to climate, to biodiversity". The worry is also about worries about "unholy alliances" such as those between energy-producers in rich and poor countries that may see the SDG process as a threat.
- **Gap cannot be ignored:** While some of the world's poorest countries will need extra help, and aid will have to play a part in that, the SDGs will be written with an understanding that all states have to take collective responsibility for challenges faced. "This has been the big shift that has happened since the latter part of the last century and this century."
- **No contradiction of goals formed:** To ensure that various goals, targets and indicators proposed do not contradict each other. To make sure that there is consistency between what we're doing on one aspect, say macroeconomic policy, with what we're aspiring to in another aspect, say climate change, or consumption.
- **Leaders need to be more focused on SDGs:** The fact of the modern world is that leaders of the most powerful countries support business as usual, shamefully putting private profit before people and the planet.
- **Nations focus on their own problems:** Since Mugs, though some of the goals have been fulfilled, however, global emissions have risen by 48%, 300m hectares of forest have been cleared and the population has increased by 1.6bn people. Despite a reduction in poverty, one in six people are malnourished. While the problems have grown, the ability of nations to deal with them has diminished because the EU is distracted by economic crisis, the US is diverted by a presidential election, and government power has declined relative to that of corporations and civil society. With Barack Obama, Angela Merkel and David Cameron absent, it is blamed that the BRICS nations dominated proceedings of SDGs.

#### PROPOSED NEW SDGS ON CONSENSUS BY ALL THE UN NATIONS

- **Goal one: Thriving Lives and Livelihoods**  
End poverty and improve wellbeing through access to education, employment and information, better health and housing. It should include targets on clean air that build on World Health Organisation guidelines for pollutants such as black carbon.
- **Goal two: Sustainable Food Security**  
The MDG hunger target should be extended and targets added to limit nitrogen and phosphorus use in agriculture; phosphorus flow to the oceans should not exceed 10m tonnes a year; and phosphorus runoff to lakes and rivers should halve by 2030.



- **Goal three: Sustainable Water Security**  
Achieve universal access to clean water and basic sanitation. This would contribute to MDG health targets, restrict global water runoff to less than 4,000 cubic kilometres a year and limit volumes withdrawn from river basins to no more than 50-80% of mean annual flow.
- **Goal four: Universal clean energy**  
Improve affordable access to clean energy that minimises local pollution and health impacts and mitigates global warming. This contributes to the UN commitment to sustainable energy for all, and addresses MDG targets on education, gender equity and health.
- **Goal five: Healthy and Productive Ecosystems**  
Sustain biodiversity and ecosystem services through better management, valuation, measurement, conservation and restoration. Extinctions should not exceed 10 times the natural background rate. At least 70% of species in any ecosystem and 70% of forests should be retained.
- **Goal six: Governance for sustainable societies**  
Transform governance and institutions at all levels to address the other five sustainable development goals. This would build on MDG partnerships and incorporate environmental and social targets into global trade, investment and finance. Subsidies on fossil fuels and policies that support unsustainable agricultural and fisheries practices should be eliminated by 2020.

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Meeting three key conditions could help make the post-2015 agenda and the SDGs a comparable communications success and also help UN identifying the major agendas of SDGs post-2015. It will also help form consensus on important goals by all the UN member states, Rich and Poor.

- They need a new but equally simple definition as the "global anti-poverty goals" used for the Mugs.
- This definition, the core idea of the goals, must have the potential to cut through the ever-increasing noise of 24/7 media and social networks.
- The future goals will also need to garner an even larger social consensus in order to be adopted by the diverse development communities who could then persuade new audiences to support the goals.

Factors that will have to be kept in mind while forming the universally sustainable goals for all the UN nations states:

- Sustainability: this is the obvious "global sustainability goals" as a new model of the "global anti-poverty goals."
- Forward Planning: this definition could be built around the concept of a problem-solving "plan" that will help us create sustainable future
- Empowerment: this interpretation of the goals would be centred on the idea of participation — that the entire global community, not just states, are shaping and delivering the future development agenda.
- Universality: the common ground for this frame could be founded in the universal preference for education, healthcare, jobs, and honest and responsive governments as was documented by the global My World survey.

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