2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Implementation of the 2030 Agenda by G20 members: how to address the transformative and integrated character of the SDGs by individual and collective action

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The implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development will benefit considerably from the contributions of G20 countries. The G20 Development Working Group (DWG) can support this endeavour by agreeing on specific steps in three areas that would specify its mandate to "act as a forum for sustainable development dialogue" and to facilitate "mutual learning and exchange of experiences and good practices among G20 members on their respective national actions for sustainable development". These three areas are mainstreaming, partnerships and building capacity / sharing experience. (1) (2)

Challenge

In the G20 Action Plan on the 2030 Agenda, adopted in Hangzhou in 2016, G20 members committed to contribute to its implementation through "collective and individual efforts, at home and abroad" with a "focus on sectors and themes of the Agenda where the G20 has comparative advantage and can add value as a global forum for economic cooperation". Furthermore, the Action Plan states that countries will "integrate sustainable development in domestic policies and plans and international development efforts". In Annex B of the Action Plan all G20 members have presented first outlines on national actions. These commitments describe the challenge that lies in achieving results while focusing on economic cooperation goals that are coherent with social and environmental objectives.

The Action Plan was developed in cooperation between G20 Sherpas and the Development Working Group (DWG). In order to support implementation of the Action Plan, the DWG was mandated to "act as a forum for sustainable development dialogue between G20 members, low income and developing countries, development stakeholders and the G20 engagement groups" and to facilitate "mutual learning and exchange of experiences and good practices among G20 members on their respective national actions for sustainable development".

Furthermore, the DWG committed to conduct Annual Progress Reports and a Comprehensive Accountability Report every three years. These reports would cover G20's collective actions, and its working groups and workstreams.

The recommendations in this policy brief pursue two interconnected aims: (i) to support the G20 in its ambition to contribute to sustainable development in all it dimensions in a balanced and integrated manner, and (ii) to support the DWG to fulfill its mandate with a view to the Hangzhou Action Plan. We group our proposals in three areas that we consider important: mainstreaming, partnerships and building capacity / sharing experience. The recommendations include specific proposals for the upcoming summit as well as action that will require several years for being implemented with a view to promoting the transformative change that the 2030 Agenda calls for.

Proposal

Proposal 1: Intensify and facilitate the mainstreaming of the SDGs

As G20 members are very diverse countries, mainstreaming the implementation of the 2030 Agenda both domestically and in forums and organizations of international cooperation will be very helpful for promoting individual and collective actions towards implementation.

Adopt a whole-of-government approach

The G20 should underscore this approach in its collective activities and encourage all its members to adopt this approach in their respective national action plans. A whole-of-government approach can advance SDG implementation domestically by virtue of robust institutions and effective participation of all sectors of society on the one hand and improve the governance of global development cooperation by promoting international cooperation across policy fields and building global partnerships on the other. This approach considers vertical coordination between all layers of governance (central/federal as well as regional and local) as key for the process of implementation, together with horizontal coordination between different policy fields (3)(4). In this way, implementation strategies are more likely to be synergetic, to enable effective participation of all sectors of society and to provide the necessary resources, including making proper investments that boost prosperity, promote transparent, accountable and sustainable public procurement and investment in innovative technologies such as renewable energies. A whole-of-government approach also helps to improve risk management (5), promote international cooperation and carry out comprehensive oversight reviews of national implementation.

Pursue the systemic alignment of strategies

In drawing up their national action plans, G20 members should align their policy objectives and strategies with the 2030 Agenda both horizontally and vertically. Members should integrate the 17 sustainable goals and 169 targets of the 2030 Agenda, according to their specific conditions, into national mid- and long-term development strategies and create synergy and complementarity between international agendas and domestic strategies. Local development plans should be brought in line with national/federal governments' plans for 2030 Agenda implementation. At the same time initiatives at the regional and local level could and should be "labs" setting innovative and creative examples that will also inform national strategies.

Achieve cohesion between G20 collective action and national priorities

While formulating national plans, G20 members should identify areas to be prioritized in fulfilling the Sustainable Development Goals, taking into account the 15 priority areas (Sustainable Development Sectors, SDS) laid out in the G20 Action Plan on the 2030 Agenda as well as different national conditions, which will contribute to the comprehensive implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Collectively, the G20 should identify key actions that – if taken collectively – would facilitate universal implementation, promote synergies and reduce tradeoffcs. Each G20 summit could present new actions or revise existing ones. Focusing on the right priorities will not exclude the other sustainable development sectors as specific priorities will bring general progress on the whole.

We recommend that the G20 invest in describing the mechanisms by which the Sustainable Development Sectors will contribute to the SDGs that each SDS targets. This description shall also refer to how negative effects on other SDGs will be avoided in order to promote policy coherence (e.g., how would the global infrastructure connectivity alliance advance sustainable development in its three dimensions and to which SDGs will it contribute).

