

2024 Sustainable Development Transformation Forum

‘Advancing sustainable, inclusive, science- and evidence-based solutions for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals for leaving no one behind’

29 - 31 October 2024 - Incheon City, Republic of Korea

Concept Note

Background

At the midpoint of the 2030 Agenda, the world’s progress on the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is alarmingly off track. As highlighted in the 2024 Sustainable Development Goals Report¹, only 17% of SDG targets are on track, while nearly half show minimal or moderate progress, and progress on over one third of the Goals has stalled or even regressed.

Furthermore, the pace of SDG progress varies significantly across country groups with low-income and vulnerable nations lagging far behind. The impacts of climate change, a growing number of conflicts, a fragile global economy, and the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have revealed weaknesses and hindered progress towards the Goals.

About 23 people million are living in extreme poverty, with an increase of 100 million suffering from hunger in 2022 compared to 2019 due to the spillover effects of conflict, inflationary pressures, a cost-of-living crisis for many, and supply chain disruptions among other human-induced causes. In addition, greenhouse gas (GHG) concentrations hit record highs in 2022, with real-time data in 2023 indicating a continued rise further affecting the resilience of food systems, human health and planetary health overall.² 2024 is also a transformative year politically, with half of the world’s population undergoing an election, presenting the potential for significant changes in approaches to sustainable development and climate action for many countries.³

However, we still have hope to rescue these ambitions by 2030, provided we swiftly accelerate our efforts. At this year’s HLPF, 36 countries presented their Voluntary National Reviews with a focus on showcasing national progress towards the 2030 Agenda.

While the annual investment gap for developing countries to achieve the SDGs stands at \$4 trillion, there is marked progress in engaging private sector financing and innovative and sustainable engines of growth in developing countries and vulnerable communities.

The United Nations Office for Sustainable Development (UNOSD), under the umbrella of the Division for Sustainable Development Goals (DSDG) of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), plays a pivotal role in fostering the creation, dissemination, and application of knowledge to advance the implementation of the SDGs in developing countries.

¹ <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2024/>

² <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2024/07/closing-press-release-hlpf2024/>

³ <https://www.idea.int/initiatives/the-2024-global-elections-supercycle> and <https://www.idea.int/news/gnsei-network-convenes-discuss-2024-elections>

A flagship initiative of UNOSD aimed at realizing this objective is the annual Sustainable Development Transformation Forum (SDTF). Typically held in Incheon City in October, this event brings together approximately one hundred participants implementing the 2030 Agenda from various sectors and offers a platform for capacity building, knowledge exchange, policy innovation and partnerships.

Objectives and Contents

As in most of previous editions of the SDTF, this year's Forum will follow the thread of the next High-level Political Forum (HLPF) that will be held in 2025 under the overarching theme, *'Advancing sustainable, inclusive, science- and evidence-based solutions for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals for leaving no one behind'*. In this sense, this year's SDTF will feature the Sustainable Development Goals that will go under in-depth review during the HLPF in July 2025, namely SDG 3 (good health and well-being), SDG 5 (gender equality), SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth), SDG 14 (life below water), and SDG 17 (partnerships for the Goals).

Building on last year's SDTF, the forum will also focus on the Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR) 2023⁴ and reflect on the Summit of the Future⁵ held this 22 - 23 September 2024. At the Summit, Member States agreed on a Pact for the Future, a Global Digital Compact and a Declaration on Future Generations, marking the beginning of a new phase of accelerated progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals with high-level political guidance on transformative commitments leading up to 2030 and beyond.

The GSDR 2023 brought together the latest scholarship on sustainable development from a wide range of sources and disciplines. It included an analysis on the current states of progress on each of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), offers a conceptual framework and tools to understand impediments and opportunities for realizing the 2030 Agenda, and presents a "Call to Action" that can be adapted to different regional, national, and sub-national contexts. The "levers", or tools and approaches that will drive transformation, suggested by 2023 GSDR —governance, economy and finance, science and technology, individual and collective action, and capacity building— will continue to provide guidance for the discussions at the SDTF.

Therefore, the 2024 SDTF will aim to support the participants in achieving a deeper understanding of the findings and recommendations outlined in the 2023 GSDR, focusing on their application for the implementation of SDGs 3, 5, 8, 14, and 17. The Forum will also facilitate peer learning by fostering discussions on challenges and solutions, sharing success stories and lessons learned. Moreover, it will contribute to identifying strategies to expedite necessary actions for the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Methodology

The 2024 SDTF will open with a reflection on the outcomes of the Summit of the Future and the themes of the 2025 HLPF, framing the Forum within the current international framework and the latest scientific thinking.

