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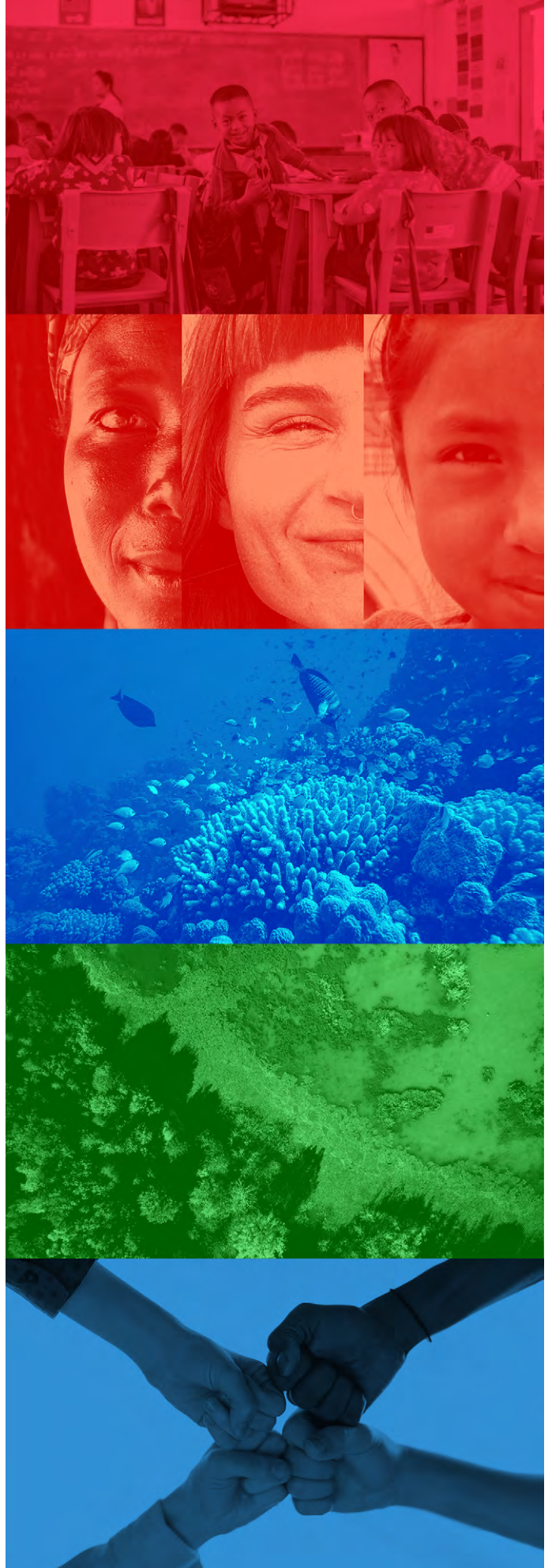
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Introduction

In 2022, we exist in a world of duality. There are countries where many are vaccinated and Covid-19 no longer disrupts daily life. Other countries lack access to vaccines, and the pandemic remains a dominant concern. Some enjoy peace and prosperity, while others experience ongoing violence and instability. The High-Level Political Forum presents an opportunity to address inequities and injustices. The NGO Major Group is calling for a global commitment to meaningful action supported by engagement with Civil Society, evidence-based reporting, and steadfast political will.

Sadly, we note that the groups identified in our 2021 Position Paper – Women, Youth, Indigenous Peoples, and those living with disabilities – remain the most at risk of being left behind. Significant concerns include the exploitation of women and girls, animals, the environment, regressive action on human rights, regional and national conflicts, and threats to biodiversity.

Covid-19 necessitated the creation of online spaces for civil society, which should be maintained and expanded, as they increased accessibility and participation in decision making processes. However, virtual spaces are not a replacement for face-to-face dialogue or meaningful in-person participation. Digital divides between rich and poor countries and rural or remote communities became more apparent during the pandemic.

We urge States to adopt broad inputs to Voluntary National Reviews as a source of good practice and opportunity for collaboration. Civil society, universities, and local governments are well positioned to facilitate scalable interventions with citizen participation and feedback.

We invite States to consider the following when preparing for the High-Level Political Forum:

> Geo-political instability negatively impacts the progress of all Sustainable Development Goals.

>> Call for the cessation of hostilities; ensure political will and global commitment to securing high quality, formal and informal education.

> Gender discrimination and violence impedes the realization of Agenda 2030.

>> Call for the adoption and implementation of policies and, where appropriate, temporary special measures aimed at eliminating gender-based discrimination and violence. This must include recognition of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights for all women in all their diversity.

> Lack of resources for climate change mitigation and adaptation in coastal communities, small island developing States and other remote communities.

>> Increase funding for adaptation efforts and increase focus on prevention, regulation and enforcement of sustainable marine and industry practices.

| Accelerating climate change.

- Safeguard wetlands, forests, and agricultural lands, prioritizing the storage and sequestration of carbon and sustainable practices that do not encourage exploitation of humans, animals, and the environment.

| Unequal access to Green Technologies.

- Ensure global equity of access to technologies that impact health, education, employment, and sustainable development, recognising that protectionist policies inevitably limit the access of those most in need. Bridging the global North/South divide, and addressing the historic, colonialist, and systemic separation of donor/recipient nations is needed, with listening and cooperation as critical as leadership.

Sustainable development must employ inclusive, systematic processes to overcome systemic inequalities. We call on States to leverage their expertise and assets in 2022 to achieve meaningful progress and ensure no one is left behind.

4 QUALITY EDUCATION

QUALITY EDUCATION

How should governments implement this SDG and related targets?

Before the Covid-19 pandemic, UNICEF concluded that 12 million children would never see the inside of a school;[1] and three-quarters of those children denied the right to education are girls.[2] Considering that the pandemic has exacerbated existing inequalities and inequities, governments must ensure that inclusion is at the heart of any educational policy. States should ensure free public education of the highest attainable quality and inclusive digital transformation, including the right to access free internet for all. Furthermore, governments must implement measures to end discrimination, stigmatisation, and bullying, while also strengthening children´s participation in democracy.

Governments must implement measures supporting groups at risk of discrimination and exclusion, particularly persons with disabilities, girls and children in situations of poverty. Children caught in forcibly displaced contexts also need support to access education irrespective of their lack of official documentation or citizenship status. States must also ensure lifelong learning opportunities for older people, with special methods including assistive technologies and techniques in accordance to their different cognitive and emotional capacities and stages of development.

Governments must promote and protect the rights of children, especially girls and children with disabilities, to quality education while also ensuring access to water, sanitation and hygiene services, and tackling poverty, hunger and malnutrition. Government should ensure the provision of safe learning environments for all, especially in the most remote rural areas, urban settlements, including in migrant, refugee, and displaced communities.

