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Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Introduction

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as the Global Goals, are a collection of 17 global goals designed to be a "blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all". SDGs were adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015 as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity by 2030.

The 17 SDGs are integrated—that is, they recognize that action in one area will affect outcomes in others, and that development must balance social, economic and environmental sustainability.

Through the pledge to Leave No One Behind, countries have committed to fast-track progress for those furthest behind first. That is why the SDGs are designed to bring the world to several life-changing 'zeros', including zero poverty, hunger, AIDS and discrimination against women and girls.

Everyone is needed to reach these ambitious targets. The creativity, knowhow, technology and financial resources from all of society are necessary to achieve the SDGs in every context.

Objective of Sustainable Development Goals

The Sustainable Development Objectives cover different aspects of social development, environmental protection and economic growth, and these are the main ones:

- The eradication of poverty and hunger so as to ensure a healthy life.
- Achieve universal access to basic services such as water, sanitation and sustainable energy.
- Support the generation of development opportunities through inclusive education and decent work.
- Foster innovation and resilient infrastructures by creating communities and cities capable of producing and consuming in a sustainable way.
- Reduce inequalities in the world, especially gender inequalities.
- Caring for the environment by combating climate change and protecting oceans and terrestrial ecosystems.
- Promote collaboration between different social actors to create an environment of peace and sustainable development.

If we achieve these Sustainable Development Goals among people, governments and companies, we will make the world a more prosperous place for all.

AIMs of Sustainable Development Goals

The aim of sustainable development is to define viable schemes combining the economic, social, and environment aspects of human activity. That is making sure that there is a balance between the three types of sustainable development.

- Environmental Sustainable Development
- Economic Sustainable Development
- Social Sustainable Development

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are 17 goals with 169 targets that all 191 UN Member States have agreed to try to achieve by the 2030. It is constant tussle between the Planet (environment) The People (social) and Profit (profits). The 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) to transform our world:

Goals 1 to 7 carrying forward the unfinished agenda of the Millennium Development Goals

GOAL 1: No Poverty- By 2030, End poverty in all its forms everywhere.

GOAL 2: Zero Hunger-End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

GOAL 3: Good Health and Well-being- Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

GOAL 4: Quality Education- Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

GOAL 5: Gender Equality- Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

GOAL 6: Clean Water and Sanitation- Ensure availability and sustainable management of clean water and sanitation for all

GOAL 7: Affordable and Clean Energy- Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

Goals 8 to 10 enhancing development drivers and cross-cutting issues

GOAL 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth - Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

GOAL 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure- Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

GOAL 10: Reduced Inequality- Reduce inequality within and among countries

Goals 11 to 15 enhancing aspects of environmental sustainability

GOAL 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities- Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

GOAL 12: Responsible Consumption and Production- Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

GOAL 13: Climate Action- Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.

GOAL 14: Life below Water- Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

GOAL 15: Life on Land- Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

Goals 16 & 17 Harnessing the global partnership for development

GOAL 16: Peace and Justice Strong Institutions- 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: Partnerships to achieve the Goal- Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development

(Source: Authors' construction based on General Assembly resolution 70/1)

Needs for Sustainable Development Goals

Seven reasons need to step up action on the Sustainable Development Goals.

1) While extreme poverty has been reduced considerably in the past decades, there are pocket in the world where it still stubbornly persists. Extreme poverty in 2013 was a third of the 1990 value-declining to only 11% of the world population.

2) World-wide, child mortality decreased substantially over the past several decades. Child deaths fell by 47 percent from living and thriving. Still the facts that 5.6 million children die each year-mostly of preventable causes-shows we have more work to do.

3) Child marriage has continued to decline around the world. Gender inequality continues to threaten girls and women around the world. Women continue to be underrepresented in the work-force and in political capital, but one important area of improvement is fewer girls are being married as child brides.

4) Ensuring access to affordable, reliable, and Modern energy for all is one step closer. From-2000 to 2016. The proportion of the global population with access to electricity increased from 78% to 87% with the absolute number of people living with access to electricity dipping to just below 1 million.

5) Despite efforts to reduce the risks from disasters, economic losses in 2017 attributed to disasters were estimated at over \$300 billion. These are among the

highest losses in past years owing to three major hurricanes affecting the U.S. and the Caribbean. Climate change is contributing to more intense extreme weather, and unfortunately the world's poorest people are the most vulnerable to disasters.

6) Global hunger is on the rise after a period of prolonged decline. Until recently, global hunger was decreasing. Unfortunately, that trend has reversed as the number of undernourished people rose to 815 million in 2016. Conflict, drought, and disasters linked to climate change are among the factors causing reversal in the long-term progress in fighting global hunger.

