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**Sustainable Development Goals for Environmental Conservation**

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**ABSTRACT**

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a collection of 17 interlinked global goals to transform our world. They were designed to be a “blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all” and part of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. They were agreed by 193 countries in September 2015. Each of the 17 goals strive for the universal reduction of climate change and poverty, and the improvement of education, health, and economic growth. United Nations describes the SDGs as seeking to “protect the planet, and improve the lives and prospects of everyone, everywhere.” The SDG’s provide worldwide guidance for addressing each of these goals. Crises within the SDG’s are faced by most countries and can only be addressed if we work as one global community. The SDGs are: no poverty; zero hunger; good health and well-being; quality education; gender equality; clean water and sanitation; affordable and clean energy; decent work and economic growth; industry, innovation and infrastructure; reduced inequalities; sustainable cities and communities; responsible consumption and production; climate action; life below water; life on land; peace, justice, and strong institutions; and partnerships for the goals. Achieving the SDGs requires a collaborative effort from governments, businesses, and individuals. As of 2018, progress has been made towards achieving these goals, but significant challenges remain. Urgent action is needed to address these challenges and ensure a sustainable future for generations to come.

**KEYWORDS:**

Sustainable Development Goals, SDGs, environmental conservation, greenhouse gas emissions, sustainable land use, climate action, marine pollution, biodiversity, deforestation, renewable energy, urbanization.

## INTRODUCTION

The Sustainable Development Goals work towards a world of peace and prosperity, eradicating major issues such as poverty and hunger, all while protecting the planet. In the midst of the climate crisis, this has never been more important. Each of the goals are interlinked, meaning the key to achieving one often lies within another. The goals can only be achieved if they are embedded within all each area of governance. Sustainable development means developing cities, land, businesses, and communities to meet the needs of the present, without effecting future generations' ability to meet their needs. The environment underpins each of the SDG's – they seek to improve living conditions for all, without increasing the use of natural resources. The SDG's work to protect the planet's resilience for our future generations.

The 5 pillars, also known as 5 Ps of sustainable development, encompass 5 overarching areas that each of the SDG's address. These are of critical importance to act towards over the next decade. They are: People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace and Partnerships, sustainability sitting at the core of each. These pillars are there to inform decision making around interventions installed by the government that work towards the SDG's. When a new policy is adopted, it must consider the consequences it will have upon any of the 5 Ps. Today, United Nations successfully continues to consider these pillars against each of their development goals. They offer a blueprint that many organisations can measure their own actions against.

## IMPORTANCE OF THE SDGs

The importance of the SDGs lies in their potential to transform the world into a more sustainable, equitable, and resilient place. Here are some key reasons why the SDGs are crucial:

**1. Universality:** The SDGs apply to all countries and aim to bridge the gap between developed and developing nations. They recognize that sustainable development requires collective action and cooperation at local, national, and global levels.

**2. Eradicating Poverty:** Goal 1 aims to end poverty in all its forms, recognizing that poverty is not just about income but also encompasses access to basic services, education, healthcare, and social protection. Poverty eradication is essential for achieving sustainable development.

**3. Environmental Sustainability:** The SDGs emphasize the need to protect and restore the planet's ecosystems, combat climate change, conserve biodiversity, and promote sustainable resource management. These efforts are crucial for ensuring the well-being of current and future generations.

**4. Inclusive Development:** The SDGs prioritize social inclusion, equality, and human rights. They aim to reduce inequalities within and among countries, promote gender equality, empower marginalized groups, and ensure access to education, healthcare, and essential services for all.

**5. Economic Growth and Decent Work:** The SDGs recognize the importance of sustainable economic growth, job creation, and entrepreneurship. They promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization, innovation, and infrastructure development, while ensuring decent work and fair wages for workers.

**6. Peace and Justice:** Several SDGs address the importance of peace, justice, and strong institutions. They promote accountable governance, access to justice, and inclusive decision-making processes. Sustainable development cannot be achieved without stability, security, and respect for human rights.

