

SDG Summit 2023

National and Global Commitments to SDG Transformation: Pathways, Investments and Means of Implementation

Guidance Note for States

I. Overview

At the half-way mark of the Sustainable Development Goals, the world is severely off track. The recent special edition report of the Secretary-General on Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals demonstrated that just 12 percent of the assessable Sustainable Development Goal targets are on track. The SDG Summit in September 2023 provides an opportunity to change course and to secure the breakthroughs and momentum needed to achieve the goals by 2030.

To this end, in his letter dated 3 April, the Secretary-General urged world leaders to help deliver a 'Rescue Plan for People and Planet' at the Summit, including by announcing national and global commitments at the Summit that will help drive SDG transformation for inclusion and sustainability in the years ahead. This document seeks to provide additional guidance to countries that are intending to put forward such commitments this September.

II. Scope of National and Global Commitments to SDG Transformation

Member States are encouraged to put forward commitments on two levels:

National Commitments

States have repeatedly committed to achieving the SDGs and have taken a wide range of actions to that end in the past 7 years. To further strengthen momentum and demonstrate that every country has a clear path to SDG success, States are encouraged to outline a forward-looking National Commitment to SDG Transformation at the Summit that includes (i) priority transitions and areas for investment that will help maximize progress across the SDGs; (ii) a national benchmark for reducing poverty and inequality by 2027; and (iii) steps towards strengthened national planning and institutional frameworks to support progress in these areas.

(i) SDG Transitions and priority areas for SDG Investment

Drawing on recent national development planning exercises, Voluntary National Reviews, existing regional/subregional frameworks and on the latest available data on national progress towards the SDGs, governments may wish to conduct an integrated SDG Transformation analysis to help identify priority areas for SDG investment and priority policy changes that would yield the greatest multiplier effects across the goals.

In keeping with the findings of the Global Sustainable Development Report, this would include steps to visualize the interlinkages between SDGs and their targets and understand better patterns of synergies and trade-offs. Scenario planning and foresight analysis could be instructive in this regard. Drawing on

the special edition of the SDG Progress report, **annex 1** includes an illustrative list of policy areas and actions that can drive key transitions and transformations across the goals.

(ii) Benchmark for reducing poverty and inequality

Poverty eradication is an ‘indispensable requirement for sustainable development’, yet under current trends, 575 million people will still be living in extreme poverty in 2030 and only about one third of countries will meet the target to halve national poverty levels.¹

In light of this situation, countries are encouraged to put forward an ambitious national benchmark for reducing poverty and inequality between now and 2030 at the Summit. Such a benchmark would serve as an overarching result of investment in the above referenced priority areas, and as a key marker of national SDG ambition alongside other targets, such as those included in Nationally Determined Contributions under the Paris Agreement.

National benchmarks would consist of a numerical target for reducing poverty by 2027 against national poverty lines, in accordance with SDG Target 1.2.² In line with the global SDG indicator framework, where relevant and feasible, benchmarks should be disaggregated by income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability and geographic location, or other characteristics, in accordance with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics.³

(iii) National institutional arrangements to deliver the goals:

Since 2015, governments have established specific institutional arrangements to oversee SDG implementation. In line with the need to significantly boost efforts to drive SDG transformation, governments may wish to signal plans to further enhance these arrangements in the coming years.

As per the SDG Progress report, this could include actions to make SDG achievement a more central focus in national planning and oversight mechanisms; to align domestic budgets and financing with the SDGs, including through SDG-aligned Integrated National Financing Frameworks (INFFs); to strengthen regulatory frameworks to align private sector governance models, operating principles and disclosure requirements with sustainable development objectives; to strengthen the capacities of local and sub-national governments to advance the SDGs; to rejuvenate and strengthen public sector institutions; to boost transparency and access to information, and to strengthen national statistical systems, secure country-level data for at least 90% of the SDG targets by 2027 and increase domestic financing for data and statistics by 50% from current levels by 2030.