Educational curricula should be student-centred to ensure the development of individual potential, including receptive qualities, such as intuition and empathy. Curricula should include pedagogies for social emotional learnign, teaching of life skills including financial education, psychosocial well-being and mental health, menstrual hygiene, and sexual education and reproductive rights. Furthermore, the curricula should complement didactic learning with critical and creative thinking skill development, and the development of "solutionary" approaches, empowering students to become agents of change. Governments should prioritise budgetary transparent allocations destined to education, to ensure school capacity and infrastructure, embedded with sustainable practices, and making them a safe place. Governments should also retain both the quantitative and qualitative data, to capture the progress in learning outcomes for all, while recognising and promoting citizen-generated data.

We call on all countries to: adopt and fully implement all of the recommendations included

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[1] UNICEF (2019), "Around 12 million children may never see a classroom, UN data reveals". Available at: https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/09/1046272

[2] Antoninis, M. et al. (2018) Global Education Monitoring Report Gender Review. Meeting our commitments to gender equality in education. Paris: UNESCO & UNGEI (https://en.unesco.org/gem-report/gender-reviews); UNESCO (2020) Global Education Monitoring Report – Gender Report: A new generation: 25 years of efforts for gender equality in education. Paris: UNESCO (https://en.unesco.org/gem-report/2020genderreport)

in the 2030 Roadmap and Framework on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and the Education 2030 Framework for Action[3]; for education ministries and offices, at all levels, to ensure that climate action and ESD are taught at all grade levels and in all school programs and in a fully integrated manner; and to include a report on progress made in all voluntary national reviews (VNRs). VNRs should include the recommended whole-institution approach, transdisciplinary project based learning, the suggested involvement of young people, and focus on and participation of parents and local communities. VNRs should have open access to public.

Governments must provide access to lifelong education for teachers at all levels, enabling them to be upskilled with new developments in their field, to use emerging new technologies, and to develop and rapidly spread the educational curricula and relevant materials needed to ensure the achievements of the SDGs. Governments should also strengthen and enhance partnerships with civil society organisations along with youth groups and other stakeholders to pursue equity, social inclusion, mental and emotional well-being and empowerment. Migrant associations can help foster collaboration between the schools and families to improve the quality of education and opportunities for life skills, TVET and livelihoods.

What structural obstacles hinder the implementation of this SDG (at local, national, regional, and/or global levels)?

Different barriers hinder the implementation of SDG4, such as inaccessible, poorly functional and insufficient infrastructure, non-inclusive teaching methods and facilities, the absence of multilingualism and free education; discrimination, stereotyping, the existence of hidden costs; and resource constraints. Many of these barriers are drivers of poor learning and child labour.[4] The most effective way to stem the flow of schoolaged children into child labour is through quality, inclusive and accessible education and the elimination of poverty; Child labour and poverty are two of the main obstacles to achieving SDG4.[5]

At the height of the pandemic, more than 90 percent of school-age children were out of school, and school enrollment decreased with unemployment and lack of family support making it difficult for students to have successful learning.[6] If no additional efforts are deployed, it is estimated that more than 23 million children will never return to school, and those who return will need additional support to make up for lost learning, especially girls, children with disabilities and refugee children.[7] To avoid a "lost generation" of school-age children, it is pivotal that Governments address learning gaps and create a compact across schools and homes.

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[3] https://iite.unesco.org/publications/education-2030-incheon-declaration-framework-action-towards-inclusive-equitable-quality-education-lifelong-learning/

[4] Emezue. C., Pozneanscaia, C.,Sheaf, G., Groppo, V., Bakrania, S., Kaplan, J., (2021). *'The Impact of Educational Policies and Programmes on Child Work and Child Labour in Low and Middle-Income Countries: A rapid evidence assessment'.* UNICEF Office of Research-Innocenti. p.5. (accessed 21/02/22).

[5] International Labour Organisation (2018). *'Ending child labour by 2025: A review of policies and programmes'.* p.51. (accessed 21/02/22).

[6] https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/05/17/pandemics-dire-global-impact-education#:~:text=An%20estimated%2090%20percent%20of,it%2C%20Human%20Rights%20Watch%20said.

[7] https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/05/17/pandemics-dire-global-impact-education#:~:text=An%20estimated%2090%20percent%20of,it%2C%20Human%20Rights%20Watch%20said.

There is also a data gap, which can be addressed using the thematic Indicators included in the Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action for the implementation of SDG4.[8] To analyse needs and monitor progress in disability inclusion, data needs to be disaggregated by disability, which can be achieved using the Washington Group Child Functioning Module. There is a need for upholding context sensitive, culture-based learning that supports skills associated with tangible and intangible heritage.

What role can civil society play in achieving this SDG?

Civil society can participate in evidence generation for accountability, in policy dialogues for advocacy upholding their research role and can contribute valuable information to shape education policies that benefit the most marginalised. They can monitor policy implementation, raise concerns, lobby for increased education funding and advocate to ensure that no one is left behind.

In accordance with national curricula and education sector plans, CSOs can establish not-for-profit schools, second chance programs and early childhood initiatives that are inclusive and remove barriers to education, particularly for vulnerable groups such as the poorest groups, victims of contemporary forms of slavery, and can provide technology (lo-to high) options for rural students and those without access to remote learning. Support should be provided for CSOs building classrooms in rural communities and providing reading materials and nutritious school meals. Civil society has also a strategic role in accompanying the educational trajectories of children and youth.

How does this SDG support or connect with other goals in the 2030 Agenda? With specific targets of other international frameworks?

Education is a necessary requirement for the promotion and achievement of the SDGs, as it provides the knowledge and skills required for decent work and good health. It reduces inequalities, and is key for peace and justice. Quality education decreases the vulnerability to child labour, and child marriage increases drastically for girls who do not attend school.[9] It is a powerful tool in the development of people and in breaking down cycles of exclusion. The linkage of SDG 4 is directly with SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDGs 1-3, SDG on decent livelihoods, SDG climate change and SDG.

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[8] https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000245656

[9] The World Bank (2017). 'Educating Girls, Ending Child Marriage'. Available at https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/immersive-story/2017/08/22/educating-girls-ending-child-marriage (accessed 21/02/22).

Are there emerging issues related to this SDG that should be noted?

In two years of the pandemic, school closures affected more than 43,000,000 children worldwide.[10] Online child sexual exploitation[11] also increased as a result of the pandemic. This is a huge concern considering that school closures during times of crisis could lead to an increase in early child marriage,[12] child militia recruitment, [13] and child sexual exploitation.[14] The Covid-19 pandemic accelerated digitalisation but also evinced a digital divide due to uneven access to the Internet or uneven capacity to adequately use digital technologies[15] which further pushed children into exploitative work.

Covid-19 also led to a reduction in public funding for educational institutions and services. Children from rural and remote areas and marginalized groups, children with disabilities and girls experienced more difficulties in accessing education and digital learning. To recover adequately from the pandemic, it is key to build inclusive, equitable, safe, clean and digitally upgraded and accessible school facilities and to tackle the multiple existential environmental crises.

