



Discussion Paper

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Addressing Climate Change

Independent Commission on Multilateralism

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Introduction

2015 was a watershed year for the United Nations. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change were adopted with an unprecedented sense of ownership by member states, and both are universally applicable. The Third International Conference on Financing for Development and the Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction also form part of the new policy framework.

In 2016, the UN has the opportunity and the challenge to operate under the most comprehensive sustainable development agenda in its history. The open and inclusive nature of the process that led to the adoption of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change has renewed the international community's faith in multilateralism. However, to implement these outcomes, the UN needs to change its working methods and update its structures from 1945.

I. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

On September 25, 2015, at the UN Sustainable Development Summit, 193 governments took the historic step of adopting the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The preamble of the 2030 Agenda clearly defines its purpose: “a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity” that also “seeks to strengthen universal peace in larger freedom.”

The 2030 Agenda breaks manifold paradigms. First, the three fundamental pillars of development—economic, social, and environmental—are integrated. Second, it is universally applicable; all countries, from north and south, signed up to implement it. Third, it includes issues that had remained outside the scope of development, particularly peace and climate change.

The SDGs build on the success of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). However, their design is entirely different. As opposed to the MDGs, the SDGs were painstakingly negotiated in a period of over two years during which 193 member states participated and more than 8 million people from all corners of the world engaged.¹ The amount of input received confirms that the new agenda shares the aspirations of “we the peoples of the United Nations.” As the Declaration of the 2030 Agenda conveys, it is “a charter for people and planet in the twenty-first century.”²

The international community also recognized that current data systems lack the capacity to measure progress in real time. Outdated data systems make “invisible” those who are most vulnerable.³ The 2030 Agenda calls to “increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data.”⁴

¹ Jimena Leiva Roesch, “How Can You Have Development Without Peace? Interview with Nikhil Seth,” *The Global Observatory*, September 23, 2015, available at <http://theglobalobservatory.org/2015/09/how-can-you-have-development-without-peace-interview-with-nikhil-seth/>.

² UN General Assembly Resolution 70/1 (October 21, 2015), UN Doc. A/RES/70/1.

³ Independent Expert Advisory Group on a Data Revolution for Sustainable Development, “A World that Counts,” November 2014, available at www.undatarevolution.org/report/.

⁴ UN General Assembly Resolution 70/1.

However, experts convey that funding this “data revolution” is costly and requires investments, as, simply put, “good data, used well is not cheap.”⁵ The process to agree on a set of global indicators is underway.

An Integrated Agenda: Moving Beyond the Silos Approach

The three central pillars of the United Nations—peace and security, human rights, and development—are given new operational meaning in the 2030 Agenda. The preamble highlights five essential elements that frame and reinforce the universal, integrated, and transformative nature of a sustainable development agenda: **People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace, and Partnership.**

The seventeen goals and 169 corresponding targets integrate economic, social, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. They recognize interrelationships between pressing concerns such as rising inequality (SDG 10), violent deaths (SDG 16), and lack of affordable housing and basic services (SDG 11). The following graph highlights the integrated nature of the 2030 Agenda. If, for example, a member state implements SDG 5 on “gender equality and empower[ment] of women and girls,” it would also address targets related to poverty eradication, health, inequality, education, and peaceful and inclusive societies. Thus, the new SDG framework is a network in which all goals are interconnected.

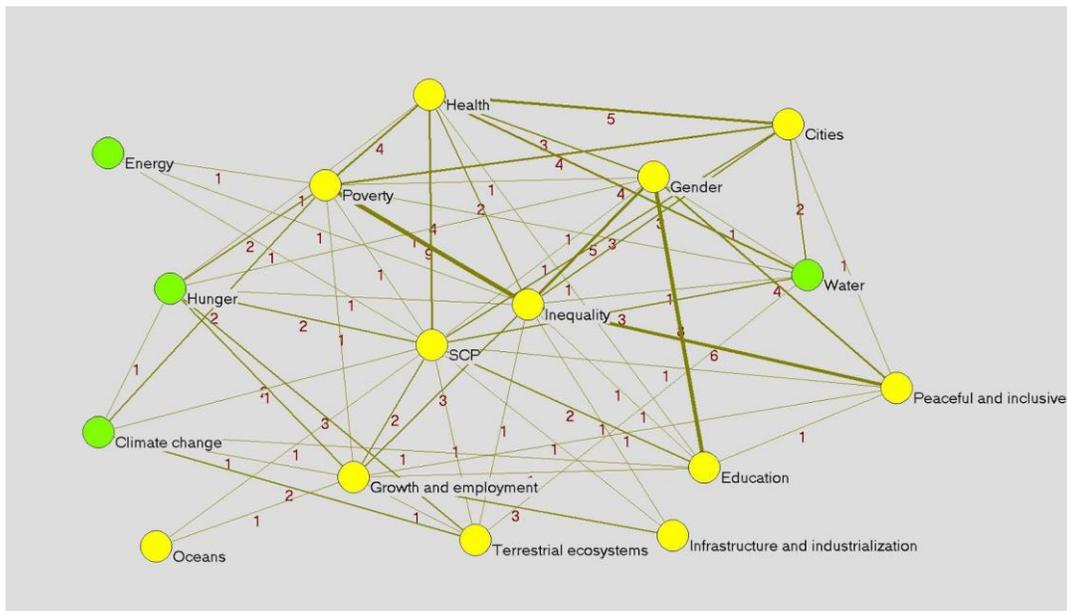


Figure 1. Explicit links among SDG areas made by targets⁶

⁵ Claire Melamed and Grant Cameron, “Funding the Data Revolution,” January 20, 2015, Data Revolution Group, available at www.undatarevolution.org/2015/01/20/funding-data-revolution/.

⁶ David Le Blanc, “Towards Integration at Last? The Sustainable Development Goals as a Network of Targets,” Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Working Paper No. 141, March 2015, available at www.un.org/esa/desa/papers/2015/wp141_2015.pdf.