Global Commitments

The slow pace of SDG progress is a universal challenge, but it is abundantly clear that developing countries and the world’s poorest and most vulnerable people are bearing the brunt of global inaction and major shortcomings in global solidarity and cooperation. Compounding climate, COVID-19 and economic injustices are leaving many developing countries with fewer options and even less resources to make the SDGs a reality.

¹ [Special Edition report of the Secretary-General on Progress towards the SDGs](#), May 2023

² SDG Target 1.2: ‘By 2030 reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions’

³ Resolution 68/261.

To decisively address this imbalance and deliver on commitments made in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and elsewhere, developed countries and others in a position to do so are encouraged in addition to their national commitments to put forward time-bound global and regional commitments to strengthen international cooperation and support for developing countries, particularly the most vulnerable countries.

In doing so, countries are encouraged to draw on the Secretary-General's proposal for an SDG Stimulus⁴ and the following key issues:

- Scale up and fulfil ODA commitments, including to achieve the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national income for official development assistance (ODA/GNI) and 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of ODA/GNI to the least developed countries.
- Re-channel all unused Special Drawing Rights to countries in need including through multilateral development banks.
- Immediately suspend all pending debt payments.
- Commit to improve upon or replace the Common Framework with an effective sovereign debt workout mechanism.
- Align national and regional trade policies with the SDGs.
- Deliver on climate finance commitments made in Copenhagen, Paris and Glasgow, replenish the Green Climate Fund and double adaptation finance before 2025.
- Increase funding for SDG-related research and innovation on underlying social issues.

III. Developing and registering national and global commitments

In building their commitments, countries are encouraged to actively **engage a wide range of constituencies and stakeholders**, including civil society, youth, women's organizations, the private sector, national parliament, academia and local authorities. This could include a national SDG Day aimed at strengthening national ownership of the national and global commitments that will be put forward at the SDG Summit in September.

Countries can draw on support from the **UN development system** in developing their commitments, including Resident Coordinators and UN Country Teams. Countries can draw on global and regional level tools such as the SDG Push Diagnostic and its national 'Integrated SDG Insights' report developed by UNDP, as a complement to analysis conducted in preparation of UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks.

Countries are encouraged to announce their National and Global Commitments to SDG Transformation at the Summit through the contributions of Heads of State and Government and to register these commitments on the **SDG Acceleration and Accountability Registry**. Member States may wish to integrate follow-up on these commitments into the existing follow-up and review processes including the Voluntary National Review Process.

At the global level, delegations seeking further information can contact decadeofaction@un.org.

⁴ [SDG Stimulus, February 2023](#)

Annex 1: Possible areas of focus within National Commitments

Illustrative list of policy actions and investments to drive just transitions and unlock accelerated progress across the goals by 2030 taken from the Special Edition of the SDG Progress Report

Leave no one behind

- Expand investments in social protection floors as a percentage of GDP in national budgets and make institutional changes to promote an integrated approach to achieving adaptive, shock-responsive, and universal social protection and creating new, decent job opportunities in the care, digital, and green economies.
- Mobilize political efforts through the UN Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions to channel funds from international, national, public and private sources, including from the International Financial Institutions towards this aim.
- Create active labour market policies to help workers upskill and re-skill to keep or change their job, adapt to the green and digital transitions, and find ways out of poverty.
- Fully leverage digital technology to expand the foundations—including registries, digital IDs and financial inclusion, on which more comprehensive, dynamic and adaptive social protection systems can be built.

Invest in women and girls

- Leverage special measures and quotas to promote gender parity across all levels of decision-making in political and economic life; accelerate women's economic inclusion by closing the digital divide, investing in women-owned businesses and reducing the unpaid care and domestic burden for women and girls.
- Dismantle all discriminatory laws and practices, take action to shape social norms that promote gender equality and ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights.
- Pass laws and put in place emergency response plans that prevent and eliminate violence against women and girls, both on and offline, by 2025.