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[10] UNESCO. 'Education: From disruption to recovery'. Available at https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse#schoolclosures (accessed 21/02/22).

[11] Guarascio, F., (2020) 'Online child sex abuse rises with COVID-19 lockdowns: Europol'. *Reuters*, 18 May (accessed 21/02/22).

[12] See for example, Korkoyah,Jr, D., Wreh, W. (2015). *'Ebola Impact Revealed: An assessment of the Differing Impact of the Outbreak on Men and Women in Liberia'. UN Women, Oxfam, Ministry of Gender & Development, Liberia WASH Consortium.* p.34 (accessed 21/02/22).

[13] Baytiyeh, H. (2018), 'Online learning during post-earthquake school closures'. *Disaster Prevention and Management,* Vol. 27 No. 2, pp. 215-227.

[14] Werber, C. (2015). *'Has Ebola led to more teenage pregnancy in West Africa'.* Quartz Africa, 6 November (accessed 21/02/22.

[15] According to UNESCO, some 826 million students - kept out of the classroom by the COVID-19 pandemic - do not have access to a household computer or tablet and 43% (706 million) have no internet at home.

[16] The Commonwealth Secretariat noted the effective suspension of labour laws in India and the UK. *Commonwealth Secretariat submission to the UN Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences.* (2021). The Commonwealth. Available at https://ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/SP/COVID/UNBodies/CommonwealthSecretariat.pdf (accessed 21/02/22). create education rooms for the training of young girls and boys who lack support, who wander into typical delinquencies in order to put an end to these kinds of harmful practices in the face of the population. that they learn the different trades in order to self-support and put a grant structure for NGOs that deserve to work with ECOSOC.

5 GENDER EQUALITY

How should governments implement this SDG and related targets?

Governments must recognize existing barriers that hinder women and girls' enjoyment of human rights. They must create the conditions to facilitate the empowerment of women and girls, ensure space for their participation without discrimination and considering specific vulnerabilities. Budgetary allocations should be made for the implementation of social and economic development programmes targeting women and girls, and ensuring lifelong financial education to reduce gender inequality. States should provide equal opportunities for women in governance and decision-making positions, and assist small-scale women-led projects with capacity building.

Governments must adopt measures to eliminate mulitiple and intersecting forms of discrimination against women and girls, in particular intersectional discriminations linked to race, religion, ethnicity, disability, migration, family status or sexual orientation. The cultural, political, social, economic and historical practices and existing regulation should be adjusted to remove discriminatory practices.

Equal pay opportunities are needed to reduce gender inequality. Governments must take immediate steps to recognise the value of and redistribute unpaid care and domestic work, which remains largely performed by women and girls and is a major obstacle to Gender Equality. States are urged to implement reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, and ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources.

States must eradicate violence against women and girls, and establish special departments for these cases. Governments should build institutional capacity for data collection on gender-based violence (GBV) and invest in social support systems and evidence-based programs that emphasize prevention and trauma-informed care.

Governments must guarantee access to sexual and reproductive freedoms. Women need access to free medical and legal services to protect their rights and entitlements.[1] Overcoming medical and legal disadvantages for poor and marginalized women requires targeted legal empowerment policies and programs. The incidence of children by chance rather than choice should be minimized, and no woman should be obliged to continue with an unintended pregnancy.

States are urged to ensure that criminal justice systems recognise the specific needs of women prisoners and address them in line with the Bangkok Rules, to ensure women prisoners have dignity and that non-custodial measures for women offenders preserve their human rights.

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[1] Many countries do not identify women as eligible beneficiaries for legal aid and representation, eg - China (Pg 28 of UNODC Document); Japan (Pg 39 of UNODC Document; Nepal (Pg 51); Thailand (Pg 62); Benin (Pg 83); Burkina Faso (Pg 93); Chad (Pg 111); Democratic Republic of Congo (Pg 121); Ghana (Pg 132); Mauritius (Pg 161); Brazil (Pg 197); Dominican Republic (Pg 208); Ecuador (Pg218); Haiti (Pg 238); Mexico (Pg 248); Armenia (Pg 268); Belarus (Pg 277); Czech Republic (Pg 299); Lithuania (Pg 331); Slovakia (Pg 361); Canada (Pg 416); Cyprus (Pg 425); Greece (Pg 444); Israel (Pg 453); Italy (Pg 464); Portugal (Pg 487).
https://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/LegalAid/GSLA_-_Country_Profiles.pdf

States need to understand and acknowledge that women and girls experience gender discrimination on diverse ways and face different issues relating to gender inequality. Women and girls must be allowed to participate and be involved in the development of policies addressing gender inequality.

What structural obstacles hinder the implementation of this SDG (at local, national, regional, and/or global levels)?

In the post-pandemic world, the pre-existing justice gaps have widened and there is increased GBV, especially domestic violence. Threats to forcibly displaced women and children have worsened across the globe with borders closing and looming threats of persecution.[2] With less access to education, employment opportunities, and economic resources, women are more vulnerable to exploitation and slavery.[3]

Discriminatory national laws, absence of legislation protecting the rights of women, traditional roles and patriarchal values, are major obstacles to the realisation of SDG 5.[4] Other structural challenges include bureaucracy in governmental institutions, lack of synchronization and limited effectiveness of policy implementation. Specialized services for GBV are often not sensitively handled.[5] Additionally, there is a need for improved access to information, data sharing across institutions and increased awareness of the rights of women and girls.

Women in prisons have risen by 17% according to the Global Prison Trends 2021.[6] Health crises of women in custody present specific challenges like menstrual hygiene,[7] medical care and attention[8] and support during pregnancy and post-natal care. Women in custody are particularly vulnerable coupled with lack of access to information regarding their legal rights while in custody. Efforts should also focus on decarceration and rehabilitation (including access to education).

Women in extreme poverty also face different obstacles. They are perceived as victims, and not as agents of change, preventing them from participating in policies and actions. These women are also prevented from enjoying their fundamental rights, such as the right to health and education - in which gender disparities still exist.[9] Governments must address the root causes of poverty and inequalities. Participatory mechanisms should be used in designing policies to ensure that the voices and interests of the poorest and most vulnerable women are taken into account.

