

JEIMUN

2027



**JAPAN
EDUCATIONAL
INTERNATIONAL
MODEL
UNITED NATIONS**

BACKGROUND GUIDE

**CONFERENCE:
84TH SESSION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
PLENARY MEETING**

**AGENDA ITEM :
BEYOND 2030:
REIMAGINING THE
GLOBAL FRAMEWORK
FOR SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT**

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Greetings

When we consider international issues, what role do you delegates believe the United Nations should play? There has long been criticism that the UN is ineffective, lacking the power to meaningfully influence international relations. Yet, the complex crises of recent years have brought this criticism into sharper focus. As the international community faces global turmoil, divisions among major powers, and concerns over corruption and accountability, the UN's ability to respond effectively is being put to the test. Initiatives such as UN80 reflect the ongoing debate over how the organization should adapt to meet the challenges of a changing world.

What, then, does this conference's theme of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have to do with this broader debate over the UN's role and the need for institutional reform?

Intended to be achieved by 2030, the SDG's deadline is fast approaching. Official discussions on the post-2030 development agenda are also to begin in 2027. As we approach this turning point, it is worth considering what the SDGs reveal about the UN as a whole. Both embody the aspirations of the international community: establishing shared goals, providing a framework for collective action, and offering hope for a better future. In this sense, the SDGs almost mirror the UN as a whole- establishing guidelines for worldwide peace and showing hope for the international community, but ultimately failing to deliver due to the restrictions within itself. The gap between these aspirations and their realization raises important questions about the UN's ability to turn international consensus into tangible results.

If the UN is to remain a meaningful force in international affairs, it must confront the gap between what it promises and what it delivers. The organization risks losing its credibility if its declarations and frameworks are not accompanied by meaningful progress. As delegates, we therefore encourage you to approach the SDGs not only as a set of development targets, but also as an opportunity to reflect on the future of multilateralism itself. In an era of growing international uncertainty, how should the UN evolve to remain relevant, effective, and capable of addressing global challenges?

We look forward to welcoming delegates from diverse backgrounds and perspectives to JEIMUN 2027. Do not be afraid to challenge conventional thinking, propose ambitious policies, or imagine possibilities that may seem out of reach. After all, this is a *Model* United Nations conference, and it is an opportunity to explore not only the world as it is, but also the world as it could be.

JEIMUN 2027 Front Team Chika SAITO

Chapter 1. Assembly Information

This chapter sets out the basic settings of the conference: the body in which it is set, the agenda item, the dates, and the scope of information that delegates may use. It also explains the functions of the General Assembly and its Main Committees, and introduces the international organizations and country groupings relevant to the agenda item.

Assembly Information in This Conference

Conference: 84th Session of the United Nations General Assembly Plenary Meeting

Agenda item: Beyond 2030: Reimagining the Global Framework for Sustainable Development

Dates: 2027/1/9-11

Setting of the conference

This conference is set in the 84th session of the United Nations General Assembly, which will in reality run from September 2029 to September 2030. Although the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are to be achieved by 2030, discussions at this conference shall be based on the progress achieved as of the dates of the conference. In addition, to ensure fairness, the information that delegates may use in the conference is limited to that available as of 2026.

Functions of the General Assembly

The General Assembly (UNGA) is composed of all Member States of the United Nations, each of which has one equal vote. Under the Charter of the United Nations, the powers of the General Assembly are more limited than those of the Security Council: the Assembly may make recommendations to States. Such recommendations are not in themselves legally binding, in that they impose no clear obligation of implementation. They nonetheless carry considerable normative weight and may contribute to the formation of customary international law.

The Assembly may discuss any matter within the scope of the Charter, and its competence therefore extends across virtually the entire range of political, economic, humanitarian, social and legal questions with which the United Nations is concerned. The principal limitation concerns international peace and security: while the Security Council is exercising its functions in respect of a dispute or

situation, the Assembly may not make recommendations on it unless the Council so requests. There is an exception to this limitation in the form of the "Uniting for Peace" resolution (General Assembly resolution 377 (V)). Delegates who wish to learn more are encouraged to research it independently.

Resolutions that delegates will encounter later in this guide, or in the course of their own research, contain references to the Main Committees of the General Assembly. A brief explanation is therefore provided here.

