

## **Sustainable Development Goals.**

**A Universal Agenda that should shape strategies, priorities and action in both developed and developing countries, and in middle income countries.**

**How to build on the Draft Goals prepared by the UN's Open Working Group**

***A Challenge - and an Opportunity - for Europe***

***Paper by Stakeholder Forum for ESDN Conference in Rome***

***6-7 November 2014***

In the attached paper Stakeholder Forum (SF) has undertaken a preliminary assessment of the draft Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as they have emerged in the report from the United Nations' Open Working Group (OWG). SF concludes that the present package is seriously imbalanced in that it places much greater emphasis on the traditional development agenda of the developing countries centred around poverty eradication, and much too little emphasis on the sustainability transformation needed in the developed and middle income countries over the next generation.

The package therefore fails in the universality objective which was a central feature of the mandate given by world leaders at Rio in 2012. And it is internally inconsistent since it is becoming increasingly clear that in a world of finite resources and finite planetary boundaries the poverty eradication objectives of the developing countries will not in practice be capable of achievement without parallel efforts in the developed world to reduce excessive consumption of fossil fuel energy and other natural resources and to cease over-production of greenhouse gas emissions, pollution and waste.

SF's analysis identifies a number of areas where the package needs to be strengthened from this universality perspective in the further negotiations.

Building on 20 years of experience of trying to implement sustainable development around the world since the first Rio Earth Summit of 1992 the paper then goes on to identify key elements that ought to feature in a new worldwide movement for sustainability built around implementation of the SDGs universally.

SF's paper analyses the situation and the possibilities from a global and UN perspective. ESDN will no doubt wish to consider particularly the part that Europe and the EU could and should now play in the further negotiations and in implementing the goals once agreed.

The Commission and many Member States have already been active in the negotiations and in considering the follow-up. SF has not so far been able to undertake a detailed analysis of the positions being taken by individual Member States and the EU as a whole in the UN negotiations. But SF has the impression that some at least of the Member States have been amongst those trying to narrow the focus of the SDGs to a more traditional development agenda built around poverty eradication, and to avoid taking on significant or ambitious new challenges in the SDGs to achieve more sustainable economies in the developed world and middle income economies.

It would now therefore be a good time for ESDN to consider how the EU and its Member States could be encouraged to come forward as a more vigorous champion of a broader more genuinely universal agenda for the SDGs and to re-create a more broadly based European drive to implement them. ESDN might for example like to consider the suggestions for strengthening the draft SDGs that are contained in the Annex to SF's paper. They might also like to review the suggestions for building a strong implementation process set out in the final section of SF's paper.

With a new Parliament and a new Commission in place the EU ought now to be well-placed to launch a new initiative to promote sustainable development and the implementation of the sustainable development goals when they are adopted. In particular it is vital that sustainable development should be placed at the heart of the review of the 2020 Strategy and any new over-arching European strategies leading up to 2030. Similarly sustainable development could be developed further as a core element of the semester process for the self-monitoring of progress throughout the Union, and sustainability impact assessment could be reinvigorated as a core element of policy and programme development in all areas of the Commission's work.

*Derek Osborn and Farooq Ullah*

*October 2014*

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### **Background**

The UN Summit meeting in Rio in 2012 decided to establish a set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) intended to help guide an environmentally and socially sustainable path of development throughout the world up to 2030. The new goals are to be universal in the sense of applying to all countries, and covering all relevant aspects of society and the economy.

The need for universal goals stems from the growing recognition that all countries are increasingly interdependent in the modern global economy, and that all countries need to make major changes in order to achieve a fairer and more sustainable world living within finite planetary boundaries. The achievement of a sustainable development pathway for the world will therefore require efforts by all countries, and by all sectors of society. While recognising that different countries will have different short term priorities depending on their stage of development and other local circumstances the SDGs are intended to provide a general over-arching framework of medium term goals for all countries so as to ensure progress towards global sustainability in a well-balanced and equitable way.

This universality objective for the SDGs is one of the key elements that are intended to differentiate them from the previous Millennium Development Goals, and to expand their scope. They will follow the MDGs in outlining a pathway and objectives for the eradication of poverty and sustainable progress in the developing countries over the next 15 years. But they also have to signpost the changes needed in the developed countries and economies in transition in order to make their economies more environmentally and socially sustainable.

In 2013 the task of drafting proposals for these goals was assigned by the General Assembly to an Open Working Group. That Group reported in July 2014 and it is

planned that that report should now form the basis for further negotiations at the beginning of 2015, leading to final adoption of a set of universal Sustainable Development Goals by Heads of Government in the autumn of 2015.