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[2] UNHCR. 2018. "Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2018." United Nations. Available at: https://www.unhcr.org/5d08d7ee7.pdf
[3] https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_575479.pdf
[4] https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CEDAW/Shared%20Documents/1_Global/CEDAW_C_GC_33_7767_E.pdf
[5] https://www1.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/km-qap/undp-gpn-bpps-cb-gender-justice_for_women_amidst_covid-19_En.pdf
[6] https://cdn.penalreform.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Global-prison-trends-2021.pdf , Pg 4 (Facts & Figures)
[7] https://www.penalreform.org/blog/period-poverty-in-prisons-ensuring-menstrual-hygiene-and/
https://www.humanrightsinitiative.org/download/1590647964CHRI%20&%20BOONDH%20Recommendations%20on%20Ensuring%20Menstrual%20Hygiene%20in%20Prisons.pdf
https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Health/sexual-reproductive-health-covid/CSOs/ngo.indp.chc.pri.docx
[8] https://www.unodc.org/documents/hiv-aids/WHO_EURO_UNODC_2009_Womens_health_in_prison_correcting_gender_inequity-EN.pdf
https://www.unodc.org/documents/hiv-aids/WHO_UNODC_2011_Checklist_Womens_health_in_prison.pdf
[9] According to Unicef, 129 million girls are out of school in the world, including 32 million of primary school age, 30 million of lower secondary school age and 67 million of upper secondary school age.

What role can civil society play in achieving this SDG?

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) play a fundamental role in raising awareness and promoting international pressure and accountability towards the recognition of the rights of girls and women. CSOs can promote international frameworks on the rights of women, and are vital in monitoring and assessing the implementation of legislation and policy frameworks to identify gaps in implementation.

CSOs can enhance capacity building through workshops and distribution of information materials. They can contribute to research on issues of equality and equity in access to human rights, and can ensure access to human rights themselves such as by promoting the creation of decent jobs for women in the formal economy, CSOs can also push for transparency at all levels of governance, and the full and effective participation of all genders and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making.

How does this SDG support or connect with other goals in the 2030 Agenda? With specific targets of other international frameworks?

Gender equality is at the core of the SDGs, inextricably linked to SDG 4, since access to early and sustained education often determines girls' and women's empowerment. It directly connects with nutrition and hunger, access to healthcare, adequate housing, decent work and various other SDGs. With severe disparities in employment opportunities and resolution mechanisms, gender equality becomes a distant goal. Governments must address the specific needs of women in vulnerable groups, including women in custody and women in situations of poverty.

Unpaid care work as well as the inequitable distribution of care work is a cause of inequality for women and girls. It is also a major obstacle for women and Girl's education. Access to water and sanitation, energy and other relevant infrastructure is key to reducing unpaid care work which is often an obstacle for women's access to decent work

Governments must recognise and take into account international treaties on gender equality in developing national policies. For example, CEDAW includs specific measures States must take to eliminate discrimination and suppress all forms of trafficking and exploitation of women.

Are there emerging issues related to this SDG that should be noted?

COVID-19 had a disproportionate impact on women and girls, as evidenced by concerning trends in GBV, reallocation of health services including sexual and reproductive health services, job loss, and increased unpaid work.

The pandemic has particularly affected women living in poverty[10] and informal workers. As restrictions led to mass layoffs and global brands canceled orders, the garment industry — 80% women — was particularly affected.[11] The COVID-19 pandemic shook the job security of millions of domestic workers, 76.2% of whom are women,[12] and put them at greater risk of abuse, exploitation, and trafficking.[13] Domestic workers have been found living on the street after dismissal by their employers,[14] left without shelter, income, or the legal right to remain, facing an increased risk of trafficking and exploitation.[15]

Climate-related crises and disasters continue to affect women in poverty, and are inflection points for exploitation and trafficking. Traffickers, aware of the vulnerabilities of women less likely to be financially independent, use these events opportunistically.[16] Female inhabitants of displacement camps or evacuation shelters become targets for traffickers, and may resort to collusion with traffickers themselves in order to earn money or support their families.[17] Despite documented evidence that climate change and disaster impacts are gendered, 80% of Pacific Island countries and territories, where climate-related risks are increasing dramatically, had gender-blind national disaster legislation as of 2016.[18]

[10] https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2020/9/feature-covid-19-economic-impacts-on-women

[11] International Labour Organisation, BetterWork. (2020) *'Gendered impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the garment sector'* (accessed 21/02/22).

[12] International Labour Organisation. (2021) *'Making decent work a reality for domestic workers: Progress and prospects ten years after the adoption of the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No.189)'*. Geneva. p.12. (accessed 21/02/22).

[13] UN General Assembly (2000), Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime. Available at: https://www.refworld.org/docid/4720706c0.html (Accessed: 22 November 2021).

[14] International Labour Organisation (2021). *Making decent work a reality for domestic workers: Progress and prospects ten years after the adoption of the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011*, p.236 (accessed 21/02/22).

[15] Ibid.

[16] *The perfect storm: the impact of disaster severity on internal human trafficking*, A. Gurung, A.D. Clark, International Area Studies Review, 21 (4) (2018), pp. 302-322.

[17] *Are Natural Disasters Linked to Human Trafficking?*, Homes of Hope, 2021, https://www.hopefiji.org/post/are-natural-disasters-linked-to-forced-sex

[18] *Climate change disasters and gender-based violence in the Pacific*, UN Women, 2014, https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2015/1/climate-change-disasters-and-gender-based-violence-in-the-pacific
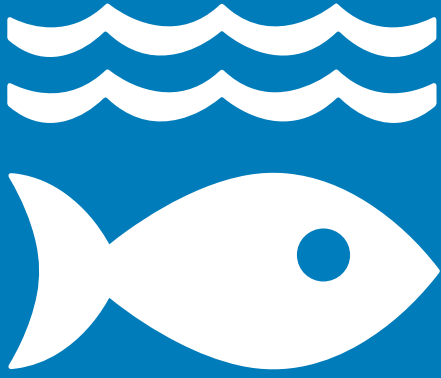
14 LIFE BELOW WATER

LIFE BELOW WATER

How should governments implement this SDG and related targets?

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights failed to set any limits on our use of natural resources to ensure that we remain within the biophysical limits of our environment. We have now been in global ecological overshoot for over fifty years, passed six planetary boundaries, and reached the exponential phase of ecological collapse. The new human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, finally recognised last year, underlines the fundamental underpinning of healthy ecosystems and biodiversity, a core focus of SDG14, to the delivery of the entire 2030 Agenda and wider human rights for all. Already recognised by 156 states in their national constitutions, laws or ratification of relevant treaties, it suffers from inadequate integration into global and regional policies and implementation.

Key to the delivery of SDG14 are the upcoming post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework being negotiated under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the high seas biodiversity treaty being negotiated under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), both of which are expected to be agreed this year. They both include targets on comprehensive spatial planning for biodiversity, climate and sustainable development and expanding protected and conserved areas to protect key areas for biodiversity, which governments must implement alongside and in support of SDG14.

As part of this and in order to reduce negative impacts and stem the tide of climate change, governments should prioritize the implementation of a national marine protection plan to meet the proposed target of protecting or conserving 30 percent of the ocean by 2030, and halt the opening of new deep seabed mining as well as the support for deep-sea mining internationally.

Legal efforts have been made at the international and national levels to address marine pollution. The most important are the 1972 Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping Wastes and Other Matter (the London Convention), the 1996 Protocol to the London Convention (the London Protocol), and the 1978 Protocol to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL). However, compliance with these laws is still poor.

