



Concept Note

Progress on the 2030 Agenda: Insights from country experiences

12 July 2019, 9:00-15:30

Ford Foundation Center for Social Justice

Background

Four years into the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and it is clear that progress in creating a more equitable, sustainable societies will be tenuous unless grounded in whole-of-government action based in interlinkages between the goals. How can we measure progress of the efforts to create systemic change? In addition to monitoring the 2030 Agenda's goals and targets, we must measure how regional and national changes to policy and practices enable implementation.

We know that to achieve Agenda 2030, three important transformations are required for success:

- We need a stronger global partnership to support SDGs implementation at a national level and to ensure the provision of global public goods. This requires a better **understanding of how global systemic issues, such as global value chains, technology transfer and conflict, are affecting countries.**
- Public policies must account for synergies and trade-offs to increase their effectiveness and efficiency. **In practice, synergies and trade-offs play out differently in each setting.**
- Finally, **priority should be given to those who are being left behind.** These are not always the same groups everywhere.

Moving forward, national contexts and priorities need to be better understood. Evidence from the global south, in particular, is needed to contextualize gaps that may be overlooked as global progress is monitored.

On the occasion of the first quadrennial review of the SDGs, Southern Voice will present its *Global Report on the State of the SDGs (SVSS)*. At this roundtable, Southern Voice researchers will present the six country case studies (Bolivia, Ghana, India, Nigeria, Peru and Sri Lanka), featured within the upcoming report, for review and validation. Event conclusions will feed into the final *Global Report on the State of the SDGs*, which will be launched in September 2019 on the sidelines of the SDGs Summit.

Description of Event

This closed-door roundtable will comprise two sessions with ample time for discussion between researchers, respondents and event participants. The case studies will serve as the starting point of the discussion to connect the global agenda with national contexts. Discussion will take place under the Chatham House Rule to encourage a frank discussion.

Opening. Setting the Scene

The event will kick-off with remarks by Dr. Debapriya Bhattacharya, research head of the report. This session will introduce participants to the day, the importance of understanding the progress of the 2030 Agenda beyond its goals and targets and to also consider how more in-depth transformations are taking place.

Session 1. Understanding global systemic issues to strengthen the global partnership.

Global systemic issues have cross-border impacts on countries in a myriad of ways. Despite the global nature of trade, technology, or conflict, the effects of these forces are highly dependent on national and local contexts. By identifying the transmission mechanisms of global systemic issues to national contexts, it is possible to assess countries abilities and strategies to adapt to global changes and bring into the discussion strategies related to the provision of global public goods in the framework of the SDGs. This session will discuss the role of global systemic issues through the presentation of three case studies:

- **Repositioning labour in a rapidly changing world: A case study from Sri Lanka.** The fourth industrial revolution with its promise of advanced technology is upending the traditional notions of work in Sri Lanka. Our case study has highlighted the impacts that the adoption of technology at the global level is having on the labour market at the national level. Concerns are raised about potential job losses and job polarisation in the face of a shift in the economy driven by global markets.
- **Ensuring access to affordable, sustainable and clean household energy for all in Ghana.** The case study in Ghana analyses the role of development partnerships in supporting Ghana's progress towards providing clean and affordable energy for all. Extended commitment to support access to clean and reliable energy by the global community is vital and can also support the achievement of other goals that have transboundary effects such as the reduction of CO2 emissions and the mitigation of climate change
- **Exclusion in education in Nigeria: The dimensions, drivers and implications for the SDGs.** The provision of quality education is highly dependent on external factors. Conflict and violence can severely undermine the state's ability to provide access to quality education. Our case study in Nigeria has analysed the impact of violent conflict, technology and foreign aid on the achievement of SDG 4.

Session 2. *The elusive links between SDGs: How to avoid trade-offs where synergies are expected?*

The discussion of synergies and trade-offs tends to focus on identifying connections across SDGs. However, a closer look at the extent to which education contributes to accessing education, or how employment or access to essential services is helping to close the gender gap, is needed. Evidence from the global south has shown that deeply rooted practices and institutions often undermine the synergistic relationships across SDGs. In these scenarios, more in-depth and focused analyses are required to understand particular contexts and the barriers that contribute to leave people behind.

- **Poor education and precarious jobs in Peru: Understanding transitions in Peru.** The case study in Peru analyses the extent to which education is contributing to better employment opportunities in Peru. The research focuses on youth transitions into employment, and their analysis of synergies and trade-offs allows the identification of the groups that are benefiting the least from quality education despite widespread education coverage across the country.
- **The challenges of the slow implementation of the SDG4 in Bolivia.** Bolivia has long struggled with limited data to monitor education outcomes. Using innovative methodologies, this case study analyses available data to identify the synergies (or the lack of them) between the widespread access to education in the country and other development outcomes. There is a widespread concern in Bolivia that the education system might not be allowing people to improve their living conditions.
- **Will women be a part of India's future workforce? A quest for inclusive and sustainable growth in India.** Progress made in some areas of the Agenda is still undermined by gendered institutions that prevent women and girls from enjoying equal rights. The case study in India analyses the conditions that prevent women from accessing the labour market in decent and equal conditions and sheds light into the social structures that preserve gender discrimination in India.

Conclusion

The concluding time will focus on extracting the most important insights, agreements and pending questions that emerge from the panel. These insights will be invaluable inputs for Southern Voice's State of the SDGs Global Report that will be launched in September 2019.

Agenda

- 08:45 - 9:15 Check-in and registration (breakfast and coffee)
- 9:15 - 10:00 **Opening. Setting the Scene**
Chair: Minh-Thu Pham, Executive Director for Global Policy, UN Foundation
Keynote: H.E. Ms. Laura Chinchilla Miranda, President of Costa Rica (2010-2014), Vice President of the WLA-Club de Madrid
Panelists:
 - Sofia Borges, Senior Vice President and Head of New York Office, UN Foundation (TBC)
 - Debapriya Bhattacharya, Distinguished Fellow at CPD; Chair, Southern Voice and Team Leader, SVSS Research Team
- 10:00 - 12:00 **Session 1. Understanding global systemic issues to strengthen the global partnership.**
Chair: Dr. Debapriya Bhattacharya, Distinguished Fellow, Centre for Policy Dialogue
Presenters:
 - Karin Fernando, CEPA - Sri Lanka
 - Aba Obrumah, ISSER - Ghana
 - Chukwuka Onyekwena, CSEA - NigeriaDiscussant:
 - Laurel Patterson, Team Leader, AI and SDG Integration, UNDP
 - Member State (TBC)
- 12:00 - 12:30 Lunch served
- 12:30 - 14:30 **Session 2. The elusive links between SDGs: How to avoid trade-offs where synergies are expected?**
Chair: Andrea Ordonez, Director, Southern Voice
Presenters:
 - Lorena Alcázar, GRADE - Peru
 - Werner Hernani-Limarino, ARU - Bolivia
 - Meena Nair, PAC - IndiaDiscussants:
 - Michael Green, Chief Executive Officer, Social Progress Imperative
 - Ms. Christine Brautigam, Director, Intergovernmental Support Division, UN Women
- 14:30 - 15:30 **Conclusion. What is next for the 2030 Agenda?**
Panelists:
 - Peter Taylor, Director of Strategic Development, International Development Research Centre
 - Minh-Thu Pham, Executive Director for Global Policy, UN Foundation
 - Andrea Ordóñez, Director, Southern Voice