

Leaders Dialogue 3:
Leveraging Progress Across the Sustainable Development Goals
(Wednesday, 25 September 2019, 11.05 -12.00)

The 2030 Agenda is unprecedented in its level of ambition and range of interconnection across goals and targets, and it will be achieved only when a diverse array of actors – local and national governments, the private sector, academia, civil society organizations, youth and others – work together. The GSDR identifies four “levers of transformation” available for use by these actors: governance, economy and finance, individual and collective action, and science and technology.

Several of these levers are enumerated in the Agenda itself as the ‘means of implementation’, but it is becoming increasingly apparent that they must be deployed in strategic, innovative and integrated ways if they are to reach their transformative potential. At the same time, it is also clear that SDG progress itself can end up improving the efficacy of these levers or how they work together – which is also critically important. Governments, civil society and the private sector can advance the SDGs through effective, transparent and participatory institutions, given sufficient means of implementation: adequate financing from a range of sources (including Official Development Assistance); latest scientific evidence and technological solutions, among others. Likewise, academic and government institutions can strengthen the role that science and technology play in policy making in part by supporting innovative approaches to sustainability science, emphasizing cross-disciplinary partnerships, and by committing support and resources to scientific institutions in the Global South.

Objective

The session will explore how these levers (governance, economy and finance, individual and collective action, and science and technology) can be used in strategic combinations and partnerships to drive the transformations towards sustainable development. Participants will discuss concrete interventions that draw on a mix of policy measures, financial mechanisms, effective partnerships, and insights from science and technology to drive change. The emphasis will be on success stories and approaches that can be transferred from one national or sub-national context to another, including through partnerships, capacity building programmes, city networks, and other collaborations. Difficulties or challenges in operationalizing such initiatives will also be discussed.

Guiding Questions

- How can policy makers use the GSDR “levers of transformation” – governance, economy and finance, individual and collective action, and science and technology – in innovative combinations? How can they overcome the roadblocks to these collaborative approaches?
- How can non-government actors, including business and community leaders, academic institutions, and civil society organizations, team up to drive change and encourage new and increased financial investment in the 2030 Agenda?
- What can the United Nations and other relevant entities do to build capacity in developing countries to fully and effectively deploy the levers of transformation?