Governments, research institutions and industries also need to work collaboratively in order to support research and innovation. Knowledge of the full extent of plastic pollution and its impacts would provide policymakers, manufacturers, and consumers with scientific evidence needed to spearhead appropriate technological, behavioral, and policy solutions. We must focus environmental policy on precautionary solutions, such as effective regulation and taxation of unsustainable practices.

Additionally, to meet SDG 14 targets, governments must reverse the global expansion of industrialized animal farming and agriculture, which results in runoff (nitrogen pollution) and aquaculture, which is also a major contributor of fish waste, food spills, and disease transmission. There must be strong regulation and enforcement at both national and regional levels to protect against overfishing, which jeopardizes local food security and sustainability. Replacement (non-animal) products and industries should be explored and supported, such

as seaweed farming, plant-based alternatives, and cellular seafood. Harmful subsidies to the fishing sector and the widespread practice of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing must be stemmed.

Lastly, governments must recognize that communities, including Indigenous Peoples, remain critical in their successes. Mechanisms must also be put in place to ensure governments are accountable to their citizens and partners. In order to assure the implementation of the SDGs and international law, governments and international organizations should adopt legal indicators to measure the effectiveness and effectiveness of their policies, plans, strategies and rules. This would be a means to address the gap between theory and practice, to concretize the efforts and to develop efficient tools of implementation and monitoring.

What structural obstacles hinder the implementation of this SDG (at local, national, regional, and/or global levels)?

Structural obstacles include the need to mobilize financial resources, as well as to strengthen the ability of governments to plan, coordinate, and act as a catalyst for protection, conservation and sustainable use of the oceans. The implementation of SDG14 is particularly challenged by the fact it covers distinct areas within and beyond national jurisdiction, which requires the integration of global and national governance frameworks, policies, and monitoring. Within both these jurisdictions, but particularly in the high seas, overlapping, confusing and conflicting governance mechanisms and oversight at both a spatial and resource level are a major obstacle to implementation.

There is an urgent need to scale up funding for and focus on science and advocacy to underpin identification of marine Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) as priorities for marine protected and conserved area gazettement, and to safeguard KBAs through comprehensive, biodiversity-inclusive strategic environmental assessment. Regarding the high seas specifically, there is also a need for capacity building of governments to engage in UNCLOS and ratify/implement the new high seas biodiversity treaty accordingly.

Another challenge is to ensure that local policies contribute to global sustainability, while avoiding the impact of negative economic, social and environmental external factors imposed from outside the country's borders, for the benefit of future generations. Currently, extractive industries and industrial agriculture are prioritized, and there is a lack of accountability and enforcement of environmental policies in such industries. For example, in the petroleum and forest industries, harmful subsidies have a negative impact on coastal and marine ecosystems. The pollution of coastal waters from these industries remains a major challenge hindering the implementation of SDG 14.

What role can civil society play in achieving this SDG?

Civil society can play an active role in achieving this SDG through education and outreach, informing international processes, frameworks, and implementation, and supporting corporate reform. There must be capacity-sharing activities for local people so that they understand and become part of the decision-making processes taken at higher levels.

Civil society is the right arm of governments, not only in the development process, but also in seeking to mobilize idle resources and energies, and to involve the various segments of society in this process. This may include promoting multi-stakeholder collaboration to promote resilience in coastal communities, as well as taking part in monitoring, reporting, assessing, capacity building and advocating for solutions to human activities impacting ocean and coastal ecosystems.

How does this SDG support or connect with other goals in the 2030 Agenda? With specific targets of other international frameworks?

This SDG links closely with SDG1, SDG 2, SDG 3, SDG 6, SDG 8, and SDG 12. Vitally, it is also connected with SDG 13, with around 25% of all CO_2 emissions being absorbed by the ocean, making it one of the world's largest 'carbon sinks', and SDG 15 with new targets to be agreed under the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.

SDG 15 is also linked to international frameworks including the work of the One Health High Level Expert Panel and the new Quadripartite; as well as 2022 processes including UNFCCC COP27, the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework being negotiated under the CBD, and the Food Systems Summit, among others. UNCLOS, and its current negotiations on a treaty for biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction, due to be concluded this year, is also particularly relevant.

Are there emerging issues related to this SDG that should be noted?

Disrespect for the law is a major emerging issue related to SDG 14. Looting of ecological wealth undermines the governance of ecological systems that provide sustainable prosperity and ecosystem resilience to stress. Ecological destruction in areas beyond national jurisdiction endangers local ecosystems and the global macrosystem that is cooled by the ocean's containment of carbon and other GHGs. Additionally, safeguards and transparency must be used to address any colonial-style aggression where states work to build climate fortresses for their elite, undermining the rule of law that should protect the health of ocean and coastal ecosystems.

