



SDG Progress Report 2023



By
Dr. Sanjay Banerji
Founder Director/Dean of Amrita School of Business

Dear Friends,

This month, I would like to go back to the theme of Sustainable Development, and offer you an update on what is happening on the SDGs front. I shall attempt to provide an overview of these topics: SDG Progress Report 2023, Covid 19 Impact, SG's call, SDG Stimulus, G 20 and Role of Civil Society C 20.

We are just in the mid-point of the 15 years of SDGs timeframe. The 2023 SDG Progress Report rings an alarm bell - the Covid 19 has resulted in a grave set back, and we are far from reaching the 2030 targets. Right from the UN Secretary General (SG) down to every conscious person, we are all concerned that time is running out. The SG has specifically called for implementing the SDG Stimulus plan.



Yet, there are signs of hope. This year (December 2022 to November 2023 to be precise), India has assumed the presidency of the [G 20](#), [1] and along with several other working groups, the C 20 Working Group has just concluded its deliberations and have come out with a Policy Pack. Hopefully, these would be taken up for discussions in the forthcoming G 20 Ministers Meeting in September 9 – 10, New Delhi. The UN General Assembly is due to hold the [SDG Summit 2023](#) [2] in September 18 – 19 in New York.

Where and how do we come in, in this matter? This is where India's G 20 presidency comes in picture, and we can aspire to have our voices heard through the C 20 framework.

SDG Progress Report 2023 Highlights [3]

Here are some highlights from this report.

First and foremost, the international community must move forward on our proposed SDG Stimulus, to scale up affordable long-term financing for all countries in need.

More than half the world is still lagging behind.

Progress on 30 per cent targets has stalled or gone into reverse.

Progress on key targets on poverty, hunger and climate is weak and insufficient;

The COVID-19, climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution are having a devastating impact.

Everything ultimately boils down to lack of financing.

Flows of Official Development Assistance are far below the long-standing commitment of 0.7 per cent of GNI.

The financial markets routinely charge developing countries interest rates up to eight times higher than developed countries.

Climate finance is also far below commitments and developed countries have not delivered the \$100 billion that was promised annually from 2020.

Meanwhile, vulnerable Middle-Income countries are denied debt relief and concessional financing, and the **G20's Common Framework for Debt Treatment is simply not working.**

Covid 19 Impact

Covid 19 has had wide ranging economic, financial and social impacts; including national health systems, businesses large and small, lock downs and exposures of the vulnerable groups to its most destructive effects.

Stakeholders see the pandemic setting back progress on the SDGs for all vulnerable and marginalised groups, but especially older people, homeless and slum dwellers, migrants, women and girls, and people with disabilities.

Though online participation may have increased the engagement of certain sectors, this is not true for vulnerable and marginalised groups, who risk being 'left behind' in a move to online engagement.

Climate Finance

The **Green Climate Fund** was created to **reinforce public-private partnerships to catalyse additional finance to drive transformative climate action.**

Responding to COVID-19 and Recovering Better

The recommended steps include “designing inclusive stimulus packages; preventing a global debt crisis; supporting countries in special situations; protecting the most vulnerable groups of people; strengthening the role of science, technology and institutions for an effective response; and working together to build back better and achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”.

This Covid 19 Impact write-up is based upon several references included in [Covid 19 Impact URLs.docx](#).

SG's call

“Unless we act now, the 2030 Agenda will become an epitaph for a world that might have been.”— António Guterres, [Secretary General United Nations](#) [3]



This SDG Progress Report 2023 is termed as a ‘Special edition Towards a Rescue Plan for People and Planet’. This in itself indicates the urgency.

The SDG Stimulus

The SDG Stimulus has three areas for action: a massive surge in finance for development, enabled by a transformation in the business model of Multilateral Development Banks; a new initiative on debt, under which short-term debt could be exchanged for longer-term instruments at lower interest rates; and the expansion of contingency financing to all countries in need. It can be achieved under the current rules and will enable immediate investments in basic services, clean energy and the digital transition. We call for deep reform of our outdated, dysfunctional and unfair international financial architecture.

The G 20

Briefly, the [G 20](#) [1] came into being after the Asian Financial Crisis in 1997. It is a group of 20 [member nations](#) [4], with EU, India, USA, Russia, China, Saudi Arabia, Brazil, South Africa, Germany, France and UK as some of the members. Originally it was a forum of the Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors of these countries. The main purpose was to prevent similar financial crises arising of speculations involving national currencies. After the 2007 – 08 global financial crisis, the **level** of G 20 forum was enhanced to the ‘head of the state / government’. Over the years, the scope of this forum has expanded to include other topics like ‘trade, sustainable development, health, agriculture, energy, environment, climate change, and anti-corruption’.

As a result, several ‘[Engagement Groups](#)’ [5] including business, civil society, labour, parliamentarians etc. have become a part of the G 20. These groups provide recommendations from non-governmental entities to the G 20. The Presidency of G 20 rotates annually, and holds an annual summit.

For further information, please see: [G20 Background Brief](#). The newsletters of G 20 may be seen [here](#) [6] and [here](#). [7]

Role of Civil Society C 20

The C 20 is an engagement group of the G 20, voicing the concerns of the civil society. In tune with the spirit of the SDGs, C 20 “promotes social and economic development with the vision of leaving no one behind”. [C20 India 2023](#) [8] is chaired by Mata Amritanandamayi

Math. Rambhau Mhalgi Prabodhini functions as its Secretariat. Vivekananda Kendra, Kanyakumari is its Institutional Partner. The Satsang Foundation is associated as Participant.

At the [C 20 Summit Inaugural Ceremony](#)[9] in Jaipur on July 29, 2023, Sri Vijay Nambiar former permanent UN representative of India said,

“Since January 2023 till now, more than 1000 meetings have been held in almost 60 locations in India and abroad, with participation of more than a million people from 122 countries, mainly from the global south. In person, online, people centric.

“Challenges facing the globe – climate change, the pandemic, attaining the SDGs – require participation and engagement by everybody. People must become pro-development and pro-planet”.

“The 16 working groups have been larger than ever before. Covered both traditional and new themes. The Policy Pack is ready – it has 238 pages”.

This is a good example of the degree of involvement of our Civil Society. Let us hope and pray that all of humanity rises to the call by the UN Secretary General to achieve the 2030 SDG goals.

References:

1. <https://www.g20.org/en/about-g20/#overview>
2. <https://www.un.org/en/conferences/SDGSummit2023>
3. <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2023/The-Sustainable-Development-Goals-Report-2023.pdf>
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