The 2030 Agenda highlights that “eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty is the greatest global challenge.” Progress has been made in recent decades to reduce extreme poverty. However, “the number of people living in poverty remains unacceptably high.”⁷ In 1990, 1.95 billion people lived on less than \$1.90 per day and in 2012, 896 million continue living below the poverty line. Progress was also uneven, and poverty did not decline in all regions or all countries. Without significant changes in policy direction at multiple levels to reduce human pressure on the Earth’s ecosystems, a quest to “end poverty in all its forms” is destined to get more difficult to achieve. Hunger and poverty are both causes and effects of global environmental degradation and resource scarcity. Land degradation, freshwater availability, and population density are important factors that many scholars argue influence the risk of conflict.⁸ The integrated approach created by the SDGs is more likely to reduce poverty.

The adverse social impact of economic downturns and shocks and extreme inequality has been amply demonstrated, most recently by the world economic crisis, the food and energy crisis, and the associated social and political crises that erupted in many parts of the world. Food insecurity looms particularly large as an international concern—one that is likely to be exacerbated by the combination of continued strong population growth in some food-deficit regions, changing diets and the demands they place on food supplies, and climate change with associated changes in precipitation patterns, extreme weather events, temperature extremes, and pandemics. The Ebola epidemic is an example of how a “health issue” had rippling impacts throughout society and confirms the value of having an integrated framework.

Unsustainable production methods, combined with climate change, are likely to worsen the erosion and degradation of soil as well as water scarcity, undermining the capacity of many areas to produce food. Currently, more than 60 percent of ecosystems and their services are degraded, overexploited, or already lost, while the world population is expected to increase to a projected 9.5 billion people by 2050.⁹ Moreover, the 2030 Agenda includes the main drivers that contribute to or catalyze conflict.

Financing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The World Bank Group announced that in order to achieve the 2030 Agenda, “financing needs to move from ‘billions’ in official development assistance to ‘trillions’ in development investments of

⁷ World Bank, Poverty Overview, October 15, 2015, available at: <http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/poverty/overview>

⁸ Clionadh Raleigh and Henrik Urdal, “Climate Change, Environmental Degradation and Armed Conflict,” *Political Geography* 26, no. 6 (2007).

⁹ United Nations Technical Support Team, *Compendium of Issue Briefs Prepared by the United Nations Inter-Agency Technical Support Team for the United Nations General Assembly Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals*, 2014, available at <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=400&nr=1554&menu=35>.

all kinds.”¹⁰ Public and private financing is needed to succeed. Persuading the private sector to join and operate domestically and internationally under the principles of the 2030 Agenda is a fundamental task. Already, a growing number of companies have signed up to the UN Global Compact and other initiatives that encourage principles of responsible investment and alignment with the SDGs.¹¹ Nonetheless, the share of investments subject to the above considerations is small compared to global capital markets.

The stand-alone goal on means of implementation (SDG 17) is different than all the others; it contains five subsections that address systemic issues. This goal also includes targets that are not under the sole purview of national governments but need to be addressed in a multilateral setting, such as promoting a “rule-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system.”

SDG 17 is also the bridge that connects the 2030 Agenda with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA). Both outcomes are designed to complement each other. The Addis Agenda established the Financing for Development Forum, the Technology Facilitation Mechanism, and the Global Infrastructure Forum. These new arrangements will support developing countries in building the capacity to implement the 2030 Agenda.

The distribution of resources in the UN budget highlights the lack of balance between its three founding pillars: peace and security, human rights, and development. Currently, the UN spends \$8.3 billion on fourteen peacekeeping operations every year and approximately \$2.7 billion on all the rest of its activities. This is the total of assessed contributions per year. Clearly, the UN has prioritized peace and security. At the same time, UN agencies are begging for resources to implement their core mandates.

The UN development system, international financial institutions (IFIs), and World Bank have the daunting challenge to mobilize resources to support countries in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

The Link Between Sustainable Development and Peace

The link between peace and security and development has long been recognized. In its 1987 report, *Our Common Future*, the Brundtland Commission highlighted that environmental stress can be a driver and a result of political tensions and conflict, noting that it is rarely the only driver of conflict.¹²

¹⁰ The World Bank, “Financing the Post-2015 Development Agenda,” 2015, available at www.worldbank.org/mdgs/post2015.html.

¹¹ The Global Commission on Business and Sustainable Development was launched in Davos, Switzerland in January 2016 (see www.unilever.com/news/news-and-features/2016/New-global-commission-puts-business-at-heart-of-sustainable-development.html).

¹² United Nations, *Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development*, UN Doc. A/42/427, August 4, 1987.

In 1992, heads of state agreed on Principle 25 of the twenty-seven Rio Principles, which states that “peace, development and environmental protection are interdependent and indivisible.”¹³

Subsequently, in the Millennium Declaration, member states committed to eliminating conflict and fostering peace and security.¹⁴ Yet peace and security was not part of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). This was a significant step backwards, as violence and fragility are seen as the largest obstacle to achieving the MDGs.¹⁵ Data from 2013 showed that twenty conflict-affected states had not met one or more targets under the MDGs.¹⁶ In the 2005 World Summit, heads of states again confirmed the link between peace and security, development, and human rights in the summit’s Outcome Document.¹⁷ Although this link has been recognized at the highest levels, peace and security remained out of the scope of the MDGs. Moreover, in the MDG “era,” peace and security was considered necessary only in the context of countries in conflict or post-conflict situations.

The concept of “peace” in the 2030 Agenda is universal; it does not circumscribe a specific category of countries. The preamble of the 2030 Agenda highlights this shift: “We are determined to foster peaceful, just and inclusive societies which are free from fear and violence. There can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development.”

