

# The Evolution of Development Ideology

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## Abstract

The paradigm shift in the development field necessitates a reevaluation of traditional economic development models. This paper argues that sustainable development, rather than classical economic development, is crucial in addressing the challenges posed by the most pressing modern-day issues. The evolution of institutions and their role in providing stability and predictability amidst growing complexity is also examined. The historical exploitation of the global south by the global north for economic growth is discussed, highlighting the detrimental social and environmental consequences. The legacy of colonialism, characterized by resource extraction and labor exploitation, perpetuated economic inequality and hindered local economies. The negative impact of aid dependency and misallocation of funds is examined, demonstrating the hindered growth and perpetuation of corruption in developing nations. The paper concludes that a shift towards sustainable development approaches is necessary to address these challenges and foster inclusive growth.

Keywords: Sustainable development, Exploitation, Economic growth

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“Development is not sustainable if it is not fair and inclusive. And people are rightfully questioning a world where a handful of men... hold the same wealth as half of humanity.”

*UN Secretary-General António Guterres*

A harsh truth resides in the Secretary General’s words. The quote sheds light on the paradigm shift the development field is undergoing. Developing countries need to grow, but amidst the complications caused by the classical development model and its externalities, development faces unprecedented challenges. Today, we need inclusive growth to ensure no one is left behind. This paper argues that in a world plagued with inequality, extreme poverty,

climate change, and natural disasters, classical economic development is not the key to growth, sustainable development is.

In a world with growing complexity, the definition of growth has evolved over time. Growth success can be attributed to institutions whose concept has also evolved with time with varying degrees of formality. Douglas North (1990) describes the evolution of institutions from informal personalized forms of economic exchange in primitive societies to modern economic systems with a high degree of formal rules and impersonal exchanges. This evolution did not occur based on a pre-planned strategy but came about on its own to cope with the growing scale and complexity

of economic activity to provide a stable and predictable environment for economic exchange amid uncertainty occurring due to impersonalization.

North (1990) defines institutions as ‘humanly devised constraints for human behavior.’ As a result, society created formal systems of economic interaction based on laws and institutions to foster confidence, stability, and predictability to deal with uncertainty. Therefore, rules theorists such as Acemoglu and Robinson (2012) propagate that the quality of institutions is critical for economic development as institutions shape economic incentives. The rules have defined property rights and created a system of enforcement that has facilitated cooperation and exchange. This viewpoint received historical support, as seen in instances like the post-World War II growth in Japan, where institutions were crucial in promoting economic growth. The impressive economic growth in Japan was made possible by a combination of central government development plans and private enterprise.<sup>1</sup> However, unwanted modifications were also brought about by the exceptionally high growth. As heavy and chemical industries expanded to accommodate urbanization, major air and water pollution plagued many urban areas.<sup>2</sup> Inadequate regulations pertaining to the environment and social costs led to hazardous water contamination, like in the instance of Minamata, which

resulted in numerous tragic deaths and severe diseases caused by mercury poisoning.<sup>3</sup>

Economic development has been the focus of the global north as they have had the means to develop technologies and foster human capital to transform their economies while using the global south as a mine for resources without worrying about the environmental or social cost. The economic growth that the global north has achieved over the years has been fueled by the exploitation of cheap labor and natural resources in the global south. The historical legacy of colonialism is proof of the exploitation endured by the global south for economic growth in the global north. The colonial era saw the establishment of colonies by European nations in Africa, Asia, and the Americas, often for the sole purpose of extracting resources like rubber, precious metals, and crops like cotton, sugar, and coffee. For instance, the economic interests of European colonial powers had a major role in the extraction of natural resources, such as diamonds, gold, rubber, and lumber, from African colonies throughout the colonial era. These resources were massively exploited and sold to the global north, aiding in the industrialization and economic growth of Europe at the expense of the local populations and the environment, which were left destitute.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, in addition to imposing taxes and tariffs on their exports, they frequently compelled the local inhabitants to work for no

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<sup>1</sup> Som, Lalita, "[Japan's Growth Experience: Post-Second World War and Recent Times.](#)" *The Capitals of Nations*. Oxford Scholarship Online. 2014.

