

Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda: A Significant Opportunity for Pakistan

Mian Ahmad Naeem Salik*

Abstract

The Post-2015 Development Agenda is aimed at providing a framework to identify global and national priorities and stir up action towards a sustainable development for all. The United Nations (UN) since 2000 has introduced two distinct sets of global agenda, aimed at bringing together the international community towards a single objective of achieving sustainable development. First, the 8 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that lasted from 2000-2015 and ushered into Post-2015 World Development Agenda, 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), through participatory, inclusive and formalised processes. The SDGs try to build upon the achievements of MDGs by learning from its past mistakes. They have come into action since the beginning of 2016 and will continue until 2030, all the while setting in motion the UN's vision of sustained universal development. The new Development Agenda is focused on bringing in multi-faceted reforms, removing the main impediments to development and building a conducive international environment for sustainable development, especially for the developing countries like Pakistan. The objective of this paper is to highlight a feasible path for Pakistan based on the Post-2015 Development Agenda and the SDGs to create a foundation for development through which the country can achieve economic progress and equitable human welfare, by overcoming the various impediments in the current socio-political environment.

Keywords: Post-2015 Development Agenda, Global Partnership, Rio+20 Conference, Sustainable Development Goals, Millennium Development Goals, Pakistan Vision 2025.

* The author is Research Fellow at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad.

Introduction

The year 2015 brought in a new development agenda from the United Nations (UN), in the form of Social Development Goals (SDGs), to replace the existing Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). This arrangement followed a two-year process of global consultations and inter-governmental negotiations.¹ The new framework will bring together all the three aspects of sustainable development – economic, environmental and social- consisting of 17 goals and 169 targets that have to be met by all countries by 2030.² The process of development of SDGs framework was set in motion during the Rio+20 UN Conference held in June 2012- in which the world leaders agreed to come up with a set of sustainable development goals. Unlike the MDGs (2000-2015), which were targeted at poor and emerging nations, the SDGs have a global scope and will apply to both developed and developing countries alike.

Launching of Post-2015 Agenda Goals was one of the major outcomes of the Rio+20 Summit on Sustainable Development, which authorised the creation of an open working group to come up with a draft set of proposals for the new framework. The concept of SDG was initiated by Columbia and Guatemala in 2011, which received widespread support at the Rio+20 Conference as it was built upon the concept of MDG for setting voluntary and time-bound targets. At Rio+20, all the countries agreed that the SDGs should be integrated into the UN development agenda beyond the year 2015.³

There was an accord to establish an inter-governmental process to develop a set of action-oriented, concise and easy to communicate SDGs to help drive the implementation of sustainable development.⁴ The open

¹ Sophie Robinson, “Sustainable Development Goals,” *Institute of Development Studies*, <http://www.ids.ac.uk/idsresearch/sustainable-development-goals>

² David Le Blanc, et al., “Global Sustainable Development Report, 2015 edition,” Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform Report, June 29, 2015, <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/globalsdreport/2015>

³ “Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development,” *United Nations*, June 20-22, 2012, <http://www.uncsd2012.org/>

⁴ Lauren Boucher, “Sustainable Development Goals vs. Millennium Development Goals: What You Need To Know,” *Population Education*, May 01, 2015,

working group, with representatives from 70 countries, held its first meeting in March 2013 and published its final draft with its 17 suggestions, in July 2014.⁵ After agreement on the final draft of SDGs at the 70th UNGA session in September 2015, they have become operational since January 2016.⁶ The final outcome of the Rio Talks was to set the human development on a sustainable trajectory so that the prevailing global systems could be safeguarded for future generations in the developing countries.⁷

There is a lack of literature on the subject at hand as it is a relatively new field of study in Pakistan. Therefore, this paper attempts to create a foundation for development, based on the Post-2015 Development Agenda and SDGs, through which Pakistan can achieve economic progress and equitable human welfare, by overcoming the various impediments in its current socio-political environment. This action plan is in sync with the Vision 2025 of the Government of Pakistan (GOP), and can help set the framework for internal development towards a sustainable future for the country.

UN Post-2015 Development Agenda and the SDGs

The MDGs were conceived to bring a better understanding among the international community with regard to different aspects of development. However, they have come under a variety of criticism, due to some glaring faults which were over-looked. Firstly, the goals were formulated through bureaucratic and technocratic processes based on a series of assumptions, which could not be tested through broader input systems. Secondly, the goals were more focussed on increasing children's enrolment rates rather than quality of education being imparted. Thirdly,

<https://www.populationeducation.org/content/sustainable-development-goals-vs-millennium-development-goals-what-you-need-know>

⁵ "The Future We Want: Outcome Document Adopted at Rio+20," Rio+20 The Future We Want, June 2012, <http://www.un.org/en/sustainablefuture/index.shtml>

⁶ Jack Cornforth, Juliette Becuwe, and Umberto Sconfienza, "SDGs Focus Areas: Stakeholder Proposals for Goals and Targets," Sustainable Development 2015, March 31, 2014, <http://www.sustainabledevelopment2015.org/>

⁷ United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), "Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development," *UNEP Environment for Development*, June 20-22, 2012, <http://www.unep.org/rio20/>

the goals, targets and indicators reflected a focus on areas that presumably had measurable data available. While in some cases, the assumption that data existed was wrong, in others it was partially absent or incomplete. Lastly, due to a lack of universality and accountability, the MDGs strengthened the notion that development only occurred chiefly through transference of resources from north to south.⁸ These failings laid the groundwork, leading to the main construct behind the UN's Post-2015 Agenda to rectify the shortcomings of the prevalent MDGs and their implementation as a development tool.

