



**United Nations University (UNU) Summary Input for 2020 HLPF and ECOSOC on  
“Accelerated action and transformative pathways: realizing a decade of action  
and delivery for sustainable development”**

1. Key policies and measures to ensure “accelerated action and transformative pathways” for realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development
  - a. UNU institutes across the globe have identified a number of critical gaps in implementing the 2030 Agenda including:
    - i. Data: gaps in existing data and methodology, e.g. for SDG 11 on sustainable cities, the progress is still slow due to the low number of indicators available; for SDG 6 on water and sanitation, critical data and evidence is missing, overlapping or even fragmented for many member states, particularly low and middle income countries, and adopting complex and expensive indicator frameworks might also increase the burden and divert important resources of already low and lower-middle income countries; for SDG 10 on reducing inequalities, efforts to construct databases in developing countries and meet the standards required for a conventional analysis of social mobility are, still, at a preliminary stage and need to be complemented by innovative conceptual and methodological advances to convincingly study this phenomenon.
    - ii. Governance: uneven governance arrangements, e.g. at the national level progress on adopting the 2030 Agenda in national development plans and strategies remains uneven. At the sub-national level, particularly, urban areas beyond capital cities, in many cases development goals are yet to be mapped out based on local needs and contexts, and interlinkages and trade-offs have not been taken into consideration;
    - iii. Partnerships: the need for greater cooperation, collaboration and meaningful multi-stakeholder engagement with governments, the private and donor sectors, as well as civil society organisations, e.g. many citizens, micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and community based organisations (CBOs) from the Global South are not aware of the SDGs, nor the role they can play in helping to achieve the SDGs. In terms of domestic resource mobilization (DRM), greater international support is required to help developing countries improve their capacities to raise taxes to finance public spending and combat poverty and inequality.
    - iv. AI: the lack of development of artificial intelligence (AI) in the Global South. AI can be considered a key measure to accelerate actions to achieve the SDGs, yet the development of AI technologies remains almost exclusively in the Global North.
    - v. Gaps related to specific SDGs:
      1. *SDG 5: Gender Equality*: for SDG 5 on gender equality, more consideration needs to be given to policy paths for the creation of productive jobs for women that are properly remunerated – this is a route to women’s social and economic empowerment. Critical gaps also remain in addressing the intersectionality of disadvantage. For example, services may be sensitized to address gender, but



- rarely are also able to address disability or will work with a range of challenges for displaced/migrant populations.
2. *SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth*: gaps in knowledge of the causes and consequences of the informal sector, inhibit better informed policy-making needed for the structural transformation to achieve rapid and sustained growth for SDG 8. Further, more research is required to understand what works to achieve target 8.7 on forced labour, modern slavery and trafficking.
- b. Priority measures to accelerate action and ensure transformative pathways to realize the decade of action for achieving the 2030 Agenda identified by UNU institutes include:
- i. SDG 11: sustainable cities: it is critical to systematically connect cities and community Governance, create better models of how local contributions can address global concerns, and leverage wisely the technologies in smart city initiatives. Issues of equity and social inclusion, as well as, social and environmental concerns must be top priorities and at the heart of governance and policies.
  - ii. AI: Tackling the challenges related to AI and ethics by including the voices of the global south in deciding the future pathway of AI, balancing advice and guidelines in AI related to policy-making in the Global South, and building a global participatory AI narrative to preserve cultural diversities and demystify AI so as to enable all citizens to participate in the discussions of AI's role in society;
  - iii. Partnerships and coordination:
    1. Fostering and facilitating greater coordination and negotiation between and among different stakeholders. For example, meaningful stakeholder engagement, through partnerships to collectively implement the agenda, includes addressing public participation and the involvement of broad stakeholders, such as civil society organisations and companies, both in the consultation process for mainstreaming the SDGs and preparation of voluntary national reviews at the national level.
    2. Stronger mechanisms for integration through the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) with resources tied to ensuring intersectionality in conceptualization and programming
  - iv. Data:
    1. *Gaps*: To address gaps in data and evidence, rational and systematic approaches are needed and engagement between partners and national governments should be prioritized, particularly those more likely to be able to share the challenges and opportunities, gaps and needs. One area where this could be prioritized is for action on SDG 6 on water, one of the top five global risks in terms of impacts and also increasingly considered as an instrument for international cooperation. Gaps can also be filled by sharing data among different stakeholders, such as for SDG 8.7 where greater benefits would be derived if stakeholders working to combat human trafficking shared data among themselves.
    2. *Access*: Improving access of governments to good quality data and ensuring they have accurate knowledge available for decision and policy-making processes. This



is a priority in many areas including in relation to the quality and quantity of women's work, reducing horizontal inequality, modern slavery and human trafficking.