Collective actions under the 15 SDS should be specified at the Hamburg summit. They should adopt a balanced approach towards the three dimensions of sustainable development (economic, social and environmental) and specify contributions towards the environmental dimension as well as the social dimension (as recommended in the joint statement for open and inclusive societies by the chairs of all G20 Engagement Groups). (6)

Proposal (2) Build dynamic and enduring partnerships between all stakeholders

Building alliances is at the core of the means of implementation for the 2030 Agenda, partnerships within and among countries to "free humanity from the tyranny of poverty and want and to heal and secure our planet" (Preamble of the 2030 Agenda). It is important to establish a framework that enables enduring partnerships, through participation, transparency and accountability. Regional and local governments play a crucial role in linking key stakeholders in territorial development. They are a key part of public administration and draw their mandate from their regional and local democratic accountability and from working on the front line, close to citizens and communities. Civil society organizations, the private sector, and academic organizations are key actors for the implementation of SDGs and their partnership with regional and local governments should be enhanced.

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Establish innovative and effective partnerships

SDG 17 demands all countries and all stakeholders (private sector, civil society organisations and academia) to work together to implement the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs. As these goals are interlinked and require integrated approaches for implementation, cross-sectoral and multi-stakeholders partnerships at every level are an adequate instrument for achieving the SDGs. The G20 should encourage its members to engage in multi-stakeholder partnerships, including public-private partnerships (PPP). Moreover, the DWG should start to work on standard-setting, e.g. by elaborating SDG-related standards for PPPs, emphasizing its developmental component, and on specific review and oversight procedures in order to promote peer learning on such partnerships within the G20 and between members and non-members. Innovative and effective multi-stakeholder partnerships that enable capacity building and technology transfer should be greatly encouraged.

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Work on a common understanding of CBDR 2.0

Although the 2030 Agenda reaffirmed "all the principles of the Rio Declaration on Environment and

Development, including, inter alia, the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, as set out in principle 7 thereof" (para 12) it remains a controversy as to whether the principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities should serve as a principle for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and how it should be understood (or adapted). We believe that the G20 should engage in fostering a common understanding of CBDR 2.0 as this will contribute substantially to more equal and balanced global partnerships for development among G20 members and beyond. Specifically, all countries have the common responsibility of implementing the 2030 Agenda at home. Highly-industrialized countries have additional responsibility for facilitating international cooperation towards this purpose. This includes their commitment of devoting 0.7% of gross national income to official development assistance. Newly-industrialized countries and middle-income countries should commit to nationally determined contributions for international cooperation that supports SDG implementation, applying the Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDC) principle, introduced in the context of the Paris Agreement, to the 2030 Agenda. Least-developed countries should step up mobilization of domestic resources and ensure that aid flows contribute to achieving SDG targets. In addition, in building global partnerships, experience and knowledge sharing should be encouraged to promote South-South, South-North, and North-North cooperation and make the best of comparative advantages so as to help developing countries to build up capacities.

Proposal (3) Build up a framework and institutional capacities for SDG implementation

Positive experiences with implementing the SDGs should be shared among G20 members, especially with a view to monitoring and evaluation. Experience sharing is also important regarding the accountability not only of governments but also of other stakeholders that contribute to implementation, such as parliaments, the private sector, NGOs, universities, and think tanks. Finally, given the G20 countries'

position within the multilateral system, G20 members should commit towards a programmatic alignment of multilateral organizations, including multilateral development banks and the IMF, with the requirements of the 2030 Agenda.

Raise public awareness on the SDGs

Governments should invest in explaining to the public the significance of the SDGs for both national and international action towards improving wellbeing and protecting the natural foundations of life. An improved awareness and understanding could increase the legitimacy for policies that make reference to the SDGs and strengthen accountability. This could be done in cooperation with civil society, but government involvement is crucial.

Introduce a timetable for national plans

All G20 members need to clarify their individual timetables respectively on working out their national action plans. In Annex B of the Action Plan all G20 members have presented first outlines on national actions. They should commit to update these outlines by the 2018 G20 Summit. The DWG should prepare a template for this. In addition, six G20 members presented a voluntary national report at the HLPF (plus two further EU member states) already in 2016; for 2017 six additional G20 members have volunteered for reporting. (7) This leaves seven G20 members who have not declared yet when they will report. (8) The G20 as a whole should agree that all members at least start working on their national action plan in the year of 2017 and commit to report at the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) in 2018 in order to reaffirm their commitment to the 2030 Agenda and to inject energy into the implementation process around the world. These national action plans should cover all SDGs and the three dimensions of sustainable development, along with a monitoring plan. In addition, G20 countries should remain engaged in the reporting process in order to manifest leadership by example and maintain the momentum of reporting and learning.