<sup>2</sup> JICA. "[Japan after World War II.](#)" Chapter 3, 1-12.

<sup>3</sup> JICA. "[Japan after World War II.](#)" Chapter 3, 1-12.

<sup>4</sup> Michalopoulos, Stelios, and Elias Papaioannou. "[The Long-Run Effects of the Scramble for Africa.](#)" *American Economic Review*. 2016. 1802-1848.

pay or for very little pay.<sup>5</sup> In addition to causing the global South to lose significant resources, this exploitation disturbed local economies, jeopardized traditional livelihoods, and increased economic inequality. This strategy made colonizers richer while making their colonies poorer, creating immense social and environmental costs for the colonies. The exploitation of Algeria by the French is an excellent example to illustrate this as, to assist its own industries and economic growth, France put into place policies and procedures that prioritized resource extraction and export from Algeria. French enterprises made extensive use of Algeria's abundant mineral reserves, which included iron ore, phosphate, and zinc.<sup>6</sup> These minerals were mined and exported to France, which helped spur the country's industrial development and overall economic prosperity. Additionally, agricultural development took place in Algeria's rich soil, focusing on cash crops like wheat, grapes, and citrus fruits. Large-scale plantations and farms were built by French colonists and settlers, who also used forced labor while uprooting nearby communities creating social unrest and economic inequity.<sup>7</sup> The majority of Algeria's agricultural output was sent to France, which was a major source of income and support for the French economy. While the French prospered, the exploitation of these resources had serious repercussions for Algeria. The Algerian economy's development suffered from resource

extraction and exportation without sufficient investment in local infrastructure or industries.<sup>8</sup>

While the former colonizers have tried to make reparations in the form of Official Development Aid (ODA) and foreign aid with a limited focus on economic development, until the recent past, not all attempts have been successful and have further extended the damage. Advocates such as Dambisa Moyo and Willaim Easterly have criticized the Global North's ODA efforts as they have worsened the condition of the recipient countries by aggravating corruption and power consolidation in the hands of the governments. Moyo (2009) argues that aid has helped keep corrupt governments in Africa in power and has made these economies aid-dependent as opposed to tax-dependent. Despite receiving more than US\$300 billion in development aid since 1970, Moyo (2009) questions why the majority of sub-Saharan nations "flounder in a seemingly never-ending cycle of corruption, disease, poverty, and aid dependency," She responds that the reason why Africa is underdeveloped is because of all that help, contrary to the widespread notion in the West that "the rich should help the poor, and the form of this help should be paid."<sup>9</sup> Corruption has been egregiously fueled in Africa due to aid. For instance, it was found that Mobutu Sese Seko, the president of the Democratic Republic of Congo,

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<sup>5</sup> Michalopoulos, Stelios, and Elias Papaioannou. "[The Long-Run Effects of the Scramble for Africa.](#)" 1802-1848.

<sup>6</sup> Greenfield, Jerome. 2020. "[The Price of Violence: Money, the French State, and 'Civilization' during the Conquest of Algeria, 1830s–1850s.](#)" *French Historical Studies*.537-569

<sup>7</sup> Greenfield, Jerome. 2020. "The Price of Violence". 537-567

<sup>8</sup> Greenfield, Jerome. 2020. "The Price of Violence". 537-567

<sup>9</sup> Moyo, Dambisa. 2009. "[Dead Aid: Why Aid is not working and how there is a better way for Africa.](#)" 9-20.

