

Progress of Sustainable Development Goals towards the Agenda-2030 and Hurdle of COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract: Whole world is facing lots of challenges for serving due to wars and pandemics, United Nations came with the solution in the form Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Sustainable Goals (SDGs) and decide the year 2030 as target agenda. 162 Countries and territories and 34 UN agencies, funds and programmes starts the work towards the 2030 Agenda. To meet the agenda 2030, eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) later on 17 Sustainable development Goals (SDGs) were decided. And 17 Sustainable development Goals (SDGs) divided in 169 associated targets points for success of Goals. Although Sustainable Development Goals are not legally binding upon the countries but this is the responsibility of the all countries to established peace and safety in whole world. United Nations has joined the hands with different international agencies, organization and coordinating with all the countries, UN Partnerships at global, regional, national and local levels to solve the problem related to poverty and hunger, universal primary education and gender equality etc. and for this successfully implementing of all 17 Sustainable Development Goals is required.

Keywords: Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), 2030 Agenda, GINI Index, ODA (Official development assistance), Target points

Introduction

After The Great War or the war to end all the wars (28th July 1914 to 11th November 1918) world again became a witness of Global war or World War Second or Total War (1st September 1939 to 2nd September 1945)¹. By these two wars Nations and humanities were destroyed. Whole world was waited for initiatives which can help to establish a peace in the world.

For the same UN Charter was signed by the representatives of Fifty Countries on 26th June 1945 to attend United Nations Conference on International Organization in San Francisco, California by this the step towards the international peace and security was began. On 24th October 1945 United Nations came in to existence to establish a peace and security in the world. Since 1945 United Nations is working to maintain International Peace, Security, protecting human rights, Sustainable Development, Global issues and trying to established international rules and goals for better future of humans.²

In the same line in September 2000, in Millennium Summit, at United Nations Headquarters, New York, United Nation set Eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for - poverty and hunger, universal primary education, gender equality and women empower, reduce child mortality, Improve maternal health, Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, environmental sustainability and global partnership for development³

1 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_War_I and https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_War_II

2 <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/history-of-the-un/preparatory-years>

3 <https://www.un.org/en/conferences/environment/newyork2000>

Objectives of the Study

1. To know the purpose and present status of SDGs.
2. To know whether is there any impact of COVID-19 pandemic on each SDGs progress.
3. To know the steps taken by UN to meet the agenda 2030.

Research methodology

This work is based on secondary data and reports published by the United Nations. Various data and figures are obtained from the different reports published by United Nations and through different online source. This work is descriptive in nature to know the status and progress of SDGs and to know the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on SDGs.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

MDGs final deadline of 2015 UN achieved three goals out of eight before the time but growth was not even within and across countries so a strong partnership and more efforts were required. So Un start work on the global development agenda beyond 2015. As a result, In September 2015 United Nation is came with the 17 The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)⁴ and 169 associated targets. (The 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development)

“The Sustainable Development Goals are the blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. They address the global challenges we face, including poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace and justice. Learn more and take action.”⁵

Total 162 Countries and territories and 34 UN agencies, funds and programmes work towards the 2030 Agenda. Out 162, 131 Member Countries implement SDG as priority⁶

Sustainable Development Goals

SDG 1. No poverty –In SDG 1 Un set a goal to “End poverty in all its forms everywhere”⁷ For this purpose UN decided 7 target points. Global Poverty Rate, percentage of people headcount living in extreme poverty in 1990 was 36% and its decline in 2015 to 10% But COVID-19 pandemic stops the progress of SDG 1 and as per the new research UNU-WIDER (World Institute for Development Economics Research) due to COVID-19 pandemic, since 1990 in thirty years this would be first time that global poverty can increase as per the UNU-WIDER this can be half a billion people or 8% of the total human population⁸. But UN projected 7% as Global Poverty Rate for agenda 2030.⁹

SDG 2. Zero hunger – UN as agenda 2030 add SDG 2 to “End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture” with 8 target points but COVID-19 pandemic also had negative impact on SDG 2 and as per UN in2020 2.37 billion people don’t have food, pandemic increase the number of persons living undernourished, it was 607 million in 2014 and 650 million in 2019 but it increased 720-811 million in2020 also exacerbate child malnutrition rate and women health¹⁰. As per

4 <https://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/about/mdg.shtml>

5 <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>

6 <https://undg.org/>

7 <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal1>

8 <https://www.wider.unu.edu/news/press-release-covid-19-fallout-could-push-half-billion-people-poverty-developing-countries>

9 <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal1>

10 <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal2>

Food and Agriculture organization of the United Nations currently near about 690 or 8.9% of the world population are hungry¹¹. So, ZERO Hunger as agenda 2030 is looks not achievable.