The 2030 Agenda also includes a stand-alone goal on “peaceful and inclusive societies, access to justice for all and effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels” (SDG 16), with a number of corresponding targets.¹⁸ SDG 16 highlights that development, peace, security, and human rights are mutually reinforcing.¹⁹ It sheds light on the essential conditions for enhancing peace. Beyond this dedicated goal, the content of the SDGs and their focus on systemic issues help to address drivers of violence and, ultimately, conflict (see Annex I).

Several of the SDGs include targets that have a direct impact on security, such as tackling income inequality, achieving gender equality, and making cities safe. Other targets aim to foster a stable economic and ecological environment with fair distribution of resources.

¹³ United Nations, *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development*, UN Doc. 151/26, August 12, 1992, Principle 25.

¹⁴ UN General Assembly Resolution 55/L.2 (September 8, 2000), UN Doc. A/RES/55/L.2.

¹⁵ UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, “Peace and Security,” 2012, available at www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/untaskteam_undf/thinkpieces/14_peace_and_security.pdf.

¹⁶ World Bank, “Fragile and Conflict-Affected States: Signs of Progress to the Millennium Development Goals,” 2013, available at www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2013/05/02/fragile-and-conflict-affected-states-signs-of-progress-to-the-millennium-development-goals.

¹⁷ UN General Assembly Resolution 60/1 (October 24, 2005), UN Doc. A/RES/60/1.

¹⁸ The full title of the proposed Goal 16 is “Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.”

¹⁹ See UN General Assembly Resolution 60/1 (October 24, 2005), UN Doc. A/RES/60/1; and UN General Assembly Resolution 67/1 (November 30, 2012), UN Doc. A/RES/67/1.

II. Addressing Climate Change

Evidence abounds that human activity is causing irreparable damage to the planet's ability to sustain life and humanity as we know it. There is more carbon dioxide in the atmosphere now than in any other period of recorded history,²⁰ and 2015 is the hottest year on record.²¹

The world's largest scientific society unequivocally determined that "pushing global temperatures past certain thresholds could trigger abrupt, unpredictable and potentially irreversible changes that have massively disruptive and large scale impacts."²² The climate threshold agreed by scientists and member states is an increase in global average temperature of less than 1.5–2°C above pre-industrial levels.²³ The longer it takes emissions to peak, the more difficult it will be to hold the temperature increase below this level.

Already, the climate has warmed 1.02°C since the Industrial Revolution.²⁴ If global temperatures rises 2 or 3 degrees above average temperature, then we would be living in a "climate casino." We would not know what to expect, because it would be outside the range of observations made over the past 100,000 years.²⁵ Paradoxically, the countries that have contributed the least to climate change will be most affected, among them the small island and low-lying developing states and many developing countries across all regions.

The Paris Agreement

The twenty-first Climate Change Conference (COP21), under the aegis of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), was held in Paris from November 30 to December 11, 2015. The Conference took place two weeks after the terrorist attacks in Paris. Despite security concerns, world leaders were undeterred and did not postpone COP21. The Climate Change Conference gained even more momentum, as it was held under the aegis of peace. French President François Hollande stated that "*ce qui est en cause, c'est la paix*" ("what's at stake here is peace").²⁶

The Paris Agreement is the result of years of work under the UNFCCC. It builds on the experience of the Kyoto Protocol, although its design is vastly different: it is based on a "bottom-up" approach.

²⁰ National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), "NASA Scientists React to 400 ppm Carbon Milestone," n.d., available at <http://climate.nasa.gov/400ppmquotes/>.

²¹ World Meteorological Organization, "2015 Likely to Be Warmest on Record, 2011–2015 Warmest Five Year Period," November 25, 2015, available at www.wmo.int/media/content/wmo-2015-likely-be-warmest-record-2011-2015-warmest-five-year-period.

²² Mario Molina et. al., "What We Know: The Reality, Risks, and Response to Climate Change," AAAS Climate Science Panel, American Association for the Advancement of Science, 2014, pp. 15–16.

²³ Negotiations on climate change take place under the aegis of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). See Decision FCCC/CP/2010/7/add.1, March 15, 2011.

²⁴ UK Meteorology Office, "Global Temperatures Set to Reach 1°C Marker for First Time," November 9, 2015, available at www.metoffice.gov.uk/news/release/archive/2015/one-degree.

²⁵ William D. Nordhaus, "Economic Growth and Climate: The Carbon Dioxide Problem," *The American Economic Review* 67, no. 1 (February 1977), available at www.econ.yale.edu/~nordhaus/homepage/carbondioxideproblem.pdf.

²⁶ Elisabeth Gilmore, "'What's at Stake Here Is Peace': Climate and Conflict at Paris Talks," *The Global Observatory*, December 11, 2015, available at <http://theglobalobservatory.org/2015/12/cop21-climate-paris-syria-ipcc/>.

Each country sets its own emission reduction target through “Intended Nationally Determined Contributions” (INDC) to reduce greenhouse gas emissions beyond 2020. By the end of the conference, 186 countries had presented their pledge.²⁷ Also, the Paris Agreement is “universally applicable,” a key difference from the Kyoto Protocol.

The Paris Agreement contains a number of key achievements and shortcomings. Differentiating between developed and developing countries in a universal agreement was a herculean challenge. The agreement contains differentiation caveats across the entire outcome and offers developing countries needed space, flexibility, and time to meet other urgent development priorities. To achieve the overall purpose of the Agreement, the responsibility to cut emissions falls on the shoulders of all countries.

Another difficult task was to keep ambition high in the Paris Agreement. Currently, the aggregate sum of greenhouse emissions from the 186 national pledges would result in an average global increase of 2.7°C by the end of this century.²⁸ This number contradicts the agreed long-term goal of holding global average temperature below 2°C (Article 2) and is even farther away from the request by vulnerable countries to keep the increase to 1.5°C. To address this gap, the Paris Agreement states that national climate plans need to “represent a progression over time” (Article 3) and will be reviewed every five years. All countries will submit a higher reduction target every time they update their climate plans. It was also agreed that emissions need to peak “as soon as possible,” and countries need to reach carbon neutrality in the second half of the century (Article 4).