misappropriated an amount equal to his nation's entire external debt: \$5 billion.<sup>10</sup> This highlights rampant corruption within governments, where aid funds are usually stolen and not allocated toward public expenditure. Furthermore, a greater proportion of aid flows have reached highly corrupt countries rather than less corrupt ones. Consequently, this has hindered Africa's growth and exacerbated existing challenges. Similar patterns can be observed in many other developing countries, thus stagnating their growth.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were thus created in the year 2000 to address various global development issues. Although these goals focused on a broad spectrum of subjects, including eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, achieving universal primary education, promoting gender equality and empowering women, reducing child mortality, improving maternal health, combating HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases, ensuring environmental sustainability, and developing a global partnership for development, their main priority was economic development as it was seen as the key driver for poverty reduction. By fostering economic empowerment, expanding access to essential services, and establishing income-generating possibilities, economic development was viewed as an important tool for helping people escape

poverty.<sup>11</sup> While the MDGs lifted more than 1 billion people out of poverty, their overall performance was impacted by limitations and challenges.<sup>12</sup> The failure of these goals illustrated the global north's limited understanding of the local context in developing countries and their needs. According to Morden (2013), the MDGs' primary flaw was that they were created without the input of the people whose lives were intended to improve. This resulted in a wide range of issues. Many of them were based on gravely erroneous figures and neglected to account for the millions of people who lacked identification documents or birth certificates.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, the MDGs' focus on economic growth overlooked the significance of social and environmental considerations as they did not consider the multidimensional nature of poverty. They did not address issues like conflict and political unrest, social injustice and discrimination, vulnerability to natural disasters, a lack of the rule of law, and corruption.<sup>14</sup> They also didn't discuss how the environmental factors cause poverty, the number of people displaced due to climate change and forced into poverty. They did not take into account the opinions of stakeholders, restricted gender equality to women's access to school, only covered the completion of basic education, and mentioned a small number of healthcare-related topics.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Moyo, Dambisa. 2009. "Dead Aid." 9-20

<sup>11</sup> Gibbs, Drussila. 2015. ["MDG Failures."](#) *The Borgen Project*.

<sup>12</sup> World Vision. 2015. ["Were the Millennium Development Goals a success?"](#) July 3.

<sup>13</sup> Morden, Johanna. 2013. ["Where the MDGs fell short."](#) June 28.

<sup>14</sup> Bettelli, Paola. 2021. ["What the World Learned Setting Development Goals."](#) January 29.

<sup>15</sup> Bettelli, Paola. 2021. ["What the World Learned Setting Development Goals."](#)

Growth in a developing country cannot be attained merely by providing funds and assuming that investment in its industries will be sufficient to address all the country's problems. The MDGs were designed as distinct objectives, which resulted in a disjointed approach to development. Synergies and complete solutions were hindered by the inadequate recognition of the interdependencies between diverse goals and targets.<sup>16</sup> Integrated methods that take into account economic, social, and environmental factors in a coordinated manner were needed to address complex issues like poverty. The perceived failure of the MDGs highlighted the need for a shift in addressing the complexity of present-day challenges. It revealed that sustainable development requires more than just economic growth as a solution, as the problems faced today are multifaceted and interconnected.

Even though the idea of sustainable development is relatively new, the idea of sustainability has existed for a very long time. Two of its more well-known antecedents are the 19th century's 'law of progress' and the 1970s "appropriate technology" movement.<sup>17</sup> Like these ideas, sustainable development is a well-liked idea that people support despite openly admitting that they are unsure of what it entails. However, since these ideas were not defined with clarity for the common person, despite being noble ideas, they were reduced to mere catchphrases that signify different things

to different individuals, eventually deteriorating into useless platitudes that quickly became outmoded. It would be unfortunate if the idea of sustainable development ended up having this fate because, if clearly defined, sustainability has the potential to become a strict accompaniment element alongside efficiency and equity in assessing development progress and creating development policy. The Brundtland Report (1987) defined sustainable development as 'the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.' This is the most commonly used and accepted definition of sustainable development, and it states simply that actions taken today will affect the future, compelling the world to consider the type of future that choices taken today will produce. The fundamental idea of this definition is centered around needs, primarily the basic needs of the vulnerable population. Brundtland contended that as requirements are socially and culturally generated, promoting values that encourage consumption patterns that are ecologically feasible and to which everyone may fairly aspire is necessary for sustainable development.<sup>18</sup> However, achieving sustainable development is not possible by defining rules and then imposing them to attain results, as it is a multifaceted concept. This was possible for economic growth because there are clear mediums of measurement, such as GDP, PPP, and revenues, but such clear indicators

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<sup>16</sup> Lancet. 2012. ["From the Millenium Development Goals to Sustainable Development Goals"](#). June 1.

