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Accelerating implementation of the SDGs and Agenda 2063: leveraging the six transitions to scale up action at national and local levels

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Background: 2023 SDG Summit

- Held in September 2023, halfway through the period that UN member States agreed upon to achieve the SDGs
- The review of progress showed that advances towards most of the SDG **indicators were not on track to achieve the Goals.**
- On current trends, **only 15% of the targets will be met by 2030.**
- **In Africa, only 6% of the SDGs are on track**
- Lack of progress due to diverse and complex challenges – **slow growth, pandemics, debt and cost-of-living crisis, conflicts, climate change, etc.**



Background: 2023 SDG Summit, con't

- These challenges made clear the imperative to **correct the course and pick up pace and achieve the SDGs**
- The Summit adopted a **Political Declaration** that includes a road map for getting back on track through **ambitious, just and transformative actions**
- **Major transformations in different spheres** are required to **trigger structural changes** capable of accelerating progress towards the achievement of the SDGs by 2030.



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Transformative Transitions to Accelerate Progress Towards the SDGs

- Key criteria: potential catalytic, multiplier and accelerator effects across the SDGs
- The UN Sustainable Development Group identified six transformative transitions:
 - Food systems
 - Energy access and affordability
 - Digitalization (connectivity, artificial intelligence)
 - Education
 - Jobs and social protection, and
 - Addressing climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution.



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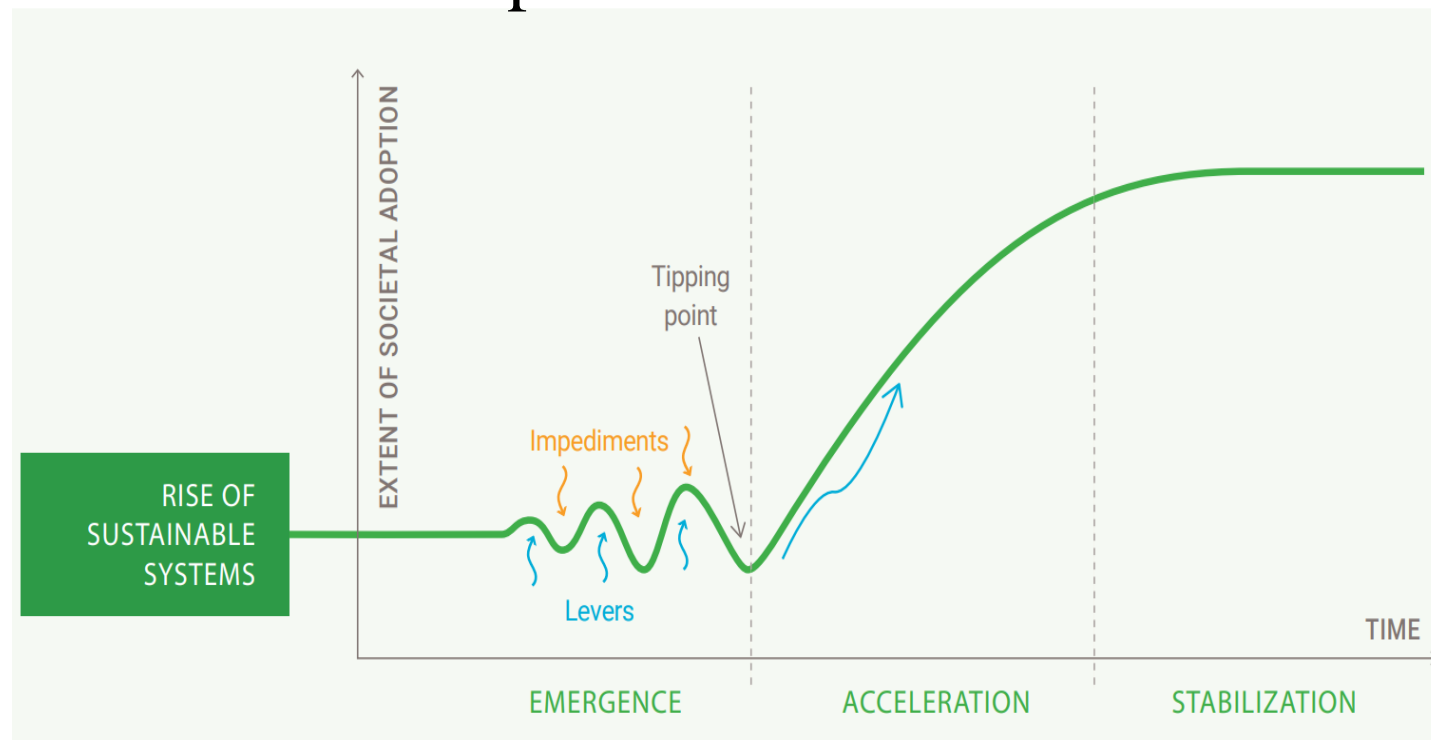
Transformative Transitions to Accelerate Progress Towards the SDGs