15 LIFE ON LAND
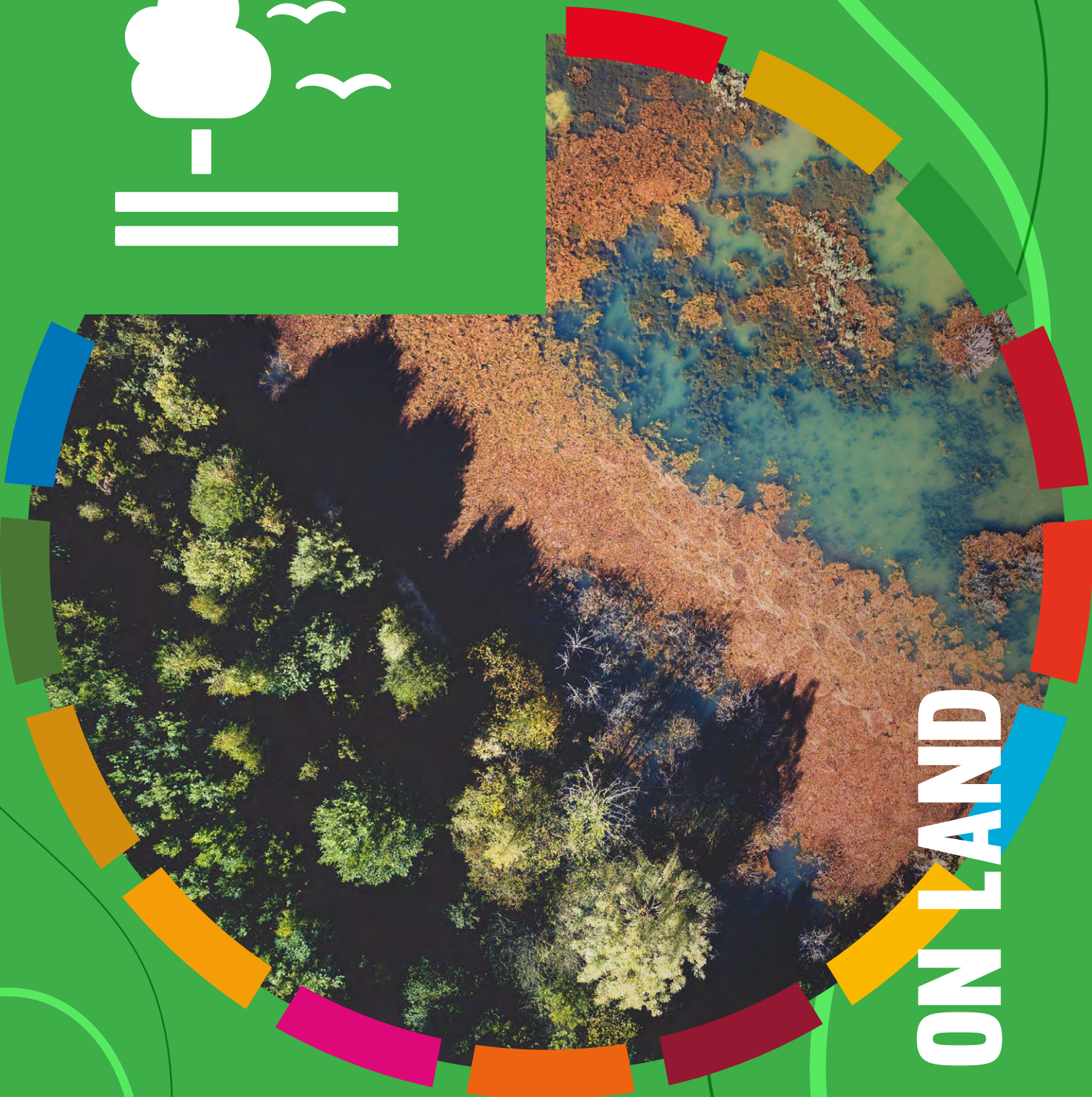
LIFE ON LAND

How should governments implement this SDG and related targets?

Humanity is totally dependent upon the natural world. It supplies us with every oxygen-laden breath we take and every mouthful of food we eat. Scientists have identified nine boundaries that we must live within to maintain a stable state on Earth; we have now exceeded five of them. We have failed to meet a single biodiversity target, agreed to over a decade ago, to stem the destruction of wildlife and life-sustaining ecosystems. We are facing a planetary emergency of unprecedented urgency, magnitude and scope; and everything possible must now be done to address this crisis as a first order challenge and priority.

There is an urgent need to implement SDG15 through policies, on-the-ground action, effective enforcement systems and enhanced resource mobilization to prevent further environmental deterioration, conserve and protect biodiversity, reduce the risk of disasters and pandemics, and work towards restoration of past damages. This needs a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach in all countries.

Our governments must agree to an ambitious and transformational post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework due to be signed off under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) this year, and to halt and reverse biodiversity loss for a nature-positive world by 2030. This includes, but is not limited to, expanding protected and conserved areas to cover at least 30% of the planet by 2030, focusing on key areas for biodiversity, recognising the rights and roles of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in conserving and benefiting from biodiversity, reducing nutrient loss by half and pesticide use by two thirds, and supporting the highest levels of funding proposed to ensure delivery of the targets.

We call on all governments to recognize that our one earth system is a common heritage of humanity that must be protected and to support the recommendations included in the Secretary-General's Common Agenda Report to revitalize the trusteeship council and give voice to the interests of future generations.

Human activity has now altered almost 75 percent of the Earth's surface. Therefore it is imperative that collectively we effectively and equitably implement the goals of the Global Strategy for the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration; take the actions needed to maintain ecosystem integrity; and stem the loss of ground cover.

Industrialized agriculture and factory farming are two of the main causes of deforestation, land degradation, climate change, pollution of the natural environment, and biodiversity loss. It is thus essential that humanity transition as rapidly as possible to ecologically-friendly and regenerative agricultural practices, ensuring equitable access to nutritious food and supporting efforts to transition to more healthy and sustainable plant-based diets, and that policies are instituted to make a just transition and to support this at all levels of government.

What structural obstacles hinder the implementation of this SDG (at local, national, regional, and/or global levels)?

Many structural obstacles hinder the achievement of SDG 15 and must be addressed through:

1. The fulfillment of human rights, including the Right to Development, Right to an Adequate Standard of Living, right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, and the recognition of the obligation to ensure the welfare of animals and the integrity of the whole of nature.

2. The prioritization of a just One Health approach, which addresses the interconnected health and well-being of humans, other animals, and the environment.

3. Integrated, multi-sectoral, biodiversity-inclusive spatial planning and management processes which ensure sustainable development and fully address the negative environmental impacts of extractive industries, industrial agriculture, and infrastructure development;

4. The redirection, reform or elimination of all incentives and subsidies harmful to biodiversity and the integration of biodiversity values and safeguards into policies, regulations and development processes.

5. Ensuring government transparency and accountability in the implementation of SDG15;

6. Engendering cooperation at the local, regional and global scale, including through the adoption of a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach;

7. Ensuring those SDG15 targets based on the Aichi Targets which expired in 2020 are updated to reflect and support implementation of the upcoming post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework targets.

To this end, civil society has called repeatedly through the UNEA 5.2 and UNEP+50 processes for the development of a Global Framework for strengthening national and international environmental legislation and law with an integrated set of goals, targets, indicators, and review mechanisms in order to take advantage of the many benefits that will come from pursuing a holistic approach to dealing with our interdependent global challenges.

This would (1) provide the framework for governments to shift away from the prevailing economic system which is dependent on ever-increasing GDP growth and unsustainable consumption and production to create nature-positive economies; (2) encourage the development of local and national policies and strategies to support the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements and conventions, including biodiversity targets agreed through the CBD and in accordance with the CITES convention on wildlife trade; and (3) provide States with a mandate to hold extractive and polluting industries, including transnational corporations and large infrastructure projects, accountable for negative impacts.

With regards to wildlife trade, governments and IGOs must work to close those legal trades in wildlife – which may include trophy hunting, wildlife farming, and auctions of confiscated stockpiles – which make illegal trade impossible to enforce. Wildlife trade is a threat not only to biodiversity, but also increases the risk of future zoonotic disease outbreaks and transmission by bringing humans into close contact with animals at all stages along the supply chain. Increasing efforts need to be undertaken to address and eliminate illegal logging and deforestation, along with the illegal hunting and killing of protected and threatened species. A major effort will also have to be made to reverse the loss of insect populations and pollinator species.

The precautionary principle is critical. Subsidies supporting activities and practices with detrimental social, environmental or animal welfare impacts must be repealed and/or repurposed to support humane and sustainable practices, including food system transformation, subsidy reforms, and dietary change. A resolution tasking UNEP to support countries in fulfilling the commitments made on subsidy policies would support states to identify and repeal and/or repurpose subsidies supporting activities and practices with detrimental social, environmental or animal welfare impacts with those supporting humane and sustainable practices, including food system transformation, subsidy reforms, nature conservation, and dietary change.

