

TURNING AMBITION INTO REALITY

Platforms and Partnerships for Delivering Agenda 2030



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As part of Agenda 2030, the world's leaders have signed up to 17 Sustainable Development Goals – a development agenda that they describe as being of **unprecedented breadth and ambition**.

The new agenda was developed through an extensive process of debate and consultation, but relatively little attention has been paid to how countries can achieve the **acceleration in social, economic, and environmental progress** that will be needed if the goals are to be delivered in full.

This paper explores the role global **platforms and partnerships** can play in bringing governments, the private sector, civil society, and international organizations together around shared strategies for implementation of one or more of the SDGs.

It forms part of a broader stream of work undertaken by the NYU Center on International Cooperation that is organized around a ***time to deliver*** theme.

We aim to provide the evidence and analysis that will support Agenda 2030 during its critical early years, emphasizing both the universal responsibility for delivering the new global goals and the need to deliver on the commitment to **reach the furthest behind first**.

Further reading

Independent Review of the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States

Sarah Hearn

From Declaration to Delivery: Actioning the post-2015 agenda

David Steven

The Post-2015 Agenda – Delivering its Core Promises to Children

David Steven

What Happens Now? Time to deliver the post-2015 development agenda

Alex Evans and David Steven

States of Fragility 2015: Meeting Post-2015 Ambitions

OECD (lead author, the Center on International Cooperation)

If Not Now, When? Ending Violence Against the World's Children

David Steven

Post-2015 Means of Implementation: What sort of global partnership?

Alex Evans

A Laboratory for Sustainable Development? Latin America, the Caribbean, and the Post-2015 Development Agenda

David Steven and Alejandra Kubitschek-Bujones

The Future is Not Good Enough: Business as Usual after 2015

Alex Evans and David Steven

Contents

- Key Findings.....3**
- One | Partnerships, Platforms and Networks.....8**
 - Of Partnership and Partnerships..... 9
 - Tracking Partnerships..... 10
 - The 5Ps..... 11
- Two | Agenda 2030 Partnership Opportunities and Gaps15**
 - Partners for *People* 17
 - Partners for *Prosperity*..... 22
 - Partners for *Planet*..... 27
 - Partners for *Peace*..... 31
 - Partners for *Partnerships* 36
- Three | Making Partnerships Fit for Results38**
 - Making Partnerships ‘Fit for Results’ 39
 - Conclusion – The Promise of Partnerships 47
- Case Studies49**
 - People* Case Studies 50
 - Prosperity* Case Studies..... 61
 - Planet* Case Studies 69
 - Peace* Case Studies..... 74
 - Partnership* Case Studies..... 80
- Endnotes85**

Key Findings

Agenda 2030 asks all countries and stakeholders to act in ‘collaborative partnership’ to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals.

The new agenda includes targets for strengthening the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development and ensuring multi-stakeholder partnerships mobilize and share the *knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources* that countries need if they are to develop sustainably.

Recent years have seen a proliferation of multi-stakeholder partnerships. During the early years of Agenda 2030, the priorities are to:

- Align strong or promising partnerships to a development agenda very different from the MDGs.
- Launch new platforms only where gaps make it unlikely that one or more SDGs will be delivered.
- Develop mechanisms for strengthening links between partnerships, ensuring that they contribute to, rather than detract from, the integrated nature of the goals.

To provide a perspective on the effectiveness and impact of the existing partnership portfolio, this paper presents case studies of 20 partnerships (see). It summarizes strengths and weaknesses for Agenda 2030’s five ‘critical areas’, based on this review:



Strong partnerships exist for ending hunger and ensuring healthy lives for all, but ending poverty will be far harder than halving it. We lack evidence on the most cost effective strategies for tackling the global learning crisis. Partnerships must adjust to the twin challenges of *universality* and the commitment to *reach the furthest behind first*.



There is demand from both governments and the private sector for intensified multi-stakeholder cooperation to deliver more widespread, sustainable and inclusive growth. Energy has emerged as a priority in recent years, but partnerships for employment and infrastructure are embryonic. Inequality is not a central theme for existing partnerships.



The Roadmap for Climate Action aims to “boost cooperative action between governments, cities, business, investors and citizens” and to ensure partnerships make a full contribution to long-term climate goals. It provides a model for the systemic approaches needed to increase coherence and impact across the partnership portfolio.



There is growing momentum behind partnerships that prevent and address violence, provide access to justice, and strengthen governance and institutions. SDG16 and related targets will stimulate further collective action to build peaceful, just and inclusive societies. Action is needed, however, to reduce fragmentation, to strengthen evidence for what works, and to promote a shared strategic direction.



Partnerships are emerging to strengthen the means of implementation of Agenda 2030, including for domestic resource mobilization, for technology transfer, and for data, monitoring and accountability. Their success is essential to providing capacity to implement all 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

Partnerships in each of these areas are divided into four groups. The first comprises strong partnerships that provide a platform for Agenda 2030 delivery. For this group, the recommendation is to **stay the course**, challenging partnerships to deliver results against the new goals, while adapting to the challenges of the new agenda. Dramatic changes to strategy or architecture will distract from delivery, while launching new, overlapping initiatives will increase duplication and waste.



Stay the Course

The **Scaling Up Nutrition Movement**. A relative newcomer to the partnership world, but one that has built a foundation that could allow it to make early impact against the SDGs.

Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance. A long standing public-private partnership that aims to reach every child with vaccines.

Every Woman Every Child. An umbrella network that has brought together partners behind the Global Strategy for Women's, Children's, and Adolescents' Health.

Sanitation and Water for All. A high-level platform, introduced in 2009, to coordinate action on improving access to clean water and sanitation.

Open Government Partnership. A universal partnership where governments commit to increasing transparency and reducing corruption, empowering citizens and strengthening governance.

The **Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative**. Provides a global standard for all countries to encourage a transparent and open approach to governing oil, gas and mineral resources.

The second group contains partnerships that need to be **boosted**, either because a new alliance needs time to prove itself or because a legacy partnership must be reshaped for Agenda 2030. These partnerships require political support and resources as they attempt to fulfill their potential.



Boost

Platforms and funds for gender equality. Align behind a shared approach to mainstreaming gender across Agenda 2030, using advocacy, evidence and catalytic funding to break down structural barriers to gender equality.

The **Global Partnership for Education**. Support through its latest wave of reforms, with the aim of developing the evidence, consensus and strategies needed to deliver rapid improvements in learning outcomes in the 2020s.

New **partnerships for youth employment**. Develop a credible theory of change for how multi-stakeholder platforms can support the expansion of national labor markets and create successful models in pilot countries.

Infrastructure. Successfully complete the three-year pilot phase of the Global Infrastructure Facility, while using the Global Infrastructure Forum to unite overlapping infrastructure initiatives around a common roadmap.

Climate partnerships and funds. Deliver the objectives of the Roadmap for Climate Action, in particular on transparency, tracking results and demonstrating credibility, while creating a mechanism to ensure climate partnerships contribute to long-term climate goals.

The **10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production**. Support the Framework's mini-partnerships to deliver results in areas such as procurement,

construction and tourism, while building data systems to demonstrate overall impact on production and consumption patterns.

Delivery partnerships for ending violence and promoting access to justice. Invest in partnerships that aim to deliver change in areas such as violence against children, legal empowerment or trafficking.

Partnerships for domestic resource mobilization. Show that multi-sectoral platforms can increase national capacity for DRM and strengthen international cooperation on illicit financial flows, asset recovery, beneficiary ownership and transfer pricing.

Technology Facilitation Mechanism. Articulate a strategy that will increase exchange in technology and accelerate innovation, and that can gain support from leading investors, business, and owners of intellectual property.

The **Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data.** Work with data champions to introduce country Data Roadmaps for Sustainable Development.

The third group comprises gaps we have identified, where the UN should consider **launching** new platforms. This decision should be taken with caution, but we believe there are opportunities to achieve impact and to do so in a way that will increase policy coherence for sustainable development.



Leave no one behind. Launch a platform to bring together all partners and alliances working at global and regional levels to end poverty. Focus initially on building “nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors,” with the aim of reaching the 73% of the world’s population not yet covered by comprehensive social security systems.

Inequality. Explore the potential for a new platform to develop political consensus around the shared strategies and policies that are needed for inclusive growth and to address grievances fueled by rising inequality, building on the work of the proposed special commission within the UN system on inequality and the Group of Friends of SDG10.

Oceans. Use the High-Level UN Conference to Support the Implementation of SDG 14 to bring together existing partnerships and alliances in an Oceans Movement that will coordinate and synthesize their efforts, and maximize their contribution to conserving and sustainably using the oceans, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development.

Peaceful, just and inclusive societies. Convene relevant partnerships, alliances, and networks on a platform that will increase alignment and coherence, and act as a catalyst for greater innovation and ambition. Explore the potential for a roadmap or action plan, and a shared strategy for investing in evidence for what works.

The final category is the **zombie** partnership – those that continue to absorb resources, but do not make a meaningful contribution to the new agenda. Given implementation of the SDGs has only just begun, it is too early to identify zombies. However, the onus is now on partnerships to publish credible statements of their results and to demonstrate the contribution they are making to one or more SDGs.

In order to be ‘fit for results’ under Agenda 2030, all partnerships must:

- 1. Have a clear ‘theory of change’.** A new partnership needs clarity about which model it will use and what its ‘theory’ is for how it will drive change. The scope and mandate for partnerships vary from financing and/or driving delivery to building political will or promoting norms and standards. The critical question is not what, but why?
- 2. Avoid spreading themselves too thinly across too many countries.** Inclusivity is an important principle, but in the early years of the new agenda, partnerships must concentrate on their ‘pathfinders’ – countries who play a leadership role in implementing one or more of the SDGs. At present, relatively few proven partnerships are universal in scope, so it will be important to demonstrate success across multiple income groups.
- 3. Demonstrate their ability to turn global cooperation into results at local levels.** Partnerships must demonstrate their ability to catalyze collective responses to those global challenges that member states cannot tackle on their own. Ultimately, however, they must build an unbroken link from global goals, aspirations, and activity to impact on people’s lives and communities.

The international community must:

- 4. Demand transparency about results.** A more systematic approach for tracking commitments within larger global partnerships is needed. To improve accountability, existing data platforms could be used or adapted to develop common standards and increase sharing of data. The potential for an independent body for auditing partnership results could be explored.
- 5. Gain a better understanding of the financing of partnerships.** There is no effective system for tracking the finances partnerships deploy. We have no breakdown of partnership finance by source, or any estimate of how effective partnerships are in using their own finance to leverage investment from others.
- 6. Take a strategic approach to strengthening the partnership ‘portfolio’.** A complex ecosystem of partnerships exists. New partnerships should only be launched when there is a compelling case that they will strengthen the ‘portfolio’ of partnerships. Existing partnerships must be supported to ensure they deliver results.
- 7. Actively promote integration and coherence.** In order to coordinate the delivery of the SDGs by partnerships, leadership is needed from member states, from the UN development system, and from the larger partnerships themselves. The new Secretary-General should convene major partnerships and work towards a ‘light touch’ strategy for these partnerships that is in line with the ambitions of Agenda 2030.

All partnerships should see the High-level Political Forum in 2019 as the end of Agenda 2030’s start-up phase. This will be the first chance for leaders to review progress against the SDGs. By making the HLPF a deadline for partnerships to demonstrate delivery of results, member states will be able to distinguish ‘transformative’ partnerships from ‘zombies’ that have made little meaningful progress.

They can then focus energy and resources on those partnerships that have demonstrated they can turn the ambition of Agenda 2030 into reality.



Stay the Course



Boost



Launch



People

- Scaling Up Nutrition
- Every Woman Every Child
- Sanitation and Water for All

- Platforms and funds for gender equality
- Global Partnership for Education

- Leave No-One Behind platform



Prosperity

- Sustainable Energy for All

- Partnerships for Youth Employment
- Global Infrastructure Forum
- Global Infrastructure Facility

- Inequality Forum



Planet

- Climate partnership and funds

- 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production

- Oceans movement



Peace

- Open Government Partnership
- Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative

- Delivery partnerships for ending violence
- Delivery partnerships for access to justice

- Platform for peaceful, just and inclusive societies



Partnership

- Addis Tax Initiative and other partnerships to strengthen domestic resource mobilization
- Technology Facilitation Mechanism
- Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data

One

Partnerships Platforms and Networks

Of Partnership and Partnerships

In September 2015, the world's leaders gathered in New York to adopt *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*.

According to the new agenda, the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets constitute a “supremely ambitious and transformational vision” for the future of humanity and the planet.¹ All countries and stakeholders – “acting in collaborative partnership” – are enjoined to come together to implement the new agenda. SDG17 sets out targets for a “revitalized Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, based on a spirit of strengthened global solidarity, focused in particular on the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable and with the participation of all countries, all stakeholders and all people.”

But this overarching global partnership can only ever be an umbrella arrangement, expressing the willingness of national governments and other stakeholders to work together to deliver the sustainable development agenda, while defining their complementary roles, responsibilities, and expectations. On a practical level, delivery of the goals requires various formal platforms for multi-stakeholder cooperation.²

Beneath the global partnership (in the singular), in other words, sits a flotilla of issue-specific platforms, partnerships and alliances. It is these multi-stakeholder partnerships (in the plural) that are the topic of this paper, especially those that have global reach and ambitions.

There is nothing new about multi-stakeholder partnerships. Their roots lie in the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992, where there was an unprecedented attempt to mobilize a multitude of private and non-governmental partners behind a new global partnership for sustainable development, based on “a comprehensive blueprint of action to be taken globally, nationally and locally.”³

A decade later, the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) returned to this theme, attempting to unlock more flexible approaches to delivering sustainable development. The summit, argued Jonathan Lash, then president of the World Resources Institute, marked:

*The first stirrings of a new way of governing the global commons – the beginnings of a shift from the stiff formal waltz of traditional diplomacy to the jazzier dance of improvisational solution-oriented partnerships.*⁴

Over subsequent years, the number of partnerships has proliferated, with many gaining a central role in the delivery of development policy. This shift was reflected in the text of Agenda 2030, where multi-stakeholder partnerships are the subject of two targets within SDG17:

- 17.16** *Enhance the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, complemented by **multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources**, to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in all countries, in particular developing countries*
- 17.17** *Encourage and promote **effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships**, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships*

These targets reflect agreement among governments that partnerships have a vital role to play in the delivery of the new development agenda. Most countries are active supporters and members of partnerships, and will continue to be so. And Secretary-General, Ban Ki-Moon, has viewed the launch of new partnerships as one of his main tools for advancing his policy priorities.

Partnerships have their critics, however. There are concerns about levels of ownership, about mechanisms for accountability, and whether the results are being properly tracked. Partnerships can also weaken policy coherence and cut across the formal multilateral system.

So how effective have these ‘jazzier’ approaches to international cooperation been at mobilizing very different types of actors around a shared delivery agenda? And has their impact been sufficient to compensate for any damage caused to more formal mechanisms for international cooperation?

Tracking Partnerships

These questions are not easy to answer. Identifying and tracking multi-stakeholder platforms and partnerships is a far from simple matter. Even a definitive *list* of major global partnerships proves hard to compile.

There have been repeated efforts to correct this deficit. A registry of partnerships was set up after WSSD and held by the Commission on Sustainable Development. At Rio+20, member states asked the UN Secretary-General to improve this registry and ensure it included all commitments that had been made to complement the action of national governments to deliver sustainable development.⁵

The registry included a mix of ‘legacy partnerships’ (198 in total), alongside a much larger number of *voluntary commitments* (more than 1,500 by July 2015). The use of the term ‘voluntary commitment’ was a deliberate attempt by the UN to focus on “the outcomes of associations rather than the associations themselves.”⁶ However, both the new nomenclature and the inclusion of grassroots and single organization initiatives made it harder to identify and assess the work of formal partnerships.

In September 2015, the partnership registry was reconfigured to align with Agenda 2030. The new Partnerships for SDGs platform is described as “an online platform for encouraging global engagement around multi stakeholder partnerships and voluntary commitments in support of the implementation of the sustainable development goals and their targets.”⁷ As of June 2016, 2,088 ‘initiatives’ had been registered against Agenda 2030’s goals and targets.⁸

Once again, the database aims for maximum inclusion, bringing together an impressive array of initiatives of various shapes and sizes. The voluntary nature of submissions, however, inevitably dilutes the quality, making it challenging to identify and track major multi-stakeholder partnerships that are global in reach and where the UN plays a convening and strategic role. Fifteen of the partnerships from our case studies are not yet included in this database, including longstanding ones such as the Global Partnership for Education.

As a result, we must rely on independent studies and analyses for an overview of partnership numbers, remit and effectiveness. In 2009, for example, 330 partnerships were included in the Global Sustainability Database, hosted by the Institute of Environmental Studies, VU University Amsterdam.⁹ An analysis of this database found that 38% of partnerships were inactive and fewer than a quarter reported at least some activities that aligned with their mission and objectives.¹⁰

According to the International Civil Society Centre:

The overall picture that emerges is rather sobering. Multi-stakeholder partnerships have, by and large, not lived up to their promise. There are certainly some that perform excellently and have had impressive impacts on their issue areas but these should be considered as anomalies.¹¹

While a useful exercise, this review did not include more recent partnership initiatives that were created in response to the impending deadline for delivering the MDGs. It was also reliant on self-reporting of activity, rather than on independent evaluation of impact and outcomes. So how do we gain a better perspective?

The 5Ps

Given the sheer number of partnerships, one option would be to focus on the Sustainable Development Action Networks, which have the potential to act as an umbrella platform that drives coherence and integration across multiple initiatives.

Introduced as a concept by the UN in 2013, Action Networks are described as “initiatives that aim at catalyzing new commitments within a certain thematic area.”¹² There are currently 13 of these networks,¹³ including the UN Global Compact, the Sustainable Energy for All initiative, and Every Woman Every Child.

One future model for Action Networks would see them act as a ‘docking station’ for the partnerships that are working to deliver each SDG. While superficially attractive, the alignment between goals and partnerships is seldom neat for two reasons. Firstly, only one of the current Action Networks (Sustainable Energy for All) maps onto an SDG. All others are cross-cutting, represent only part of a goal, or both. And even if it were possible to tie an Action Network or partnerships to each goal, this might well prove counterproductive, re-creating silos rather than encouraging integration.

Secondly, commitment to the Action Network concept also seems to be weak. Only one of the entities described as an Action Network – Business for 2030 – uses this description on their own website. It is far from clear that the model will persist throughout the course of Agenda 2030. In retrospect, this approach to focusing and aggregating initiatives and commitments has proved something of a dead end.

For this assessment of partnerships, therefore, we have used material from Agenda 2030’s preamble to provide a lens for exploring partnership approaches. In it, leaders say they expect the 17 SDGs and 169 targets to stimulate action over the next 15 years in “*areas of critical importance* for humanity and the planet.”¹⁴ Each of the SDGs can be allocated to one of the ‘5 Ps’ of *People, Prosperity, Planet, Peace, and Partnership*, allowing multi-stakeholder platforms and partnerships to be clustered for analysis.

There are limitations to this approach. Many objectives are cross-cutting and, within each goal, targets vary considerably in their relevance to one or other of the 5Ps. However, with this proviso in mind, we have compiled an illustrative list of existing and proposed partnerships for each of the 5Ps (see Table 1 for an overview). We have also prepared 14 case studies of existing partnerships, which have been selected for their relevance to different parts of Agenda 2030. These case studies can be found in the second half of the paper.

 People	Feed the World	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scaling Up Nutrition Movement
	A Strategy for Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gavi – The Vaccine Alliance Every Woman Every Child
	Tackling the Global Learning Crisis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education for All Global Partnership for Education
	Water Works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sanitation and Water for All
 Prosperity	An Energy Revolution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainable Energy for All
	Decent Work for All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Let's Work: a global partnership to create more & better private sector jobs Solutions For Youth Employment The Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth
	Investing in Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Global Infrastructure Facility Global Infrastructure Forum
 Planet	Financing an Environmental Transformation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Global Environment Facility Green Climate Fund
	Sustainable Consumption and Production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10-Year Framework of Programmes
 Peace	Open Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open Government Partnership
	Tackling the Resource Curse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative
	Ending Violence Against Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Global Partnership and Fund to End Violence Against Children
 Partnership	Coordinating on Science, Technology and Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technology Facilitation Mechanism
	A Data Revolution for Sustainable Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data

Table 1

The case studies demonstrate that global goals are a good starting point for partnership development. The MDGs and other globally agreed targets appear to have had a galvanizing effect on partnerships, providing clear and legitimate goals to organize around, and a deadline that has added a sense of urgency. This is especially true of the health sector, where goal-based partnerships have been effective in mobilizing stakeholders and attracting resources from public, philanthropic and private sources, and where goals and targets have been further articulated in the revised Global Strategy for Women's, Children's, and Adolescents' Health.¹⁵

As Sachs and Schmidt-Traub argue:

Goals provide energy, commitment, resources, and timelines. They give rise to partnerships that can create real change. In this way goal-based development constitutes a critical

*approach for solving extremely complex operational and investment challenges at global, regional, national, and local levels.*¹⁶

The scale and ambition of Agenda 2030 seems certain to lead to an increase in the number of partnerships working towards global targets. This could lead to duplication and fragmentation, which is why this paper focuses on a *portfolio* of global partnerships. Ultimately, we must judge all major partnerships on two issues: whether they deliver results on the one hand; and whether they increase coordination and coherence on the other.

To maximize impact in the early years of the new agenda, the priorities are to:

- Build on strong and promising partnerships, aligning them to a development agenda that is very different from the MDGs.
- Launch new platforms only where there are gaps that make it unlikely that one or more goals will be delivered.
- Develop mechanisms for increasing links between partnerships, ensuring that they contribute to, rather than detract from, an indivisible sustainable development agenda.
- Challenge partnerships to demonstrate results ahead of the High-level Political Forum in 2019 – the first to be held at Head of State/Government level – allowing resources to be withdrawn from those that are unable to deliver.

In Section Two, therefore, we draw on the case studies to summarize the main strengths and weaknesses of the partnership portfolio for delivering the SDGs for *people, prosperity, planet, peace and partnership*.

In each of these areas, we identify the opportunities and gaps that have the greatest *strategic* significance in the early years of the new agenda. For some goals, established or recently launched partnerships must succeed if the credibility of the agenda is to be reinforced. For others, there is an opportunity to launch a new platform that will bring partners together around a shared strategy and roadmap.

We make four categories of recommendation:

- ***Stay the course.***

In some cases, strong partnerships are already in place. They are in the process of aligning their strategies to one or more SDGs, and have a realistic possibility of meeting some or all of their objectives.

