



LOGIN Asia

Local Governance Initiative and Network

Knowledge Network on Decentralisation and Local Governance

1 NO POVERTY



2 ZERO HUNGER



3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



4 QUALITY EDUCATION



5 GENDER EQUALITY



6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION



7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY



8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE



Localisation of Sustainable Development Goals

10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES



11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION



13 CLIMATE ACTION



14 LIFE BELOW WATER



15 LIFE ON LAND



16 PEACE AND JUSTICE STRONG INSTITUTIONS



17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS



A Literature Review



Local Governance Initiative and Network

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Localisation of Sustainable Development Goals A Literature Review

Local Governance Initiative and Network (LOGIN) is a multi-stakeholder knowledge exchange platform that supports greater decentralisation and strengthened local governance in South and East Asia. Spanning over 11 countries, LOGIN's members include elected representatives, training institutions, think tanks, government departments, non-governmental organisations and inter-governmental organisations, among others. Working in favour of accountable, transparent and inclusive local governance, LOGIN facilitates knowledge sharing and peer-engagements on key governance issues amongst its members. Since its inception in 2013, LOGIN has been connecting and capacitating various actors and change agents who are driving reform agendas within their countries and the region.

At the 3rd LOGIN General Assembly held in December 2015, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were identified as a topic that had cross-cutting relevance for the learning activities of LOGIN. It was, thus, decided that SDGs be taken up as an area for knowledge exploration in 2016.

This literature review is a step undertaken by the Secretariat towards this end. The review seeks to collate and synthesize the ongoing discourse on the SDGs, highlighting the importance of localisation of the Goals. It aims to provide a ready reference through a collation of available literature on various aspects of implementing the Goal, including localisation, for LOGIN members.

The review highlights discussions so far about indicators on SDGs, importance of data, institutional and financial mechanisms for SDGs, potential responsibilities for local governments in SDGs and different approaches for localisation of SDGs and some recent examples of localisation of SDGs. The review does not aim to provide critical analysis of the literature on SDGs or provide recommendations on specific approaches for localisation of the goals.

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Contents

Abbreviations	iv
Background	1
Moving towards the SDGs	1
The goals	2
Indicators	3
Big data	4
Institutional and financial mechanisms	4
Localisation	6
Decoding the meaning of localisation	7
Localising at the level of cities	8
Possible responsibilities under localisation	9
Donor support for localisation	10
Local indicators	11
Examples of localisation	12
Conclusion	13
References	14

Abbreviations

CMDGs	Cambodian MDGs
CSDGs	Cambodian Sustainable Development Goals
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
GoN	Government of Nepal
IAEG-SDGs	Inter-Agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators
LDC	Least Developed Country
LOGIN	Local Governance Initiative and Network
MDBs	Multilateral Development Banks
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UCLG	United Cities and Local Governments

Background

At the 3rd General Assembly of LOGIN held in December 2015, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were identified as a topic that had cross-cutting relevance for the learning activities of LOGIN. It was thus decided that SDGs be taken up as an area for knowledge exploration in 2016. This literature review is a step undertaken by the Secretariat towards this end. The review seeks to collate and synthesise the ongoing discourse on the SDGs, highlighting the importance of localisation of the Goals. It aims to provide a ready reference through a collation of available literature on various aspects of implementing the Goals, including localisation, for LOGIN members. The paper does not aim to provide critical analysis of the literature on SDGs or provide recommendations on the approaches for localisation of the goals.¹

Moving towards the SDGs

In September 2000, the United Nations (UN) adopted a set of 8 goals known as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to guide and drive international efforts towards poverty eradication and development. The MDGs were given a 15-year timeframe of 2000-2015.² As the timeframe was approaching its end, the MDG Summit Meeting of 2010 requested the UN Secretary General to launch consultations for a future development agenda. This idea came to be known as the Post-2015 Agenda.³ The Rio+20 Summit, organised by the UN in 2012, brought out the mandate of formulating a set of sustainable development goals. The outcome document of the Summit titled 'The Future We Want' suggested the creation of an Open Working Group that would formulate a set of draft SDGs.⁴ The Group submitted its draft proposals to the UN General Assembly in July 2014.⁵ The finalised SDGs were formally adopted by the General Assembly in September 2015.

Advocates of the SDGs argue that they provide an effective method of mobilising action in order to achieve some important development priorities.⁶ Another significant argument regarding the SDGs has been made in comparison to the MDGs – the motto 'leaving no one behind' of the SDGs shows 'a clear intent to move away from the former approach of picking off the low-hanging fruit, criticised under the MDGs.⁷ Two suggested elements of 'leaving no one behind' are: tackling non-income inequality, particularly of people at the intersection of multiple inequalities, and ensuring that marginalised groups progress faster than the average.⁸

¹ This paper serves as a first input to LOGIN membership. Further work in updating the report and analysis of approaches may be undertaken based on interest and demand from LOGIN membership.

² From MDGs to SDGs. Sustainable Development Goals Fund, 2015. Available online at <http://www.sdgfund.org/mdgs-sdgs>, accessed 7 January 2016.

³ SDC. 2015. Swiss Position on a Framework for Sustainable Development Post-2015. Bern: Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.