The General Assembly has six Main Committees:

- First Committee: Disarmament and International Security
- Second Committee: Economic and Financial
- Third Committee: Social, Humanitarian and Cultural
- Fourth Committee: Special Political and Decolonization
- Fifth Committee: Administrative and Budgetary
- Sixth Committee: Legal

Given the comprehensive nature of the SDGs, the 2030 Agenda (A/RES/70/1) was adopted without reference to any particular Main Committee, as recorded in the heading of the resolution. However, when researching a specific Goal or target, delegates may find it necessary to distinguish between the Committees, and should bear this in mind.

Chapter 2. The UN and development- a prehistory to the SDGs

The discussion of development in the United Nations

Topics such as reducing poverty and achieving development were always a part of the United Nations' agenda, especially since the 1960, when they added 17 new member states, all of which were developing countries. This was also the largest number of states admitted in a single year. Ever since, and as the UN expanded globally, the topic of development was always on the frontside of the UN. Organizations like the FAO first tackled starvation, leading to the establishment of the World Food Programme in 1961. However, very quickly, the member states realized that solving only hunger wasn't enough. Declaring the 1960s as the "United Nations Development Decade" via A/RES/1710(XVI), many other projects and organizations to achieve development, such as UNCTAD and the UNDP were established.

However, entering the 1970s, the general assembly declared previous efforts not enough, and noting that, on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, proclaimed the Second United Nations Development Decade, starting from 1 January 1971. On this occasion, it adopted A/RES/2626(XXV), the International Development Strategy as a means of achieving the Decade's goals. The second development decade faced challenges such as the 2 oil crises, and subsequent global inflation. In response, the UN held the world food conference in Rome, adopting The Universal Declaration on the Eradication of Hunger and Malnutrition, which recognized that the food crisis had implications not only for economic and social development but also for the fundamental principles and values associated with the right to life and human dignity. Despite these efforts, the 1970s midterm review of these set goals proved them to be insufficient, and within the same decade, the general assembly made more attempts to financially support developing countries during global economic crises, and ultimately failed to reach the goal of at least a 6% annual GDP growth rate for developing nations.

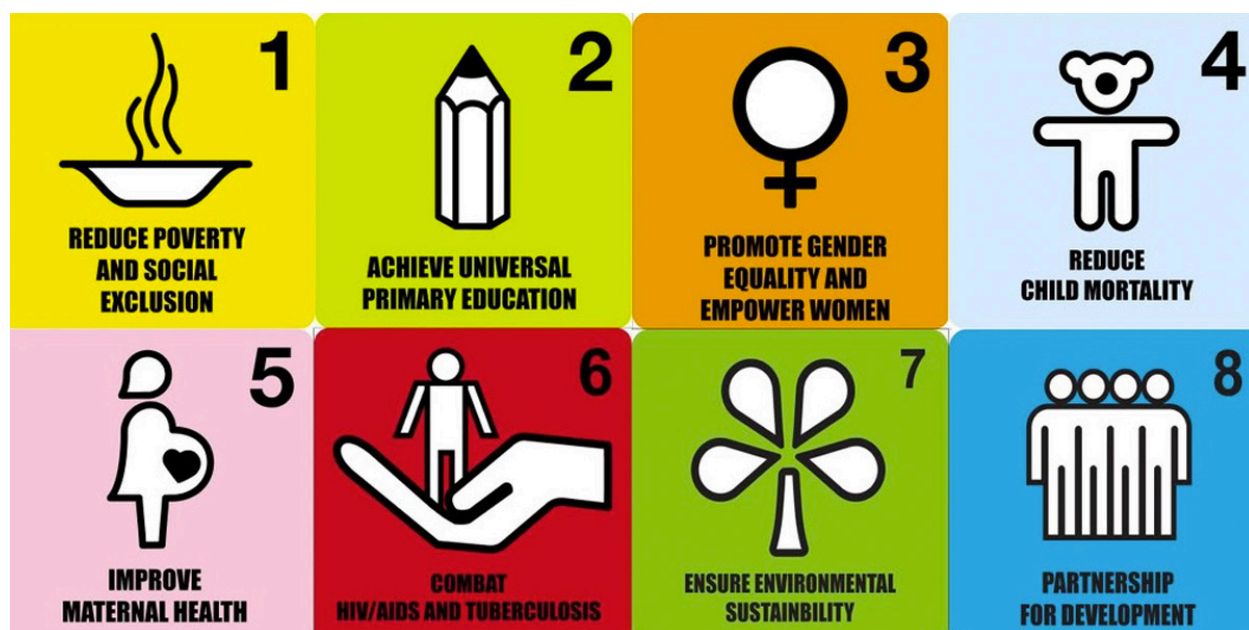
The third UN development decade, from 1981 to 1990, was then declared by resolution A/RES/35/56, setting even more specific goals compared to before, such as: growth rates for developing countries of 7.5 per cent of GDP and 8 per cent for exports; gross investment at 28 per cent and gross domestic savings at 24 per cent of GDP; concessional financing to reach and surpass 0.7 per cent of GDP of developing countries; the reduction and elimination of poverty; a significant reduction of mortality rates and more. These were all goals set to be achieved by the year 1990. In the review and appraisal of the third development decade in 1984, the General Assembly stated that the targets have not yet been met.