Elaborate a comparable review approach

The G20 Summit should give the DWG a mandate to work out a review system for the collective implementation of the 2030 Agenda by the G20. Such a review system could (i) help to increase coordination between the DWG and other G20 working groups regarding mainstreaming development issues, and (ii) contribute to the Annual Progress Reports and the Comprehensive Accountability Report of the DWG. The review system could also establish a process for identifying specific successful policies, programs or projects at national level which are innovative, sustainable and replicable. These policies, programs and projects could be documented and shared as SDG Solutions within a DWG knowledge platform, and thus enable knowledge sharing within and beyond the G20. The review system could benefit from both the work of the OECD on measuring distance to the SDGs and targets and the work of the United Nations Development System (UNDS) as well as the HLPF review process.

Build an evaluation agenda

The G20 should call its members to ensure two main issues: first, the evaluability of all SDG-related policies and major programmes when designing and formulating national interventions, and second, evaluation of the Action Plan's performance and of the impact of national policies towards SDGs. This will allow for sharing lessons learned among countries and across sectors, and nurture the global development community with fresh findings and knowledge. (9)

The United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) can promote and facilitate principles for sound evaluation among G20 members. The G20 members are encouraged to work with the UN to elaborate a set of criteria and indicators to monitor the impact of individual and collective action by G20 members, at national and international levels, and to develop a list of less and better indicators than currently agreed. A set of indicators to assess the impact of financial flows upon SDG implementation outcomes would also be helpful, as well as work on standards

for measuring adequate contributions to global public goods for different country groupings.

Embed the 2030 Agenda in development finance institutions

The G20 should promote a dialogue between national development banks in order to establish a common approach for the implementation of the SDGs, as well as to promote knowledge sharing and identify best practices. Furthermore, given the G20 countries positions within Multilateral Development Banks, the DWG should set up an agenda for the adoption of SDG related standards and policies. (10)

Support and reform the UN Development System

The G20 should encourage its members to tap into the UN Development System when formulating their national action plans. UNDS is playing a key role in facilitating implementation in multiple ways, such as acting as a facilitator, catalyst and bridge-builder, helping drafting the national action plan, setting up the national GTI, as well as helping to objectively assess the performance, and the domestic and international impacts of national action. In this context, the G20 should acknowledge the indispensable role of the UN Development System in implementation and promote a dialogue among its members envisaging a common agenda for reforming and strengthening the UNDS, in order to adjust the institution to the challenges posed by the 2030 Agenda (11). Furthermore, being an important forum for global economic governance, the G20 should also strengthen coordination with the UNDS in implementing the 2030 Agenda.

References

1. The content of this policy brief is the responsibility of the authors. We thank for helpful discussions with the members of the task force and specifically for comments by: Ram Upendra Das (Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS), India), Rainer Thiele (Institute of the World Economy (IfW), Germany), Manuel Montes (South Centre), Ali Mehdi (ICRIER, India), Nancy Alexander, Heinrich Böll Foundation, USA), Iliana Olivié (Real Instituto El Cano, Spain), Mehmet Arda (EDAM, Turkey), Alejandra Kern (Universidad Nacional de San Martín / CARI, Argentina), Gala Diaz Langou (CIPPEC, Argentina), Céline Charveriat and Konar Mutafoglu (IEEP, Belgium).