⁴ The Future We Want. United Nations, 2012. Available online at <http://www.un.org/en/sustainablefuture/>, accessed 10 January 2016.

⁵ UN. 2014. UN General Assembly's Open Working Group Proposes Sustainable Development Goals. United Nations Press Release, 22 July.

⁶ See, for instance, Sachs, Jeffrey D. 2012. From Millennium Development Goals to Sustainable Development Goals. *Lancet* 379, 2206-2212.

⁷ Stuart, Elizabeth and Jessica Woodroffe. 2016. "Leaving no-one behind: Can the Sustainable Development Goals Succeed where the Millennium Development Goals Lacked?" *Gender and Development* 24(1): 70.

⁸ Ibid.

The SDGs have been hailed as an opportunity to engage with the private sector in realising development priorities (indeed Goal 17 envisages private partnerships for sustainable development).⁹ The wide consultations that were carried out around the world before the adoption of the SDGs have led to considerable confidence amongst development stakeholders in having the SDGs to streamline efforts towards priorities that are universal.

Meanwhile, the critics point out that the SDGs are over-ambitious for the timeframe set and sometimes utopian in the articulation of the goals, especially the halving of poverty by 2030.¹⁰ The merging of the poverty alleviation agenda (espoused in the MDGs) and the sustainable development agenda (advocated by the Rio Summits) in the SDGs received substantial criticism. This was because the inclusion of global public goods, such as climate and oceans, were perceived as diluting the conciseness and measurability that a limited set of goals could offer.¹¹

The goals

The SDGs consist of 17 goals and a total of 169 constituent targets within these goals.¹² The goals are related to:

- **Poverty:** End poverty in all its forms everywhere
- **Hunger and Food Security:** End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
- **Health:** Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
- **Education:** Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
- **Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment:** Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
- **Water and Sanitation:** Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
- **Energy:** Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
- **Economic Growth:** Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
- **Infrastructure, Industrialisation:** Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation
- **Inequality:** Reduce inequality within and among countries
- **Cities:** Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
- **Sustainable Consumption and Production:** Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
- **Climate Change:** Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

⁹ Mancini, Matteo and Maria del Mar Maestre Morales. 2015. *The Private Sector and the Sustainable Development Goals*. Brighton: IDS Sussex.

¹⁰ See, for instance, Easterly, William. 2015. *The SDGs should Stand for Senseless, Dreamy, Garbled*. *Foreign Policy*, September 28.

¹¹ Knoll, Anna. 2013. *The Post-2015 Development Framework: Issues, Challenges, Opportunities*. Brussels: Belgian Development Cooperation.

¹² http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E.

- **Oceans:** Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
- **Biodiversity, Forests and Desertification:** Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss
- **Peace and Justice:** Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
- **Partnerships:** Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

Overall, responsibilities related to public service delivery as envisaged in these Goals are as numerous and diverse as in the MDGs. Inequality has been given increased focus, after the MDGs were criticised for not paying sufficient attention to this issue.¹³ Sustainability-related goals have been disaggregated with separate goals related to production and consumption, ocean, forests and climate. Two notable changes in the SDGs compared to the MDGs are the inclusion of transparent and accountable institutions, and the call to partner with the private sector in realising government goals.

A less obvious shift from the MDGs to the SDGs was the process that was adopted behind the formulation of the SDGs. The Open-Working Group¹⁴ conducted consultations with stakeholders – states parties, non-governmental organisations, donor agencies, private sector etc. – around the world before the final goals were chalked out. Further, the MDGs largely depended on conventional sources of funding such as the Official Development Assistance, while the SDGs call for the mobilisation of all available domestic and international sources for development finance.

Indicators

The Inter-Agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDGs)¹⁵ set up by the UN Statistical Commission is currently engaged in the preparation of detailed indicators to monitor and evaluate the progress achieved on the goals. The group has identified a set of steps for evaluation that begins with an annual SDG progress report to support follow-up actions. Data will be gathered by national statistics institutions, with the intention of promoting country ownership. The data will be aggregated at the regional and global levels. A strategic plan for statistical capacity building is also being planned to build data capacities of national governments.¹⁶

For the 169 Targets, a total of 229 indicators have been currently proposed. These are meant to be global indicators, which will provide an overarching framework for all other sets of indicators. Countries can produce their own indicators at regional, national and sub-national levels based on these indicators. Going by the motto ‘leaving no one behind’ of the SDGs, much emphasis has been placed on data disaggregation so that data at the level of specific social groups can be analysed.

¹³ Fukuda-Parr, Sakiko. 2010. “Reducing Inequality – The Missing MDG: A Content Review of PRSPs and Bilateral Donor Policy Statements”. *IDS Bulletin*, 41: 26–35.

¹⁴ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/owg.html>.

¹⁵ <http://unstats.un.org/sdgs/iaeg-sdgs/>.

¹⁶ IAEG-SDGs. 2016. Update on the Work of the IAEG-SDGs: Informal Briefing on the Global Indicator Framework for SDGs. New York: IAEG-SDG.