By 1990, the gap between developed and developing countries continued to widen, and with this background, the General Assembly would adopt both the Declaration on International Economic Cooperation as well as proclaimed the Fourth United Nations Development Decade. In December 1990, the same year, it proclaimed the Fourth United Nations Development Decade, from 1991 to 2000, through resolution A/RES/45/199, adopting a new International Development Strategy aimed at accelerating development throughout the decade. The Strategy sought to reverse the adverse economic trends of the 1980s, strengthen international cooperation, and improve living conditions in developing countries. However, despite these renewed commitments and subsequent international conferences and initiatives, development remained uneven, with economic growth alone increasingly recognized as insufficient to address the broader social and institutional challenges facing developing countries. The mid-1990s faced many armed conflicts in Africa, the Americas and Eastern Europe, requiring large humanitarian operations from the UN and forcing the UN to rethink its developmental strategy for many nations. Towards the end of the decade, there was a sudden surge of globalization from developing countries liberalizing and becoming integrated into the world economy made the discussion of development even more complex. The world realized that pure economic growth wasn't enough to achieve true development, and the focus shifted to a framework for development that would comprehensively address the complex humanitarian, economic, and social needs for development, which led to the creation of the Millennium Development Goals.

What are the MDGs

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are a set of 8 goals, adopted at the UN millennium summit in 2000, aiming to achieve these by the year 2015. Adopted by resolution A/RES/55/2, these goals were created specifically to target developing countries. The 8 goals were also more specified at the 56th UN general assembly, with then general secretary Kofi Annan proposing the "Road map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration." In this declaration, there were 18 more targets, and numerous indicators that aimed to specify the 8 goals. These aimed to holistically address the numerous factors needed for development, as well as sought to combine the efforts towards development from the decades before.

The 8 Goals



Source: <https://www.mdgmonitor.org/outline-of-the-mdgs-notable-challenges/>

Background of the Millennium Development Goals

Despite overall significant economic development during the twentieth century and the 4 UN development decades, many challenges concerning human well-being remained unresolved. Persistent problems such as extreme poverty, hunger, limited access to education and healthcare, and gender inequality demonstrated that economic growth alone was insufficient to address all dimensions of human development. These issues increasingly came to be recognized as global challenges requiring coordinated international action.

At the United Nations Millennium Summit in 2000, world leaders adopted the Millennium Declaration, reaffirming their commitment to shared values and collective responsibility at the global level. The Declaration emphasized that, in addition to their responsibilities toward their own societies, states had a collective responsibility toward people around the world, particularly the most vulnerable. Against this background, the MDGs were established as a common framework for international development efforts.

Compared to the UN development decades prior, there were three key differences:

- Focus on individual well-being as a contributor to development (regarding poverty, hunger etc)

- Less focus on economic growth in numbers (such as targets for GDP growth)
- A more structured international cooperation between countries, not just UN entities

The Approach of the MDGs

The implementation of the MDGs was based on the principle of international cooperation and partnership. This approach was particularly reflected in Goal 8, “Develop a Global Partnership for Development,” which recognized that achieving the development goals required cooperation between developing and developed countries. Goal 8 included commitments concerning development assistance, debt relief, access to essential medicines, technology transfer, and international trade.

Within this framework, developing countries were expected to take primary responsibility for implementing policies and reforms aimed at achieving the MDGs, while developed countries were expected to provide international support. Such support included development assistance, improved access to global markets, debt relief, and access to essential medicines and technologies. The MDGs therefore established a framework in which domestic development efforts were complemented by international cooperation.