<sup>17</sup> Pisani, Jacobus A. Du. 2006. ["Sustainable development – Historical roots of the Concept."](#), Elobeid, Dirar

Elmahi. 2012. ["The Role of Institutions in Sustainable Development: The Experience of Sudan Economy."](#) 53-68

<sup>18</sup> Elobeid, Dirar Elmahi. 2012. "The Role of Institutions in Sustainable Development." 53-68

do not exist for sustainable development. Formal rules based on a written and codified doctrine focusing on the constraint element of institutions as opposed to behavior require a constant third-party enforcer, which in the case of economic development has been the state.<sup>19</sup> However, a rules approach cannot be applied to create sustainable development as one rules-based institution is not the key to bringing the change required on a global scale because climate change, inequality, and the problems we are plagued with affect the global north and the global south differently. Furthermore, we are no longer striving for economic development but for holistic development that does not come at the cost of weaker sections of society and the environment. The interdependence of the systems of the economy, society, and environment calls for a larger viewpoint that incorporates sustainability considerations into the structure of institutions. When paradigms change, institutions must be seen as partnerships and equilibria instead of just rules. This strategy considers not only economic growth but also social well-being, and environmental preservation, acknowledging the necessity for balance and collaboration among diverse stakeholders. Institutions as equilibria is a more holistic approach to sustainable development as, according to Grief and Kingston (2011), 'they constitute interactions between purposeful agents to create structures that motivate the agents to act in a manner perpetuating the structure.' In this case, the structure is sustainable development. Institutions as equilibria can accomplish several goals simultaneously

while balancing social justice, ecological resilience, and economic growth. They allow for partnerships to foster cooperation between governments, corporations, civil society organizations, and local communities to address challenging sustainability issues jointly. Flexibility and adaptability are essential for sustainable development to adjust to shifting circumstances and new challenges. Institutions as rules do not offer the pliability and responsiveness needed to tackle today's challenges effectively. Sustainability is a long term idea, and its implementation depends on various factors such as appropriate technologies, supportive regulations, improved ethical considerations, and changes in individual behavior at grassroots levels. This holistic growth can only be brought about by the interaction between various stakeholders and actors outside of the formal rule-based dynamic.

The emergence of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) resulted from this realization. The SDGs apply to all nations, developed and developing, unlike the MDGs, which solely focused on developing nations. In addition, each nation is free to create a national framework for accomplishing the SDGs because they are both nationally owned and country-led, advocating for collective action by all nations. The first six SDGs enhance and reinforce certain MDG targets. The MDGs' agenda is expanded with goals 7 through 10, which deal with the underlying causes of inequality and poverty and the connections between the

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<sup>19</sup> North, Douglas C. 1990. "[Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance.](#)"

economic, social, and environmental pillars of sustainable development.<sup>20</sup> Goals 11 through 15 examine how people's effects on the environment have impacted social and economic development.<sup>21</sup> The last two objectives foster the conditions necessary for sustainable development. In addition to having more goals and targets than the MDGs, the SDGs propagate the 2030 Agenda, which is universal, integrated, transformative, and based on human rights, governance, justice, and fairness. The 2030 Agenda outlines a vision of a world devoid of poverty, hunger, disease, discrimination, fear, and violence, with equitable access to high-quality healthcare and education, with universal respect for human rights and dignity, the rule of law, justice, equality, and a place where people coexist peacefully with nature (Bettelli 2021). The SDGs embody former Secretary General Ban Ki Moon's statement, "We don't have a plan B because there is no planet B."<sup>22</sup> The United Nations has created the SDGs to be the structure that motivates nation-states to achieve sustainable development which in the institutions as equilibria theory serves as the new equilibrium. The SDGs present a comprehensive framework based on the principle of 'leave no one behind,' rooted in human rights. The MDGs and a large portion of mainstream development strategies have failed to address systematic patterns of discrimination and disadvantage - abuses of rights - that keep many people in poverty.<sup>23</sup>

