



HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT CONVENED UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

18-19 September 2023
United Nations Headquarters, New York

Concept Note

Background

Globally, cascading and interlinked crises are exacerbating long-standing challenges to sustainable development and placing the achievement of the 2030 Agenda in peril. The confluence of crises, dominated by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change and conflicts, have created severe impacts on poverty, food and nutrition, health, education, the global economy, the environment, social cohesion and peace and security.

Urgent and ambitious action is needed to rescue the SDGs and deliver progress for people and the planet by 2030. According to the 2023 Special Edition of the SDG Progress Report, a preliminary assessment of the approximately 140 targets with data shows that only about 12 per cent are on track; close to half, though showing progress, are moderately or severely off track; and some 30 per cent have either seen no movement or regressed below the 2015 baseline.

The President of the United Nations General Assembly will convene Heads of State and Government for the 2023 High-level political forum on sustainable development under the auspices of the General Assembly (SDG Summit) on Monday, 18 September and Tuesday, 19 September 2023. The Summit marks the mid-point of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and provides a crucial opportunity to accelerate our efforts.

The SDG Summit is the central UN platform for Heads of State and Government to provide political leadership on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals. It will provide high-level political guidance on the 2030 Agenda and its implementation, identify progress and emerging challenges, and mobilize further actions to accelerate implementation. The Summit will be the centerpiece of the UN's work in 2023 and of the General Assembly's High-level week this September.



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Objectives and expected outcomes

Through the Summit, countries, both individually and collectively, have an opportunity to place the world on a sustainable development path. The international community can seize this opportunity to make significant transformations for integrated SDG implementation and how societies produce, consume and share benefits and risks, while leaving no one behind.

The Summit is envisaged to be forward-looking and action-oriented, with the aim of accelerating international action to improve people's lives and reinvigorating the sense of hope, optimism and enthusiasm that characterized the adoption of the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda. It is expected to adopt a concise, action-oriented political declaration as its outcome document.

The Secretary-General has urged world leaders to deliver a Rescue Plan for People and Planet at the SDG Summit through deliverables in three areas. First, he requested countries to deliver global commitments to the SDGs, including through an SDG Stimulus by massively scaling up financing and other measures, such as debt relief. Second, he urged world leaders to convey a National Commitment to SDG Transformation. This could include clear benchmarks to reduce domestic poverty and inequality levels by 2027 and 2030, in tandem with nationally determined climate contributions. And third, all countries are urged to fully engage their domestic constituencies, particularly civil society and the private sector, in their Summit preparations.

The SDG Summit will also be followed by the Summit of the Future in 2024, which will build upon the outcomes of the SDG Summit and turbocharge the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Programme overview

The opening of the Summit will feature statements by the President of the General Assembly, the United Nations Secretary-General, and the President of the Economic and Social Council. The political declaration will be adopted during the opening of the Summit.

Immediately following, a setting-the-stage segment will take place with the participation of stakeholders including the SDG Advocates, the Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR) Independent Group of Scientists, International Financial Institutions, and Youth, Civil Society and Private Sector Representatives. This segment



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intends to provide a clear picture on what has been achieved, where we are lagging behind, and what needs to be done to restore credibility on the promise of a sustainable transformation.

The opening will be followed by a short plenary segment for group statements to hear the actions and commitments delivered on behalf of groups of States.

Six Leaders' Dialogues will be held to allow Heads of State and Government to set out concrete national commitments to SDG transformation.

Each Leaders' Dialogue will be co-moderated by two States at the level of Head of State and Government. Participating States will intervene on the specific theme of the Leaders' Dialogue to share their concrete new commitments in the field of sustainability.

The Dialogues will also feature interventions from selected representatives of the UN system, intergovernmental organizations, the private sector, civil society and academia.

Commitments and recommendations will be summarized and reported back during the Closing Segment.

The time limit will be three minutes for both national statements during the Leaders' Dialogues and statements made on behalf of a Group of States during the plenary segment.

The list of speakers will open on the e-deleGATE portal on Wednesday, 19 July 2023 at 10:00 a.m. and close on Thursday, 31 August 2023 at 6:00 p.m.

2023 SDG Summit Leaders' Dialogues

The six themes of the Leaders' Dialogues are based upon the analysis conveyed in the Report of the Secretary-General (Special Edition) entitled "Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals: Towards a Rescue Plan for People and Planet" as well as the main findings of the 2023 Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR). These six areas are crucial to accelerating implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and offer an opportunity to address the transformations needed to achieve the SDGs by 2030.

The Dialogues are aimed to elicit the participation of Heads of State and Government,



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while also providing opportunity to receive priority messages and inputs from major groups and other stakeholders as critical to the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda. An expected outcome of each dialogue is the identification of concrete solutions and proposals for rescuing the SDGs.

Leaders’ Dialogue 1: “Scaling up actions on key transitions to accelerate SDG progress”

Achieving the SDGs by 2030 requires key transitions pursued through bold decisions, a surge in investment, and long-term holistic approaches. This Leaders’ Dialogue will concentrate on policy actions and investment pathways to drive these transitions that will act as multipliers to advance progress across the SDGs, including in areas such as energy, digitalization, education, social protection, the triple planetary crisis and food security.