The Post-2015 development debate has distinctive but interrelated features: the substance of the priority areas that will be reflected in the goals, the design of the goals to make them more effective, and the politics involved in the implementation of these goals. Since 2015, the focus has shifted to the details of how these goals can be best designed, monitored, and governed.⁹ The debate is characterised by concerns about inadequacy of the existing evidence to formulate a better and fool-proof design of the SDGs. This arises, in a large part, from the chronological, methodological, and practical challenges of assessing the impact of the MDGs.¹⁰ The procedure to satisfactorily assess the ultimate effects of the MDGs, in terms of their achievements, has been hampered by various factors like inadequate data collection at the national level, inadequate investment into rigorous qualitative assessment of their impact, the time-frame to assess the effects, and the correlation between achievements made due to implementation of MDG commitments as they primarily focussed on broad-based poverty reduction as the core of the development agenda in international policy discourses.¹¹

⁸ Jeffrey D Sachs, "From Millennium Development Goals to Sustainable Development Goals," *The Lancet*, vol 379 (June 9, 2012): 2206-2211.

⁹ Yılmaz Akyüz, "Post-2015 Development Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals: Perspectives of the South Centre," *South Centre Perspectives*, October 2013, 1-16.

¹⁰ Markus Loewe, and Nicole Rippin, "The Sustainable Development Goals of the Post-2015 Agenda: Comments on the OWG and SDSN Proposals," *SSRN*, February 17, 2015, 102.

¹¹ Andrew Doolan, and Vaqar Ahmed, "Future of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs): Perspectives from Pakistan," *Sustainable Development Policy Institute*, November 2012, https://sdpi.org/publications/publication_details-372-7.html

The SDGs were not intended to be a negotiated treaty and, therefore, will at best be a form of soft law. In the 70th UNGA session the member states voted to adopt the SDGs which will set the global development agenda till 2030.¹² The SDGs are going to be wider in scope, more ambitious, and more extensive in their agenda than the MDGs. They have digressed far from the administrative approach that undermined the MDGs. The target of the SDGs will be to bring about changes in governmental behaviour around the world, mainly at the domestic level, instead of regulating the relationships between different countries. The SDGs envision are drawing on multi-stakeholder initiatives for support in their governance and implementation. The SDGs are based on a balanced outline of economic, social and environmental goals and targets. In order to achieve the SDGs, countries will need to recognise the existence of potential trade-offs, develop ways to alleviate them, and to identify methodologies, which can accentuate their progress. Advanced technological capabilities, climate resilient infrastructures and effective labour market institutions will be central in reducing the potential trade-offs and achieving the three core pillars of the SDGs: social, economic, and environment.¹³

The SDGs have started functioning and replaced the MDGs from the beginning of the year 2016. The MDGs were developed as a product based on the understanding of what constituted development in the late 1980s. They recognised the limitations of development, focused solely on economic and income growth, and called for a broader understanding of development that would place the populace at the forefront. Subsequently, their focus was largely on social development.¹⁴ The

¹² Sam Jones, and Carla Kweifio-Okai, "World Leaders Agree Sustainable Development Goals – as It Happened," *Guardian*, September 26, 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/live/2015/sep/25/un-sustainable-development-summit-2015-goals-sdgs-united-nations-general-assembly-70th-session-new-york-live>

¹³ Thomas Milburn, "Background and Overview of the Post-2015 Development Agenda - Corporate Citizenship," *Corporate Citizenship*, June 16, 2015, <http://corporate-citizenship.com/2015/06/16/background-and-overview-of-the-post-2015-agenda/>

¹⁴ Yurendra Basnett, and Debapriya Bhattacharya, "Exploring Spaces for Economic Transformation in the Sustainable Development Goals," *ODI Research Reports and*

SDGs are aimed at bringing the spotlight back to economic development issues, while taking into account the social aspects with added focus on the environment. In the decades immediately following World War II, development was defined primarily in economic terms and measured by growth in countries' gross domestic product (GDP) and per capita incomes.¹⁵ In the late 1980s and early 1990s, however, the social scientists were of the view that development must be about human well being, and broadening people's choices and rights. According to this view, economic growth, though important, is not sufficient. According to Amartya Sen, the basic summarisation is that the impact of economic growth depends much on how the fruits of economic growth are used.¹⁶ During these decades, therefore, concerns about distributional patterns of economic growth in turn led to the popularity of concepts like pro-poor and inclusive growth, which were later to form the core of the MDGs.

The MDGs served the purpose of being indicators to the donors, as an advocacy tool for activists, and as a planning framework for governments. Their focus on human development objectives meant that these were increasingly prioritised over economic ones.¹⁷ For developing countries, the MDGs acted as a constraint, implying they had fewer resources to meet their own goals for economic transformation, which could have been crucial for maintaining human development outcomes in the long term. For progress in social sectors such as health services, to be sustainable, countries had to depend increasingly upon domestic resource mobilisation, which in turn was dependent upon higher

Studies, May 2015, <http://www.odi.org/publications/9579-yurendra-basnett-debapriya-bhattacharya>

¹⁵ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Development, eds., *Poverty Alleviation and Sustainable Development: Goals in Conflict: Views and Recommendations of the Committee for Development Planning* (New York: United Nations, 1992), 69.

