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## **GLOBAL AGENDA AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS)**


## **GLOBALNA AGENDA I CELE ZRÓWNOWAŻONEGO ROZWOJU**

### **Abstract**

*The research paper entitled ‘Global Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals(SDGs)’ is an attempt to analyze the existing relationship between the global agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals(SDGs) in terms of key global macro parameters that are part of the global agenda and the international order to achieve the SDGs by the turn of 2030 slated by the United Nations. Though the scope of this paper has been limited and confined to the only study of the key global macro parameters, their interrelationships and inter-linkages, their role in achieving global sustainable development cannot be undermined. There is a lot of pieces of literature on the subject, but a lot more needs to be studied and analyzed to assess the intricacies involved in these key macro parameters and their role in achieving SDGs. It is understood that United Nations is the key international organization at the global level to perceive the concept of SDGs and the key global macro parameters such as international and foreign policies, climate action, education, reduced inequalities, poverty, global economic growth, violent conflicts, technology, housing, migration etc., that can be analyzed and assessed to figure out the key lacunae in implementation of these global parameters so that corrective measures could be taken to rectify these macro imbalances in order to achieve sustained international order and development. The review of literature has been dealt in this paper to the extent that the role and perceptions of United Nations in figuring out and in analyzing the key global macro parameters needs particular mention as it is the only international organization functioning at the global level to identify and perceive such new interrelationships and linkages existing amongst the key global macro variables in achieving the SDGs by 2030. It is felt that the SDGs are holistic concepts that cover almost all the aspects of human life and existence on this planet earth. The paper dwells into the aspects such as the SDGs facing strong challenges, slowing global economic growth, issues relating to inequalities, international migration, education, child and health care, climate change and climate risks, violent conflicts vitiating SDGs, inter-*

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*linkages between inequalities and climate action, small island economies and LDCs most vulnerable to climate risks, role of technology in achieving SDGs, energy security and global peace, world economic situation and prospects, global conversation and dialogue and role of global cooperation etc., The most important conclusion that could be drawn from this research study is that in order to achieve sustainable development goals and global sustainable development including international development the role and interrelationships, inter-linkages amongst these global macro variables is of paramount importance in building a new international order through global peace and inclusive societies.*

**Keywords:** SDGs, reduced inequalities, multilateralism, energy security, global cooperation

### **Streszczenie**

Artykuł badawczy zatytułowany „Globalna agenda i cele zrównoważonego rozwoju (SDG)” jest próbą analizy istniejącej relacji między globalną agendą a celami zrównoważonego rozwoju (SDG) pod kątem kluczowych globalnych parametrów makro, które są częścią globalnej agendy i realizacji celów zrównoważonego rozwoju do końca 2030 r. Chociaż zakres tego dokumentu został ograniczony do jednego badania kluczowych globalnych parametrów makro i ich wzajemnych powiązań, ich rola w osiągnięciu zrównoważonego rozwoju na świecie nie może zostać podważona. Wiele literatury zostało przeanalizowane, ale o wiele więcej należy przestudiować i przeanalizować, aby ocenić zawilości związane z kluczowymi makroparametrami i ich rolę w osiąganiu celów zrównoważonego rozwoju. Rozumie się, że Organizacja Narodów Zjednoczonych jest kluczową organizacją międzynarodową na poziomie globalnym, która postrzega koncepcję celów zrównoważonego rozwoju i kluczowych globalnych parametrów makro, takich jak polityka międzynarodowa i zagraniczna, działania w dziedzinie klimatu, edukacja, zmniejszone nierówności, ubóstwo, globalny wzrost gospodarczy, gwałtowne konflikty, technologie, mieszkalnictwo, migracje itp., które można analizować i oceniać w celu wykrycia kluczowych luk we wdrażaniu tych globalnych parametrów, aby można było podjąć działania naprawcze w celu skorygowania tych zakłóceń równowagi makroekonomicznej w celu osiągnięcia trwałego ładów międzynarodowego i rozwoju. Przegląd literatury omówiono w tym artykule w zakresie, w jakim rola i postrzeganie Organizacji Narodów Zjednoczonych w ustalaniu i analizowaniu kluczowych globalnych makroparametrów wymaga szczególnej uwagi, ponieważ jest to jedyna organizacja międzynarodowa działająca na poziomie globalnym w celu identyfikacji nowych i istniejących powiązań wśród kluczowych globalnych makrozmiennej w osiąganiu celów zrównoważonego rozwoju do 2030 r. Uważa się, że cele te są holistycznymi koncepcjami obejmującymi prawie wszystkie aspekty ludzkiego życia i istnienia. W artykule poruszono takie aspekty, jak cele zrównoważonego rozwoju, spowolnienie globalnego wzrostu gospodarczego, kwestie związane z nierównościami, migracja międzynarodowa, edukacja, opieka nad dziećmi i opieka zdrowotna, zmiany klimatu i zagrożenia klimatyczne, gwałtowne konflikty, małe gospodarki wyspiarskie i kraje najsłabiej rozwinięte najbardziej narażone na ryzyko klimatyczne, rola technologii w osiąganiu celów zrównoważonego rozwoju, bezpieczeństwo energetyczne i pokój na świecie, światowa sytuacja gospodarcza i perspektywy, globalna

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rozmowa i dialog oraz rola współpracy globalnej itp., Z przeprowadzonego badania można wyciągnąć wniosek, że dla osiągnięcia celów zrównoważonego rozwoju i globalnego zrównoważonego rozwoju, w tym rozwoju międzynarodowego, wzajemne powiązania między globalnymi makrozmiennymi mają ogromne znaczenie w budowaniu nowego porządku międzynarodowego.

**Słowa kluczowe:** cele zrównoważonego rozwoju, zmniejszone nierówności, multilatera-  
lizm, bezpieczeństwo energetyczne, współpraca globalna

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### **Statement of the problem in general outlook and its connection with important scientific and practical tasks**

The Sustainable Development Goals(SDGs) conceived and adopted by the United Nations at the global level across economies/countries including at national and sub-national levels is a novel concept cutting across almost all aspects of human life in this planet earth. In this regard, UN has devised 17 SDGs and 169 indicators which cover almost all aspects of human existence viz; poverty, health, education, climate action, social security, decent housing, employment, industrialization, economic growth, technology, infrastructure development, peace, justice and strong institutions, global partnerships etc., in order to achieve these SDGs by 2030. A lot of endeavors have been initiated and put in by various economies/countries to tackle these issues in order to achieve them for the benefit of the international community. Thus, this research paper is an attempt to analyze these global macro parameters and study their implications and inter-linkages to ascertain the issues encountered by various economies in order to resolve them. Thus, the research problem seems to be a global issue that needs to be addressed in light of the changing behavioral relationships existing amongst these macro variables internationally.