Furthermore, inclusivity is a core priority for the goals as seven targets specifically include people with disabilities; another six openly mention vulnerable people; seven aims are universal; and two directly mention non-discrimination.<sup>24</sup> Inequality is evaluated by ensuring that those most excluded may express their human rights, not merely by measuring it in terms of economic disparities. The SDGs also emphasize the importance of partnerships for sustainable development, Goal 17, as collective action is crucial not only by nations but also by the private sector, governments, and civil society to achieve scale and transform markets.

Partnerships, according to the UN, are voluntarily cooperative relationships between different parties, both public and non-public, in which all participants agree to cooperate to accomplish a common goal or take on a specific task and, as mutually agreed, to share risks and responsibilities, resources, and benefits.<sup>25</sup> However, creating a nurturing and enabling climate for partnership is a difficult endeavor that calls for developing institutional skills, convening and supporting infrastructure and a policy environment that can facilitate mainstream cooperation. Multi-stakeholder collaborations are crucial for sustainable development as they unite various viewpoints, assets, and domain knowledge from diverse stakeholders. Creating

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<sup>20</sup> Bettelli, Paola. 2021. "[What the World Learned Setting Development Goals.](#)"

<sup>21</sup> Bettelli, Paola. 2021. "[What the World Learned Setting Development Goals.](#)"

<sup>22</sup> United Nations. 2016. "[UN Secretary-General's Remarks at COP22 Press Conference.](#)"

<sup>23</sup> Clarke, Joe Sandler. 2015. "[7 reasons the SDGs will be better than the MDGs.](#)"

<sup>24</sup> Clarke, Joe Sandler. 2015. "[7 reasons the SDGs will be better than the MDGs.](#)"

<sup>25</sup> GA Resolution 68/234, 66/223, 64/223, 62/211, 60/215, 58/129, 56/76



synergies between the knowledge and resource bases of international organizations, civil society organizations (CSOs), governments, and private sector institutions is the overall objective to achieve the SDGs more quickly, effectively, and fairly than is possible when these actors work individually. Ultimately, these synergies are intended to provide win-win scenarios in which all parties achieve their respective and mutual aims. Furthermore, promoting the use of constructive standards, establishing cross-sectoral relationships at the policy level, and transforming organizational and individual behavior towards a new equilibrium of sustainability can only be achieved with collaborations between diverse actors.

In contrast to formal rules, institutions created as a consequence of or response to informal rules based on norms and unwritten codes of conduct that structure human behavior to the prevailing equilibrium are creating a larger impact on sustainable development than the state itself. CSOs may operate within informal rules and structures in a society but they play a key role in shaping equitable societies as they master the local context of problems. The OECD (n.d.) defines civil society organizations “to include all non-market and non-state organizations outside of the family in which people organize themselves to pursue shared interests in the public domain.” These organizations are valuable partners as they possess a deep understanding of the needs of developing nations, expertise in particular industries, and knowledge of

public opinion. They actively promote human and civil rights, fight poverty and environmental degradation, enhance public governance, and advocate for changing international policies to be more development-friendly. Informal structures are built by the grassroots and have the advantage of being steered in a local context with an understanding of the needs of the vulnerable population directly from them as opposed to a third party. Furthermore, it can be argued that these informal rules create equilibria in society, which are based on stable patterns of behavior supported by self-enforcing beliefs and expectations. This is the key to achieving sustainable development. Creating a virtuous cycle of stable behavior patterns from the grassroots to the profit-motivated private sector focused on promoting sustainability by adopting responsible consumption and production practices. Embracing sustainability consciously in daily lives and business practices is the need of the hour. The question then arises as to how can an equilibrium for sustainable development be created. Although the exact course of events is still unknown, one thing is certain: no one sector, whether government, business, civil society, or academia, will be able to manage the coming economic and social revolution on its own due to its scale, scope, and complexity.<sup>26</sup> To overcome these obstacles, unexpected coalitions that unite all sectors are needed. With their potential to foster participation and increase responsibility, civil society organizations can be essential partners for both the private sector and governments by exchanging data,

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<sup>26</sup> The Network. 2018. “[Why collaboration will be key to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.](#)”



assets, initiatives, and skills based on a local understanding of the problems. The world today is going through highly interdependent and complex social, economic, technological, and ecological changes resulting from past and present trends. Therefore, along with furthering the global agenda to bring change, a thorough understanding of the local context is critical for success.

