

# High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development

## Theme in 2018: Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies

Monitoring Progress towards achieving the SDGs  
*Panel discussion on "Reviewing the progress in achieving the SDGs"*

Monday 9 July 2018 from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM

Conference Room 4, United Nations

### ***Speaking Notes***

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#### **Session 1:**

What does progress towards the SDGs look like in your country or within your area of work?

Preparations for the implementation of the SDGs has entailed:

- organisational set up (structure);
- programme integration and linkages, including among institutions;
- engaging stakeholders of every type– institutions, groupings and individuals; government, private – profit, nonprofit, civil society and everywhere;

Applying the Principle of "Leave no one behind" broadly – with respect to actors, participation, and benefits.

#### **❖ Set up of a robust institutional arrangement for implementing the SDGs**

SDGs are being implemented through the decentralised planning system. Three committees have been set up to enhance intra- and inter sectoral collaborations, as well

as forge partnerships among government, civil society and the private sector. These three committees are:

- (1) **High Level Ministerial Committee** – consists of 15 ministers with the prime responsibility of providing strategic direction to the implementation of the SDGs
  - The United Nations system in Ghana reports to the Committee on progress in implementation of the UN’s Sustainable Development Programme in the country.
- (2) **SDG Implementation Committee** – made up of 12 representatives from key ministries and agencies, the office of the President, CSOs and Philanthropy. They are mandated to strengthen the cross-sectoral coordination, multi-stakeholder partnerships in implementing and monitoring and evaluating the SDGs. Other institutions are coopted as required.
- (3) **SDGs Technical Committee** – made of representatives of MDAs, CSOs and private sector organisations. Its main task is to develop plans that are consistent with the SDGs; provide accurate data for the SDGs; provide technical support to interested parties; and support advocacy, awareness creation and public education on the SDGs (i.e. implementation and results).
  - These are focal points of the SDGs in their respective institutions, and support alignment, adoption and adaptation of SDGs concerns in the national development agenda, correspondent with their institutional mandates.

#### ❖ **Leadership**

- **President—H.E. Nana Akufo-Addo—Co-chair of the Secretary-General’s Group of Eminent Advocates for SDGs**

- An SDGs Advisory Unit at the Presidency, supports programming of national, regional and interregional advocacy and promotion of the SDGs
- Vice President – member of the Governing Board of the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data
- Minister of Finance – ensures budgeting with SDGs lens (mapping the SDGs to government budget)
- High-level Inter-ministerial Committee – guides and monitors implementation
- National Development Planning Commission – Leading the coordination of implementation and ensuring integration with national development agenda and African Union’s Agenda 2063.

❖ **National Planning and the SDGs** - The SDGs are reflected in the President’s Coordinated Programme of Economic and Social Development Policies (2017-2024), which sets out the goals and aspirations for national development. This programme forms the basis for the preparation of a detailed medium-term national development policy framework (2018-2021) which contains strategies that are consistent with the SDGs targets. The associated Results Framework, also includes many of the SDGs indicators. The medium-term plans (2018-2021) of ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs), as well as that of the Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) will be based on the medium-term national development policy framework.

❖ **Financing the SDGs:** The national budget statement and economic policy of government serves as the primary vehicle for financing the SDGs and Agenda 2063. The SDGs are being financed primarily through the National Annual Budget. Budget lines have been mapped to the SDGs to enable tracking of budgetary allocations to the various SDGs.

**Notable outcomes from the SDG coordination structure:** has resulted in a well-coordinated and managed SDGs implementation and reporting system that has produced a series of fora at all levels and attracted many interventions to support implementation of SDGs and its related activities. Progress on the national medium term policy framework is assessed annually with the production of sector, district and national progress reports. A special issue on the SDGs is produced biennially. The 2016-2017 Report, the first, has been produced.

**What are some policies and actions that have shown a significant positive impact on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda?**

**Flagship programmes which contribute to multiple SDGs**

In his agenda setting, the President's Coordinated Programme has several specific initiatives to address some of the interconnected issues that will enhance the country's chances of achieving the SDGs. These include:

- Free senior high school education
- Planting for food and jobs
- One district – one factory
- Slum and inner city development
- Infrastructure for poverty eradication programme
- National identification programme

**Strengthening Statistics in National Development Planning:** NDPC in collaboration with the GSS to undertake an assessment of the statistical system in the country in order to strengthen the national statistical system for sustainable planning, implementation, effective and efficient monitoring and evaluation.

**Data Production for SDGs Indicators in Ghana:** To ensure sustainable tracking of the SDGs and other international commitments the GSS assessed the data generation capacity for the country. For Ghana, 62 of the indicators are already computed by the statistics system, while data exist within the various agencies for 63 other indicators, but are currently not computed. An assessment of the data requirements showed that the majority of the information can be obtained from administrative data sources, which are less expensive and can produce data on a more regular basis. Making administrative sources more effective in data generation is a major thrust of the country's statistical development—advanced by collaborative initiatives with UK National Statistics, Statistics Denmark, African Regional Data Cube, and private sector among others; to strengthen administrative data and GIS data for bridging the data gaps for the SDGs the national statistical system as a whole.