Moreover, the Paris Agreement established an “enhanced transparency framework for action and support” with the purpose of tracking progress of each INDC. It also provided for a “mechanism to facilitate implementation and promote compliance.” Even with these mechanisms in place, enforcement will likely be weak, and countries can still backslide or, worse, “jump ship.” Peer pressure and a yearning to lead by example remain the key drivers for ambitious implementation.

The Achilles’ heel of the Paris Agreement is finance. The quantified goal of mobilizing “\$100 billion per year by 2020” appears only in the decision and is not an agreed obligation. Moreover, the increase of the quantified goal is postponed until 2025. On the positive side, Article 9 states that developed countries “shall” provide financial resources. They are also required to communicate their level of support biennially, including public financial resources.

Moreover, Article 2 requests that developed countries “make financial flows consistent with a pathway towards low greenhouse gas emissions and climate resilient development.” Even though it

²⁷ United Nations Conference on Climate Change, “189 Countries Have Committed to Reducing Their Greenhouse Gas Emissions,” n.d., available at www.cop21.gouv.fr/en/185-countries-have-committed-to-reducing-their-greenhouse-gas-emissions/.

²⁸ Climate Action Tracker, “INDCs Lower Projected Warming to 2.7°C: Significant Progress but Still above 2°C,” October 1, 2015, available at <http://climateactiontracker.org/news/224/indcs-lower-projected-warming-to-2.7c-significant-progress-but-still-above-2c-.html>.

is a general statement, if taken seriously, it would need to address contradictory policies on investments in development that are not in the direction of stabilizing the world's climate.

An important milestone for vulnerable countries is the established long-term goal on adaptation, making it a global priority on par with mitigation. Moreover, the Paris Agreement also recognizes loss and damage as an important component of the new climate architecture.

Despite all the pros and cons of the Paris Agreement, delegations left Paris with a sense of optimism. The “spirit of Paris” counteracted the lack of trust that had become the norm in the negotiations since 2009. The secretary-general's remarks after COP21 emphasized that “the Paris Agreement is a victory for people, for the common good, and for multilateralism. It is a health insurance policy for the planet. It is the most significant action in years to uphold our Charter mandate to 'save succeeding generations.'”²⁹

Member states are also aware that the Paris Agreement is not the only solution to climate change. There is growing awareness that climate change needs to be tackled by all sectors of society. Investment in new technologies and renewable energy is an essential component of reaching a carbon-neutral economy.³⁰ Technology transfer to developing countries will also accelerate the required global shifts.

The Link between the 2030 Agenda and Climate Change

Eradicating extreme poverty and achieving sustainable development are the overarching goals of the 2030 Agenda. However, a lack of ambitious mitigation and adaptation measures could draw up to 720 million people back into extreme poverty.³¹ Climate change cuts across all seventeen SDGs, and it has a disproportionate impact on the poorest.³²

During the UN Sustainable Development Summit, member states welcomed the new “development focus” on climate change provided by the 2030 Agenda, which includes a stand-alone SDG on climate change (SDG 13).³³ This is the first time climate change has been fully incorporated in the development policy framework. With the exception of the annual resolution on climate change in the Second Committee, there has been little overlap between policy making on sustainable development and the UNFCCC.

²⁹ UN Secretary-General, remarks to the press following return from COP21, New York, December 14, 2015, available at www.un.org/sg/offthecuff/index.asp?nid=4304.

³⁰ Africa's Renewable Energy Initiative and the International Solar Alliance are two important strategies launched in Paris. See www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/grassroots-climate-change-agreement-by-kofi-a-annan-2015-12.

³¹ Overseas Development Institute, “Zero Poverty, Zero Emissions: Eradicating Extreme Poverty in the Climate Crisis,” London, September 2015, available at www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/9844.pdf.

³² The most recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) executive summary for policymakers conveys that climate change risks are unevenly distributed and are greater for disadvantaged people and communities.

³³ SDG 13 is titled “Taking urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.”

Once the Paris Agreement starts to be implemented, it remains to be seen how the 2030 Agenda and the INDCs will overlap. For example, in the implementation of SDG 2 to “end hunger, achieve food security and improve nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture,” development plans will have to take into account that industrial agriculture is currently the largest contributor of greenhouse gas emissions.³⁴ With world population on the rise, many countries face the exponential challenge to feed a growing population with healthy food while limiting greenhouse gas emissions. Efforts to eliminate agricultural export subsidies (Target 2.b) will also have an impact on achieving both outcomes.

The Links between Climate Change and Peace and Security

Climate change can increase resource scarcity, undermine livelihoods, increase pressures for migration and forced displacement, and weaken the ability of states to provide the conditions necessary for human security. It makes delivering on the sustainable development agenda more difficult and can reverse positive trends, introduce new uncertainties, and increase the costs of building resilience.³⁵

Climate change has the potential to affect every part of the globe. But its impact can be particularly severe for vulnerable people and those who experience low levels of human development. This adds to social and political tensions and can increase the possibility of armed conflicts.³⁶ For small island developing states (SIDS), climate change is an existential threat that directly threatens their territorial integrity.

III. Implications for UN Institutions

There is a general understanding that the UN “system” is not fit nor designed to implement the integrated nature of the 2030 Agenda.

An interconnected approach to peace, security, and sustainable development requires deep changes. What is needed is not to create new multilateral bodies but, instead, to change the way governments engage in these bodies and structure their work. Instead of encroachment of the Security Council on issues that have been traditionally the purview of the General Assembly, there is a need for greater coherence and alignment between the General Assembly, Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), and Security Council.

³⁴ Golan Radha, “The Winter of Our Disconnect and the Neglect of Soil,” *The Wire*, January 13, 2016, http://thewire.in/2016/01/13/the-winter-of-our-disconnect-and-the-neglect-of-soil-19179/#disqus_thread.