2. UNU has institutes across the globe, all working in ways to inform policy-makers through evidence-based research. As such, UNU can contribute meaningfully to accelerate action and transformative pathways to achieve the 2030 Agenda including:
  - a. Capacity building:
    - i. The UNU Operating Unit on Policy-Driven Electronic Governance (**UNU-EGOV**)<sup>1</sup> provides advisory services, capacity building and training programmes to support cities in developing their Smart Governance programmes and establishing their smart city initiatives in direct connection with SDG11 to achieve the 2030 Agenda.
    - ii. The UNU Institute on Water, Environment and Health, (**UNU-INWEH**)<sup>2</sup> and partners have developed the SDG 6 Policy Support System ([SDG-PSS](#)), a free online tool available in English, French and Spanish, that helps countries in producing evidence on the enabling environment under data limited conditions to inform on national water-related policy and decision processes. SDG-PSS has been tested and adopted in five trial countries and being rolled out in 30 more countries.
  - b. Policy-relevant research:
    - i. **UNU-EGOV** conducts intensive policy-driven research to provide measurement tools, techniques, guidelines and policy recommendations to help cities.
    - ii. The UNU International Institute for Global Health (**UNU-IIGH**)<sup>3</sup> is establishing a gender and health policy hub to collate, analyse, develop and disseminate solutions based on grassroots experience from country studies.
    - iii. The UNU Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability (**UNU-IAS**)<sup>4</sup> addresses a number of specific SDGs as well as interconnections between them, helping them translate the global agenda into action at the regional, national and local levels. For example, its research on Education and Sustainable Development and the dissemination of ESD principles and practices, is distilled from the local level through its global network of Regional Centres for Expertise on ESD and regional alliance in Asia for higher education, Promotion of Sustainability in Postgraduate Education and Research Network (ProSPER.Net)
    - iv. The Modern Slavery Programme of the UNU Centre for Policy Research (**UNU-CPR**)<sup>5</sup>, includes 1) its Delta 8.7 platform<sup>6</sup>, a repository of best available evidence of what works to achieve SDG Target 8.7, 2) a public-private partnership to mobilise the global financial sector to tackle modern slavery and human trafficking, and 3) the upcoming publication

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<sup>1</sup> See Annex I for more details of UNU-EGOV's contributions

<sup>2</sup> See Annex VI for more details of UNU-INWEH's contributions

<sup>3</sup> See Annex V for more details of UNU-IIGH's contributions

<sup>4</sup> See Annex IV for more details of UNU-IAS' contributions

<sup>5</sup> See Annex VII for more details of UNU-CPR's contributions

<sup>6</sup> Delta 8.7 was launched at the UN General Assembly in September 2018, is shaped by a 35-member reference group, including researchers, government agencies, UN bodies, practitioners and survivors.



in 2020 of a major study on the role of the global development sector in fighting modern slavery.

- v. The UNU World Institute for Development Economics Research (**UNU-WIDER**)<sup>7</sup> mobilises policy research, evidence, and action around selected areas of the 2030 Agenda and its 17 goals (SDGs), and responds to the Agenda's 'call for increased support for strengthening data collection and capacity building in Member States'. For example, its World Income Inequality Database ([WIID](#)), Government Revenue Datasets ([GRD](#)) and other datasets are freely downloadable from the institute's [website](#).

c. Collaborations:

- i. **UNU-EGOV** collaborates with other UN entities such as ITU, UN-Habitat and UNECE to develop KPIs and the Global Smart Cities index to help cities monitor and assess their progress and providing various guidelines related to smart sustainable cities
- ii. **UNU-IIGH** and WHO APO are exploring the possibility of establishing a network to bring data through a Health and Demographic Surveillance System (HDSS) Asia network to support sites to maintain and improve their relevance and accessibility for addressing major health and demographic concerns, and harness evidence gathered to inform the strengthening of health systems to deliver on universal health care.
- iii. The **UNU-IAS** Governance for Sustainable Development (GSD) project, will further develop research on governance structures for the 2020 Agenda, working closely with UN ESCAP on implementation in Asia and the Pacific.
- iv. **UNU-IAS**, UN ESCAP and UN-Habitat will build local capacities by expanding the Mayors Academy for Sustainable Urban Development in the Asia Pacific
- v. Working with the UN Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Slavery, **UNU-CPR** crowd-sourced policy analysis through a public consultation that fed into a report to the Human Rights Council and General Assembly.

3. UNU has a range of recommendations for accelerating progress and moving on transformative pathways to realise the 2030 Agenda including:

- a. Data Quality: When measuring inequality in middle-income countries, it is necessary to hone existing analytical methods and to combine the information provided by surveys with data from alternative sources. [More information](#)
- b. Competitiveness: To compete in the global market for manufactures, African governments need to develop new policies to promote industrial exports, build the capabilities of domestic firms and foster industrial clusters. [More information](#)
- c. Investment Climate: A sound investment climate is critical for both traditional activities and industries without smokestacks. Infrastructure, skills and competition will raise productivity and accelerate growth. [More information](#)
- d. AI: efforts related to AI should be coordinated within the UN system using every partner's strengths. As the UN's think tank, UNU is well positioned to lead on the research portfolio of AI and ethics sharing its findings to member states to support their evidence-based policy making
- e. Partnerships:

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<sup>7</sup> See Annex II for more details of UNU-WIDER's contributions



- i. Application of the SDG targets to local contexts should reflect priorities, and indicators developed accordingly. Indicators should allow flexibility for local choices
  - ii. Localization and hyper-localisation of the SDGs could be mainstreamed with a focus on strategic partnerships, particularly with the private sector (specifically, MSMEs and third sector organisations). Specific measures need to be considered for each region, for example, in Asia, where top-down policy processes are common, capacity building prioritized at the regional and national level.
  - iii. horizontal coordination between cities and vertical coordination between cities and national governments should be supported
  - iv. engagement of national partners has been critical for assessing the gaps and needs in policy-making and decision-making processes as demonstrated in the development and implementation of UNU-INWEH's SDG-PSS on SDG 6. For more details on how a tool like SDG-PSS can be aligned to other SDGs, see Annex VI.
- f. Governance: Strengthening governance can help accelerate progress on the SDGs through the development of robust vertical and horizontal governance mechanisms, by creating links across sectors and actors to strengthen interlinkages between the SDGs and targets, integrating the SDGS into national and local budgetary processes, and linking SDGs monitoring and evaluation processes to existing local and national monitoring mechanisms
- g. Recommendations for Specific SDGs:
  - i. *SDG target 8.7 – modern slavery and human trafficking*: it is proposed to move away from the focus on prosecution towards making prevention at the centre of anti-trafficking responses, informed by a public health lens and an operational approach through sentinel surveillance. This upstream, multi-level approach would examine vulnerabilities and drivers of exploitation.
  - ii. *SDG 11 – sustainable cities*: For cities to be truly 'smart,' rather than taking a purely techno-centred approach, research highlights that cities need to be sustainable first. It is recommended that cities be encouraged to progressively build an overarching economic, social and environmental sustainability goal and establish their smart cities initiatives in direct connection with the SDGs. For more recommendations related to smart cities see Annex I).
- h. Synergies between the 2030 Agenda and the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, should be realised. UNU-IAS has been developing this concept through its 258 member International Partnership for the Satoyama Initiative.



