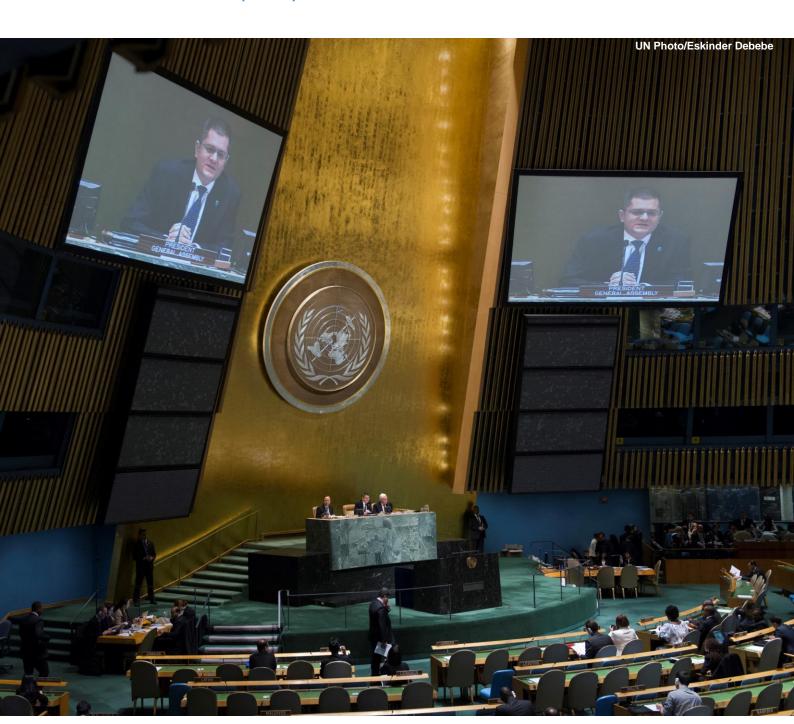# Introduction to the 2030 Agenda:
A New Agenda for a Sustainable World

Massive Open Online Course based on contributions from 22 parts of the UN family

Course Syllabus

Course duration: Self-paced open course

UN Photo/Eskinder Debebe

Background

2015 was marked by the adoption of four landmark UN agreements: Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, Addis Ababa Action Agenda, 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement. The 2030 Agenda serves as an umbrella for the other three. It provides an overarching vision and a global framework for national strategies and policies in both developing and developed countries alike and is expected to lead the transformation on the road to 2030.

The 2030 Agenda has prompted a high level of interest among national authorities and civil society stakeholders already during the negotiations. It will be particularly important to build on this sense of urgency, and help enhance knowledge and skills of all the key stakeholders to ensure the new 17 global goals are implemented. Some of the critical knowledge gaps that will need to be addressed include the improved understanding of the changes required from policy-makers and ordinary citizens to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Many questions are being asked: Are the SDGs significantly different from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)? What does a new focus on "leaving no one behind" mean for our policies? What kind of inequalities exist and why is it important to address them? What is policy integration? And how does sustainable consumption and production fit with economic growth and poverty eradication? What is the link between the roads and public health? Does a country that has no access to oceans or seas have to worry about Goal 14? Does violence affect the development prospects of a country? How exactly are these 17 global goals to be translated into national policy action?

This course is designed to address this type of learning needs and answer some of these questions. It was developed drawing primarily on the key UN Member States' Outcome Documents such as "Transforming our world: the 2030 agenda for sustainable development" and "Addis Ababa Acton Agenda", contributions made by the UN family to the previous learning products developed by UNITAR, such as UNITAR-UNDG "Preparing for Action" national briefing package (2015), a Massive Open Online Course for UN delegates (2015), and UN delegates briefings (2014), and the wealth of thematic knowledge produced by the UN Technical Support Team during the negotiations of the Open Working Group on the Sustainable Development Goals.

Target audience

This introductory course is open to everyone interested to learn more about the meaning and principles of the 2030 Agenda, Sustainable Development Goals and understand how the implementation could be financed and why it is important to monitor and review progress. It is hoped that this course would be of a particular interest to those policy-makers who would like to quickly improve their understanding of the implications of the 2030 Agenda for their work, as well as to many young people who wish to learn how this Agenda could be relevant to them.

