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Tracking Progress of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)



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It has been more than three years since the historic 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted by the 193 member states of the United Nations in September 2015. The adoption of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was hailed as an ambitious and bold vision for sustainable development given its 17-part agenda—much more than the goals set by its predecessor, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), that was concluded in 2015.

The aim of the expanded SDG agendas was to build on the momentum of what the MDGs have achieved and go beyond the goals of eradicating poverty and hunger, improving health and achieving clean environment in order to address cross-cutting challenges brought on by climate change, rapid urbanisation, demands for clean and sustainable energy, agriculture, and building resilient infrastructure, safe cities and human settlements. Significantly, the SDGs were also aimed at addressing rising inequality, promoting peaceful and inclusive societies, and increasing access to justice. As noted in the statement of the UN General Assembly Resolution 70/1 that adopted the 2030 Sustainable Development

Agenda, the global goals were ‘unprecedented in scope and significance...setting out a supremely ambitious and transformational vision.’

Since its adoption, annual reviews have been conducted and led by the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development which is convened by the UN’s Economic and Social Council. The Forum, which is held in New York, brings together representatives from governments, the UN System, civil society, the private sector and other stakeholders. It provides the platform for these representatives to exchange ideas and information on the progress of achieving the SDGs. Progress is measured based on a set of indicators and measures for each goal which in turn helps to assess what works and what does not in the implementation of the Goals. In further advancing work on tracking progress of the Goals, the HLPF has encouraged member states to conduct their own voluntary reviews at the national and sub-national levels. These national reviews then serve as the basis for the regular reviews done by the HLPF and provide a platform for building partnerships, including through the participation of major groups and other relevant

stakeholders. It is useful to note that the latest report of the HLPF presented by the UN Secretary General in May 2018, noted that while there is moving progress in the implementation of the SDGs, much more work needs to be done to ensure commitments of all parties and in ensuring that no one is left behind.

Aside from the UN, the monitoring of progress of SDGs on countries and regions has also been done by international organisations like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) which recently released a report on “*ASEAN Progress Towards Sustainable Development Goals and the Role of the IMF*” in October 2018. Similarly, CSR-Asia also brought out its report, “*The Sustainable Development Goals and ASEAN 2025: A Guide for Business*”, in March 2018. The two reports had noted significant progress made by ASEAN countries in reducing poverty, improv-

ing income and expanding economic opportunities. But the reports also flagged the need for ASEAN countries to reduce inequality within and between countries and address the gaps in sustainable development and the challenges of climate change.

A shared yet specific recommendation pointed out in the two reports and other studies in moving implementation of SDGs forward is noteworthy. That is that more efforts should be done by ASEAN countries to fully integrate the SDGs in their national development plans. Moreover, given that the 2030 SDG goals are highly complementary with the ASEAN Community Vision 2025, more efforts should be made in finding ways to enhance regional cooperation in achieving the SDGs. This means finding a coherent way to link global goals with regional/national programmes through targeted intra-regional programmes in issues like infrastructure develop-

ment, cooperation in water and energy, and in managing migration. Thus, aligning the implementation of SDGs with the goals of a prosperous and peaceful ASEAN Community would allow for more efficient way in tracking progress of shared development goals.

Suggested Readings

- UN Economic and Social Council, 2018. Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals: Report of the Secretary-General.
- International Monetary Fund, 2018. ASEAN Progress Towards Sustainable Development Goals and the Role of the IMF.
- CSR Asia, 2018. Linking ASEAN 2025 Vision and the SDGs.

CLIMATE SECURITY

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2018's top 10 ocean news stories (commentary)

Douglas McCauley and Francis Joyce, Mongabay
24 December 2018

Climate change: Huge costs of warming impacts in 2018

Matt McGrath, BBC
27 December 2018

COP24 and the Silesia Declaration: Impact on palm oil

Margareth Sembiring, RSIS Commentary
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Bamboo: Malawi's unexpected tool for climate change resilience

Caroline Gagné and Moushumi Chaudhury, World Resources Institute
3 January 2019

MSC Zoe: Islands hit as 270 containers fall off ship

BBC
3 January 2019

Before they disappear: Treasured UNESCO sites at risk from climate change

Katy Scott, CNN
7 January 2019

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Advancing marine environmental protection in the South China Sea

Lina Gong and Julius Cesar Trajano, RSIS Policy Report
2018

Katowice climate package: Operationalising the climate change regime in the Paris Agreement

Melissa Low, Eric Bea and Sarah Lu, Energy Studies Institute Policy Brief
2019

EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

World Sustainable Development Summit 2019

11–13 February 2018
New Delhi, India

One Planet Summit

14 March 2019
Nairobi, Kenya



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ENERGY SECURITY

NEWS AND COMMENTARIES

Stopping dirty bombs in Southeast Asia

Julius Cesar Trajano and Mely Caballero-Anthony, East Asia Forum
4 December 2018

Controversial nuclear reactor goes live in southern China

Frank Chen, Asia Times
18 December 2018

Bill Gates' nuclear venture hits snag amid US restrictions on China deals: WSJ

Channel News Asia
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National strategies for nuclear safety regulatory competence needed, regulators conclude at IAEA-supported meeting