Big data

The use of large volume of data from diverse sources, popularly known as big-data,¹⁷ is being explored as a means of information towards the implementation of SDGs. A task team has been constituted under the aegis of the World Bank constituting private mobile companies, technology corporations, think tanks, universities and UN agencies to steer this process. This includes the World Economic Forum, Overseas Development Institute, Data-Pop Alliance, NASA, Paris 21, Positium, UN Economic Commission for Europe, UNESCAP, ITU, Global Pulse, UNDESA, UPenn, MIT, Harvard and Colombia's National Administrative Department of Statistics.

The task team is in the process of identifying those targets that can avail big data, and preparing big-data specific indicators under them. The work of the task team started with a survey of past and present big data techniques to understand the characteristics of such data that can be used to monitor and achieve SDGs, identify data sources, understand scope for replication and assess the feasibility of proposed projects. The survey identified that eradication of poverty and hunger are two goals where maximum big data projects are present. Some of the major sources of big data identified were: mobile phone data, satellite imagery data, social networks, financial transaction data etc.¹⁸

There are also discussions going on about an 'urban data revolution', especially by stakeholders in civil society and local governments, to accompany the SDGs. The Urban Institute proposes three new concepts related to this process – permission, incentive and institutionalisation.¹⁹ This research argues that it is important to address permission constraints and competing incentives that local government face while handling data. Without this, efforts towards data collection at the local level are bound to fail. The authors also argue that permission and incentive are important dimensions in the institutionalisation of a data-driven approach to local governance founded on evidence-based policymaking.

Institutional and financial mechanisms

Overall, the SDGs rely on the existing government mechanisms to implement the goals and monitor the targets. For instance, data collection has been identified as the responsibility of national official statistical systems. This leads us to the obvious question of capacities. Recognising the importance of capacity building in steering the implementation of the SDGs, Goal 17 recognises that adequate efforts must be taken to build the capacities of all levels of government.

A recent Oxfam report notes that compared to the MDGs, the SDGs would need an additional USD 1.5 trillion every year for their successful implementation. Based on an analysis of country budgets, the report recommends that some of the measures required to raise the increased revenue would be: doubling tax revenue, doubling concessional development cooperation, and raising a substantial sum through innovative public financing. Reorienting all public spending towards attacking inequality and ensuring

¹⁷ Big-data is extremely large volume of data sets – both structured and unstructured (as text and numeric data, sensor data, audio, video, click streams, log files and more) that may be analysed computationally to reveal new insights, patterns and trends, especially relating to human behaviour and interactions. Many of the early adopters characterised big data in terms of 3 Vs: Volume (very large databases), Velocity (speed of change in data-sets) and Variety (diverse nature of structured and unstructured datasets). Data-Pop Alliance (www.datapopalliance.org), the coalition on big-data and development by Harvard Humanitarian Initiative, MIT Media Lab and ODI however advocates big-data as the union of 3 Cs: Big-data Crumbs, Capacities and Communities.

¹⁸ Amapro Ballivan. 2016. Using Big Data for the Sustainable Development Goals. Washington DC: World Bank.

¹⁹ Edwards, Ben, Solomon Greene and G Thomas Kingsley. 2016. A Political Economy Framework for Urban Data Revolution. Washington DC: The Urban Institute.

greater transparency and accountability would be integral to these measures.²⁰ Interestingly, the report finds that 77% of MDG spending was done by governments, and not donors, and that government spending was more aligned towards national policies than donor funding.

A significant moment in the discussions on the Post-2015 agenda was the Third International Conference on Financing for Development. The heads of states and representatives of countries assembled in Addis Ababa to develop a global framework for financing international development between 13 and 16 July 2015. The conference affirmed that nationally-owned development strategies, supported by 'integrated national financing frameworks' would be at the core of the efforts. A 'new social compact' was recognised at the conference – that of 'fiscally sustainable and nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including [social protection] floors'. Indeed social protection was identified as one of the key components of ending poverty in the SDGs that were adopted later that year. On the fiscal aspect, the conference affirmed that additional resources would be required to finance social protection measures and that such resources would be mobilised through new, coherent funding modalities.²¹

The financing requirements for the SDGs are so vast that concerted efforts from all corners is required. A seven-pronged strategy suggested is: (1) Get everyone on board so that all possible players – governments, companies, foundations, individuals – mobilise resources, (2) Mobilise domestic resources through efforts in trade and taxation, (3) Involve the private sector, (4) Make sure everyone is accountable, (5) Increase the scale of public funding, (6) Find the appropriate source of finance for each goal, and (7) Take care that one size doesn't fit all: where private capital can be utilised for spending on SDG-related purposes.²² Another study recommends the following measures to boost finance for the SDGs: (1) boost market-related lending by Multilateral Development Banks, (2) boost access to market-related public finance more generally, (3) incentivise private finance and align it with development objectives, (4) minimise allocation distortions inherent in public climate mitigation finance, (5) balance public-private roles across and within countries.²³

Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) including the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, African Development Bank, Asian Development Bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, European Investment Bank and Inter-American Development Bank have produced a joint statement titled 'From Billions to Trillions: Transforming Development Finance', which makes proposals for collective action after the Third International Conference on Financing for Development that took place in Addis Ababa in 2015. The title is inspired by the actual requirement – to increase development funding from billions to trillions by mobilising all resources. The report recognises that this would need the enhancement of public domestic resources as well as private sector finance. The 'financing solutions' proposed would fall into four categories: (1) Adding, pooling, enabling: taxes, flows, policy measures that are not traditional finance instruments etc., (2) debt-based instruments: these instruments are expected to make public finance available earlier through the issuance of bond in international capital markets, (3) financial risk-management mechanisms: these instruments utilise public funds that incentivise private funding through reduction of market risks. Example are derivatives, guarantees, and blended finances etc., (4) results-based financing: here, finance is provided if results are achieved. The banks consider this as an instrument that can promote accountability and ownership.²⁴

²⁰ Oxfam. 2015. Financing Sustainable Development Goals: Lessons from Spending on the MDGs. Oxford: Oxfam.