For this group of partnerships, the challenge is to *stay the course*. While ongoing adaptation will be needed to meet the demands of the new agenda, the primary focus must be on delivery. Dramatic changes to strategy or architecture will distract from the imperative of both achieving and demonstrating results, while launching new, overlapping initiatives will increase duplication and waste.

These partnerships need support, but should also be subject to increased scrutiny. Most have been in existence for some time and should be in a position rigorously to quantify impact. They also have

a role to play in increasing coherence by aligning the strategies of their partners and building links to those working on other sustainable development priorities.

- **Boost.**

This second group contains partnerships that need to be boosted if they are to take on the challenges presented by the new agenda. Some of these partnerships are new and must be supported as they consolidate and scale up their activities. Others are more established but need substantial reform and realignment if they are to take on the challenges of the SDGs.

For partnerships in this category, external review is needed to assess whether impact is being delivered. In particular, it will be important to identify partnerships that are stuck in a cycle where results are promised only after a further phase of reform has been undertaken.

The credibility of these partnerships with governments is especially important. Do countries see them as an important part of the 'answer' to the questions posed by the SDGs? Or is national ownership weak and perhaps only incentivized by the provision of finance?

- **Launch.**

Third, we identify gaps where the UN could consider new partnerships or platforms that act as a 'partnership of partnerships'.

Given the proliferation of partnerships, the decision that another 'start-up' is needed should be taken with caution. There should be a significant opportunity to achieve impact and to do so in a way that will increase policy coherence for sustainable development.

If the UN is to initiate a partnership, or be a leading partner, it should be clear about its comparative advantage and its capacity to ensure that the partnership adds real value. A strategic approach is essential: an unplanned proliferation of partnerships would be highly counterproductive.

The final category is the **zombie** partnership – those that continue to exist and absorb resources, while not making a meaningful contribution to the new agenda. Given that implementation of the SDGs is only just beginning, it is too early to identify any zombies. Instead, partnerships must publish credible statements of their results and subject them to external scrutiny. The onus is on *them* to demonstrate that they do not fall into the 'undead' category over the next few years.

Two

Agenda 2030 Partnerships Opportunities and Gaps



End poverty and hunger, in all their forms and dimensions, and ensure that all human beings can fulfil their potential in dignity and equality and in a healthy environment



Strengths

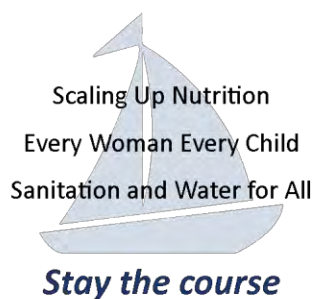
- Successful poverty reduction under the MDGs provides foundation for further progress under Agenda 2030.
- Innovative initiatives are emerging with potential to transform poverty reduction strategies.
- The Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health is fully aligned with the SDGs, and Every Woman Every Child (EWEC) acts as an umbrella multi-stakeholder movement for health.
- The Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) movement offers a platform to accelerate delivery of nutrition targets.
- Advocacy platforms have been effective in shifting norms for gender equality.
- Sanitation and Water for All has built political will, improved coordination and increased the focus on results.

Weaknesses

- Ending poverty will be much tougher than halving it.
- *Reaching the furthest behind first* creates strategic challenges that are yet to be fully explored.
- Few SDGs will be met in fragile settings without significant innovation and reform.
- Few partnerships are universal, leaving them ill-equipped to respond to income and non-income poverty outside developing countries.
- It is unclear whether there is sufficient determination to overcome enormous obstacles to delivering quality education.
- Progress is slow on sanitation and new models and approaches are needed.

Priorities

- 1 Strengthen coordination across all partnerships that aim to deliver the 'people' SDGs.
- 2 All partnerships to make reaching the furthest behind first a strategic priority and to mainstream gender equality.
- 3 Demonstrate EWEC and SUN can deliver acceleration in progress for health and nutrition goals.
- 4 Invest in evidence for what works to deliver quality education. Develop a shared strategy that will deliver rapid improvements in learning outcomes in the 2020s.
- 5 In 2019, report on whether sufficient progress is being made to end poverty in all its forms by 2030, while leaving no-one behind.





Partners for *People*

Under '*people*' in Agenda 2030, governments commit to “end poverty and hunger, in their forms and dimensions, and to ensure that all human beings can fulfill their potential in dignity and equality and in a healthy environment.” The following SDGs are included in this thematic area:

- SDG1** *End poverty in all its forms everywhere*
- SDG2** *End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture*
- SDG3** *Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages*
- SDG4** *Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all*
- SDG5** *Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls*
- SDG6** *Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all*

Collectively, they represent the minimum levels of well-being all global citizens must enjoy if they are to benefit from, and play a role in, building a sustainable future. The goals are heavily interlinked with each other, and are also dependent on progress in delivering Agenda's 2030's aspirations for *prosperity, planet, and peace*.

For most of these targets, at least some progress is being made, with rapid poverty reduction during the MDG era. According to the final Millennium Development Goals report “nearly half of the population in the developing world lived on less than \$1.25 a day; that proportion dropped to 14 per cent in 2015.”¹⁷ Undernourishment fell by half under the MDGs while access to clean water nearly doubled, progress on many health indicators was strong, and many more children are now in school. Women have experienced gains in education, health outcomes, labor market opportunities, and political participation.

These successes, however, are only partial. It will be much harder to end extreme poverty than to halve it, given the multiple deprivations that the poorest face. Almost all countries are off course for four of the nine global nutrition targets for 2025.¹⁸ Access to sanitation remains poor, with 2.4 billion people lacking adequate sanitation facilities, disproportionately affecting women and girls.¹⁹ Gender discrimination is a binding constraint on the development prospects for a large number of women and girls, with broader impacts on national prosperity and security.

The SDGs for ending poverty are many times more ambitious than the MDGs. At the heart of Agenda 2030 lies a commitment to ‘reach the furthest behind first.’ This implies a profound strategic shift. As many of the targets are ‘zero based’, they can only be met if they are met for all. Effective implementation requires a transformation in the capacity to deliver for those who face the most daunting obstacles to achieving a better life.

Strong platforms and partnerships already exist for this theme, although less so for SDG1 (end poverty) than the other *people* SDGs. This goal, however, has seen a wave of innovation, as partnerships explore the potential of direct cash transfers as a poverty reduction strategy (the Better than Cash Alliance),²⁰ work to provide financial services to poor people and to their businesses (the Global Partnership for

Financial Inclusion),²¹ or aim to increase the role of the private sector in tackling poverty (Partnerships in Poverty).²²

Nutrition has also seen a recent surge of partnership development (see case study 1), with the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) movement launched in light of the realization that “nutrition is a desperately neglected aspect of maternal, newborn, and child health”²³ and that international efforts to address the problem were “fragmented and dysfunctional.”²⁴ According to its recent evaluation, SUN has successfully built political will for tackling nutrition and must now translate this into results for children at national level. The nutrition sector has united behind a “case for investment” and “a set of the most cost-effective actions which can be scaled up immediately” to deliver SDG2.²⁵

Partnerships have played a particularly strong role in health (SDG3) over the past decade, demonstrating how “a multitude of actors including national governments, CSOs and civil society, businesses, international organizations, foundations, and the scientific community can be mobilized around shared goals to solve a complex long-term investment challenge.”²⁶ Case study 2 discusses two very different health partnerships: Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, is characteristic of a number of partnerships that focus on particular threats to child survival. It has been successful in delivering immunization to large numbers of children and, increasingly, has shown that it can reshape vaccine markets, while ensuring sustainability after countries ‘graduate’ from its support.

Every Woman Every Child (EWEC) is very different in structure and intent. It is an umbrella movement that aims to bring multiple health actors (including other partnerships) together around a shared strategy for delivering global health goals. The first global strategy was launched in 2010 and revised for Agenda 2030 as the Global Strategy for Women’s, Children’s, and Adolescents’ Health. EWEC is the most ambitious attempt to create a ‘partnership of partnerships’ and acts as the ‘admiral’ for a fleet of constituent initiatives, ensuring the global health community is in pole position to deliver the health SDG for women and children. It shows the potential for partnerships to play an aggregating and amplifying, rather than implementing, role.

For some partnerships, Agenda 2030 brings substantial new challenges. The education SDG looks beyond primary schooling, while making a long overdue shift towards focusing on quality as well as access. SDG4 is many times more ambitious than its equivalent MDG, but comes at a time that UNESCO has described as an unprecedented crisis in the education sector, with too many schooling systems failing “not only to impart the basics, but to keep pace with rapid changes in global economic, socio-political and natural environments and equip students with the skills, knowledge and attitudes to meet the challenges they pose.”²⁷

Education partnerships also have a mixed record (case study 3). The Education for All (EFA) movement has existed for 25 years with the aspiration to be simultaneously a partnership of countries, international organizations and civil society, and a driver of mass participation at grass roots level. It has failed to gain political commitment, with successful initiatives happening “in spite, rather than as a result of attempts at global coordination.”²⁸

The Global Partnership for Education (GPE), which describes itself as “the only multilateral partnership solely devoted to getting all children enrolled in school for a good quality education,”²⁹ started as an offshoot from the EFA. It has become one of the largest education donors, but has been through repeated waves of reform as it attempts to demonstrate that it can deliver significant improvements in

learning outcomes. Given the scale of the global learning crisis, it is yet to demonstrate that it has the strategy, tools and expertise to help governments reform failing education systems. It must also do more to meet the needs of the most disadvantaged children, working with new initiatives, such as the Education Cannot Wait Fund, launched to meet the needs of children affected by emergencies and protracted crises.³⁰

Gender equality and empowerment is critical to the delivery of all 17 SDGs, with growing realization that structural barriers to gender equality must be broken down for the new agenda to succeed, allowing “the enhancement of women’s skills and capacities as active agents of change for sustainable development.”³¹ SDG5 is a goal that is especially strongly linked to the rest of the agenda, with gender partnerships focused on areas such as the prevention of violence and abuse (Girls not Brides, Together for Girls), reproductive rights (Family Planning 2020), water (Gender and Water Alliance) and climate change (the Global Gender and Climate Change Alliance).

Gender partnerships with a more general focus, such as the DAC Network on Gender Equality or the International Alliance of Women, will also be judged primarily on how effective they are at mainstreaming gender-sensitive implementation of all aspects of Agenda 2030.

Water and sanitation (SDG6) has been on the international agenda for over 30 years, including two ‘decades’ of action (1981-1990 and 2000-2015) dedicated to improving access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation. In part, delivery has been hampered by rapid population growth and urbanization, environmental degradation and rising costs of water supplies. However, follow-through has also been disappointing, with a lack of the financing or practical strategies needed to deliver MDG target 7c “*By 2015, halve the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation.*”

To strengthen and coordinate action, the Sanitation and Water for All partnership (SWA)(case study 4) was launched in 2009 aiming to increase political will and strengthen the evidence base and national planning processes. Through high level meetings, the partnership has succeeded in bringing together finance and water and sanitation ministers from over 100 countries. Commitments have been made, but it remains unclear whether these have led to incremental impact. With high level ministers recently aligning plans with Agenda 2030, the partnership will now need to demonstrate that these national commitments add up to a global strategy for reaching the SDG targets on water and sanitation.

Across the six *people* goals, it is clear that the main priority is to build on the foundation created by the MDGs, while adapting to the twin challenges of *universality* on the one hand, and the commitment to *reach the furthest behind first* on the other. The major partnerships in this area are critical to ending absolute poverty and ensuring all children survive their early years, but they must go beyond that to ensure that all people are able to thrive and to contribute to the achievement of the sustainable development agenda.

We therefore recommend focusing primarily on accelerating delivery through existing partnerships for health and nutrition, and on strengthening the transformative capacity of partnerships for education and gender.

There is, however, an opportunity to do more on Agenda 2030’s commitment to *reach the furthest behind first*, by launching a Leave No-One Behind platform to bring together all partners and alliances

that are working at global and regional levels to end poverty. The platform's initial focus might be on building "nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors." This would build on existing programs such as the Universal Social Protection Initiative,³² with the aim of reaching the 73% of the world's population not yet covered by comprehensive social security systems.³³ Work could start after the HLPF 2016, with the platform launched at the HLPF 2017, which is expected to include *eradicating poverty* as part of its theme.

Recommendations



Scaling Up Nutrition Movement (SUN), Every Woman Every Child (EWEC)

Demonstrate that SUN and EWEC can:

- Translate political will into improved health and nutrition outcomes.
- Bring partners together to implement shared strategies for health and nutrition.
- Reduce fragmentation in global governance while maximizing the impact of their constituent partnerships and alliances.

Sanitation and Water for All

- Continue to collaborate with, and act as an umbrella for, various water partnerships and alliances, with the aim of demonstrating accelerated progress against SDG6.
- Ensure national plans and commitments are monitored.



Platforms and funds for gender equality

- Bring alliances, platforms and funds together around a shared approach to mainstreaming gender across Agenda 2030.
- Use advocacy, evidence and catalytic funding to leverage change to break down structural barriers to gender equality.
- Increase the voice and role of women and girls in the implementation of Agenda 2030, while engaging men and boys in addressing barriers to sustainable development.

Global Partnership for Education (GPE)

- Develop the evidence and consensus on the most cost effective strategies for tackling the global learning crisis.
- Support GPE through its latest wave of reforms, with the aim of laying the foundations for rapid improvements in learning outcomes in the 2020s.
- Develop strategies for ensuring children from vulnerable groups are in school and learning, and the disaggregated data for monitoring progress.



Leave No-One Behind platform

- Explore the potential for a new platform to reach the furthest behind first.
- Develop a business case and shared strategy for building a universal social protection system by 2030.
- Launch the platform at the High-level Political Forum in 2017.



Ensure all human beings can enjoy prosperous and fulfilling lives and that economic, social and technological progress occurs in harmony with nature



Strengths

- The SDGs for prosperity are a leading priority for many countries.
- Established ahead of Rio+20, Sustainable Energy for All (SE4All) is hard-wired into the SDGs.
- For employment, more credible and focused partnerships have recently been established.
- Major cities are well-networked and are important sources of leadership and innovation.

Weaknesses

- Prosperity partnerships are relatively under-developed.
- SE4All is yet to demonstrate significant results on the ground.
- Past employment initiatives have failed and there is a risk of duplication between new partnerships.
- The Global Infrastructure Facility and Forum are in their start-up phase, while lead times for major infrastructure are long.
- There is no strategy or platform to confront inequality between or within countries.

Priorities

- 1 Demonstrate SE4All can deliver on its promise and respond to the concerns of its critics.
- 2 Build strong partnerships for youth employment, while avoiding overlaps and duplication.
- 3 Engage investors and the private sector in major infrastructure investments.
- 4 Increase the leadership role of cities across all Agenda 2030 partnerships.
- 5 Develop shared strategies and a platform for policies for inequality and inclusive growth.





Partners for Prosperity

Under ‘prosperity’, governments commit to ensuring that “all human beings can enjoy prosperous and fulfilling lives and that economic, social and technological progress occurs in harmony with nature.” The prosperity thematic area includes the following SDGs:

- SDG7** *Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all*
- SDG8** *Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all*
- SDG9** *Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation*
- SDG10** *Reduce inequality within and among countries*
- SDG11** *Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable*

Many developing country governments regarded the MDGs as having been overly focused on social development priorities and saw the new agenda as an opportunity to place an increased emphasis on the need for an economic transformation that will deliver more widespread, sustainable and inclusive growth.³⁴ In the negotiations, this was a particular priority for African countries, who called for greater investment in “infrastructure, agriculture, industrial and services sectors development; science technology and innovation; value addition; youth development and engagement; women’s empowerment; and sustainable natural resource management.”³⁵

Partnership is essential to delivering the aspirations of SDGs7-11. Delivering ambitious economic goals and targets will only be possible with active participation from the private sector, both as a source of finance, and as an actor that works with governments to shape and implement growth policies. Given the interconnected nature of the global economy, public-private alliances have an important role to play at international and regional levels, with the business community identifying them as “vital to gaining the shared buy-in necessary, on the part of all stakeholders, needed to achieve the objectives of international development frameworks.”³⁶

Partnerships in this area have not traditionally been strong, but energy has emerged in recent years as a priority for international action (case study 5). In 2011, the UN Secretary-General launched Sustainable Energy for All (SE4All) to trigger “a transformation of the world’s energy systems that will benefit people everywhere.”³⁷ SE4All was explicitly positioned as a forerunner initiative, demonstrating what could be achieved at the Rio+20 summit. The Secretary-General argued that energy should be used to show how to place the “social, economic, and environmental pillars of sustainable development more equally at the center of policy-making.”³⁸ Three linked objectives – for access to modern energy services, energy efficiency, and renewable energy – were proposed, and formed the basis of SDG7.

As a result, SE4All has emerged as a significant test case for Agenda 2030’s potential to deliver ambitious targets that have a universal focus, incorporate an integrated vision of sustainable development, and are supported by a broad coalition of international and national actors, from the public and private sectors, and from civil society. Alongside other related partnerships such as the Partnership for Clean

Fuel and Vehicles, or the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership (REEEP), SE4All's challenge is whether it can tackle a perceived disconnect between 'global cheerleading' and action on the ground, delivering measurable progress against the SDGs ahead of the HLPF in 2019.

SDG8 aims to sustain economic growth, and increase it in least developed countries, while boosting economic productivity "through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation." Perhaps its most important targets, however, are those that promise "full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men" by 2030 (SDG8.5) and a substantial reduction in the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training *by 2020* (SDG8.6).

The MDGs also promised full employment and decent work for all, but progress against this target was disappointing, to say the least. According to the final report on the MDGs, 53 million *more* people were unemployed in 2015 than 1991. Countries of all income levels have failed to generate sufficient job opportunities, with young people – women, in particular – the hardest hit.

The case is strong, therefore, for making youth employment a priority, especially in developing countries that are seeing large numbers of young adults entering the labor force. If sufficient jobs can be created, these countries will collect a substantial demographic dividend, making it much more likely that other SDGs will be delivered. A failure to expand labor markets at sufficient speed will have obvious economic and social impacts, and could also fuel instability that will threaten the achievement of all of the SDGs.³⁹

Partnerships in this area do not have an impressive track record. The Global Jobs Pact was launched in 2009 as a response to the global financial crisis and aimed to create "45 million new entrants to the global jobs market annually – most of them young women and men."⁴⁰ The Pact was intended to bring together the UN with the "the actors of the real economy" (governments, business, labor) and also with the G20, the international system's dominant economic grouping. Delivery, however, has been weak, with the International Labour Organization (ILO) finding only 'limited' uptake of the Pact's proposals.⁴¹ While both the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and Agenda 2030 commit to implementation of the Pact, there is little evidence of activity after 2012.⁴²

More promising are three recent partnerships (case study 6) that include a strong role for the private sector and for other partners from outside the UN system with credibility to tackle economic challenges:⁴³

- **Let's Work**, which describes itself as "a global partnership to create more and better private sector jobs,"⁴⁴ was launched in 2013. It aims to pilot new approaches to job creation in country, while improving data and evidence, and sharing best practice and tools.⁴⁵
- **Solutions for Youth Employment (S4YE)** was launched in 2014 and aims to help 150 million young people access productive work by 2030.⁴⁶
- Most recently, the **Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth** was launched as "a strategic multi-stakeholder alliance... leveraging the convening power of the United Nations," with the aim of being a "cornerstone" for the delivery of SDG8.⁴⁷

During the SDG negotiations, many developing countries made infrastructure (SDG9) a priority,⁴⁸ with the need for greatest investment to support a structural transformation in the least developed countries.⁴⁹ In 2012, Bhattacharya, Romani and Stern observed that "1.4 billion people still have no

access to electricity, 0.9 billion are without access to safe drinking water and 2.6 billion without access to basic sanitation.”⁵⁰ They estimated that investment spending on infrastructure in developing countries would have to double, from \$0.8-0.9 trillion per year to approximately \$1.8-2.3 trillion per year, in order to address these concerns by 2020.

Recent years have seen a number of efforts to bridge this financing gap, especially in Africa, where there has been a surge in investment from traditional and non-traditional sources.⁵¹ A number of new financing vehicles have been created, including the New Development Bank, set up by BRICS, which has been created to fund long-term infrastructure needs in developing countries.⁵² The New Development Bank has explicitly challenged the Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) to “reinvent themselves and introduce innovative instruments,” while analysts have called on the MDBs to do more to set standards, meet the needs of investment ‘orphans’, and ensure coordination in an increasingly crowded field.

The Global Infrastructure Facility, launched in October 2014, is a reaction to this shifting landscape (case study 7). Hosted by the World Bank, this new multi-stakeholder partnership is “designed to provide a new way to collaborate on preparing, structuring and implementing complex projects that no single institution could handle on its own.”⁵³ The Facility commenced a three-year pilot phase in April 2015, with an initial capitalization of \$100 million and private sector partners representing around \$12 trillion in assets.

The need for greater coordination among the multiple infrastructure initiatives (including the Global Infrastructure Facility) was reflected at Third International Conference on Financing for Development in Addis Ababa, where world leaders called for a Global Infrastructure Forum to be established.⁵⁴ The Addis Ababa Action Agenda envisions that the Forum will improve alignment among “established and new infrastructure initiatives, multilateral and national development banks, United Nations agencies, and national institutions, development partners and the private sector.”⁵⁵ The first forum has now been held. Moving forward, it must now unite overlapping infrastructure initiatives around a common roadmap, increasing accountability and ensuring that investment and implementation are in line with the aspirations of the SDGs.

Inequality (SDG10) is not a central theme for existing multi-stakeholder partnerships, although the Global Forum on Migration and Development, and the Global Knowledge Partnership on Migration and Development address SDG10.7. In March 2016, the UN’s first meeting on inequality underlined the need for strong partnerships to deliver SDG10 and recommended that “a special commission within the UN system should be created, dedicated to follow up, monitor, and systematize approaches to inequality.” Following this, a Group of Friends of SDG10 has been formed to “further collective efforts that could eventually translate into the right policies to address inequalities.” There is also growing interest from foundations to tackle inequalities, with some making it their main priority.⁵⁶

Finally, cities are the subject of a goal (SDG11), but are perhaps most important as a source of innovation and experimentation for all 17 SDGs. The Cities Alliance aims to strengthen “the capacity of cities to provide improved services to the urban poor.”⁵⁷ The C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group has brought together leaders from 80 cities that represent a quarter of the global economy. 100 Resilient Cities aims to increase the resilience of cities to both shocks and “the stresses that weaken the fabric of a city on a day to day or cyclical basis.”

