

# SDGs - promise of a 'transformative change' for Africa?

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# Perspective on the SDGs

- Politics of SDGs – contestation over competing ideas and agendas
- Global goals as a policy tool (instrument) that can influence policy by creating narratives that frame policy debates. Framing is used by dominant governments and organizations to exert power by controlling agendas, making favored ideas seem like common sense and keeping out radical ideas.
- MDG experience: successful framing exercise that articulated/defined development as ending poverty, replacing the old ideas of national development and enhancing the productive capacity through structural change.

- SDGs propose a ‘transformative agenda’, leaving no one behind’ – how will ‘transformative be defined and implemented?
- Will the SDGs respond to the African countries for ‘transformation’ and structural change in national economies and in the international economic environment?

# **AFRICA IN SDG NEGOTIATIONS**

# Focus of G77 statements to Open Working Group

1. importance of global partnership
2. removing agricultural subsidies and other trade issues
3. growth and unemployment
4. imbalances in goods and financial markets, trade, finance, technology, industrialization,
5. means of implementation in the SDGs and finance/technology transfer to the developing countries
6. global governance and reform of institutions
7. poverty and urbanization in relation to sustainable production and consumption
8. restructuring of global systems and implementation of SDGs
9. reducing inequality *between* countries and the key role of trading system and finance
10. reducing inequality *between* countries, not to be merged with poverty

# G77 and Africa priorities in SDG negotiations

Reflected in G77 and Africa group statements to OWG, Santa Cruz Summit Declaration

- Means of implementation
- Common but Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR) as a core principle
- Inequality as a standalone issue
- Inequality between not just within countries
- Reform of international financial/econ architecture and institutions
- New and additional resources, technology transfer, capacity development, pro-development trade, stability of financial markets.
- Importance of infrastructure

# Many included in SDG adopted

- CBD: agenda 2030 text; 12c (fuel subsidies)
- Means of implementation:
  - 2 sections in Agenda 2030;
  - stand alone goal 17 (finance, technology, capacity building, trade, systemic issues)
  - incorporated into goals 1-16
- Inequality
  - goal 17 on inequality within and between countries
- Global institutions
  - target 16.8 broaden and strengthen participation of developing countries in institutions of global governance

- New and additional resources – goal 17;1a, increase investments and finance 2a, 8a, 10b, 11c, 15c, 4c, 6a, 11c, 13a, 15b
- Technology transfer – goal 17, 2a (infrastructure) 3a (vaccines), 7b, 9b
- capacity development – goal 17, 3d, 9a, 12a,13b, 14a
- pro-development trade – 2b (ag issues)
- stability of financial markets – 2c (food commodity markets).

# Africa Group SDG proposals *not* included (select list)

G7. (Energy) capacity building and technology transfer  
(weakened to enhanced international cooperation)

G10. (Inequality) target for inequality between countries  
including 'adoption by international organizations of reduction  
of international inequality as an objective of their institutions'.

G10. (Inequality) commitments by developed countries to  
support energy for the poor.

G13. Desertification, land degradation and drought

G16.{Governance) return illicit financial resources to countries of origin

G16.provide access to affordable essential drugs

G16.) support to TRIPS flexibilities

G16. reform international IP regime to facilitate technological catch up, improve health, education and health

G17. control and reuglate speculating in commoditiy markets

- stand alone goal on structural transformation
- stand alone goal on industrialization, employment and decent jobs.

# **PROSPECTS FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

Selectivity: neglect of Goal 17 and goal specific means of implementation

MDG experience of Goal 8 as the 'poor cousin' of the MDGs. Little tangible process, no champions.

SDGs: 17 goals, 69 targets and over 200 indicators: not all will be prioritized, championed, reported, monitored.

# Quantification and neglect of non-measurable

MDG experience – reductionism through quantification and distorting the Millennium Declaration agendas.

SDGs:

- Means of implementation are difficult to quantify..
- Absent indicators e.g. inequality between countries
- Poorly selected indicators

# Inadequate indicators

Technology		
17.6 Enhance North-South, South-South and triangular regional and international cooperation on and access to science, technology and innovation and enhance knowledge-sharing on mutually agreed terms, including through improved coordination among existing mechanisms, in particular at the United Nations level, and through a global technology facilitation mechanism	17.6.1 Number of science and/or technology cooperation agreements and programmes between countries, by type of cooperation	
	17.6.2 Fixed Internet broadband subscriptions per 100 inhabitants, by speed	Tier I

<p>17.8 Fully operationalize the technology bank and science, technology and innovation capacity-building mechanism for least developed countries by 2017 and enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology</p>	<p>17.8.1 Proportion of individuals using the Internet</p>	<p><i>Tier I</i></p>
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Trade		
<p>17.10 Promote a universal, rules-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system under the World Trade Organization, including through the conclusion of negotiations under its Doha Development Agenda</p>	<p>17.10.1 Worldwide weighted tariff-average</p>	<p>Tier I</p>

# Narrative of development

- target driven narratives framing development by measurable outcomes that neglect priority issues (e.g. inequality between countries, systemic reforms in international financial and economic governance, means of implementation, CBDR, etc.) which are unquantifiable, long term.

# MDG experience – framed development agendas with many essential objectives missing

- Development
- National strategies
- Developmental state
- Developmentalism
- Capacity development
- Systemic reforms in global institutions (climate change, financial institutions, Doha round, etc)
- Productivity, employment
- Pro-poor growth
- Theory, moral reasoning, ideology

MDG experience - narrow agenda with many priorities  
off the table

- Reduced 'development' to delivering basic needs. Omitted structural causes of inequality and deprivation
- Narrow agenda with off the table priorities in the MDGs: inequality, employment, climate change, root causes of poverty.....
- Quantification: inherently reductionist, leaves out of the frame non-quantifiable issues

# Contradictory trends: bilateral trade and investment agreements

- New 'trade' (and investment) rules (TPP/TTIP and other bilateral/regional trade and investment agreements) rewriting the rules of the global economy side step multilateral agreements, reinforce investor/corporate interests and reduce policy space (for industrial policy, public health priorities, and more).

# Example: Access to medicines

- Patent extension through weakening patentability standards (ever-greening)
- Data exclusivity for clinical trials delaying approval of generics alternatives
- ISDS and dispute resolution

- Goal 17 trade agenda centered around WTO multilateral rules with consequences for SDGs 1-16.
- Series of provisions reduce ability of governments to implement SDGs