### **Sustainable Development Outlook: Overview and Challenges of SDGs**

#### **Sustainable Development Goals encountering strong resistance and opposition**

The Sustainable Development Goals(SDGs) adopted by the United Nations is a global vision and endeavor of the UN to integrate the world community at large. In fact, there are 17 SDGs that cover almost the entire gamut of global issues and concerns encountered by the global society/world community. SDGs touch upon almost every aspect of human life and existence on planet earth. Hence, it is apt that these concepts need to be dealt with in greater detail and studied at length. United Nations is one of the global organizations which have the broad mandate of defining, analyzing and implementing the global SDGs indicators which have both direct and indirect bearing on human existence. Be it global peace, international trade, global conflict, international law, sustainable development of global societies, United Nations is the global organization which is involved in the implementation of the global SDGs for the all-round and overall development of the global economies and global society. This would lead to the development and betterment of global human existence.

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### **Key Global Macroeconomic aspects affecting SDGs**

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have registered tremendous progress since their adoption in 2015. It is observed that global child mortality as one of the global macroeconomic phenomenons has serious repercussions and impacts on the promotion of SDGs. It is on account of the concerted efforts of many Governments and development partners that global child mortality has been on the decline continuously. The issues that have been addressed are 'Hepatitis' is on the retreat, while new chronic hepatitis B virus infections have nearly come down to zero. Access to electricity has increased globally and the proportion of the urban population living in slums is declining. Notwithstanding this progress, gathering storms of weakening global economic growth, rising income inequality, unabated global warming and climate change, and escalating conflict are the major factors that account for impeding SDG implementation. The onset of rapid technological advancement in this era of

globalization, on the other hand, offers the best hope for accelerating SDG progress, but however, lot more needs to be done in terms of harnessing and ineffective usage and adoption of appropriate technology. The focus of the research study is basically on these key challenges and the policy responses that can address them. The paper tries to identify the interlinkages among these challenges, underscoring the imperative of addressing them in a coherent and systematic manner, rather than as free-standing issues that can be analyzed sequentially and in isolation. The challenges highlighted are, of course, not the only impediments to achievement of the SDGs; they also risk changing the overall context for sustainable development and, because they cut across all the SDGs being adopted/implemented in various countries/economies and affect all countries/economies worldwide, they can potentially undermine the overall implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

### **Analysis of latest research where the solution of the problem was initiated**

In fact, the latest research on Sustainable Development Goals(SDGs) mostly relates to global macro-level issues that have been addressed at the first instance by the United Nations which have been functioning at the global level cutting across all national boundaries and transcend all regions of the world. Various other international organizations also work for the promotion and development of SDGs, though at a bigger scale but not at the larger scale adopted by the UN. Hence, almost all the research papers and research studies emanate mostly from UN publications apart from few other international organizations such as the ADB, AfDB, World Bank etc., Thus, to that

extent this research study has been quite robust enough to focus on the above thematic issues/sectors which mostly hovers around achieving the SDGs by 2030 and the efforts initiated in this direction by UN and other multilateral organizations in this regard for the promotion and development of SDGs by the international community.

### **Review of Literature**

The review of literature on the research study have been drawn and referred to basically from United Nations publications such as Global Economic Monitoring Branch, UN DESA on world economic situations and prospects, speeches, and talks deliberated by UN Secretary-General in various global forums on SDGs, peace,

resolving conflicts, climate action, energy security issues etc., so as to get a clear perception, picture, viewpoint and focus on the subject i.e. global agenda for promoting SDGs. The scope and focus of the research

study is limited to and broadly on the macroeconomic and social parameters that could help address, develop and nurture the sustainable development goals conceived by the United Nations by the turn of 2030

### **Aims of Paper: Methods**

The aims and objectives of the research paper and the methodology adopted basically focus on the key global macro parameters with specific focus on key global socio-economic issues such as health, education, climate action, housing, economic growth and employment, industrialization and infrastructure development, peace, justice and strong institutions, global partnerships etc., The research study found that macro data on these key macro parameters are not available in a continuous-time series pattern. Thus, arises the limitations of this study in analyzing quantitative aspects and the inter-relationships amongst these macro variables at the macro level.

#### **Deteriorating Global Economic Growth: Looking forward**

Amidst rising inequality and uncertainty, global growth is expected to average 3 percent during the SDG period (2015-2030) i.e. falling below the global growth rate achieved during the Millennium Development Goals(MDGs) period (2000-2015), despite a global financial crisis that wreaked havoc on the world economy in 2008-09. There is a noticeable decline in global trade which has been mostly driven by trade disputes, conflicts and technological change. Excessive debt accumulation will remain a serious drag on global growth and exacerbate the risks of an economic downturn/economic crisis. An economic downturn/economic crisis, whether global or regional or sub-national, remains a real possibility and poses a serious challenge, which may further trim


the growth and employment outlook and derail SDGs progress if steps are not taken to mitigate the crisis. With policy interest rates at historic low levels and fiscal space already constrained in many countries including that of the developed ones, the world economy is less prepared today than in 2008 to confront and avert a major financial crisis. While economic growth is necessary, it alone will not deliver the progress of SDGs. Growth in the gross domestic product (GDP) is an incomplete measure of economic performance and well-being and may not be the only yardstick to measure economic development. Yet, the pursuit of higher GDP growth continues to shape and define policy considerations, even though it comes at high social and environmental costs to the global economies/societies. In fact, the macro parameters such as progress in creating decent jobs, reducing economic inequality, managing and mitigating climate risks and preventing violence and conflicts at the international level must form the basis, core objectives and the criterion for measuring and in assessing economic performance for accelerating SDG progress.

#### **Taming Inequality is an urgent and felt need**

Rising inequality of income, wealth and access to opportunities discourage skills accumulation, choke economic and social mobility and human development and, consequently, depress economic growth. Thus, rising inequality is a serious global

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economic challenge that jeopardizes economic growth and hence in turn economic development. Further, inequality also entrenches uncertainty, vulnerability, and insecurity, undermines trust in institutions and government, increases social discord and tensions and could possibly trigger violence and conflicts, if not addressed globally. More than two-thirds of the world population are now experiencing rising income and wealth inequality, which is significantly undermining the prospects for SDG achievement and progress. Hence, these factors act as a deterrent to the development and progress of various economies. Therefore, the role and intervention of the UN are imperative to correct these macroeconomic deficiencies at the international level.

It is said that inequality and employment vulnerability are mutually reinforcing. Highly unequal societies tend to have larger shares of vulnerable employment which affects the growth of these economies to a considerable extent. Inequality also affects households' ability and capacity to cope with economic shocks, making them more vulnerable to future downturns and crises. Despite new data showing the steady rise in income and wealth inequality, there is as yet little evidence of concerted policy efforts made to address the problem even at national levels. Leaving no one behind, the overarching goal and principle of the SDGs will remain beyond reach unless societies make a deliberate choice and attempt to address the inequality issue at the global level. In order to achieve this, the national economies need to address their inequalities issues at the country levels to correct it so that the overall effect of

inequality at the international level gets nullified. If the need arises, country-specific solutions could be integrated and embedded into the global plan to develop synergy and consensus to arrive at meaningful and appropriate solutions/corrective measures to arrest the inequality problem at the international level. As inequality manifests in wealth, income, access and outcomes, societies must address inequalities in one or all these dimensions, taking into account country-specific factors and constraints by analyzing the country-specific scenarios and taking corrective measures to counter the burgeoning problem of inequality. Expanding skills and educational opportunities, creating decent and secure jobs that pay living wages and strengthening social protection systems will remain paramount for taming inequality in all its forms and manifestations.