¹⁶ Amartya Sen, eds., *Development as Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 366.

¹⁷ May Miller-Dawkins, "Global Goals and International Agreements: Lessons for the Design of the Sustainable Development Goals," *ODI Working and Discussion Papers*, November 2014, <http://www.odi.org/publications/8813-global-goals-international-agreements-lessons-design-sustainable-development-goals>

taxations.¹⁸ The MDGs were shaped by the need to correct the existing imbalances in the previous development thinking and practices. But in doing so, it created a new imbalance in which social development, largely fuelled by aid, became the focal point in donor thinking. As a result, essential structural changes in the economies that were receiving this aid suffered.¹⁹ For the SDGs to succeed, they need to plan a shift from donor, advocacy and political agendas to economic transformation. This would achieve one of their purposes to sustain development in the long term. For this successful intellectual adjustment to take place, the focus will have to shift on development, particularly in relation to the procedures and content of international development cooperation.

Goals of the SDGs

Sustainable development is a process in which material well-being is achieved through economic transformation through the three core Principle of sustainable development. The SDGs include 17 goals and further ensuing targets which are as follows:²⁰

¹⁸ Marianne Beisheim, "Reviewing the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals and Partnerships," *SWP Research Papers* (January 20), 2015, 5-37.

¹⁹ David Griggs, "Policy: Sustainable Development Goals for People and Planet," *Nature*, vol.495 (March 21, 2013): 305-07.

²⁰ "Sustainable Development Goals," *Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform*,

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/topics/sustainabledevelopmentgoals>

SDG	Objective
Goal 1	End poverty in all its forms everywhere
Goal 2	End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
Goal 3	Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
Goal 4	Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
Goal 5	Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
Goal 6	Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
Goal 7	Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
Goal 8	Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
Goal 9	Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation
Goal 10	Reduce inequality within and among countries
Goal 11	Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
Goal 12	Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
Goal 13	Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
Goal 14	Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
Goal 15	Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss
Goal 16	Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
Goal 17	Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

Source: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/topics/sustainabledevelopmentgoals>

Major Differences between MDGs and SDGs

The MDGs have run their course and concluded at the end of the year 2015. With the dawn of 2016, the UN has come up with ways to build upon the progress made by the MDGs in the last 15 years, by bringing forth a reorganised and comprehensive Post-2015 Agenda. For this purpose, the UN has brought forward its new SDGs. These goals have a proposed outline to structure the next 15 years of international development by moulding a focused and rational plan of action towards a sustainable future.²¹ While the MDGs provided a broad focal point for

²¹ Liz Ford, "Sustainable Development Goals: All You Need to Know," *Guardian*, January 19, 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2015/jan/19/sustainable-development-goals-united-nations>

governments, by giving them a framework through which they could undertake policies designed to end poverty and improve the lives of poor people, they were too constrained in their approach. The MDGs failed either to identify the root causes of poverty or to determine the true nature of sustainable development.

The MDGs, designed to be applied to all countries, were in real terms considered to be targets only for developing countries to achieve, through financial aid from developed states. On the other hand, every country will be expected to work towards achieving the SDGs.²² A revised set of goals is necessary for achieving worldwide success, therefore, the SDGs are intended to address these impediments. There are certain key similarities between the previous MDGs, and the current SDGs. The UN Secretary General has directed that the SDGs should not lose the key successful elements of the MDGs. There is, therefore, a need to look at key differences in the thematic areas between the MDGs and SDGs.²³

SDGs are More Transformative for the Planet

Eradication of extreme poverty as in the MDGs is one of the key aspects of the SDGs. Each of the 17 suggested goals has its own agenda, but they collectively converge towards addressing the many facets of global poverty. This distinction has become increasingly important as political and environmental landscapes continue to change.

SDGs are Comprehensive in Scope

The SDGs seek to have a broader spectrum for its intended targets, compared with the restricted approach of the MDGs. The SDGs are based on a concept of comprehensive agenda that extends well beyond

²² United Nations Economic and Social Council, eds., *Achieving Sustainable Development and Promoting Development Cooperation: Dialogues at the Economic and Social Council* (New York: United Nations, 2008): 295.

²³ “The Road to Dignity by 2030: Ending Poverty, Transforming All Lives and Protecting the Planet,” *Synthesis Report of the Secretary-General on the Post-2015 Agenda* (2014), <http://www.brookings.edu/events/2015/01/13-un-road-to-dignity>

the social sector, with the 17 goals incorporating issues of environmental quality as well as sustained economic development.

SDGS Encompass a more Integrative Approach to Development

Most of the objectives of the MDGs were addressed in isolation from one another whereas the SDGs will seek to fully coordinate the efforts between the 17 goals in order to present a unified and integrated agenda.

SDGS are Operational on a more Universal Scale

The MDGs were primarily focused on how the developed world could finance improvements in developing nations. The SDGs, however, meticulously focus on all goals in all nations, developed and developing. Achievement of sustainable development goals requires a universal and widespread drive to devise a programme that is applicable to all countries and at all levels of economic development.

SDGs are Concerned with Availability of Reliable Data

The MDGs in their working were not completely focused on monitoring, evaluation and accountability. On the other hand, the SDGs have set a target by 2020 to increase significantly the availability of best, timely and reliable data that encompasses income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other relevant characteristics, which are pertinent pointers in national settings.