The rest of the Forum will consist of several sessions covering the five levers suggested by 2023 GSDR matched with SDGs 3, 5, 8, 14, and 17 under the theme of *'Advancing sustainable, inclusive, science- and evidence-based solutions for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals for leaving no one behind'*. The sessions will be composed of presentations by

⁴ <https://sdgs.un.org/gsdrgsd2023>

⁵ Adopted Pact for the Future https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/sotf-pact_for_the_future_adopted.pdf

international experts, scholars, practitioners, and actors followed by Q&A and discussions. While most of the sessions will take place in plenary, group work and breakout sessions may also be used as needed.

The Forum will take place in person.

Target Audience

The Forum participants will include policymakers at all levels, civil society, local communities, youth, academia, and the private sector. The opening session may involve a larger number of high-level government officials.

The Forum will focus on developing countries with participation encouraged from countries in special situations, particularly Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries, Small Island Developing States and countries in conflict and post-conflict situations.

Dates and time

The Forum will take place in Incheon City, the Republic of Korea from **29 - 31 October 2024**.

Theme

As indicated above, the theme of the 2024 Sustainable Development Transformation Forum will be focused on SDGs 3, 5, 8, 14, and 17 in line with the 2025 HLPF theme of '*Advancing sustainable, inclusive, science- and evidence-based solutions for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals for leaving no one behind*'.

Language

The Forum will be conducted in English.

Outputs and Follow-up

The Forum will result in an outcome document of key messages which participants would like to convey to the international community regarding the successes, lessons learned and good practices they identified in relation to the implementation of the selected SDGs as well as the main theme of the Forum. In addition, a Forum Report documenting the presentations and discussions on the entire integrated agenda will be produced. Both the key messages and the 2024 SDTF Report will be published and posted on UNOSD's Website.

Organisers

The 2024 SDTF is organised by the United Nations Office for Sustainable Development (UNOSD) of UN DESA, Division for Sustainable Development Goals (UN DESA-DSDG).

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29 October – 31 October 2024

Agenda

Day One Tuesday, 29 October 2024		
Time	Sessions	Objective
8:30 – 9:00	Registration	
9:00 – 9:30	Opening remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr. Chun Kyoo Park, Head, UN Office for Sustainable Development, Division for SDGs, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) Welcome remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> H.E. Mr. Wansup Kim, Minister of Environment, Republic of Korea (video) Mr. Navid Hanif, Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (video) 	Introduction and opening remarks for the 10 th Sustainable Development Transformation Forum
9:30-9:45	Setting the Stage – Keynote address <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dr. Eun Mee Kim, President, Ewha Womans University, Republic of Korea and Independent Group of Scientists (IGS) for the 2019 Global Sustainable Development Report 	
9:45-10:00	Group Photo	
10:00 – 10:45	Reflections on the Summit of the Future Ms. Astra Bonini, Chief, Integrated Policy Analysis Branch, Division for Sustainable Development Goals, UN DESA Q&A and Interactive discussion	Share information on the Summit of the Future and explore implications for attending Member States
10:45 – 11:00	Coffee and Networking Break	
11:00 – 12:00	Science-Policy Dialogue: How to Advance Sustainable, Inclusive, Science- and Evidence-Based Solutions	This dialogue will introduce the