**Multi-stakeholder partnership** between state and non-state agencies has galvanised support and collaborative action for the implementation of the SDGs. The Civil Society Platform for SDGs in partnership with Government and the Private Enterprise Foundation, in May 2018 successfully organised a national dialogue on the role of Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) in Data Collection for the SDGs. The event culminated in a 10-point action statement to spur action by all stakeholders to strengthen and deepen the use of STI in national development.

#### **The President's Advocacy Role**

H.E. the President has championed the implementation of the SDGs internationally, but also driven home the agenda. He hosted Chief Executives of selected private sector organisations and state enterprises aiming to foster a strong partnership with the private sector towards the attainment of the SDGs. It ended with the CEOs agreeing to organise themselves into smaller groups to work on specific goals for the success of the Agenda.

In December 2017, a High Level Roundtable on Mobilising Support and Accelerating Implementation of the SDGs in Africa, aimed at mobilising regional support for the implementation of the SDGs, and to propose practical, smart and innovative actions needed to underpin accelerated implementation of the goals at both the regional and country levels. The outcome statement with key recommendations was shared with other African Heads of State at the ECOWAS and the AU Summits.

## **Challenges**

### **Leave no one behind – a preoccupation for Ghana**

As input for the formulation of the SDGs, Ghana co-chaired with Denmark deliberations that served to explore deeper and more broadly the pervasiveness of inequalities among and within countries and how they can be tackled. These were followed:

- In 2014 with a Pan African conference on tackling inequalities across the continent.
- In 2016, a National Forum on Inclusive Development aimed to contribute to the integration of key policy actions in national policy making to reduce poverty and inequality through the promotion of the equitable transformation of Ghana's economy.
- Earlier this year 2018, another Forum was organised to review the integration of the 2016 Agenda and outcomes into national development planning processes and interventions and identify new areas of focus. The Forum looked extensively at inclusive growth and sustainable development in the context of the President's Coordinated Programme, SDGs, data sources and usage and funding allocations from the petroleum sector.

A bigger challenge is to go beyond understanding inequalities and inclusive development (from the benefits point of view) to the involvement of all segments of civil society – the organised and the unorganised – in all aspects of the planning cycle.

To quote a CSO partner:

*Inclusive growth or development works best as a tool in the hands of locals trying to solve problems in their own neighbourhoods. Effective poverty reduction requires all stakeholders to be actively involved in the planning, execution and monitoring of development initiatives.*

It was already mentioned that at the organisation level we work with and also closely collaborate with the civil society organisations (CSOs). But also key is to get the unorganised part involved i.e., the citizenry at large.

- Knowledge is key to achieving the aim of “leaving no one behind” and bringing knowledge of SDGs to all and sundry is a critical item on our agenda.
- This should give people a sense of ownership (advocacy should help them identify fully with SDGs implementation and to see the role they can play); this way they can also see the benefits and call for the needed change in their communities.
- The Ghana Academy of Arts and Science (GAAS) focused its annual conference for this year on discussing the SDGs. It was noted that still too many pupils and students at the various levels of learning are not adequately informed about the SDGs.
- The monitoring and evaluation system of Ghana is effective at all administrative levels and needs also to get to the sub-district levels where individuals need to feel closer to the governance system; Ghana is in the process of developing a national M&E electronic tool with features to enhance the citizen’s contribution (reporting on the status of projects in their communities, and better accountability)
- Ensuring that private sector contributions to the SDGs implementation are well coordinated to avoid duplications, disparate and divergent efforts; and also conflicting results.

## **Keeping track of how the various stakeholders are contributing to the SDGs implementation processes**

At the institutional level, “leaving no one behind” has required working hand-in-hand with various constituencies (government; public sector and private sector institutions; civil society organisations; philanthropy; development partners including intergovernmental institutions).

Ghana’s decentralised planning system operates with Cross-sectoral Planning Groups—institutions (with CSO and Private Sector representation) working around a common thematic area of the national development policy framework.

- Keep the goals of the 2030 Agenda in focus, we are considering sub-groups around the Goals (similar to how the Civil Society SDGs Platform is organised in Ghana.
- Maintain a database on implementation of SDGs—catalogue of information about the initiatives being undertaken by the various categories of institutions—to promote the sharing of information, drawing out synergies and avoiding duplications.

## **Decentralisation**

The next major hurdle to be tackled is how we meaningfully engage the metropolitan, municipal, and district assemblies (MMDAs) to not only implement their district plans (which are reflective of the SDGs) but also monitor achievement of SDGs at their level. This training and orientation was initiated at the beginning of the SDGs alignment, adoption and adaptation programme, and continues as plans are being reviewed in the current budgeting cycle. Yet substantially more would be required to have SDGs fully ingrained at all levels of programming.