SDGs bring about a Change in Quality of Education

The MDGs are mainly focused on quantity (high enrolment rates), which led to decline in the quality of education in many societies around the world. The SDGs meanwhile represent a first-rate attempt by the UN to focus on the quality of education, and building up of a better technically trained human workforce leading to increased human development index, especially in the developing world.

Pakistan's Progress on the MDGs

According to Khan, Pakistan has failed to meet most of its MDG commitments since the UN sponsored Millennium Declaration in 2000.²⁴ Furthermore, Minister of State for Federal Education and Professional Training, Balighur Rehman, also highlighted the weaknesses of government in achieving any MDGs by its completion in 2015 and linked the success of SDGs with significant and well-targeted increase in financing from both internal and external sources.²⁵

The findings of the last United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) MDGs Progress Report 2013²⁶ concluded that the prospects of achieving any of the eight MDGs by 2015 were dim.²⁷ Successive Pakistani governments worked closely with the UNDP, to promote the MDGs through a number of joint initiatives with various international stakeholders, by including them in formulation of public policy adaptable to the prevalent environment within the country.²⁸ The Ministry of Planning Development and Reform of Pakistan played a major role in setting up a policy direction for the MDGs, monitoring their progress and coordinating efforts between different stakeholders to bring about the desired results.²⁹ Pakistan's progress on the MDGs along with Post-2015 Development Agenda, however, was influenced by both external and internal developments in the region. These factors included natural disasters, deteriorating security situation, institutional, administrative and political changes, weak commitments to hard-core structural economic reforms, reductions in Foreign Direct Investment

²⁴ Ikram Junaidi, "Not possible for Pakistan to meet SDGs," *Dawn*, November 29, 2015, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1222996>

²⁵ Ikram Junaidi, "Minister accepts govt failure to achieve MDGs," *Dawn*, December 16, 2015, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1226659>

²⁶ No further report has been published by UNDP since this report on MDGs in Pakistan due to financial constraints.

²⁷ UNDP Pakistan, "Millennium Development Goals," UNDP in Pakistan, <http://www.pk.undp.org/content/pakistan/en/home/library/mdg.html>

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Nadeem Javed, "The Pakistan Millennium Development Goals Report (PMDGR) 2013," PMDGR Report (2013), http://pc.gov.pk/PMDGR-2013/PMDGR2013_Summary.pdf

(FDI), and limited enactment of the MDGs programme at the provincial and district levels.³⁰

The pursuit of MDGs by UNDP in developing countries in hindsight was highly ambitious, as these goals were designed as a roadmap for global development by 2015, and also provided a basis to measure progress against time bound targets. However, the ground realities in many developing countries, including Pakistan, were not much encouraging by the end of MDGs deadline. In the case of Pakistan the apparent weaknesses lay firstly, in the lack of indigenous planning at national and local levels; secondly, in the lack of alignment between goals, targets and indicators; thirdly, in the absence of explicit targets for global partnership in modern technology; fourthly, in insufficient and highly uneven progress; fifthly, in absence of mid-term review; and finally in lack of a natural calamity inclusive agenda.³¹

The attainment of the MDGs was declared a national objective by the government while becoming a signatory to the UN Millennium Declaration along with 189 countries in the year 2000. However, these were not implemented due to the lack of an effective official framework and weak institutions. On the other hand, the MDG secretariat in the Ministry of Planning, Development and Reform did not pay adequate attention to major issues identified in the MDGs, for example, energy access and costs, food security, sexual and reproductive health rights and unemployment, particularly youth unemployment and other livelihood and security challenges.³² Furthermore, external factors adversely affected government's development efforts and further pushed the vulnerable groups into poverty. These externalities coupled with the challenges of governance, and corruption made it nearly impossible to

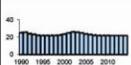
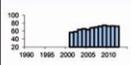
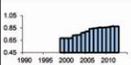
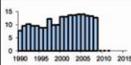
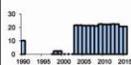
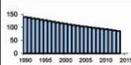
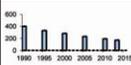
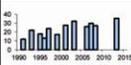
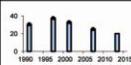
³⁰ Ishrat Husain, et al., "Reforming the Government in Pakistan," *National Commission for Government Reforms Report* (2008), http://www.pc.gov.pk/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/NCGR_Vol_I-1.pdf

³¹ "National MDGs Orientation for Parliamentary Task Forces," *PIPS Report* (2014).

³² "National Report: Pakistan," *Commonwealth Foundation Report* (2013), http://www.commonwealthfoundation.com/sites/cwf/files/downloads/MDG%20Reports%20Pakistan_FINAL_1.pdf

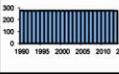
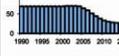
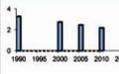
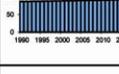
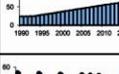
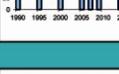
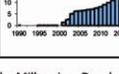
Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda

achieve the MDGs in Pakistan by their scheduled end in 2015 which can be seen from the table below:³³

