

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

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On 1 January 2016, the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by world leaders in September 2015 at an historic UN Summit, officially came into force. Over the next fifteen years, with these new Goals that universally apply to all, countries will mobilize efforts to end all forms of poverty, fight inequalities and tackle climate change, while ensuring that no one is left behind. The SDGs, also known as Global Goals, build on the success of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and aim to go further to end all forms of poverty. The new Goals are unique in that they call for action by all countries, poor, rich and middle-income to promote prosperity while protecting the planet. They recognize that ending poverty must go hand-in-hand with strategies that build economic growth and addresses a range of social needs including education, health, social protection, and job opportunities, while tackling climate change and environmental protection. While the SDGs are not legally binding, governments are expected to take ownership and establish national frameworks for the achievement of the 17 Goals. Countries have the primary responsibility for follow-up and review of the progress made in implementing the Goals, which will require quality, accessible and timely data collection. Regional follow-up and review will be based on national-level analyses and contribute to follow-up and review at the global level.

Sustainable Development Goals:

Goal 1. To end poverty in all its forms everywhere

Goal 2. To end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

Goal 3. To ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

Goal 4. To ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

Goal 5. To achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Goal 6. To ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

Goal 7. To ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

Goal 8. To promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

Goal 9. To build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

Goal 10. To reduce inequality within and among countries

Goal 11. To make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

Goal 12. To ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

Goal 13. To take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts*

Goal 14. To conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

Goal 15. To protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

Goal 16. To promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

Goal 17. To strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development

Out of the above mentioned goals there are certain goal that have received a lot of attention lately. Gender equality is one of such goals. The Brundtland report defines Sustainable development as *“development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own*

needs” and further describes the term *development* as a progressive transformation of economy and society and implies a concern for social equity between generations.¹ It is therefore understandable that for any development to be sustainable a basic tenet of it is equity, equity not just in the current generation but transgressing to the future generations. Any discourse about equity in society will imperatively include a deliberation and demand for gender equality because unless we bridge the disparity amongst the two major genders, all attempts of achieving a sustainable and inclusive development will ultimately be rendered futile. This inextricable yet inevitable link has been increasingly recognized in recent decades. The importance of this has been time and again asserted in a number of international norms and agreements, including the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and most importantly the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, in 2012, which included recognition of the importance of gender equality and women’s empowerment across the facets of sustainable development.

However, gender equality as a key to sustainable development is still a distant dream globally. Women still lack access to basic amenities such as sanitation, health, nutrition, education and basic human rights. Perils such as crime and violence against women add to the existing hindrances. In light of these, there is a definite need of coming together of all factions of society and taking small steps at a time which bring us closer to a growth that is inclusive, just, equitable and sustainable.

¹Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future < <http://www.un-documents.net/ocf-02.html> > accessed on 27 March,2017