### **Evaluating the OWG Package. A Good Agenda for the Developing Countries but insufficiently ambitious for the Developed Countries**

Encapsulating all the objectives in a single set of goals has not been an easy task. In SF's view the package presented by the OWG represents a good overall framework that should be retained in the negotiations going forward. In particular the technique of setting a limited number of broad universally applicable goals in general terms and then supplementing these with more specific quantifiable targets that can be calibrated appropriately for different countries according to local circumstances and current state of development is a good way of combining universality and difference.

The present package presents poverty eradication as the first and pre-eminent goal and focuses primarily on describing associated goals and targets that are needed to achieve that goal in developing countries<sup>1</sup>. It has much less to say about achieving sustainability in the developed world.

In SF's view however the package does not yet represent a sufficiently ambitious and demanding challenge to the developed countries world to transform their own economies in a more sustainable direction at the same time as helping the developing countries with their own sustainable development. It sets out a well-balanced set of development goals and targets for the developing countries together with appropriate challenges to the international community to assist them in this development process. But the goals and especially the targets as they stand at present do not yet amount to an adequate description of the sustainability transformation that is needed in the developed countries.

This is crucially important because it is increasingly becoming clear that achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in the developing countries will literally not be possible unless the developed and transition economies achieve their own sustainability transformation. Universality and the pursuit of sustainability in all countries of the world is not an optional extra to a traditional development agenda for the developing countries – it is a necessity if meaningful progress towards sustainability and poverty eradication is to be achieved in any part of the world.

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<sup>1</sup> OWG Outcome Document. Para 2 of the preamble. Poverty eradication is the greatest global challenge facing the world today and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. The Rio+20 outcome reiterated the commitment to freeing humanity from poverty and hunger as a matter of urgency.

Already climate change driven mainly by emissions from developed countries and the transition economies is exacerbating water shortages and crop failures in some of the poorest parts of the world. Already developed country demand for biofuels and for forestry products are contributing to loss of agricultural land and to destruction of forests in the developing countries. Already over-fishing by the industrial scale fleets of the north is destroying small-scale local fisheries in the south.

Eradicating poverty in the poorest parts of the world must thus go hand in hand with reducing carbon emissions and pollution in the developed world, and with using finite resources more efficiently. Otherwise efforts to secure development and poverty eradication in the developing countries will increasingly be overwhelmed by the adverse impacts of global changes arising mainly from unsustainable practices in the developed world and middle income countries.

The SDGs could and should be a new and updated version of Agenda 21 and should play an equally significant role in the whole world. That is what the Rio Summit in 2012 intended. But the package is in danger of being watered down to a restatement and updating of the development agenda for the developing countries, with not much more than token references to the changes needed in the developed and middle income countries.

Action is needed now to strengthen the OWG package so as to make a more significant and ambitious sustainability challenge to the developed world, at the same time as charting a sustainable development pathway for the developing countries and the international development community.

One objective in the further negotiations on the goals should therefore be to clarify and strengthen the description of those parts of the goals and targets that will be especially relevant to developed and middle income countries in order to guide their path towards sustainability over the next 15 years, and to reduce their harmful impacts on the rest of the world.

The Annex to this paper presents a preliminary appraisal of how the SDGs proposed by the OWG are relevant to developed countries. It indicates topics and subjects on which developed countries and middle income countries will need to consider new targets, policies, programmes and measures in order to meet the challenges for them that are implicit in the proposed SDGs.

This preliminary analysis indicates that although the current SDGs appear to be primarily oriented towards the priorities of the developing countries they do at least cover the main topics that ought to be included in a sustainability transformation challenge for the developed countries and for the middle income countries. The problem will be to turn the rather general language of the goals and targets proposed into a significantly stretching challenge that can inspire and shape a new drive towards sustainability in the developed and middle income world

The Annex indicates that for some of the goals their achievement will primarily be of significance in the individual country concerned. But for certain of the goals (8, 12,13,14,15, and 17) the achievement of the goals by developed and middle income countries both individually and collectively will be of crucial importance for the achievement of sustainability at a global level for the planet as a whole and for the developing countries in particular. Special efforts will therefore be needed to set ambitious targets for these goals and to ensure their delivery.

