

Assessing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through climate change action

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development aims at achieving the full implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. The 17 SDGs were set in 2015 by the United Nations General Assembly and are intended to be achieved by the year 2030. The 17 SDGs are: (1) No Poverty, (2) Zero Hunger, (3) Good Health and Well-being, (4) Quality Education, (5) Gender Equality, (6) Clean Water and Sanitation, (7) Affordable and Clean Energy, (8) Decent Work and Economic Growth, (9) Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure, (10) Reducing Inequality, (11) Sustainable Cities and Communities, (12) Responsible Consumption and Production, (13) Climate Action, (14) Life Below Water, (15) Life On Land, (16) Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions, (17) Partnerships for the Goals. In 2017, the SDGs were made more "actionable" by a UN Resolution adopted by the General Assembly. The resolution identifies specific targets for each goal, along with indicators that are being used to measure progress toward each target.



The Agenda makes the link to climate change very clear, noting that it “is one of the greatest challenges of our time and its adverse impacts undermine the ability of all countries to achieve sustainable development,” and that the widest possible cooperation is needed to mitigate and adapt.

Achieving the global goals, for example, those related to poverty, hunger, access to water, terrestrial and marine ecosystems, health, gender equality, etc., will be challenging if urgent action on climate change is not taken. Many of the goals and targets can be achieved in ways that would enable adaptive responses to climate change. For example, the energy transitions would contribute significantly to lowering greenhouse gas emissions. Similarly, industry, innovation and infrastructure and responsible consumption and production can all contribute toward low-emission pathways, the creation of new jobs, and long-term progress in eradicating poverty. The electricity and heat sector presents linkages (synergies or trade-offs) related to good health and well-being, decent work and economic growth, industry, innovation and infrastructure, sustainable cities and communities. Mitigation actions in the transport sector is related to good health and well-being, decent work and economic growth, and sustainable cities and communities. Reducing emissions intensity in transport includes the adoption of electric vehicles and biofuels, both of which identify some negative linkages (for example, biofuel production threatens food security and has other environmental impacts). Similarly, mitigation actions in the building sectors show the most linkages to the goals for decent work and economic growth, industry, innovation and infrastructure and sustainable cities and communities. Strong positive linkages can be also found between all the adaptation sectors and no poverty. Poverty is affected by a wide range of sources, from food production, access to social services, and productivity - all of which are threatened by worsening climate change. Quality education is supported by actions that correspond to other sectors, such as energy (needed for building and maintaining institutions), and transportation (which allows access to educational facilities).

Climate change threatens many of humanity's biggest achievements as well as its future goals as reflected in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Thus, progress on climate action is needed to meet the targets of the global Agenda by 2030.