Participants can follow the course at their own pace, and can choose to have a certificate provided if they have met the certification requirements described in the "Certification and feedback" section.

Learning objectives

Following the completion of the course, participants will be able to

1) Define the key reasons behind the convergence between the post-Millennium Development Goals and sustainable development tracks;

2) Explain the difference between the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the 2030 Agenda in terms of ambition, structure, scope and approach;

3) Identify main challenges in each Sustainable Development Goal area, as well as the key linkages between different goals;

4) Analyze possible options in terms of financing and means of implementation for the SDGs, and the changing nature of Global Partnership for Sustainable Development;

5) Identify the importance of review and follow-up for the implementation of the SDGs, as well as the crucial role and challenges of quality data collection and data literacy.

Structure

Module 1. The Post-2015 process and the origins of the 2030 Agenda

Module 2. From the MDGs to the 2030 Agenda: a call for transformative action

Module 3. The Sustainable Development Goals: policy integration and synergies

Module 4. Leveraging resources, working with partners: The implementation of the 2030 Agenda

Module 5. Follow-up, review and data for the 2030 Agenda

Learning methodology

This self-paced course consists of five modules developed around the overall learning objectives, as well as second-level learning objectives specific to each module. The estimated learning time per module ranges from 2 to 5 hours. Modules can be followed separately if a participant is only interested in catching up on some specific issues. It is advised, however, that those who are not familiar with the subject matter follow the modules according to the proposed sequence. Each module is developed as an interactive presentation complemented by a set of exercises (formative assessment). These formative exercises can be taken either prior or after the consultation of the content of the module to improve the understanding of the issues under discussion, and retain the acquired knowledge. Additional exercises, such as case studies and other tasks, are also proposed for some of the modules. Each module is followed by an objective multiple-choice assessment (summative assessment).

Module 1.

Module 1 will help participants to improve their understanding of the origins of the 2030 Agenda and the nature of the Post-2015 process. Beyond factual information about the key milestone events and work streams, this Module will aim to demonstrate how the specific characteristics of the Post-2015 process explain the holistic and inclusive nature of the new Agenda. Chapter 1 will focus on the main features of each of the two previous tracks, i.e. Millennium Development Goals track and Sustainable Development Goals track, discuss the reasons for and consequences of their convergence, and describe key milestones in the Post-2015 process. Chapter 2 will describe the role of UN Member States in negotiating the SDGs and avenues used by other key constituencies for providing their contributions. The approach to negotiating the SDGs will be contrasted with the way the MDGs were crafted to provide food for thought on possible implications for the implementation of the SDGs.

Learning objectives

1. Identify the point of convergence between the MDGs and sustainable development tracks in the Post-2015 process;

2. Define the key reasons behind the convergence between MDGs and sustainable development tracks;

3. Describe main features and timeline of the Post-2015 process;

4. List key stakeholders who provided inputs into the negotiations.

Structure

Chapter 1. Origins and key milestones of the process

Chapter 2. The nature of the process and stakeholders' contribution

Module 2.

Module 2 will enable participants to discuss key principles and concepts of the 2030 Agenda through the demonstration of differences with the MDGs. More specifically, Chapter 1 will focus on the legacy of the MDGs, including their successes, lessons learned, and the "unfinished business". Chapter 2 will discuss the major differences between the 2030 Agenda and the MDGs in ambition, structure, scope and approach. Chapter 3 will define the underlying principles of the 2030 Agenda and their implications for national policy-making.

Learning objectives

1. Analyze the reasons for success and lessons learned from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs);

2. Explain the difference between the MDGs and the 2030 Agenda in terms of ambition, structure, scope and approach;

3. Describe the principles of the 2030 Agenda and their implication for national policy making.

Structure

Chapter 1. Lessons learned from the MDGs

Chapter 2. How is the 2030 Agenda different from the MDGs?

Chapter 3. The principles of the 2030 Agenda

Module 3.

Module 3 will help participants to understand the rationale behind the 17 goals and 169 targets proposed by the Open Working Group on the SDGs, individually and as a set. Chapter 1 will provide a brief introduction to each goal area, including major challenges and emerging policy recommendations in relation with different targets. Chapter 2 will introduce the concept of policy integration and illustrate interlinkages between and within different goal areas through concrete examples of existing projects and programmes. Goal 17 will be covered in greater detail in Module 4.