MDG Country Progress Snapshot: Pakistan Last update: August, 2015										
Goals and Targets	Indicators	First Year		Latest Year		Percentage Change	Country Progress		Region Latest Data: Southern Asia	
		Value	Year	Value	Year		Level ^{1/2}	Chart	Value	Year
Goal 1: Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger										
Reduce extreme poverty by half	Proportion of population living below \$1.25 (PPP) per day (%)	64.7	1990	12.74	2010	-80	moderate poverty		23.4	2011
Reduce hunger by half	Proportion of population below minimum level of dietary energy consumption (%)	25.1	1991	22.0	2015	-12	moderately high hunger		15.7	2014-2016
Goal 2: Achieve Universal Primary Education										
Universal primary schooling	Net enrolment ratio in primary education (enrollees per 100 children)	56.2	2002	71.9	2013	28	low enrolment		94.8	2015
Goal 3: Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women										
Equal girls' enrolment in primary school	Ratio of girls to boys in primary education	0.53	1990	0.87	2013	63	away from parity		1.03	2015
Women's share of paid employment	Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector (%)	7.7	1990	12.6	2008	64	low share		20.1	2013
Women's equal representation in national parliaments	Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament (single or lower house only - %)	10.1	1990	20.7	2015	105	moderate representation		17.6	2015
Goal 4: Reduce child mortality (New data will be available in late September 2015)										
Reduce mortality of under-five-year-old by two thirds	Under-five mortality rate (deaths of children per 1,000 births)	138.6	1990	85.5	2013	-38	high mortality		55	2013
Goal 5: Improve maternal health (New data will be available in late September 2015)										
Reduce maternal mortality by three quarters	Maternal mortality ratio (maternal deaths per 100,000 live births)	400.0	1990	170.0	2013	-58	moderate mortality		190	2013
Access to universal reproductive health	Contraceptive prevalence rate (percentage of women aged 15-49, married or in union, using contraception)	11.8	1991	35.4	2013	200	low access to reproductive health		57.6	2013
	Unmet need for family planning (percentage of women aged 15-49, married or in union, with unmet need for family planning)	30.5	1991	20.1	2013	-34			14.1	2013

³³ United Nations Statistics Division, "UN Stats | Millennium Indicators Pakistan," *Millennium Development Goals Indicators* (2015), <http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/data.aspx>

Strategic Studies

MDG Country Progress Snapshot: Pakistan										Last update: August, 2015	
Goals and Targets	Indicators		First Year		Latest Year		Percentage Change	Country Progress		Region Latest Data: Southern Asia	
			Value	Year	Value	Year		Level ^{1/2}	Chart	Value	Year
Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases											
Halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS	HIV incidence rate (number of new HIV infections per year per 100 people aged 15-49)		0.00	2001	0.01	2013	625	low incidence		0.02	2013
Halt and reverse spread of tuberculosis	Incidence rate and death rate associated with tuberculosis	Number of new cases per 100,000 population	277.0	1990	275.0	2013	-1	moderate mortality		179.0	2013
		Number of deaths per 100,000 population	69.0	1990	27.0	2013	-61			23.0	2015
Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability											
Reverse loss of forests	Proportion of land area covered by forest (%)		3.3	1990	2.2	2010	-33	low forest cover		14.5	2010
Halve proportion without improved drinking water	Proportion of population using an improved drinking water source (%)		86.3	1990	91.4	2015	6	high coverage		93.0	2015
Halve proportion without sanitation	Proportion of population using an improved sanitation facility (%)		23.7	1990	63.5	2015	168	low coverage		47.0	2015
Improve the lives of slum-dwellers	Proportion of urban population living in slums (%)		51.0	1990	45.5	2014	-11	high proportion of slum-dwellers		30.7	2014
Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development											
Internet users	Internet users per 100 inhabitants		0.0	1990	13.8	2014	-	moderate usage		14.5	2013
<p>The MDG Country Progress Snapshot provides an overview of the progress achieved at country level since 1990 towards the Millennium Development Goals. The snapshot is intended mainly to provide the international community easy access to the information and are not meant to replace in any way the country profiles produced at the national level in several countries. They are also meant to reflect the contribution of country-level progress to the global and regional trends on progress towards the MDGs.</p> <p>The data used in the snapshot are from the MDG global database (http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/Data.aspx). The metadata and responsible agencies can be found on http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/Metadata.aspx. Sources of discrepancies between global and national figures are due to, among others, different methodology and definitions or different choice of data sources. At the global level, the monitoring of the progress aims to ensure better comparability of data among countries. Country can contact the responsible agencies for resolving data discrepancies.</p> <p>Note: 1) The country progress level indicates the present degree of compliance with the target based on the latest available data. The technical note on the progress level can be found at http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/Resources/Static/Products/Progress2012/technicalnote.pdf.</p>											

Vision 2025

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, in his address to the 70th UNGA, explained Pakistan's vision of sustainable development, the country's desire to achieve the Post-2015 development agenda since it was interlinked with Pakistan's development programme under Vision 2025. He said, "By adopting the Post-2015 development agenda, we, as the global community, are committing ourselves to a shared vision of

inclusive growth and development, ensuring that no one is left behind.”³⁴ He further added that, “For Pakistan, the SDGs complement our own developmental needs and priorities, as articulated in our Vision 2025.”³⁵ Going by the current government’s policy, Pakistan needs a more methodical approach about development of the country than it has been employing in the past to fulfil its short and long term development goals. Presently, the government is propagating its Vision 2025 without leaving any stone unturned. The government has linked the achievement of SDGs with successful implementation of its Vision 2025 agenda to achieve economic progress and provide welfare to the people by building upon national strategies and international development goals.³⁶