## Annex I

### UNU Operating Unit on Policy-Driven Electronic Governance (UNU-EGOV), Portugal, Institute Input for 2020 HLPF and ECOSOC

“Accelerated action and transformative pathways: realizing a decade of action and delivery for sustainable development”

#### **1. Key policies and measures to ensure “accelerated action and transformative pathways” for realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development**

##### ***a. Critical gaps in implementing the 2030 Agenda:***

We face today an unprecedented societal, environmental and economic global challenge. Cities are the main "battleground" for fighting against climate change, increasing consumption, the depletion of natural resources, increasing energy demands, and rising greenhouse emissions. At the same time, cities contain most of the population, create most of the revenues and are the place where most activities are concentrated.

However, and despite the efforts realized at different levels where international organizations are developing standards, monitoring and measurement tools, diffusing best practices, and generating key consensus while governments and local authorities are developing strategies and deploying initiatives to build better cities, there are still important challenges that need to be overcome before the vision of sustainable cities is fully optimized. According to UN-ESCAP the actual progress on SDG 11 “sustainable cities and communities” is very slow, characterized mainly by the low number of indicators available. This directly impacts at levels of economic, social and environment sustainability including, the increase of unemployment and urban poverty (SDG1), poor sanitation and safety (SDG2), poor urban water quality and air pollution (SDG3, SDG6), increased the energy consumption (SDG7), deepening social exclusion and economic inequality (SDG4, SDG5, SDG10), unsustainable consumption/production patterns (SDG12), climate risks (SDG13), loss of biodiversity (SG14 and SDG15), and more. The international community is at a point requiring greater collaboration and cooperation in order to face these challenges.

##### ***b. Priority measures which need to be considered to:***

###### **i. accelerate action:**

To accelerate action and progress, it is critical to systematically connect cities and community governance to achieve the SDGs, to better model the local contribution to address the global concerns presented, and to wisely leverage technologies in smart city initiatives. The aim is to generate sustainable public value with a continuous measurement and monitoring of the progression towards the objectives. These questions are directly related to the governance of cities and communities, the role of the technology in this governance, and how the intelligence of smart cities can be turned towards sustainable development.

###### **ii. ensure transformative pathways:**

Changes and reforms should start in cities. Smart sustainable cities and settlements aim to provide innovative solutions to cities and settlements by using a wide variety of ICTs (Internet of Things (IoT), digital platforms, wireless sensor networks, artificial intelligence, big data analytics, and more), as well as other means to improve



quality of life and address the growing environmental and socio-economic pressures exerted by rural-urban migration. Many cities are working to become smart and sustainable cities by consuming less energy, generating less waste, reducing traffic congestion and optimizing public transportation. It is clear that smart sustainable city development holds great potential in accelerating the progress of the SDGs and ensuring transformative pathways. However, it is critical that these efforts are focused on the citizen, human well-being, and quality of life without leaving no one and nothing behind. Smart city development focuses strongly on effectiveness and efficiency, highlighting an important contribution and priority to the economic sustainability of a city and nation. To ensure transformative pathways and accelerate the actions for achieving the 2030 Agenda it is essential to place issues of equity and social inclusion, as well as social and environment concerns, as top priorities and at the heart of the good governance and policy.

## **2. Contributions the UNU institute can make to accelerate action and transformative pathways to realize the decade of action and delivery for achieving the 2030 Agenda:**

UNU-EGOV provides advisory services, capacity building and training programs to support cities in developing their smart governance programs and establishing their smart city initiatives in direct connection with the SDG to achieve the 2030 Agenda. It is also conducting intensive policy-driven research in the field of smart cities and communities to provide measurement tools, techniques, guidelines and policy recommendations to help cities.

UNU-EGOV is also collaborating with other UN Agencies and organization such as ITU, UN-Habitat and UNECE under the U4SSC initiative (United for Smart sustainable cities) to develop the KPI's and the Global Smart Cities Index to help cities monitor and assess their progress as well as providing guidelines on different topics, such as the use and adoption "Blockchain for cities", "easy way to be smart", "practitioner guide to measure smart sustainable cities", "Practitioner guide to monitor smart sustainable cities" among others.

## **3. Specific recommendations from the UNU institute for accelerating progress and moving on transformative pathways for realizing the decade of action:**

- There is no true city smartness without achieving sustainability. While smart cities policies are often dominated by a techno-centered perspective, research highlights that cities need to be sustainable first, to be considered truly "smart". Cities should progressively build an overarching economic, social, and environmental sustainability goal and establish their smart cities initiatives in direct connection with the SDGs.
- Smart sustainable cities will contribute directly and accelerate actions for achieving the SDGs provided urban planners and city managers will able to define models that take into consideration the city context and specificities, as well as to place the human well-being and quality of life at the heart of cities design, practices and policies.
- The achievement of smart sustainable cities depends strongly on creating more inclusive, sustainable and democratic cities by leveraging innovative technologies.