³⁵ W. Neal Adger et al., “Human Security,” in *Climate Change 2014: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability, Part A: Global and Sectoral Aspects, Contribution of Working Group II to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

³⁶ Ibid.

Currently, there is a somewhat arbitrary division among institutions and bodies working on peace and security, sustainable development, and climate change. There is a further divide in UN work on sustainable development—conducted in the General Assembly, ECOSOC, and the new High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

There has been little substantive interaction among the work of the General Assembly, the Security Council, ECOSOC, the Peacebuilding Commission, and governing bodies of UN system organizations. This has hindered the international community’s ability to address the linkages between sustainable development and peace and security. At the same time, aspects of these linkages have started to appear on the agenda of some of those bodies.

The **General Assembly** addresses a range of issues from peace and security to sustainable development and its various dimensions. But there is almost a “firewall” between what it does in the area of peace and security and what it does on sustainable development, each of which is addressed by separate main committees. The General Assembly, however, may convene special sessions or events on issues related to peace, security, and sustainable development. The president of the sixty-eighth session convened a special event on “ensuring stable and peaceful societies,” which contributed to the agreed outcome.

The **Security Council**, on its part, has appeared increasingly aware of the impact of development issues on security. In 2014, it called for a comprehensive approach to conflict prevention and sustainable peace, which comprises, among other factors, “promoting sustained economic growth, poverty eradication, social development and sustainable development.” It also asked the secretary-general to analyze the potential conflict situations arising from factors such as poverty and lack of development.³⁷ The latest open debate on “security, development and the root causes of conflict” was held on November 16, 2015.

The Security Council has also addressed development issues with security implications on several occasions. It held its first-ever debate on the impact of climate change on peace and security in April 2007. In 2014, it recognized its responsibility for sustainable development issues, including climate change. It expressed concern about the potential long-term impact climate change can have on existing threats to international peace and security, as well as about the security implications of loss of territory by some states (in particular island states).³⁸ The Security Council has also addressed the role of natural resources in armed conflicts and post-conflict situations.³⁹ It adopted a resolution on HIV/AIDS in 2011 and one on Ebola in September 2014. It also adopted a resolution on youth, peace and security in 2015.

³⁷ UN Security Council Resolution 2171 (August 21, 2014), UN Doc. S/RES/2171.

³⁸ United Nations, *Statement by the President of the Security Council*, UN Doc. S/PRST/2011/15, July 20, 2011.

³⁹ United Nations, *Statement by the President of the Security Council*, UN Doc. S/PRST/2007/22, June 25, 2007.

At the same time, some member states object to the Security Council addressing development issues. In 2013, an attempt to recognize climate change as an international security threat was opposed by a large number of countries. This reflects, in part, concerns about the Security Council's limited membership and a desire to avoid encroaching on the responsibilities of the General Assembly and ECOSOC.

Within the **Economic and Social Council**, there has been a disconnect between discussions on humanitarian issues and those on development, which are addressed in two different segments of the council. There are other positive experiences, such as ECOSOC's consultative group on Haiti. The group has focused on promoting the sustainability of development assistance to Haiti and on ensuring aid effectiveness, while also advocating for long-term action on development in the context of peace and security. ECOSOC has also held joint meetings with the Peacebuilding Commission in the past. For example, the two bodies held a joint event on youth employment in June 2012. But the discussions at these meetings remained at a fairly general level and were not very conclusive. The outcomes were summaries rather than agreed and actionable outcomes.

The **Peacebuilding Commission** (PBC), in its country configurations, integrates countries' strategic frameworks for peacebuilding with aspects related to peace and security, development, and human rights. It has held important meetings, for example, to address conditionalities in countries emerging from conflict. The report of the PBC has been discussed in the General Assembly and in the Security Council. The report of the Advisory Group of Experts (AGE) on the 2015 Review of the UN Peacebuilding Architecture recommends that the relevant goals and targets adopted in the 2030 Agenda be "the basis against which to assess global-level and country progress towards sustaining peace."

As the synthesis report of the secretary-general notes, the **High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development** (HLPF) is an "important institutional innovation that emerged from Rio+20."⁴⁰ The HLPF has been tasked with steering, promoting, and reviewing progress in the implementation of sustainable development commitments and their means of implementation. It is to provide high-level policy guidance; promote policies that integrate economic, social, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development; and address new issues. As of 2016, it will be the overarching platform for the follow-up and review of the SDGs.

IV. Conclusion and Recommendations

Overall, all intergovernmental bodies should constantly bear in mind the peace and security implications of sustainable development, and vice versa. Their work should be grounded in solid

⁴⁰ United Nations, "The Road to Dignity by 2030," December 4, 2014, para. 150.

analytical work and evidence from the country level. In turn, they should provide impetus for integrating sustainable development concerns in special political missions and in peacekeeping operations, for example, and imbuing development work with an awareness of conflict-related dynamics. Risks associated with the changing climate should also be taken into account.

Stronger linkages should also be built between UN bodies in the sustainable development and peace and security areas. This will make it possible to bring urgent situations requiring holistic approaches to the attention of relevant bodies. At the same time, political sensitivities should be taken into account, and appropriate linkages should be made between the work of the Security Council, General Assembly, ECOSOC, and High-Level Political Forum.

The 2030 Agenda requires breaking away from silo approaches and opening the door for holistic and integrated solutions at all levels. To address the complex interlinkages between peace, sustainable development, and climate change, it is necessary to strengthen national, regional, and global institutions. These institutions need to adopt more holistic approaches, reflecting on the diverse drivers of sustainable development.

Countries need to work together to strengthen international cooperation on these issues and foster a stronger multilateral system. Such a system should be supported by institutions that work in unison and are equipped to assist countries in responding to sustainable development, climate change, and peace and security challenges.