Achievements and Remaining Challenges

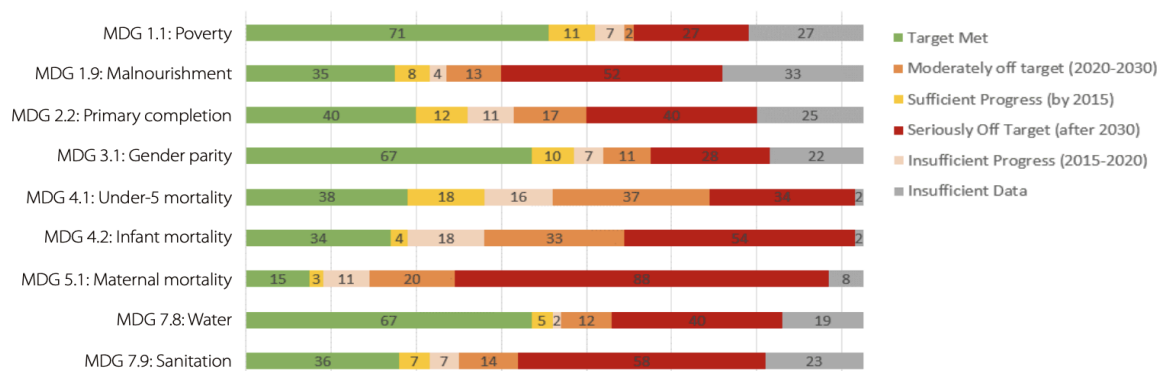
The MDGs contributed to substantial progress in several areas between 2000 and 2015. The number of people living in extreme poverty fell by more than half compared with 1990 levels, while primary school enrollment in developing regions increased from 83 percent in 2000 to 91 percent in 2015. Progress was also made toward gender equality, particularly in access to education and women's representation in political institutions and the workforce.

Significant improvements were also observed in health-related goals. Between 1990 and 2015, the global under-five mortality rate declined by more than half, from 90 to 43 deaths per 1,000 live births. Maternal mortality also declined by nearly half worldwide, while access to skilled health personnel during childbirth increased. Furthermore, international efforts to combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis contributed to declining infection and mortality rates and expanded access to treatment, including antiretroviral therapy.

However, the achievements of the MDGs varied significantly across countries and regions. Although considerable progress was made globally, substantial disparities remained in the extent to which individual targets were achieved. Sub-Saharan Africa, in particular, lagged behind other regions in progress toward several MDGs. For example, the region remained off track for the target of halving

extreme poverty, while progress toward health-related goals, particularly maternal mortality, was also insufficient.¹

MDGs goals achieved by number of countries



Source: Adapted from UNDP, Transitioning from the MDGs to the SDGs (n.d.), based on data from World Bank (2015), Global Monitoring Report 2015/2016: Development Goals in an Era of Demographic Change

These disparities highlighted an important limitation of the MDG framework: global progress did not necessarily translate into equal progress across all regions and populations. The MDGs therefore raised questions about how a subsequent global development framework could address a broader range of social, economic, and environmental challenges while simultaneously ensuring that development reached populations and regions that had been left behind. These considerations contributed to the development of the Sustainable Development Goals, which would succeed the MDGs in 2015.

¹

<https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/publications/Transitioning%20from%20the%20MDGs%20to%20the%20SDGs.pdf>

Chapter 3. What are the SDGs

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are 17 different goals set by the UN, created for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, both adopted at the United Nations Summit in New York from 25 to 27 September 2015. The SDGs refers to 17 broader goals as well as 169 associated, more specific targets to achieve the 2030 Agenda.

The 17 Goals



Source: <https://social.desa.un.org/2030agenda-sdgs>

A World in Decay, and a More Inclusive Agenda

The SDGs are widely understood as the successor to the MDGs, as discussed in the previous section. This transition from the MDGs to the SDGs was not simply a matter of extending an existing framework, as

the international community entered the post-2015 era facing a more complex and interconnected set of challenges than ever.

The Millennium Development Goals Report 2014 highlighted several areas in which significant challenges remained. Four issues were particularly prominent:

1. Gender inequality
2. Disparities between the richest and poorest populations, as well as between urban and rural areas, particularly in regards to access to basic healthcare, sanitation, and adequate living conditions
3. Climate change and environmental degradation prohibiting the achievement of the MDGs
4. The expansion of armed conflict²

These challenges demonstrated that progress at the global level did not necessarily translate into progress for every person. Although the MDGs had contributed to substantial improvements in areas such as poverty reduction, education, and health, their achievements remained highly uneven, especially in regards to the least developed nations.

