

Leaders Dialogue 1:
Megatrends Impacting the Achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals

(Tuesday, 24 September 2019 at 17:05 -18.00)

Important changes are taking place at a global scale that impact all our lives and set the stage on which actions to achieve the 2030 Agenda will play out. These trends include population and economic growth, environmental degradation, climate change and developments in science and technology. They are set in motion by human activity and can represent the aggregated impact of individual and collective decisions at various levels. They have ripple effects in a world that is increasingly interconnected through how its natural systems interact, and also through increasing flows of goods, capital, people, information and knowledge.

At a macro-level, these trends are indeed global – however, the ways in which they impact specific populations, communities or countries depend on the context. For example, demographic changes are taking place across the world, but certain regions are currently experiencing rapid growth in numbers of young people, while others face a relatively faster increase in older people. Recent global assessments indicate an accelerating decline in the quality and integrity of natural systems across the world, with a million species faced with extinction, even as areas under protection in some parts of the world are increasing. Critically, trends like biodiversity loss and climate change are reaching tipping points where negative impacts may become irreversible. Rapid advances in science and technology offer the promise of addressing many challenges, but also bring to the fore issues such as increasing inequality across and within countries.

Taken together, these (and other) megatrends indicate that a forward-looking approach to SDG implementation is needed, which anticipates these on-going changes while also taking into account the impact of implementation actions on them.

Objective

This session will consider implementation of the 2030 Agenda in the context of megatrends: the response of governments in planning and adapting SDG actions; opportunities presented by these trends for accelerating progress across multiple goals and targets; and the potential impact of collaborations and partnerships towards more sustainable outcomes.

Guiding Questions

- What are the most critical global trends that are already influencing SDG actions and how?
- How can trends such as demographic changes, technology, global integration be leveraged to maximize positive synergies across the SDGs? What institutional, policy and partnership mechanisms are needed to ensure positive outcomes?
- Are there emerging trends, not fully evident today, but expected to present challenges or opportunities for the 2030 Agenda, five or ten years from now? How can the science-policy interface be strengthened to forecast and better prepare for new challenges?