What role can civil society play in achieving this SDG?

Given the many urgent challenges facing humanity it is essential that governments at all levels make a much more determined effort to support and partner with civil society organizations both to share information and to participate and contribute fully in whole-of-society implementation.

Civil society and its institutions, such as libraries and museums, can help empower people to claim their environmental rights, such as access to information, opportunities to participate in decision-making, and to empower them to seek justice when these are not met.

Civil society is already involved in so many aspects of this work – including education and awareness raising, participation, research, analysis, practical projects, the development of best practice, and advocacy. Civil society has also provided a primary means for enabling public education, awareness and participation especially in regards to and addressing threats including species extinction, loss of biodiversity and ecosystems, and inequitable land distribution, desertification, and drought.

With more support, financially and otherwise, civil society can scale up efforts to collect, collate and transfer knowledge, participate actively in capacity building activities, scale up and implement transformative projects, and provide a platform for raising the voices of marginalised groups.

National campaigns need to be developed and undertaken to support action on achieving UN Decades of Action and a global goal of being nature-positive by 2030; and funding needs to be provided to support civil society initiatives that will help in achieving legislative goals and

campaigns. Local to global campaigns will need to be carried out to ensure awareness and implementation of the ambitious new targets to protect, conserve, restore, and leave at least half for nature, and while also investing fully in ecosystem restoration.

How does this SDG support or connect with other goals in the 2030 Agenda? With specific targets of other international frameworks?

Several of the other SDGs and targets—particularly SDGs 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 16 —support or are deeply inter-connected with SDG15.

The intimate connection between sustainable development challenges has been recognised in more recent years in the One Health approach and framework, which acknowledges the interconnected health of humans, domesticated and wild nonhuman animals, and the environment through just and equitable means.

Fulfilment of the commitments made in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and at the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples (2014) can enable effective participation of Indigenous Peoples in the protection and restoration of sustainable ecosystems.

Full ratification and implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Geneva Conventions, ILO Conventions, and the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea and its upcoming treaty concerning biodiversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction are also essential to achieve SDG15, as well as linkages to the other biodiversity-related conventions and Rio Conventions (in particular the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and SDG 13).

Are there emerging issues related to this SDG that should be noted?

The COVID-19 pandemic and the climate emergency have brought to reality the importance of social and ecological interventions focused on the interconnected rights, health, and wellbeing of vulnerable humans, other animals, and the environment. The food-health-biodiversity nexus is critical to the fight against Covid-19; and the same is true with efforts to address climate change, the need for land degradation neutrality, biodiversity loss, disruption of natural water cycles, and most other environmental challenges.

Analysis of conservation impacts should be reviewed with the same science-based methodologies as the UNFCCC, respecting scientific data, investigative findings, reports, and analysis of Indigenous Peoples.

17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

How should governments implement this SDG and related targets?

The NGO Major Group urges governments to stand with international solidarity and global cooperation for the accomplishment of the Sustainable Development Goals. We are in the exponential phase of global, social and ecological collapse with the world's financial capital still being used in ways which accelerate that collapse. To achieve SDG 17, governments, the private sector, and organized civil society must strengthen a multisectoral active participation in interdisciplinary dialogues, collaborations, and partnerships, particularly between the most affected and vulnerable groups and communities. Governments must cooperate and work closely with others because only together humanity can reach farther, create joint actions, and implement best practices to achieve the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development.

After seven years, the Technology Facilitation Mechanism has not achieved the expected working condition laid out in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. Therefore it is crucial for governmental, private, and civil society institutions to demand the UN to conclude this aspect of the agreed declaration and support a platform where all stakeholders can share information and best practices widely.

Commitments to develop National Human Rights Institutions should be fulfilled within the means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda, including the Paris Accord on Climate Change, the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction, and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. Furthermore, the NGO MG encourages the implementation of a Green Impact Fund for Technology (GIFT) that rewards emission reductions achieved in the Global South with patented green technology, which can be a proactive interpretation of the common but differentiated principle (CBDR).

What structural obstacles hinder the implementation of this SDG (at local, national, regional, and/or global levels)?

Most countries are still adhering to the unsustainable model of unaccountable economics. Political coherence to sustainable development is mostly still a horizon, which makes SDG 17 an enormous challenge considering the turn to inefficient political choices in many countries filled by undemocratic populism within democratic regimes with frail institutions. Trade tensions and political instability continue to challenge effective cooperation towards common goals, while unequal access to the Internet and digital technologies prevent many from participating in development processes and opportunities. Moreover, the emergence of armed conflicts neutralizes cooperation between nations to achieve the SDGs. As a result, States no longer have common objectives for seeking collaboration with other countries.

The low visibility of, for example, VNRs or VLRs and the lack of participation of more and diverse actors from civil society reflects the opaque processes in government reports. Public budget reductions for projects related to the 2030 Agenda, and highly insufficient investment from the private sector dampens the perspective for the implementation of the SDGs on a broader scale. The lack of financial resources at the disposal of civil society organizations makes it difficult to carry out and promote impact initiatives.

What role can civil society play in achieving this SDG?

Civil society has been a protagonist of SDG implementation, whether as a watchdog or an project implementer. Notwithstanding, civil society has had limited and insufficient access to financial resources to perform its role. Besides all the praises from high dignitaries, there has been no mechanism created to guarantee the financial sustainability of CSOs committed to the realization of the 2030 Agenda, whereas there is substantial discussion about alleviating risks for private capital, compromising public resources that could be put to a better, more focused use.

Moreover, civil society works continuously with multiple stakeholders and rights bearers to create greater collaborations for sustainable solutions, including resource mobilization and capacity development to continue the work already being done, but leveraging it to be impactful at all levels.

Civil society has proven to be the main partner for the implementation of sustainable development programs. Specifically, working with grassroots and national non-governmental organizations can help to amplify funds allocated from the Official Development Assistance (ODA) commitments of developed countries. This is why decentralization of aid is fundamental to eventually deliver better development solutions to the needs of social and environmental equilibrium: from capacity building to transfer of technologies.

How does this SDG support or connect with other goals in the 2030 Agenda? With specific targets of other international frameworks?

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) define global sustainable development priorities and aspirations for 2030 and beyond, seeking to mobilize global efforts around a common set of goals and targets. SDG 17 has a major role in achieving the rest of the SDGs and is connected in the accomplishment of the 5 Ps (People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace, and Partnerships). Without partnerships, without consolidation, without local, national, regional, and other stakeholders, we cannot achieve the SDGs upstream or downstream.

The 17 Goals are interconnected, yet SDG 17 in particular is key for the others to be accomplished. The existence of partnerships among all the stakeholders at all levels is fundamental for the implementation and achievement of the 2030 Agenda. In collaboration with others (no matter how big or small they are) it becomes easier to overcome any challenges that may arise, to successfully accomplish the goals and to leave no one behind. Finally, Partnerships are an important tool for establishing international development standards and approaches that are human rights based, diversity conscious, environmentally respectful and sustainable.