## Annex II

### UNU World Institute for Development Economics Research, (UNU-WIDER), Finland, Institute Input for 2020 HLPF and ECOSOC

“Accelerated action and transformative pathways: realizing a decade of action and delivery for sustainable development”

#### **1. Key policies and measures to ensure “accelerated action and transformative pathways” for realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development**

##### ***a. Critical gaps in implementing the 2030 Agenda:***

**SDG 5:** We must consider policy paths for the creation of productive jobs for women that are properly remunerated as a route to women’s economic and social empowerment. (See our related work [here](#))

**SDG 8:** Structural transformation is an essential feature of rapid and sustained growth. We need knowledge for better policy-making with respect to the informal sector, to understand the causes and consequences of informality. (See our related work [here](#) and [here](#))

**SDG 10:** To address and reduce inequality we need to better understand it - how it varies, why it varies, and what the implications of this might be. (See our related work [here](#) and [here](#))

**SDG 16:** Research is needed to identify knowledge gaps in our current understanding of fragile states; and support the capacity of the UN system to address this key issue in the Global South. (See our related work [here](#) and [here](#))

**SDG 17:** Strengthening domestic resource mobilization (DRM), including international support to developing countries to improve their capacity to raise taxes in order to finance public spending in a sustainable manner and ultimately combat poverty and inequality. (See our related work [here](#))

##### ***b. Priority measures which need to be considered to accelerate action and ensure transformative pathways:***

Improving access to good quality data and ensuring that governments have accurate knowledge available for decision- and policymaking processes. This is a priority especially in relation to the [quantity and quality of women’s work](#) and [reducing horizontal inequality](#).

#### **2. Contributions the UNU institute can make to accelerate action and transformative pathways to realize the decade of action and delivery for achieving the 2030 Agenda:**

Much of UNU-WIDER’s work will include mobilizing policy research, evidence, and action around selected areas of the 2030 Agenda and its 17 goals (SDGs) as well as responding to the Agenda’s ‘call for increased support for strengthening data collection and capacity building in Member States’. UNU-WIDER contributes to the achievement of positive economic and social change – via better and more informed policy-making, more effective development cooperation, and greater national analytical capacity. Our World Income Inequality Database ([WIID](#)), Government Revenue Datasets ([GRD](#)) and other datasets are freely downloadable from our [website](#).





UNU-WIDER's [2019-23 work programme](#) is designed around three interlinked development challenges and 5 priority SDGs: Transforming economies (SDG 8), transforming states (SDGs 16 & 17), and transforming societies (SDGs 5 & 10) – with three cross-cutting concerns – reducing fragility and risk, empowering people, and strengthening knowledge and capacity. Gender-equality is embedded as a priority in all themes.

**3. Specific recommendations from the UNU institute for accelerating progress and moving on transformative pathways for realizing the decade of action:**

- Data quality: When measuring inequality in middle-income countries, it is necessary to hone our analytical methods and to combine the information provided by surveys with data from alternative sources. [More information](#)
- Competitiveness: To compete in the global market for manufactures, African governments need to develop new policies to promote industrial exports, build the capabilities of domestic firms and foster industrial clusters. [More information](#)
- Investment climate: A sound investment climate is critical for both traditional activities and industries without smokestacks. Infrastructure, skills and competition will raise productivity and accelerate growth. [More information](#)



## Annex III

### UNU Institute in Macau Institute Input for 2020 HLPF and ECOSOC

“Accelerated action and transformative pathways: realizing a decade of action and delivery for sustainable development”

#### 1. Key policies and measures to ensure “accelerated action and transformative pathways” for realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development

##### *a. Critical gaps in implementing the 2030 Agenda:*

A major critical gap observed is that certain individuals and population groups, particularly minorities, people from the Global South, migrant workers, women and other vulnerable groups, are “left behind” and not included in the journey towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). There has been a lot of effort to catalyze broad participation, but a lot more still needs to be done. Many stakeholders including citizens, Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), and Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) from the Global South are still not aware of the SDGs and, more importantly, of the role they can play towards the achievement of the SDGs.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a key measure to accelerate actions to achieve SDGs. However, the development of AI technologies currently remains nearly exclusively to the Global North at the moment.

##### *b. Priority measures which need to be considered to accelerate action and ensure transformative pathways:*

First, we need to take the priority measures to tackle the challenges related to AI and ethics:

- how to include the voices from global south to decide the future pathway of AI.
- how to provide balanced advice and guidelines in AI related to policy-making for the Global South.
- how to build a global participatory AI narrative, on the one hand to preserve the cultural diversities, and on the other demystify AI and enable all citizens to participate in the discussion of AI’s roles in society.

Secondly, SDG17, partnership for the goals, is essential for the achievement of the SDGs, however, participation can only be sustained by clear motivations and incentives for the different stakeholders. To ensure that action towards SDGs is aligned with the spirit of the SDGs, there needs to be significant coordination and negotiation between the different stakeholders. Indicators are valuable to measure progress but can be detrimental to the SDG itself when the goal becomes improving scoring on an indicator, rather than to “end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity.”

In addition, there is a need for better coordination among different stakeholders, especially with respect to data collection and analysis to avoid data silos. For example, each of the different stakeholders working to combat human trafficking collect information but do not always share with other stakeholders. As human trafficking is a



cross-boundary crime, greater benefit could be derived from data if it was shared between the different stakeholders.

## **2. Contributions the UNU institute can make to accelerate action and transformative pathways to realize the decade of action and delivery for achieving the 2030 Agenda:**

The UNU Institute in Macau can take the lead in the research work of AI and social inclusion while partnering with academia, UNU sister agencies, other UN entities and private sector. Our research results aim to lead to policy impact in the UN and member states on the AI and social inclusion.