²¹ UN. 2015a. Outcome Document of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development: Addis Ababa Action Agenda. New York: United Nations.

²² Larsson, Naomi. 2016. Seven Ideas on How to Finance the SDGs. The Guardian, 26 January.

²³ Kharas, Homi, Annalisa Prizzon and Andrew Rogerson. 2016. Financing the Post-2015 Development Goals: A Rough Roadmap. London: Overseas Development Institute.

²⁴ World Bank. No Date. Financing the Post-2015 Development Agenda. Washington DC: World Bank. Available online at <http://www.worldbank.org/mdgs/post2015.html>, accessed 29 June 2016.

The strategies of the MDBs can be criticised for advocating the available modes of capital finance, except that they are being leveraged for the SDGs. Many instruments proposed, such as derivatives, were found to be extremely risky in the 2008 financial crisis. It could be a matter of debate to what extent public finance should be used to shield private finance from market risks in the pretext of funding the SDGs. In addition, formulating instruments to spur local resource mobilisation does not find mention in the MDB strategy.

Localisation

Even before the SDGs became finalised, there were ample arguments put forward to consider governance, including local governance, as an essential element of the Post-2015 Agenda.²⁵ The local government also interacts with citizens more often.²⁶ This makes it a natural site to implement the SDGs. The text of the 17 SDGs do not contain an explicit call to adapt the goals at the level of the local governments. Nevertheless, local government do find mention in many of the goals, notably: (a) Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable, and (b) Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

The importance of local governments in the successful achievement of the goals has been recognised amply. For instance, a synthesis report by the UN secretary general on the SDGs notes that ‘it will be important to consider that many of the investments to achieve the SDGs will take place at the sub-national level and led by local authorities.’²⁷ The Third International Conference on Financing Sustainable Development asserted the importance of local governments in fiscal terms by committing to ‘scale up international cooperation to strengthen the capacities of municipalities and other local authorities’ and ‘support local government in their efforts to mobilise revenues as appropriate.’²⁸ These instances support the case for increased recognition of the local governments in achieving the SDGs.

A report of the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) notes that local governments should be seen as not just implementers, but also policymakers, catalysts of change and the level of government best placed to link global goals with local communities.²⁹ This argument is in line with the classic case for empowerment of local governments that it is the level of government that is closest to people, in possession of largest amount of information at the local level, and thus best placed to implement development programmes. Another argument in support of giving local governments greater space in implementing the goals is made by the Centre on International Development and Governance, which points out that local governments can be the best partners in implementing the SDGs because they can be subject to an ‘accountability sandwich’ – between the people and the national governments.³⁰ This is in line with the concern of Goal 17 that accountability and transparency needs to be promoted at all levels. The role of local government needs to be supported by the civil society, which can play four major roles in the process of localisation: represent the voice of the poor and the marginalised, be the agents of accountability, act as service delivery agents and involve actively in data collection, reporting and monitoring.³¹

²⁵ See for instance, Boex, Jamie. 2015. A Post-2015 Local Governance Agenda. Urban Institute.

²⁶ DeLoG. 2015. Localising Public Services and Development: The Local Public Sector’s Role in Achieving Development Goals in Health and Education. Bonn: DeLoG Secretariat.

²⁷ UN. 2015b. Synthesis Report of the Secretary General. New York: United Nations, Article 94.

²⁸ UN. 2015a. Outcome Document of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development: Addis Ababa Action Agenda. New York: United Nations, Article 34.

²⁹ UCLG. 2012. The Role of Local and Regional Authorities in the UN Development Agenda Post-2015. United Cities and Local Governments.

³⁰ CIDG. 2015.

³¹ ACSC. 2016. The Roles of Civil Society in Localising the Sustainable Development Goals. African Civil Society Circle.

Decoding the meaning of localisation

Although there is a broad understanding of the importance of local governments, the meaning of localisation is still under debate. In general, while localisation could mean simply implementing national goals at the local level, it could also be interpreted as the formulation of context-specific goals and targets at the local level. The examples in the following section would show that localisation is being interpreted in either ways from place to place. The Global Task-Force of Local and Regional Governments, which has been involved in the consultations on localising the SDGs, defines localisation as ‘the process of taking into account subnational contexts in the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, from the setting of goals and targets to determining the means of implementation and using indicators to measure and monitor progress. Localisation relates both to how local and regional governments can support the achievement of the SDGs through action from the bottom up and how the SDGs can provide a framework for local development policy’.³²

Curiously, the term localisation is also being used for adaptation of the global goals at the local level. For instance, the Ministry of Planning of the Government of Cambodia envisages the formation of Cambodian Sustainable Development Goals (CSDGs) as its strategy towards ‘localisation’.³³ This is in line with its earlier strategy of localising the MDGs through the formulation of Cambodian MDGs (CMDGs).³⁴ This paper however uses localisation in a more specific sense that foregrounds the role of sub-national governments, especially the local governments, in the achievement of the SDGs.