Regular and orderly migration and resettlement can also play a critical role in reducing inequality while preventing conflicts and facilitating adaptation to climate change. Addressing inequality will require a new, win-win approach to redistribution of income, wealth and opportunities. Redistribution needs not to be considered only as meaningless for people at the top of the income distribution. It can mean more for everyone, more peace and stability for people at the top, more economic security and opportunities for those at the bottom, and more climate resilience and sustainable development for all. Societies must redefine redistribution as a positive-sum game in order to bring inequality to the front and center of efforts to achieve the SDGs.

**Exposition of main material of research with complete substantiation of obtained scientific results. Discussion**

The conclusions drawn from this research study are contingent upon the research of the main material contained and reflected in this paper in a detailed manner. Based on the available literature, research questions/research problem and the thematic/sectoral issues relating to achieving SDGs at the global level, the research paper tries to adequately address these questions by drawing literature mostly from UN publications. These issues and the relevant remedial measures adopted have been addressed at length below:

**Climate change: a rising global concern**

Climate change is considered to be one of the biggest and burgeoning global issues that need to be tackled by all national economies at the international level. However, the global scenario is just the opposite to the extent that almost all countries worldwide are encountering the problem of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions due to their rapidly growing economies, thereby generating huge amounts of CO<sub>2</sub>. In fact, it is statistically observed and understood that human activities are generating 42 billion tons of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions every year, accelerating global warming and climate change which is the most ominous threat to the SDGs. After slowing down during 2012–2014 and remaining flat during 2015–2016, global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions have started to increase again. Curbing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions will remain a daunting challenge, given the persistently high levels of inequality in per capita emissions levels between high and low-income countries, thereby aggravating climate change issues. Average per capita emissions in high-income countries are 43 times higher than emissions per capita in low-income countries, dwarfing the level of income

inequality. As people in developing countries achieve greater economic prosperity, their per capita emissions will rise. New pathways to development and prosperity must leverage technology especially renewable energy technologies that decarbonize economic growth.

Stopping this serious menace, which means cutting emissions by 45 percent from their 2010 levels by 2030, will require drastic measures and dramatic changes in production and consumption patterns of various economies worldwide. The world needs to quickly move from this current level of emissions to net-zero emissions, and then to net negative emissions to minimize climate risks and in the process accelerate SDG progress.

**Climate Risks most pronounced and alarming for developing economies**

Developing countries particularly small island developing States and the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) that are least able to cope are more vulnerable to climate risks. The human cost and economic damages as a share of GDP are significantly higher in developing countries than in the developed world, despite their relatively small contribution to global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

**Curbing Inequality is a prerequisite for ambitious climate action and climate change**

Urgent climate action accelerating mitigation and adaptation efforts and transitioning to low-carbon production and consumption patterns must form the cornerstone of all SDG efforts, alongside improving resource efficiency and creating millions of decent jobs in the new green economy. Yet, climate action is faltering, despite growing evidence that inaction or

delayed action will be too costly for humanity. The “developed/developing country” divide that impeded global progress on climate action is now reinforced by the growing “rich/poor” divide in the developed economies, challenging and preventing ambitious climate action. In fact, the working poor in developed countries increasingly views global warming and climate change as elitist, urban concerns. The recent ‘Yellow Vest movement in France’ is an early warning on further paralysis in climate action and absent significant reversal in inequality and improvement in the condition of the most vulnerable population groups in both developed and developing economies. A continued push for climate action without addressing the concerns of the most vulnerable will further inflame populism and reinforce opposition to climate action.

#### **Violent Conflicts vitiating SDG achievement**

Violent conflicts, especially those within countries, are on the rise and pose a serious challenge towards SDG progress. The intensity of violent conflicts (i.e., number of battle-related deaths) has risen since 2012, with the Middle East alone accounting for more than 50 percent of total fatalities. These conflicts are often the result of entrenched intra-group inequalities and livelihood insecurities due to economic slowdowns, climate-related disasters, forced displacement, epidemic outbreaks, ill-designed policies and capricious behavior of authoritarian regimes. Conflicts often reverse decades of hard-won development gains. They also destroy political institutions and social norms, and erode trust and cooperation across ethnic, religious and other dividing lines, sowing the seeds for perpetual conflict. Ethnic nationalistic and religious

groups have taken advantage of people’s grievances and the inadequate government responses to them, to radicalize and recruit a significant number of new members both nationally and internationally.

Climate change and conflicts are increasingly and inextricably linked. Droughts and loss of livelihood induced by climate change will amplify economic insecurity, increase migration pressures and potentially trigger violence and conflicts, while conflicts will, in turn, accelerate deforestation and environmental degradation, and undermine the political and administrative capacities to cope with climate change. Reducing inequality, expanding economic opportunities and securing livelihoods especially for the most vulnerable and marginalized population groups must remain a priority for preventing conflicts and accelerating SDG progress in many developing countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa.

#### **Harnessing and tapping the potentials of global migration**

Migration pressures have become stronger and more pronounced than ever in an age of growing economic inequality, persistent conflicts, rising climate risks and high population growth in the developing world, especially in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. Safe, orderly and regular migration, both within and across countries, remains an important option not only for escaping poverty and conflicts but also for facilitating climate change adaptation. Yet, regular migration opportunities are increasingly limited for would-be migrants, as a political power in a large number of destination countries has decisively shifted towards the right, which typically opposes migration. The perceived fear of migrants taking over jobs, burdening the national economy and spreading their cultural and religious practices in the host country is



propelling right-wing populism and nativism, making immigrants unwelcome even when the benefits of migration outweigh the costs. The populist backlash against immigration is also undermining international commitment to, and governance of, safe, regular and orderly migration and giving rise to a vicious cycle. Against this backdrop, many developing countries with limited economic means are increasingly hosting large numbers of migrants and refugees. Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey are home to many Syrian refugees, while Bangladesh has taken over a million Rohingya refugees from Myanmar. In Africa, Uganda has sheltered the largest number of refugees on the continent. Latin America, Colombia, Peru and Brazil are hosting many displaced people from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

Harnessing the positive potential of migration, for both receiving and sending countries, will remain critical for SDG implementation. In addition to the humanitarian grounds for accepting refugees, aging and declining populations in many developed countries make it an economic necessity to accept and welcome migrant workers from developing countries with a large young population facing limited economic prospects. A better and wider understanding of the benefits of migration can help counteract populist responses to immigration and promote orderly migration. More effective multilateral cooperation will remain critical for leveraging the potential of migration to deliver various SDGs, including that addressing climate change and reducing inequality. Thus, migration or immigration of persons globally as the case may be is considered to be a positive goading factor promoting employment and in turn global economic growth. This leads to welfare and

overall upliftment of the societies at large. However, migration of skilled manpower from one country to another is considered as a drag on the host country which loses the skilled manpower on the migration of the manpower to another country.