Specifically, the institute is well positioned to provide expertise in computer modeling/simulation of complex systems. For example, previous projects could serve as evidence of expertise, such as a project in Senegal and Vietnam on SDG 6, Clean Water & Sanitation, could use AI & sensors to epurate domestic waste waters in the context of urban zone with filtered garden; or a project on agroforestry cocoa systems in Cameroon on SDG 15, Life on Land, could use AI to model & analyze these agroforestry systems to improve sustainable cropping systems and contribute to food security by diversifying the sources of farmer's incomes.

In addition, the UNU Institute in Macau can contribute research and policy recommendations on [how non-traditional stakeholders \(e.g., civil society, community-based organizations\) can participate in SDG indicators](#) ensuring that [various population groups are not left behind in data processes](#) and exploring mechanisms for ensuring the [maturity of SDG indicators production processes](#).

Further, innovating and inventing ICTs to support computer mediated communication between vulnerable populations and the frontline responders who aim to support them enables [the UNU Institute in Macau's work](#) to support: frontline responders to overcome barriers of communication, training, trust and privacy concerns that are associated with field work; vulnerable populations to understand what they are being asked, and to have confidence to respond honestly; and decision makers to pursue evidence-based policy making.

## **3. Specific recommendations from the UNU institute for accelerating progress and moving on transformative pathways for realizing the decade of action:**

First, AI and ethics is a "hot topic", which many UN organizations list on top of their work agenda. However, in the spirit of "One UN" and for the effectiveness for UN to deliver results, the effort should be coordinated within the UN system while utilizing every partner's strengths instead of creating silos. For example, the UNU Institute in Macau is well positioned to lead on the research portfolio of AI and ethics, with research outcomes shared with policy makers in the relevant UN organizations to support their evidence-based policy-making. Vice-versa, UN organizations can also commission UNU to conduct AI research to feed into policies later.

In addition, we should mainstream the localization and hyper-localization of the SDGs with a focus on strategic partnerships, in line with SDG17, with the private sector, specifically MSMEs and third-sector organizations. MSMEs make up over 90% of all enterprises around the world and provide two-thirds of global employment (WTO, 2016). [Third sector organizations outwork the "Leave No One Behind" principle](#) at the local level.



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Finally, for SDG Target 8.7, much work has focused on prosecution which has not proven to be effective in fighting human trafficking and forced labour. We propose re-centering prevention at the heart of anti-trafficking responses through a conceptual approach informed by a public health lens and an operational approach through sentinel surveillance. This will provide a proactive and consistent method to identify trends and monitor for labour exploitation or human trafficking hotspots, as well as at-risk populations. By moving away from a 'downstream' approach to an 'upstream' multilevel approach that looks for vulnerabilities and drivers of exploitation, we argue for a shift in the anti-trafficking paradigm that can potentially prevent millions of workers from being victimised in the first place.



## Annex IV

### UNU Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability (UNU-IAS), Tokyo

Institute Input for 2020 HLPF and ECOSOC

“Accelerated action and transformative pathways: realizing a decade of action and delivery for sustainable development”

#### **1. Key policies and measures to ensure “accelerated action and transformative pathways” for realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development**

##### ***a. Critical gaps in implementing the 2030 Agenda:***

Most Member States have developed foundational governance arrangements for implementation of the 2030 Agenda, by mapping policies related to the SDGs, prioritising and adapted targets, and initiating work on indicators at the national level. However, progress on adopting the 2030 Agenda in national development plans and strategies remains uneven. At the sub-national level — particularly in urban areas beyond capital cities — in many cases development goals are yet to be mapped based on local needs and contexts, and interlinkages and trade-offs have not been taken into consideration.

In particular, priority measures should focus on meaningful multi-stakeholder engagement, through partnerships to collectively implement the agenda. This includes addressing public participation and the involvement of broader stakeholders — such as civil society organisations and companies — in the consultation process for SDGs mainstreaming and VNR preparation at the national level.

*For more details, please see [UNU-IAS Policy Brief No. 19, 2019](#), and [UNU-IAS Policy Brief No. 20, 2020](#).*

##### ***b. Priority measures which need to be considered to accelerate action and ensure transformative pathways:***

Priority measures should focus on meaningful multi-stakeholder engagement, through partnerships to collectively implement the agenda. This includes addressing public participation and the involvement of broader stakeholders — such as civil society organisations and companies — in the consultation process for SDGs mainstreaming and VNR preparation at the national level.

*More details can be found in: [UNU-IAS Policy Brief No. 19, 2019](#), and [UNU-IAS Policy Brief No. 20, 2020](#).*

#### **2. Contributions the UNU institute can make to accelerate action and transformative pathways to realize the decade of action and delivery for achieving the 2030 Agenda:**

UNU-IAS will advance the global effort to achieve the 2030 Agenda through producing and delivering science-based inputs to policymaking. The institute addresses a number of specific SDGs as well as the interconnections between them, helping to translate the global agenda into action at the regional, national, and local levels.

The UNU-IAS **Governance for Sustainable Development** (GSD) project will further develop research on governance structures for the 2030 Agenda, working closely with UN-ESCAP on implementation in Asia and the Pacific. This collaboration has produced practical guidelines for Member States in the region to build effective multi-stakeholder partnerships for the SDGs, and adapted these guidelines to the local context in Indonesia. UNU-



IAS, together with UN-ESCAP and UN-HABITAT, will build local capacities by expanding the Mayors Academy for Sustainable Urban Development in the Asia Pacific — an initiative to create and support a network of local leaders committed to sustainable urban development in the region.

UNU-IAS will also accelerate progress on the 2030 Agenda through research on **Education for Sustainable Development** (ESD) and dissemination of effective ESD principles and practices. The institute will distill best practice from the local level through its global network of Regional Centres for Expertise on ESD (RCEs) and regional alliance in Asia for higher education, Promotion of Sustainability in Postgraduate Education and Research Network (ProSPER.Net).