Across the five *prosperity* goals, the priority is to ensure that new partnerships and platforms fulfill their promise, and that they have the credibility to mobilize investment that is commensurate with the ambitions of the agenda.

The success of the major partnerships in this area is not a given. SE4All is now attempting to move from advocacy for the importance of universal access to clean energy to a new strategy “where the emphasis is on helping partners to take rapid, tangible action on those agreements.”⁵⁸ Its success is now a test case for the credibility of the UN’s contribution to delivery of the SDGs.

Partnerships for jobs hold promise, but must avoid overlap and be challenged to deliver results in their pilot programs and countries. It is similarly important that the Global Infrastructure Forum and Facility identify and address infrastructure and capacity gaps, improve coordination among existing and new infrastructure initiatives, and mobilize investment from public and private sources. The leadership role of cities, meanwhile, should be developed, not just for SDG11, but for the agenda as a whole.

Inequality is a clearly a gap in the current partnership portfolio. A new platform could emerge from the work of the ‘friends’ group and the proposed UN commission, and be asked to develop political consensus around the shared strategies and policies that are needed for inclusive growth, and to address grievances fueled by rising inequality.

Recommendations



Sustainable Energy for All (SE4All)

- Deliver the results set out on the strategic framework for 2016-2021.
- Address criticisms of the platform from some governments and businesses.
- Demonstrate that SE4All is able to deliver significant additional investment.



Partnerships for Youth Employment

- Avoid overlap and duplication between various partnerships and initiatives.
- Develop a credible theory of change for how international action can support the expansion of national labor markets.
- Invest in those partnerships that demonstrate they have created jobs in their pilot countries and programs.

Global Infrastructure Forum and Facility

- Identify and address infrastructure and capacity gaps.
- Improve coordination among existing and new infrastructure initiatives.
- Mobilize investment from public and private sources.



Inequality Forum

- Share knowledge and experience on how to reduce inequality.
- Build the political will needed to deliver policies that will achieve greater equality.
- Strengthen evidence for what works, at both international and national levels.



Protect the planet from degradation, including through sustainable consumption and production, sustainably managing its natural resources and taking urgent action on climate change



Strengths

- After the Paris Agreement, momentum is growing behind a number of partnerships, platforms and initiatives.
- The Green Climate Fund should provide a substantial boost in investment, with \$100bn to be disbursed annually by 2020.
- The Roadmap for Climate Action aims to ensure these partnerships deliver results in line with long-term climate goals.
- The 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production (10YFP) has launched a series of ‘mini-partnerships.’
- Oceans have been identified as a priority for strengthened partnerships.

Weaknesses

- Many targets for environmental sustainability are far off track.
- Climate and sustainable consumption partnerships may not be able to mobilize fast enough to support the Paris Agreement.
- The Green Climate Fund and 10YFP are unproven.
- On land, biodiversity is being lost rapidly, while the oceans face a growing crisis due to over exploitation of resources, pollution and climate change.
- Few partnerships are at a scale to tackle threats to oceans and biodiversity.

Priorities

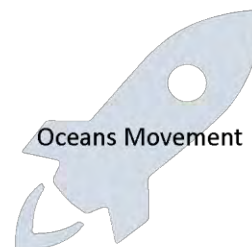
- 1 Use Agenda 2030’s universality to increase focus on and urgency for all goals related to environmental sustainability and its impact on livelihoods and resilience.
- 2 Increase political will and support to ensure platforms for sustainable consumption and production are a success.
- 3 Implement the Roadmap for Climate Action to ensure partnerships, alliances and funds meet the Paris Climate Goals.
- 4 Use the effectiveness of climate partnerships to support more ambitious climate commitments in 2020.
- 5 Launch a movement to deliver the oceans SDG.



Stay the course



Boost



Launch



Partners for Planet

Agenda 2030 brings together the development priorities of the MDGs with action to address the long-term sustainability challenges that were first put on the international agenda in Rio. The four ‘planet’ SDGs are:

- SDG12** *Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns*
- SDG13** *Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts*
- SDG14** *Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development*
- SDG15** *Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss*

While the past 20 years have seen rapid improvements in economic growth and some notable successes in reducing poverty, environmental indicators have deteriorated markedly.⁵⁹ The world is developing, but it is not doing so sustainably.

Climate is the dominant concern, with implications for all other SDGs. The Paris Agreement recognizes that it “represents an urgent and potentially irreversible threat to human societies and the planet and thus requires the widest possible cooperation by all countries.”⁶⁰ The Paris Agreement includes national commitments for 2020-2025 that put the world on track for a 2.7-3.7°C temperature rise – an improvement on the pre-Paris expectation of 4-5°C, but still far above a 1.5 or 2°C threshold.⁶¹

The road to Paris, however, demonstrates the importance of partnership approaches. In 2009, the Copenhagen Climate Conference failed to deliver a comprehensive global deal, with negotiators left with far too much to do in a frantic endgame characterized by confusion and mutual distrust. The Paris negotiation was comparatively more successful due to the fact that it married ‘bottom-up’ cooperation with ‘top-down’ political support, and had done so well before anyone travelled to the French capital.

Countries were willing to commit themselves to cuts in national emissions ahead of time because the process was bolstered by bilateral and multilateral cooperation, and partnerships in areas such as technology and finance.⁶² Governments sealed a deal for which considerable groundwork had been laid in the real world, not trying to bring one into existence within the confines of the negotiating room.

A similar logic will be needed after Paris. Many Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) are conditional on the provision of finance, technology and capacity-building, with a projected need of at least \$3.5 trillion for the former (from all sources, national and international, private and public).⁶³ The Paris Agreement enjoins developed countries to scale up financial support and appoints two High-Level Champions whose job it will be to lay the groundwork for delivery of the INDCs.⁶⁴ An ongoing effort to marry action platforms with political will should, in turn, allow countries to make stronger commitments in 2020, and to further ‘ratchet up’ ambition after the first global stock take in 2023.

Partnerships for a number of the SDGs can be expected to make a contribution to this process, in particular those for clean energy, for innovation and resilient infrastructure, and for sustainable

urbanization. But partnerships that aim to ensure a shift to sustainable consumption and production patterns (SDG12) are especially important, as they will demonstrate whether growth is beginning to be decoupled from the environmental damage it causes.

This puts the spotlight on the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production (10YFP)(case study 8). Announced at Rio+20, 10YFP is identified as the main tool for the delivery of SDG12.1, as well as for a target in SDG8 on decoupling economic growth from environmental degradation. The framework is, in effect, an umbrella for a series of mini-partnerships, with programs launched for public procurement, consumer information, tourism, lifestyles and education, buildings and construction, and food systems. Each of these has its own lead group and multi-stakeholder advisory committee.

For the climate goal – SDG13 – the target for mobilizing \$100 billion of annual climate finance and operationalizing the Green Climate Fund (GCF) is of great importance. The GCF is critical to the political bargain that underpins the Paris Agreement (case study 9). It has been established through a drawn out process, reflecting disagreements about its mandate, strategy and design, and has only recently announced its first grants. Its target for disbursement in 2020 is more than the Global Environment Facility – the original ‘green fund’ – has disbursed over its 25 year history. It explicitly aims to “operate at a larger scale than other comparable funds to promote the paradigm shift towards low-emission and climate-resilient development pathways.”

SDGs14 and 15 cover the sustainable use of oceans and terrestrial ecosystems. The global dimensions of most environmental threats are particularly obvious, with patterns of unsustainable development increasingly causing irreversible environmental damage. The Global Biodiversity Outlook finds that “pressures on biodiversity will continue to increase at least until 2020, and that the status of biodiversity will continue to decline,”⁶⁵ while the first World Ocean Assessment⁶⁶ concludes that climate change is having a serious impact on the world’s oceans and seas, the exploitation of marine resources is unsustainable, and that a variety of human activities are causing growing damage to marine ecosystems.⁶⁶ The latter calls for a coherent and comprehensive approach to the management of human impacts on oceans, and for the implementation of practicable, cost effective and evidence-based solutions that will lead to greater sustainability.

In both biodiversity and oceans, there is a push for stronger partnerships that can bring stakeholders together to provide change at the scale needed to deliver the SDGs. Momentum seems strong for oceans, where there are a number of relevant partnerships such as the Ocean Sanctuary Alliance, the Partnership for Regional Oceans Governance, Global Partnership on Marine Litter, the Global Partnership on Nutrient Management, and the Global Coral Reef Partnership, but no umbrella that can coordinate and synthesize their efforts, and maximize their contribution to SDG14.

In 2017, the UN will hold the first of a series of triennial conferences that aim to strengthen cooperation and partnerships for the delivery of SDG14. The first conference, to be held in June 2017, will assess progress and gaps in implementation of the goal, and explore “what action alliances and partnerships need to be formed to take [all partners] forward.”⁶⁷ Given that the UN has comparative advantage in this area, this is an opportunity to launch an Oceans Movement that will ensure diverse partnerships work effectively together. If proven successful, a similar approach could be considered for biodiversity.

Across the four *planet* goals, the priority is to support and boost existing partnerships and initiatives, and strengthen cooperation between them.

Given the scale of its ambition and the complexity of its structure, 10YFP will need sustained political support and effective management if it is to fulfill its “significant potential for delivering *collective impact*...through the programs and flagship projects which engage multiple actors with a common agenda, mutually supportive activities and shared measurement systems which can thus deliver at scale.”⁶⁸ It will be especially important for 10YFP to build the data systems to demonstrate its platforms are contributing to the shift towards more sustainable patterns of consumption and production.⁶⁹

For climate, the two High-Level Champions will need to ensure the “successful execution of existing efforts and the scaling-up and introduction of new or strengthened voluntary efforts, initiatives and coalitions.”⁷⁰ They have set out a roadmap that aims to “boost cooperative action between governments, cities, business, investors and citizens,”⁷¹ by providing a path for partnerships to gain official recognition, while ensuring coalitions meet targets that are consistent with long-term climate goals.⁷² This Roadmap for Climate Action, complete with champions to drive it forward, provides a model for how diverse partnerships and funds can be galvanized to work towards shared targets.

Recommendations



Stay the Course

Climate partnerships and funds

- Deliver the Roadmap for Climate Action in the run up to 2016 climate talks in Marrakech (COP22).
- Build on existing climate initiatives, while ensuring the credible tracking of results.
- Create an ongoing mechanism for ensuring that climate partnerships, alliances, networks and funds contribute to long-term climate goals.



Boost

10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production (10YFP)

- Support 10YFP’s six ‘mini-partnerships’ to deliver results in public procurement, consumer information, tourism, lifestyles and education, buildings and construction, and food systems.
- Launch new programs under 10YFP only when it is clear that the first batch will deliver results.
- Build data systems that enable 10YFP to demonstrate its impact on production and consumption patterns.



Launch

Oceans Movement

- Convene existing oceans partnerships and initiatives to explore opportunities and gaps.
- Conduct a scoping study for a new Oceans Movement.
- Launch the Oceans Movement at the first UN Conference to Support the Implementation of SDG 14 in June 2017.



Foster peaceful, just and inclusive societies
which are free from fear and violence



Strengths

- Strengthened evidence for what works to prevent violence.
- Growing grassroots networks for increasing access to justice.
- The Open Government Partnership is a potentially transformative and universal platform.
- Increased political will to tackle transnational threats to peace and justice.
- Networks of policymakers, experts and practitioners have increased in number and effectiveness.

Weaknesses

- The capacity to deliver SDG16 is divided across sectors and disciplines.
- Relatively few partnerships are designed to deliver change at a scale commensurate with the Agenda 2030 aspiration for fostering peaceful, just and inclusive societies.
- Policy is often not informed by the latest evidence.
- Data is lacking to demonstrate progress against the targets for peaceful, just and inclusive societies.

Priorities

- 1** Strengthen global efforts to prevent violence in all its forms, especially against women and children.
- 2** Respond to strong public demand for greater access to justice.
- 3** Build on the Open Government Partnership and other partnerships for strengthening governance and institutions.
- 4** Increase focus on transnational threats such as illicit financial flows.
- 5** Launch a platform for peaceful, just and inclusive societies.



Open Government Partnership
Extractive Industries Transparency
Initiative

Stay the course



Delivery partnerships for
ending violence and promoting
access to justice

Boost



Platform for peaceful, just and
inclusive societies

Launch



Partners for Peace

Agenda 2030 recognizes that “there can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development.”

SDG16 is the main goal for this thematic area, but we would again underline the importance of targets from other goals that relate to this theme (for example, gender-based violence in SDG5, human trafficking in SDG8, and political, social and economic inclusion in SDG10):

SDG16 *Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels*

The role of peace and justice in Agenda 2030 has proved controversial. In April 2014, at the request of the President of the General Assembly, the Center on International Cooperation (CIC) reviewed the debate around the proposed SDG16. Drawing on a series of interviews with member states and other actors, we found:

Widespread support for the need to foster peaceful, non-violent and inclusive societies, but disagreement as to how this objective can be achieved within the context of the post-2015 development agenda.

From a delivery perspective, all goals are not equal. As can be seen from case studies presented in the second part of this paper, some SDGs are based on relatively well-developed strategies, complete with projected business-as-usual trajectories and a roadmap for the finance and actions that will be needed. Delivery platforms and partnerships at global and regional levels have also been identified. These SDGs emerged from a debate about solutions and are an expression of *an intent to deliver* by stakeholders from many sectors and geographies.

In contrast, SDG16 and related targets for *peaceful, just and inclusive societies* have emerged from a debate about problems, rather than solutions. There is much greater clarity about the threat posed to sustainable development by violence, insecurity and injustice, than there is consensus on the strategies that can be used to deliver peace, access to justice and good governance. This has resulted in skepticism about how these targets can be implemented and progress measured, which has been compounded by fears that development will take a back seat to narrowly-defined security objectives.

The implementation of SDG16 is critical to the two most important cross-cutting themes for Agenda 2030: the commitment to *reach the furthest behind first* on the one hand, and principle of *universality* (goals and targets for “the entire world, developed and developing countries alike”) on the other.

- To ***leave no-one behind***, there must be a more effective response to the concentration of all forms of poverty – income and non-income – in countries and communities where violence is high and institutions are weak. A lack of capacity to deliver in these settings must also be confronted. More effective policies are needed to transform institutions, increase access to justice, and to sustain peace in a way that will support development.

- But at the same time, **universality** encourages us to confront the role played by violence, injustice, and weak institutions in entrenching inequality in all countries, with a disproportionate impact on women, children and other vulnerable groups. With SDG16, high and middle income countries face pressure to show they are willing to take action domestically.

The dual focus on *leaving no-one behind* and tackling *universal threats to sustainable development* means that delivery strategies for the *peaceful, just and inclusive societies* lens will need to transcend the one-way modalities of the MDG era. New platforms for collective action will have to demonstrate that they can engage with countries of all income levels, while providing particular support for those where insecurity is a binding constraint to the delivery of many of the SDGs.

Partnerships for this area break into three broad clusters. For peaceful societies, recent years have seen growing investment in collecting the evidence on the most effective interventions for preventing violence, through platforms such as the Violence Prevention Alliance and the Know Violence in Childhood Global Learning Initiative, with international organizations uniting behind common strategies for ending violence against women⁷³ and against children.⁷⁴ Networks of practitioners are also being strengthened (the Violence Prevention Alliance once again, or the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime). Partnerships that can turn evidence into an agenda for action, however, are at an early stage. There is also fragmentation between partnerships that work on interpersonal violence, on violent crime, and on fragility and conflict.

The Global Partnership and Fund to End Violence Against Children is one of the first of a new generation of partnerships that have been stimulated by the launch of Agenda 2030 (case study 10). It aims to make violence prevention a global policy priority, while working with pathfinder countries to accelerate action to tackle the violence children face. This partnership is universal in scope, given that children experience violence in all countries. Its most urgent task is to redefine what governments and other actors believe can be delivered. Advocates have long argued that “all violence against children is preventable.” They now have to turn that assertion into a convincing case for action and investment.

The ‘just societies’ category includes partnerships that help deliver targets for access to justice and rule of law, for legal identity, and for illicit flows and corruption, as well as targets for discrimination, equality and human rights. Evidence-based approaches have been slower to develop for access to justice,⁷⁵ with “limited evidence on how the rule of law can be improved through concerted domestic and/or international intervention.”⁷⁶ Partnerships for justice are relatively under-developed – a result of a lack of past funding and support for this priority. There has, however, been recent interest in bottom-up and grassroots approaches, largely driven by civil society. The Global Legal Empowerment Network, for example, has 2,500 members “working to make justice a reality for the billions who live outside of the law.”⁷⁷

For inclusive societies, partnerships are working to strengthen institutions and promote good governance, and to support SDG targets that aim to ensure all people can participate fully in society. The Open Government Partnership (OGP) is the most established partnership for this thematic area (case study 11). Launched in September 2011 by eight governments (Brazil, Indonesia, Mexico, Norway, the Philippines, South Africa, the United Kingdom, and the United States), it now includes 69 countries as members – representing a third of the world’s population. Aiming to “secure concrete commitments from governments to promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption, and harness new

technologies to strengthen governance,” it must now turn this commitment into long-term impact that will provide more capacity for governments to deliver all of their development goals. OGP, along with other partnerships such as the Effective Institutions Platform, are also investing in developing the evidence base for delivery of SDG targets on governance and institutions.

Not all partnerships are as broad-based as OGP. The Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) does not attempt to deliver change itself, but to promote “a global standard for the governance of a country’s oil, gas and mineral resources” that will reduce corruption, strengthen institutions, and influence the behavior of governments, resources companies and investors (case study 12). Its ultimate aim is to ensure that public revenues from resources are available for high-priority national needs, with \$1.91 trillion of government revenues now disclosed. EITI must now persuade governments that compliance is a chance to build effective governance systems, and is not just a box-ticking exercise. Other partnerships that focus primarily on norms and standards include the Open Contracting Partnership and the Construction Sector Transparency Initiative.

For SDG16 and other related targets, the main priorities are to support nascent platforms and to enable them to work together more effectively to deliver the global goals. OGP is one of the few mature platforms, with a universal membership and an innovative model that combines national ownership with independent reporting on the delivery of commitments. It must now deliver its aim to “make sure that real change is happening on the ground in a majority of OGP countries and that this change is benefiting citizens.” EITI offers an example of a focused partnership that addresses a problem that many countries are eager to solve, and which could play an important role in establishing the rules and practices needed to support a fairer and more sustainable model of globalization.

Other partnerships, especially newer ones such as the Global Partnership and Fund to End Violence Against Children, need to be supported as they demonstrate they can deliver significant, sustained and measurable reductions in violence, creating the conditions where growing numbers of people can benefit from development. Platforms and partnerships for justice also need to be supported and expanded, as do initiatives to tackle transnational threats to peace and justice, which can only be tackled through international cooperation.

The main priority, however, is to ensure coherent delivery across a range of partnerships, networks and alliances. In part, this can be achieved by strengthening data and reporting, as UNDP proposes in bringing together an alliance of governments, civil society and the private sector to support accountability for the delivery of SDG16. But greater effort will be needed to create a shared strategic direction and to bring partners together around the policies that are most likely to deliver impact. For this reason, we believe a platform for peaceful, just and inclusive societies is needed.

Its task would be to increase alignment across SDG16 as a whole, acting as convener and catalyst for greater innovation and ambition, and building a strong link with practice in the field. This platform would not, initially at least, need the profile of Every Woman Every Child. Instead, it could be an informal initiative that aimed to convene relevant partnerships, alliances, and networks in a way that will bring urgency and coherence to delivery, bringing them together around a roadmap, an action plan, and a common approach to investing in evidence for what works.

Recommendations



Open Government Partnership (OGP)

- Growing number of OGP country action plans to support ambitious delivery of SDG16.
- Demonstrate implementation of OGP action plans delivers sustained improvements to standards of governance.
- Continue to invest in research agenda and increase understanding of ‘what works.’

Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI)

- Continue to strengthen and promote the EITI standard.
- Meet EITI’s four challenges for the future: integration into government systems; using reporting to change policy; make beneficial ownerships disclosure mandatory; strengthen participation by governments and systems.⁷⁸
- Quantify the benefits for compliance for governments and private sector.



Delivery partnerships for ending violence, and for promoting access to justice

- Support and expand partnerships that aim to reduce violence, especially those focused on preventing violence against women and children.
- Support and expand platforms and partnerships aimed at delivering access to justice for all.
- Strengthen evidence for what works to tackle transnational threats to peace and justice, including human trafficking.



Platform for peaceful, just and inclusive societies

- Explore the potential for a platform for peaceful, just and inclusive societies.
- Build a road map for delivering SDG16 and other related targets.
- Strengthen evidence base and develop case for investment.



A revitalized Global Partnership for Sustainable Development... focused in particular on the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable, with the participation of all countries, all stakeholders and all people



Strengths

- Growing focus on supporting domestic resource mobilization and improving capacity for tax collection.
- Partnerships are exploring more effective use of development finance to deliver the SDGs.
- Technology Facilitation Mechanism has been launched.
- Strong and growing support for the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data.
- Platforms such as the Global Compact promote private sector contributions to the SDGs.

Weaknesses

- The financing gap for the SDGs is estimated at 1.5-2.5% of GDP – partnerships are yet to respond to a challenge of this scale.
- New approaches to technology cooperation are unproven.
- It will take most countries many years to gather data needed to demonstrate progress against the majority of SDG targets.

Priorities

- 1 Demonstrate that international cooperation can strengthen domestic resource mobilization.
- 2 Show that the Technology Facilitation Mechanism can provide developing countries with the science, technology and innovation needed to deliver the SDGs.
- 3 Use national Data Roadmaps for Sustainable Development to demonstrate how progress against the SDGs can be reviewed.



Stay the course

Addis Tax Initiative and other partnerships to strengthen domestic resource mobilization
 Technology Facilitation Mechanism
 Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data

Boost



Launch



Partners for *Partnerships*

SDG17 sets out the means of implementation for the other 16 goals, and it is considered “of equal importance with the other Goals and targets.”

SDG17 *Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development*

It includes 19 targets on finance, technology, capacity-building, trade, and broader systemic issues, while the other 16 goals include a further 43 targets for their implementation. More than a third of the targets, in other words, are concerned with *how* the SDGs will be delivered.