The Vision 2025 is a programme developed by the Ministry of Planning, Development and Reform, which aims to achieve four main objectives. First, it will try to build a national consensual view between national and international stakeholders regarding the future direction of the country. Second, it will set out future goals and expectations, which will be translated into a tangible road map and provide a coherent strategy for well-adjusted human, social, and economic development. Third, it will try to provide a theoretical platform for the revitalisation of sustainable and inclusive growth in the country, by strengthening the development fundamentals and enabling the country to achieve the international development goals within their given time frame, so that welfare of the people can be improved through increased human development and achievement of high income status. Finally, the Vision will look to provide home-grown framework and methodology to meet all globally agreed targets, including the SDGs and any new development goals which can be recognised by the Pakistani state in the international arena.³⁷

³⁴ Pakistan Permanent Mission to the UN, “Statement by H.E. Mr. Nawaz Sharif PM of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan at the UN Summit for the Adoption of the Post-2015 Development Agenda,” *News release New York*, (2015).

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ Hina Lotia, et al., “Sustainable Development Goals (SDG),” *LEAD National Briefing paper on SDG* (June 2015), http://www.lead.org.pk/lead/attachments/SDGFlyer_english.pdf

³⁷ Nadeem Javed, et al., “Pakistan Vision 2025 approved by National Economic Council (NEC),” *Pakistan Vision 2025 Complete Document* (May 30, 2014), <http://www.pc.gov.pk/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Pakistan-Vision-2025.pdf>

The focus on development based on a green economy, according to the Vision 2025 perspective, is also one of government's main priorities, as it will lead to sustainable socio-economic development in the country. Under Vision 2025, Pakistan Environmental Protection Agency (Pak-EPA), which was established in 1997, has been provided with an enhanced agenda of environmental protection to sustain the green economy vision of the government. As there is a trade-off relationship between economic growth and environment, it creates challenges for the economists as well as policy makers to adopt a policy to continue economic growth while protecting the environment. The federal government, to offset the adverse effects of environmental degradation of recent years, has increased the allocation for the environment from PKR 1,055 billion for 2015-16 to PKR 1,068 billion for 2016-17, in its recently announced budget for the year 2016-17.³⁸ Pakistan has already taken some important measures for controlling environmental health issues by enacting provisions like prohibition of smoking in public places (Prohibition of Smoking and Protection of Non-smokers Health Ordinance 2002), and creating a cleaner environment through various tree planting schemes.³⁹ A healthy environment is the basis of a healthy nation and a healthy society which could play an important role in the development of the country.

Similarities between SDGs and Vision 2025

The provisions inside the GOP Vision 2025 are closely linked with the UN SDGs which can be seen in the following figures:⁴⁰

³⁸ Waqar Masood Khan, "Annual Budget Statement 2016-17," *Ministry of Finance Federal Budget Publications 2016-17*, http://www.finance.gov.pk/fb_2016_17.html

³⁹ Kamal Hyder, "Pakistan Investing \$150m in Billion-tree Reforestation," *Al Jazeera*, April 30, 2015, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/04/pakistan-investing-150m-billion-tree-reforestation-150430135404923.html>

⁴⁰ A Reporter, "Pakistan to Take on Sustainable Development Goals on Its Own," *Dawn*, October 6, 2015, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1211217>

Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda

SIMILARITIES BETWEEN GOP VISION 2025 POLICY AND SDGs	
VISION 2025	SDGs
PILLAR I <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PUTTING PEOPLE FIRST: DEVELOPING HUMAN & SOCIAL CAPITAL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ GOAL 1: END POVERTY IN ALL ITS FORMS EVERYWHERE ▪ GOAL 2: END HUNGER, ACHIEVE FOOD SECURITY IMPROVED NUTRITION & PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE ▪ ENSURE HEALTHY LIVES & PROMOTE WELL-BEING FOR ALL
PILLAR II <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ACHIEVING SUSTAINED & INCLUSIVE GROWTH 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ GOAL 4: ENSURE INCLUSIVE & EQUITABLE EDUCATION & PROMOTE LIFELONG LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL ▪ GOAL 5: ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY & EMPOWER ALL WOMEN ▪ GOAL 12: ENSURE SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION & PRODUCTION PATTERNS ▪ GOAL 13: TAKE URGENT ACTION TO COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE & ITS IMPACT
PILLAR III <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ GOVERNANCE, INSTITUTIONAL REFORM & MODERNISATION OF THE PUBLIC SECTOR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ GOAL 16: PROMOTE PEACEFUL & INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, ACCESS TO JUSTICE & BUILD EFFECTIVE, ACCOUNTABLE INSTITUTIONS
PILLAR IV <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ENERGY, WATER & FOOD SECURITY 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ GOAL 6: ENSURE AVAILABILITY & SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF WATER FOR ALL ▪ GOAL 7: ENSURE ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE, RELIABLE ENERGY FOR ALL ▪ GOAL 14: CONSERVE NATURAL WATER RESOURCES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ▪ GOAL 15: PROTECT ECOSYSTEM THROUGH LESS DEFORESTATION, DESERTIFICATION, LAND DEGRADATION & BIODIVERSITY LOSS
PILLAR V <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PRIVATE SECTOR & ENTREPRENEURSHIP LED GROWTH 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ GOAL 8: PROMOTE SUSTAINED, INCLUSIVE SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH & PRODUCTIVE EMPLOYMENT FOR ALL ▪ GOAL 9: BUILD RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE, PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE INDUSTRIALIZATION & FOSTER INNOVATION
PILLAR VI <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DEVELOP A COMPETITIVE KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY THROUGH VALUE ADDITION 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ GOAL 17: STRENGTHEN THE MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION & REVITALIZE THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
PILLAR VII <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ MODERNISING TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE & GREATER REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ GOAL 10: REDUCE INEQUALITY WITHIN & AMONG COUNTRIES ▪ GOAL 11: MAKE CITIES AND SETTLEMENT AREAS SAFE, RESILIENT & SUSTAINABLE

