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**Title:** The UN's 2030 Sustainable Development Goals

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## **The UN's 2030 Sustainable Development Goals: A Case Study of Australia**

### **BACKGROUND**

189 countries and their respective leaders have gathered and agreed on the adoption of the United Nations' Millennium Declaration in September 2000 (UNDP 2015). The agreements were based on a globalised mindset and unified cooperation targeted on the abatement of grave poverty by following eight objectives (UNDP 2016): (1) Eliminate acute world hunger and poverty; (2) Allow the world to reach universal primary education; (3) Reduce gender inequality and strengthen women; (4) Ensure child Safety and reduce infant mortality; (5) Ensure safe maternal health; (6) Reduce mortality cases related to diseases such as Malaria, HIV/AIDS, and other epidemics; (7) Develop sustainable mechanism for the protection of global environment; and (8) Promote a globalised developing partnership. The agreement has been dubbed the 'Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)' and it is aimed to achieve the established objectives by 2015.

The grand commitment, over a period of 15 years, has expressly and recognizably fruitful in the targeted aim of acute poverty abatement (UNDP 2015). The outcomes of the MDGs achievements are the followings: (1) The people whom are staying under the threshold of acute poverty has reduced to 836 million in 2015 from 1.9 billion in 1990; (2) The people with sources of daily income averaged at four dollars or more has increased threefold since 1991; (3) The people under the threshold of life-threatening hunger scenario has been abated by more than 50 per cent; (4) The number of school-aged children with admission to universal primary education has augmented by 53 million; (5) The reduction in gender inequality and promotion of women's strengthening process in equal access and right has successfully implemented in most consented countries; (6) The reduction in mortality rate of infants under the age of five has been increased by 50 percent; (7) The mortality rate of women during child birth has been reduced by 45 percent in 2015; (8) The mortality rate related to HIV/AIDS infection has been reduced by over 40 percent and 6.2 million fatal cases related to Malaria has been prevented, 13.6 million of HIV patients are being effectively treated in 2015 in comparison to 800,000 in 2003; (9) The mechanism implemented by the United Nations has prevented epidemic breakouts, such as tuberculosis, has saved an average of 37 million people across numerous developing countries; (10) 147 countries has achieved the clean drinking water goals, 95 countries has achieved sanitization goals and 77 countries has achieved both goals, furthermore a combined population of 2.1 billion has access to sanitization; and (11) The Official Development Assistance has increased 66 percent to 135.2 billion from 2000.

The positive outcomes of the MDGs have driven for an extension of the UN programs and other respective long-term objectives (UN 2016). In September of 2015, The collective leaders of the world have gathered and agreed in the establishment of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a larger and extended program of the MDGs. The Sustainable Development Goals are built on the MDG's 8 objectives and

augmented to 17 targeted objectives aimed to reduce acute poverty, encourage sustainability and abate development problems at the roots (UNDP 2016). The objectives of the SDGs are more extended and comprehensive relative to the MDGs. Therefore, the anticipated outcomes are expected to have much wider implications in term of contributions and effects. The unified effort as seen in the SDGs will prompts participated countries to be more comprehensive, sustainable, modernise and diplomatic. The United Nations have stated that the establishment and achievement of the SDGS can be utilised as a milestone that bring into line the UN's unified efforts in coordination and MAP approaches in solving global issues by the provision of generalization and accelerated policy supports (UN 2015).

## **THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SDGS WITH AUSTRALIA'S VALUES AND INTEREST**

The crucial inferences of SDGs on the value and interest of Australia can be measured through the contribution input of the Department of Foreign Affair and Trade. Furthermore, the alignment of each stage and relevant SDGs' objectives on the value of Australia can be clearly identified given the national characteristics (MSI 2014). The prospect to account for contribution input from Australia to the UN's Open Workings Group on the formulation of the SDGs (OWG) and the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) is important in concocting required implementation steps for further transitioning reform. Therefore, an initial point must be included. Irrespective of SDGs, Australia will need to conceptualize future detrimental issues that can be emerged in securing its future prospect as a developed and sustainable nation.

