

Aligning the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to the NDP: Towards domestication of the SDGs in South Africa

South Africa has played a key role in the negotiations and processes that led to the development of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including its 17 SDGs, and Agenda 2063. Aspects of these negotiations were informed by the priorities of South Africa's National Development Plan. In working towards realizing the vision of both the NDP and the SDGs, South Africa has made several important steps forward, but also faces considerable challenges regarding implementation, capacity-building, financing, and engagement.

To what extent are the SDGs and the NDP aligned? What are the implications of this alignment? How do we ensure that "nobody gets left behind" in seeking to eradicate poverty and systemic inequality? These were some of the questions addressed by **Debate 6** of the O R Tambo Debate Series. The seminar discussed whether the focus should be on alignment or implementation, and also covered topics such as capacity-building, inclusivity, the cultivation of citizenry as agents of change, and the involvement of the private sector in eradicating poverty and inequality.

This Debate was a collaboration between the Wits School of Governance, the Oliver & Adelaide Tambo Foundation, the Department of Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

The Panelists: Framing Comments

In keeping with the topic of the debate, the panelists in their individual and professional capacities represent passion for and commitment to realizing the visions of the NDP and SDGs in eradicating poverty and reducing inequality.



Mr Mansour Ndiaye
Moderator



Mr. Zaheer Laher



Mr. Pali Lehohla



Ms Joanne Yawitch



Mr Tshediso Matona

Mansour Ndiaye, Africa Regional Cluster Leader – Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development, in the role of Moderator, skillfully framed and guided the discussion. He added valuable insights from his extensive experience to the debate, and masterfully pinpointed key areas of debate, confluence of ideas, and further inquiry.

Zaheer Laher, Director: International Coordination – Global Governance and Continental Agenda, DIRCO, provided valuable insight into the focus South Africa took in negotiations for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, “looking back in order to look forward” and highlighting the key priorities in developing inclusive and comprehensive visions for both the NDP and SDGs.

Pali Lehohla, the Statistician General of South Africa and head of Statistics South Africa, highlighted the leading role African statisticians and leaders took in developing the global agendas for sustainable development, as well as significant issues surrounding democratization of data, global partnerships for data sharing, and standards for private and public producers of data.

Joanne Yawitch, CEO of the National Business Initiative, questioned the relevance of alignment of the NDP with the SDGs. She spoke about the reframing of the private sector as agents of change, as well as the need for promoting unification across all levels of society and between public and private organizations in order to realize the goals of the NDP and SDGs.

Tshediso Matona, Head of the National Planning Commission Secretariat and Acting Director-General of the Department of Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluation, highlighted the need to build the process of change around people: this entails cultivating leadership, communication, and agency in realizing lasting change and accountability across society in order to foster awareness of the NDP and commitment to its goals.

The Debate: Highlights and Key Discussion Points



Ms Alessandra Casazza, UNDP Regional SDG Advisor, introduces the discussion

Alignment between the NDP and the SDGs

How do the new UN Sustainable Development Goals match South Africa’s National Development Plan? What are the challenges facing successful implementation and “domestication” of these plans?

South Africa’s part in negotiating and framing the global and continental processes leading to the development of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (including its 17 SDGs, and Agenda 2063) included reference to the new National Development Plan. The NDP is grounded on analysis of South Africa’s achievements and the challenges faced since 1994, and sets out the elements which will guide the country’s development policies and actions until 2030, with the aim of eliminating poverty and reducing inequality.

While South Africa’s NDP is broadly aligned with the United Nations’ SDGs, there are still areas of the NDP that are less focused and require further capacity-building and work. These include food security and sustainable agriculture, gender, green industrialisation, labour rights and working conditions, and other issues related to social, political, economic inclusion and equality of access to opportunities.

We need to ask whether more investment is needed to ensure greater alignment of the NDP with the SDGs, or whether the focus should now shift to implementation. This also raises the question: what are the implications of SDGs ‘domestication’ for implementation? Why is ‘domesticating’ the SDGs and Agenda 2063 important for South Africa?

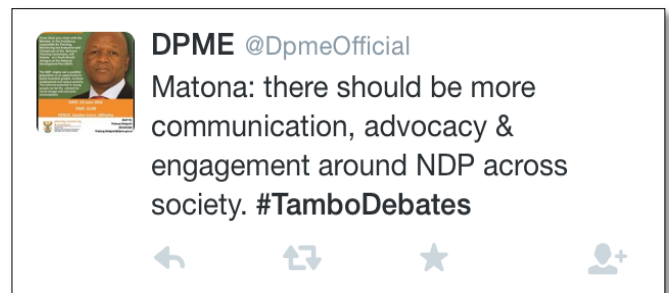
Clearly, successful implementation hinges on the country’s capacity to implement policies and create broad-based partnerships across all sections of society in support of development goals. How then do we ensure that implementation of the SDGs in South Africa succeed in leaving no-one behind in the mission to achieve poverty eradication and reduction of inequality?