The consultations that went behind the Post-2015 Agenda brought out some key recommendations for the localisation of SDGs. Consultations under ‘The World We Want’ banner indicated that decentralisation, subsidiarity and good governance as essential to implementing the post-2015 Agenda; local governments should have a key role in international development cooperation, transfer priority areas to local governments (including territorial and urban planning, access to basic services for all, social safety nets and promotion of economic opportunities), allow local governments to raise own revenue, among others.³⁵

Local governments have time and again tried to make their voices heard on many forums in the consultative processes that took place before the adoption of the SDGs. Many of them came together under the Global Taskforce of Local Regional Governments for Post-2015 and Habitat III. The Taskforce brought together various forums that represented local governments such as the United Cities and Local Governments and Commonwealth Local Government Forum with development partners such as UNDP and UN Habitat to explore ways of foregrounding the role of local governments in the Post-2015 Agenda.³⁶ The Taskforce has come up with a road-map to localise the SDGs, aimed at ‘local and regional governments and their associations to implement and monitor the SDGs and to influence national policy-making with a view to creating an enabling environment for action at local and regional level’.³⁷

³² Global Task-Force of Local and Regional Governments. 2016. Roadmap for Localising the SDGs: Implementing and Monitoring at Subnational Level. Global Task-Force of Local and Regional Governments.

³³ Pagnathun, Theng. 2015. SDGs Pre-Localise, Localise Process and SDG Implementation in Cambodia. Phnom Penh: Ministry of Planning.

³⁴ Cooperation Committee of Cambodia. 2015. An Analysis of Cambodia’s Preparedness for the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goals: Challenges, Opportunities and Financing.

³⁵ UN. No Date. Key Messages and Process on Localising the Post-2015 Agenda. New York: United Nations World We Want Campaign.

³⁶ Slack, Lucy. 2015. The Post-2015 Agenda: A Role for Local Government. Commonwealth Journal of Local Governance 16: 4483.

³⁷ Global Task-Force of Local and Regional Governments. 2016. Roadmap for Localising the SDGs: Implementing and Monitoring at Subnational Level. Global Task-Force of Local and Regional Governments.

The road-map has four parts: awareness-raising, advocacy, implementation and monitoring. Awareness-raising is critical to increasing engagement of citizens and local communities in achievement of SDGs. The local governments also need to include SDGs in their own policy frameworks to make it relevant locally. Through campaigns and educational activities using conventional and social media, local governments can empower citizens to participate in achievement of SDGs. Local government associations can launch supporting campaigns at regional and national levels and help local governments in awareness raising activities. Advocacy activities should focus on developing a national consensus with participation of local governments on SDGs. Further, advocacy should also focus on creating an enable environment for promoting decentralisation and strengthening local governments and promotion of multi-level and multi-stakeholder partnerships. Implementation should begin with establishing priorities relating to 17 SDGs based on local contexts, needs and resources. It will be essential to synergise local and regional developmental plans with national strategy on SDGs. Building capacities of local governments, developing institutional and governance frameworks and mobilising local resources will be important activities for localising SDGs. Monitoring processes will require development of a set of localised indicators specific to local context and ensuring that data gathered at local level is used in National level monitoring and reporting on SDGs. Localisation of SDGs is critically dependent on participation of all local stakeholders in implementation with the support of local governments.

Localising at the level of cities

One level where the localisation of SDGs is receiving wide attention and discussion is the cities. The Overseas Development Institute points out that how cities manage urbanisation in the next 15 years will determine government's ability to achieve most of the SDGs.³⁸ There are two reasons to emphasise cities. Firstly, urban populations are growing fast in cities of Asia and Africa, with many of them facing increased threats of environmental disasters and climate change. Secondly, city governments can play an important role in implementing the SDGs in a general sense. The authors point out that "although the level of decentralisation varies by country, broadly speaking local governments have responsibilities for delivery of basic services (e.g. water, sanitation and land-use decisions leading to housing provision, among many others), that are clearly linked to many of the goals".³⁹ Also, given the motto 'leaving no one behind', paying attention to the city becomes indispensable as a large share of city populations live marginalised lives, in slums and under informality. Inequality is as relevant a problem in the cities as earlier and continues to drive large sections of city populations to live without social protection. Their study of Mumbai city used the SDGs targets to measure progress on a few aspects such as access to clean water and sanitation. This work thus demonstrated that SDGs can be used to monitor the achievement of the targets at the city level.

Another forum – the Local Authorities Major Group – has also been a part of the negotiations that argued for the inclusion of local governments in the Post-2015 Agenda. Lucy Slack notes that the importance of local governments has been well-recognised early in one of the outcome documents of the negotiations – the World We Want – thus:⁴⁰

- Empower local governments and their associations through capacity strengthening and enhanced institutional effectiveness to own and achieve development goals.