Guiding questions to serve as the basis for the commitments:

- What actions have been successful in bringing about transitions for sustainable development?
- How can these actions be scaled up to unlock the rapid and deep transitions needed to deliver on the Goals?
- How can multi-stakeholder partnerships and collaboration contribute to SDG progress through key transitions?

Leaders’ Dialogue 2: “Building resilience and leaving no one behind”

This Dialogue will consider the profiles of resilience that demonstrate humanity’s capacity to overcome adversity. The world must act to tackle the drivers of socioeconomic inequalities within and between countries, and improve the well-being of people furthest behind, especially marginalized and vulnerable groups, and thus contribute to inclusiveness and resilience globally. Local and indigenous approaches to building resilience and wellbeing can be introduced in the discussion. The dialogue will also address disaster risk reduction and disaster resilience as well as advancing the SDGs in crisis and humanitarian settings.

Guiding questions to serve as the basis for the commitments:

- How can rapid technological change enhance resilience and ensure a people-centered and human rights-based approach to sustainable development?
- What concrete and ambitious actions can be pursued for safeguarding the wellbeing of all in society, leaving no one behind?



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- How can child-sensitive and gender-responsive approaches be bolstered and brought to scale, especially focusing on the needs of youth?

Leaders' Dialogue 3: "Game-changers: Applying science, technology, innovation and data for transformative action"

The world is equipped with levels of knowledge, technologies, and resources that are unprecedented in history. Yet the potential for science, technology, innovation and data to be applied to the SDGs is vastly under-utilized. Systemic and contextual barriers that stand in the way of their effective and equitable utilization also need to be identified and eliminated, including with respect to the participation of women, girls and minority groups in STI. The Dialogue will facilitate a discussion on the most effective entry points to bring to bear scientific knowledge, technologies and data in accelerating SDG implementation.

Guiding questions to serve as the basis for the commitments:

- How to advance innovative approaches and solutions to the application of new technologies and practices to accelerate and scale up SDG achievement?
- How can science, technology, innovation and data be applied coherently and strategically to make game-changing transitions?
- What measures can be taken to strengthen the capacity of developing countries in utilizing science, technology, innovation, and data for transformative action?

Leaders' Dialogue 4: "Strengthening integrated policies and public institutions for achieving the SDGs"

This Dialogue will serve to advance policymaking which takes into account interlinkages between the SDGs and spillover effects, and to strengthen public institutions to this end. A central tenet of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is a holistic approach to SDG implementation. This includes harnessing synergies where action in one area can also generate positive impacts in another, while also addressing trade-offs.

Guiding questions to serve as the basis for the commitments:

- What capacities are needed to further strengthen integrated approaches for action across the SDGs, and what are the major obstacles?
- How to ensure that SDG transformations effectively deal with cross-dimensional impacts?
- How to enable public institutions to better apply integrated policies and manage the trade-offs?



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- How shall the UN and governments benefit from the contributions of civil society and other stakeholders in a more efficient and inclusive manner?

Leaders' Dialogue 5: "Unity and Solidarity: Strengthening the multilateral system for enhanced support, cooperation and follow-up and review"

The international community needs to deliver on the outstanding promise of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Yet recent global shocks have highlighted the weaknesses and inequities of the current multilateral system. This Dialogue will contribute to strengthening unity and multilateralism, particularly through international cooperation and trust-building, including as it relates to follow-up to the Secretary-General's report on Our Common Agenda. It will consider avenues and opportunities to augment the follow-up and review of SDG progress. Member States can also give guidance to facilitate the continued strengthening of the United Nations Development System to support the transformative changes envisioned in the 2030 Agenda.

Guiding questions to serve as the basis for the commitments:

- How can the United Nations work better with other institutions to accelerate the achievement of the SDGs?
- What areas of follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs could be strengthened for the greatest impact on delivery?
- How can the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development be urgently revitalized?

Leaders' Dialogue 6: "Mobilizing finance and investments and the means of implementation for SDG achievement"

This Dialogue will address finance, investments and means of implementation for SDG achievement. There is a need to match abundance and responsibility with global, national and local commitments to deliver on financing, galvanize leadership and restore the trust that will place the world on course to achieve the SDGs by 2030. The Secretary-General has encouraged Member States to deliver on an SDG Stimulus, to ensure that developing countries can deliver on the SDGs and to advance deep reforms of the international financial architecture. This Dialogue is also conceived to connect the SDG Summit with the High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development to be convened during the General Assembly High-level Week in September 2023.

Guiding questions to serve as the basis for the commitments:

- What immediate measures can be taken to implement the SDG stimulus,



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especially on debt treatment and providing long term and affordable liquidity, including through investments?

- How to generate political momentum for reforming the international financial architecture to make it fair and better aligned with the objectives of sustainable development?