

Stakeholder Briefing on the Global Sustainable Development Report

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Baha'i International Community's United Nations Office

Organized by UN DESA - Division of Sustainable Development Goals (DSDG) and the
Baha'i International Community

Some 50+ Members of Civil Society and the United Nations came together to discuss the Global Sustainable Development Report and its implications for the future of the Sustainable Development Goals, the High Level Political Forum and global development more broadly.

Daniel Perell: Expressed gratitude to the authors.

- Report addressed data and indicators, but also the drivers of change.
- Current trajectory is rather bleak, but report manages retains a degree of optimism.
- The structural dimensions highlight vital role of process, systems, and transformation:
 - Government as decision maker and convener of grassroots actors.
 - Focus on systems science for finding mutually reinforcing connections.
 - Transformation challenges us to interrogate what drives us to make change.

Dr. Eun Mee Kim: The report was an independent assessment of the progress of the SDGs, a meta analysis of scientific research mandated by Member States. It is an attempt to show a systematic approach to achieving all 17 goals. It proposes six entry points to the SDGs.

- The goal of the GSDR is to present a blueprint for the world up to and beyond 2030. The benchmark used was the 1987 WCED (Brundtland) report. Unfortunately, progress in the past 30+ years has been inconsistent, and sometimes non-existent. Evidence-based research should be used in order to achieve the SDGs.
- Gender inequality is universal and it contributes to compounded inequality, often found in women and girls and in indigeneous people. This turns into intergenerational inequality.
- Must build capacity through women's groups education, and more enrollment in STEM.

Dr. Eeva Furman: The report's main message is that we must change how we work in order to achieve the SDGs. At the current rate, only a few of the SDGs can reasonably be achieved. There is a need to understand systemic challenges we face that link all of the 17 SDGs together.

- Looking at environment, society and economy, over emphasis has been put on the economy, and too little on the other dimensions.
- Trying to achieve a framework within which the environmental goals are assisting in achieving the social and economic ones (and vice versa).
- Must analyze interlinkages, including the "tradeoffs" which may negatively affect the other SDGs. More evidence is needed.

- To help nations develop something more concrete needed beyond the SDGs. We focused on four levers: government, science and technology, economy and individual action.
- We need more scientific capacity in more countries. Also need mission-oriented research, as well as an assessment of the current scientific knowledge we have.

Open discussion:

- This report is very useful. It is a product of the time and care it took to produce, but it means it would be good to have this more frequently (logistically almost impossible).
- What is the role of media in promoting inclusion?
- The interlinkages are constantly seen in practice at the grassroots level, given this, there is a lack of information and evidence on them. More work should be done not only to conduct cross-discipline research but also cross-discipline action.
- Participants expressed that the report can be used, and its recommendations implemented, outside of the UN, in the work of NGOs and others.
- The phrase “leaving no one behind” and its underlying principle must be mainstreamed, which would translate into more precise data and targeted policies.
- It is important to establish how close we are to achieving each SDG annually. We should be examining this progress at a local level, rather than solely a global one.
- An understanding of the risks of trade-off is important, but we must engage critically in the process of balancing what are sometimes competing priorities.
- The framing of entry points and levers of change presented by the GSDR is remarkable, how can this approach better feed into HLPF.
- There are still both communications and implementation gaps: we should make SDG platforms available and accessible to all through education and technology.
- Due to the clear interlinkages in the Agenda, we must be careful not to see the SDGs only through the lens which has caused us the very challenges we are trying to solve: e.g. growth first. We must be more holistic in our approach than we have been historically.