³⁸ Lucci, Paula and Alaina Lynch. 2016. *The SDGs at City Level: Mumbai's Example*. London: Overseas Development Institute.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Slack, Lucy. 2015. *The Post-2015 Agenda: A Role for Local Government*. *Commonwealth Journal of Local Governance* 16: 9.

- Stimulate community involvement and participation in local development strategies.
- Establish suitable financing mechanisms to support strengthening of capacities and building effective institutions.
- Localise resources along with localising of SDGs

The SDGs translate into public services, many of which would eventually percolate down to the level of local governments in the wake of adoption of the goals by national governments. Some critics have expressed discontent with the absence of explicit reference to the local governments and local civil society, or data support systems for the local level.⁴¹ Nevertheless, the local nature of many of the public service delivery functions undisputedly foreground the role of local governments in the realisation of the Goals.⁴² In addition, local institutions can also play a major role in monitoring progress at the subnational level, promoting broad-based ownership of development programmes, transmission of knowledge, promoting local solutions to development problems etc.

Possible responsibilities under localisation

A few possible responsibilities of the local governments under the SDGs are⁴³⁻⁴⁵:

Goal	Role of Local Institutions
1. End poverty in all its forms	Local economic development, quality delivery of welfare schemes, maintenance of shelters
2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agricultures	Local management of water and natural resources for food security, local improvement of transport and infrastructure for agriculture, local management of land
3. Ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all at all ages	Slum improvement, awareness building on various ailments, urban planning, managing environmental pollution, monitoring of local health centres
4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all	Education is a direct responsibility of subnational governments in many countries. Local governments at the lowest tier can monitor and evaluate the efficiency of teachers, progress of students and infrastructure facilities in schools
5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls	Local planning and local policing for preventing violence against women, encouraging greater participation of women in elections, capacity building of women representatives, advocating gender budgeting at the local level to allocate more resources for women's empowerment
6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all	Improving service related to clean water and sanitation

Contd...

⁴¹ Satterthwhile, David. 2014. "Guiding the Goals, Empowering Local Action." SAIS Review of International Affairs 34(2): 51-61.

⁴² UNDESA. 2015. Policy Integration in Government in Pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals: Report of the Expert Group Meeting Held on 28 and 29 January 2015. New York: United Nations Headquarters.

⁴³ UCLG. 2015. The Sustainable Development Goals: What the Local Governments Need to Know. United Cities and Local Governments.

⁴⁴ Lucci, Paola. 2015. Localising the SDGs: What does it Mean in Practice? London: Overseas Development Institute.

⁴⁵ Slack, Lucy. 2015. The Post-2015 Agenda: A Role for Local Government. Commonwealth Journal of Local Governance 16: 4483.

Goal	Role of Local Institutions
7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all	Identify local energy needs and innovate local, scientific solutions
8. Economic growth and full and productive employment and decent work for all	Local employment, administering employment guarantee programmes, exploring new areas such as tourism for employment
9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation	Construction and maintenance of local roads, bridges, drainage and other infrastructure
10. Reduce inequality within and among countries	Administration of welfare programmes, rationalisation of property taxes.
11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable	Provision of public services in slums, planning for land use, waste disposal, controlling pollution
12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns	Reducing the use of non-biodegradable goods, ensuring sustainability practices in local production centres.
13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts	Formulate local adaptation and mitigation programmes
14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development	Ensuring the sustainable use of marine resources through sustainable fishing, protection of mangroves etc.
15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems	Planning for nature conservation and checking environmental pollution
16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all level	Participatory budgeting and planning, facilitating social audits
17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development	Mobilising own source revenue, partnership with private sector and civil society, experimenting with open data and other tools of improving data capacities at the local level

Donor support for localisation

The debates on discussions on localisation must take into account the role of donors. UNDP for instance has come up with an integrated framework as a 'support from the UN system' to the various stakeholders involved in SDG implementation. The report notes that one of the essential requirements for the effective implementation of SDGs would be 'glocalisation' – 'equal reflection of local and global considerations'.⁴⁶

Glocalisation is important as local institutions and actors can provide legitimacy to global and national initiatives by grounding them in the local context through participation and community ownership. Although the report is primarily directed at country offices of the UN agencies, the framework can provide rich insights on localisation to other stakeholders as well.

⁴⁶ UNDP. 2016. An Integrated Framework to Support Local Governance and Local Development. New York: United Nations Development Programme, p. vii.

Essentially, the framework envisages the support given to local government systems for localisation into six key inputs and six outputs. The six inputs are: facilitation of democratic accountability, strengthening rule of law and security, development of necessary administrative capacity for development management and service delivery, facilitation of necessary fiscal empowerment and resources, availability of spatial information, and acceleration of social capital formation. The outputs envisaged are: local and regional associations empowered with meaningful autonomy and embedded in effective accountability networks; equitable and effective delivery of goods and services; inclusive decision-making process involving women and men; a secure environment where the rule of law prevails; sustainable use and management of natural resources; and increased economic opportunities and jobs for men and women. The framework is expected to result in two final outcomes: improving the quality of life for local residents and building state-society relationships at the local level.