SDG 3. Good health and well-being – In SDG 3 UN decide “to promote well-being and healthy lives for all and all age groups” and for this UN decide 13 targets points, **the success of SDG 3 is very important to sustainable development of world. There is a short supply of health workers around the world as per UN data there are 150 health workers on per 10000 people in Northern America and 10 health workers on per 10000 people in Sub-Saharan Arica**¹². Before COVID-19 pandemic world became witness of progress in Reproductive health, maternal health and child health but due to COVID-19 there is a negative impact on progress health and life expectancy. During the pandemic The World Health Organization (WHO) with partners put lots of efforts and issue guidelines for public health measures and for mental health. Now days there is a global health crisis around the world. But UN is trying to prepare themselves by focusing on health system, sanitation, hygiene and health emergencies like COVID-19.¹³

SDG 4. Quality education – IN SDG4 UN decide to “Quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all” Education is the only key to remove poverty, UN set 10 target points for the same, in 2018 as per UN data 260 million children were out of school It is near about one fifth of the global population in that age group. Although school enrollment rate increases especially for girls. As per UN report school completion rate for primary education in 2010 was 82 percent and 85 percent in 2019, and for secondary education in 2010 was 46 percent and 53 percent in 2019 but due to COVID-19, 91 percent of students around the world due to pandemic nearly 1.6 billion youth and children were out of school. For continuing education and learning process UNESCO launched the COVID-19 Global Education Coalition also UN and partners innovate solutions for learning process.¹⁴

SDG 5. Gender equality – “To empower all women and girls and for achieve gender equality “UN set SDG 5 and to achieve Goal 5 UN also set 9 targets points. As per UN report every 1 woman out of 3 is at least once in their life is a victim of physical or sexual violence and in next decade near about 10 million girls have risk of child marriage, and as per UN report women representation in national parliament is 25.6 %, in local government 36.3% and on managerial positions only 28.2% which show less than 50% of women participation. For unpaid and care work women ratio is 2.5 time more as compare to men and due to COVID 19 pandemic this burden is also increased¹⁵

SDG 6. Clean water and sanitation- In SDG 6 UN set a goal “ To ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation to whole world” for achieving this UN divide this goal into 8 targets. According to UN data 26 percent people don't have safe drinking water, 46 percent people don't have safe sanitation and 29 percent people lack of basic hygiene. Near about 2.3 billion people are facing water stressed. Natural wetlands also shrank by 35 percent during 1970 to 2015 and rate of forest loss is increase by 3 times. According to UN total 129 countries is not on path to achieve the agenda 2030. According to world health organization hand hygiene is the most preventive measure to fight with COVID 19 pandemic and to reduce the spread of infections. UN launched water action decade 2018-2028 to manage water. UN also advice to double the current progress rate.¹⁶

¹¹ <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/hunger/>

¹² <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal3>

¹³ <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/health/>

¹⁴ <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/education/>

¹⁵ <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal5>

¹⁶ <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal6>

SDG 7. Affordable and Clean Energy- Goal 7 focus that every one of world “has access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy”. For this purpose, UN has divided this goal into 5 target points. Towards SDG 7 world is on progress path but more focus is required to improve access towards safe cooking fuels for 3 billion people¹⁷, because one third of the world’s population having dangerous and inefficient cooking systems, also energy efficiency improvement rate and modern renewable energy is required to be improve¹⁸

SDG-8. Decent Work and Economic growth- SDG 8 “promote productive and decent work, sustainable, inclusive economic growth for all” SDG 8 is having 12 target points. Due to COVID 19, near about 255 million people has loose fulltime jobs, and as per ILO (International Labour Organization) near about 50 percent of global workforce has a risk of losing their economic resources, and as per IMF (The International Monetary Fund) world can again see the recession just like 2009¹⁹. AS per the UN report International Tourism will take near about 4 years to come up to the 2019 levels. Global real GDP per capita was 2.2 in the year 2017 but its falls and reached in negative -4.6 in the year 2020. But as per UN report many countries can recover from this economic crisis up to the year 2023²⁰.

