



HIGH IMPACT
INITIATIVES



SEPTEMBER 2023

FUTUREGOV

Building public sector
capabilities for the future

HALFWAY TO 2030

High Impact Initiatives at SDG Action Weekend, 2023

The SDGs are essential but we are off track

World leaders made a historic global promise to secure the rights and well-being of all peoples when they adopted the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015. This Agenda recognizes that collectively, we can deliver a better future for all. However, the Agenda is a promise, not a guarantee.

Over the past eight years, the world has seen unprecedented mobilization around the SDGs and we have made significant progress on some fronts, laying the critical foundations for our future success. However, now halfway to the 2030 deadline, we are not halfway there – in fact, we are only 15% of the way.

To keep the promise, we need a fundamental pivot

It will take more than rhetoric or increased attention to deliver the promise. We cannot stay wedded to current ways of working. Everything we do, in every corner of our world, will need to evolve for us to advance.

The fundamental pivot we need at the core of the 2030 Agenda demands that countries reorient economies, ways of working and mind-sets to ensure the rights and aspirations of all can be achieved while preserving our climate and natural environment.

This change will take everyone

In many ways, the foundations for transformation are right in front of us - the technical know-how, institutional infrastructure, global financial resources and proven programmes – but we need to channel these resources more effectively. This is the critical moment for political leadership and bold action from national governments; for the international community to come together in common purpose; and for all partners on the SDG journey to take their contribution to the next level. We start tomorrow, by accelerating what works today.

THE HIGH IMPACT INITIATIVES AT SDG ACCELERATION DAY *SUNDAY, 17 SEPTEMBER*

As we look to the future, our goal is simple: to generate renewed momentum, strengthen political leadership and channel tangible, integrated and coordinated support behind national plans and priorities. As part of the global effort to meet this challenge, the United Nations development system is mobilizing behind 12 high impact initiatives which provide a platform to help take SDG progress to scale. This platform will enable us to learn, evolve and scale what works with greater coordination and collaboration. The platform cuts across three major areas: economic and social transitions, means of implementation, and a core aspect of the cross-cutting issue of gender equality.

- **Energy** Compacts: Scaling up ambition to deliver on SDG7
- Nature Driving Economic Transformation: Leveraging the power of **biodiversity and nature** to drive equitable economic progress
- **Food Systems** Transformation: Transforming food systems for a sustainable world without hunger
- Transforming **Education**: Learning to build a better future for all
- Global Accelerator: The Global Accelerator on **jobs and social protection** for just transitions
- **Digital** Public Infrastructure: Scaling inclusive and open digital ecosystems for the SDGs
- The SDG Stimulus: Scaling up long-term affordable **financing** for the SDGs
- Transforming **Trade**: Paradigm shift to boost economic development
- **Local2030** Coalition: Pushing key transitions and achieving the SDGs by 2030
- FutureGov: Building **public sector capabilities** for the future
- Power of **Data**: Unlocking the data dividend for the SDGs
- Spotlight Initiative: To eliminate **violence against women and girls**

FUTUREGOV VISION FOR IMPACT

Major investment is needed to strengthen public sector capabilities to unlock accelerated delivery of the SDGs. As the world becomes increasingly volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous, public institutions can no longer do business as usual. Governments must be equipped to anticipate development risks and effectively adapt and transform their public sectors for sustainable, inclusive development that speaks to the aspirations of their people. As we look to the future, gaps in public sector capabilities present an acute obstacle to the achievement of the SDGs – member states must adopt a renewed sense of purpose and urgency towards public sector transformation.

Critical public sector capabilities for the future must create the conditions necessary for advancement across the sustainable development transitions, through

- 1) adapting and learning at an institutional level in the face of incomplete information and radical uncertainty;
- 2) using systems thinking and foresight to govern effectively, making the most of data and digital

solutions; and 3) tapping into social and policy innovation beyond digitalization.

The FutureGov initiative will help member states build these three public sector capabilities to unlock accelerated delivery of the SDGs. FutureGov is designed to support member states through their ‘transformation journeys’ as they improve the way they design, finance, deliver, and evaluate public services. The FutureGov Facility will be launched at the SDG Action Weekend (16-17 September 2023) by UN DESA, UNDP, and a coalition of countries and organizations committed to enhancing the public sector, to support the achievement of the SDGs and national priorities.

This High Impact Initiative will drive progress not only on SDG16, but across all SDGs. Achieving the SDGs will require strong public sector capabilities that are fit for purpose – FutureGov aims to develop skillsets, shift mindsets, and foster innovation in a way that empowers countries to accelerate progress towards the SDGs.