The importance of a holistic and multilateral approach



An audience member addresses the panelists

In order to successfully implement development strategies, there is a recognized need to adhere to a “bottom-up” approach. The processes of both the NDP and SDGs emphasize inclusivity and ensuring that no-one is left behind. The challenge is: how do we implement this? What does CBDR mean in terms of responsibility to policy makers? Furthermore, how do we ensure that implementation is marked by full integration of social, economic, and environmental levels of sustainable development?



Climate change is likely to make existing issues of poverty and inequality more severe, particularly given the persistent dichotomy between urban and rural development. Linked to issue of unemployment and poverty reduction we need to look at the growing impact of climate change, especially in a rural context. It could actually be an area of massive opportunity for new skills development, tech, and innovation. *Joanne Yawitch*

Developing an integrated approach

One of the key issues underpinning both the SDGs and NDP is the necessity for an integrated approach to development that incorporates all sectors of society and fosters a mindset of ownership and agency. This raises questions surrounding the role of the private sector in contributing to the implementation of development goals. Should the private sector merely be a source of funding or should it also be an agent of change? What are the areas in which the private sector can make a meaningful contribution towards the implementation of the SDGs? Considering the contributions of the private sector in South Africa towards achieving development goals, how can different

Most of our troubled economy is driven by the private sector. How do we catalyze growth to address a wide set of social, economic, and environmental concerns?

Joanne Yawitch

sectors of society and different actions be pulled together in order to have an impact? How do we cultivate communication, trust, and policy coherence both horizontally and vertically in partnering public and private sectors with the aim of implementing development strategies? How do we pinpoint and leverage common points of interest in order to work together across all levels towards a united goal?

Building the process around people



In order to successfully implement development strategies, an attitude of ownership needs to be developed. When the process is built around people, and made accessible, public, and transparent, we can realize a developmental state in which everyone is an actor of change. What would it take to make that happen? How do we ensure we have the necessary state capacity to deliver quality public services in order to reach the poorest of the poor, and ensure that

everyone's needs are met? There is a growing realization that the state needs to reinvent itself, adopt new approaches that break down silos and welcome innovation and inclusivity. There is also a need to rethink the idea of the state itself, and the role of government in implementing change. How do we foster ownership of development across society, not solely in government? Do we have an over-regulated and bureaucratic public sector, with little being done to cultivate strategic leadership? What about the caliber of individuals assigned the responsibilities of leadership? How do we ensure that they are responsive and accountable?

We need leaders who are guided by a love of the people. This may sound like a fuzzy statement but in reality it is not. If our leaders have a love of the people, they will not steal from them, and will not exploit them for their own self-interest.

Tshediso Matona

The importance of reliable data

One of the most pressing challenges for development is the lack of a cohesive global partnership for data gathering and sharing. Substandard data gathering and monitoring across both private and public producers of data undermines efforts to ensure full inclusivity of development efforts and proper monitoring of development work. What is more, many of the systems that currently gather data are transient. We need to invest in long-lasting data systems that will stand the test of time over generations.

Data and statistics are a conduit of trust. Once anybody can produce data - without standards and accountability - that trust is lost.

Pali Lehohla

Issues surrounding data production, monitoring, and standards are at the core of the transformative agenda. You can't know whether you have left anybody behind unless you know where they started from.

Pali Lehohla

Hot Topics

- What leadership characteristics are evident in those who are agents of change? What attributes characterise those who are predisposed to maintaining the status quo?
- The African voice was very prominent and acknowledged in terms of the design of the SDGs –and there is a very eloquent proposition that there should be a UN system for statistical analysis and gathering of data. Shouldn't we as Africans be at the forefront of that process?
- Should we be licensing data in order to address issues raised by the unmonitored democratization of data gathering?
- During our transition to democracy business played various roles in the CODESA process. Business can't succeed in a failed society. That's something that South African business has understood with varying degrees of depth and breadth over the years. Now we must ask ourselves: how do we build relationships of trust and common interest across both public and private sectors, and unite disparate actions towards making meaningful impact?
- The public sector is a special domain that requires commitment from those who work in the sector. How do we define the qualities that lend themselves to successful leadership in the public sector? How do we marry these qualities and interests with those of the private sector in order to forge mutually beneficial partnerships that create an impact?

One of the biggest strengths we have is the strength of our civil society. This is our greatest strength in creating a developmental state in which everyone feels they are part of the process.

Tshediso Matona



The moderator and panelists

SHARING THROUGH TWITTER

The Dialogues on Development & Rights are all about opening up issues of vital importance to our country's development to public scrutiny and debate. Here are the Twitter Stats for this debate.

75 Posts

25 Users

81 551 Reach

194 933 Impressions



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