### **3. Specific recommendations from the UNU institute for accelerating progress and moving on transformative pathways for realizing the decade of action:**

Partnerships between stakeholders are a prerequisite for accelerating progress and moving on transformative pathways. Specific measures may be required in each region — for example in Asia where top-down policy approaches are the norm, capacity building at the regional and national level should be prioritised. Action by cities has the potential to play a key role in achieving the SDGs, through horizontal coordination between cities, as well as vertical coordination between cities and national governments. At the same time, application of the SDG targets to local contexts should reflect local priorities, and indicators developed accordingly. Indicators should thus allow flexibility for local choices.

Strengthening governance should be a key priority to accelerate progress on the SDGs:

- i. Develop robust vertical and horizontal governance mechanisms that enable the government to address cross-cutting and complex sustainability issues
- ii. Create links across sectors and actors to strengthen interlinkages between SDGs and targets, and with other agendas, to enhance synergies and minimise trade-offs
- iii. Integrate the SDGs into national and local budgetary processes to improve policy coherence
- iv. Link SDGs monitoring and evaluation processes to existing local and national monitoring mechanisms

*More details can be found in: [UNU-IAS Policy Brief No. 19, 2019](#).*

In pursuing transformative pathways, it will also be important to realise synergies between the 2030 Agenda and the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, due to be adopted at CBD COP15 in October 2020 (Kunming, China). The new framework will promote transformational change throughout society and economies, including changes in behavior and decision-making at all levels, in order to achieve the 2050 Vision of “living in harmony with nature”. UNU-IAS has been developing this concept and related approaches for sustainable use of biodiversity through its 258-member [International Partnership for the Satoyama Initiative](#), which will be actively promoted through the post-2020 framework.



## Annex V

### UNU International Institute for Global Health (UNU-IIGH), Malaysia Institute Input for 2020 HLPF and ECOSOC

“Accelerated action and transformative pathways: realizing a decade of action and delivery for sustainable development”

#### 1. Key policies and measures to ensure “accelerated action and transformative pathways” for realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development

##### a. Critical gaps in implementing the 2030 Agenda:

Thematic area: *Advancing human well-being and building human capacity, including on eradicating poverty, advancing gender equality and reducing other forms of inequality, universal provision of and access to quality basic services, such as health, education, water, energy, sanitation, disaster risk management, information and communication technology, transport, adequate housing and social protection as well as ensuring that no one is left behind, focusing on the poorest and most vulnerable at the global, regional and national levels and meeting SDGs for all nations, peoples and segments of society.*

With a focus on gender transformative interventions and progress towards gender equality towards health and wellbeing, critical gaps remain in addressing the intersectionality of disadvantage. The potential to be left behind is not solely in gender + poor + displaced + disabled but in the intersectionality of that experience and in the ways in which institutions, services and systems address each of these. Services that may be sensitized to address gender, very rarely are also able to address disability or will work with the range of challenges for displaced / migrant populations. The intersectionality also plays out across the SDGs with women, work and health covering multiple sectors improving opportunities, but also increasing risks and exposure if treated in silos.

##### b. Priority measures which need to be considered to accelerate action and ensure transformative pathways:

Priority measures could include stronger mechanisms for integration through the UNSDCF process with resources tied to ensuring intersectionality in conceptualization and programming. The indicators and measures of success will need to reflect this thinking.

#### 2. Contributions the UNU institute can make to accelerate action and transformative pathways to realize the decade of action and delivery for achieving the 2030 Agenda:

UNU-IIGH is establishing a gender and health policy hub that will collate, analyse, develop and disseminate solutions based on combining grassroots experience from country case studies, with rigorous theoretical and analytical approaches. The hub will, in part, provide a repository of rich contextual data, based on engagement with in-country partners to inform the policy options.

#### 3. Specific recommendations from the UNU institute for accelerating progress and moving on transformative pathways for realizing the decade of action:

Thematic area: *Investing in data and statistics for the SDGs and strengthening statistical capacities to address gaps in data on the Sustainable Development Goals in order to allow countries to provide high-quality, timely, reliable,*



*disaggregated data and statistics and to fully integrate the Sustainable Development Goals in monitoring and reporting systems.*

There are myriad sources of data, with varying levels of rigour and accuracy in compilation. However there are some real gems that are underutilised in terms of secondary analyses that enable an understanding of policy impact and relational and contextual analysis in communities. These are data compiled by health and demographic surveillance sites across about 40 countries worldwide. Health and Demographic Surveillance Systems (HDSS) are longitudinal studies of dynamic cohorts living in geographically circumscribed areas. Developed conceptually in the 1960s, HDSS remain important research infrastructure in countries where vital registration is weak. The critical contribution, however, is in the growing repository of longitudinal data on health and wellbeing of populations, with contextual and relational information to understand the impact of development, policies and community-based interventions on the day to day lives or real people.

Recent discussions among the Asian HDSS has highlighted the need to strengthen the regional collaborations and find additional mechanisms for working together, sharing their methodology and data, leveraging their cohorts for larger multicentre trials, and leveraging their existing data. There is a particularly strong imperative to harness the evidence generated to inform the strengthening of health systems to deliver on UHC. An HDSS Asia network is needed that can support the sites to maintain and improve their relevance and accessibility for addressing major health and demographic concerns.

UNU-IIGH and WHO APO are exploring the possibility of establishing a network to bring together the data from these sites to explore critical questions related to the SDGs.