SDG17 was designed to address some of the weaknesses of the equivalent MDG, which was widely seen as one of the least successful of the old goals. MDG8 lacked quantified targets, had poorly constructed indicators, and saw only patchy measurement.⁷⁹ It was also seen as being lax on developed countries, with critics reporting it as “an exercise in packaging anything the reporting country may have been doing on aid, debt or trade, rather than assessing those actions against a pre-set yardstick of progress or of what they were achieving in terms of human rights and promoting the other MDGs.”⁸⁰

Only a few of SDG17’s targets are readily quantifiable, however. This makes the goal’s tangible commitments especially important. These include targets for official development assistance; a commitment to establish a global technology mechanism and technology bank; a ‘significant’ increase in the share of exports from developing countries; support for developing countries to produce high-quality, timely and disaggregated data; and establishment of a new measure that will complement GDP.

As a cross-cutting goal, many of SDG17’s targets are already being incorporated into partnerships primarily focused on other goals, through the promotion of domestic and other resource mobilization, for example, or through accelerating the collection of data to monitor progress. The goal also offers specific opportunities for SDG17 partnerships and platforms that will underpin the delivery of the agenda as a whole. Immediate priorities are to boost new partnerships for domestic resource mobilization, technology cooperation, and the ‘data revolution,’ demonstrating that they can significantly increase national capacity to deliver the SDGs.

Partners in the Addis Tax Initiative aims to “generate substantially more resources for capacity building in the field of domestic resource mobilization/taxation as well as more ownership and commitment for the establishment of transparent, fair and efficient tax systems.”⁸¹ Other partnerships such as Tax Inspectors Without Borders have recently been launched to improve international cooperation on taxation,⁸² while a Global Forum for Asset Recovery (with implications for both SDG16.4 and SDG17.1) has been created to “strengthen co-operation between the countries that have had assets stolen and the countries where those assets are hidden, and help ensure law enforcement on both sides drive forward vital work to return illicit funds.”⁸³

The Technology Facilitation Mechanism aims to enhance international cooperation and tackle the fragmentation that prevents developing countries from gaining access to the science, innovation and technologies they need to develop sustainably (case study 13). It has been launched, but is yet to

articulate its strategy for delivering results in terms of increased exchange of technologies and an acceleration in innovation. It also needs to ensure it is equipped to attract the participation of leading investors, business, and owners of intellectual property.

The Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data is a third partnership that has been launched to support the delivery of Agenda 2030 (case study 14). It is bringing together ‘data champions’ from all sectors to work on developing the data sources and systems needed to underpin sustainable development. It is supporting the development of Data Roadmaps for Sustainable Development, which aim to use “real-time, dynamic, disaggregated data to help achieve and monitor the SDGs.” The priority is to establish a number of these roadmaps in countries with different levels of capacity, providing a practical demonstration of how a ‘data revolution’ can underpin the SDGs.

Recommendations



Addis Tax Initiative and other partnerships to strengthen domestic resource mobilization

- Meet target to double technical cooperation for taxation and DRM.⁸⁴
- Demonstrate increased capacity for DRM in ‘pathfinder’ countries.
- Strengthen international cooperation on illicit financial flows, asset recovery, beneficiary ownership and transfer pricing.

Technology Facilitation Mechanism

- Identify most urgent technology needs and gaps in addressing them.
- Demonstrate ability to attract and involve businesses/investors.
- Monitor results for a small number of technology clusters.

Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data

- Data champions to implement Data Roadmaps for Sustainable Development.
- Promote and disseminate innovative models and best practice.
- Continue to communicate with the UN Statistical Commission to avoid any duplication in efforts.

Three

Making Partnerships Fit for Results

Making Partnerships ‘Fit for Results’

In December 2015, the Second Committee resolution *Towards Global Partnerships* stressed the need for:

The United Nations system to develop, for those partnerships in which it participates, a common and systemic approach which places greater emphasis on transparency, coherence, impact, accountability and due diligence, without imposing undue rigidity in partnership agreements.⁸⁵

This paper endorses the importance of a common and systemic approach. A strategic conversation about the future of partnerships is badly needed. This should not be about their *theoretical* role in the Agenda 2030 environment, but instead a practical dialogue about whether each partnership has the capacity, resources, and will to deliver transformational change, and how, collectively, they will respond to national policies, needs, and demand.

In the past, member states have shown some ambivalence towards efforts to take a more strategic approach to partnerships. In 2013, the Secretary-General proposed the creation of a UN Partnership Facility, arguing it would enable the UN to “capture the full potential for partnership, yielding more results at a fraction of the current costs.”⁸⁶ The Facility was intended to increase integration and to extend the range of ‘partnership services’ that could be provided centrally. While civil society and business leaders were supportive of the need for increased coordinating capacity, some member states were skeptical and the proposal was withdrawn in 2015 after inclusive discussions on its mandate, structure, and funding.⁸⁷

Nonetheless, the need for strategic oversight persists. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda contains a commitment to developing “principles, guidelines and standardized documentation” for public-private partnerships, calls for increased transparency in philanthropic giving (much of which is channeled through partnerships), and for the development of a ‘knowledge base’ on partnerships that can share lessons learned about what does and doesn’t work.⁸⁸

Exercises such as the ECOSOC Dialogue on the longer term positioning of the UN Development System, which has explored partnership approaches to Agenda 2030 delivery, have an important role to play in catalyzing debate on this issue.⁸⁹ The Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review will also need to assess the role partnerships can play in contributing to the coherence and impact of the UN development system. Additionally, the next Secretary-General must set out her plans to ensure the SDGs do not lead to a situation where partnerships proliferate, but the quality of their direction, effectiveness, and coherence is weak.

So what can we do to ensure the portfolio of partnerships supporting delivery of Agenda 2030 is ‘fit for results’ and can play a full role in helping governments and others to turn ambitious and far reaching targets into real progress?

This paper identifies seven recommendations. The first three are aimed directly at partnerships and those who lead and operate, fund, and monitor them. Recommendations four to seven are aimed primarily at the UN, governments and others who interact with partnerships and aim to ensure they are used most effectively.

1. Partnerships and their programs must be based on a clear theory of change.

Partnerships can, and should continue to, play a number of different roles in delivering Agenda 2030. Most global platforms allow for the sharing of knowledge and expertise, providing a forum for mutual accountability, while acting as a stimulus for the improvements in the quality and availability of data that are needed to demonstrate impact.

Beyond these basic functions, the scope and mandate of a partnership varies, as does whether it identifies as a platform, a movement, a network, an alliance or some other form. Some partnerships are primarily financing vehicles (e.g. the GEF, GCF, and Global Infrastructure Facility), while others have a delivery function, whether in a narrow niche (e.g. Gavi), or across a much broader range of activities (e.g. SE4All, 10YFP). Some are designed explicitly to promote norms and standards (e.g. EITI and OGP), while others are committed to building political will needed to tackle neglected challenges (e.g. SUN, the Global Partnership and Fund to End Violence Against Children, SWA). Meanwhile umbrella platforms such as Every Woman Every Child, the Global Infrastructure Forum, and the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data aim to ensure that many other initiatives are more than the sum of their parts.

The primary question however is not so much *what* a partnership does, as *why* it has chosen to focus on these activities. What is the theory of change that underlies the assumption that a set of interventions will trigger broader changes leading to meaningful and lasting outcomes?

We need to understand these motivations, and judge the performance of partnerships accordingly. Is the GEF driving a transformation towards environmental sustainability or is it simply a portfolio of worthwhile projects? Does GPE's investment in national planning lead to meaningful improvements in schools and, ultimately, to learning outcomes, or do most sector plans end up gathering dust on a shelf? Is Gavi effectively reshaping vaccine markets and EITI natural resource industries, or is the former displacing national expenditure and the latter creating a paper-based standard with little real world bite? Will the political will SUN has created eventually lead to children enjoying more nutritious diets, or is the link between advocacy and delivery broken? Can SE4All 'de-risk' investment opportunities in a way that allows a country's energy sector to tap into private finance that would otherwise be denied to it, or is the gulf between market imperatives and a weak business environment beyond the partnership's ability to bridge?

Asking similarly fundamental questions of all partnerships that seek to support delivery of Agenda 2030 would enable us to build a shared understanding of which types of approach tend to be most successful, and are most highly valued in the countries in which they work. This work would be done ideally through periodic meta-evaluations, possibly on a five year cycle.

At present, assumptions that underpin a partnership's theory of change are often untested, and there is scant comparative understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of different partnership models. This is a significant hindrance to the establishment of effective new partnerships and the reform of existing ones, since we lack a clear body of evidence on what works, in which circumstances, and why.

2. "Which countries? And how many?" are tough questions for most partnerships.

All models of partnership involve compromise in their design – there is no magic formula. In designing – or reforming – a partnership, compromises must be made between inclusivity and ownership on the one

hand, and focus and strategic clarity on the other. There is no ‘right answer’ to this problem, and there will always be interest groups lobbying for a shift in one or other direction, or for a greater or lesser use of conditionality to maximize strategic coherence.

Low performing partnerships are likely to be those that expand too quickly, their embryonic systems overwhelmed by members with only a weak commitment to action. In the start-up phase of Agenda 2030, *quality* will be more important than *quantity*, with partnerships losing credibility if they spread themselves too thinly. As Bill Gates has argued, development partnerships are probably best judged in the same way as a venture capital portfolio – by whether the successes are striking enough to compensate for the failures.⁹⁰

Inclusivity is an important principle, but in the early years of the new agenda, partnerships must concentrate on their ‘pathfinders’ – countries who play a leadership role in implementing one or more of the SDG targets. Their commitment to acting ambitiously, and to monitoring progress and demonstrating results, will provide a model for others to learn from. It will provide a basis for the partnership to make the case for ongoing investment and political support.

Partnerships must also make difficult decisions about their levels of ambition (realistic and achievable plans *versus* an attempt to provide transformational change of the scale needed to deliver the SDGs), and on whether to take on new objectives even when existing ones are yet to be delivered. Many existing partnerships will face important questions about how to adapt to universality. Do they continue to focus on the needs of the poorest countries or do they revise their strategies so they have a more global focus?

The most successful partnerships will be those that make a clear choice. On the one hand, there will be those who make a strong commitment to reaching the furthest behind first – driving action to ensure that *everyone* benefits from Agenda 2030’s zero based goals. Gavi, Every Woman Every Child, Scaling Up Nutrition, and Sanitation and Water for All must all devote themselves to ensuring that all people in all countries receive the healthcare, food, and services they need. On the other hand, some partnerships will implement truly universal models, such as the Open Government Partnership – whose richest member is the United States of America and its poorest is Liberia – or 10YFP which aims to deliver fundamental changes in the way all societies produce and consume.⁹¹

Given the inevitability of trade-offs in the structure and operation of a partnership, we should not be surprised that most go through repeated cycles of reform as they try to find a design that offers the best ‘fit’ in response to their current set of strategic and operational challenges and constraints. While some partnerships seem stuck in a cycle of repeated waves of unsatisfactory governance reform, even successful partnerships have found their governance needs to evolve as they grow. The willingness to learn and adapt should therefore be encouraged, with partnerships requiring flexibility and a willingness to identify and build on successes. Much more threatening would be an ambivalence and loss of political backing shortly after a high profile launch and therefore well before impact can be demonstrated.

3. Partnerships must demonstrate their ability to turn global cooperation into results at local levels.

Partnerships are often seen as a response to fragmentation in the global architecture or to a failure of the international system to deliver.

Gavi was formed out of disillusion at the international system's failure to increase global immunization rates. Now an independent organization, there is still debate about whether it and other vertical funds have improved international health governance or weakened it. Like Gavi, SUN was explicitly set up as a response to the dysfunctional nature of the international system for nutrition. Its recent evaluation found that it is yet to reduce duplication, or increase alignment and clarity. Every Woman Every Child exists purely to try and increase alignment and reduce fragmentation, a role it seems to be performing effectively, although it has met with skepticism from some member states.

Partnerships can clearly demonstrate their added value by showing they address challenges that member states cannot tackle on their own. Gavi, for example, helps countries increase rates of immunization, but it also attempts to reshape the markets for vaccines. 10YFP aims to reshape value chains that stretch across borders in order to achieve a shift to more sustainable patterns of consumption and production. The EITI brings national actors and international investments together around a common standard for the management of natural resources. To add value, all partnerships should consider looking beyond purely national objectives to include global collective action challenges in their focus, reflecting a development agenda that has been built for an increasingly interconnected world.

In the early years of the new agenda, partnerships can also play an important role in offering governments and other partners a platform for problem-solving. The SDGs present governments with a vast number of new and unfamiliar challenges, in terms of planning, delivery, data and reporting. Partnerships will thrive if they are effective conveners and catalysts, helping countries diagnose problems and tailoring their work to assist in tackling the 'to-do' list that emerges in the new agenda's start-up phase.

Partnerships will also need to invest in innovation and act as a clearing house for solutions. Given the scale of its ambition, Agenda 2030 requires a leap into the unknown. Delivery of many of the SDGs will require new models and solutions, and significantly increased innovation. Partnerships can add value to national governments by bringing 'news from elsewhere' – evidence of what has worked in other countries and why. By building up 'toolkits' of cost effective solutions, partnerships can help inform national policymaking, and in ways that allow for the more rapid delivery of the SDGs.

At the same time, partnerships must unlock new opportunities to invest in results. A lack of finance may be a constraint for the sustainable development agenda, but many potential sources of both public and private finance are not effectively utilized at present because of a lack of investment opportunities. Partnerships have considerable potential to leverage additional finance if they are able to create credible results-based instruments or to 'de-risk' the environment. CIC has proposed the development of one or more 'quick start' packages that aim to ensure rapid delivery in areas where partnerships already exist and can be pushed to work together to demonstrate results in the early years of the partnership.⁹²

Ultimately, however, partnerships must demonstrate an unbroken link from global goals, aspirations and activity to impact on people's lives and communities. Even if the global 'added value' of a partnership is clear, and national governments are enthusiastic participants, the results chain can often be broken between national and local levels, especially in countries that are either highly devolved or where central government is weak and ineffective. This points to the imperative for partnerships to

work more closely with local decision-makers, ensuring tighter connections from national plans and policies to local delivery.

4. Greater transparency is needed for the results that partnerships deliver.

As discussed in Section One, the UN has experimented with several ways of tracking commitments to sustainable development and is currently piloting its latest database, the Partnerships for SDGs platform. Historically, the focus has been on maximum inclusion, bringing together an impressive array of initiatives of various shapes and sizes, including large numbers of voluntary commitments.

However, we need a more systematic approach for larger global partnerships. Voluntary reporting of commitments has limitations. Submissions tend to lack specificity and to claim impact across an implausibly large number of goals and targets. As a result it is hard to discern whether past commitments have been delivered and to aggregate results at goal level. We therefore recommend that all partnerships beyond a certain size and importance (perhaps defined by their geographic reach and budgets) should be clearly identified within the Partnerships for SDGs platform. These flagship partnerships, comprising a bigger group than the existing handful of Action Networks, should subsequently be asked to report on their plans and results on the basis of a common and open standard.

Existing data platforms could be used or adapted for this work. The Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data should facilitate increased sharing of data (especially that disaggregated for age and gender) by, and between, partnerships. Common standards will also be important. The International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) promotes a data standard for financial reporting that is already used by a number of major global partnerships.⁹³ Reporting of results will need to be standardized if accountability is to be improved. This work will rely on operationalization of the global indicator framework and integration with the broader system that is developed for monitoring and reporting progress in delivering the SDGs.

In time, member states could explore the potential for an independent body, reporting to ECOSOC on a regular basis, for auditing partnership results and assessing the quality of evidence for impact and effectiveness. Partnerships could then have their results assessed and their methodologies for monitoring and evaluation graded for their robustness, transparency and reach. Eventually, this could develop into a standard that all partnerships should meet in order to be considered part of the formal international 'toolkit' for delivering Agenda 2030 goals.

Results must also be assessed across the portfolio of Agenda 2030 partnerships. Many countries are exploring how they can utilize partnerships to help them deliver national priorities under the SDGs, but there is little available to guide them as they work out how a plethora of supposedly multi-sectoral initiatives can be integrated into a coherent response to their needs. This question can only be answered from the perspective taken in this paper: not considering partnership results in isolation, but whether they *aggregate* to significant progress towards sustainable development.

5. We need a better understanding of the financing of partnerships.

If it is hard to gain an overview of the results delivered by partnerships, we are even further from having the detailed financial analysis partnerships deploy.

UN DESA estimates that \$930m of the money the UN spent on development came from global funds (out of a total UN expenditure on development of \$42.6bn),⁹⁴ with the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, the GEF, and Gavi the largest sources of finance. However, this excludes money spent through implementing partners that do not come from the UN family. There is also no breakdown of partnership finance by source, nor any estimate of how effective partnerships are in using their own finance to leverage investment from others.

This lack of transparency is troubling, obscuring the role that partnerships can play in the broader challenge of financing Agenda 2030. Without corrective action, the picture is likely to become even less clear, given the need for a vast increase in the finance leveraged from the private sector to meet the SDGs, and the proliferation of innovative forms of financing. The scale of these flows is already large, with innovative finance conservatively projected to reach \$24bn by 2020, *excluding* green finance and investment in infrastructure, and assuming that various constraints to growth (lack of liquidity, institutional capacity, standards, trust, etc.) are not addressed.⁹⁵

An integrated picture of existing financial, and where possible non-financial, flows through partnerships is therefore needed, allowing an analysis of the effectiveness of different mechanisms and of the opportunities for and obstacles to growth in delivering Agenda 2030. Partnerships should also provide timely, comprehensive and forward looking data on their financing.⁹⁶ In addition, partnerships should increase independent scrutiny of the commitments they solicit from others, building on the model created by partnerships such as the EITI and the OGP, both of which have already developed independent mechanisms for follow-up and review.

This might initially be restricted to the major partnerships, but, over time, open data and standardized reporting could significantly increase transparency, with substantial benefits for those attempting to understand and increase the aggregate impact of partnerships on the SDGs as an integrated agenda.

6. A strategic approach is needed to strengthening the partnership ‘portfolio’.

As this paper has shown, a complex ecosystem of partnerships already exists, while new goals and targets are stimulating a plethora of new launches.

Developing an overview of the global partnership portfolio would be helpful, combined with identifying priorities for strengthening this. This requires leadership from the UNDS, from those running the larger partnerships (such as those badged as Action Networks), and from UN member states who are most committed to partnerships playing a central role in delivering Agenda 2030. This is not a call for a heavy-handed coordination mechanism – and *certainly* not for an attempt to plan global delivery of the SDGs centrally. Rather, it is a recommendation for the kind of joined-up thinking about next steps that is usually only thrust upon the international system by the urgency of a crisis.

The first priority should be to build on and strengthen platforms that already exist. This paper has identified established and newly launched partnerships across the 17 SDGs that need ongoing support if they are to deliver on their promise. Partnerships for sustainable energy, jobs and infrastructure, for example, are critical to Agenda 2030’s aspiration to achieve shared prosperity, but none are yet certain to succeed. The UN development system, member states, multilateral and national development banks, development partners and the private sector will all need to work together over the long term if these partnerships are to leverage a shift in the nature and direction of economic growth commensurate with

the ambitions of the SDGs. A similar argument could be made for other major partnerships – those that we have identified as having *strategic* significance for the Agenda’s success.

Second, new partnerships and platforms should only be launched where there is a compelling and demonstrable need. In this paper, we have identified the four most important gaps. *Leave no-one behind* is a cross-cutting theme for the new agenda, while the potential to create a universal social safety net could be a signature achievement of Agenda 2030. Inequality is both a standalone goal (SDG10) and an enabler for all the other goals. It is an area where political will needs to be translated into a convincing agenda for action. Meanwhile, SDG14 is recognized as a priority for collective action and for “an integrated and holistic approach to stem the decline and restore the vitality of the global ocean.”⁹⁷ Finally, for peaceful, just and inclusive societies, a mechanism is required to bring together disparate sectors, alliances and networks more effectively. In each of these four cases, a new platform is needed not to compete with what already exists, but for its potential to align the efforts of numerous partners and initiatives behind shared goals from the new agenda.

Third, partnerships themselves have a potentially important role to play in driving coherence. This paper has described how Every Woman Every Child acts as an ‘admiral’ that helps to drive a ‘fleet’ of health initiatives in a common direction (towards the SDGs for women and children’s health). SE4All plays a similar role for energy, with its new strategy bringing partners together around an agenda for action. SUN was launched in response to the dysfunctional nature of the international system for nutrition and regards itself more as a movement than a traditional partnership, and it has proved effective in encouraging national and international actors from all sectors to work together more effectively.

In each of these cases, platforms and partnerships are working to bring others together around a common purpose and a shared direction. By acting as a platform for development of a roadmap or action plan for the delivery of an SDG or for one or more targets, they foster collaboration between sectors and geographies. Their multi-stakeholder nature should allow them to align data and evidence to the goal or targets, identify business-as-usual trajectories, review evidence of what works, and develop an investment case for effective delivery. They have the potential to use the ‘data revolution’ to unite partners, bringing them together around the data tools and systems that are needed to demonstrate whether goals and targets are being met.

7. Member states and the UN Development system must actively promote integration and coherence.

Both member states and the UN development system bear responsibility for harnessing the potential of partnerships. In this recommendation, we identify four important types of action.

First, at a political level, ‘high ambition’ coalitions of countries can help create the political conditions for success. For example, the leaders of Brazil, Colombia, Germany, Liberia, Sweden, South Africa, Tanzania, Timor-Leste, and Tunisia have come together to form a group to build momentum behind Agenda 2030 delivery.⁹⁸ They have an opportunity to advocate for a coherent response from partnerships to the new agenda’s most urgent priorities. Regional bodies or other groupings of like-minded countries can play a similar role. The Small Islands Developing States have sponsored an informal partnerships dialogue and launched a partnerships platform, which could form the basis of ensuring joined-up delivery by partnerships of dimensions of the SDGs that are most relevant to the distinctive needs of these

countries.⁹⁹ This provides a model for a group of countries that is thinking strategically about what they want partnerships to deliver.

Similarly, on climate change, an important and innovative model has emerged in recent years, based on the need to bring together ‘top down’ goals and targets with ‘bottom up’ commitments and delivery. The Roadmap For Global Climate Action aims to mobilize more ambitious implementation, with two High-Level Champions acting as the “interface between action on the ground and the UNFCCC negotiation process.”¹⁰⁰ It is attempting to ensure that many thousands of initiatives and alliances are effective, credible and making progress in line with the goals set by the Paris Agreement. The Roadmap will provide policymakers with regular briefings on initiatives that have the greatest potential to be scalable and replicable, and on the alliances and collaborations that are most effectively supporting delivery.