### **Technology: an aspiring and the best option for the SDGs**

Technological advances present the best hope for addressing mitigation of CO2 emissions, improving food and energy security, and accelerating progress on other SDGs. Technology is also considered as a tool that can drive the economies towards achieving the SDGs as it would lead to faster growth, progress and development of various economies worldwide due to the successful use of the technology by the economies. Technology is also considered a wild card, as it may exacerbate employment risks, increase insecurity and inequality and undermine social cohesion, peace and stability. SDG outcomes will largely depend on policies and incentives that will ensure the responsible and equitable deployment of new technology. The world must leverage and make the best use of technological innovations to meet the most urgent and basic needs of hunger, shelter, health and energy. These 'basic-needs SDGs' are critical determinants for meeting other SDGs. Fulfilling the basic needs of humanity, including those of the most vulnerable people, will remain a necessary precondition for achieving the SDGs in their entirety. People in developing countries spend as much as 80 percent of their total income to meet their basic needs. Technologies can drastically reduce costs and expand access in the areas of food, housing, health care and energy. Technologies deployed for meeting these basic needs can be a key enabler in reducing vulnerability and inequality.

### **Securing Decent Housing for all**

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Technological innovations are offering cost-effective emergency shelters as well as longer-term solutions. They also allow a smoother transition to permanent housing and recovery opportunities for the displaced population. Prefabricated housing and new construction materials not only carry the promise of providing adequate and affordable housing for displaced populations but also may solve the global housing crisis and build resilience against economic and natural disasters. One in five people in the world lives in inadequate housing, with nearly one billion still living in slums and informal settlements. Millions of displaced people are trapped in inadequate and often dangerous dwellings, putting their lives, dignity and futures at risk for an extended period. Thus, the concept of housing for all is a very important and welcome step that would help in achieving SDGs slated by the UN. UN has been making commendable efforts to achieve SDGs through adequate, decent, affordable and proper housing amongst various countries.

#### **Satellite Technologies revolutionizing agriculture**

As of 2017, the number of malnourished people reached 821 million. Without substantial progress in boosting agricultural productivity and improving affordability, the number will continue to rise, if proper and effective steps are not taken to improve the nourishment of the people globally. Early warning and mitigation technologies for drought especially in sub-Saharan Africa where droughts undermine the food security of subsistence farmers can boost agricultural productivity and help eradicate hunger. Satellites are already delivering promising results. The 'Famine Early Warning Systems Network', a network of the satellite, ground measurements and data amalgamation algorithms, is providing

information on climatic and agricultural market developments for thirty countries across Africa, Asia and Latin America. A system of different technologies working together is critical for a well-functioning satellite-drought initiative.

Satellite technologies are also enabling farmers to respond to drought conditions. An initiative in Ethiopia involves satellite remote sensing to identify groundwater sources, with information relayed to communities and pastoralists in drought-affected areas, assisting them in digging more accurate boreholes. This has led to a 92 percent success rate in drilling new water sources, reducing cost and improving accessibility.

#### **Energy Security within accessible reach**

Sustainable energy production and access is a catalyst for achieving many other SDGs. A number of developing countries have made large strides in improving access to electricity since 2000. Yet, 840 million people still lack access to electricity, and nearly 3 billion rely on inefficient and polluting cooking systems responsible for 2.6 million premature deaths due to indoor air pollution. Heavy dependence on fossil fuels perpetuates energy insecurity for millions of people worldwide and contributes to devastating global warming. Decentralized, off-grid renewable energy systems that use solar photovoltaic, wind turbines, mini-scale hydropower generators or biomass present tremendous hope for increasing access to electricity while reducing emissions and global warming. New technologies are reducing the cost of renewable and making decentralized solutions viable options, along with the expansion of conventional grid connections. The significant uptake of renewable energy usage and reduction in the use of fossil fuels as envisaged in the sustainable development scenario is paving

the way for the decoupling of economic growth and carbon emissions, making it possible to maintain the same growth rates with greatly reduced CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

### **Mobile Technology and Access to Health Care**

Despite tremendous progress in medical science globally, at least half of the global population, especially the poor and marginalized, still lack access to essential health services. Mobile health services that make health information and basic health services accessible from mobile devices promise to drastically expand coverage and transform health outcomes for billions of people. But leveraging mobile technologies to promote universal health care will require significant improvements in Internet infrastructure. Mobile connectivity is also helping to alleviate the global shortfall of health workers estimated to be as large as 10 million, especially in remote locations. It is now possible for medical personnel anywhere in the world to remotely review radiological images, diagnose skin conditions, review pathological results, provide mental health services and monitor patients. The combination of connected devices and the growing recognition of the role of digital technologies will substantially change how Governments manage their health systems. Fifty-eight percent of the 125 countries that participated in the survey by the World Health Organization report having national strategies to use digital technology for health (eHealth) in 2016.

Technology-induced cost reductions will not necessarily mean that more people will automatically gain access to affordable housing, clean renewable energy or health care. Technological innovation must be managed and regulated, keeping in mind the most vulnerable who are least able to pay for their basic needs. Further, the

technological innovation needs to be monitored by the various international organizations which are functioning in these areas of activities to determine the efficacy of the technology for providing the basic needs of the poor and marginalized sections of the global societies. The efficiency gains and cost reduction must translate to affordability and improved access for those who are most likely to be left behind. Technologies will foster SDG achievements only if they are handled with caution.

### **Multilateralism must weather 'challenges of today and tomorrow' Guterres, UN Secretary-General tells Paris Peace Forum on 11 November 2019**

#### **Peace and Security**

In a speech to the 'Paris Peace Forum' in Paris on November 11, 2019, UN Secretary-General António Guterres said that to thrive, multilateralism had to adapt, mindful that "conflicts persist, creating suffering and displacement: our world is unsettled". He was speaking as commemorations took place in countries across the world, marking the official end of the First World War, in 1918. **(Statement of UN Secretary-General).**

Drawing parallels with the geopolitical landscape in the early 20th Century, Mr. Guterres described today's world as neither bipolar, unipolar, nor multipolar, but rather "chaotic and uncertain". **(Statement of UN Security General)**

#### **Prevention 'more indispensable than ever'**

According to UN Secretary-General, 'Conflicts are not between sovereign States, but rather consist of asymmetrical conflicts, in which countries are often pitted against non-State actors'.