Are there emerging issues related to this SDG that should be noted?

We recognize that bridging silos, providing accessibility to information, and involving various stakeholders in meaningful participation in drafting regulations, contributes to greater ownership of the environment from the part of local communities, as well as increased local governance. Heritage projects which involve both the public administration, as well as private entities, have a greater chance to respond efficiently to challenges and find creative means for achieving sustainable development due to that inter-sectoral dialogue and actions are crucial for successful implementation of protecting heritage and achieving the SDGs.

The interplay between human, animal, and environmental health and welfare should be noted as one of the important emerging issues by all stakeholders so that we can prevent and prepare for future pandemics and other existential threats (like antimicrobial resistance) through cooperation and partnerships.

Finally, in order to improve the financing of SDGs, and specifically to contribute to target 17.1, illicit financial flows and the spread of tax havens need to be countered globally, in order to address their root-causes, through an international tax convention under the auspices of the United Nations.

Interlinkages and Coherence

The integrated, indivisible and interlinked nature of the SDGs is a reflection of the interconnectedness of all beings on our planet and with the planet itself. Pre-pandemic systems and principles tend to be geared more toward individualism, disintegration, and separation, making building "back" better a misinformed starting point for progress on goals for true sustainable development.

COVID-19 revealed the fundamental reality, and complexity, of our interdependency. We can no longer reconcile our interlinkages under the predominantly separation-based paradigm that existed prior to the global lockdown. Just as a soil culture determines the robustness of a plant, culture is the "soil" in which people integrate, unite and connect. In order to create a better world in which we can all thrive, additional resources and focus, including data-based assessment, must center around proactive development of cultural coherence. The recognition last year of the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment in HRC resolution 48/13, following a resounding vote in favour by the UN Human Rights Council on 8 October 2021, underlines the fundamental underpinning of healthy ecosystems and biodiversity, the focus of SDGs 14 and 15, to the delivery of the entire 2030 Agenda and wider human rights for all.

In order to achieve cross-sectoral, integrated action and build forward better, governments must support transversal policies at the local level and involve non-state actors into their decision making and actions. Non-state actors that have achieved local or regional correlated targets for SDG indicators, can serve as models for success. Community-led results with multiple SDG goals should be prioritized over single SDG political or financial gain. Governments must work to design more effective projects with wider reach that incorporate data and information into continuous project improvements and utilize innovative approaches. In this regard, it is necessary to create collaborative platforms that collect and present good practices implemented at the local level.

New methods of assessing the economy, including the Social and Solidarity Economy are detailed in the Secretary-General's report to the Commission for Social Development at its 59th session. Basing an economy on social values and solidarity principles aimed at finding a new balance between economic efficiency and social and environmental resilience can remedy corruption that aggregates wealth and vaccines at the terminus of illicit ecological and financial flows.. Governments endorsing the Stockholm Declaration are uniting with others aspiring to voluntarily reduce the scale of human enterprise to levels within the biophysical limits of our planet.

There is increasing likelihood that our global growth-based economy will cause ecological collapse, in turn impacting the ability to make financial profit. It is therefore critical that all governments choose a route to sustainability which prioritizes minimal consumption of non-essential eco-costly goods and services and voluntarily reducing our population size.

A key obstacle impeding progress in many SDGs is our globalized innovation system. Innovators are reliant on twenty year product patents, enabling them to reap markups or licensing fees

from early users, neglect the needs of lower income individuals by pricing innovations out of their reach. Proposed are sector-specific international impact funds that encourage innovators to forgo monopoly markups in exchange for rewards based on social benefit.

The SDGs partially help obviate the silos of different processes, but too often they are treated as separate silos themselves. In addition, civil society is frequently not taken into consideration in the planning, implementation or review of projects intended to progress the SDGs. Supporting the whole of the Agenda and all SDGs is key.

The current capitalist growth model inhibits the achievement of SDGs by increasing inequality, poverty and related effects on individuals and societies, and accelerates climate change, ecosystem destruction, and exploitation of animals and nature. Taking a holistic, One Health approach in pandemic recovery can have myriad benefits, including mitigating climate change, reducing environmental degradation and pollution, halting biodiversity loss, while simultaneously supporting human and animal health and welfare. The Historical prejudice toward ignoring intangibles such as values and culture lead to the belief that "realistic" metrics do not include concepts like cultural accountability and values development. Creating a world in which everyone benefits requires dedicated and proactive promotion of intangibles such as values, consciousness and culture, that have been grossly underutilized.

Opportunities for civil society to participate in and contribute to the development of solutions and responses to global issues encourages a holistic approach to the implementation of SDGs. The desire to make reparation for ecological injustice might well motivate privately funded philanthropy between affluent societies and those who are most impacted by the ecological damage which has resulted from extractive economies.

Because the Social and Solidarity Economy is an empowered model, civil society has greater control over key areas of decision making in the states, regions and bodies that have adopted it. Civil society recognizes the need to not only make pre-pandemic systems better, but also to establish a new paradigmatic center that more accurately represents the reality of our interdependence and for the power of cooperation and common vision in developing forward together.

It is essential we work to achieve SDGs as integrated rather than separate challenges. Metrics that demonstrate authentic alignment could help us transcend the dynamic tension between the right to sovereignty and the reality that we live on an integrated, indivisible and interlinked planet. Culture can be thought of as the white space behind and in between the 17 SDG color blocks. Cultural accountability provides data-based means to assess underlying conditions that support or do not support the achievement of SDGs. Just as cultures in laboratories provide the conditions for some things to grow and not others, local, regional, national and global cultures create the conditions for achieving the SDGs.

Lack of funding resulting from Covid-19 will likely shrink civic space, and/or make it more commercially driven. The concept of 'Supplementary Income for All' is founded in growth economics, but it may offer the opposite, actually providing a vehicle for a Universal Basic Income. Ideas being explored may help us move to a global economy that endorses goods and services to help humanity reduce impact at a sufficiently rapid rate to mitigate ecological collapse. Voluntary reduction in population size via reproductive health services and dignity in dying can be extremely valuable but are often illegal in many countries.

Siloed approaches to climate change, food systems, biodiversity and economic improvement threaten the holistic implementation of the SDGs. In particular, many of those SDG targets expiring in 2020 are linked to the previous Aichi Targets on biodiversity and it will be critical to ensure the SDGs reflect and support implementation of the new targets due to be signed off this year under both the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework being negotiated under the Convention on Biological Diversity and the high seas biodiversity treaty being negotiated under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. Key to both these global agreements are cross-cutting targets such as comprehensive spatial planning across land and sea for biodiversity, climate and sustainable development, and expanding protected and conserved areas to protect key areas for biodiversity.

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