Second, international organizations can act as *aggregators*, especially when they attempt to ensure that multiple partnerships deliver results for a group at risk of being left behind by Agenda 2030. We have pointed to the need for greater strategic alignment across various partnerships and platforms that aim to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls across one or more SDGs. UN Women has a mandate to play this convening role and to emphasize the need for a common strategic direction if the structural causes of discrimination are to be dismantled. Similarly, UNICEF could bring together a plethora of sectoral partnerships and initiatives, ensuring that they contribute in a coherent way to the needs and aspirations of children.¹⁰¹

Third, at national level, Resident Coordinators and UN Country Teams have an important role to play. The recent Second Committee resolution described the UN as a unique ‘builder of bridges’ between countries and stakeholders. Agenda 2030 increases the importance of partnership approaches that allow for types of cooperation between countries that transcend the North-South model that was common under the MDGs. Increasingly, the UN will need to facilitate the work of multi-stakeholder partnerships, based on an understanding of the assistance that national actors require and the capacity that international alliances and networks have to meet this need. Their role as a ‘broker’ should also extend to promoting the sharing of learning from country to country, requiring UN actors in country to be networked to their peers elsewhere in the world.

Finally, leadership from the new Secretary-General will be critical. She should convene key platforms, partnerships and networks immediately after she starts work in 2017, with the aim of increasing their understanding of shared strategic challenges and their ability to work together to deliver the SDGs. This could pave the way for a light-touch strategy for major partnerships, setting out areas of comparative advantage and how they plan to ensure their work is integrated, coherent and in line with the ambitions of Agenda 2030. The new Secretary-General could also build on the Paris Agreement and consider appointing high-level champions for the delivery of Agenda 2030, asking them to play a similarly active role in bringing multiple platforms, partnerships and alliances together.

This would allow the Secretary-General to provide member states with a much clearer overview of what the portfolio of partnerships can be expected to deliver, offering them a perspective that is currently hard to attain. Initial results could be presented to the High-level Political Forum in 2017, as the start of a two year agenda for action leading up to the HLPF 2019.

Conclusion – The Promise of Partnerships

In New York in September 2015, leaders agreed to a set of exceedingly ambitious and stretching goals and targets. After its birth, the Agenda received mixed reviews. Within the United Nations, the mood was and remains highly positive, with many believing we have reached a defining moment for international cooperation.

Elsewhere, however, some have been less charitable. While the Agenda 2030 summit generated much goodwill, it has been followed by “hard-hitting attacks and critiques of the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals — as well as critiques of the United Nations itself.”¹⁰² The former World Bank Economist, William Easterly was especially harsh. “The SDGs should stand for Senseless, Dreamy, Garbled,” he wrote. “Only the UN could come up with a document so worthless.”¹⁰³

The attacks, which come from across the political spectrum, are predominately driven by doubts about implementation of the new goals. Many believe that lofty targets have been set recklessly, without the requisite analysis of whether and how they can be met. As the Center on International Cooperation warned:

*In agreeing such broad and ambitious goals, governments have set the bar high. If they fail to show equivalent ambition when it comes to delivery, this will feed cynicism about multilateralism.*¹⁰⁴

The scale of the delivery challenge is indeed daunting. As this paper has argued, much of the work must be done at national level, but global multi-stakeholder partnerships clearly have an important role to play. Partnerships do not offer easy answers. Their job is a far from simple one. They must bring together stakeholders with very different expectations and approaches, and be relevant to countries with varied national priorities and capacity.

Agenda 2030 presents them with new, and complex, strategic challenges, and at present, there are only a few mechanisms for bringing partnerships together, helping them to avoid duplication and to work together towards the new goals.

This paper has reviewed existing and planned partnerships, and argued for a pragmatic approach to maximizing strengths, minimizing weaknesses, and managing complexity as far is possible. We have identified partnerships that need ongoing support and gaps where there are opportunities to launch new partnership approaches.

We have also proposed the development of common tools and standards that partnerships can live up to, and argued that governments, the UN system, and partnerships themselves must all take responsibility for promoting coherence and integration. The ‘perfect’ partnership may not exist, but without mechanisms for collaboration, the promise of Agenda 2030 will remain far out of reach.

All stakeholders – whether developing or developed country, or from the public, private or civil society sectors – want partnerships in which they are treated equally, their needs and views are understood, and their contribution is respected.

But most of all, they want partnerships that are able to help them turn ambition of Agenda 2030 into reality, and that make a full contribution to the vision of “an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable future for our planet and for present and future generations.”¹⁰⁵

Member states should make clear to major partnerships that they see the HLPF in 2019 as marking the end of the start-up phase of the new agenda. This will be the first opportunity for leaders to review Agenda 2030 and to “provide high-level political guidance on the Agenda and its implementation, identify progress and emerging challenges and mobilize further actions to accelerate implementation.”

Ahead of the HLPF 2019, all major partnerships should be asked to report, in a consistent format, on the results they have already achieved, on their financing, and on what they expect to be able to deliver during the early 2020s.

By making 2019 a deadline for delivery, member states can start the process of distinguishing ‘transformative’ partnerships – those that are acting as catalysts for effective, inclusive and urgent delivery – from the ‘zombies’ that have made little meaningful progress. They can then focus energy and resources on those partnerships that have demonstrated they can turn the ambition of Agenda 2030 into reality.

The background of the top half of the page is a dark blue grid. Each cell in the grid contains a white icon and text representing a Sustainable Development Goal (SDG). Visible goals include: 2 (Zero Hunger) with a bowl of food; 3 (Good Health and Well-being) with a heart and pulse line; 4 (Quality Education) with an open book and pencil; 5 (Gender Equality) with a female symbol and equals sign; 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) with a bar chart and upward arrow; 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure) with stacked cubes; 10 (Reduced Inequalities) with an equals sign in a circle; 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) with buildings; 14 (Life Below Water) with a fish; 15 (Life on Land) with a tree; 16 (Peace and Justice, Strong Institutions) with a scale; and 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) with interlocking circles. The text 'Case Studies' is overlaid in large white font across the middle of this grid.

Case Studies



People Case Studies

No poverty

- Better Than Cash Alliance
- Consultative Group to Assist the Poor
- Global Partnership for Financial Inclusion
- Partnership for Economic Policy
- Partnerships for Prosperity
- The World Alliance of Cities Against Poverty

Zero hunger

- CGIAR: A Global Agricultural Research Partnership
- Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition
- Global Food Safety Partnership
- Scaling Up Nutrition Movement
- Zero Hunger Challenge Initiative

Good health and well-being

- Every Woman Every Child
- Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance
- Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria
- Measles & Rubella Initiative
- Polio Global Eradication Initiative
- Roll Back Malaria
- The Partnership for Maternal, Newborn & Child Health
- WIPO Re:Search

Quality education

- Accessible Books Consortium
- Education First Initiative
- Education for All
- Global Partnership for Education
- Higher Education Sustainability Initiative

Gender equality

- DAC Network on Gender Equality
- Empower Women
- Family Planning 2020
- Fund for Gender Equality
- Gender and Water Alliance
- Girls Not Brides
- Global Gender and Climate Change Alliance
- International Alliance of Women
- International Knowledge Network of Women in Politics
- Together for Girls
- UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women

Clean water and sanitation

- Global Wastewater Initiative
- Global Water Partnership
- Great Rivers Partnership
- Sanitation and Water for All
- Sustainable Sanitation Alliance
- Toilet Board Coalition
- Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council
- World Water Council

Case Study 1: Feed the World – the Scaling Up Nutrition Movement

The Scaling Up Nutrition movement (SUN) is a relative newcomer to the partnership world, but one that has built a foundation that could allow it to make early impact against the SDGs (in this case, SDG2.2 which targets an end to all forms of malnutrition by 2030).

SUN was launched in 2010 in the light of the realization that “nutrition is a desperately neglected aspect of maternal, newborn, and child health”¹⁰⁶ and that international efforts to address the problem were “fragmented and dysfunctional.”¹⁰⁷ Initially, SUN was more of an *idea* than a partnership, or to be more precise, a way of aligning governments, international organizations, civil society, business, and existing nutrition partnerships behind a ‘framework for action’ that includes a commitment to scale up a ‘package’ of evidence-based interventions for improving nutrition, especially in a 1,000 day window from conception to a child’s second birthday when the returns are believed to be highest.¹⁰⁸ SUN had an early commitment to uniting multiple sectors, given the need to solve nutrition challenges through health, education, sanitation, agriculture, gender, governance, and other inputs.

SUN attracted considerable support from governments, international institutions, foundations, civil society, and business, launching with five participating countries and now has 57 members. (For a more detailed discussion of SUN's inception and history, see CIC's *Core Promises* paper.¹⁰⁹) However, an independent evaluation of SUN was completed in January 2015 and was ambivalent in its findings. It concluded that the movement has been:

*Widely successful at the level of advocacy and mobilization but there is only limited evidence that this is leading further towards scaling up nutrition at country level. Effective progress in scaling up nutrition responses was found in only a limited number of countries.*¹¹⁰

The evaluation identified a number of weaknesses in the partnership including:

- A failure to align stakeholders at national level behind high quality, well-costed plans, and to mobilize and track the resources needed to implement these plans. This is far from being an uncommon problem for partnerships, especially those whose theory of change relies on better planning leading to better outcomes, and raises questions about how feasible it is to expect political will at a global level to translate into national delivery.
- An emphasis on inclusion that has led to a rapid expansion in the number of countries that are members of the partnership, with not all countries having a genuine commitment to delivery. SUN also faces the challenge of deciding whether to focus on countries where the nutrition need is greatest, or those with the political will and institutional capacity to implement and sustain pro-nutrition reforms and interventions.
- A failure to develop tailored approaches to implementation in fragile states and middle income countries that have low levels of aid dependency, which is an important challenge for all partnerships, given the need for 'beyond aid' approaches in many middle income settings on the one hand, and the concentration of deprivation in dysfunctional states where impact is extremely challenging to achieve on the other.¹¹¹
- Continued and serious weakness in the international architecture for nutrition, with "a plethora of overlapping and insufficiently coordinated and coherent international initiatives on nutrition... [and] only slow progress in addressing issues of coherence and coordination among UN bodies concerned with nutrition."¹¹² This demonstrates the fact that partnerships are seldom a magic formula for correcting deep-seated weaknesses in the international system, absent a broader political commitment to reform and rationalization.

Overall, the evaluation argues that SUN has made a strong start and is in a position to achieve results in the future (partners have also argued that the evaluation "does not reflect the sheer amount of enthusiasm and energy unleashed by SUN").¹¹³ This seems both a fair assessment and an indication of the time that it takes for a partnership to build the foundations needed to achieve impact.

The nutrition sector has a clear understanding of what will be needed to deliver the SDGs. In April 2016, the World Bank, Results for Development Institute (R4D), and 1,000 Days, with support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Children's Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF) published an investment framework and in-depth costing analysis for achieving the global nutrition targets. According to the findings "reaching the targets to reduce stunting among children and anemia in women, increase

exclusive breastfeeding rates, and mitigate the impact of wasting will require an average annual investment of \$7 billion over the next 10 years...in addition to the \$3.9 billion the world currently spends on nutrition annually.”¹¹⁴

This was reiterated in the latest Global Nutrition report which found that although “many countries are on course for meeting targets related to stunting, wasting and overweight among children under aged five and exclusive breastfeeding...nearly all countries are off course though for meeting targets on anemia in women and adult overweight, diabetes, and obesity.” It also observed that progress was faster in countries that set clear undernutrition targets, but that many countries are yet to include a full set of SMART targets on improving nutrition.¹¹⁵

SUN is in the process of finalizing a strategy for 2016-2020 that will focus on its role as an “accelerant”¹¹⁶ in delivering Agenda 2030, with improved support for countries and “a more strategic approach to leveraging increased external resources for scaling up nutrition.”¹¹⁷ Due to be launched in July 2016, the new strategy’s objectives place a stronger emphasis on implementation and sustaining action. In support, the accompanying Roadmap will focus on “strengthening country capabilities” through improved policy and budget cycle management, increased social mobilization, advocacy and communication, increased capacities of individuals and institutions and strengthened equity drivers.¹¹⁸

SUN will need to maintain political momentum, given that there is consensus among its partners and supporters that “the current high profile of nutrition is not guaranteed to last; other issues are likely to push nutrition back down the list of political priorities, especially if efforts to scale up nutrition are not conspicuously successful.”¹¹⁹ This will include efforts to address growing nutrition concerns, such as obesity and weight increase that are both on the rise.¹²⁰

Case Study 2: A Strategy for Health – Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, and Every Woman Every Child

This case study discusses Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, a long standing public-private partnership that aims to reach every child with vaccines; and Every Woman Every Child (EWEC), an umbrella network that brings together actors, partnerships and other initiatives across the health sector.

Gavi was launched just before the MDGs were agreed, and says that it has created a 21st century development model “bringing the key stakeholders in global immunization together around a single mission... combin[ing] the technical expertise of the development community with the business know-how of the private sector.”¹²¹ Since 2000, it has immunized over 500 million children, saving an estimated 7 million lives.¹²²

Gavi is broadly regarded as one of the more successful international partnerships, based on “the partners’ common purpose, trust and commitment, and strong leadership, which made up for shortfalls in areas such as clarity of partner roles and responsibilities, clear governance structures, and accountability mechanisms.”¹²³ It had early success in building political will behind immunization, in attracting additional resources and expertise to the challenge of vaccinating children, and in ensuring that national and international efforts supported each other.¹²⁴

It has not, however, been without its difficulties and critics. In 2010, its independent evaluation found that it was yet to reshape vaccine markets, and financial sustainability and country ownership were weak.¹²⁵ Some critics believe that, as a vertical fund, it erodes national capacity and has undermined health systems.¹²⁶ From within the UN, there have been calls for Gavi to be rolled into a “global health

fund¹²⁷ – a suggestion that may not be practical, given that Gavi is now an independent foundation, but which illustrates unease at the potential for narrowly-focused partnerships to lead to fragmentation and a loss of broader strategic oversight.

Independent analysis has also challenged Gavi's added value. The Center on Global Development compared changes in immunization rates in countries on either side of Gavi's eligibility criteria and found no significant impact for older vaccines, with Gavi's investment displacing government financial support.¹²⁸ There did appear to be more impact on the availability of newer vaccines. The study is not definitive, with results not applicable to the poorest countries, but it does demonstrate the difficulty of proving that even a well-respected partnership has improved lives against a 'do-nothing' counterfactual.

Gavi has undertaken a series of strategic and operational reforms since its launch in 2000. In recent years, it has focused on improving performance in fragile states (where immunization programs are both most needed and most difficult to run effectively), on strengthening the market for vaccines, and ensuring its support is sustainable. A mid-term review in 2013 argued that a revised co-financing policy would lead to successful 'graduation' for countries no longer eligible for Gavi support,¹²⁹ with Gavi also claiming that "increased investments in vaccines have transformed the global vaccine market, attracting new suppliers of quality vaccines at sustainable prices."¹³⁰

Gavi's fourth strategy – for 2016-2020 – sets goals for increasing vaccine coverage and strengthening health systems, shaping markets and ensuring the sustainability of national immunization programs.¹³¹ The strategy is fully funded, with \$9.5 billion committed from governments (including non-traditional donors such as China and Saudi Arabia), philanthropists (primarily the Gates Foundation), and the private sector. It is therefore in a position to make an immediate contribution to SDG3.2 (ending preventable new born and child deaths), SDG3.8 (affordable vaccines for all), and SDG3.b (research and development for vaccines).

In health, the most important 'partnership of partnerships' is Every Woman Every Child (EWEC), which has been at the forefront of bringing health actors together around a shared strategy. Its roots are in earlier failures to make progress in improving children's health, with the Bellagio Study Group on Child Survival finding in 2003 that:

More than 10 million children die each year, most from preventable causes and almost all in poor countries. Six countries account for 50% of worldwide deaths in children younger than 5 years, and 42 countries for 90%. The causes of death differ substantially from one country to another, highlighting the need to expand understanding of child health epidemiology at a country level rather than in geopolitical regions.¹³²

By 2005, two global coalitions aimed at accelerating progress on MDGs 4 and 5 had already emerged. Countdown to 2015 "tracks progress in the 75 countries where more than 95% of all maternal and child deaths occur... promotes accountability from governments and development partners, identifies knowledge gaps, and proposes new actions to reduce child mortality and improve maternal health."¹³³ Meanwhile, the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH) was formed by merging three existing networks on maternal and child health, hosted variously by WHO, Save the Children USA, and UNICEF. It has more than 680 member organizations.

In 2008, a third grouping, H4+, emerged with the aim of working with governments and civil society in countries where progress towards meeting MDGs 4 and 5 was most problematic. Founding agencies of H4+ included UNFPA, UNAIDS, UNICEF, UN Women, WHO, and the World Bank. Each of these three coalitions brings a distinct aspect to international efforts on MNCH: while Countdown to 2015 concentrates on tracking data and evidence, PMNCH has the convening power of a strong membership organization. Meanwhile H4+'s work focuses on technical policymaking and planning at national level.

The Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health, launched by the UN Secretary-General, represented a first attempt to unite these multiple global coalitions and groupings behind a shared approach, "galvaniz[ing] a broad, unprecedented and unified global movement to promote and protect the health and wellbeing of women and girls and to accelerate progress towards achievements of MDGs 4, 5 and 6."¹³⁴ Every Woman Every Child was launched at the same time as the Global Strategy, as a platform for commitments to deliver the strategy and for accountability for those commitments.¹³⁵

The Global Strategy and EWEC expanded the scope of earlier global coalitions, by explicitly including MDG6 in its approach to maternal and child health. It also aimed to build the broadest possible partnership, with the UN Secretary-General stressing the need for an inclusive approach at EWEC's launch during the closing session of a global summit on the MDGs in 2010:

*We all have a role to play: governments, international organizations, business, researchers, philanthropists, health professionals, and civil society. We must scale up our successes. We must provide the resources. Because investing in women's and children's health has a multiplier effect across the MDGs. It is the best investment we can make.*¹³⁶

The presence of premiers and other senior politicians from 15 member states emphasized the breadth of support for the strategy and EWEC. Foundations, private enterprise, academia, and NGOs were also all represented in panel discussions.

The purpose of EWEC is to provide an umbrella in support of the Global Strategy, around which other actors can coalesce and work collectively. Structurally, it operates a "highly decentralized network model with very light governance structures. While there is no formal board or steering committee, a small secretariat within the office of the Secretary General spearheads work. Major partner meetings are organized as needed and hosted by existing platforms and networks that are operating in this space."¹³⁷ Anyone, ranging from donor and developing countries to businesses and academic institutions, can register a commitment that is in line with the Global Strategy. EWEC itself focuses on three coordinating functions in support of commitments made and delivered by partners worldwide: advocacy and communication; technical support to governments; and accountability and results.

Assessing EWEC's impact is difficult. It has not been independently evaluated and it is hard to imagine how such an assessment could be carried out given that EWEC is an aggregating and amplifying, rather than an implementing, entity. Its most important role is as a 'partnership of partnerships,' aligning "a broad, unprecedented and unified global movement" behind a shared strategy, reducing the fragmentation caused by vertical funds, partnerships and programs.¹³⁸

Work on an updated Global Strategy began in 2014. The process included four stages, starting with a call for preliminary views on priorities, followed by a second round where more than 4,550 individuals and organizations helped identify priorities and key strategies. The third feedback round was a review of 15

draft working papers, while the final round collected comments from nearly 2,500 individuals and organizations on the zero draft.¹³⁹ The new strategy is based around the following vision:

By 2030, a world in which every woman, child and adolescent in every setting realizes their rights to physical and mental health and well-being, has social and economic opportunities, and is able to participate fully in shaping prosperous and sustainable societies.

It sets three objectives: SURVIVE (end preventable deaths), THRIVE (ensure health and well-being), and TRANSFORM (expand enabling environments). The strategy includes a set of cost-effective interventions that all women and children should have access to, and identifies nine action areas (and respective actions) that will be needed to deliver the SDGs.¹⁴⁰ The aim is to move from child survival to a broader attempt to ensure good health for women, children and adolescents allowing them to “realize their rights to the highest attainable standards and health and well-being... deliver[ing] enormous social, demographic and economic benefits.”¹⁴¹

The Global Strategy for Women’s, Children’s and Adolescents’ Health was launched at the Agenda 2030 summit, with a \$25 billion of commitments.¹⁴² A new Global Financing Facility (GFF) had been announced at the Financing for Development (FfD) conference in Addis Ababa and will support delivery of the strategy in low and lower-middle income countries that demonstrate a willingness to match greater international support with increased domestic resource mobilization.¹⁴³ The aim is to prevent “up to 3.8 million maternal deaths, 101 million child deaths, and 21 million stillbirths in high-burden countries by 2030.”¹⁴⁴

GFF aims to build on the partnerships formed through EWEC to move to a ‘beyond aid’ model of financing for development, moving from ODA to “an approach that combines domestic financing, external support, and innovative sources for resource mobilization and delivery (including the private sector).”¹⁴⁵ The emphasis is on results-based financing, building on the model created by the Health Results Innovation Trust Fund (HRITF), in providing results-focused financing to support countries to achieve reproductive, maternal, newborn child and health results “shifting from counting inputs to tracking what really matters: changes at the output, outcome, and, ideally, impact levels.”

The GFF expands EWEC’s role as the ‘admiral’ for a fleet of constituent initiatives and actors, with the strategy and financing vehicle ensuring the global health community is in pole position to deliver for the health SDG for women and children. It will now need sustained political support over the next five years, ensuring that vision and commitment is turned into measurable results.

Case Study 3: Tackling the Global Learning Crisis – The Global Partnership for Education and Education for All

According to UNESCO, the education sector is in crisis.¹⁴⁶ The education MDG aimed to achieve universal primary education but 57 million children are estimated to have been out of school in 2015,¹⁴⁷ while nearly 40% of the world’s children of primary school age are failing to gain basic foundational skills.¹⁴⁸ More than half of these are in school, but are not learning.

UNESCO’s verdict is damning. “Concern for the poor quality of education is nothing new,” it says. “What is unprecedented is the scale at which education systems are failing – not only to impart the basics, but to keep pace with rapid changes in global economic, socio-political and natural environments and equip students with the skills, knowledge and attitudes to meet the challenges they pose.”¹⁴⁹

Despite the failure to meet its MDG targets, the education sector pushed for much greater ambition in Agenda 2030, with the SDGs promising universal access to early childhood development, pre-primary education, and primary and secondary schooling, leading to “relevant and effective learning outcomes” and universal literacy and numeracy among young people.¹⁵⁰ At the World Education Forum in 2015, leaders also promised that quality education for all will not just mean ensuring children are able to read and write, and are numerate, but that all school children will attain “analytical, problem-solving and other high-level cognitive, interpersonal and social skills.”¹⁵¹

According to an earlier CIC assessment, the sector is poorly positioned to deliver these promises:

While valuable work is underway in the education sector, [Agenda 2030] targets for both access and quality reveal the chasm between the sector’s aspirations and its ability to deliver to children. Unlike in health, credible and costed plans do not yet exist that could plausibly lead to significant progress against more ambitious targets. And unlike in nutrition, the education sector has been reluctant to engage in debate about the failures of the MDG era.