When third-party states interfere, these conflicts take on a regional dimension, said Mr. Guterres, at a time when relations

between the most powerful countries are dysfunctional, and with a Security Council that is frequently paralyzed. The UN chief declared that conflict prevention is more indispensable than ever, citing growing links to a new form of global terrorism, as seen in Libya and the Lake Chad region, and the danger of nuclear proliferation. He called for the root causes to be addressed, as well as the prevention of new tensions and conflicts. **(Statement of UN Secretary-General).**

Mr. Guterres explained that ‘international cooperation’ is the only way to solve these issues, which is why crisis prevention and mediation, as well as a framework for fighting violent extremism and reinforcing peace and international security, are at the heart of his UN reforms. **(Statement of UN Secretary-General).**

#### **Five fault-lines that threaten the world**

The world is facing five major risks, declared the Secretary-General. Firstly, an economic, technological and geostrategic fault line. This sees the planet divided in two, with the two largest economies dividing the world between them, each imposing their own financial and economic rules on their spheres of influence. **(Statement of UN Secretary-General).**

"We must do all we can to avoid this ‘Great Fracture’ and preserve a global system, a universal economy that respects international law, a multipolar world with solid multilateral institutions”.

The second risk lies in the social contract between citizens and governments, leading to a wave of demonstrations around the world, said Mr. Guterres, which demonstrates a growing distrust in institutions and political leaders. “The people are suffering”, he declared, “and want to be heard”.

This leads to a third risk, said the UN chief: a solidarity gap, and rise in inward-looking

attitudes, in which the most vulnerable minorities, refugees, migrants, women and children are the first to suffer. **(Statement of UN Secretary-General).**

“Fear of foreigners is being used for political ends. Intolerance and hatred are becoming commonplace. People who have lost everything are being blamed for all the world's ills. This exacerbates the polarization of political life and the risk of divided societies”.

The fourth risk, Mr. Guterres spelled out, is the climate crisis, a “race against time for the survival of our civilization, a race that we are losing”. The UN chief described record temperatures, receding icecaps, expanded deserts, and destructive storms, such as those he has witnessed as UN chief in Dominica, Mozambique, and the Bahamas. **(Statement of UN Secretary-General).**

#### **It’s not too late to act**

“If we fail to act now”, said Mr. Guterres, “history will remember that we had all the means needed to fight back, but that we chose to do nothing”. However, he said, solutions exist and if countries find the political will to act, honor pledges to cut emissions and mobilize funding for sustainable development, catastrophe can be averted. A technological divide, declared Mr. Guterres, is the fifth emerging global fault-line, because, whilst new technology has the potential to be a powerful tool for peace and sustainable development, it can also increase risk and accelerate inequalities. Solutions outlined by the Secretary-General include education systems that integrate lifelong learning, because “we must no longer simply learn, but learn how to learn.” **(Statement of UN Secretary-General).**

#### **Overcome hate, together**

Turning to the rise of hate speech and the manipulation of information, Mr. Guterres

said that he plans to make the UN a place in which governments, companies, researchers and civil society can meet to “define together the red lines and best practice rules”. **(Statement of UN Secretary-General).**

**We must do all we can do**

The threat of cyber-attacks and a new “cyber-arms” race involving killer robots and autonomous weapons must also be tackled, warned Mr. Guterres, who said that “machines that have the power and discretion to kill without human intervention are politically unacceptable and morally despicable”. The world must instead ensure, said the UN chief, that artificial intelligence is used to guarantee that everyone can live in dignity, peace and prosperity. **(Statement of UN Secretary-General).**

**Multilateralism must “adapt to challenges of today and tomorrow”**

The Secretary-General opined that with a vision of multilateralism, that can adapt to the challenges of today and tomorrow, and make the UN more effective and agile. Multilateralism, he said, must be networked, and close to the people, working hand in hand with regional organizations, but also with international financial institutions, development banks and specialized agencies. **(Statement of UN Secretary-General).**

It must also be inclusive, he added, with the full participation of civil society, including young people, business, academic and philanthropic circles, and tackle gender equality, an issue that the UN is addressing, with a strategy to achieve parity well before 2030. **(Statement of UN Secretary-General).**

The UN chief called for a “sustained strategic vision” to solve the world’s interdependent and long-term challenges, noting that the international community has

shown, in the past, that it can come together and rise to the occasion: “So let us fight, fight and not give up”. **(Statement of UN Secretary-General).**

**Progress toward Sustainable Development is seriously off-track says UN Secretary-General on 6 November 2019**

The UN Secretary-General is calling on business leaders to use their “enormous influence” to push for inclusive growth and opportunities that benefit all people and the planet.

“It is both good ethics and good business to invest in sustainable, equitable development,” he wrote. “Corporate leadership can make all the difference to creating a future of peace, stability and prosperity on a healthy planet”. **(Statement of UN Secretary-General).**

He pointed to recent protests across the world where people have taken to the streets to protest rising living costs as well as real, or perceived injustice.

“They feel the economy is not working for them and in some cases, they are right. A narrow focus on growth, regardless of its true cost and consequences, is leading to climate catastrophe, a loss of trust in institutions and a lack of faith in the future,” he said. **(Statement of UN Secretary-General).**

Mr. Guterres believes the private sector is critical to solving these problems, and businesses have been working with the UN to achieve the SDGs, which were adopted in 2015. The 17 SDGs address challenges such as poverty, inequality, climate crisis, peace and justice. They aim to bring about a more just future by the deadline of 2030. **(Statement of UN Secretary-General).**

**‘We are seriously off-track’**

The UN chief noted that since their adoption, extreme poverty and child mortality have fallen.

However, he lamented that overall, “we are seriously off-track”, with a lack of financing a contributing factor. As public funding is not enough to meet the challenge, the UN is working with the financial sector to fill the gap. **(Statement of UN Secretary-General).**

Mr. Guterres stated that businesses need long-term investment policies that serve society, not just shareholders. He added that the UN and the private sector are working to find new ways to invest in sustainable growth and development. 30 leaders of multinational companies meeting at the UN launched the Global Investors for Sustainable Development Alliance. Already they are backing clean energy projects in Africa, Asia and Latin America, among other initiatives. **(Statement of UN Secretary-General).**

#### **‘Push for Policy Change’**

The UN chief expressed hope that other business leaders will follow suit. Mr. Guterres further called on the corporate sector “to go beyond investment and push for policy change”, noting that consumers are already exerting pressure. **(Statement of UN Secretary-General).**

“We need business leaders to use their enormous influence to push for inclusive growth and opportunities,” he said. “No one business can afford to ignore this effort, and there is no global goal that cannot benefit from private sector investment.” **(Statement of UN Secretary-General).**

#### **Global Conversation on the Role of Global Cooperation**

To mark its 75th anniversary in 2020, the United Nations will launch the biggest-ever global conversation on the role of global cooperation in building the future. Tackling issues such as the climate crisis, inequality, new patterns of violence and the major changes that are being seen in population and technology in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals

the shared vision for the future would require cooperation across borders, sectors, and generations. But just when there is a need for collective action more than ever, support for global cooperation is flagging. In many countries, public trust in traditional institutions is in decline and relations between countries are under strain. Dialogue and action on global issues are of paramount importance and play a major role in achieving SDGs through effective international cooperation which is possible through effective dialogue and negotiations amongst the major international players and multilateral organizations. Through these conversations, the UN aims to build a global vision of 2045 its centenary, increase understanding of the threats to that future, and support enhanced international cooperation to realize that vision.