As with many logical frameworks, this input-output-outcome model too could be criticised for practicality on ground and links between input, outputs and outcomes. For instance, it is not clear how much donor support can strengthen rule of law and security at the local level, when these elements are related to larger political situations at the national level, especially in fragile and conflict affected places. It is also not clear how the six chosen inputs alone can contribute to the two outcomes proposed, when, in fact, improved quality of life and strong state-society relationships depend on myriad other factors. Also embedded in the framework is the assumption that local and regional governments around the world are in a position to make decisions to improve the quality of life of their citizens, and all that they need is a bit of extra support from outside. In fact, one of the biggest challenges that localisation could face is the limited powers of local and regional governments to make independent decisions, ensuring which would require large-scale governance reforms directed towards devolution.

The UNDP has published a report titled as ‘An Integrated Framework to support local governance and local development’⁴⁷ that mentions a set of approaches that can be followed to localise SDGs. It argues that any framework for localising SDGs will require a multi-dimensional approach.

Such an approach would need to combine area based on territorial approaches with a focus on local communities and building capacities of local government institutions. Such an approach would have multiple advantages of being able to increase engagement of communities and mobilise social capital, develop accountability and inclusiveness in decision making, increase adaptability and flexibility to produce locally relevant plans and facilitate an integrated approach for concerted action for achieving development goals. Such an approach has the potential to strengthen state delivery systems and create sustainable local institutions.

However, such multi-dimensional approach will also have multiple challenges such as coordination across different levels of the state, complicated implementation process and slow results. This approach would require high investment in capacity building of local communities and local institutions and also an enabling legal framework for strong local governments.

Local indicators

While discussions are underway on the indicators to measure the SDGs targets, clarity is still required on local level indicators. There are voices that are arguing for local indicators to measure progress as national-level indicators do not give details of the exact situation on ground. Criticising the work of the UN Statistical Commission on the indicators, David Satterthwaite argues that the draft list of indicators

⁴⁷ UNDP. 2016. ‘Integrated Framework to Support Local Governance and Local Development.

proposed by the Commission ‘fails to distinguish between indicators that are valuable for national and state governments and indicators that are valuable for local governments’.⁴⁸ This is especially relevant in the case of urban local governments as many of the urban development goals contained in the SDGs would fall on those governments. Satterthwaite gives the following examples of SDG indicators that would need local data: population covered by social protection systems and households with access to basic services (under SDG 1), indicators on under-nutrition and infant, child and maternal mortality (under SDGs 2 and 3), road traffic fatal injury deaths (under SDG 3), gender equality in education (SDGs 4 and 5), water, sanitation and electricity provision (SDGs 6 and 7) etc. Satterthwaite also criticises the SDGs for emphasising the building of capacities at national level, but not at the local level.

Examples of localisation

It is too early to assess examples of localisation of SDGs as the timeframe for their implementation has just begun. However, a few efforts that indicate the willingness to initiate steps towards localisation can be discerned in a few isolated cases.

For instance, the government of the province of Sindh in Pakistan has set up an SDG unit under the Planning and Development Department to steer the implementation of SDGs in the province. The government also intends to provide sufficient financial resources to the local governments for implementing SDGs at the lowest level of government. This will be materialised through new allocations under the upcoming Provincial Finance Commission.⁴⁹

The government of the state of Odisha in India is preparing a Vision 2020-30 document that would set out a strategy to achieve the SDGs by the end of 2030. The government intends to make this step more practical by formulating two additional strategies: a seven-year strategy for the period 2017-24 to convert the long-term strategy into implementable policies, and a three-year action document for the period 2017-20 to align the policies with available financial resources.⁵⁰ The Planning and Convergence Department would act as the nodal agency in charge of spearheading the process. As a first step, SDG cells would be set up in each department of the government. The 17 goals have been clustered into seven thematic areas, and seven working groups have been established to flesh out detailed programmes each thematic area.⁵¹

The government of the state of Assam in India, similarly, has come up with a strategy known as Assam 2030, which contains a formal plan to move towards the SDGs. Under the strategy, the state government intends to set up SDG cells in all departments and government-run institutions to streamline their activities towards the goals.⁵² In addition, an SDG centre has been established in the Assam Administrative Staff College with the purpose of providing public servants with an orientation on the content and purpose of the goals.

⁴⁸ Satterthwaite, David. 2016. *Where are the Local Indicators for the SDGs?* London: International Institute for Environment and Development.

⁴⁹ Sindh Launches SDG Unit, *The Dawn*, 22 December 2015. Available online at <http://www.dawn.com/news/1227899/sindh-launches-sdgs-unit>, accessed 18 June 2016.

⁵⁰ Odisha Formulating Vision 2020-30 to Set Development Goals, *Business Standard*, 22 June 2016. Available online at http://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ians/odisha-formulating-vision-2020-30-to-set-development-goals-116062201132_1.html, accessed on 25 June 2016.

⁵¹ Odisha Preparing Vision 2020-30. *The Statesman*. 23 June 2016. Available online at <http://www.thestatesman.com/news/odisha/odisha-preparing-vision-2020-30/149930.html>, accessed 25 June 2016.

⁵² Planning and Development Department. 2015. *Assam 2030 in Light of the SDGs*. Dispur: Government of Assam.