	<p>Moderator: Ms. Sara Castro de Hallgren, Sustainable Development Officer, UNOSD, DSDG, UN DESA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Astra Bonini, Chief, Integrated Policy Analysis Branch, Division for Sustainable Development Goals, UN DESA • Dr. Eun Mee Kim, President, Ewha Womans University, Republic of Korea, IGS for the GSDR 2019 • Ms. Nancy Shackell, Senior Research Scientist, Bedford Institute of Oceanography, IGS for the GSDR 2023 • Mr. Mesuilame Maheuliuli Simote Vea, Chief Economist, Prime Minister's Office, Tonga <p>Q&A</p> <p>Guiding questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the key challenges in integrating scientific evidence into policymaking to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals? • How effective are current policies in leveraging scientific data and knowledge to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals? • How can science-policy frameworks and dialogues be designed to ensure inclusive stakeholder engagement including underrepresented groups? • How can science-policy frameworks and dialogues address the trade-offs and synergies between different SDGs? 	<p>theme and key topics under the forum, exploring relevance for participants</p>
<p>12:00 – 13:00</p>	<p>Lunch Break</p>	
<p>Transformative Actions for the SDGs Today</p>		
<p>13:00 – 15:00</p>	<p>Session I: 2024 Voluntary National Reviews – Reviewing progress for accelerating the SDGs</p> <p>Moderator: Mr. Riccardo Mesiano, Deputy Head, ESCAP-ENEA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Friedrich Soltau, Chief, Intergovernmental Policy and Review Branch, Office of Intergovernmental Support and Coordination for Sustainable Development (OISC), UNDESA • VNRs from selected 2024 Member States <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ms. Araksya Babikyan, Third Secretary, Department of Multilateral Policy and Development Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia ○ Mr. Nabi Nabizade, Chief Advisor, Ministry of Economy of Azerbaijan ○ Mr. Steven Gabriel Guaycha Cruz, Advisor, National Planning Secretariat, Ecuador ○ Mr. Alomlangsy Rajvong, Director of Division, Department of International Organizations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Lao PDR ○ Ms. Darlyn Lucy Muloma Brima, Senior Assistant Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Republic of Sierra Leone 	<p>This session will focus on sharing current progress, actions and challenges for accelerating the SDGs today through Voluntary National Reviews</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mr. Tawanda Chitambara, Ministry of Public Services, Labour and Social Welfare, Government of Zimbabwe <p>Q&A</p> <p>Guiding questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are some of the common trends observed in the 2024 Voluntary National Reviews, including persistent and shared barriers, or notable stories of progress? • What is the role of inclusive and solid data in the VNR process and how does science and evidence strengthen SDG review processes and beyond? • What are the benefits of continued SDG progress monitoring and review especially through VNRs? 	
15:00 – 15:30	Coffee and Networking Break	
15:30 – 17:00	<p>Session II: Interactive session – Operationalizing the GSDR: Training Session on Entry Points and Levers of Transformation for the SDGs Moderator: Ms. Astra Bonini, Chief, Integrated Policy Analysis Branch, Division for Sustainable Development Goals, UN DESA</p> <p>Framework presentation on Entry Points and Levers by Ms. Nancy Shackell, Senior Research Scientist, Bedford Institute of Oceanography, IGS for the GSDR 2023</p> <p>Call to Action Plan – Transformation for the SDGs Exercise Part 1 of 3: Exploring the GSDR’s Framework of Entry Points and Levers for Transformation at national level</p> <p>Guiding questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the entry points, levers and transformations under the Global Sustainable Development Report framework? • How is this approach relevant for national policymakers seeking to better plan and implement policies to achieve the SDGs? • What key impediments or barriers exist to advance progress on key entry points or levers? • As we are now heading to a third Global Sustainable Development Report to be developed for 2027, what would some of the insights be from the previous processes that will be taken forward for this future report? 	<p>This session will provide a general understanding of the GSDR framework, including its entry points and levers, as an approach to plan and frame SDG progress today for transformations tomorrow</p>

Day Two		
Wednesday, 30 October 2024		
Time	Sessions	
Transformative actions for SDGs under review		
9:00 – 9:15	Opening Session – Day 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recap of Day 1 and Overview of Day 2 Warm-up Systems-thinking Exercise 	Participants welcomed with a review and warmup
9:15 – 10:30	Session III: Enabling Engines of Sustainable Growth (SDG 3, 5, 8, 14, & 17) Moderator: Ms. Sara Castro de Hallgren, Sustainable Development Officer, UNOSD, DSDG, UN DESA Overview Presentations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms. Cornelia Kaldewei, Senior Economic Affairs Officer, EAPD, UN DESA (virtual) Mr. Stefan Csordas, Economic Affairs Officer, Least Developed Countries Section, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) Q&A Exercise – Reviewing the Productive Capacities Index Guiding questions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How can policymakers identify the right engines of growth to ensure national progress on the SDGs? Are current measures of growth masking key progress? What role does a middle-income trap play in hindering sustainable growth for all? What barriers and solutions exist for countries in special situations, given competing crises today to enable sustainable and especially inclusive growth? 	This session will introduce key concepts, approaches and tools for sustainable growth and key bottlenecks to ensure more effective planning for the SDGs
10:30 – 10:45	Coffee and Networking Break	
10:45 – 12:30	Session IV: From Rural Livelihoods to Rural Wellbeing: Empowering Rural Women and Communities Towards Prosperity (SDG 3, 5 & 8) Moderator: Mr. Simon Gilby, Sustainable Development Officer, UNOSD, DESA Introductory Presentations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr. Albert Motivans, Head, Data and Insights, Equal Measures 2030 Mr. Wycliffe Alwago, Phd Fellow, UNU-WIDER 	This session will highlight rural issues in developing countries, emphasising the need to centre