This gave rise to one of the defining principles of the SDGs, which was to “leave no one behind.” Rather than focusing primarily on aggregate improvements, the SDGs sought to address who benefited from development, who remained excluded, and why.

The distinction is particularly important when considering climate change and conflict. While gender inequality and socioeconomic disparities can be understood as persistent societal problems, climate change and conflict function as forces that actively undermine gains in development. Environmental degradation also acts to worsen poverty and inequality, while conflict can destroy infrastructure, interrupt education and healthcare, and force people into displacement. The SDGs therefore emerged not only as an attempt to complete the unfinished work of the MDGs, but also as a response to an increasingly unstable world. This shift also represents a move toward addressing sustainable development as a responsibility of the international community as a whole. Rather than focusing primarily on developed countries supporting developing countries, the SDGs emphasize that each country, no matter how developed, should also address its own domestic challenges.

² <https://www.un.org/en/desa/millennium-development-goals-report-2014>

This broader understanding of development is reflected in the expansion of the framework itself. Whereas the MDGs consisted of only 8 goals, the SDGs broadened to 17 goals and 169 targets. The increase represents a shift toward a more comprehensive understanding of development, incorporating economic, social, environmental, institutional, and political dimensions.

Another important shift from the MDGs to the SDGs is the focus from material goals such as economic growth to focusing on human life, specifically the concept of human dignity. This can be found partly in how the United Nations itself framed the purpose of the post-2015 agenda. Reflecting on the MDGs and looking toward the following fifteen years, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon described the shared responsibility of the international community in terms of ending poverty, leaving no one behind, and creating “a world of dignity for all.”³

This emphasis on human dignity is significant because unlike decades before, the SDGs were not designed solely around development from just a statistical lens. Instead, they increasingly placed the individual at the center of development and international progress: such as their access to healthcare and education, their physical and social well-being, their rights, their ability to participate in society, and their freedom from discrimination and violence.

In this sense, the SDGs can be understood as a framework for governments and other international actors to value the individual’s quality of life, and is based on the belief that this increase in quality of life ultimately leads to international development.

The Establishment and Purpose of the SDGs

This section instead examines A/RES/70/1, “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,” in order to consider what kind of world the SDGs sought to create and what they expected governments and other actors to pursue.

At a broad level, the resolution can be divided into four major components:

Preamble → Declaration → Goals and Targets → Implementation, Follow-up and Review

For discussions concerning the development agenda beyond 2030, particular attention should be paid to the Declaration, especially the sections titled:

- “Our vision” (Paragraphs 7–9)

³ The Millennium Development Goals Report 2015

- “Our shared principles and commitments” (Paragraphs 10–13)
- “Our world today” (Paragraphs 14–17)⁴

These three sections can be understood as addressing three fundamental questions:

1. What kind of world did the international community want to create by 2030?
2. What principles and commitments were expected to be shared by all countries in pursuing that vision?
3. What conditions and failures in the existing world made a new development agenda necessary?

1. Our Vision: What Kind of World Should Development Create?

Paragraphs 7–9 present a normative vision of the world that the SDGs seek to create. Rather than defining development solely through economic indicators, the text describes a world free from poverty, hunger, disease, fear, and violence, while emphasizing universal access to education, healthcare, social protection, water and sanitation.

Paragraph 8 goes further by placing human rights, human dignity, equality, non-discrimination, cultural diversity, gender equality, and social inclusion at the center of this vision.

Paragraph 9 then connects this social vision to economic and environmental sustainability, calling for sustained and inclusive economic growth, decent work, sustainable patterns of consumption and production, environmental protection, climate-sensitive technology, biodiversity protection, and harmony with nature.

Therefore, Paragraphs 7–9 can be understood not simply as a list of aspirations, but as an attempt to answer a fundamental question:

What should “development” ultimately mean?

For the purposes of post-2030 discussions, this can be broken down into several possible dimensions:

- Human well-being: What constitutes a life of dignity?

⁴ <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3923923?v=pdf>

- Equality and inclusion: Who should benefit from development, and how can exclusion be prevented?
- Human rights: Should development be understood as a matter of rights rather than simply economic progress?
- Economic development: How can growth be reconciled with social inclusion and decent work?
- Environmental sustainability: What limits should be placed on development in order to protect future generations and the natural world?