2. The T20 Task Force on 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is co-chaired by Imme Scholz (DIE, Bonn, Germany), CHEN Dongxiao (SIIS, Shanghai, China) and Jann Lay (GIGA, Hamburg, Germany). Members of the Task Force are: Tony Addison (UNU-WIDER, Finland), Elena Agüero (Club of Madrid, Spain), Nancy Alexander (Heinrich Böll Foundation, USA), Venkatachalam Anbumozhi (Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia / ERIA, Indonesia), Francisco Andrés (Real Instituto Elcano, Spain), Mehmet Arda (EDAM, Turkey), Nils aus dem Moore (Rheinisch-Westfälisches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung, Germany), Belay Begashaw (SDG Center Africa, Rwanda), Tom Bigg (IIED, United Kingdom), Colin Bradford (Brookings, USA), Clara Brandi (German Development Institute / DIE, Germany), Ingo Bräuer (Potsdam-Institut für Klimafolgenforschung (PIK), Germany), Celine Charveriat (IEEP, Belgium), Andre Coelho (FGV, Brazil), Aart De Geus (Bertelsmann Stiftung, Deutschland), Gala Diaz Langou (CIPPEC, Argentina), Carlos Dominguez (Instituto Mora, Mexico), Matthew Doherty (Sovereign Strategy, UK), Edna Martinez (Proactivo Sostenible, Mexico), Paulo Esteves (BRICS Policy Center, Brazil), Güven Sak (TEPAV, Turkey), Alejandra Kern (CARI, Argentina), KIM Heungchong (Korea Institute for International Economic (KIEP), Korea), Richard Klein (SEI, Sweden), Daniel Klingenfeld (Potsdam-Institut für Klimafolgenforschung (PIK), Germany), Adolf Kloke-Lesch (SDSN, Gemany), Christian Kroll (Bertelsmann Stiftung, Germany), LI Yuefen (South Centre, Switzerland), Faith Mabera (Institute for Global Dialogue, South Africa), MAO Risheng (IWEP, China), Thomas Mättig (FES, Germany), Ali Mehdi (Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER), India), Suguru Miyazaki (Kyoto University, Japan), Manuel Montes (South Centre, Philippines), Konar Mutafoglu (IEEP, Belgium), Philani Mthembu (Institute for Global Dialogue, South Africa), Shingirirai Mutanga (Human Sciences Research, South Africa), Archna Negi (Jawarharlal Nehru University, India), Andrew Norton (IIED, United Kingdom), Iliana Olivié (Real Instituto Elcano, Spain), Yulius Purwadi Hermawan (Catholic University Jakarta, Indonesia), Ortwin Renn (IASS, Germany), Sachin Chaturvedi (RIS, India), Jeffrey Sachs (SDSN, USA), Hubert Schillinger (FES, Germany), Guido Schmidt-Traub (SDSN, France), Ole Jacob Sending (NUPI, Norway), Aniket Shah (SDG Center Africa, Africa), Jose Siaba Serrate (CARI, Argentina), Elizabeth Stuart (ODI, United Kingdom), Ulf Sverdrup (Norwegian Institute for International Affairs / NUPI, Norway), Rainer Thiele (IfW, Germany), Ram Upendra (Research and Information System for Developing Countries, India), Rebecka Villanueva Ulfgard (Instituto

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4. OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development); UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) (2002): Sustainable development strategies. A resource book. London: Earthscan; Scholz, Imme (forthcoming) National strategies for sustainable development between Rio 1992 and New York 2015, in: M. von Hauff / C. Kuhnke (eds.) Sustainable Development Policy: A European Perspective (Routledge Studies in Sustainable Development)

5. Nilsson, Mans / Dave Griggs / Martin Visbek (2016) Policy: Map the interactions between Sustainable Development Goals, in: Nature 2016 Jun 15; 534(7607):320-2. doi: 10.1038/534320a

6. G20 Engagement Groups: Statement for Open and Inclusive Societies, February 2017

   Link

7. In 2016, China, France, Germany, Korea, Mexico and Turkey (plus Estonia and Finland from the EU) reported at the HLPF; in 2017, Argentina, Brazil, India, Indonesia, Italy, and Japan are on the HLPF list (plus Denmark, Luxemburg, The Netherlands, Portugal and Sweden from the EU).

8. G20 countries that have not yet indicated interest in reporting at the HLPF are Australia, Canada, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, the UK and the US.

9. Wilton Park Conference Report (2016) Tracking development progress and evaluating development partnerships in the post-2015 era, December 2016, WP1504

10. More specifically, proposal 5 of the Policy Brief "Reforming international cooperation towards transformative change" recommends the "adoption of SDG-related standards and policies" by multilateral development banks and the IMF as well as the elaboration of "strategies to harness the potential of the financial markets in financing sustainable development. Furthermore, as MDBs are emphasizing the need of strengthening national systems to cope with socio-environmental standards, the G20 should set up an agenda for the adaptation of national systems as SDGs enablers."

11. UN (2016) ECOSOC Dialogue on longer-term positioning of UN Development System in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Findings and Conclusions, ITA Working Paper

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Existing Initiatives & Analysis

Implementation Overview (1)

The G20 countries and the G20 Development Working Group can support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda by agreeing on specific steps in three areas: - Mainstreaming: adopt a whole-of-government approach, achieve cohesion between G20 collective action and national priorities - Partnerships: engage systematically and transparently with civil society, business and academia; elaborate SDG-related standards for public-private partnerships; invest in common understanding of CBDR 2.0 - Building capacity / sharing experience: establish a performance review system; build an evaluation agenda, together with the UN; embed the Agenda in development finance institutions and support the reform of the UN Development System

Existing Agreements (4)
2016 G20 Action Plan on 2030 Agenda for Sustainable development, Hangzhou

[More Information](#)

2010 G20 Development Consensus, Seoul

[More Information](#)

2013 G20 Development Outlook, St. Petersburg

[More Information](#)

2015 G20 Low Income and Developing Countries Framework, Antalya

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