In his synthesis report, the secretary-general reminds the international community that it is facing universal challenges that “demand new heights of multilateral action based on evidence and built on shared values, principles, and priorities for a common destiny.”⁴¹ Building effective and interconnected institutions at the United Nations, such as the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF), is an essential component to ensure progress on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

There are a number of events in 2016 that can support coherent implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Paris Agreement. The president of the General Assembly’s High-Level Event on the 2030 Agenda (April 21st) and subsequent secretary-general’s event on the Paris Agreement (April 22nd) provide unique opportunities to look at both outcomes as the new comprehensive vision of sustainable development.

The ICM puts forward the following preliminary recommendations:

1. **Build a common vision:** The 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement are two universal agreements that constitute a new world vision. They can be one powerful agenda for global transformation. However, these two outcomes require integrated planning at all levels.

⁴¹ United Nations, “The Road to Dignity by 2030,” para. 14.

National plans and strategies can become more holistic and more effective in the long term if they take both outcomes into account (the SDGs and national climate plans).

2. **Keep the momentum going:** Although the Paris Agreement and the SDGs have already gained the attention of world leaders and top media outlets, awareness of these outcomes needs to be more widespread. These normative frameworks need to be locally owned. In developed countries, a shift toward implementing internationally agreed global goals domestically is a new challenge. Champions of the SDGs, from political to business to academic leaders, should be enlisted to support implementation. The recent appointment of “eminent advocates” to increase awareness and implementation of the SDGs is a step forward, and these kinds of champions should also be identified at the regional, national, and local levels.
3. **Promote long-term political leadership:** Implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Paris Agreement is possible only with sustained political leadership beyond terms of office. Constant attention to the delivery of the 2030 Agenda and Paris Agreement is needed. Citizens, civil society, youth can keep the pressure on and hold leaders accountable for timely implementation. This new vision requires a **whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach**. Several member states are putting in place inter-ministerial arrangements in order to encourage integrated implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the government level. Involvement of the Ministry of Finance is key to unlock domestic resources. Breaking the silos is not only a challenge for the UN but also at the national level. As member states start to prepare to implement the Paris Agreement, the SDGs and the INDCs should become core priorities of national plans.
4. **Transcend “siloes” structures:** The UN’s siloes system has reached a crisis point. Structures created in 1945 are not functioning in 2016. The 2030 Agenda recognized that the UN can no longer work in separate compartments with little cooperation, or even interaction, between them (General Assembly, ECOSOC, Human Rights Council, and Security Council). The main intergovernmental structures need a new modus operandi. The revitalization of the General Assembly is a priority. The work of the six committees of the General Assembly—particularly the work of the Second and Third Committees—needs to be evaluated to reduce duplication, augment impact on the ground, and support the implementation of the new outcomes. The sheer number of resolutions adopted in the Second and Third Committees (forty-three resolutions and fifty-seven resolutions, respectively) highlights the need to reflect on and discuss the adoption of coherent and strategic work programs.

5. **UN top leadership must show the way:** The Chief Executives Board (CEB),⁴² the Special Adviser of the United Nations Secretary-General on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Climate Change, has a unique responsibility to align the system toward effective implementation. The new secretary-general should make implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement her or his top priority.
6. **Create a dynamic and inclusive follow-up of the 2030 Agenda:** The High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) has the universal participation of all member states. Its meetings should be dynamic and should carry on the spirit in which the 2030 Agenda was negotiated. It should include participation of “movers and shakers” of civil society and the private sector. The HLPF also needs to be the bridge between communities of policy makers and practitioners that are not used to working together, such as by discussing the links between the SDGs and INDCs. The HLPF also needs to remain true to the integrated nature of the 2030 Agenda. As the discussion on the follow-up and review moves forward, it will be tempting to pragmatically repackage the SDGs into discrete categories. This would go against the integrated design of the SDGs. The overarching theme of the HLPF should be on implementation at all levels.
7. **Review funding strategies (assessed and voluntary contributions):** The work of the UN development system largely follows the nature of the funding it receives. The lack of core and flexible funding in the UN development system has increased fragmentation and competition.⁴³ Assessed contributions from member states should reflect greater balance between the three main pillars of the UN: peace and security, human rights, and sustainable development.
8. **Match the ambitious goals in the 2030 Agenda with substantial resources:** Domestic and international resources will need to be leveraged to implement the 2030 Agenda. In 2016, developed countries need to scale up official development assistance (ODA) to support the poorest and most vulnerable populations, particularly in countries that do not attract foreign direct investment. International resource flows to developing countries are estimated to amount to \$2 trillion annually, coming from a variety of sources.⁴⁴ These resource flows should support, or at the very least not contradict, priorities set in the 2030 Agenda and Paris Agreement. Innovative sources of financing, such as adding a minimal fee to airline tickets, can increase the amount of resources for sustainable development.

⁴² The CEB had its first meeting on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

⁴³ Secretary-general's report on the QCPR (advanced unedited version, 28 December 2015).

⁴⁴ Development Initiatives, “Investments to End Poverty,” 2015, <http://devinit.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Investments-to-End-Poverty-highlights.pdf>.