The suggestions in the Annex are no more than preliminary indications of the areas in which developed countries should be looking to the SDGs to prompt them to further efforts towards the sustainability transition. Stakeholder Forum and other partners are currently planning to undertake a more detailed assessment over the next few months of how the goals can best be elaborated and applied in a developed country context in order to provide a new impetus towards the sustainability transition. At the first stage this will involve a qualitative analysis of the applicability, implementability and transformativeness of the current SDG framework in a developed country, and is intended to be followed by a more quantitative analysis of the degree of challenge or ambition represented by the goals in a developed country.

As in earlier years the developed countries (and middle income countries) also need to consider how they can best support the developing countries in their own progress towards sustainable development, both through the deployment of ODA and by other means. But the new perspective implicit in the creation of the SDGs is that the contribution of the developed countries to support development and the eradication of poverty in the developing countries is not limited to the 0.7% of GDP (or lesser amounts) that they contribute in ODA and through other forms of assistance - important though they are. It is as much dependent on the transformation of the remaining 99.3% of the developed country economies into a more sustainable trajectory.

The SDGs must be for everyone. They need to be truly universal.

### **Implementing the SDGs after 2015. The SDGs as an Opportunity to relaunch the Sustainability Transition Worldwide.**

The goals as set out in the OWG package are deliberately expressed in simple and easily comprehensible language. It ought in principle to be possible to build widespread popular and political support for them – both in the developed and the developing world - and hence for the plans, measures and institutional arrangements that will be needed to achieve them. This will be easier to achieve if the goals and targets can be strengthened during the 2015 negotiations in the directions suggested above. But it is vitally important in any case even on the basis of the current version of the goals and targets.

SF believes that one main focus of effort during 2015 should now therefore be on planning for effective mobilisation of public and political support around the world for the SDGs, and planning for the creation or strengthening of the institutional structures and measures that will be needed at national, regional and international level to deliver the goals, and the indicators and monitoring processes that will be needed to monitor progress.

In 1992 the first Rio Earth Summit in 1992 secured enormous worldwide public and political support for the cause of sustainable development and built a significant head of steam for the implementation of its conclusions. In recent years however, partly no doubt because of over-riding concerns about the economic and financial crises, the original momentum towards sustainable development has diminished in many parts of the world.

The arguments for transforming the global economy to a more sustainable model are of course stronger than ever. Finite global resources are being depleted. Carbon emissions are rising. Pollution and waste steadily increase. Poverty and other social problems and glaring inequalities remain entrenched. Building a new global momentum for sustainability should be a top political priority.

If grasped vigorously the launch of the new Sustainable Development Goals in 2015 could provide the occasion for reviving the political commitment and society-wide momentum needed to make better progress on sustainability. Hopefully the Paris meeting of the UNFCCC in that year will complement this with a new push to make progress on climate change.

As countries prepare to meet this challenge it may be helpful to review the experience of the last 20 years since the 1992 Earth Summit to consider what worked best in advancing sustainable development and where the main emphasis should be placed in launching a new drive for sustainability.

After 1992 most countries created national sustainable development strategies, which were followed through with many measures to protect the environment, reduce pollution, promote sustainable consumption and production and advance sustainable development. A wide variety of institutional structures were created to engage business, local government and other parts of civil society in the development and follow up of the national strategies. New indicator sets were developed to monitor progress.

As countries now prepare themselves to implement the SDGs when they have been adopted SF would like to draw attention to key elements which in our experience will be crucial to using the SDGs to rebuild and maintain commitment and momentum for the sustainability transition:

- (i) Ensure that in the final negotiations the SDGs and the quantified targets within them are shaped so as to represent a significant stretch and challenge

to all countries to make substantial progress towards the sustainability transition over the next 15 years.