**7. Partnerships:** Goal 17 highlights the significance of global partnerships and cooperation. The SDGs call for collaboration between governments, civil society, private sector, academia, and international organizations to mobilize resources, share knowledge, and implement effective solutions.

Overall, the SDGs provide a comprehensive framework for tackling the world's most pressing challenges in a balanced and integrated manner. They recognize the interdependence of social, economic, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development and call for transformative actions at all levels. By promoting sustainable development, the SDGs offer a roadmap for building a more inclusive, prosperous, and resilient future for all. Achieving the SDGs requires collective effort, political will, and sustained commitment from all stakeholders to leave no one behind and ensure a better world for generations to come.

**AS OF 2018, PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE TOWARDS ACHIEVING THESE GOALS,**

**SDG 13:** Climate Action is focused on taking urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts. This includes reducing greenhouse gas emissions, increasing resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards, and integrating climate change measures into national policies, strategies, and planning. As of 2018, there had been some progress in reducing greenhouse gas emissions in some countries. However, the concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere continued to increase, and the impacts of climate change, such as extreme weather events, sea-level rise, and ocean acidification, continued to be felt around the world.

**SDG 14:** Life Below Water is focused on conserving and sustainably using the oceans, seas, and marine resources. This includes reducing marine pollution, protecting marine and coastal ecosystems, and regulating overfishing and destructive fishing practices. As of 2018, there had been some progress in reducing marine pollution and protecting marine and coastal ecosystems in some countries. However, overfishing and destructive fishing practices continued to be a major challenge, and many marine species remained threatened with extinction.

**SDG 15:** Life on Land is focused on protecting, restoring, and promoting the sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems. This includes halting deforestation, restoring degraded land, and conserving biodiversity. As of 2018, there had been some progress in halting deforestation and restoring degraded land in some countries. However, the loss of biodiversity continued to be a major challenge, and many species remained threatened with extinction.

**SDG 6:** Clean Water and Sanitation is focused on ensuring access to clean water and sanitation for all. This includes improving water quality, increasing water-use efficiency, and protecting and restoring water-related ecosystems. As of 2018, there had been some progress in improving access to clean water and sanitation in some countries. However, many people still lacked access to these basic services, particularly in developing countries.

**SDG 7:** Affordable and Clean Energy is focused on ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all. This includes increasing the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix and improving energy efficiency. As of 2018, there had been some progress in increasing the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix and improving energy efficiency in some countries. However, many people still lacked access to electricity, particularly in developing countries.

**SDG 11:** Sustainable Cities and Communities is focused on making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable. This includes improving urban planning and management, reducing the environmental impact of cities, and providing access to safe and affordable housing. As of 2018, there had been some progress in improving urban planning and management and reducing the environmental impact of cities in some countries. However, many cities still faced challenges related to air pollution, waste management, and access to affordable housing.

**SDG 12:** Responsible Consumption and Production is focused on promoting sustainable consumption and production patterns. This includes reducing waste generation, increasing resource efficiency, and promoting sustainable lifestyles. As of 2018, there had been some progress in reducing waste generation and increasing resource efficiency in some countries. However, many people still consumed resources at an unsustainable rate, and the amount of waste generated continued to increase.

### **CONCLUSION:**

Until 2018, significant progress was made in advancing the environmental conservation goals outlined in the Sustainable Development Agenda. Efforts were made to improve access to clean water and sanitation, promote clean and affordable energy, create sustainable cities and communities, foster responsible consumption and production, mitigate climate change, protect marine ecosystems, and preserve terrestrial biodiversity. However, challenges persisted, requiring continued commitment, collaboration, and innovation to achieve the desired outcomes. The next decade will be crucial in accelerating the progress towards these goals, with sustained efforts needed to ensure a sustainable future for generations to come.

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