- These **transitions are not a new agenda**. They are a framework that recognizes the **integrated, universal, and indivisible nature** of the 17 SDGs
- They are characterized by **long-term change** and **based on disruption and innovation**
- They entail **simultaneous transformation** of **multiple systems**, (e.g. energy, agriculture) and **dimensions** (e.g. technological, organizational, cultural and political)
- They **create winners and losers**, hence **must be just**, offer **alternatives to potential losers**, and **must be implemented with support from all parties**



Transitions to sustainable systems tend to follow a pattern –GSDR 2023

Three transition phases



- 1st : an emergence phase for a new system is instigated by an innovation. It could be technological, organizational, behavioral - that creates political impetus for a shift to the new technology or behavior or organization.
- 2nd : when a 'tipping point' is reached, a phase of acceleration sees rapid uptake of the new technology or modality. This is supported by government incentives, innovation, rapid deployment and scale-up of technology, and increased demand by voters and consumers.
- 3rd : a period of stabilization where the new technology or system is entrenched and becomes an accepted part of life.



(i) Foods Systems Transition

- Food systems: All the **elements** (environment, people, inputs, processes, infrastructures, institutions, etc.) and **activities** that relate to the production, processing, distribution, procurement, preparation and consumption of food, and the outputs of these activities, including socio-economic and environmental outcomes.
- Food systems transformation: contributes towards affordable healthy diets and protecting the environment.
- Food systems **contribute to one-third** of global **human-induced GHG emissions** and are the **main driver of biodiversity loss**.



Foods Systems Transition

- Catalyzing food systems change requires operating across **diverse sectors, scales, and stakeholders**, and requires:
 - improving land and ocean management (SDGs 15 & 14)
 - reducing the environmental impact of agriculture
 - strengthening ecosystem resilience to climate and environmental change
 - ensuring that food production is sufficient and equitable for all to guarantee global food security



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Contributions to the SDGs

- This Transformation is key to the achievement of SDG 2 (end hunger), SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), SDG 13 (Climate Action), SDG 14 (Life Below Water), and SDG 15 (Life on Land)



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SDGs supported by the Food System Transition





(ii) Energy Transition

- Energy transition: the process of **shifting the global energy system from fossil fuels to modern, renewable and clean energy sources in a just, orderly and equitable manner** (COP28 Agreement). Its a transformational effort, a system overhaul, based on the rapid upscaling of available technologies while innovating for the future. **Paris Agreement goals key -**
 - Net zero emissions by 2050. Decarbonization of the economy by reducing CO2 emissions
 - Electrifying consumption and digitalizing grids to increase energy efficiency
 - Mitigating trade-offs in energy supply and demand, etc



Contributions to the SDGs

- Contributes to achievement of several SDGs, e.g.
- SDG 9 Innovation- development of new technologies and value chains in associated industries
- Increases productivity, with gains in energy efficiency
- Opens up new labour market opportunities, creation of green jobs
- Reduces the use of fossil fuels, GHG emissions, pollution

SDGs supported by the Energy Transition





(iii) Digital Transition

- **Process by which economic stakeholders integrate digital technologies into all aspects of their activity, transforming models of consumption, production and social interaction.**
- It entails the development and use of ICTs, applications and services, to close the digital divide and empower people and societies for sustainable development



Contributions to the SDGs

- Potential to increase productivity, open new markets, create new industries and new jobs
- Improves the well-being of the population with new and better services e.g., e-government, online learning, telemedicine services, autonomous vehicles
- Enables more environmentally sustainable models of production
- Improves agriculture productivity- automation of sowing and harvesting
- Promotes LNOB, gender equality, empowerment of women and girls and their full, equal and meaningful participation in the economy and society

SDGs supported by the Digital Transition





(iv) Education Transition

- **Education transition**: the process or set of processes that comprise the transformation of education systems with a view to protecting the rights of individuals throughout the life cycle, in particular the right to education
- Its goals include improving prospects for social and economic well-being, reducing inequality, strengthening social mobility and cohesion and preparing societies for the green and digital economies of the future.
- It is based on human rights and dignity; social justice; inclusion; protection; cultural, linguistic and ethnic diversity; and shared responsibility and accountability.



Contributions to the SDGs

- Investing in education a key determinant of labour market and health outcomes
- It enables people living in poverty to benefit more from and contribute to growth, and to enhance their resilience to shocks
- Key to combating inequalities and promoting socioeconomic mobility

SDGs supported by the Education Transition





(v) Jobs and Social Protection Transition

- **Moving towards societies capable of creating decent jobs and establishing sustainable, universal social protection systems, which would close existing access gaps and help to ensure adequate living standards for all.**
- Promotes access to quality employment, income above the minimum wage and social protection, particularly for women and young people.
- A key piece to this is the **Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions**, launched in September 2021
- Initiative aims to ensure **global financing** to create **400 million jobs** and extend social protection to **4 billion people currently without coverage**.