United Nations has planned a high-profile international event in September 2020 to address the global issues and concerns through a global mechanism i.e. ‘Your voice will be heard’. The views and ideas that are generated will be presented to world leaders and senior UN officials at a high-profile event during the 75th Session of the United Nations General Assembly scheduled in September 2020. They will also be disseminated online and through partners on an ongoing basis.

From January 2020, the UN75 campaign will initiate dialogues in all settings from classrooms to boardrooms, parliaments to village halls. The aim is to reach as many people as possible, to listen to their hopes and fears, and learn from their ideas and experiences. The focus of this mega international meet is basically to create awareness on global cooperation by apprising the world community through the mechanism of ‘Anybody can join the global conversation physically or online, individually or as a group, in every region of the world’ adopted by UN.

**UN75 will drive the initiative from behind: Together We will Connect, Amplify, Act and Connect People**

UN75 is building and will continue to build, a network of diverse groups, individuals and partners to convene dialogues. Through its global online and offline networks, UN75 will aim to reach as many people as possible, including youth, marginalized communities, and those who would not often or ever engage around issues of global cooperation.

**Amplify Voices**

UN75 toolkit with guidelines on **how to join**, and how to inspire conversations and amplify voices through channels and communities for people to talk and be heard could be checked out through the UN. In order to amplify voices, UN75 will undertake global opinion polling, media and internet analysis to collate robust, representative and comparative data that can inform future communications and policymaking. According to reports of UN, Video and audio recordings with testimonials from people who have participated will be shared across platforms illustrating people's views and ideas. This would have a greater audience for effective global cooperation.

**Inspire Action**

Each conversation is an opportunity to encourage individuals to take action in their own lives in line with what they have heard and learned. Both formal and informal dialogues can yield insights and evidence that national and international organizations can apply. Findings may inspire new programs, investments, partnerships and campaigns, among other options. A global platform to illustrate key outcomes of discussions is being developed by the UN75 team.

The arrangement is that for formal focus groups, the toolkit provides a moderator

form allowing information to be centrally recorded and analyzed. People taking part in conversations of all kinds can provide feedback via their moderator or through the UN75 website.

The United Nations serves as a global forum where countries can raise and discuss the most difficult issues, including problems of war and peace. In addition to maintaining international peace and security, the UN protects human rights, delivers humanitarian aid, promotes sustainable development and upholds international law.

The Dubai Expo 2020 runs from 20 October 2020 to 10 April 2021: The Department of Global Communications, in close collaboration with other United Nations system entities, will leverage the opportunity of international exposition to showcase the central role of the Organization as a proponent of ideas, a catalyst for action and a driver of multilateral solutions to global problems.

Education is an "essential pillar" to achieving the United Nations' 2030 Agenda, Secretary-General António Guterres told an audience at UNESCO headquarters, stressing the importance of bringing young people to the table as key partners.

**World Economic Situation and Prospects**

According to reports of Global Economic and Monitoring Branch, Economic & Policy Analysis Division, Department of Economic & Social Affairs United Nations, 1 November 2019 Briefing, No. 132, the following are the key features of the global economies viz;

**Lack of innovation a key structural challenge and issue for many developing countries**

Economic diversification impeded by structural barriers in the CIS and Africa. Weak productivity growth contributing to

the bleak economic outlook in Latin America.

**Global Issues: The challenge of innovation in developing countries**

The economic situation in many developing countries has deteriorated considerably in recent years. Between 2010 and 2014, aggregate GDP expanded at an average pace of 6.0 percent, but Growth slowed to an average of 4.2 percent between 2015 and 2018. The slowdown in growth has been particularly pronounced in Africa, Latin America, and Western Asia. In 2019, average GDP growth in developing countries could fall below 4.0 percent, amid lingering fragilities in Argentina, Brazil and South Africa, and weaker economic conditions in Mexico, Saudi Arabia and Turkey. There are many reasons behind this trend, including the knock-on effects from the collapse in commodity prices, protracted domestic weaknesses and, in many cases, deteriorating investor and consumer confidence due to policy uncertainties. For many developing countries, the escalation in trade tensions has dampened export flows and investment plans. The growth slowdown in developing countries also highlights structural factors, which include limitations in their innovation and technological capabilities, which in turn impedes economic growth. In the short term, an innovative and adaptive productive structure supports a faster recovery in the event of a downturn, facilitating the adjustment to macroeconomic shocks. In the current context, this would allow for a smoother adjustment to rising trade protectionism. In the medium term, innovation is a key engine that drives the transformation of the productive and export structure towards more sophisticated activities. Thus, fostering innovation capabilities into higher growth and more sustainable development

trajectories. In recent decades, progress on innovation has differed markedly across developing countries. While difficulties exist in measuring innovation, some indices combine economic, technological and institutional aspects to provide a comprehensive assessment. For example, the Global Innovation Index(GII), uses a wide-ranging set of indicators of institutions, human capital, research, infrastructure, market, and business sophistication and technology outputs. Notably, East Asia performs better than other developing regions, with an average score of 43.1. Higher innovation indices are not only the case for Hong Kong SAR, Republic of Korea and Singapore, but also for countries like China, Malaysia and Vietnam. These economies have been able to visibly strengthen their innovation activities and technological capabilities in recent decades. Other developing regions, by contrast, show a much lower score, especially Africa and South Asia. These patterns are confirmed by other measures of innovation and technological capabilities, such as R&D investments and the Economic Complexity Index(ECI). R&D investments reflect efforts to generate, absorb and use knowledge, constituting a critical input for introducing product and process innovations at the firm level. Meanwhile, the ECI combines information on the diversity and ubiquity of a country's exports. As expected, there is a positive correlation, and countries with more diverse and specialized exports tend to exhibit R&D efforts. Again, countries from East Asia tend to score high according to both R&D investments and the ECI, while countries from Africa and Latin America tend to exhibit a relatively weaker performance. The ECI and R&D investments reflect distinct aspects of innovation, emphasizing its multiple



dimensions. For example, the Philippines display a relatively high ECI, as its structure contains a large share of medium-high and high technology products. However, technological effort in the Philippines is limited, with a very low level of R&D investment, 0.13 percent of GDP. This reflects several weaknesses in its innovation ecosystem, including an inadequate number of scientists and engineers, deficient infrastructure, and weak linkages between the private sector, universities and public institutions. By contrast, Kenya exhibits a relatively low level of ECI, as exports are highly concentrated in a few agricultural products and textiles. Yet, Kenya has strengthened its efforts to increase R&D investment in the last decade, to about 0.8 percent of GDP, by designing comprehensive innovation policy frameworks.