Learning objectives

1. Identify challenges and related policy options addressed by different targets within each of the SDGs;

2. Define the meaning of policy integration;

3. Explain why there is a need for policy integration;

4. Discuss possible approaches to promote policy integration.

Structure

Chapter 1. Sustainable Development Goals

Chapter 2. Policy integration

Module 4.

Module 4 will discuss options for financing and means of implementation for the SDGs, including policies, technology, international trade and global economic governance regimes, etc. Participants will learn how the notation of the Global Partnership has changed and improve their understanding of the roles different stakeholders can play. Chapter 1 will provide a brief historical context of the intergovernmental debate on Global Partnership and means of implementation, describe key components of the recent agreements, incl. Addis Ababa Action Agenda, and provide an analysis of the changes related to the understanding of the Global Partnership. Chapter 2 will cover the main types of financial resources that would need to be mobilized and other means of implementation to meet the needs of the 2030 Agenda and discuss policy related challenges and solutions agreed in Addis Ababa in July 2015. Module 4 will close with Chapter 3 which will focus on the role of partnerships with non-state actors for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Learning objectives

1. Define main features and components of the revitalized Global partnership and means of implementation required to achieve the SDGs;

2. Identify key challenges and action areas to ensure means of implementation for the achievement of the SDGs at national and global levels;

3. Examine the role of civil society, academia and scientific community and businesses for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Structure

Chapter 1. Global partnership for sustainable development: origins, concepts and meaning

Chapter 2. Agreed policy options to ensure the resources needed for sustainable development

Chapter 3. Multi-stakeholder approach

Module 5.

Module 5 will provide an introduction into the follow-up and review framework for the 2030 Agenda, and discuss the importance of monitoring and evaluation for the implementation of the SDGs. Chapter 1 will focus on the follow-up and review framework for the 2030 Agenda and review processes in general. It will explain the importance of reviews and monitoring and evaluation functions for the implementation of the SDGs, and provides information on the framework and first reviews at global, regional and national levels. Chapter 2 will discuss specifically key decisions related to monitoring and indicators for the SDGs, and address challenges related to the strengthening of national data systems to provide evidence for decision-making. Given that the Outcome Document does not provide detailed guidance on evaluation for the SDGs and the latter is currently under discussion in various fora, it is not covered in the present module in more detail at this stage.

Learning objectives

1. Define the role of the review processes and M&E for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda;

2. Describe the key principles, levels and features of the agreed framework to follow up and review the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at various levels;

4

3. Describe the SDG indicator framework and challenges and opportunities related to ensuring quality data for evidence-based decision-making and accountability.

Structure

Chapter 1. Review processes for the 2030 Agenda

Chapter 2. Data and monitoring progress on the SDGs

Certification and feedback

Each of the five modules is followed by an objective multiple-choice assessment or a quiz. Three attempts are allowed per quiz. The attempt with the highest score is retained as the grade for the module. Each attempt proposes 10 questions drawn at random from the respective question bank. For each question, the correct responses add up to 1 point. Each incorrect response is penalized individually by -0.1 point. Participants would need to obtain a minimum of 7 points out 10 points for the module quiz to complete the assessment requirements.

Participants interested in obtaining a certificate of completion for the course would need to meet the above requirement for all of the 5 modules. Those participants who complete the requirements for at least 3 out of 5 modules are entitled to a certificate of participation.

Participants will be requested to provide feedback on the course by filling in a feedback form which can be accessed in the 'Course Evaluation' section on the course home page.

Technical requirements

Browser:
- The course works best with Firefox 3.6 or higher (download for free at http://www.mozilla-europe.org/en/firefox)
- The course is also compatible with Google Chrome (download for free at https://www.google.com/intl/en/chrome/browser/)
- It is not recommended to use Internet Explorer for technical reasons
- Note JavaScript & Cookies must be enabled

Software:
- Adobe Acrobat Reader (download for free at http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html).
- Adobe Flash Player (download for free at http:/get.adobe.com/flashplayer)
- Microsoft Office (Windows or Apple version) or Open Office (download for free at http://www.openoffice.org)

Platform: Windows 95, 98, 2000, NT, ME, XP or superior; MacOS 9 or MacOS X
Hardware: 64 MB of RAM, 1 GB of free disk space
Modem: 56 K