Delegates should therefore consider whether the SDGs' vision of development remains appropriate for the post-2030 world, or whether the international community should redefine what it means by “development” itself.

Column: From “Strengthening the United Nations” to a More Cautious UN

When examining the MDGs and the SDGs, there is an interesting contrast between the political context of the two.

The Millennium Declaration, adopted through the resolution A/RES/55/2, contained a section explicitly titled “Strengthening the United Nations.” This emphasis is striking from today's perspective, particularly when the effectiveness of the United Nations is frequently questioned in relation to international issues such as the “paralysis” of the Security Council.

In 2000, however, the international political environment was considerably different. The Cold War had ended only a decade earlier, and the United States remained the world's sole superpower. Against this background, the United Nations could still be viewed as an institution onto which considerable expectations, including those as a guarantor of international peace and security were projected.

By contrast, the 2030 Agenda, adopted through A/RES/70/1 in 2015, does not contain an equivalent section devoted to “strengthening the United Nations.” Instead, it places greater emphasis on universal participation, international cooperation, human rights, sustainable development, and implementation at both national and international levels.

This comparison raises an interesting question for delegates when considering the post-2030 agenda:

Has the international community's understanding of the role of the United Nations itself changed between 2000 and 2015—and, if so, how and what would that mean for the framework that succeeds the SDGs?

Chapter 4. Evaluating the SDGs

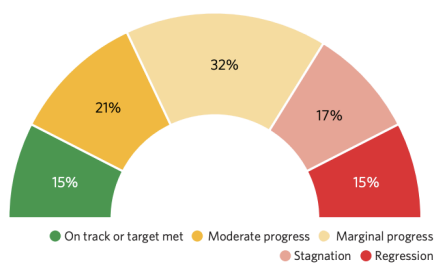
Considering that there are a multitude of actors when it comes to global progress and development, simply stating whether the SDGs were successful or not and what kind of specific difference it made is impossible. In other words, the complex nature of development and progress makes it incredibly difficult to pinpoint whether some goal being met was due to the SDGs, or which part of that progress the SDGs should be accounted for. However, when considering the need to renew the agenda for the post 2030 world, we must evaluate the SDGs to some extent. Thus, this chapter serves to guide delegates to seeing what the SDGs achieved, and what remains the main criticisms of it.

The achievements of the SDGS

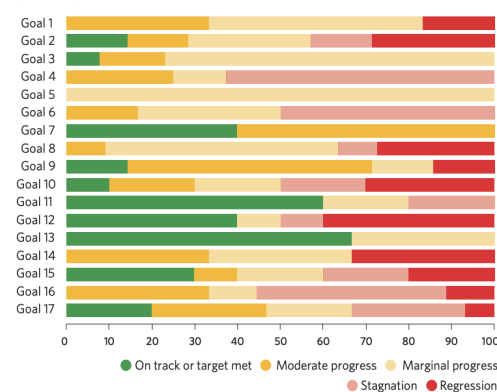
First, let us examine the differing achievements of the SDGs by looking at the most recent Sustainable Development SDGs progress report of 2026.

Overall, out of the 139 targets with sufficient data, only 15% are on track, 21% show moderate progress, and over half have shown marginal progress, stagnation, or regression. When we examine the progress based on the 17 Goals, we can clearly see the uneven progress between them, with some goals, such as Goal 11(Sustainable Cities and Communities) and Goal 13(Climate Action) showing significant progress, whilst others like Goal 10 (Reduced Inequalities) and Goal 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) showing signs of regression.

Overall progress assessment across 139 targets with trend data, 2025 or the latest data



Progress assessment for the 17 Goals based on assessed targets, by Goal (percentage)



Source: The SDGs progress report 2026

Main Criticisms of the SDGs

Other data from the *Sustainable Development Goals Report 2026* show that many of the SDGs remain out of reach. Of course, progress has been hindered by factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russian invasion of Ukraine. However, the extent to which progress has fallen short of expectations raises an important question: what went wrong with the SDGs?

1. It's Non-Binding Nature

One major criticism of the SDGs is that it's ultimately non-binding, meaning that member states don't have any type of legal obligation to achieve these goals. Therefore, this means that the implementation of the goals depends heavily on elements such as political will, national priorities, domestic institutions, and funding. Some research suggests that there is limited evidence that the SDGs have significantly impacted any national policymaking.