Strong innovation and technological capabilities in East Asia have acted as an engine of growth, contributing also to enhanced resilience of their economies. By contrast, the poor performance of many countries in Africa, Latin America, South Asia, and Western Asia is in part attributable to weaknesses in their innovation ecosystems. While there are significant differences across regions and countries, crucial factors include a limited scientific community and low levels of skills in the labor force, usually including mismatches between educational outcomes and industry requirements. Innovation is also concentrated in low-tech sectors with limited spillovers, and manufacturing innovation is highly informal. In addition, private investments in R&D are low and there are limited cooperation efforts between the private sector, universities and research institutions, amid weak institutional frameworks. Against this backdrop, more formal approaches to

promote innovation activities have gained increasing prominence in the policy agendas across developing countries in the last decade. In many cases, this includes major modifications of the institutional frameworks as well. Altogether, this is an immense challenge, but transforming innovation from a barrier to an engine for development is essential to drive a sustained rise in living standards.

#### **Developed economies**

#### **North America: Low Labor Force participation and high inequality impede inclusive growth in the United States**

Economic activity in the United States has decelerated, prompting a third interest rate cut by the Federal Open Market Committee. Manufacturing production declined by 2.5 percent in the first 9 months of the year. A particularly sharp decline in the production of motor vehicles was recorded, reflecting the impact of tariffs and trade disruption on the auto sector. Despite the recent deceleration, labor markets appear relatively strong, with the unemployment rate at its lowest level since 1969. However, the employed share of the population, while on an upward trend, remains well below levels prevailing a decade ago, reflecting a significant deterioration in labor force participation. The flow of re-entrants into the labor market continues to slow, and stands at its lowest rate in 50 years, suggesting that weak labor force participation will continue to act as a structural barrier to economic growth. Job quality is also uneven, and inequality remains a significant obstacle to a higher sense of subjective well-being in the United States. After-tax income inequality in the United States is the highest in all developed economies and has continued to rise steadily since the mid-1970s. Inequalities in health and access to quality healthcare are also stark. Individuals with lower levels of

education, who also have fewer job options, tend to report lower levels of health in general. The quality of available healthcare shows significant racial and ethnic disparities, which may partly explain racial life expectancy differentials that are as high as 7.6 years for men and 6.2 years for women. Life expectancy also differs significantly across income levels and geographical location. The share of the population with no form of health insurance began to rise again in 2018, following several years of improvement, suggesting that health inequalities may widen further.

**Developed Asia: Labor shortage in Japan poses a serious threat to the aging society**

Despite declining real wages throughout 2019, the labor market remains tight in Japan. The unemployment rate edged down to 2.2 percent in August 2019, and labor shortage became more severe and acute in several economic sectors. Japan officially opened its door to semi-skilled foreign workers in April 2019 but the new immigration policy is not expected to resolve the situation in the short run. The critical staff shortage in the medical and nursing care sectors is expected to continue, although the rapidly aging society requires these sectors to be sufficiently staffed. In recent years, the Government has shifted its budgetary focus towards expanding social protection measures, including those for the elderly and the senior citizens. However, the widening staff shortage in the medical and nursing care sectors poses a threat to socio-economic development in Japan.

**Europe:** Intellectual property rights and clean energy demand is an integrated policy framework. The research and innovation performance in the 'European Union' shows a steady improvement along several dimensions, such as broadband penetration and Doctorate graduates, but by many

measures lags behind global innovation leaders such as Japan and the Republic of Korea. The environment for innovation may be impacted by ongoing policy debate in several areas, including intellectual property rights and climate policy. Innovation may be supported by an effective legal framework that protects intellectual property rights. This incentivizes R&D across the board, especially by small and medium-sized firms. A key aspect of current global trade tensions relates to the global protection of intellectual property rights and barriers to entry that requires the handover of technological expertise. Reducing these barriers could support innovation activity for many export-oriented companies in Europe. The climate policy has stimulated efforts to revamp entire national electricity systems. Despite already significant investment in renewable energy generation, many countries in the region are struggling to wean themselves off their reliance on fossil fuel-based electricity supply. In some cases, environmentally damaging emissions have even increased after the implementation of renewable energy investment policies, because electricity imbalances have increased coal-fired electricity generation. This illustrates that innovation policies for specific technologies and applications must be fully integrated within a broader policy framework to ensure progress towards policy targets.

**Economies in Transition**

**Commonwealth of Independent States:**

Low R&D spending impedes economic diversification. For many economies of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), excessive commodity dependence and a narrow export base remain sources of economic vulnerability and are significant constraints on growth prospects. The share

of hydrocarbons and related products in total exports approaches 70 percent for the Russian Federation and exceeds 90 percent for Azerbaijan. To make progress on economic diversification, it is critical to invest in non-commodity sectors and increase their productivity, boost innovation and enhance intangible assets such as know-how and human capital. However, many CIS countries are lagging behind other countries with a similar level of economic development in the field of innovation, partly reflecting a legacy of the economic transition in the 1990s, which saw a massive emigration of scientists or their relocation to other sectors. The Russian Federation has the highest rank in the 2019 Global Innovation Index among the CIS countries, but ranks only 46th in the world, as spending on R&D is equivalent to only 1 percent of GDP. Little research is conducted by the private sector, with important exceptions in the areas of IT, finance and the space industry. Even energy companies rely on imported technology to develop new oil and gas fields, which has led to a cancellation of off-shore drilling projects in response to sanctions imposed by the EU and the US. The Government of the Russian Federation has taken certain initiatives to promote innovation, such as providing additional tax breaks for companies developing new products and special tax exemptions for technology parks such as the Skolkovo Innovation Center, however, the outcome so far has been modest. The Governments of Armenia and Belarus are prioritizing the development of their respective IT sectors. For those policies to succeed, it is crucial to develop supportive regulatory institutions, including a commitment to intellectual property rights.

## **Developing Economies**

### **Africa: Structural transformation must drive non-resource-based economic growth**

Growth in Africa has trended in line with primary commodity prices for several decades. Real GDP growth peaked at about 4–5 percent annually in the 1970s and 2000s as commodity prices soared. Output expanded by about 2 percent annually in the 1980s and 1990s when prices were low. Most recently, faced with the largest real oil price decline since 1970 and a severe terms-of-trade shock, growth fell in the 2010s to about 3 percent annually. The need for systematic structural transformation from resource-based economies to more diversified economies is clear and has been thoroughly acknowledged. However, economic diversification across the continent remains low with only a few exceptions, including Egypt and South Africa, although recent improvements are evident in a few countries, such as Ethiopia, Morocco, and Rwanda. International support for African economic diversification has also remained far from steady. For instance, the United Nations Industrial Development Decades have only been established in years of low commodity prices and slow economic growth.

The launch earlier of the ‘African Continental Free Trade Area’ aims to create a single market for goods and services which, once finalized, will cover 1.2 billion consumers with an aggregate income of \$2.5 trillion. Since a significant portion of intra-African trade occurs in manufacturing, this is expected to promote industrialization and more productive jobs for a workforce that is predicted to increase rapidly in the next decade. While any visible results will take years to develop, this regional agreement remains one of the

most promising concerted efforts towards economic transformation and growth.