The Government of Nepal in a report on the implementation of the SDGs notes ‘as the localisation of SDGs at the sub-national and local levels is critical for universal, equitable and inclusive outcomes, it is equally important to have political setups at these levels that are willing and capable of handling the development agenda’.⁵³ Thereby the report recognises the importance of institutions at the sub-national level in localisation. The importance of localisation is underlined by the report in terms of the need to reach remote areas and marginalised ethnic groups. The report also makes the significant remark that the idea of ‘capacity first, devolution later’ should be avoided; capacity building and devolution of powers should go hand-in-hand while implementing the SDGs at the local level.⁵⁴

The examples demonstrate that at the sub-national level, provincial/state governments are leading the efforts towards localisation.

Conclusion

This literature review attempted to provide a glimpse into the ongoing discussion on the SDGs. From the perspective of local governments, localisation of the goals was seen as an imperative, given the responsibilities that would fall on their shoulder and their proximity to people. A number of challenges were noted in the review. These included: (1) Data availability: Although realisation of the objective of ‘leaving no one behind’ would require data that is disaggregated at the local level, such data is currently not available. It remains to be seen how the ‘big data’ projects would prove helpful in this regard; (2) Unclear local indicators: Although the SDGs are intended to be global goals that inspire regional and national goals, it is still not clear how they can be adapted at the local level and how corresponding local indicators can be developed, (3) Finance: The Third International Conference on Financing Sustainable Development had recognised the importance of transferring resources to the local level. However, the various means and channels of generating local finance as well as transferring resource to the lower levels still need to be fleshed out. (4) Devolution: The success of local governments becoming meaningful players in the implementation of the SDGs would depend to a considerable extent on the powers available to them. Contexts where deconcentration remains the norm would face significant challenges in allowing local governments formulate their own strategies towards localisation of the goals. Future discourse on the SDGs should focus on addressing these challenges and achieving the goals through the equal partnership of local institutions.

⁵³ Government of Nepal. 2016. Sustainable Development Goals 2016-30: National (Preliminary) Report. Kathmandu: National Planning Commission, Government of Nepal.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

References

Sustainable Development Goals 2016-2030: National Preliminary Report Government of Nepal, National Planning Commission: 2015

The Report assesses the national situation by each SDG from national perspectives, examines their relevance in the national context and provides inputs for national planning, dialogue, and shows a pathway for implementation.

Further, this report is expected to guide Nepal in operationalising the SDGs at all levels—national, regional and local. It contains goal-wise indicators and their quantitative benchmarks. Nepal is also aspiring to graduate from the least developed country (LDC) by 2022; and thus the SDGs indicators set by the Government of Nepal (GoN) will help in achieving these novel goals.

http://www.npc.gov.np/images/download/23rd_Jan_final_for_print_Sustainable_Development_Goals.pdf

Localising the Post-2015 agenda: What does it mean in practice? Paula Lucci: 2015

This report looks at what it means to localise SDGs in practice and role of local governments in SDGs. It stresses that the role of local authorities in the implementation of the SDGs can be acknowledged and emphasised together with the fact that local authorities that have to deliver basic services in areas of high need require adequate capacity and resources to do so. It is for individual countries to work out what 'localising' means when thinking about implementation of a new set of goals, including coordination between different levels of government for the delivery of the goals.

Overseas Development Institute (ODI)

<https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/9395.pdf>

The Roles of Civil Society in Localising the Sustainable Development Goals African Civil Society Circle: 2016

In January 2016, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) replaced the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as the main international mechanism for guiding development in all United Nations member states until 2030. These global goals concern a wide range of targets, including poverty alleviation, economic growth and environmental objectives. National governments, however, cannot realise these ambitious goals on their own. Collective and individual efforts at the local, national and international levels are necessary. Moreover, governments will need the broad involvement of other stakeholders, such as the private sector, the general public and civil society organisations (CSOs). This paper identifies four critical roles that CSOs can play in the "localisation" of these goals. These roles were discussed and validated by two African think tank dialogues that involved civil society actors as well as other local and international experts.

African Civil Society Circle

<http://www.acordinternational.org/silo/files/the-roles-of-civil-society-in-localizing-the-sdgs.pdf>

The Sustainable Development Goals: What Local Governments Need to Know

United Cities and Local Governments: 2015

This note highlights some of the potential relevant targets for each of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for local governments. The local governments are critical to SDGs because they are policy makers, catalysts of change and the level of government best-placed to link the global goals with local communities.

United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG)

https://www.uclg.org/sites/default/files/the_sdgs_what_localgov_need_to_know_0.pdf

Roadmap for Localizing the SDGs: Implementation and Monitoring at Subnational Level Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments, UNDP and UN Habitat: 2016

This roadmap aims to support local and regional governments and their associations to implement and monitor the SDGs and to influence national policy-making with a view to creating an enabling environment for action at local and regional level. The roadmap is not a prescriptive 'how to'; rather, it covers a range of strategies for localising SDGs that can be adapted to the specific contexts and needs of different cities and regions.

UN HABITAT

<http://unhabitat.org/roadmap-for-localizing-the-sdgs-implementation-and-monitoring-at-subnational-level/>



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