- (ii) Create a single central focus in national governments for advancing sustainability, Since the transformation involves major changes in all or most functions of government the lead and the co-ordination must come from the top – the Prime Minister and the Prime Minister’s Department. Since the sustainability transition will require significant shifts of resources and of fiscal policies Economics and Finance Departments must also be centrally involved. (Environment Ministers and Departments have a crucial role to play in defining the challenges and monitoring the progress, but are not strong enough by themselves to co-ordinate and lead all action on sustainability. Similarly Development Assistance Departments in developed countries have a very important part to play in ensuring that assistance programmes are centred around the promotion of sustainable development in developing countries. But they cannot co-ordinate domestic action to advance sustainability within the developed country itself.)
- (iii) Create effective processes for engaging with all parts of society in creating or updating sustainability strategies and monitoring systems. Business must be fully involved. So too must regional and local government. The general public must be fully informed of the issues and engaged in the parts of the transformation that will affect them, and require action by them. Sustainability transformation needs a broad co-operative alliance to make progress. It cannot be achieved solely by top-down government command and control measures. It needs to build on the resourcefulness and commitment of organisations and individuals in all parts of society.
- (iv) The changes needed will require major changes in many of the key sectors of the economy, and in the businesses, industry and infrastructure that support them. Major investment and reinvestment programmes will be needed, and the financial and investment community need to be fully engaged.
- (v) Regional and local government and local communities of all kinds have a crucial part to play. They need to be empowered and resourced to play their part effectively. 20 years ago the Local Agenda 21 movement around the world unlocked a great surge of local enthusiasm and innovation for the sustainability transformation. It would be a timely moment for a new wave to be generated linked with the widespread desire to reanimate and re-empower cities, towns and local communities of all kinds to take more charge of reshaping their own environments and economies.
- (vi) Ensure that the strategy identifies lead departments or agencies for following up each strand of the strategy and implementing the necessary policies, programmes and measures.
- (vii) Create or update effective indicator sets and use them proactively to monitor progress and make policy adjustments whenever the transition to sustainability veers off course.



- (viii) Create effective research and policy advisory bodies to stimulate innovatory thinking about sustainability.
- (ix) Create effective reporting and monitoring arrangements at international level so that global progress can be kept under review and corrective action initiated where needed.

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## **ANNEX**

### **Applying the Sustainable Development Goals in Developed Countries**

The following notes make some preliminary suggestions as to how the Sustainable Development Goals might be brought to bear in developed countries to stimulate new efforts towards the sustainability transition. This analysis indicates that there are a number of issues on which developed countries will need to consider new targets, policies, programmes and measures in order to meet the challenges for them that are implicit in the proposed SDGs.

This challenge could be made clearer if it proves possible to add additional targets or changed wording under some of the goals so as to make them more directly applicable and transformational in a developed country context. The notes make some suggestions on this. But there is already enough under most of the goals to give a general indication of the direction developed countries will need to take as they shape their plans for achieving the goals, and reinvigorating their implementation structures.

The Annex indicates that for some of the goals their achievement will primarily be of significance in the individual country concerned. But for certain of the goals (8, 12,13,14,15, and 17) the achievement of the goals by developed countries and countries in transition both individually and collectively will be of crucial importance for the achievement of sustainability at a global level for the planet as a whole and for the developing countries in particular. Special efforts will therefore be needed to set ambitious targets for these goals and to ensure their delivery.

The suggestions in the Annex are no more than preliminary indications of the areas in which developed countries should be looking to the SDGs to prompt them to further efforts towards the sustainability transition. Stakeholder Forum and other partners are currently planning to undertake a more detailed assessment over the next few months of how the goals can best be elaborated and applied in a developed country context in order to provide a new impetus towards the sustainability transition. At the first stage this will involve a qualitative analysis of the applicability, implementability and transformativeness of the current SDG framework in a developed country, and is intended to be followed by a more quantitative analysis of the degree of challenge or ambition represented by the goals in a developed country.

## **Preamble of the OWG Outcome Document.**

The preamble describes the background to the creation of the SDGs and outlines some of the principal purposes they are intended to serve. It gives much more attention to the problems of the developing countries and the help they need from the international community to achieve sustainable development than it does to the transformation needed in developed countries' own economies. It would be desirable to do something to redress this balance, perhaps by the inclusion of a supplementary paragraph on the following lines:

“10a. Developed countries have a particular responsibility to transform their own economies to a more sustainable pattern so as to reduce the pressure their demands make on limited or finite global resources and the load they impose on the world through waste production, pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.”

## **Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere.**

This goal and its targets rightly focus primarily on the eradication of the most extreme forms of poverty in the poorest countries.

But even in developed countries there continue to be deprived areas or sectors of society and pockets of poverty that need attention. Dealing with these problems ought to form part of the sustainability agenda in developed countries.

Target 1.2 of this goal proposes a halving of numbers living in poverty according to national dimensions by 2030. This clearly applies to developed countries as well as to developing countries. For a developed country context it could usefully be elaborated further to refer to the kinds of poverty still found in developed countries including child poverty, poverty amongst the elderly, and amongst minority and marginalised groups, and to particular aspects of poverty such as homelessness, food poverty and fuel poverty.

## **Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture**

This goal is also focused primarily on developing countries.