OVERVIEW: FUTUREGOV

To achieve this vision, FutureGov will focus on three elements of public sector transformation – through prioritized capabilities that can shift over time in response to the evolving development needs of member states:

1. **Skillsets: Building public sector skillsets for adaptable and resilient institutions through a shared toolbox.**

Member states will participate in co-creating and regularly updating a shortlist of priority skills– including in improving the agility of public service delivery; designing systems to generate effective policies and investment decisions; and working beyond traditional boundaries to unify capabilities across agencies, sectors and society..

2. **Mindsets: Shifting mindsets towards systems thinking and foresight for effective governance and inclusive service delivery, including through digital and data tools.**

FutureGov will support countries to accelerate intergovernmental learning and countries' exchange, to effectively use system tools to inform public sector policies and investment in the SDGs, and to leverage data science and digital literacy capabilities.

2. **Innovation: Enabling broader and more impactful social and policy innovation in public sectors, supported by the requisite enabling environment**

FutureGov will help countries mainstream innovation by helping them make better use of accelerator platforms and innovation labs, apply behavioral insights to improve the efficacy of public policy, and design new interfaces for public engagement and democratized innovation.

Under the auspices of the United Nations and with support from UN DESA, UNDP and other partners, the FutureGov Facility will provide technical assistance, channel resources, facilitate intergovernmental learning, and serve as a knowledge platform – enabling member states to benefit across these three pillars.

In particular, the FutureGov Facility will include a digital portal that serves as a clearinghouse for research, policies, strategies, methodologies, tools, trainings, and case studies on public sector transformation. The portal will facilitate peer-to-peer connectivity and learning, allowing countries to share their expertise and address challenges and issues of common interest. It will provide access to specific trainings, resource materials and experts from both the Global South and Global North.

PLANS FOR 2023 SDG ACTION WEEKEND

The FutureGov session at this year's SDG Action Weekend will renew a sense of purpose and urgency towards public sector transformation while serving as a launch event for the FutureGov Facility. The session will bring member states, partners and experts together in a conversation on the centrality of public sector transformation, while allowing member states to share capability-building experiences and reiterate their commitments to public sector transformation moving forward.

ROADMAP TO 2030

Long-term plans will evolve as we learn and circumstances change; below is our current approach to acceleration through 2030, after the SDG Action Weekend.

Timeline and deliverables for progress: After the SDG Action Weekend, FutureGov will assemble a coalition of front-runner member states and institutions to form *the Group of Friends of FutureGov*, committed to supporting peer countries through the *FutureGov Facility*. The FutureGov initiative will mobilize resources to establish a digital portal, align on skillsets to prioritize, and explore partnerships, working towards key milestones:

- *June 2024:* Launch the Group of Friends on FutureGov, for informal consultation and advocacy
- *December 2024:* Engage at least 10 countries towards the advancement of SDG Target 17.6, enhancing North-South, South-South and triangular regional / international cooperation
- *December 2024:* Build a coalition of 20 front-runner countries to drive the FutureGov Facility as a capability-building hybrid platform
- *December 2024:* Enhance the FutureGov Facility through a context-driven digital portal
- *December 2025:* Demonstrate impact through engagement with 15 beneficiary countries, with representation from the Least Developed Countries, Small Island Developing States, Landlocked Developing Countries, countries in transitions, etc.

Metrics for success: The FutureGov digital portal will be used to monitor progress and provide transparency to

the international community. In addition, regular updates on FutureGov's metrics for success will be reported at annual HLPF meetings. Several key performance indicators will be tracked:

Output indicators

- Number of front-runner countries in coalition of the Group of Friends of FutureGov
- Number of beneficiary countries supported through engagement with the FutureGov Facility

Outcome indicators

- SDG Indicator 16.6.2 and 16.7.2; number of countries to implement measures and monitor scale of their improvements
- SDG Target 17.6, number of countries engaged to enhance targeted cooperation

Roles and responsibilities of partners: Within the UN development system, the work of the FutureGov initiative will be managed by UN DESA and UNDP.

- This initiative will be funded by champion member states, complemented with existing resources of UN DESA and UNDP.
- Member states will also be expected to provide in-kind contributions to the FutureGov Facility (e.g., resources, expertise, tools, roadmaps, etc.).
- FutureGov's work will be guided by the UN Committee of Experts on Public Administrations (CEPA), a subsidiary body of the Economic and Social Council.



**United
Nations**

Department of
Economic and
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For an overview of the High Impact Initiatives, visit the [Transformative Actions](#) action tab on the [SDG Summit](#) website