Make the digital transformation work for everyone

- Invest in foundational inclusive and accessible digital infrastructures to ensure meaningful connectivity for all and build digital literacy and data literacy in and outside the public sector.
- Incentivize digital partnerships with the private sector and other stakeholders to produce applications that further SDGs progress.

Adopt a life course approach to essential services and urgently tackle the global crisis in education

- Expand access to early childhood education, nutrition, healthcare and leverage the forthcoming high-level meeting on Universal Health Coverage to strengthen national health systems.
- Equip social protection systems to address needs that arise naturally during the life cycle and during periods of low earning capacity, such as childhood, disability, childbearing and old age.
- Deliver on National Statements of Commitment to Transform Education including by taking concrete steps to invest more, more equitably and more efficiently in education, taking corrective action and monitoring progress at all levels to improve basic literacy and numeracy

and digital literacy proficiency, ensuring a future-oriented focus in education curricula and pedagogy and leveraging technologies for greater access and learning.

Invest in peace

- Strengthen investment in development priorities in conflict-affected areas and those with humanitarian needs to address the underlying drivers of vulnerability.
- Proactively integrate persons and communities affected by instability, conflict or violence, especially refugees and IDPs, into national systems of healthcare, education and employment.

Accelerate access to energy for all and the shift to renewables

- Take immediate action to advance the global transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy as proposed in the Secretary-General's Climate Acceleration Agenda:
 - a. No new coal and the phase out of coal by 2030 in OECD countries and 2040 in all other countries. End all international public and private funding of coal.
 - b. Ensure net zero electricity generation by 2035 for all developed economies and 2040 for the rest of the world.
 - c. Cease all licensing or funding of new oil and gas – consistent with the findings of the International Energy Agency. Stop any expansion of existing oil and gas reserves.
 - d. Support the preparation of investment-ready energy transition plans consistent with these actions.
- Address critical bottlenecks to renewables deployment in developing countries by ensuring access to battery storage technology, resilient and diversified supply chains for critical raw materials and tackling the high cost of capital for renewables in the developing world.
- Triple finance and investment for renewable energy and energy efficiency including shifting fossil fuels subsidies to renewables and reforming the international financial architecture.
- Mobilizing financing to support the Energy Compacts, and all on the MDBs, DFIs, and bilateral agencies to do their part on taking more risk and develop/repurpose financial instruments to lower the cost of capital for renewable technologies. This can help expand cooperative models on renewable energy transition, such as the Just Energy Transition Partnerships.
- Strengthen international cooperation and collaboration for ensuring transparency, accountability, and credibility around the above-mentioned actions.

Secure food, water and sanitation systems

- Integrate decision-making in the water, energy, food and environment sectors to ensure good nutrition, strengthen food and water security and sanitation, support climate action and maintain biodiversity and forests.
- Advance on national pathways for follow up to the 2021 Food Systems Summit and on the outcomes of the 2023 UN Water Conference, engaging all sectors and stakeholders.
- Enable a coordinated policy effort across countries to better meet nutritional needs while addressing climate change and inefficient water and land use.
- Invest in green infrastructure, to upgrade ageing infrastructure for water management, to ensure water efficiencies, access, and lower pollution.

Protect biodiversity and natural resources

- Strengthen links between the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and public health in sectoral policies and ensure equitable access to the benefits of natural assets
- Raise government and stakeholder awareness, as well as monitoring and predicting impacts of biodiversity loss on human well-being.
- Follow up on the goals and targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and close the \$700 billion biodiversity finance gap, with actions that increase the level of financing from all sources and eliminate and reform incentives harmful for biodiversity by at least \$ 500 billion per year.

Prevent new and reduce existing disaster risks

- Systematically integrate risk considerations into planning for the 2030 Agenda by fully implementing the Sendai Framework.
- Ensure universal coverage of multi-hazard early warning systems by 2027.
- Ensure linkages between global data for public health emergencies and other disasters.