Extreme hunger is uncommon in most developed countries. But the recurrence of food banks and various forms of malnutrition in some developed countries shows that the problem has not been totally eliminated, particularly for some of the more marginalised groups in society. Dealing with these problems should form part of the sustainability agenda in developed countries as well as developing countries.

Even in developed countries much remains to be done to make agriculture more sustainable, and this should be a key part of the sustainability agenda for developed

countries. Agriculture needs to be more efficient and environment-friendly in its use of water, energy, nutrients, herbicides, pesticides and drugs. Targets 2.4 and 2.5 express this, but it could be helpful to add words indicating more explicitly the kind of transformation that is needed in a developed country context.

### **Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages**

This goal and its targets focus primarily on the needs of developing countries.

Health services are well developed in most developed countries. But even in developed countries much remains to be done to promote healthier lifestyles, to reduce major causes of ill health, and to ensure prompt and equitable access to health services. This should form part of their sustainability agenda.

Target 3.5 calls for strengthening prevention and treatment of substance abuse and harmful use of alcohol and 3.6 for halving deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents, both still very relevant in developed countries, while 3.9 calls for reduction in deaths and injuries from hazardous chemicals and pollution. All these objectives are relevant in most developed countries, but it could be helpful to add words characterising more clearly the public health sustainability challenge in a developed country context.

### **Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all**

This goal and its targets focus primarily on the needs of the developing countries.

Education at primary and secondary level is universal in most developed countries and there are extensive opportunities at tertiary level. But maintaining the quality of education remains an on-going challenge in all countries. And there is a growing need to integrate a sustainability approach both into the curriculum and into the management and life of educational institutions at all levels as called for by target 4.7.

These objectives should form part of developed country sustainability strategies.

### **Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls**

This goal and its targets are well-expressed in a way that is applicable and relevant to both developing and developed countries.

Gender equality and empowerment of women and girls are already recognised as goals in most developed countries. But even in developed countries there remain many on-going challenges to secure full equality in employment situations, and in various social and domestic settings. Making further progress on these issues remains an important part of the sustainability agenda in developed countries.

Target 5.5 about participation and equal opportunities might be strengthened by reference to the need for specific quantified targets for levels of participation to be achieved in particular contexts by specified dates.

## **Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all**

This goal and its targets are a well-balanced expression of the sustainability needs of both the developing and developed countries.

In most of the developed countries almost everyone has access to fresh water and sanitation services. But there are a number of areas where the water cycle is not managed sustainably – water extraction is depleting natural resources, sanitation services are not entirely satisfactory, and management of the services use too much energy. The protection and restoration of water-related ecosystems is also still a serious challenge in some developed countries.

All of these objectives should be included in the sustainability plans for water in developed countries as well as in those of developing countries.

## **Goal 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all**

The goal and the first target – securing universal access to energy for all by 2030 is a clear expression of the developing countries' energy needs.

It is much less relevant to developed countries since access to energy is already almost universal in those countries (even if affordability and reliability) remain an issue in some cases. But there is a long way to in making the supply of energy more sustainable, and in promoting the more efficient use of energy, both of which are urgent sustainability tasks for the developed countries and the middle income countries.

Unfortunately the two targets proposed in 7.2 and 7.3 - increasing substantially the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix by 2030 and doubling the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency by 2030 are a weak expression of the pressing need to move rapidly to a more sustainable use of energy in the world and particularly in the developed countries. The use of the word “global” in particular offers too much of a let out for individual countries to evade their own responsibilities. And “increasing substantially” renewable energy and “doubling” the [woefully inadequate] rate of energy efficiency improvement are much too vague as expressions of objective.

It would be difficult for even a well-intentioned developed country to make for itself much of a challenge to accelerate the sustainability transformation in the energy sector out of these vague and thin words. A real attempt should be made to strengthen the targets proposed under this goal, at least by removing the word “global” from the text so that all countries recognise their responsibilities for promoting this crucial transition.

## **Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.**

This goal has been a central objective for all countries in the world both developing and developed. In recent years most countries have been blown off course by the banking crisis and economic recession or stagnation. But the detailed targets under it appear to give more weight to sustaining (or restoring) economic growth to ambitious levels, and much less to the quality or sustainability of this growth.

The need to put sustainability at the heart of development in the developing countries and of recovery in the developed countries is not given sufficient attention. Target 8.4 specifically calls on developed countries to take the lead in a 10 year programme of economic transformation toward sustainable consumption and production, but no precise or quantified indication of what this means are included.