Impactful partnerships can be achieved at different levels between the global north and the global south, with many stakeholders coming together to incentivize the developing countries to work towards the SDGs. It is important to understand that while there is a will to transition towards sustainable development in developing countries, they often lack the infrastructure, financial means, knowledge, and technology capability to do so. The Global North can support developing countries by providing critical financial support, including grants, concessional loans, and development assistance specifically targeted toward SDG implementation. Technology transfer through knowledge sharing and capacity-building programs focused on skill building of the local labor force can make the transition smoother for developing countries. Additionally, providing fair market access and trade opportunities for products and services from developing countries by reducing trade barriers and promoting exports from these countries can boost economic development while engaging in responsible trade practices promoted by the SDGs. Furthermore, it is imperative that policies created for trade,

development, and growth are coherent. This can be achieved by engaging experts and scientific evidence along with a local understanding of the target of the policy to not create conflicting issues or hinder progress in developing countries. Moreover, south-south cooperation also has the potential to create significant progress for sustainable development, as collaboration between developing countries has the potential to foster long-term solutions. This can help developing countries learn from each other's successes and challenges. An excellent example to illustrate this is the sharing of technology between Indian entrepreneurs and various African countries, namely, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zimbabwe, for turning unused parts of the cotton crop into renewable energy for businesses, which also generates extra income for farmers.<sup>27</sup> Therefore, collaboration and knowledge transfer between developing countries can create significant value as the underlying issues are sometimes very similar.

However, it is crucial to recognize that the transition to the equilibrium achieving sustainable development may be hampered by resistance to change, power relationships, and implementation difficulties. Power disparities and ulterior motives may make it difficult to collaborate effectively on sustainable development from a broader perspective. There are several challenges to creating transformative partnerships for sustainable development, and the three main challenges are as follows. Firstly, at the national policy level, the pursuit of SDGs frequently takes a backseat to the

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<sup>27</sup> UNCTAD. 2019. "[UNCTAD: Prosperity for All.](#)"

growth and stabilization of economies. Initiatives that promote economic growth, such as luring investments, fostering exports, and raising GDP, are frequently given top priority by national policy. This emphasis on short-term economic rewards obscures the long-term sustainable development objective, which calls for more extensive and radical changes. Developing countries are not to blame for prioritizing economic growth at this stage as the global north achieved this growth years ago at their cost, and now they criticize the growth of developing countries like India and China, as they are the highest carbon emitters today. Nevertheless, this criticism is not justified as key components of the industrial processes in China and India are progressively being outsourced by nations in the global north, particularly the United States, United Kingdom, Japan, France, and Germany.<sup>28</sup> However, China and India are responsible for the emissions generated during the production of those products while the consumers reside in the global north. The idea of ‘consumption-based emissions’ has been continuously ignored as utilizing consumption-based measurements, China and India would experience a decline in output, perhaps not by a significant amount, but sufficient to indicate the pressure being imposed on these nations.<sup>29</sup> This is valid for a large portion of the global south, which is more frequently used to outsource carbon emissions. However, China has pledged

