



10 Key Facts about the SDGs

1- The proposal by Colombia and Guatemala originated during the Rio+20 Summit in 2012 when Member States decided to launch a process to define a set of [Sustainable Development Goals](#) - the SDGs, as a new global framework to re-direct humanity towards a sustainable pathway.

2- The SDGs were meant to balance the three dimensions of sustainability-environmental, social and economic; build upon achievement and lessons learned from the Millennium Development Goals; include and transcend the Agenda 21 (1992) and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (2002).

3- The new goals are the result of a three-year process involving UN Member States, 83 national surveys engaging over 7 million people, and thousands of actors from the international community making it the biggest consultation in UN history.

4- Nations finally adopted the list of 17 goals and 169 targets in September 2015. The breadth and depth of the proposed SDGs is unprecedented. Adopting a rights-based approach, the new agenda aims to leave no-one behind and promote social inclusion for the most vulnerable groups. At the same time, it sets the environmental limits and critical natural thresholds for the use of natural resources. Some critics argue that 17 are too many. This may be true, but it ignores the fact that the goals have been heavily negotiated, having a broad legitimacy among all parties.

5- While the Millennium Development Goals were aimed at the Global South the new goals are designed to be universal. The goals are non legally-binding, with each country setting its own priorities and reporting to the High Level Forum on Sustainable Development.

6- The final document **Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** states in its Preamble: *"This Agenda is a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity"*, and affirms *"the interlinkages and integrated nature of the SDGs are of crucial importance in ensuring that the purpose of the new Agenda is realised"*.

7- The 2030 Agenda also includes the United Nations Addis Ababa Action Agenda adopted in July, which sets out the different means necessary to implement the Global Goals, including domestic resources, private finance and Official Development Assistance (ODA). While MDGs relied on voluntary aid and individual promises from countries, perpetuating a dependence on donor-recipient aid relationships, SDGs aims to promote a paradigm shift of financing beyond 'development aid', with multi-stakeholder partnerships, social investment and ethical trade.

8- A key challenge is how to engage the public in support of a complex agenda. The UN is currently rolling out a major advertising campaign led by film writer and director Richard Curtis.

9- As with all intergovernmental agreements the success or lack of it will be due to the political support governments give to implementation. Here a key role of stakeholders will be to continually remind governments of their commitments. These governments will change a number of times in the next 15 years in many countries and the succeeding governments must be educated and reminded of these commitments.

10- Which country is most likely to complete the goals first? According to a recent study of all 34 OECD states conducted by Germany's Bertelsmann Foundation the countries best positioned to achieve the new UN goals are the four Scandinavian nations: Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and Finland, with Switzerland following in fifth place. The nations with the lowest ranking are the USA, Greece, Chile, Hungary, Turkey, and Mexico.

More information on the SDGs:

<http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>

More information on ECOLISE: <http://www.ecolise.eu>