9. **Increase the role of the private sector:** Currently, there are over 8,000 corporations in 150 countries participating in the Global Compact.⁴⁵ Increased participation by the private sector in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Paris Agreement is key to leverage the needed additional resources. The UN, led by its member states, should strengthen cooperation with the private sector based on the agreed principles of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement. The president of the General Assembly could launch an intergovernmental process to further strengthen this relationship.
10. **Increase investment for evidence-based monitoring and review:** A critical effort needs to be made to build capacities to gather, process, and use data to strengthen the decision making of multilateral institutions, as well as national governments.⁴⁶ The SDGs' targets and global indicators will provide the overall framework for these efforts—nationally, regionally, and globally. However, there is a risk that the reporting infrastructure becomes too prescriptive and onerous for developing countries with limited resources. An extra effort is needed to support collection of disaggregated data as called for in the 2030 Agenda. The secretary-general's Independent Expert Advisory Group on the Data Revolution makes further key recommendations.
11. **Strengthen the link between peace and sustainable development:** Successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda depends on strategic and comprehensive follow-up of all targets and global indicators related to peace. There are risks, however, of concentrating exclusively on SDG 16, thereby contributing to the UN siloed structure and limiting the benefits of implementing a comprehensive agenda that looks at all the drivers that lead to peace and sustainable development.
12. **Update SDG 13:** After the Paris Conference on Climate Change, the targets in SDG 13 and subsequent global indicators need to fall in line with the outcomes achieved in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

⁴⁵ Georg Kell, interview with UN News Centre, June 23, 2015, available at www.un.org/apps/news/newsmakers.asp?NewsID=122.

⁴⁶ Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data, available at www.data4sdgs.org/#intro.

Annex I: Table 1. SDG targets focusing on peace⁴⁷

	Target	Goal
4.7	By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development	Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all
5.1	End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere	Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
5.2	Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation	
5.3	Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early, and forced marriage and female genital mutilation	
5.5	Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision making in political, economic, and public life	
5.c	Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels	
6.2	By 2030, achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all, and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations	Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
8.7	Take immediate and effective measures to secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, eradicate forced labour, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms including recruitment and use of child soldiers	Promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all
10.2	By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic, and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion, or economic or other status	Reduce inequality within and among countries
10.3	Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including through eliminating discriminatory laws, policies, and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies, and actions in this regard	
10.7	Facilitate orderly, safe, regular, and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies	
11.1	By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe, and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums;	Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable

⁴⁷ United Nations, *Report of the Open Working Group of the General Assembly on Sustainable Development Goals*, UN Doc. A/68/970, August 12, 2014.

16.1	Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere	Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels
16.2	End abuse, exploitation, trafficking, and all forms of violence and torture against children	
16.3	Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all	
16.4	By 2030, significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen recovery and return of stolen assets, and combat all forms of organized crime	
16.5	Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all its forms	
16.6	Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels	
16.7	Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory, and representative decision making at all levels	
16.8	Broaden and strengthen the participation of developing countries in the institutions of global governance	
16.9	By 2030, provide legal identity for all including birth registration	
16.10	Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms in accordance with national legislation and international agreements	
16.a	Strengthen relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation, for building capacities at all levels, in particular in developing countries, for preventing violence and combating terrorism and crime	
16.b	Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development	

Annex II

Timeline of Key Multilateral Events and Decisions

Efforts to address climate change began at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, where the Rio Convention included the adoption of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The convention is the principal multilateral framework on climate change, and its ultimate objective is to stabilize the atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases (GHGs) in order to avoid “dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system.” The UNFCCC entered into force on March 21, 1994, and has near-universal membership, with 195 parties.

The main objective of the annual Conference of Parties (COP) is to review the convention’s implementation. The first COP took place in Berlin in 1995, and significant meetings since then have included COP3, where the Kyoto Protocol was adopted; COP11, where the Montreal Action Plan was produced; COP15 in Copenhagen, where an agreement to succeed the Kyoto Protocol was

unfortunately not realized; COP17 in Durban, where the Green Climate Fund was established; and finally, COP 21, where the Paris Agreement, a universal and binding outcome was adopted.

Climate Change

1979 — The first World Climate Conference (WCC) took place in Geneva.

1988 — The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) was established.

1990 — The first IPCC assessment report was issued. The IPCC and the second World Climate Conference called for a global treaty on climate change. The United Nations General Assembly negotiations on a new global framework began.

1992 — At the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was opened for signature along with other Rio Conventions: the United Nations Convention on Biodiversity (UNCBD) and United Nations Convention on Combating Desertification (UNCCD).

1994 — UNFCCC entered into force.

1997 — The Kyoto Protocol was formally adopted at the third Conference of the Parties (COP3) under the aegis of the UNFCCC. The Kyoto Protocol established emission reduction commitments for developed countries. The United States never ratified the Kyoto Protocol.

2005 — The Kyoto Protocol entered into force. The first Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (MOP 1) took place in Montreal.

2007 — The IPCC's Fourth Assessment Report was issued. Its findings caused alarm and ignited greater awareness of the adverse impacts of climate change. At COP13, the parties agreed on the Bali Road Map, which charted the way toward a post-Kyoto Protocol outcome.

2009 — The Copenhagen Accord was negotiated by a few countries at COP15 in Copenhagen. This outcome was not adopted by consensus; it was only “taken note of” by the COP. Member states later submitted voluntary emissions reduction pledges or mitigation action pledges.

2010 — The Cancun Agreements were adopted at COP16. This was an important meeting, given the failed outcome of 2009, and the Cancun Agreements incorporated many of the elements of the Copenhagen Accord.

2011 — The parties to the UNFCCC established the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action, with the mandate to deliver a universal agreement by 2015 that would enter into force by 2020, and the Green Climate Fund was operationalized.

2012 — The Doha Amendment to the Kyoto Protocol was adopted.

2013 — Key decisions were adopted, including on the Green Climate Fund and long-term finance, the Warsaw Framework for REDD Plus, and the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage. The concept “Intended Nationally Determined Contributions” was agreed on by member states, which paved the way for the new climate architecture.

2014 — The Lima Call for Climate Action was adopted at COP 20 in Lima, Peru. This outcome clarified concepts and ideas that paved the way for the results in 2015.

2015 — The Paris Agreement on Climate Change was adopted at COP 21 in Paris, France. This comprehensive agreement contains a set of decisions and a legally binding treaty that should support ambitious climate action to ensure a sustainable future for the next generations.

Sustainable Development

1969 — Jackson Report⁴⁸

- Sir Robert Jackson⁴⁹ put forward a package of recommendations to streamline the activities of the UN development system, including UNDP, ECOSOC, and inter-agency coordination.
- As a result, UNDP established a new system of country programming, its headquarters were reorganized, and the Technical Assistance and Special Fund programs were merged.