Pakistan's Current Economic Outlook

Pakistan's growth as a developed nation cannot afford to lose time in adopting the ambitious and the multi-faceted SDGs agenda into an effective action plan at the national level. This will be a major challenge for the government as any delay in implementation of SDGs will be costlier unlike in the case of MDGs. Pakistan's Gross Domestic Products (GDP) growth is expected to be around five per cent in the financial year 2017 (FY2017), depending mainly upon continuance of low global oil prices and other commodities, the projected pickup in growth in the advanced economies, and finally, some alleviation of the power crisis afflicting the country.⁴¹ Plans of an economic corridor, the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) linking Kashgar in the People's Republic of China to the Pakistani port of Gwadar, has the potential to be the megaproject that could significantly boost private investment and growth inside Pakistan in the coming years.

According to the Asian Development Outlook 2015 (ADO),⁴² Pakistan can expect an increase in inflation, which can be expected to be slightly higher in the upcoming FY2017 than the current FY2016, as oil prices are estimated to recover. The ADO Update 2015 Report nonetheless does see a lower inflation than forecasted earlier, but inflationary pressures may come in the form of higher food prices because of possible supply shortages following floods in Pakistan in upcoming year of 2016. Monetary policy of the State Bank is expected to remain stable and play a supportive role in the growing economy of the country.⁴³ Also in the coming FY2017, the current account deficit is projected to widen marginally due to a projected increase in oil prices and positive growth in the advanced countries, which would translate into expansionary trade trends globally. Nevertheless, Pakistan's exports will increase marginally after almost two years of stagnation, mainly

⁴¹ "Pakistan: Economy," *Asian Development Bank Report* (2015), <http://www.adb.org/countries/pakistan/economy>

⁴² "Asian Development Outlook 2015 Supplement: Growth Prospects Soften for Developing Asia," *Asian Development Bank Report* (July 15, 2015), <http://www.adb.org/publications/asian-development-outlook-supplement-july-2015>

⁴³ "Asian Development Outlook 2015: Financing Asia's Future Growth," *Asian Development Bank Report*, March 23, 2015, <http://www.adb.org/publications/asian-development-outlook-2015-financing-asias-future-growth>

because the manufacturing sector continues to suffer due to energy shortages and recent recession in low cotton prices will only abate modestly.⁴⁴

Pakistan's economy is at a turning point, according to the World Bank's (WB) bi-annual Pakistan Development Update.⁴⁵ Growth recovery is underway, with a better projected GDP growth rate than previous years, led generally by dynamic innovations made in the manufacturing and service sectors and the efforts being made by the government for improved energy availability. All of this is morphing into nascent restoration of investor confidence. With inflation stabilised at less than 10 per cent, and some improvement on government's part to contain the menace of fiscal deficit which has already devastated Pakistan's economic growth in the previous decades,⁴⁶ the current deficit hovers around six per cent of GDP. The stability is due to improved tax collections and regulated development expenditure by the current government. The current account deficit, which is at around one per cent of GDP, is buoyed by strong remittances, export diversification, and improving monetary and exchange rate policies of the State Bank.⁴⁷ Economic activity is gradually improving in the country, with preliminary data collected for FY2014, for Pakistan, by the WB showing that economic growth is picking up, driven mainly by services and manufacturing sectors. All these signs point to the fact that with improving economic conditions Pakistan has a much better chance to

⁴⁴ "Asian Development Outlook 2015 Update: Enabling Women, Energizing Asia," *Asian Development Bank Report* (September 21, 2015), <http://www.adb.org/publications/asian-development-outlook-2015-update-enabling-women-energizing-asia>

⁴⁵ Muzammil Pasha, "Pakistan Development Update: Economy Gradually Improving," *World Bank Report* (April 9, 2014), <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2014/04/09/pakistan-development-update-economy-gradually-improving>

⁴⁶ Mian Ahmad Naeem Salik, "Policy Reforms, Politics and Economics: A Focus on Pakistan's Burgeoning Fiscal Deficit and Dependence on IMF's Structural Adjustment Programme," *Strategic Studies*, vol. 34 (April 2015): 114-132.

⁴⁷ James M Roberts, and Huma Sattar, "Pakistan's Economic Disarray and How to Fix It," *The Heritage Foundation Special Report #172* (June 30, 2015), http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2015/06/pakistans-economic-disarray-and-how-to-fix-it#_ftn107

efficiently work on the implementation of the SDGs than it ever had with the MDGs, if the economic outlook remains on the same positive path, and the positive externalities remain in place for the foreseeable future.⁴⁸

Conclusion

SDGs is a mode of development which fulfils communal needs and enriches life standards of the community today, while ensuring that capacity of progressive change is improved and essential needs of coming generations are fulfilled and not compromised. Pakistan needs to analytically track progress on SDGs and formulate a strategy making actions at the national level by carrying out thorough research, holding all stakeholder dialogue and making public policy engagement undertakings. This should be the first step if Pakistan is to achieve success at integrating SDGs into the national thinking. The national ownership at all levels needs to be ensured from the federal government to the provinces and from there to the lower echelon of powers. All actors need to play their part in the formulation of developing an indigenous set of indicators that are best suited to Pakistan's national priorities and needs.