2. Ambition vs. Feasibility

The SDGs are extremely broad and ambitious, covering 17 Goals and 169 targets that stretch all the way from eliminating poverty to combatting climate change. Some critics argue that this broadness leads the framework to be too difficult to prioritize, and that it is simply infeasible to achieve, especially considering the timeframe of just 15 years. When we consider none of the goals are to be technically achieved by the set year of 2030, it could be said that the SDGs prioritized ambition much over feasibility. However, this discussion can also be two sides of the same coin- lowering the level of ambition of the SDGs could also weaken their ability to address complex global problems, and the sheer amount of goals and its broadness can also help to address many more complex issues in the long run. Therefore, the issue may not simply be whether the SDGs are too ambitious, but rather: How can ambitious goals that address complex international issues remain realistically achievable? Some possible approaches may be to prioritize certain targets, do phased implementation, or to make a stronger financial aid system within the framework itself.

3. Regional and National Disparities

A major problem with the SDGs, as well as development efforts in general, is the persistent regional disparity in progress. The SDGs have done little to address the deep-rooted inequalities shaped by centuries of colonialism and systemic economic disparities, which continue to hinder development in many regions. In the years 2015-2020, there has been a large regional disparity with which countries were able to develop and which countries were not. The SDGs doesn't address the fact that countries don't face the Goals with the same financial resources, infrastructure, political stability, and many more factors that all hinder development. Another problem is that the goals having a large widthway is that many actors

can prioritize differing goals. For example, a landlocked developing country won't prioritize Goal 14 (Life Below Water), the same way a Small Island Developing State will, but considering the nature of the goal, it's imperative that all countries work on it. This kind of phenomenon can hinder the progress of other countries', which can worsen regional/national disparity. There is no such thing as a universal framework that will equally address the several complex issues; therefore delegates should consider what can be done with the post 20230 agenda to better address national disparities within the framework for development.

4. Underfunding

Achieving the SDGs requires significant major investments nationwide. Therefore, implementation is not only a matter of political will, and financial capacity is a major factor determining whether countries can implement the SDGs. This creates debate over the responsibility of: individual governments, developed countries, international financial institutions, and international organizations. However, this, again is two sides of the same coin; there are arguments that the program's broadness and flexibility allows for organizations to carry out multi-faceted initiatives, effectively reaching new audiences and engaging stakeholders across various sectors and platforms.

Considering these issues, it is clear that the SDGs are a complex initiative, and addressing their shortcomings is far from straightforward, as doing so may require compromising on important aspects of the framework. Nevertheless, given the sheer number of targets that remain unmet, one could argue that the SDGs have ultimately fallen short of success. This is not to say that they have been an outright failure, but rather that their intended goals have yet to be fully realized.

Chapter 5. Discussion Points

This chapter sets out the two discussion points of the conference. They are designed to be taken in order. Point One asks delegates to look back at what the SDGs were and how they were carried out. Point Two asks what the General Assembly should do with that record. Delegates should keep in mind that the conference is set at the 84th session, and that the progress to be discussed is the progress as of the conference dates, not as of 2030.

Point One: What could have been done to make the SDGs more effective?

The evidence on the SDGs is uneven. Some goals have seen large improvements since 2015, while others have stalled or reversed. The same is true of countries. Some have advanced quickly, whereas the least developed countries, many African states, and states affected by conflict have made far less progress. Even countries that have done well on one goal often lag on another. Because the SDGs are a single framework with 17 Goals and 169 targets, this unevenness is not a minor detail. It is the central fact to be explained.

Delegates should also notice that criticism of the SDGs rarely stays confined to the SDGs. The SDGs are often cited as the example of what the United Nations cannot do: an ambitious agenda, widely endorsed, with results that fall short of the promise. From there the argument easily widens into a claim that the UN itself is ineffective or unnecessary. Delegates should treat this with care. The SDGs are the most visible product of the UN's work on development, so they naturally become the test case for the organisation as a whole. But this means that a judgment about the SDGs is also, implicitly, a judgment about what the UN is for and what it can be expected to achieve. Delegates should ask whether the shortcomings they identify come from how the SDGs were designed, or from what the United Nations is able to do.