1974 — Sixth Special Session of the GA

- A Declaration and a Programme of Action on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order were adopted, although these documents were not welcomed by all developed countries.
- The Declaration included recommendations on the restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the UN system.

1975 — Gardner Report⁵⁰

- The report described a process of institutional restructuring to address the following weaknesses of the UN development system: (1) fragmentation of effort; (2) decision-making; (3) working methods; (4) decentralization and coordination; and (5) artificial separation of planning and operations.

⁴⁸ The Governing Council of UNDP requested an assessment of the needs of developing countries related to the capacity of the UN system.

⁴⁹ Sir Robert Jackson (Australia) was a former under-secretary-general for the United Nations.

⁵⁰ The group was formed by twenty-five experts from the following countries: Argentina, Brazil, Denmark, Egypt, France, Germany, India, Iran, Jamaica, Japan, Morocco, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Sierra Leone, the Soviet Union, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, the United Kingdom, the United States, Venezuela, Yugoslavia, and Zaire.

- As a result, an Ad Hoc Committee on the Restructuring of the Economic and Social Sectors of the UN was established.

1978–1979 — Brant Commission⁵¹

- The commission was tasked to study the major consequences of economic and social disparities, and it recommended: a large-scale transfer of resources to developing countries, an international energy strategy, a global food program, and major reforms in the international economic system.
- The commission also recommended convening summits with a limited number of heads of government from the North and South (one summit was held, with no major reform breakthroughs achieved).

1984–1987 — Brundtland Commission⁵²

- The commission presented a comprehensive assessment of the trend in environmental degradation and economic development and recommended merging the issue of the environment with development in order to achieve “sustainable development.”
- The commission made concrete recommendations to tackle the following areas: population growth, food security, biodiversity loss, energy, industry, and human settlements.⁵³

1991 — Nordic United Nations Project

- The Nordic countries launched a study on UN reform in the social and economic fields. Its findings influenced the new governance system for UNDP, UNFPA, and UNICEF by replacing their governing bodies with smaller executive bodies.

1992 — United Nations Conference on Environment and Development

- The conference adopted the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, including the Rio principles, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).
- Several mechanisms were established including: the Commission on Sustainable Development, the Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development, and the High-Level Advisory Board on Sustainable Development.

⁵¹ Eighteen eminent persons participated in the commission, with Willy Brandt, former chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, as its chairman.

⁵² The secretary-general appointed Gro-Harlem Brundtland (Norway) as chair and Mansour Khalid (Sudan) as vice-chair. Twenty high-level experts participated in their individual capacity.

⁵³ This report led, in part, to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro in 1992.

1994 — An Agenda for Development

- Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali presented this initiative to supplement his agenda for peace, highlighting the need to integrate peace, environmental protection, social justice, and democracy.

2000 — Millennium Declaration

- Secretary-General Kofi Annan released the report “We the Peoples: The Role of the UN in the 21st Century.”
- Member states adopted the Millennium Declaration, which formed the basis for the Millennium Development Goals.

2002 — Monterrey Consensus

- Landmark framework for a global partnership seeking to eradicate poverty and to tackle several of the structural causes of poverty.

2006–2007 — System-Wide Coherence

- The High-Level Panel on System-Wide Coherence in the areas of development, humanitarian assistance, and the environment released its report, “Delivering as One.”
- The report proposed ten areas that needed reform.
- The report recommended a new operating procedure for coordination at the country level.

2010

- Member states consolidated four bodies that had similar mandates on gender equality and the empowerment of women into one single entity as UN Women.

2012 — High-Level Panel on Global Sustainability⁵⁴

- Launched a report ahead of the Rio+20 Conference titled “Resilient People, Resilient Planet: A Future Worth Choosing.”
- The panel proposed a range of concrete recommendations focused on the integration of the three pillars of development. Several of the recommendations were incorporated into the outcome of the conference.

2012 — United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development

- The conference adopted the outcome document “The Future We Want,” which launched the process to define the Sustainable Development Goals.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Co-chaired by H.E. President Tarja Halonen (Finland). Twenty-two high-level experts participated in their individual capacity.

⁵⁵ The General Assembly adopted the outcome document in resolution A/RES/66/288.

- The conference also established the High-Level Political Forum and replaced the Commission on Sustainable Development.

2013 — High-Level Political Forum (HLPF)⁵⁶

- The HLPF is the main UN platform for Sustainable Development.
- Its mandate is to follow up the implementation of sustainable development commitments and to address emerging challenges.
- The HLPF meets every year under the auspices of ECOSOC and every four years at the level of heads of state and government in the General Assembly.

2013–2014 — Open Working Group on the Sustainable Development Goals

- The open working group adopted a report that defined 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets.⁵⁷

2015 — 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

- On September 25, 2015, at the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit, world leaders adopted resolution A/RES/70/1, “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.”
- The 2030 Agenda includes the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals and corresponding targets.
- Currently, there is a process to develop global indicators, which should be agreed by the Statistical Commission in March 2016.

2015 — Paris Agreement on Climate Change

- On December 12, 2015, parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change adopted the Paris Agreement (FCCC/CP/2015/L.9/Rev.1).
- The Paris Agreement contains a set of decisions and a legally binding treaty that will enter into force after fifty-five countries representing at least 55 percent of total greenhouse gas emissions ratify it.
- The Paris Agreement is an ambitious, universal framework to reduce greenhouse gas emissions

2015-2016 — UN Fit for Purpose

- The UN development system is discussing how it will implement the 2030 Agenda.
- ECOSOC is holding regular meetings on the “Long-Term Positioning of the UN Development System.”

⁵⁶ The General Assembly adopted the modalities of the HLPF in resolution A/RES/67/290.

⁵⁷ A/68/970.