This has frustrated some of the major international donors, creating a crisis of confidence that may explain the shift in financing from education to other development priorities. According to the UN Special Envoy for Global Education, education “is drifting steadily down the international agenda”, although it remains the highest priority of the public for the post-2015 agenda.¹⁵²

The Global Partnership for Education (GPE) bears a significant responsibility for leading a new effort to tackle the learning crisis. It is not only a major international investor in education, but it has significant influence on both governments and bilateral donors. Describing itself as “the only global partnership solely devoted to getting all children in school for a good quality education,”¹⁵³ it says that it “brings together the largest assembly of education talent dedicated solely to helping the most vulnerable children learn.”¹⁵⁴

GPE’s history is checkered. Its roots lie in the Education for All (EFA) movement which was launched in 1990 as “a partnership of countries, intergovernmental organizations, NGOs and others”¹⁵⁵ and also as “a grassroots movement of community participation, including people and groups taking responsibility for their own education and development.”¹⁵⁶ A decade later, there was a renewed attempt to establish national and regional education forums, under the auspices of a high level group, led by UNESCO and together with governments, at ministerial level, the international system, and civil society, and to reignite grassroots and campaigning support.¹⁵⁷

By 2015, however, it was clear that EFA was failing as a global governance mechanism for education, as well as a partnership and as a grassroots movement. “Overall, the formal EFA coordination mechanisms led by UNECO, did not rise to the challenge of ensuring continuous political commitment and had limited success in actively engaging other convening agencies and stakeholders,” the Education for All Global Monitoring Report argued. “Many of the most successful mechanisms, initiatives and campaigns... happened in spite of, rather than as a result of attempts at global coordination.”¹⁵⁸

Formed in 2002, the GPE was originally a ‘Fast Track Initiative’ for Education for All, led not by UNESCO, but from the World Bank. It was widely seen as an attempt by the Bank and other donors to short circuit

the complexity and high transaction costs of the EFA itself, while also representing “one of the first programs seeking to implement the ‘Monterrey Consensus’... that rich countries would provide increased aid and trading opportunities to developing countries which implement sound policies and good governance.”¹⁵⁹

The FTI’s main focus was supporting the development and implementation of national education plans.¹⁶⁰ Better planning was the central element of its theory of change, which is based on the assumption that credible country-led plans will lead to increased funding for education from domestic and international sources, more effective and coordinated delivery from all partners, greater investment in systemic change, and enhanced accountability for results.

The initiative, however, struggled to prove its worth or to assert independence from the Bank. According to a 2010 evaluation, it has not been successful in improving the quality of sector plans or in accelerating their implementation. “There was no unambiguous pattern of stronger performance after endorsement [when a country was accepted into the FTI] than before” and no “direct evidence that the FTI was significantly responsible for trends in either direction.”¹⁶¹ The FTI was “a weak partnership, with weak accountability.”¹⁶²

The FTI was rebranded and relaunched as the Global Partnership for Education in 2011, a move that was accompanied by some dramatic claims about impact. Between 2002 and 2012, GPE claimed that it was responsible for “putting an additional 19 million children in school, training 413,000 teachers, constructing more than 37,000 classrooms, providing 218 million textbooks, and achieving higher school completion rates for boys and girls.”¹⁶³ However, the attribution of these results to GPE does not stand up to even cursory review:

- GPE’s estimate of children supported in school is based on counting all increases in enrolment from the date at which a developing country joined the partnership, whether or not membership of the partnership has led to any acceleration in the provision of primary schooling.¹⁶⁴ This makes little sense.
- GPE’s figure for teachers trained is based on “data gathered from program documents, completion reports and grant applications compiled by supervising and managing entities” rather than from a systematic framework for monitoring results.¹⁶⁵ There is no evidence as to whether this training has led to improved education outcomes.
- While GPE aimed to achieve “a dramatic increase in the number of children learning”, it had no way of measuring these outcomes, relying on the assertion that sector plans, its advocacy for quality education, and a relatively small number of grants have improved educational quality.¹⁶⁶

In recent years, GPE has undertaken a series of reforms, with the UK Department for International Development praising the GPE in 2013 for “expanding and improving quality of support to countries; increasing efficiency, transparency and predictability in financial management; and publishing consolidated reporting on results.”¹⁶⁷ An independent interim evaluation published in September 2015 concluded that “the GPE Board and Secretariat have made serious efforts to address the

* More recent results are published on the GPE website and include 61m more children in primary school in 2013 than in 2002. For more information, see <http://www.globalpartnership.org/key-results>

recommendations of the 2010 evaluation....these changes have strengthened the Partnership both operationally and strategically.” However, it also found that the partnership was still unable to demonstrate whether it was delivering results, especially in increasing delivering of quality education.¹⁶⁸

Successive waves of reforms also mean that, despite its long history, GPE is still in ‘start-up mode’ having “developed a new governance structure, new board members, new strategy, new policies on fragile states and data, added a number of new developing country partners, a new results-based financing model, and a new secretariat staffing structure and team.”¹⁶⁹ The partnership remains convinced that “inclusive and evidence-based policy dialogue at the national level to support and monitor the implementation of national plans” will lead to improved education outcomes, but the evidence to support this link remains weak.¹⁷⁰

This lack of evidence is characteristic of a sector that has been slow to acknowledge that it is in crisis. As Lant Pritchett has argued:

*No developing country has an evidence-based plan for achieving significant progress in education. Nearly all countries have plans to spend more on inputs, and will call that “quality,” but none has a plan for increasing student capabilities... It is not that they have “bad” or “wrong” or “inadequate” plans [to meet ambitious learning goals], they lack anything that even minimally qualifies as this type of plan.*¹⁷¹

The contrast with the health sector is strong, which has a long history of investing in and reviewing evidence of what works, and of using evidence to inform policymaking.¹⁷² For education, the evidence base is both weak and fragmented,¹⁷³ with research programs only just beginning to be set up that explore how to accelerate learning outcomes in line with Agenda 2030’s targets.¹⁷⁴ The challenge for GPE will be to draw on emerging findings from this research and translate them into new approaches quickly enough to demonstrate that the quality dimensions of SDG4 can be translated into meaningful change – especially for those most likely to be left behind. It will need to scale up efforts to meet the needs of the most disadvantaged children, working with new initiatives, such as the Education Cannot Wait Fund, launched to meet the needs of children affected by emergencies and protracted crises.¹⁷⁵

The risk is that GPE will remain in its comfort zone, focusing on inputs such as planning and finance, rather than the delivery of results for children. It argues that an additional \$39 billion is needed to ensure that all children receive a quality education from pre-primary through to secondary levels,¹⁷⁶ and recently heralded the success of its latest replenishment round, saying that 27 developing country governments have promised ‘unprecedented’ increases in financing over the next four years, while donors will give \$2.1 billion and innovative financing will provide a further \$400 million.¹⁷⁷

But international finance for basic education fell by a fifth between 2008 and 2013, while few developing country governments spend 6% of their GDP on education as recommended by UNESCO,¹⁷⁸ with an overwhelming majority of the available expenditure devoted to teacher salaries, rather than reform priorities or initiatives to improve quality.¹⁷⁹ GPE’s challenge – and the challenge for the education sector more generally – is that development partners and finance ministers may have become increasingly skeptical about the link between more investment and better learning outcomes. And that crisis of confidence could leave GPE struggling to complete the unfinished business of the education MDG, let alone make inroads into the much harder education targets that are included in Agenda 2030.

Case Study 4 – Water Works: Sanitation and Water for All

Water and sanitation has been on the international agenda for over 30 years, with the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade (1981-1990) declared at the World Water Conference in 1977. Rallying the international community behind the slogan ‘water and sanitation for all’, the call was purposefully ambitious, in the belief that this “would necessitate a radical overhaul of precepts and investment strategies then governing the proliferation of taps, pumps and pipes in the developing world.”¹⁸⁰

Although scaled up investments and efforts during the decade led to improved access to water for over a billion people, and sanitation for another 770 million, delivery was hampered by rapid population growth and urbanization, environmental degradation and rising costs of water supplies.¹⁸¹

So a second official ‘Decade’ followed for 2000-2015, focused on delivering MDG target 7c “By 2015, halve the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation.” Again, however, follow-through was disappointing, with a lack of the financing or practical strategies needed to deliver the MDG target. As observed in the 2006 Human Development Report on the global water crisis:

When it comes to water and sanitation, the world suffers from a surplus of conference activity and a deficit of *action*. It also suffers from fragmentation.¹⁸²

The report called for a global plan of action for water and sanitation to align existing efforts by bringing donors together under a single multilateral umbrella aimed at “delivering resources and support for capacity building and on coordination and coherence, rather than on the creation of new bureaucracies.”¹⁸³ This call, and two subsequent UK Department for International Development reports, led to the establishment of the Sanitation and Water for All partnership.¹⁸⁴

Launched initially as the Global Framework for Action on Sanitation and Water Supply (GF4A) by the UK and Dutch Governments at a UN General Assembly High Level Side Event in 2008, the partnership was formalized in 2009.¹⁸⁵ Bringing together governments, agencies, civil society organizations and other development partners, the partnership seeks to address key challenges for the water sector, including low political prioritization and levels of mutual accountability, poor implementation or lack of national plans, a lack of reliable data and evidence, and unpredictable and insufficient financing.¹⁸⁶

The partnership provides a platform for coordinated action in three priority areas: increase political prioritization, promote the development of a strong evidence base, and strengthen government-led national planning processes. Mutual accountability is strengthened as partners are encouraged to make commitments as part of a biennial high-level dialogue cycle that includes extended preparation, high-level meetings and monitoring. Simultaneously, the partnership works towards implementing the aid effectiveness agenda in the WASH sector, guided by the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action.

The High Level Meeting is the cornerstone of the partnership’s work and was first held in 2010. Initially intended as a biennial meeting, its aim was to “bring together ministers of finance and ministers of water and sanitation from developing countries, ministers of development cooperation from donor countries, high level representatives from development banks, and civil society organization.”¹⁸⁷ At these meetings, ministers published a statement listing their commitments or actions towards

improving water and sanitation services over the next two years. These statements were based on extensive in-country preparation to ensure a clear plan and budget, supported by multiple sector stakeholders, was in place.

In 2014, a new format was introduced, splitting the original meeting into a Water and Sanitation Ministers' Meeting, focused on making and reviewing commitments, and a Finance High Level Meeting, focused on addressing financial issues and constraints.¹⁸⁸ Both take place biennially, but in alternating years. These high level meetings are supported by biennial Partnership Meetings, first introduced in 2012, where the partnership assesses achievements and reviews lessons learnt, as well as discussing future direction.¹⁸⁹

Although Sanitation and Water for All is yet to be formally evaluated, an Independent Mid-Term Evaluation at the end of 2014 by the Australian government observed that "SWA has also become more effective over the last year with a very successful high level meeting that was well prepared and set the scene for meaningful advances on commitment to action by member states."¹⁹⁰

The added value of partnership commitments is harder to determine. Implementation of these commitments is based on self-reporting by developing country governments and development partners, with governments and donors also asked to assess the influence of the High Level Meeting on them achieving their commitment. In March 2015, the partnership reviewed progress made against 2014 High Level Meeting commitments, finding that partners were nearing completion or had completed 56% of their commitments.

There is, however, currently no way of assessing whether commitments have led to incremental impact in terms of increased availability of water and sanitation, or whether countries and donors are simply reporting action they would have taken without the existence of the partnership. A worrying sign is that national commitments towards financing are least likely to be on track, with less than a quarter of planned actions from 2014 for financing mechanisms or creating separate budget lines likely to be achieved by 2016.

In March 2016, ministers and sector leaders met to align plans with the Agenda 2030 targets for water and sanitation, and to continue their commitment to the four Collaborative behaviors: enhancing government leadership of sector planning process; strengthening country systems; using a mutual accountability platform; and building financing strategies for the water and sanitation sectors.¹⁹¹ Countries are committed to developing a plan for the SDG targets that will be met "complete with clear and measurable milestones that can be monitored."¹⁹²

The partnership's challenge is now to ensure that these plans can indeed be monitored, and to demonstrate whether or not its list of *national* commitments adds up to a viable *global* strategy for reaching the SDG targets on water and sanitation, and improving access for all, especially women and girls.



Prosperity Case Studies

Affordable and clean energy

- CTI Private Advisory Network
- Global Alliance for Clean Stoves
- Global Bioenergy Partnership
- Global Network on Energy for Sustainable Development
- Partnership for Clean Fuels and Vehicles
- Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership
- REN 21 Renewable Energy Policy Network for the 21st Century
- Sustainable Energy for All

Decent work and economic growth

- Alliance 8.7
- Global Initiative on Decent Employment for Youth
- Global Sustainable Tourism Council
- Inclusive Green Growth Partnership
- Let's Work
- Solutions for Youth Employment

Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure

- Global Infrastructure Facility
- Global Infrastructure Forum
- Global Infrastructure Hub
- Reduced Inequalities
- Global Forum on Migration and Development
- Global Knowledge Partnership on Migration and Development
- Group of Friends of SDG10

Sustainable cities and communities

- Cities Alliance
- C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group
- Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery
- Global Resilience Partnership
- ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability
- Partnership on Sustainable Low Carbon Transport
- Sustainable Building and Climate Initiative
- United Cities and Local Governments
- United Smart Cities
- 100 Resilient Cities

Case Study 5: The Energy Revolution – Sustainable Energy for All

Sustainable Energy for All (SE4All) is a significant test case for Agenda 2030's potential to deliver ambitious targets that have a universal focus, incorporate an integrated vision of sustainable development, and are supported by a broad coalition of international and national actors, from the public and private sectors, and from civil society.

The partnership was launched by the UN Secretary-General in 2011 to trigger a clean energy revolution and was explicitly positioned as a forerunner initiative, demonstrating what could be achieved at the Rio+20 summit. The Secretary-General himself argued that energy could be used to show how to place the “social, economic, and environmental pillars of sustainable development more equally at the center of policy-making.”¹⁹³

The partnership is based on:

- Projections from the International Energy Agency on business-as-usual trajectories to 2030 for energy poverty, energy efficiency, and the diffusion of renewable energy technologies that demonstrated a yawning gap between current trends and the vision of a clean and sustainable energy system.¹⁹⁴
- An estimate of the financial investment needed to end energy poverty by 2030 (\$48 billion per year, or five times levels of investment seen in 2009), backed up by analysis suggesting that every \$1 of investment in clean energy that was foregone in the 2010s would require more than \$4 of

investment in the 2020s and early 2030s to compensate, and data demonstrating that energy efficiency had the potential to deliver half the additional reduction in emissions to meet a 2°C climate goal.¹⁹⁵

- Three targets for 2030 – ensuring universal access to modern energy services, doubling the rate of improvement in energy efficiency, and the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix – that address both the poverty and environmental sustainability agendas.¹⁹⁶
- Participation by 102 countries (85 of them developing countries), all key international institutions, civil society, and private sector entities.¹⁹⁷

Operationally, the partnership is extremely broad-ranging. It aims to set goals and standards, mobilize resources from public and private sources, and play a significant role in implementation. In terms of its composition, the partnership's ability to mobilize and work effectively with the private sector will be especially important, with the latter expected to:

Support sustainable energy throughout their value chain... [partner] with local businesses or governments to develop new capacity, new capabilities, or new markets... work with governments to identify regulatory policies that will help create a thriving market in sustainable energy... [develop] financial models and instruments to reduce the risk associated with sustainable energy investments ... [and] bring new technological solutions forward.¹⁹⁸

It has developed a platform that will focus on energy efficiency opportunities in priority sectors such as transport and lighting,¹⁹⁹ and is developing partnerships for 50 'high impact opportunities' that are either sectoral (e.g. distributed energy solutions) or enabling (e.g. finance and risk management). It has also recorded 239 'commitments' ranging from building support for universal energy access in Kenya to the BMW group setting voluntary long term environmental global targets in production.²⁰⁰

To monitor progress, SE4All has worked with the World Bank, the International Energy Agency and various other international organizations to develop a framework to track indicators for each of its three targets.²⁰¹ Following the publication of a baseline report in 2013, the first biennial update was released in 2015. This report found that the number of people without access to electricity had declined by around 100 million, the share of modern renewable energy was growing at 4% and energy intensity was falling. However, progress was still below the SE4All targets, and access to clean cooking fuel remains poor. The report recommended tripling current levels of investments from \$400 billion to \$1-\$1.25 trillion, as well as strengthening the transfer of knowledge and technology and the linkages between energy and other development sectors.²⁰²

Although this global tracking framework provides an overall indication of global progress, it does not measure the direct impact of SE4All. To help monitor voluntary contributions, SE4All also introduced an accountability framework in 2014.²⁰³ With the aid of a progress report template, organizations are expected to "provide an annual update on progress [against the three targets] that will be made publically available."²⁰⁴ However, it is unclear to what extent organizations have been using this template to monitor and report on their progress.

As a result, robust monitoring of either the partnership's activity or delivery of commitments by external actors is still lacking despite initial frameworks being in place. It is probably still too early for an independent evaluation to demonstrate the impact that the partnership is having on outcomes for access to energy, energy efficiency, and renewables. It is therefore hard to form an assessment of its impact and effectiveness.

At Rio+20, SE4All was hailed as having the potential to be "the greatest public-private partnership of all times" and as demonstrating the potential of the new sustainable development agenda.²⁰⁵ Two of its targets have been incorporated unchanged into the Agenda 2030 energy goal, while the renewables target is included, but in a weakened format.²⁰⁶ The partnership's indicators and accountability framework will be used to monitor impact progress against the goals, and the partnership itself used as the main delivery mechanism at a global level.²⁰⁷ SE4All, in other words, is now hard-wired into the SDGs.

But SE4All is not without its critics:

- Some UN member states are suspicious of the partnership and Rio+20's endorsement of the initiative was somewhat ambivalent.²⁰⁸ It has been suggested that the Secretary-General's team should have done more to 'sell' the partnership to the UN membership.
- Some businesses and investors are also privately critical about the speed with which the partnership is moving from aspirations to action, and are finding it hard to work effectively with actors from the UN system. It is also not yet clear how effective SE4All will be in leveraging scarce private funds to 'de-risk' private investment.²⁰⁹
- As with SUN, there appears to be a disconnect between what one observer described as the partnership's 'global cheerleading' and the 'country action agenda' that is supposed to lead to transformative change in country.²¹⁰ This may simply be because it is too early for national planning to have delivered results, or it could point to deep-seated problems with SE4All's theory of change. Information on progress in implementing action plans is scant, even for countries such as Ghana that are playing a leading role in the partnership.²¹¹

In 2015, SE4All was engaged in its first round of organizational reform, "transitioning to a new institutional structure...[that] is designed to allow business and civil society to take part in setting the direction of the initiative."²¹² It continues to maintain close ties to the UN, in part through its leader's role as SRSG and through the co-chairmanship of its Advisory Board by the UN Secretary-General and the World Bank Group president. The next couple of years will determine whether the partnership's claim that it is "really different" can be backed up by robust evidence of impact.²¹³

Given the backing it has received, and its position as a Rio+20 and Agenda 2030 pathfinder, its success, or otherwise, will provide important evidence of whether global partnerships can make a contribution to Agenda 2030 that goes beyond the poverty reduction and social development priorities of the MDG era.

It will also demonstrate whether the leadership of the UN Secretary-General can be translated into a broader mobilization of the international system behind the Sustainable Development Goals, and whether the early concerns from some member states about the scope and strategy of SE4All can be addressed.

Case Study 6: Decent Work for All – Let’s Work, Solutions for Youth Employment, and the Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth

SDG8 includes an exceedingly ambitious target for “full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men” by 2030. This is a repeat of MDG target 1.B, which expressed the same aspiration in similar wording, and which failed to stimulate any serious attempt at implementation.²¹⁴ Moreover, SDG8.6 promises to substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training *by 2020*.

As Agenda 2030 is so broad, it seems likely that some of the 169 SDG targets will be sidelined, as part of a *de facto* prioritization that sees targets gain profile if they are amenable to delivery and lose it if they are not. It is possible that, as with the MDGs, targets for employment and decent jobs will fall by the wayside, a reflection of the lack of levers for economic objectives within a UN framework.

The case, however, is strong for making youth employment a priority, with many developing countries seeing large numbers of young adults entering labor forces that are not expanding fast enough to absorb them. If sufficient jobs can be created, these countries will collect a substantial demographic dividend, making it much more likely that other SDGs will be delivered. A failure would have obvious economic and social impacts, but could also threaten security, as underemployed young men fuel instability.²¹⁵

A push for greater economic empowerment among (young) women, in particular, could lead to significant economic returns. If women were equally engaged in the labor market as men, it could add an estimated \$28 trillion to global annual GDP by 2025.²¹⁶ This would require an approach that systematically addresses the root causes of economic exclusion by tackling “basic discriminatory social norms that create barriers to girls’ and women’s economic empowerment.”²¹⁷

Employment targets also have political resonance. African member states pushed these issues particularly hard during the Agenda 2030 negotiations, with the African common position making numerous references to the need for job creation, as part of a broader economic transformation and to ensure that the continent harnesses its youthful population.²¹⁸

Unfortunately, the relevant SDG targets are poorly constructed and contradictory. SDG8.6 promises a ‘substantial’ reduction in youth employment in just five years – a window that is too short to motivate much additional action. SDG8.b, meanwhile, promises to “operationalize a global strategy for youth employment” by the same date, which at least provides the potential for SDG8.6 eventually to be quantified and extended to 2030.

Both Agenda 2030 and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda also commit to the implementation of the ILO-led Global Jobs Pact, which was launched in 2009 as a response to the global financial crisis, but also to create “45 million new entrants to the global jobs market annually – most of them young women and men.”²¹⁹ The Pact was intended to bring together the UN with the “the actors of the real economy” (governments, business, labor) and also with the G20, the international system’s dominant economic grouping.