## Annex VI

### UNU Institute for Water, Environment and Health (UNU-INWEH), Canada

Institute Input for 2020 HLPF and ECOSOC

“Accelerated action and transformative pathways: realizing a decade of action and delivery for sustainable development”

#### 1. Key policies and measures to ensure “accelerated action and transformative pathways” for realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development

##### *a. Critical gaps in implementing the 2030 Agenda:*

Making right policy decisions in the SDG era can be a complex process, requiring policy makers, experts and development actors to assess and combine data and evidence from different sectors and under multiple jurisdictions. Deciding on exactly which piece of evidence is critical to inform a specific policy process can be challenging, especially since there may be context-specific situations or conflicting evidence when interlinkages between goals and targets are taken into consideration. Moreover, it is unlikely that using enabling environments developed before these SDGs were formulated will lead to successful achievement of goals and targets at the national level.

In many UN Member States, particularly in low- and lower-middle-income countries, critical data and evidence are still missing, overlapping or even fragmented as the urgency for actions escalates, undermining efforts to develop policies for achieving the SDGs, such as SDG 6 – water and sanitation for all – and water-related targets and indicators embedded in other SDGs. However, adopting complex and expensive indicator frameworks might also increase the burdens and divert important resources of already low- and lower-middle-income countries. Thus, implementation of SDGs can also become fragmented, as countries might “check off” targets and indicators from their list. To address these challenges, actions must prioritize the collection and synthesis of data and evidence that fill the critical gaps in policy and decision-making processes. Countries need to assess strengths and weaknesses, gaps and opportunities across all SDG 6 targets and indicators now than later..

##### *b. Priority measures which need to be considered to accelerate action and ensure transformative pathways:*

At the onset of the decade of action for achieving the 2030 Agenda, change is needed to increase the likelihood of achieving SDG 6 by 2030. This is crucially important in an era when water is among the top five global risks in terms of impacts, reaching far beyond socio-economic and environmental challenges and impacting livelihoods and wellbeing of the people. Water is also increasingly considered as an instrument for international cooperation to achieve sustainable development.

Against this background, while importance has been given to identifying data gaps and interlinkages across the 2030 Agenda in the initial years of the SDG era, a truly transformative pathway must ensure that national governments take strong actions towards producing evidence that can inform policymakers and lead decisions for expedited achievement of SDGs. And although the UN Member States rely on multiple policy and decision-making processes that take into consideration different socio-political and cultural factors, gaps in data and evidence must be addressed by rational and systematic approaches. For that to happen, UNU-INWEH and its partners support and prioritize the engagement of national governments – the ones more likely to be able to share the challenges and opportunities, gaps and needs – as a key driver for accelerated action leading to SDG success, and provide



critical contributions to the challenge of producing data and evidence that are better integrated in policy and decision-making processes.

## **2. Contributions the UNU institute can make to accelerate action and transformative pathways to realize the decade of action and delivery for achieving the 2030 Agenda:**

Since the beginning of the SDG era, UNU-INWEH and partners have investigated options to support policy and decision making under situations where data and information on water and sanitation are limited. They have developed the SDG 6 Policy Support System (SDG-PSS)<sup>8</sup>, a free online tool available in English, French and Spanish that helps countries in producing evidence on the enabling environment under data limited conditions to inform on national water-related policy and decision processes. SDG-PSS has six policy critical components – Capacity Assessment; Finance Assessment; Policy and Institutional Assessment; Gender mainstreaming; Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience; and Integrity. The aim of the SDG-PSS is to show strengths and weaknesses, where evidence is missing, gaps and opportunities across all SDG 6 targets and indicators and for all critical components, and to provide professionals from different sectors, different agencies and institutions with a common framework to work together towards accelerated SDG 6 success. By using the SDG-PSS, professionals and experts across different policy critical components can aim to collect better data and create sound evidence for the policymakers to take informed decisions and expedite pertinent actions. Indeed, the tool is designed so professionals and experts need to discuss and agree on the data required for each policy critical component and for each target and indicators of SDG 6. The main outcome of this novel approach is, therefore, an authoritative and agreed evidence framework.

While the SDG-PSS has been tested and adopted in five trial countries (Costa Rica, Ghana, Pakistan, the Republic of Korea and Tunisia) by engaging and supporting water-focused professionals to act on the ground to achieve SDG 6 and other water-related SDGs for the benefit of some 280 million people in these countries. Currently, SDG-PSS is being rolled out to around 30 countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean reaching more than 120 million people with limited or unimproved drinking water services and more than 400 million people with limited or unimproved sanitation services. The engagement of more countries is expected in the coming years. Through this tool, UNU-INWEH's efforts also complement UN-Water's Integrated Monitoring Initiative (IMI) to collectively improve data monitoring and reporting for SDG 6 at the national level.

## **3. Specific recommendations from the UNU institute for accelerating progress and moving on transformative pathways for realizing the decade of action:**

As countries move forward on their quest for data and evidence to expedite achievement of SDGs, UNU-INWEH provides the UN Member States with the SDG-PSS, a framework allowing multiple national actors to work together addressing data and evidence gaps on the enabling environment of SDG 6. The development and implementation of SDG-PSS have provided important insights on the challenge of better informing policymakers for urgent expedition on SDG 6:

- If actions are taken to provide the UN Member States with tools and mechanisms to collect and produce data and evidence that inform policymakers and impact decisions on SDGs, engagement of national partners is key for assessing gaps and needs in policy and decision-making processes. Experience with the development and implementation of SDG-PSS in the five trial countries has shown that although data and evidence for SDG 6 are collected and produced in different ways in different national contexts, sharing a

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<sup>8</sup> The tool is available on the link: <https://sdgpss.net/en/>



common framework allows multiple national actors to discuss and agree on the evidence needed to inform policymakers.