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms. Rajvi Joshipura, Senior Coordinator, Self-Employed Womens Association (SEWA) <p>Country Discussants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms. Abiodun Essiet, Senior Special Assistant to the President on Community Engagement, Nigeria Mr. Hugo Allan Garcia Monterrosa, Undersecretary for Strategic Development Analysis, Secretariat of Planning and Programming of the Presidency, Guatemala <p>Q&A</p> <p>Guiding questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the current trends in achieving progress for women and gender equality in line with SDG 5 and across the 2030 Agenda? What barriers stand in the way and what actions can be taken to realize gender equality for greater well-being especially among vulnerable groups? What proven solutions exist for rural prosperity and empowering rural women towards greater wellbeing? <p>Levers of Transformation – Interactive Group and Plenary Discussion, led by forum facilitators</p> <p>Participants will be divided into groups to discuss lessons learned thus far and apply these into the Call to Action Template to identify priority areas for action</p>	wellbeing and empower women.
12:30 – 13:30	Lunch Break	
13:30 – 15:30	<p>Session V: Towards Sustainable Stewardship: Sustainable Fishing, Livelihoods and Life Under Water (SDG 8 & 14) Moderator: Mr. Simon Gilby, Sustainable Development Officer, UNOSD, DESA</p> <p>Introductory Presentations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr. Nancy Shackell, Senior Research Scientist, Bedford Institute of Oceanography, IGS for GSDR 2023 Ms. Adrienne Egger, Fisheries Officer, FAO Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries, Republic of Korea (t.b.c) Country Discussant <p>Q&A</p> <p>Guiding questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What notable achievements and pressing challenges exist to advance progress on SDG 14 in line with sustainable livelihoods? How are fish stocks changing across the world and what are the implications for vulnerable communities? What solutions exist to ensure an optimal future for life under water and how can national policymakers enable these? 	This session continues the emphasis on livelihoods and wellbeing, focusing on water and links between SDG 8 and 14.

	<p>Levers of Transformation – Interactive Group & Plenary Discussion led by forum facilitators</p> <p>Participants will be divided into groups to discuss lessons learned thus far and apply these into the Call to Action Template to identify priority areas for action</p>	
15:30 – 16:00	Coffee and Networking Break	
16:00 – 17:30	<p>Session VI: Financing a Just Transition – Accelerating Investments for SDG Progress</p> <p>Moderator and Introductory Presentation: Mr. Stefan Csordas, Economic Affairs Officer, Least Developed Countries Section, UNCTAD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Jaehyuk Choi, Director for Financial Collaboration, Outreach, and Management, Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI) • Ms. Oyun Sanjaasuren, Director, Department of Partnerships and Resource Mobilisation, Green Climate Fund <p>Q&A</p> <p>Guiding questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the current financing gap for the Sustainable Development Goals and what role can climate finance play in ensuring a just transition? • What key trends can be observed in terms of investment for the SDGs and green growth today? • What are the bottlenecks for accelerating investments for a just transition in low- and middle-income countries? <p>Call to Action Plan – Transformation for the SDGs Exercise Part 2 of 3</p> <p>Participants will be divided into groups to discuss lessons learned thus far according to Call to Action Template to finalize priority area for action</p>	<p>This session shifts the focus to delivering the resources required for ensuring the transformation needed for the achievement of the SDGs.</p>

Day Three		
Thursday, 31 October 2024		
Time	Sessions	
8:45 – 9:00	Opening Session – Day 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recap of Day 2 and Overview of Day 3 Warm-up Exercise 	Review of the forum thus far
9:00 – 10:30	Session VII: Fuelling Future Green Growth - Competing crises, the demographic dividend and decent jobs (SDG 3, 5, 8 & 17) Moderator: Mr. Simon Gilby, Sustainable Development Officer, UNOSD, DESA Roundtable discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms. Nadeeka Sudarshani Amarasinghe, Sustainable Development Council and Ministry of Finance, Economic Stabilization and National Policies, Sri Lanka Mr. Wycliffe Alwago, Phd Fellow, UNU-WIDER Mr. Edward Bruce-Lyle, Senior Planning Analyst, National Development Planning Commission, Ghana Mr. Stefan Csordas, Economic Affairs Officer, Least Developed Countries Section, UNCTAD Ms. Adrienne Egger, Fisheries Officer, FAO Mr. Albert Motivans, Head, Data and Insights, Equal Measures 2030 Q&A Guiding Questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What key crises will hold back green growth in the context of low and middle-income countries? What implications does a demographic dividend have on future SDG progress, given current the role of crises in slowing growth? How can proven solutions around women’s economic inclusion, decent jobs and targeted investments have on future well-being and green growth? What is the role of science and evidence-based policy in overcoming competing crises and their future implications? 	This session will explore the future trends expected across key goals and wider implications and insights for future scenarios to improve decision making today
10:30 – 11:00	Coffee and Networking Break	
11:00 – 12:30	Session VIII: Fuelling Future Growth for an SDG Push – Charting pathways towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals Facilitator: Ms. Sara Castro de Hallgren, UNOSD, DSDG, DESA Identifying national <u>SDG insights based on integrated accelerators</u> across Governance, Social Protection, Green Economy and Digital Disruption <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms. Laurel Patterson, Head, Sustainable Development Goal Integration, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) 	Participants will explore the SDG Push scenario model and how data and scenario-thinking can be applied for improved planning and