Delegates should resist two easy answers. One is that the SDGs failed. The other is that the SDGs worked and the world simply did not try hard enough. As the evaluation chapter notes, development involves many actors, and it is nearly impossible to say how much of any improvement the SDGs themselves caused. The more useful question is where the design of the framework, or the way countries interpreted it, made a difference. Delegates are encouraged to examine at least the following.

Obligation and accountability. The SDGs are voluntary. Governments could endorse them in public without changing legislation, policy or budgets, and some chose targets that suited priorities they already had. Should a successor framework create stronger review, reporting or peer-pressure mechanisms? If so, what would states with different views on sovereignty accept? If not, what else could make commitments credible?

Scope and prioritisation. The breadth of the framework allowed many organisations to pursue many kinds of initiatives. It also made the SDGs hard to prioritise, monitor and translate into policy. Would a smaller set of goals, phased implementation, or differentiated targets have helped? Who should decide the priorities, and would those choices fall unevenly on countries with fewer resources?

Finance. Implementation depends on large investment, and the question of who pays remains unresolved. Delegates should consider the respective responsibilities of national governments, developed countries, international financial institutions and the United Nations system. They should also consider how recent reductions in contributions to the UN by major donors affect what the organisation can realistically coordinate.

Universality and unequal starting points. The SDGs apply to all countries, yet countries begin with very different resources, institutions and levels of stability. Where a universal goal produced very different results, was the cause the goal, the support provided, or the conditions the country faced?

The interpretation of “development.” The 2030 Agenda describes a world of dignity, rights, inclusion and sustainability, which differs from earlier agendas built around growth targets. Did countries actually adopt this understanding, or did they continue to treat development mainly as economic growth?

Delegates should answer these questions from the standpoint of their own country. How did your government interpret the SDGs, which goals did it treat as its own priority, and what would it have needed from the international community to do better? The discussion should also reflect on what the other members of your coalition, and the countries you disagree with, would say about the same questions.

Point Two: What should the global framework beyond 2030 look like?

The second point looks forward. The 2030 Agenda ends in 2030, and the General Assembly has to decide what comes after it. Delegates are asked to propose what the next global framework for sustainable development should be: its purpose, its structure, and the bargain between states on which it rests.

The proposal should follow from Point One. Whatever delegates concluded about why the SDGs produced uneven results, the next framework should be designed to address those causes. Each proposal should therefore state which finding it responds to, how the proposed design addresses it, and what it would cost. A delegate who argued in Point One that voluntary commitments allowed governments to choose convenient targets should explain in Point Two what replaces that arrangement. A delegate who argued that finance was the main shortfall should say who pays, how much, and by what mechanism.

The Assembly's choices fall along a range, and delegates may favour any position on it. At one end, the 2030 Agenda could be extended with its Goals largely intact and a new deadline. In the middle, the Goals could be kept while the framework around them is rebuilt. At the other end, the international community could replace the SDGs with a framework built on a different idea of what development is. Which position is right depends on the diagnosis. If the problem lay in the content of the Goals, the answer will look different from the case where the problem lay in how they were carried out.

Delegates should speak from their country's position. What does your government need from a post-2030 framework, what would it give up to get it, and with whom could it build a coalition? Resolutions of the General Assembly are recommendations and are not legally binding. Proposals should therefore be realistic about what the Assembly can achieve, and should aim for agreement among states whose interests differ, not for the best framework on paper.

Out of Agenda

The Chair may rule the following out of order to keep debate focused on what the General Assembly can decide.

Excessively specialised discussion. Delegates may cite specific goals, targets and sectors as evidence, but debate should not become a technical dispute over a single indicator, sector or technology. Every technical point should be tied back to the framework as a whole. For example, a delegate may propose that national CO2 emissions be adopted as an indicator in the next framework, and the Assembly may debate whether such an indicator belongs there at all. A long argument over the exact emission figures or reduction thresholds, however, is out of agenda. Those details are for specialised bodies to settle once the Assembly has agreed on the principle.

Discussion clearly outside the agenda. Subjects that are not about the global framework for sustainable development beyond 2030, such as disputes between particular states or matters for the Security Council,

are out of agenda. Issues that bear on the framework, such as the effect of conflict on development, should be presented as conditions of the framework.

Draft resolutions focused on a single country. In discussion, delegates are free to describe any country's situation as evidence. A draft resolution, however, is a recommendation to the whole international community, and should address all Member States or a clearly defined group, not benefit or target one state.

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