- The novel approach used to develop and implement the SDG-PSS at the national level allows the tool to produce an authoritative evidence framework. The tool's main output consists of an overview of the progress for each SDG 6 target and indicator and for each policy critical component - whether the progress is adequate, inadequate, in development or if data is missing. For the first time, perhaps, countries can easily compare progress for different components that are critical for policymaking in the SDG era.
- The SDG-PSS' six policy critical components also synthesize the efforts to track down data and evidence gaps on the enabling environment of SDG 6 and can be adapted to the context beyond SDG 6 to other SDGs. These are the components identified by national partners as being "policy critical", which means that achievements across all these different components are necessary in order to make real sustainable progress against SDG 6 targets and indicators. Therefore, the SDG-PSS can be aligned to the requirements of other SDGs to provide an authoritative evidence framework to inform policymakers, experts and development actors on the strengths, weaknesses and gaps of data and information across the Agenda 2030.



## Annex VII

### UNU Centre for Policy Research (UNU-CPR), USA Institute Input for 2020 HLPF and ECOSOC

“Accelerated action and transformative pathways: realizing a decade of action and delivery for sustainable development”

#### **UNU-CPR’s Modern Slavery Programme Accelerated Action and Transformative Pathways for the Sustainable Development Goals**

Modern slavery and forced labour are estimated to affect more than 40 million people around the world. Under Target 8.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals, UN Member States committed to take immediate and effective measures to end forced labour, modern slavery and human trafficking by 2030, and the worst forms of child labour by 2025. To meet Target 8.7, we would therefore need to reduce the number of people affected by around 10,000 individuals per day. That requires system-level change, and identification and communication of effective measures to key policy actors at national and international levels. In the last 5 years, UNU’s presence in New York – originally called the Office in New York, and now the Centre for Policy Research – has worked to use evidence and research to mobilize system-level change. The Modern Slavery Programme specifically aims to fill the gaps in knowledge about what works to achieve Target 8.7 in the national policy, financial sector and international development spaces.

**Delta 8.7:** UNU-CPR has worked with an array of research organizations to assemble the best available evidence of what works to achieve Target 8.7 and present this in ways that maximize its utility for policy actors.

Launched at the UN General Assembly in September 2018, Delta 8.7 – which is named after the scientific for measuring change ( $\Delta$ ) and 8.7, after Target 8.7 – is shaped by a 35-member Reference Group, including researchers, government agencies, UN bodies, practitioners and survivors. Its outputs are a contribution to Alliance 8.7, the global partnership of organizations working to achieve Target 8.7.

**Methodologies:** Data visualization is central to Delta 8.7’s efforts to identify what works and encourage policy actors to act on it. The project’s website, [www.delta87.org](http://www.delta87.org), includes country dashboards compiling the best available evidence and data on modern slavery, forced labour, human trafficking and child labour in each country. These are also brought to life through a series of interactive audio-visual stories, built in collaboration with Reference Group members and Carnegie Mellon University. This work has been presented to World Economic Forum audiences in Dalian, New York and Davos, and to policy audiences from No. 10 Downing Street to Brasilia.

**Acceleration via AI:** In a current phase of work, Delta 8.7 is exploring the power of artificial intelligence and computational science to unlock new insights into what works to tackle modern slavery. Working with research partners including the University of Nottingham’s Rights Lab, the Computing Community Consortium and The Alan Turing Institute, Delta 8.7 has built an AI research coalition. This group, called ‘Code 8.7’ also works closely with survivors and survivor-focused organizations, such as Survivor Alliance and AnnieCannons. And in Brazil, Code 8.7 is working with Experian Seresa, a consumer credit bureau, to build a research sandbox to accelerate insights into vulnerability to modern slavery and forced labour.



**Mobilizing the Finance Sector: The Liechtenstein Initiative for Finance Against Slavery & Trafficking:** Working with the governments of Liechtenstein, Australia and the Netherlands, and the Nobel laureate and microfinance pioneer Muhammad Yunus, UNU-CPR established a public-private partnership to mobilize the global financial sector to tackle modern slavery and human trafficking. UNU-CPR served as secretariat to a Commission of 25 financial sector and anti-slavery leaders, including two survivors of modern slavery, and chaired by the CEO of the UN-backed Principles for Responsible Investment.

The resulting report [Unlocking Potential: A Blueprint for Mobilizing Finance Against Slavery and Trafficking](#) was launched at the UN General Assembly in 2019 by the Prime Minister of Liechtenstein and Foreign Ministers of Australia and The Netherlands. The report sets out Five Goals towards which financial sector actors can work through individual and collective action, specifying 30 actions to achieve those goals.

The same government partners have subsequently worked with UNU-CPR to establish *Finance Against Slavery and Trafficking (FAST)* an initiative to promote global implementation of the Blueprint. FAST is partnering with 13 major banks in five countries to facilitate the access of survivors of slavery to bank accounts. It is partnering with the Bali Process to promote implementation in the Asia-Pacific, particularly in the critical area of infrastructure financing. A partnership with the Association of Certified Anti-Money Laundering Specialists is bringing the FAST Blueprint to its 77,000 members worldwide, including making available an online, free training course based in part on the FAST Blueprint.

**Engagement of Development Actors:** In the second quarter of 2020, UNU-CPR will publish a major study on the role of the global development sector in fighting modern slavery. The intent of this study is to build the case for major international development actors to focus on fighting modern slavery as part of their sustainable development agenda and to put implementation of SDG Target 8.7 at the forefront of the global development system.

**The future of the fight against modern slavery:** Today, UNU-CPR is looking to the future, to think about how modern slavery may change between now and 2030, as climate change, displacement patterns, demographic patterns and work all change. Working with the UN Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Slavery in 2019 UNU-CPR crowd-sourced policy analysis through a [public consultation](#) that fed into a report to the Human Rights Council and General Assembly.