	<p>Country Cases</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Omar Herrera, Specialist, Department of Sustainable Development, Ministry of Economy, Planning and Development, Dominican Republic • Ms. Rachelle Ida Yapo, Director of Sustainable Development Policies and Strategies, Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development, Côte D'Ivoire <p>Call to Action Plan – Transformation for the SDGs Exercise Part 3 of 3 Based on priority identified on day 2, participants will leverage data for SDG insights, future scenarios, and leverage points to improve planning and decision-making for their priority action</p> <p>Guiding questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is role of data and science in strengthening planning, investment and policy leadership for future progress on sustainable development? • What common and accessible tools or approaches exist to inform future scenarios for the SDGs? • What role do key accelerators or leverage points identified today play in advancing future progress the SDGs? 	<p>insights to accelerate the SDGs. Participants will divide into group to identify key data and leverage points for their scenarios.</p>
12:30 – 13:30	Lunch Break	
13:30 – 15:30	<p>Session IX: Next Steps and Call to Action - HLPF 2025, Voluntary National Reviews and data development Moderator: Mr. Fred Soltau, Chief, Intergovernmental Policy and Review Branch, OISC, UNDESA</p> <p>HLPF 2025 and next steps – Mr. Fred Soltau, Chief, IPRB, OISC, UN DESA</p> <p>2025 Voluntary National Reviews</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Reverie Pure G. Sapaen, Director, Governance, National Economic Development Authority, Philippines • Ms. Fatima Gabriela Avelar Bonilla, Institutional Coordinator, National Council for Sustainable Development, Vicepresidency of the Republic of El Salvador • Mr. Jime Lhendup, Planning Officer, Policy and Planning Division, Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources, Government of Bhutan <p>Discussant: Mr. Eliezer Chi, Statistician II, Statistical Institute of Belize</p> <p>Country representatives: Presentation of the Call to Action Plan</p> <p>Guiding questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the next steps for HLPF 2025 and Voluntary National Review processes in 2025 and beyond? • How can investments in data today strengthen SDG review and progress in the future? 	<p>This session will introduce the HLPF 2025 in the context of the Summit of the Future and discuss potential lessons and priorities for 2025 Voluntary National Reviews</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can interested member states start and present their VNRs in future HLPFs? • As HLPF 2025 is the first after the adoption of the Pact for the Future, how can future VNR's align with inter-generational equity and the Pact's outcomes? 	
15:30 – 16:00	Coffee and Networking Break	
16:00 – 17:00	Forum Closing Session Presentation of the key messages – rapporteurs Closing Remarks	

Background readings and reference material for participants:

Day 1

[Global Sustainable Development Report \(GSDR\) 2023](#)

[Summit of the Future](#)

[The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2024](#)

Day 2

[UN DESA Policy Brief No. 155: Accelerating middle-income countries' progress towards sustainable development](#)

[UNCTAD Productive Capacities Index](#)

[Trends and progress in international development cooperation: report of the Secretary-General \(2023\)](#)

[The Gender Snapshot 2024](#)

[SDGs and Overview and Progress including SDG 14](#)

[The Least Developed Countries Report](#)

Day 3

[SDG Push: Unlocking New Pathways to SDG Acceleration](#)

[Valuing What Counts - UN System-wide Contribution on Beyond GDP](#)

[Our Common Agenda Policy Brief 4. Valuing What Counts: Framework to Progress Beyond Gross Domestic Product](#)

[UN DESA Policy Brief No. 161: On the path to an older population: Maximizing the benefits from the demographic dividend in the least developed countries](#)