to accomplish its national objectives to attain carbon neutrality by 2060 and peak carbon emissions before 2030.<sup>30</sup> Therefore, with the growing influence of the SDGs and the need for sustainable development, developing countries are willing to accommodate and innovate to achieve their economic objectives. Secondly, the private sector and governments face multitudes of competing priorities. Political cycles, in which governments are preoccupied with winning elections or scoring quick wins, might reduce the consistency and dedication needed for long-term SDG engagement as resources may be allocated to fulfilling vote-hoarding activities with long-term negative environmental and social consequences. Similarly, the private sector may be unwilling to make trade-offs that offer immediate profits, which can hinder comprehensive engagement in the SDGs in the long run. Achieving an equilibrium for sustainability can be hampered by selfish political and business interests. Lastly, governments, private sector actors, and other stakeholders may have different levels of understanding and awareness of the SDGs and their applicability. Many nations, such as Iraq and Afghanistan, are still developing their national policies and strategies for incorporating the SDGs.<sup>31</sup> Insufficient institutional ability and resources make it difficult to execute and monitor SDG efforts effectively. Therefore, working together is crucial, and multi-stakeholder, cross-

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<sup>28</sup> Ferrer, Marthe De. 2022. [“Why we’re all to blame for China and India’s ‘filthy’ CO2 Emissions.”](#)

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> World Bank. 2022. *China’s Transition to a Low-Carbon Economy and Climate Resilience Needs Shifts in Resources and Technologies*. October 12.

<sup>31</sup> United Nations. 2019. [“Success of 2030 Agenda for Post-Conflict Countries Largely Uneven, Speakers Tell Economic and Social Council, as High-level Segment Closes.”](#)

sector basis engagements involving the private sector, governments, and civil society organizations are necessary to achieve the equilibrium.

Considering the complexity of the world's problems today, there are bound to be challenges to achieving the SDGs and sustainable development. However, these challenges can be overcome by supporting varied actors to work together towards a common goal. Moreover, while governments have a key role in creating policies to support sustainable development, the private sector has the potential to transform the efforts with their knowledge and resources. There is a significant unrealized opportunity to raise the bar on sustainability leadership in the private sector through sector-specific ethical business coalitions with the government and civil society.<sup>32</sup> Building industry-wide standards, determining shared indicators, and reporting and evaluating the stakeholders' performance against these can help strengthen the strategy among the partners. Furthermore, exchanging lessons learned and best practices, supporting research and development collaborations, and undertaking joint policy advocacy with inputs from all stakeholders can also make a difference. In addition to this financing, the SDGs can also be done better through partnerships as the various stakeholders can share the load and the responsibility. International donors can benefit by engaging local stakeholders and private sector actors to implement strategic partnerships more economically. In

fact, localizing the implementation by empowering sub-national authorities and communities can help adapt the global goals to local contexts and encourage bottom-up approaches that address specific challenges and opportunities. Furthermore, the private sector can be better engaged by linking the company's mission, finance methods, and innovation platforms with a given SDG, creating focused partnerships. With the aim of developing and scaling new technologies, products, business models, and sustainable infrastructure, there are opportunities to form blended finance partnerships among businesses, investors, development finance institutions, donor agencies, research institutes, and philanthropic foundations.<sup>33</sup> Additionally, to ensure increased uniformity and integration of sustainability in grass-root practices, there needs to be cooperation between the suppliers and end users of sustainability data and reporting to make the data more equivalent, logical, and relevant. This is essential to enhance decision-making processes, efficiency, and transparency. Finally, including diverse stakeholders from the civil society and private sector in policy dialogue can help create better coordination and implementation of policies aimed at sustainable development. Policy coherence has the potential to generate synergies toward achieving the SDGs by creating mutually reinforcing policy actions inclusive of the interests and concerns of all stakeholders involved. Therefore, partnerships can produce the transition towards the equilibrium of sustainable

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<sup>32</sup> Nelson, James. 2017. "[Partnerships for Sustainable Development](#)." 1-4.

<sup>33</sup> Nelson, James. 2017. "[Partnerships for Sustainable Development](#)." 1-4.

development by bringing together expertise, scientific knowledge, financial resources, and local know-how.

In conclusion, the approach to growth today needs to rise above economic development and make room for sustainable development. The new equilibrium of sustainable development can only be created by strategically engaging varied stakeholders in meaningful partnerships to work together for a cause larger than their individual interests.

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