SDG 9. Industry Innovation and Infrastructure- IN SDG 9 UN set goal to “Nurture innovation, build infrastructure and to promote sustainable industrialization” UN set 8 target points under SDG 9. Industrialization, innovation and infrastructure play an important role for sustainable development. However, there are long way to achieve the target. Due to COVID-19 the progress rate slows down. Pandemic badly effect the global manufacturing growth, due to this global manufacturing production fall down by 6.8 percent in the year 2020. Near about 300 million rural populations is lack of access to good roads. As far as communication infrastructure is concern due to pandemic use of communication infrastructure is increased almost half of the world population is using the same. Air travel passengers were 4.5 billion in 2019 and its fall down to 1.8 billion in 2020. As per the UN report in the year 2018 there were 2.2 trillion-dollar global investment in research and development and 1235 researchers per inhabitants so world is required to increase the investment in research and development²¹.

SDG10. Reduce Inequality -UN set SDG 10 to “reduce inequality between all countries and within the countries” For this UN set 10 target points. Before COVID -19 GINI Index was falling in 38 countries out of 84 during the year 2010 to 2017²² but due to pandemic global unemployment increased so there is a chance to increase in GINI index by 6 percent. Inequality is growing very fast it is more than 70 percent of the global population²³. As per the UN data near about 311 persons are refugees for every 100,000 persons. During migration in 2020 4,186 deaths and disappearance reported, Global Refugees proportion is more than doubled since 2010.²⁴ Inequality still persists so world has to try hard towards SDG 10.

SDG 11. Sustainable cities and Communities – Under SDG 11 UN goal to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable with 10 target points. As per the UN data world is rapidly becoming urbanized, as per the data since 2007 people living in the cities is more than half of the world population which is expected to be increased by 60 percent by 2030.²⁵ This is the result of growing

17 <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/energy/>

18 <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal7>

19 <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/economic-growth/>

20 <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal8>

21 <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal9>

22 https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/E_Infographic_10.pdf

23 https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/10_Why-It-Matters-2020.pdf

24 <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal10>

25 <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/cities/>

number of slum dwellers, inadequate and overburdened infrastructure etc. because of this more than 90 percent of COVID-19 cases are in URBAN areas. Only 50 percent of URBAN population is having a convenient access to public transport.²⁶ To control this situation 156 countries developed their national urban policies but most of the countries not able to implement it or only in implementation stage.²⁷

SDG 12. Responsible Consumption and Production – UN set SDG 12 to ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns and set 11 target, Natural resources are using unsustainably by the world in 2010 Global material Footprint was 73.2 billion metric tons but it increases and it was 85.9 billion metric tons in 2017. Electronic waste is increase by 28 percent but out of this only 20 percent is recycled, as per the data of 2019 every person is generating 7.3 kilograms of electronic waste and only 1.7 kilograms was recycled ²⁸and 13.8 percent of food was lost during 2016 in supply chain. Fossil fuel subsidies was also increased in 2018, 427 billion dollars as compared to 318 billion dollars in 2015. But COVID-19 pandemic provides an opportunity to build a sustainable future so 79 countries reported policy to sustainable consumption and production patterns.²⁹

SDG 13. Climate Action – Goal 13 set to take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts and 5 target points decided, World is going through the climate crisis year 2019 recorded as second warmest year of decade of 2010 to 2019, greenhouse gases and carbon dioxide levels was at new record in the atmosphere in the year 2019³⁰ Global temperatures was projected to be rise by 3.2 degree Celsius by the year 2020. Fossil fuels investment in climate is higher than the investment in climate activities which was 781 billion dollars in 2016 as compared to global climate finance 781 billion dollar. COVID-19 drop greenhouse gas emissions by 6 percent for the year 2020 still 7.6 percent annual reduction is required. Urgent steps are required but out of whole world only 85 countries have national disaster risk reduction strategies.³¹

SDG 14. Life Below Water - UN Set SDG 14 to Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources with 10 target points. More than 3 billion people for their livelihood on marine and coastal and almost half of the nations adopted policies to supports small scale fisher. But as per the UN data dead zones are rising by very high rate that was 400 meters in 2008 but it was 700 meters in 2019. Ocean acidification is also rising. But as per the record only 1.2 percent of national research budgets are allocated for ocean research by most of the nations³². But due to the COVID -19 as human activity reduced give some chance to recuperate.³³

SDG 15. Life on Land – To Sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, halt biodiversity loss with 12target points. Forest areas declining by the alarming rate every year 10 million hectares of forest were destroyed during 2015 to 2020, two billion hectares of land on earth also degraded. Wildlife trafficking became the reasons for disrupts ecosystem and spread of infectious diseases.³⁴ Due the human activities near about 75 percent of earth's surface is affected wildlife squeezing

²⁶ https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/E_infographics_11.pdf

²⁷ <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal11>

²⁸ <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal12>

²⁹ https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/E_infographics_12.pdf

³⁰ <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/climate-change/>

³¹ https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/E_infographics_13.pdf

³² <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal14>

³³ https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/E_infographics_14.pdf

³⁴ https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/E_infographics_15.pdf

and life of almost 1 million animal and plant species are on danger. COVID-19 is the signal to humanity to change their activates.³⁵ Only few countries are trying to save life on land.