Laura Gil, International Atomic Energy Agency
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Europe is fast-becoming a natural gas battleground for Russia and the US

Holly Ellyatt, CNBC
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Rise of renewables creating 'new world': Report

Channel News Asia
11 January 2019



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EAS leaders' statement on the safe and secure use, storage and transport of nuclear and other radioactive materials
East Asia Summit, Singapore
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China's belt and road initiative and its energy-security dimensions
Frank Umbach, RSIS Working Paper
 2019

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Technical Meeting on Topical Issues in the Development of Nuclear Power Infrastructure
 29 January- 1 February 2019
 Vienna, Austria

Energy Transitions 2019
 18 March 2019
 London, United Kingdom

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Risks and opportunities of GM crops: Bt maize example
Andrea Carzoli et al., Global Food Security, Vol. 19
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Finance for seafood in South East Asia: The business case for sustainability
Barbo Døvre, Global Canopy,
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Singapore's nascent urban farming: Potential future regional centre?
Jose Ma. Luis Montesclaros and Paul Teng, RSIS Commentary
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WWF: Finance firms must do more to safeguard food sector from sustainability risks
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 8 January 2018

Qatar endures economic blockade with aplomb
Anchal Vohra, Deutsche Welle
 2 January 2018

Turning food waste into something useful
Vanessa Liu, The Straits Times
 8 January 2018

Agriculture: Food trade deficit rising again
Mohiuddin Aazim, Dawn
 7 January 2018

With farms atop malls, Singapore gets serious about food security
Thomson Reuters Foundation, Eco-Business
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Biotechnology accreditation in Nigeria tertiary institutions to boost food security
The Nation
 7 January 2018

EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

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 25 January 2018 (Deadline)
 Kiel, Germany

3rd Agriculture and Climate Change Conference
 24–26 March 2019
 Budapest, Hungary



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HEALTH SECURITY



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Top 6 digital transformation trends in healthcare for 2019

Daniel Newman,
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3 January 2019

Sugary sodas tied to higher risk of kidney disease

Reuters Health,
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First malaria saliva test could help eliminate the disease through early diagnosis

Sarah Newey,
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Billions of dollars are pouring into digital health, but Americans are still getting sicker and dying younger

Christina Farr,
CNBC
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Forget the VR hype. In healthcare, it's making a real difference

Stephanie Tilenius,
Wired
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How to stop losing the fight against malaria

Andrea Boggio and Colin Ohrt,
The ASEAN Post
7 January 2019

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Impact, economic evaluation, and sustainability of integrated vector management in urban settings to prevent vector-borne diseases: A scoping review

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Infectious Diseases of Poverty, Vol. 7, No. 83
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Migrant and refugee populations: A public health and policy perspective on a continuing global crisis

Mohamed Abbas et al.,
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World Congress on Primary Healthcare and Medicare Summit

20-21 May 2019
Rome, Italy

4th International Conference on Nanomedicine and Nanotechnology

20-21 May 2019
London, UK



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HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE AND DISASTER RELIEF

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OCHA's 2018 in review

The United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA)
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Humanitarian assistance has a terrorism problem. Can it be resolved?

Jessica Trisko Darden,
War on the Rocks
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Six aid policy priorities to watch in 2019

Ben Parker,
IRIN
03 January 2019

3 ways to fix the way we fund humanitarian relief

Mark Lowcock,
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Humanitarianism is in crisis. Digital innovation won't fix it

Mark Duffield,
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07 January 2019

Indonesia to double disaster relief budget in 2019 after year of tragedies

Reuters,
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The state of the humanitarian system 2018

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Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) and the European Commission (EC),
Brussels: IASC & EC
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4th World Congress on Disaster Management

29 Jan 2019 - 01 Feb 2019
Mumbai, Maharashtra, India

Humanitarian Networks and Partnerships Week (HNPW)

4-8 February 2019
Geneva, Switzerland

MIGRATION



Courtesy of Flickr account of ILO Asia Pacific and used under a creative commons license.

India citizenship bill ignites mass protest over migration fears

Murali Krishnan,
Deutsche Welle
10 January 2018

Far-right president Jair Bolsonaro pulls Brazil from United Nations pact designed to protect migrants

Ernesto Londoño,
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11 January 2018

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The farms where no Vietnamese should ever work

Paul Kennedy,
Vietnam.net
1 December 2018

Island exile the latest Danish blow for 'unwanted' migrants

AFP,
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Thailand can be a champion for migrants

Dana Graber Ladek,
Bangkok Post
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Guatemalan farms shift to palm oil, fueling family migration

Sofia Menchu,
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Costs of low-waged labour migration: Difficulties, implications and recommendations

Teri-Anne Teo, Amirah Amirrudin and Conor Dunne,
Transient Workers Count Too
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Global migration indicators 2018

United Nations International Organization for Migration,
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Social Innovation for Refugee Inclusion: A Sense of Home

24-25 January 2019
Brussels, Belgium

The Migration Policy Centre Annual Conference

23-24 May 2019
Florence, Italy