It would be desirable to spell out the objectives of the sustainable consumption and production target more precisely, particularly for developed countries. It would also be desirable to include a target date for switching away from GDP to a better yardstick for the growth of well-being and sustainability in a country.

## **Goal 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation**

This goal is relevant for all countries. All countries need to foster innovation, and to make their industry and infrastructure more sustainable.

Most of the individual targets are oriented primarily towards developing countries. But 9.4 which calls on all countries to upgrade infrastructure and retrofit industries to make them sustainable by 2030, with increased resource use efficiency and greater adoption of clean and environmentally sound technologies and industrial processes, all countries taking action in accordance with their respective capabilities has a particular relevance to developed countries and the sustainable redevelopment of their industries and infrastructure that they will need to undertake over the next generation.

## **Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries**

This goal and the targets proposed under it are relevant to all countries.

Several recent studies indicate that more equal countries tend to record higher levels of well-being and happiness amongst their populations. From this perspective the recent tendency for many developed countries to become more unequal is disturbing and needs to be addressed. Target 10.1 urges that by 2030 all countries should progressively achieve and sustain income growth of the bottom 40% of the population at a rate higher than the national average; and other targets propose specific policy areas for attention to help advance equality within and between countries.

It will be a considerable challenge for most developed countries to find ways of implementing this target through their sustainable development strategies and other measures.

## **Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable**

This goal is relevant to all countries, but most of the individual targets proposed will be relevant primarily to developing countries.

Most developed countries have a wide range of cities and settlement patterns displaying considerable variety in regard to sustainability, safety, resilience and inclusivity. It would be helpful if the targets could specify more quantified targets in relation to the improvements needed in the sustainability of housing and other buildings, and transport and planning policies.

A number of studies indicate that cities are likely to be able to make better progress on these issues when they have the freedom and resources to develop their own sustainability solutions without excessive central constraints. Unlocking the potential for sustainability innovation at local level in a new more effective and better resourced version of Local Agenda 21 could be a way forward here. A reference to this concept could be useful under this goal.

## **Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns**

This is one of the crucial challenges for developed countries (and middle income countries) as 12.1 indicates. In spite of some progress on energy efficiency and on waste management and recycling most developed countries are still consuming excessive amounts of non-renewable energy and other primary resources, thus placing growing pressures on the planet and on the ability of developing countries to achieve their own sustainability objectives. Developed countries have so far failed to decouple economic growth from increased consumption of energy and other resources. Some businesses and sectors of industry have made some progress towards sustainability over the past 20 years. But much greater efforts will need to be made on these issues over the next 15 years.

From this perspective the individual targets indicate some of the key areas in which progress will need to be made. But quantification is disappointingly absent. More precise targets are needed for the increase of resource efficiency and the level of waste reduction to be aimed at.

## **Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts\***

This is a crucial sustainability objective for both developed and developing countries.

Although some progress has been made in limiting GHG emissions in some countries global emissions continue to rise and the prospects for damaging climate change are worsening. Tougher targets and more vigorous implementation will be needed, particularly from those developed and middle income countries that have been moving in the wrong direction. While acknowledging that this subject is being negotiated separately under the UNFCCC it will be important to translate the results of those

negotiations into the SDGs and to ensure that they represent a sufficiently ambitious set of targets for developed and middle income countries to build into their sustainability strategies

#### **Goal 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development**

The oceans and seas are global commons, and it is important that all countries should contribute to managing them more sustainably.

Some developed countries have been amongst the worst offenders in terms of creating marine pollution and depleting fish stocks and other marine resources. Tougher targets and more effective implementation will be needed. The targets proposed in this goal urge that basic conservation measures should be put in place by 2020, but they do not at present give sufficient guidance of the quantitative improvements needed from developed countries.

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

This goal and the targets under it are relevant to both developed and developing countries.

Developed countries have a mixed record in terms of protecting land, soil, forests, biodiversity and ecosystems both within their own countries and in the impact of their trade and investment in other parts of the world. More effort will be needed to achieve a sustainable situation and the specific targets proposed in this goal.

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

This goal and targets are relevant to all countries.

All countries will need to review the adequacy of their institutional and judicial processes for the advancement of sustainability, and the achievement of the specific targets set out under this goal.

#### **Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development**

This goal and its specific targets are primarily aimed at reinvigorating international co-operation and assisting sustainable development in developing countries through financial assistance, technology transfer and equitable trading regimes. Many developed countries are currently falling behind the internationally agreed goals for the level of official development assistance. New efforts will need to be made to achieve those targets and to reshape international co-operation towards the achievement of the SDGs.