7) Urgent action on climate change is imperative, as 2017 was one of the three warmest years on record. The well-being of people is connected to the well-being of the planet. Last year's temperature was 1.1 above pre-historical levels and one of recorded history's hottest years. In fact, the 2013-2017 five-year average global temperature is the highest on record. Rising sea levels, the most expensive hurricane season on record, and increasing concentrations of greenhouse gases demand accelerated action on the Paris Agreement on climate change, which has been ratified by 175 countries. Around the world, local governments and ordinary people are taking bold actions to fight climate change. We need more of it.

Strategies for delivering on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are the most ambitious and comprehensive global development agenda in history. They succeeded the Millennium Development Goals, whose implementation was rather uneven. The UN Sustainable Development Goals are targets for overcoming some of the world's hardest challenges. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were initiated at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro in 2012 with the intent of creating a set of universal goals that met the world's most urgent environmental, political and economic challenges. The SDGs play a critical role in focusing business, civil society, governments and individuals on a set of common goals to address key global challenges.

In total, there are 17 headline SDGs which are unpinning and supported by 169 targets. Such goals include 'No Poverty' (SDG 1), 'Affordable and Clean Energy' (SDG 7), Responsible Consumption and Production (SDG 12) and Climate Action (SDG 13).

These are intentionally high-level and aspiration and are designed to be a rallying point for governments, NGOs, business and individuals.

At first glance, connecting your business objectives to the Goals may seem overwhelming and complicated, or simply irrelevant. How is one business expected to set goals to achieve zero hunger (SDG 2) or build sustainable cities and communities (SDG 11)?

But it is important to remember that the point of the SDGs is to create focused collective action to tackle global issues. Businesses were involved in their creation partly because they knew there were global challenges no company could tackle alone, and which required a shared approach.

The role of individual companies is to align their efforts with the most relevant SDGs and make positive changes within their sphere of influence.

Many governments are now shaping and implementing national policy and regulation around the SDGs, so understanding the Goals and aligning your commercial strategy with them can help create competitive advantage and more resilient business models.

Achieving the SDGs is an open process - anyone can decide to do something to contribute to a goal; from an individual to a multinational business. Below are five steps your business can take to identify the most relevant Goals, set targets and drive measurable impact.

1) Understand your business and value chain impacts: This may sound unnecessary or too obvious, but, it is especially important if you don't already have an existing sustainability strategy. Mapping out your company's direct and indirect value chain impacts (for example key supplier locations, impacts from the use of your products or services and direct impacts of your operations, customer/use and end of life) will help you identify where your impact overlaps with the SDGs, and places where there might be commercial opportunities in making a contribution to an SDG. This mapping should make it clearer which SDGs are relevant to your business as a whole.

2) Align with the SDGs: No business can act on all 17 Goals or prioritise them all equally. Instead you need to identify a few that really speak to you and your business and fall within your sphere of influence, allowing you to make the most positive impact. This may be just one goal or several, (the exact number should depend on the size, impacts and capacity of your business) but the Goals you choose should be the ones that align most closely with your business needs, priorities and stakeholder interests.

3) Identify SDG targets: With around 10 targets per goal, once you have selected the high-level SDGs you want to contribute to, you will need to select and prioritise of the most relevant targets you are going to measure and track. This may be based on relevance and alignment with your business, metrics and goals you already track, business objectives and strategies, and those that resonate with your employees.

4) Gap analysis: With a short list of Goals and targets identified, it's now necessary to identify gaps in existing measurements and in business practices against the list outlined. Setting internal business goals and the plans to meet them will help to engage your colleagues regarding improving opportunities, helping to contribute to the SDGs.

5) Put plans into action: The point of the SDGs is not to track, measure and align but to take real, meaningful, collective action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure prosperity for all. The Goals provide a framework to encourage businesses, organizations and individuals to make changes and drive global improvement, so don't let your SDG related targets slip, or lie forgotten.

6) Take action and make improvements. It's also important to communicate regularly with staff on how the efforts are going to make sure your targeted SDGs are visible and become part of normal business activity.

7) Many businesses decide to publish their targets and progress which demonstrates the collective impact business can have. This shows the importance of the Goals, which can be engaging for employees and business partners and can encourage dialogue with stakeholders. Even if you don't want to publish your progress, talking about your commitment can benefit your reputation, raise the profile of the Goals, and encourage others to follow suit.

Companies can announce goals aligned with the SDGs on the United Nations website, using www.business.un.org. An study can help you through all stages of this process. Using our wide-ranging sustainability expertise, we can help you understand the impacts of our business, identify the appropriate SDGs, set targets and develop a strategic approach to create the greatest impact.

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