**East Asia: Large Infrastructure Gaps obstruct sustainable development prospects of the region's LDCs**

Despite the challenging external environment, the short-term growth prospects of the least developed countries (LDCs) in the region remain favorable. Buoyed by resilient domestic demand, the economies of Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, and Myanmar are projected to sustain strong GDP growth of over 6 per cent in 2019 and 2020. Alongside robust private consumption, growth will also remain driven by strong inflows of foreign direct investment. Meanwhile, the Pacific Island LDCs, which include Kiribati, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, are expected to continue growing at a steady pace, supported by tourism revenues and infrastructure projects financed by development assistance flows. The region's LDCs, however, are confronted with severe structural impediments that are constraining their medium-term growth prospects. Notably, poorly diversified economic structures and critical shortfalls in essential infrastructure has contributed to persistently low productivity levels. This poses a significant challenge to boosting competitiveness and raising growth potential in these economies. For the Pacific Island LDCs, high vulnerability to natural catastrophes and weather-related shocks is further dampening their sustainable development prospects. Given that the LDCs have very limited resources to overcome these structural weaknesses on their own, cooperation and support from the international community remains crucial. UN ESCAP estimates that it could cost up to \$37.6 billion per year, which amounts to about 12 per cent of GDP, to meet the

infrastructure investment needs of the LDCs in the Asia-Pacific region.

**South Asia: Growing inequalities are retarding development in South Asia**

Rapid economic growth has long been the engine behind development for many countries in South Asia, but growing inequalities are beginning to loom as a structural barrier for continued development. While significant progress has been made across the region in bringing down poverty, improving health and other important indicators of human development, social and economic inequalities have often risen in tandem. The disparities across regional, ethnic, demographic, economic, religious and other dimensions seem increasingly hard to bridge. The deepening rural-urban divide is troubling policymakers across the sub-region. Sectarian tensions and intolerance, often closely related to political and economic inequalities, are fuelling violent incidents in several countries. Meanwhile, despite progress in selected areas, gender inequality remains pervasive across South Asia. Policymakers in South Asia will need to invest much more in policies to bring down these rampant inequalities.

**Western Asia: Social unrest highlights structural economic barriers in Lebanon**

In Lebanon, the Government's proposal for an austerity budget ignited widespread street protests. While the demonstrations are driven by demands for comprehensive governance reforms, they also point to a structural barrier for economic development in Lebanon, overreliance on external resources. The Government has been seeking fiscal reform measures to cap the growing public debt. The ratio of gross public debt to GDP reached 151 percent in 2018. In the first seven months of 2019, 33 percent of government expenditure was on interest payments. However, the

Government faces a narrow tax base. The corporate sector in Lebanon is small compared to the domestic demand base, reflecting an overreliance on external resources to supply both goods and finance. In 2018, goods exports stood at \$3.8 billion, while goods imports stood at \$19 billion. The gap was financed by service trade surpluses, workers' remittances and foreign capital inflows. However, under this economic structure, the tax base leans heavily on the consumers' side. An expansion of the export-oriented corporate sector is essential to break this current structural barrier. Although it is challenging to shift the structure in the short run, the shift is critical to expanding the tax base. It will also ease constraints on the balance of payments, which have worsened amid dwindling foreign capital inflows. Moreover, it would nurture domestic economic dynamism to create decent employment opportunities.

#### **Latin America and the Caribbean: Low Productivity Growth deteriorates the economic performance**

Latin America and the Caribbean are mired in a prolonged economic slump. The region's aggregate GDP today is lower than it was in 2014. Much of the poor economic performance of the past few years is due to structural factors, most notably weak productivity growth. Since 2000, about three-quarters of the regions, overall GDP growth has come from an expansion of the labor force rather than through productivity gains. There is a downward trend in labor productivity growth in the region's largest economies. The weakness seen since 2015 reflects two main factors viz; slowing capital accumulation and negative

contributions from total factor productivity, which aims to capture the efficiency with which inputs of capital and labor are utilized. One of the factors behind persistently low productivity rates lies in a polarized production structure. On one side of the spectrum, there are a few highly productive large companies, many of which are operating internationally. On the other side, there is a multitude of small, often informal, companies that have low productivity and absorb the bulk of low-skill workers. The difference in productivity levels between these two groups is significantly higher than in developed economies. Largely missing is dynamic and rapidly-growing midsize companies that could add competitive pressures and help spur productivity growth.

#### **CDP Secretariat participates in UN Workshop in Support of Solomon Islands' Graduation from the LDC Category as per the report of UN, 6 November 2019**

From 17 to 18 October 2018 the United Nations Inter-agency Task Force on Least Developed Country (LDC) Graduation, in partnership with the Solomon Islands Government, held a two-day workshop to kick-start the process of preparing for smooth graduation from the LDC category. At the workshop, UN experts, the government, civil society and the private sector stakeholders and development partners came together to support Solomon Island's efforts to develop the strategies and policies to ensure a smooth transition from the LDC category after the country will graduate from the LDC category in December 2024.

## Conclusions

The research paper entitled 'Global Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)' is an attempt to analyze the existing relationships between the global agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in terms of key global macro parameters that are part of the global agenda and the international order to achieve the SDGs by the turn of 2030 slated by the United Nations. Though the scope of this paper has been limited and confined to the only study of the key global macro parameters, their interrelationships and inter-linkages, their role in achieving global sustainable development is of vital importance and cannot be undermined. There is a lot of pieces of literature on the subject, but a lot more needs to be studied and analyzed to assess the intricacies involved in these key macro parameters and their role in achieving SDGs. It is understood that United Nations is the key international organization at the global level to perceive the concept of SDGs and the key global macro parameters such as international and foreign policies, climate action, education, reduced inequalities, poverty, global economic growth, violent conflicts, technology, housing, migration etc., that can be analyzed and assessed to figure out the key lacunae in implementation of these global parameters so that corrective measures could be taken to rectify these macro imbalances in order to achieve sustained international order and development. The review of literature has been dealt in this paper to the extent that the role, perceptions and viewpoints of United Nations in figuring out and in analyzing the key global macro parameters needs

particular mention as it is the only international organization functioning at the global level to identify and perceive such new interrelationships and linkages existing amongst the key global macro variables in achieving the SDGs by 2030. It is felt that the SDGs are holistic concepts that cover almost all the aspects of human life and existence on this planet earth. The paper dwells into the global aspects such as the SDGs facing strong challenges, slowing global economic growth, issues relating to inequalities, international migration, education, child and health care, climate change and climate risks, violent conflicts vitiating SDGs, inter-linkages between inequalities and climate action, small island economies and LDCs most vulnerable to climate risks, role of technology in achieving SDGs, energy security and global peace, world economic situation and prospects, global conversation and dialogue and role of global cooperation, global communications etc., The most important conclusion that could be drawn from this research study is that in order to achieve sustainable development goals and global sustainable development including international development the role and interrelationships, inter-linkages amongst these global macro variables is of paramount importance, and in particular relationships such as global conversation and dialogue including global communications for effective global cooperation would definitely aid in stimulating and in building a new international order through global peace and inclusive societies.

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