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Contributions to the SDGs

- Helps to reduce poverty, hunger and equality gaps, in particular gender gaps
- Increases a population's chances of accessing quality health, education, water and sanitation services
- Strengthens innovation and sustainable production processes linked to action on climate change
- Fosters the development of sustainable cities and communities in a context of peace, justice and strong institutions, as well as partnerships



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SDGs supported by the Jobs and Social Protection Transition





(vi) Climate Change, Biodiversity Loss and Pollution Transition

- **Entails limiting the average global temperature rise to no more than 2 °C above pre-industrial levels, while continuing to pursue the 1.5 °C target**
- **Includes reversing biodiversity loss and pollution from GHG emissions, which cause climate change and its environmental consequences**
- The climate transition lowers vulnerability by enhancing risk management, reducing the frequency of future extreme events and climate hazards
- It requires managing trade-offs
- To LNOB, the climate transition must be just!



Contributions to the SDGs

- **1-in-5 people are at risk of an extreme weather event in their lifetime**
- Contributes to eradicating poverty and hunger, improvements in health and education outcomes, job creation
- Development (economic and scientific advancement, e.g. development of breakthrough technologies that contribute to a low emissions society)
- Protects infrastructure investments (buildings, roads, ports, etc)
- Fosters equality and peace (reductions in internecine conflicts over resources such as water and grassing lands), and improving the planet's ecosystems

SDGs supported by the Climate Transition





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Science-Policy Interface Foci for Advancing the SDGs

- **Coherent Strategies for SDG Interactions:** need strategies that align economic, social, and environmental goals by identifying synergies and minimizing conflicts between SDGs.
- **Utilizing Scientific Models:** helps policymakers assess the long-term impact of policies and design future-focused strategies. Strengthening and expanding these models can accelerate SDG progress by providing insights for better decision-making.
- **Developing Practical Tools for Policymakers:** tools that translate scientific findings into actionable solutions are essential for integrated decision-making. Co-develop these tools with stakeholders to ensure more effective and inclusive SDG implementation.



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Transformative Transitions to Accelerate Progress Towards the SDGs

- Transitions must be planned in an **integrated manner, with intelligent foresight** to help **drive shifts across policy and regulatory frameworks**
- To achieve durable progress on one, it's imperative to make substantial gains on the others
- This means designing and implementing a **new generation of public policies** that are informed by a **clear national vision, strategic governance** and **anticipatory management + capacities for innovation and foresight**
- **Adapt global scenarios to fit local realities** while ensuring they remain flexible and responsive to the priorities of local policymakers



Importance of Foresight

- **How do we get from where we are now to where we want to be?**
 - i) **Make Sense of Change** – what is happening? Identify developments that might appear insignificant today but could have a big impact tomorrow (importance of horizon scanning)
 - ii) **Imagine Possible Futures** – involves **building scenarios** and identifying **what a desired future might look like** + potential **risks & opportunities**
 - iii) **Take Action** – what transformations need to happen to bring about the desired future? Involves having a **Change Agenda** (6 transitions), **Back Casting**, & **Wind Tunnel Testing** (stress-test policies/plans/strategies)



Importance of Foresight, con't

- Requires systems thinking – socioeconomic, ecological and technological systems
- Strategic visioning and planning require reliable, accurate, timely, disaggregated data
- Strong institutional capacities for implementation at all levels
- Adequate financing, budget alignment, and right set of incentives
- Whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches that are inclusive and participatory



Way Forward

- Identify **national entry points for SDG acceleration**
- Scale up synergistic policies that can help **advance on multiple fronts, reduce trade-offs, and manage short-term transition costs** to specific groups and communities.
- Avoid excessive focus on programming for **past problems** and **anticipate the challenges of the future**
- The global crises food, fuel, finance, disease pandemics, climate change make it clear that **the future is not an extrapolation of the past**



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Way Forward

- “Development practitioners must be in the vanguard, not the rear-guard, when it comes to trends in population, migration, urbanization, natural resource depletion, and science and technology or become obsolete. Today’s world is moving too fast, is too complex, and inaction too detrimental not to make futures analysis the leading edge of development thinking.” -E. William Colglazier, 4th Science and Technology Adviser to the Secretary of State, US



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A low-angle, upward-looking photograph of the United Nations Secretariat Building in New York City. The building's dark, grid-like facade of windows dominates the frame, extending from the bottom left towards the top right. The sky is a vibrant blue, filled with scattered white clouds. In the lower right corner, there are several overlapping, semi-transparent white geometric shapes, including rectangles and an L-shape, which appear to be part of a design overlay.

Thank you.