



WEBINAR

Sustainable Development Goals and Multilateralism: Agenda 2030 and Beyond

Date: 5 August 2026 | Wednesday | Time: 2 pm to 4 pm (IST)

DRAFT CONCEPT NOTE

The adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Agenda 2030 in September 2015 have been recognized as a major milestone in multilateralism. The SDGs—which were built on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)—contain 17 universal goals that address social, economic, and environmental priorities.

As the 2030 deadline approaches, it is becoming increasingly evident that the current pace of progress is highly insufficient. *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2026* by the United Nations paint a grim picture. Out of 169 targets, only 12% of targets are on track or have been met. 18% of targets are not even tracked due to lack of data. 14% targets have stagnated while 12% of targets have even regressed, which means that these areas have gone backwards. 43% of the targets have made marginal or moderate progress with acceleration needed as we inch towards 2030. Global progress across the 17 SDGs remains uneven, with only a limited proportion of assessed targets classified as on track or already met. Several goals show substantial shares of targets requiring significant acceleration, while others are marked by stagnation or regression, suggesting that current implementation efforts are insufficient to meet the 2030 Agenda. Goals such as SDG 6 (clean water and sanitation), SDG 10 (reduced inequalities) and SDG 14 (life below water) appear particularly concerning due to limited progress and notable regression across assessed targets. The prevalence of insufficient data across several goals, including SDG 5 (gender equality), SDG 11 (sustainable cities and communities), SDG 13 (climate action) and SDG 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions), further constrain robust monitoring, accountability and evidence-based policy action.

As implementation of SDGs began in 2016, the year 2026 marks a decade of SDG implementation. The 2027 SDG Summit is expected to initiate intergovernmental discussions on a follow-up framework for sustainable development beyond 2030. Action 12 of the Pact for the Future, adopted through UN General Assembly resolution A/RES/79/1, calls on Member States to “plan for the future” and strengthen efforts to accelerate implementation of the 2030 Agenda “by 2030 and beyond”.

The meeting of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) next year, to be convened under the auspices of the UN General Assembly and referred to as the 2027 SDG Summit, is expected to serve as a key moment for initiating official discussions on a global sustainable development framework beyond 2030. It will also be the final review of the SDGs at the level of Heads of State and Government before the 2030 deadline.

Several UN and expert inputs are likely to inform the forthcoming discussions on a post-2030 sustainable development framework. At this stage, the institutional processes are yet to be formally defined. However, drawing on the experience of the SDG process, it is possible that the post-2030 process may involve an expert or high-level panel, possibly under the leadership of the UN Secretary-General, followed by working groups and a formal intergovernmental negotiation process. The third *Global Sustainable Development Report*, scheduled for publication in September 2027, is also expected to provide an important knowledge input.

The following issues are likely to shape discussions on the post-2030 framework, including for the Global South:

- Reflection on the SDG experience, including targets, indicators, financing, data systems and Voluntary National Reviews.
- Continued emphasis on financing and other means of implementation, particularly from the perspective of developing countries.
- Greater integration of climate action, biodiversity conservation and sustainable development.
- Governance of emerging technologies, including digital transformation and artificial intelligence.
- The role of multilateral reforms in strengthening global sustainable development cooperation.
- Continued importance of equity and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, particularly from the perspective of the Global South.

Three possible pathways for a post-2030 sustainable development framework may be considered:

Pathway 1: Incremental reform of the SDG framework with revised targets and timelines

This pathway would retain the broad architecture and normative paradigm of the SDGs and increase the timeline (to say perhaps 2050), while introducing incremental changes to incorporate emerging issues such as digital governance, artificial intelligence, planetary boundaries, and multilateral reforms. It may be more politically feasible, as it would build on the existing SDG framework rather than reopening fundamental negotiations on the overall structure of the agenda.

Pathway 2: Continuation of the existing SDG framework with revised targets and timelines

Under this pathway, the present SDG framework would continue beyond 2030, with updated targets, revised timelines and possibly refined indicators. This option may also be politically feasible, as it would preserve institutional continuity and avoid the complexity of negotiating a completely new framework.

Pathway 3: Transformative reform of the SDG framework

This pathway would involve more substantive institutional and normative changes, including stronger legal mandates, mechanisms that move beyond voluntary reporting, deeper localisation and federalisation of SDG implementation, and stronger intergovernmental organisation-mediated mandates for coordination and accountability. While this pathway may be better suited to addressing structural weaknesses in the current framework, it is likely to be politically less feasible because it would require greater consensus on obligations along with institutional authority.

With this background, TERI is organising a webinar to deliberate on the possible contours of a sustainable development framework beyond 2030, with a particular focus on perspectives from the Global South. The objective of the webinar is to examine key institutional, structural and political questions concerning the future of sustainable development beyond 2030. The webinar will bring together leaders and experts to contribute to agenda-setting, strengthen Global South perspectives, and identify priorities for a more equitable, implementable and future-oriented global development framework.

The discussion will be guided by the following overarching questions:

[1] What should be the core priorities of a post-2030 sustainable development framework, particularly in carrying forward the unfinished agenda of the SDGs?

[2] How should a post-2030 framework address the structural limitations of the current SDG framework, including gaps in financing, technology access, data systems, voluntary reporting, weak accountability mechanisms and uneven implementation across national and subnational levels?

[3] Which pathway is most likely and desirable for the post-2030 agenda from a Global South perspective: incremental reform of the existing SDG framework, continuation with revised targets and timelines, or a more transformative framework involving stronger institutional mandates, improved means of implementation, federalised implementation and more effective multilateral coordination?

Draft Structure

- Welcome Address (10 minutes)
- Framing Presentation (10 minutes)
- Panel discussion (90 mins | 8 minutes per speaker)
- Vote of Thanks (5 minutes)