Initially, the Pact received a warm welcome as the G8 declared it “relevant to respond to the crisis at worldwide level,” and the “United Nations Economic and Social Council...encouraged member States to make full use of the Global Jobs Pact in shaping their policy package.”²²⁰ Implementation, however, has

been weak and primarily focused on specific crisis-related policy measures. By 2010, as the economy began to recover, the enthusiasm for ‘employment-led crisis recovery plans’ began to fade²²¹ and even the ILO conceded that the uptake of the Pact’s proposals had been minimal:

*Among the countries that responded to the crisis, only limited elements of the proposals in the Global Jobs Pact were adopted. One focus was on infrastructure investment, but without much effort to make this employment-intensive. Some countries saw an increase in social dialogue, but more in an attempt to calm down workers than to actually find collectively agreed solutions. In terms of labor standards, the crisis intensified the discussion, but few concrete changes have materialized thus far.*²²²

Although the Global Jobs Pact continues to be featured in labor policy statements, there is limited evidence of activity after 2012.²²³

More promising are three recent partnerships that include a strong role for the private sector and for other partners from outside the UN system with credibility to tackle economic challenges.²²⁴ Let’s Work – which describes itself as “a global partnership to create more & better private sector jobs”²²⁵ – was the result of a study on private sector contributions to job creation that was published as a companion to the World Development Report on Jobs in 2013. The study highlighted the double challenge of creating jobs (600 million new jobs are needed by 2020) and creating *good* jobs that provide income and an opportunity for development.²²⁶

Following the launch, a group of international finance institutions issued a communiqué,²²⁷ with IFIs, donors and the private sector leading a partnership whose mission is to remove the main constraints to job creation and strengthen value chains, and to help create more formal sector jobs in developing countries, as well as better quality jobs.²²⁸ Let’s Work is structured around three pillars:

- Pilot innovative and multi-stakeholder, private sector-led approaches on job creation in selected countries, with a mix across regions and including fragile and conflict-affected states.
- Generate new methods and approaches to measure, understand and strengthen the creation of more and better jobs.
- Systematically gather, generate, test and share the best practice knowledge and tools.²²⁹

While Let’s Work focuses on creating jobs for all ages, Solutions for Youth Employment (S4YE) and the Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth focus on younger workers. S4YE was launched in 2014, in response to fragmented approaches to expanding labor markets to cater for new entrants, and it aims to help 150 million young people access productive work by 2030.²³⁰ Initiated by Accenture, the International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Youth Foundation (IYF), Plan International, RAND Corporation, the World Bank, and Youth Business International (YBI), the partnership currently has 17 partners including the UN Envoy for Youth, and civil society, private sector and foundation representatives.²³¹

Its five year strategy (2015-2020) acknowledges the need to not only meet the SDGs, but also to achieve the “corporate goals of the private sector and the regional goals of public actors” to meet the youth employment challenge, and structures its approach around three actions:

- **“Link:** linking stakeholders to integrate lessons learned, identify effective solutions and accelerate impact.
- **Learn:** collect and disseminate knowledge.
- **Leverage:** leverage knowledge and partners to catalyze the promotion of innovations and operations that scale promising youth employment practices.”²³²

More recently, in February 2016, the Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth was launched.²³³ Seen as the first comprehensive UN system-wide response to the youth employment challenge, multiple UN agencies participated in the ILO-led development process.²³⁴ Endorsed by the UN Chief Executives Board for Coordination in November 2015, the initiative aims to “become a cornerstone for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and particularly for the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8.”²³⁵

The Initiative has four integrated pillars:²³⁶

- **Alliance:** act as an umbrella forum to advocate for and expand action on youth employment by bringing together governments, the UN system, civil society, private sector, young people and other stakeholders.
- **Action:** work with multiple stakeholders at country and regional levels, under the leadership of UN country teams to expand and scale up evidence-based action by strengthening “the policy-making process, to promoting green jobs for youth and assisting young people in their transition from the informal to the formal economy.”²³⁷
- **Knowledge:** provide a global knowledge platform to collate, analyze and share best practice and innovative approaches, and facilitate peer learning.
- **Resources:** advocate for high-level commitment for increased investment from local, national, regional, and global stakeholders to scale up action.

Each of these employment partnerships are aligned with key Agenda 2030 targets and have attracted an impressive alliance of stakeholders, including those from the private sector – who will need to play a critical role in increasing employment opportunities, especially for women.²³⁸ Their ability to demonstrate measurable increases in job availability remains unproven, however, with limited evidence that global initiatives of this kind can expand job opportunities.

With both S4YE and the Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth focusing on improving youth employment, there is also a risk of duplication, and that multi-stakeholder response and resource mobilization becomes fragmented. This places an onus on the Global Initiative effectively to fulfill its role as an ‘umbrella forum,’ and on all three partnerships to demonstrate that they can move at a pace that keeps the interest of private sector partners, and effectively mobilizes business and government behind shared approaches to job creation.

Case Study 7: Investing in Infrastructure – Global Infrastructure Facility and Global Infrastructure Forum

SDG9 aims to “build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation,” while other goals contain targets for energy, water, and rural infrastructure.

During the SDG negotiations, many developing countries made infrastructure a priority,²³⁹ with the need for greatest investment to support a structural transformation in the least developed countries.²⁴⁰ In 2012, Bhattacharya, Romani and Stern observed that “1.4 billion people still have no access to electricity, 0.9 billion are without access to safe drinking water and 2.6 billion without access to basic sanitation.”²⁴¹ They estimated that investment spending on infrastructure in developing countries would have to double, from \$0.8-0.9 trillion per year to approximately \$1.8-2.3 trillion per year, in order to address these concerns by 2020.

Recent years have seen a number of efforts to bridge this financing gap, especially in Africa, where there has been a surge in investment from traditional and non-traditional sources.²⁴² A number of new financing vehicles have been created, including the New Development Bank set up by BRICS, which has been set up to fund long-term infrastructure needs in developing countries.²⁴³ The New Development Bank has explicitly challenged the Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) to “reinvent themselves and introduce innovative instruments,” while analysts have called on the MDBs to do more to set standards, meet the needs of investment ‘orphans’, and ensure coordination in an increasingly crowded field.

The Global Infrastructure Facility, launched in October 2014, is a reaction to this shifting landscape. Hosted by the World Bank, this new multi-stakeholder partnership is “designed to provide a new way to collaborate on preparing, structuring and implementing complex projects that no single institution could handle on its own.”²⁴⁴ The facility commenced a three-year pilot phase in April 2015, with an initial capitalization of \$100 million and private sector partners representing around \$12 trillion in assets.

The Global Infrastructure Facility aims to support governments in the following activities:²⁴⁵

- Project or program definition and enabling environment.
- Project preparation and investment feasibility assessment.
- Transaction design and implementation.
- Financing.

The facility is focused on four sectors – energy, water and sanitation, transport, and telecommunications – and, within each of these sectors, it aims to support investments that are ‘climate-smart’ or ‘trade enabling.’²⁴⁶ By April 2016, small planning grants had been approved for four countries (Brazil, Côte d’Ivoire, Egypt, and Georgia), while applications for projects in the Solomon Islands and Kenya are ongoing, and discussions are underway in Ghana, Indonesia, Laos, Nigeria, Rwanda, Uganda, and Vietnam. The three year pilot aims to support 15-20 projects.

According to the Global Infrastructure Facility’s website its “unique collaborative approach has won strong support from private investors, donors, and governments from emerging markets and developing economies.” This includes broad support from the World Bank’s board, although directors noted the “potential for reputational risks to the World Bank Group,” calling for strong oversight and “for the GIF to draw upon the Bank’s standards, safeguards and procurement processes.”²⁴⁷ They also emphasized

that the Facility should “work in collaboration with, and not duplicate, the efforts of Multilateral Development Bank partners and other actors in the infrastructure space.”²⁴⁸

The need for greater coordination among the multiple infrastructure initiatives (including the Global Infrastructure Facility) was reflected at Third International Conference on Financing for Development in Addis Ababa, where world leaders called for a Global Infrastructure Forum to be established.²⁴⁹ The Addis Ababa Action Agenda envisioned that the Forum would improve alignment among “established and new infrastructure initiatives, multilateral and national development banks, United Nations agencies, and national institutions, development partners and the private sector.”²⁵⁰

Less than a year later, the first forum, co-hosted by multiple Multilateral Development Banks, was held. Over 750 senior leaders attended the day-long event in April 2016, while others joined online via a live stream.²⁵¹ The presence of all MDB heads, as well as representatives from the G20, G-24, G-77, the OECD and the United Nations, emphasized the high-level commitment to jointly addressing the global infrastructure investment gap.

The Chairman’s closing statement at the end of the Forum identified two objectives for the partners present to work together to deliver better quality, affordable infrastructure services which are environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable:

- “Support country-led approaches to planning, executing, supervising, and evaluating sustainable, resilient, inclusive, and well-prioritized infrastructure programs and robust infrastructure frameworks...[and] the involvement of all stakeholders in planning, financing through domestic resource mobilization as well as national/international financing, and operating infrastructure services, including governments, consumers, the private sector and civil society.”
- “Consolidate and scale up where possible existing multilateral mechanisms to promote greater knowledge transfer, project preparation, and implementation support in the form of global and regional platforms and tools, including de-risking and risk allocation mechanisms, that have already been developed in close cooperation by MDBs.”²⁵²

To achieve these objectives, the MDBs and development partners resolved to improve data and information on infrastructure; promote compatible, efficient approaches to bottlenecks or constraints; strengthen project preparation; and promote financing for infrastructure. Progress against these objectives, and related actions, will be reviewed annually at the Global Infrastructure Forum and the subsequent outcomes reported to member states at the Financing for Development Forum.

The Forum has the potential to act as the ‘glue’ that will bring overlapping infrastructures together around a common roadmap, increasing accountability and ensuring that investment and implementation are in line with the aspirations of the SDGs. Given long lead times for infrastructure projects, and the potential for an investment crunch in a period of low natural resource prices, the Forum must urgently demonstrate that it can translate from high level political discussion into measurable results on the ground, while the Global Infrastructure Facility and related initiatives will need quickly to align investment with Agenda 2030 priorities.



Planet Case Studies

Responsible consumption and production

- 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production
- Climate Clean Air Coalition to reduce short-lived climate pollutants

Climate action

- Climate Action 2016
- Green Climate Fund
- Low Emission Development Strategies Global Partnership
- Partnership for Climate Finance & Development

Life below water

- Global Coral Reef Partnership
- Global Island Partnership
- Global Partnership on Marine Litter
- Global Partnership on Nutrient Management
- International Coral Reef Initiative
- Ocean Sanctuary Alliance

Life on land

- Biodiversity Indicators Partnership
- Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund
- Global Environment Facility
- Global Invasive Alien Species Information Partnership
- Global Partnership on Wildlife Conservation and Crime Prevention for Sustainable Development
- Millennium Seed Bank Partnership
- Mountain Partnership
- The Global Partnership Initiative for Plant Breeding Capacity Building
- The Global Partnership on Forest and Landscape Restoration
- Wealth Accounting and the Valuation of Ecosystem Services

Case Study 8: Sustainable Consumption and Production – 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production

Sustainable consumption and production was first recognized as a global priority at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992. Agenda 21, a non-binding action plan, stated that “the major cause of the continued deterioration of the global environment is the unsustainable pattern of consumption and production, particularly in industrialized countries, which is a matter of grave concern, aggravating poverty and imbalances.”²⁵³ In 2002, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) agreed to “encourage and promote the development of a 10-year framework of programmes in support of regional and national initiatives to accelerate the shift towards sustainable consumption and production.”²⁵⁴

Progress, however, has been slow. The Marrakech Process, a global and informal multi-stakeholder process, was launched in 2003 in response to the Johannesburg call. In addition to providing inputs to develop a 10-Year Framework of Programmes, this process promoted the development and implementation of sustainable consumption and production programs in 20 countries and four cities, and a variety of activities at regional level. On the one hand, the process was praised as being “truly catalytic... creat[ing] synergies and strengthen[ing] many existing initiatives.”²⁵⁵ On the other, “the scale of its impact has been limited and its sustainability is weakened by its being a voluntary initiative without formal intergovernmental endorsement.”²⁵⁶ The 10-Year Framework of Programmes (10YFP) on Sustainable Consumption and Production was designed to correct these deficits.

Adopted by world leaders at the Rio+20 Conference in 2012, 10YFP is described as “a global framework of action to enhance international cooperation to accelerate the shift towards sustainable consumption

and production in both developed and developing countries.”²⁵⁷ Through a range of sustainable consumption and production programs, the framework provides a platform for stakeholders to share good practice, build synergies and cooperation to leverage resources, and minimize any duplication of ongoing efforts. To date, six programs have been approved for public procurement, consumer information, tourism, lifestyles and education, buildings and construction, and food systems, all closely aligned with the SDGs.

Each of the six programs is, in effect, a semi-independent entity, with 10YFP acting as an umbrella organization. The structure for each program consists of a small lead group supported by a coordination desk, a multi-stakeholder advisory committee, and all participating entities as partners. The Sustainable Buildings and Construction Programme, for example, aims to promote sustainable construction policies, housing, and supply chains, while reducing climate impacts and strengthening climate resilience in the construction sector.²⁵⁸ The program is led by the government of Finland, the World Green Building Council, the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, and UNEP.

The overarching governance of the Framework includes a 10 member board with representatives from two countries from each UN regional group, and a Secretariat hosted by UNEP. In addition to working together with the program lead groups, the Secretariat engages with other stakeholders through nominated focal points, as well as an Inter-Agency Coordination Group.

UNEP also administers a Trust Fund that helps finance individual projects within the programs, although only “governments and non-profit organizations in developing countries and countries with economies in transition” are invited to submit proposals.²⁵⁹ In the period 2012-2015, financing for the framework amounted to \$8.2 million, with \$2.2 million available for proposals made to the Trust Fund.²⁶⁰ ECOSOC acts as the interim reporting body for both 10YFP as well as the Trust Fund.

To facilitate knowledge-sharing, 10YFP has introduced a Global SCP Clearinghouse, “an interface where programme coordination desks can interact with their stakeholders,” and a platform where stakeholders can submit and respond to calls for cooperation, project proposals and funding opportunities.²⁶¹ The online platform has 2,300 members from more than 200 countries and territories.²⁶²

With all of the six new programs launched, participants of the first global stakeholder meeting of the 10YFP, held in May 2015, observed “the need to ensure that the first flagships projects and projects funded by the 10YFP Trust Fund demonstrate collective impact and deliver quick results.”²⁶³ The platforms have the potential to make a significant contribution to:

- **Agenda 2030**, where 10YFP forms the basis of the first target for the sustainable consumption and production goal (SDG12.1), but is also included in the sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth goal (SDG8.4).
- **The Paris Agreement**, which recognizes that “sustainable lifestyles and sustainable patterns of consumption and production, with developed country Parties taking the lead, play an important role in addressing climate change.”²⁶⁴

The Framework’s potential remains uncertain though. Sustained political support and effective management will be needed if 10YFP is to fulfill its “significant potential for delivering *collective impact*...through the programs and flagship projects which engage multiple actors with a common

agenda, mutually supportive activities and shared measurement systems which can thus deliver at scale.”²⁶⁵

Case Study 9: Financing an Environmental Transformation – Global Environment Facility and Green Climate Fund

Founded in 1991, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) was both the original ‘green fund’ and an early example of an attempt to create a new model for global governance.²⁶⁶

Launched as “a loosely structured, action-oriented entity” with UNDP, UNEP and the World Bank as implementing agencies, its early years were dominated by arguments about governance, and in particular the balance that should be struck between universality and inclusiveness on the one hand, and tighter structures that would allow for more agile decision-making on the other. From the beginning, the GEF attempted to redefine the relationship between developed and developing countries, and to provide a stronger voice and role for civil society (initially at least, the private sector was a “neglected stepchild”).²⁶⁷ As of September 2013, the GEF had spent over \$13 billion on nearly 4,000 projects across eight focal areas (climate change, land degradation, international waters, etc.).²⁶⁸

The GEF has been through a number of rounds of reforms that have attempted to create a more strategic approach to financing and implementation; enhance country ownership; streamline a project approval process that sprawled over five years at one stage; engage the private sector more effectively; and strengthen results-based management.²⁶⁹ The GEF now describes itself as a “highly relevant and successful” partnership of 183 countries working with a network of international agencies, civil society, and business to address the drivers of environmental degradation, deliver integrated solutions across a range of environmental threats, enhance resilience and adaptation to environmental change, ensure “complementarity and synergies in the global financing architecture,” and make interventions that are tailored to overcome obstacles to change and that demonstrate what can be delivered at scale.²⁷⁰

While primarily a fund, the GEF presents its network of implementing partners as an important comparative advantage, allowing it to provide recipient countries with technical expertise and implementation capacity as well as finance.²⁷¹

The GEF has been the subject of five major evaluations (‘overall performance studies’), with the latest completed in 2013.²⁷² It found that the GEF remains relevant in a world of growing environmental threats and that its interventions are broadly successful, with 46% of its projects both having a positive environmental impact and being more broadly adopted.²⁷³ Nearly 11 billion tons of CO₂ equivalent emissions have been averted as a result, at a median direct cost of \$5.80 per ton and an average cost of \$1.20 per ton (this figure does not include co-financing).²⁷⁴ The GEF says it has also:

*Set up protected areas around the world equal roughly to the area of Brazil... eliminated the use of ozone depleting substances in Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia; transformed the management of 33 major river basins and one-third of the world's large marine ecosystems; [and] slowed the advance of desertification in Africa by improving agricultural practices.*²⁷⁵

However, the GEF admits the methodology that it uses to measure averted emissions is not robust, while more than half of projects assessed in one study would probably have happened without GEF funding (albeit perhaps not as fast, or to a lower standard).²⁷⁶ More generally its evaluations have been

criticized for their “heavy dependence on perceptions and qualitative data and the limited use (or availability) of ‘hard’ and quantitative data.”²⁷⁷ The partnership itself is also in questionable health, with the World Bank criticizing its steadily diminishing relevance and effectiveness over the past decade²⁷⁸ and the GEF’s own evaluation finding that increasing complexity and transaction costs mean that it “may have reached the limits of what was feasible within a network organization,” with an urgent need for streamlining and reform.²⁷⁹

For the international organizations that play a key role in the GEF, however, participation continues to have more benefits than costs – and not just due to the fact that the GEF has deep pockets. The Fund is valued when it can raise the profile of environmental threats, invest in and test innovation, and function as a “network of global practitioners with state-of-the-art knowledge on environmental approaches.”²⁸⁰

In country, the GEF is acknowledged as having improved national ownership, but this has necessitated the development of “an elaborate formal architecture to engage national institutions.”²⁸¹ There are also concerns whether its national engagement is strategic and whether the projects it funds add up to more than the sum of their parts.²⁸² This failure is being addressed by a new initiative to improve strategic planning at national level, but it remains too early to tell how well this will work.²⁸³

The GEF has undergone a long search for a partnership structure that is both inclusive and effective, and that can work across multiple countries and sectors, and for partners with different mandates and strategies, while controlling complexity and transaction costs. Its experience is relevant to the Green Climate Fund (GCF), which hopes to be spending \$100 billion a year by 2020 and is explicit in its objective to “promote the paradigm shift towards low-emission and climate-resilient development pathways,” as the largest multilateral climate fund.²⁸⁴ Even if all of the GEF’s co-financing is included (\$65 billion to date), the GCF must be designed to support an annual investment that comfortably exceeds the amount spent on GEF projects in its entire history.

Like the GEF, the Green Climate Fund aims to hit the sweet spot between “national priorities, [the] potential to deliver concrete climate benefits, and opportunities to deliver co-benefits [impacts on livelihoods and economies, or for ecosystems, that go beyond the core objectives of reducing emissions and increasing resilience].”²⁸⁵ Also like the GEF, it is hoping that it can combine a limited number of “strategic investment priorities” (such as transforming energy generation in Africa and Asia, or enhancing resilience in small island developing states) with a country-driven programming approach.²⁸⁶

Establishing the GCF has been a drawn out process. The Fund was agreed in 2010 and designed by a transnational committee in 2011, with its board first meeting in 2012 in the hope that it could make a series of decisions that would allow the Fund to become operational.²⁸⁷ It has been dogged from the beginning, however, by fundamental disagreements between developing and developed countries about the Fund’s mandate, strategy, and design.²⁸⁸ The former have called for an independent fund, with tight ties to the UNFCCC, that would focus primarily on the disbursement of public funds provided by rich countries. The latter argued for a less formal structure and a greater role for the private sector, losing the first argument but achieving a partial victory in the second.²⁸⁹

It remains far from clear whether the GCF can mobilize as much finance as has been promised (Ban Ki-Moon recently bemoaned the initial capitalization of ‘only’ \$10 billion²⁹⁰) or whether the Fund can build partnerships at national level that can have impact commensurate with the scale of the climate challenge. In particular, the GCF will have to prove itself in an increasingly crowded landscape, where a

growing number of competing funds struggle to attract resources and to spend them effectively²⁹¹ – a point highlighted by an analysis of the climate finance pledges made in Paris, where just \$260 million dollars (17%) of the \$1.5 billion committed to climate funds were pledged to the Green Climate Fund.²⁹²

Along with other climate funds, such as the Least Developed Countries Fund and the Special Climate Change Fund, the GCF and GEF are critical to the political bargain that underpins the Paris Agreement. As 2020 approaches, the date the Paris commitments take effect, both Funds will face a magnified version of the challenge that the GEF has long grappled with – how to achieve transformational impact at a global scale, while ensuring national ownership and keeping transaction costs under control.



Peace Case Studies

Peace, justice and strong institutions

- Community of Democracies
- Construction Sector Transparency Initiative
- Effective Institutions Platform
- Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative
- Global Alliance for Tax Justice
- Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime
- Global Legal Empowerment Initiative
- Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict
- Global Partnership for Social Accountability
- International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and State Building
- Know Violence in Childhood: Global Learning Initiative
- Open Contracting Partnership
- Open Government Partnership
- Partnering Against Corruption Initiative
- The 16+ Forum
- The Global Partnership and Fund to End Violence Against Children
- Transparency and Accountability Initiative
- Transparency International – the Global Coalition Against Corruption
- Violence Prevention Alliance

Case Study 10: Ending Violence Against Children – The Global Partnership and Fund to End Violence Against Children

The protection of children from violence was not included in the MDGs, leading one senior expert from the field to comment that “if you’re not at the table, then you’re on the menu.”²⁹³

This has been corrected under Agenda 2030, which includes ambitious targets for ending all forms of violence against children by 2030 (SDG16.2); for ending violence against women and girls (SDG5.2) and for ending child marriage and female genital mutilation (SDG5.3); for eliminating child labor (SDG8.7); and for providing safe learning environments and promoting non-violence (SDG4.a and 4.7).