An important feature in Pakistan's favour is its geopolitical location as it can serve as a passage between the Middle East and the Far East, which will come to fruition after the beginning of CPEC projects. These projects will greatly benefit Pakistan and help it finance some of its SDG commitments besides promoting cultural and political exchanges and trade between regions.⁴⁹ CPEC therefore will be a vital connector of economic integration of different regions and will contribute towards developing regional connectivity in Asia, which is severely lacking, especially in the South Asian region. This important geopolitical strategy will be of immense help for Pakistan in its long term sustainable

⁴⁸ Saadia Refaqt, et al., "Pakistan Development Update," *Economic Updates and Modelling*, April, 2014, <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/2014/04/19359562/pakistan-development-update>

⁴⁹ Louis Ritzinger, "The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor Regional Dynamics and China's Geopolitical Ambitions," *The National Bureau of Asian Research*, August 5, 2015, <http://nbr.org/research/activity.aspx?id=589>

development. Nonetheless, there are some worrisome elements, which can affect Pakistan's progress on the SDGs that need to be overcome before the country can embark on the road to sustainable development.⁵⁰ They are:

- Economic problems arising out of mismanagement of scarce natural resources in the country and corruption, can lead to decline in overall economic growth and development.
- Pakistan's backwardness in technological advancements leads to inefficiency of output in the manufacturing, both quantitatively as well as qualitatively. The low productivity leads to less competitiveness in the international market, thus resulting in a negative trade balance, and a decline in foreign revenue.
- Unfavourable economic institutions, due to lack of regulations in the financial sector and unstable interest rates coupled with weak financial laws, hinder domestic and foreign investment.
- Social hurdles arise out of increasing population growth rate, poor health conditions, mass illiteracy among other factors and leads to under developed human capital. All these conditions produce a physically weak, illiterate and unskilled labour force with little to none technical-know-how, which in turn reduces their productive capabilities.
- Administrative problems and political incompetence is one of the biggest issues which stems out of unstable democratic processes in the country throughout its history, with frequent military interventions. This has led to weakening of political, legal and economic institutions, which were not given space to mature. Most of the SDGs which are going to be implemented fall under the preview of the provincial governments after the 18th Amendment, which are severely lacking in administrative capacity to implement these goals.
- Lack of national spirit stemming from thinking manifested in the form of regional, provincial, tribal and religious loyalties is another difficulty. In this regard media has also failed to play a

⁵⁰ By Our Correspondent, "Sustainable Development Goals: Pakistan Welcomes \$400 Billion Funding Plans for Poor Countries," *Express Tribune*, July 13, 2015, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/919659/sustainable-development-goals-pakistan-welcomes-400-billion-funding-plans-for-poor-countries/>

crucial role of creating a feeling of national pride and nationalism among the common people.

All of the above mentioned impediments have already steered the country toward economic, political, and social crises, and form the core deterrents, which would be faced by the SDGs while being implemented inside Pakistan. Therefore, the GOP first has to develop coordination between different institutions, and then build capacity of the staff involved to implement the SDGs, and hope to achieve most of the intended targets, unlike the MDGs, which were an utter failure for the GOP.⁵¹ In order to maximise the efficiency, the interlinkages between separate goals should be clearly documented by the government and afterwards, transformed into clear short, medium, and long term policies.⁵² Also, for GOP to realise its Vision 2025 effectively, first of all it needs to make sure that well defined coordination mechanism exists amongst all its federating units including the four provinces, and special areas such as FATA, Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir.⁵³ The framework of the Vision needs to be strong and well entrenched in the economic plans so that the subsequent governments cannot scrap the policy and bring in their own ideas for economic development.

If one strategy suits a country, it is not necessary it would suit Pakistan as well, therefore, thorough research would need to be put in place for which universities and different think tanks can be employed by the government to come up with suitable tools regarding each goal. Pakistan will have to identify certain goals, depending on the availability of resources and capacity to implement. It is clear that additional financing that meets the conditions of environmental and social sustainability will be required for SDG implementation. Given that the

⁵¹ Mian Ahmad Naeem Salik, In *a Harmonious World: Role of the UN*. Proceedings of “70th Anniversary of the United Nations: Challenges for Peace, Security and Development,” *Conference Report* (2015), <http://issi.org.pk/?cat=19>

⁵² László Pintér, et al., “Sustainable Development Goals and Indicators for a Small Planet Part I: Methodology and Goal Framework,” *Asia-Europe Foundation Report* (Singapore, 2014): 1-80.

⁵³ Afshan Subohi, “MDGs Missed amid a Litany of Acronyms,” *Dawn*, September 13, 2015, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1206669/mdgs-missed-amid-a-litany-of-acronyms>

Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda

implementation phase would take place over an extended period of time, with regular reviews towards the success of each SDG, the overall process would have to take place in a transparent manner. GOP therefore, would have to prioritise and identify few goals at first, and then try to get resources, create capacity within the country, to carry out their implementation. The obstacles are fewer in number, but graver in intensity, and they can completely negate the enormous multi-faceted potential Pakistan possesses and make economic progress a distant dream if the path to sustainable development is not treaded carefully.