SDG 16. Peace and Justice and Strong Institutions- UN decide goal 16 to Promote justice, peace and inclusive societies with 12 target points. As per the UN report 2018 one out three in human trafficking case were children and risk is intensifying by the pandemic not only trafficking, child labour reaches up to 160 million in 2020. In 2020 as compare to 2019 killing of human rights defenders in 32 countries is increase by 18 percent and only 82 countries are having independent national human rights institutions. If we checking the bribery rate it is 37.8 percent in low-income countries which very high as compare to high-income countries which is 7.2 percent.³⁶ Almost 100 civilians are killed in armed conflicts and in 2015 global homicide rate was 5.9 per 100000 population and it's declined to 5.8 per 100000 population in 2018. 60 percent of countries having overcrowding prison and only 127 countries adopted right-to-information laws.³⁷For the battle against COVID-19 pandemic UN called for global ceasefire so the world can focus on the true war.³⁸

SDG 17. Partnership for the Goals – UN set SDG-17 to Revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development, SDG 17 is having 19 target points. In 2017 international funding for data and statistics was 690 million dolar which is to be needed 1380 million dolar³⁹. Near about 3.7 billion people are still not online, 63 percent of low- and middle-income countries are needed financing support for data and statistics. Due to COVID-19 Global foreign direct investment were decline by 40 percent which was 1.5 trillion dolar in 2019 and recorded 1 trillion in 2020. Net ODA (Official development assistance) was 147.4 billion dolar in 2019 but increased up to 161 billion dolar in 2020 due to pandemic which is still short by 0.7 percent.⁴⁰ To fight against COVID-19 pandemic UN call for partnerships and issued series of policy, Partnerships at global, regional, national and local levels. UN partners and WHO launched solidarity response fund to contribute WHO COVID-19 response.⁴¹

For the successfully achieving the **Sustainable Development Goals** the United Nations join the hands with creative agencies media houses, Entertainment Industry, Advertising Industry, and Mobile Industry.⁴²

Conclusion

Although Sustainable **Development Goals** are not legally binding upon the countries but it's expected that countries will frame their own policies to achieving the **Sustainable Development Goals** so the countries own policies, plans and programmes will decide the success rate of **Sustainable Development Goals** ⁴³.

After analyzing the different reports of UN it's found that Sustainable Development Goals can play a wide role not only for the human beings but also for all species in this world. Most of the countries are trying to set their own **Sustainable Development Goals in the same line as the UN decided in 17 Sustainable Development Goals but pace of progress is not remarkable.**

³⁵ <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/biodiversity/>

³⁶ <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal16>

³⁷ https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/E_infographics_16.pdf

³⁸ <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/peace-justice/>

³⁹ https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/E_infographics_17.pdf

⁴⁰ <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal17>

⁴¹ <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/globalpartnerships/>

⁴² <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/partnerships/>

⁴³ <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/development-agenda/>

UN is trying to give the right direction and speed to each Sustainable Development Goals to achieve agenda 2030 by joining hand with different agencies. After analyzing the progress of each SDGs, it's found that most the of SDGs is needed more efforts to achieve the object for which it was set and COVID-19 pandemic also slow down the speed of progress not only this but some SDGs were badly affected by COVID-19 pandemic like SDG 1, SDG 2, SDG3, SDG8 and SDG 10.

United Nations is required once again to coordinate with all countries and increase the partnership with different international organizations to support this Nobel cause so that word can live in peace and safe and to achieve the agenda -2030 united Nation required to increase the speed of progress of each SDGs.

This is only not the responsibility of United Nations but all countries are required to contribute towards the agenda-2030 and for the same countries have to set their development goals in the line of SDGs so that world can became place where there is no hunger, no poverty, no war so every one feel safe and equal. **Sustainable Development Goals are motivating to the whole world, growing without any negative impact on nature and humanity.**