These new targets have created a significant delivery challenge, which was discussed in *If Not Now, When?*, a CIC paper published in 2014. This paper called for formation of a Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children, providing a detailed analysis of the rationale for this partnership, its potential synergies with international partnerships for child survival and development, and the role it could play in demonstrating that SDG16 could be implemented.²⁹⁴

Work to design and launch the new partnership, and an associated fund – the Global Partnership and Fund to End Violence Against Children – has now been completed, with UNICEF, WHO, and other partners publishing its first full strategy document at the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in 2016. This strategy draws on input from various stakeholder groups including professionals working with and for children, and children themselves. The new partnership builds on existing initiatives such as #EndViolence (an advocacy campaign),²⁹⁵ Know Violence in Childhood (a learning initiative),²⁹⁶ and Together for Girls (a public-private partnership on violence against children, with a focus on sexual violence against girls).²⁹⁷ It needs, however, to be much broader in its ambitions, given the scale of the change needed to make meaningful progress towards the Agenda 2030 targets and the frequency with which countries of all income levels are being hit by scandals that reveal a systemic failure to protect children.

This new partnership must grapple with three challenges posed by Agenda 2030:

- **Norms are as important as policies or programs.** A primary purpose of the new partnership is advocacy and mobilization around a norm – that no form of violence against children should be tolerated by any government that maintains it is committed to the vision of sustainable development for all, as set out in the new agenda. The vulnerability of children to violence is exacerbated by widespread denial of the violence they suffer and by impunity for perpetrators. An entrepreneurial approach to promoting this norm, and to building the political will to tackle violence, will be at least as important for this partnership as any programmatic activity, requiring a focus on building political will, skills in advocacy and mobilization, and an understanding of the long and complex process that leads to changes in social norms and values.
- **Universality must be at its heart while targeting the most vulnerable children.** The partnership must be universal in scope – children experience violence in all countries – and will therefore act as a test case for the willingness of countries of all income levels to work together on a more equal basis than was typical of a previous generation of partnerships. It must demonstrate that it can add value in national settings where resources are not constrained and institutions and systems are relatively strong. Early ‘pathfinders’ for the partnership include Indonesia, Mexico, Sweden and Tanzania – countries from four regions and three different income groups that are committed to taking action through both national and international policy.²⁹⁸ However, the partnership will also have to ensure that action across all countries includes a focus on children who are most at risk – children who are exposed to conflict or other humanitarian emergencies or those who are disadvantaged or discriminated against because of their gender, income, ethnicity, religion or disability. Unless it shows that it can be effective at the intersection between violence and inequality, the partnership will fail to deliver on the Agenda 2030 promise that *no child should be left behind*.
- **It must redefine what countries believe is possible.** Advocates have long argued that “all violence against children is preventable” but they are yet to turn that assertion into a convincing case for action and investment.²⁹⁹ Recent years, however, have seen an increased investment in collecting evidence for what works to prevent violence, enabling a number of international and national actors to recommend cost effective strategies for implementation. Based on this, a working group of international organizations, led by WHO, has developed a package of seven evidence-based strategies for preventing and responding to violence, which will be launched at HLPF 2016 under the name *INSPIRE*. These strategies have the potential to persuade policymakers to make a commitment to investing in preventing and responding to violence, and can also be used as a focus for further research and for monitoring and evaluation. The partnership must now use *INSPIRE* to align stakeholders behind a common approach to ending violence, while presenting it to policymakers in a way that convinces them that measurable improvement in the safety of children can be achieved within a political cycle. Only then will it be able to turn this issue into one that, like health and education, is considered part of the core business of running a country.

The partnership has considerable potential, especially if its work is seen as part of wider approach to ending all forms of violence (SDG16.1) and to ending gender-based violence (SDG5.2). But the obstacles it faces are also significant. Data to establish trends in violence are unlikely to be available in more than

a handful of countries before the 2020s, and many of the ‘solutions’ which it will promote through INSPIRE are yet to be tested at scale and in different country settings.

The partnership is one of the first of a new generation of partnerships to have been stimulated by the launch of Agenda 2030. In its first five years, it must build a platform on which it can scale up in the 2020s, maintaining high standards of ambition and delivery in a relatively small number of countries, enabling these countries to work together to share knowledge and establish standards and norms, and investing heavily in the data and evidence that will be needed to demonstrate the partnership’s impact and added value.

Case Study 11: Open Government – Open Government Partnership

The Open Government Partnership (OGP), launched in September 2011, is a “multilateral initiative that aims to secure concrete commitments from governments to promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption, and harness new technologies to strengthen governance.”³⁰⁰

Once a government meets the eligibility criteria – which includes a minimum level of commitment to fiscal transparency, access to information, public officials’ asset disclosure, and citizen engagement – countries join a ‘universal’ partnership in which they have equal rights and responsibilities.

Governments become members by committing to a participation roadmap that is focused on inclusive consultation, national action and accountability.

The roadmap starts with the endorsement of the Open Government Declaration³⁰¹ and its four underlying principles:

- Increase the availability of information about government activities.
- Support civic participation.
- Implement the highest standards of professional integrity throughout their administrations.
- Increase access to new technologies for openness and accountability.

To abide by these principles, participating governments set up a forum for regular multi-stakeholder consultation and created a national action plan together with civil society. These plans should “cover a two-year period and consist of a set of commitments that advance transparency, accountability, participation and/or technological innovation.”³⁰² According to the OGP’s 2015-2018 strategy, over 2,000 open government reform commitments have been made since the partnership was launched.³⁰³

Another key aspect of the OGP’s participation roadmap is its accountability mechanism, which is based on a combination of self-assessment and independent reporting. For the former, countries produce reports that review their planning process, progress made on the commitments, and lessons learned. In 2014, the Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) was introduced, where independent experts review each country’s action plan and outcomes, and their adherence to OGP process requirements, guidance, and eligibility criteria.³⁰⁴ Countries are then required to incorporate their recommendations in the next cycle of national action planning.

The OGP has demonstrated results in its first three years: “in their first year of OGP participation, 43 countries fully implemented a total of 270 open government commitments.”³⁰⁵ However, the quality of OGP action plans has not been consistent, and some have been developed without any civil society

input, or included commitments that have been described as “low-hanging fruit.”³⁰⁶ The OGP 2014 Annual Report acknowledged that despite individual signs of success, “many questions are still unanswered about how and why countries succeed or falter and about the impact of OGP reforms in the long run.” To help address these gaps, the Support Unit (the OGP’s Secretariat) developed a new research agenda to “stimulate independent research on these questions.”³⁰⁷

Moving forward, the partnership has developed a strategy which aims to “make sure that real change is happening on the ground in a majority of OGP countries and that this change is benefitting citizens.”³⁰⁸ The strategy was published ahead of Agenda 2030, and makes no explicit mention of any of the SDGs – although it does note that “we will strategically link OGP to high-profile global policy debates where key open government principles are at stake (e.g. the post-2015 development framework).”³⁰⁹

More recently, at a ministerial-level meeting of the OGP’s Steering Committee in September 2015, the ‘Open Government for the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development’ declaration was adopted.³¹⁰ Through this declaration, the OGP has signaled its “intent to assume a leadership role in implementing some of the most crucial cross-cutting goals and targets of the SDGs.”³¹¹ Central is the institutional dimension of SDG16 (build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels), but links are made to other targets such as women’s participation (SDG5.5), participatory urban planning (SDG11.3) and increasing the availability of data (SDG17.18).³¹²

In October 2015, this commitment was reaffirmed by the 2,000+ participants of the OGP Global Summit, held in Mexico, placing the OGP in a strong position to demonstrate measurable progress against Agenda 2030. In order to fulfill its potential, it will need to:

- Ensure effective integration between OGP and the SDGs, at a time when many countries are engaged in developing national sustainable development strategies that could duplicate or supplant the OGP national action plans.³¹³ For its 69 participating countries, OGP has the potential to become the key platform for delivering the institutional dimensions of the new sustainable development agenda.
- Increase the focus on quality of participation at a time when the partnership faces continued pressure to expand and has been criticized for projecting a “façade of openness” rather than delivering sustained improvements to standards of governance.³¹⁴ OGP is unusual in having a mechanism for independent scrutiny of commitments, it must now ensure that the Independent Experts Panel fulfills its potential for ensuring independent accountability.
- Continue to invest in its research agenda, promoting the sharing of tools and solutions for open government, demonstrating whether implemented commitments translate into improved government performance and better delivery to citizens, and increasing understanding of ‘what works.’³¹⁵
- Strengthen the movement for open government at national level, through an enhanced role for civil society, and greater involvement for parliaments and the judiciary,³¹⁶ and also globally, by acting as a platform for international actors to unite behind common priorities and approaches for strengthening standards of governance.

Case Study 12: Tackling the Resource Curse – Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative

Not all partnerships are broad-based. The Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) does not attempt to deliver change itself, but to create a set of standards and norms that will lead to other actors changing their behavior. EITI describes itself as:

*A global standard for the governance of a country's oil, gas and mineral resources. The standard is implemented by governments, in collaboration with companies and civil society. Countries implementing the EITI disclose information on tax payments, licenses, contracts, production and other key elements around resource extraction.*³¹⁷

EITI currently has 51 implementing countries, of which 31 are compliant with the standard's requirements. \$1.91 trillion of government revenues from natural resources have been disclosed and a large number of resource companies and investors are also members (mostly drawn from OECD countries).³¹⁸ EITI's aims are not narrowly confined to the natural resource sector itself. By ensuring more transparent collection of public revenues from resources, it aims to ensure that more money is available for "high-priority national needs."³¹⁹

EITI therefore has the potential to make an important contribution to SDG12.2 ("achieve the sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources"), but it has broader relevance to targets from SDG16 on corruption, illicit financial flows and stolen assets, and to the equal rights to natural resources, especially for the poor and vulnerable (SDG1.4) and for women (SDG5.a). More broadly, it could help ensure domestic resource mobilization for sustainable development priorities in poor countries, while reducing the external stresses (most of them originating from developed and fast-growing middle income countries) that destabilize resource-rich fragile states.³²⁰

Establishing the impact of EITI presents considerable methodological challenges. In 2011, an EITI evaluation found that EITI had helped "build and strengthen consensus around greater democratic insight and control of resources, strengthened the voice and legitimacy of civil society in this process, and provided a major contribution to factual, verifiable knowledge in the public domain."³²¹ Greater transparency had not necessarily led to greater accountability, however, nor to broader improvements in governance standards. In part, this was because EITI was still a new initiative, but it also reflected the lack of an articulated theory of change for how transparency could be expected to drive wider benefits.

A review conducted for the European Parliament, meanwhile, found that countries such as Nigeria had recovered sizeable amounts of government revenue as a result of EITI audits.³²² It also concluded that EITI had helped promote "greater interaction and dialogue between stakeholders within and across implementing countries," especially by providing civil society with the information it needed to campaign for greater accountability. Activism could only go so far, while EITI was also unable to prevent the diversion of resources into parts of the value chain that were beyond the reach of its standards.

In 2012, the EITI Chair accepted that "the experience with implementation so far has demonstrated that as it is, the EITI is not adequately delivering against the EITI Principles to which all stakeholders are committed."³²³ Reforms have been adopted that aim to strengthen implementation on the one hand, and improve validation on the other³²⁴ but, as with other partnerships in this review, EITI continues to face difficulties in demonstrating that a global initiative can achieve sustained change at a national level. EITI's board must work to maintain its distinctive global position, and its links with the G20, G8, and

other agenda-setting bodies,³²⁵ while persuading governments that compliance is a chance to build effective governance systems, and is not just a box-ticking exercise.³²⁶ It is also keen to enable civil society and the media to use its data to promote debate and accountability, an objective that is laudable but, if mishandled, could threaten its relationship with governments.

EITI's model and experience will be relevant to other partnerships that might emerge to create the standards that are needed to underpin a global framework to support sustainable development. Its advantage is that it addresses a problem that many countries are eager to solve. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda underlined the importance of "corporate transparency and accountability of all companies, notably in the extractive industries"³²⁷ and encouraged countries to do more to promote resource transparency. But EITI will only become an essential part of the international landscape if it is able to demonstrate substantial benefits for resource-rich governments (in the form of increased investment and greater revenues for domestic funding priorities) and for private sector actors and the import-dependent governments who back them (in the form of more predictable resources flows from a more stable business environment).



Partnership Case Studies

Partnerships

- Addis Tax Initiative
- Global Innovation Exchange
- Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation
- Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data
- International Aid Transparency Initiative
- PARIS21
- Partnership for Enhancing Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development
- Sustainable Development Solutions Network
- Tax Inspectors Without Borders
- Technology Facilitation Mechanism
- UN Global Pulse
- WIPO Green
- 17Goals

Action Networks

- Business for 2030
- SDG Philanthropy Platform
- Small Islands Developing States
- UN Global Compact

Case Study 13: Coordinating on Science, Technology and Innovation – Technology Facilitation Mechanism

At Rio+20, member states asked relevant UN agencies to “identify options for a facilitation mechanism that promotes the development, transfer and dissemination of clean and environmentally sound technologies,” and requested the Secretary-General to make a recommendation based on this assessment at the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly.³²⁸

The options (as set out in two complementary reports³²⁹) were deliberated by member states in a set of four workshops held during the sixty-seventh session, and at the Structured Dialogues on Possible Arrangements for a Technology Facilitation Mechanism during the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly.³³⁰ Based on the outcome from these sessions, the Secretary-General proposed to:

Establish an online, global platform building on and complementing existing initiatives, and with the participation of all relevant stakeholders, in order to: (a) map existing technology facilitation initiatives, needs and gaps, including in areas vital for sustainable development, including agriculture, cities and health; (b) *enhance* international cooperation and coordination in this field, addressing fragmentation and facilitating synergies, including within the UN system; and (c) promote networking, information sharing, knowledge transfer, and technical assistance, to advance the scaling up of clean technology initiatives.³³¹

Despite intense debate over what was considered an ‘intensely contentious’ issue with a historical North-South divide and contradicting priorities, a consensus was reached.³³² At the Third International Conference on Financing for Development in Addis Ababa, member states agreed to establish a Technology Facilitation Mechanism. The outcome document stipulated three components:

- A UN Inter-agency Task Team to “promote coordination, coherence, and cooperation within the UN System on STI related matters.”
- A multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals to facilitate “interaction, matchmaking and the establishment of networks between relevant stakeholders and multi-stakeholder partnerships.”
- An online platform, to “establish a comprehensive mapping of, and serve as a gateway for, information on existing STI initiatives, mechanisms and programmes.”³³³

Tied to SDG17 targets 6-8 (and explicitly mentioned in target 17.6), the Technology Facilitation Mechanism was launched in September 2015 by ministers from France, Brazil and India.³³⁴ Attendees at the launch recognized its significant potential, but stressed the need for tangible results that reflected “enhanced collaboration, technology facilitated based on the ‘needs’ of countries, and innovation fostered.”

To develop and prepare the multi-stakeholder forum and online platform, the Inter-agency Task Team (including the UN DESA, UNEP, UNIDO, UNESCO, UNCTAD, International Telecommunication Union, WIPO, and the World Bank) is working with a multi-stakeholder group which includes 10 representatives from civil society, private sector and the scientific community (the ‘10-Member Group’).

Meeting for the first time in March 2016, the 10-Member Group discussed plans for the first Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) Forum.³³⁵ The STI Forum, aligned with the HLPF 2016 theme of *Leaving no one behind*, took place in June 2016, and was structured around five guiding questions:

1. Why are science, technology and innovation essential for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals?
2. What are the main opportunities and challenges – at policy, organizational and individual levels – for maximizing the contribution of science, technology and innovation to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals?
3. What are the key elements that countries and international organizations may need to take into account in formulating action plans and/or roadmaps for science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals?
4. How can we deploy existing knowledge and new, innovative solutions and technologies and make them more readily available to those who need them?
5. What would be the success criteria for the STI Forum in the coming years? What questions should the STI Forum focus on?

In preparation for the main event, a global online discussion using these five questions was held between 4 April and 11 May 2016. Moderated by internationally recognized experts, the discussion was open to civil society, academia, the private sector and any other professionals. The suggestions made during this period were summarized and fed directly into the STI Forum.³³⁶

The Forum was also preceded by an open call for innovations, held on an online platform administered by the Global Innovation Exchange. By publishing short summaries of the submitted innovations, the platform provided the opportunity for innovators, funders and potential customers to collaborate – as

well as giving innovators access to a “comprehensive list of all available innovation funding opportunities across development (more than 200+ million dollars).”³³⁷

The multi-stakeholder approach was described as a “hugely different way of doing business” by the Forum Co-Chair, Macharia Kamau, in which all stakeholders play an equally important part in bridging the gap between policymakers, academia, private sector and communities.³³⁸ Meanwhile, the Co-Chair of the 10-Member Group noted the need to shift from a dynamic of competition towards one of collaboration between and within STI communities, between different types of knowledge, between stakeholders, and between nations.³³⁹ In light of strengthening collaboration and implementation, it was suggested that the Forum be treated as an action-oriented flagship event, the culmination of an annual program of work that will include inter-sessional events and meetings.

It is, as yet, far from clear what impact the Technology Facilitation Mechanism will have on technology cooperation or transfer or, indeed, on what priorities it should pursue where there is both a clear need and where a platform of this kind has comparative advantage.³⁴⁰ Questions have also been raised about the appetite for engagement by business, owners of intellectual property, and investors, with the expert group that is supporting the mechanism failing to reflect the diversity of private sector interests.³⁴¹

The Technology Facilitation Mechanism’s supporters have hailed it as offering, for the first time, “a space for meaningful discussion and collaboration on technology at a macro and integrated level at the UN.”³⁴² But will ‘meaningful discussion’ lead to meaningful shifts in the way that technology is developed and diffused? Or will technology transfer continue to be an issue characterized by “mandates and lofty words, but no action, and no measurable targets”?³⁴³

Case Study 14: A Data Revolution for Sustainable Development – Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data

At the start of the century, the International Household Survey Network registered less than 100 open access household surveys from developing countries. By 2012, the number had doubled, while mobile subscriptions tripled in the same time frame. According to one estimate, 90% of the data in the world in 2014 had been created in 2012 and 2013 alone.³⁴⁴

This exponential growth in data, coupled with significant advances in information technology, and especially mobile technology, led the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda to call for a “data revolution for sustainable development, with a new international initiative to improve the quality of statistics and information available to people and governments.”³⁴⁵ They recommended that a multi-stakeholder partnership on development data be established to “develop a global strategy to fill critical gaps, expand data accessibility, and galvanize international efforts to ensure a baseline for post-2015 targets is in place by January 2016.”³⁴⁶

Building on this recommendation, the Secretary-General named an Independent Expert Advisory Group on the Data Revolution for Sustainable Development. In their report, *A World that Counts*, the group described the data revolution on sustainable development as:

The integration of these new data with traditional data to produce high-quality information that is more detailed, timely and relevant for many purposes and users, especially to foster and monitor sustainable development; the increase in the usefulness of data through a much greater degree of openness and transparency, avoiding invasion of privacy and abuse

*of human rights from misuse of data on individuals and groups, and minimizing inequality in production, access to and use of data; ultimately, more empowered people, better policies, better decisions and greater participation and accountability, leading to better outcomes for people and the planet.*³⁴⁷

They recommended five actions to implement the data revolution: (i) developing a global consensus on principles and standards; (ii) establishing a ‘network of data innovation networks’; (iii) endorsing a new funding stream; (iv) establishing a UN-led Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data; and (v) introducing a data platform with visualizations of SDG indicators.

In response and with the support of over 70 governments, civil society, and private organizations and expert networks, the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data was launched as a ‘network of networks’ at the end of September 2015. As of May 2016, the partnership includes 150 ‘champions’ or members including governments, companies, civil society groups, international organizations, academic institutions, foundations, statistics agencies, and data communities. Other global data-focused initiatives, such as PARIS21 and the UN Global Pulse, are also members.

Many of these partners have made explicit commitments towards addressing a range of data concerns. The website lists 122 commitments including, for example, a commitment by Kenya to convene a national forum on sustainable development which “will emphasize the need for the domestication of the data revolution,” and a \$60 million commitment by IBM to improve the skills of IT professionals across Africa in analytics, cloud and big data technologies over the next three years.³⁴⁸

Hosted by the United Nations Foundation, the partnership is independent (not UN-led as was originally proposed) and currently governed by an Interim Steering Group of Anchor Partners. It is in the process of developing its governance and operational structure, with a permanent executive director expected to join this year, and an operational launch planned for the fourth quarter of 2016. Multiple working groups are dedicated to different thematic areas including “filling data gaps and supporting national data revolution roadmaps, action plans and collaboratives, crafting data principles and protocols, strengthening data architectures and platforms, as well as mobilizing and aligning resources.”³⁴⁹

As a flexible umbrella initiative, it is in a position to focus on encouraging innovation and real-time responses to new data needs and challenges by drawing on a multitude of data approaches across sectors, and across data communities. It does this by applying a two-pronged approach to “galvanize political commitments, align strategic priorities, foster collaboration, spur innovations, build capacity and enhance trust in the booming data ecosystems of the 21st century.”³⁵⁰

On the one hand, the partnership focuses on countries, working together with stakeholders and creating new synergies at a national and municipal level to develop data roadmaps that will address national and local Agenda 2030 priorities. On the other hand, it plans to introduce a market place approach to sharing new knowledge and encouraging collaboration by establishing an online platform that will facilitate networking.

The format and modalities of this platform are currently being explored and a beta version of the platform is expected to be available at the General Assembly in September 2016. Similarly, work on a toolbox to help inform the roadmaps, a meta-analysis of existing data principles, and a review of the

current state of investment in data for sustainable development is ongoing and will be shared in the next couple of months.

With membership doubling within its first year, there is clear support for the partnership by various stakeholders despite some concerns by member states that it is not UN-led.³⁵¹ Moving forward, it will be critical that the partnership is seen as the overarching body to bring together all stakeholders working on data – and not just official entities. Setting the political agenda to emphasize the importance of data, and building trust between the different data communities will be crucial objectives in this process, especially when it comes to addressing ‘new’ data issues related to privacy and human rights.

It will also be important that the partnership continues to communicate with the UN Statistical Commission, and in particular the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Inter-agency Expert Group on the Sustainable Development Goals, to avoid any duplication in efforts, and to look for areas where they can work together, such as the upcoming World Data Forum.³⁵²

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³⁴⁹ Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data (undated), 'Frequently Asked Questions,' available at <http://www.data4sdgs.org/faq/>

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