SDGs have more coherent and progressive inferences for developed countries comparing to the MDGs, which are only pertinent to developing and transitioning countries (Thwaites & Kestin 2015). In the context of Australia, issues regarding climate change, sustainability and gender inequality can postulate future detrimental factors to the development, security and welfare of the country. Therefore, Australia must commit with the SDGs' objectives in the areas of promoting environmental sustainability, financial security and development and Official Development Assistance (DFAT 2016). The commitment will be beneficial in both mutual and universal term, accordingly the development in sustainability will promote awareness and financial security, hence ensuring Australia's prosperity in both short and long-term growth (Thwaites & Kestin 2015).

Development in sustainability, as seen in SDGs' objective, can be used to support countries in strengthening economic growth, infrastructure modernization, diplomatic ties, effective governance and environmental security (DFAT 2016). The 2030 SDGs raises regional security cooperation and development, thus supporting Australia in reaching its goals for development and awareness in the Indo-Pacific region as well as prompting wider investment opportunities to include gender equality, operative governance and economic development. The agreements and guiding principles, provided by the UN, is relevant to Australia's current policies in term of effectiveness in practised areas such as economic development, sustainability, security, peace and social inclusion.

Australia has been aggressively contributed in the global efforts along with the United Nations, in term of promoting effectiveness and efficacy in reinforcing the development steps at the highest level. Australia has contributed to the formulation and construct of the SDGs, as well as supported the bridging of collaborated stakeholders around the world (DFAT 2015). The relevant inferences of SDGs on Australia are impacted on two dimensions: the internal dimension that ensure Australia's wellbeing, environmental sustainability and growth. Furthermore, the external dimension that generate different sources of markets that contribute to the constructive economic externalities utilised and formulated by Australia, in the example of reduction in carbon footprint and fossil fuel consumption (Thwaites & Kestin 2015). SDGs is a potent instrument requisite to challenge both regional and global issues, thus Australia must contemplate the areas of effect grounded on emerging occurrences relative to accessibility of resources and limitations. Nevertheless, Australia must contemplate the check and balance amongst many variables such as the economy, ecosystem and society – which postulates strong and coherent sustainability development.

In the case of Australia, some SDGs' objectives are not applicable given the development stage and economic standing. Australia is unlikely to face issues such as severe hunger or acute poverty, access to clean drinking water and sanitization, access to basic universal healthcare and rampant malnutrition. Therefore, coherent objectives of SDGs that Australia will contemplate would be factors such as wellbeing of the population, economic growth, regional security and environmental sustainability.

## **KEY ISSUES**

The three selected objectives that are coherent with Australia's value and interest are affordability and promotion of clean energy usage (objective 7), reduction in gender and social inequality (Objective 10) and sustainability in consumption and production (objective 12). The required achievements of the objectives for Australia are the following: (1) to increase the development rate for affordable and clean energy usage in accordance to objective 7 by twofold; (2) Promoting increase in equitable income for the lower 40 percent bracket and increase social inclusion of indigenous groups in accordance to objective 10; and (3) determining a 10-year guideline for sustainable consumption and production – reducing annual food wastages per Australian as an average Australian waste around fifteen percent or 361 kilogram of food (Thwaites & Kestin 2015).

## **Evaluation of Key Issues**

### *Objective 7: Affordable and Clean Energy.*

Australia is one of the top emitters of carbon footprint per capita in the world, therefore the development and production of affordable and sustainable clean energy are essential (DFAT 2016). The sustainable and accurate usage of water, for example, is crucial in generating a myriad of benefits in the area of ensuring sustainability, cost effectiveness and the mitigation the adverse effects of climate change. The target of

affordable production and usage of clean energy extends to aggressive involvement of unified effort in abating carbon emission and footprint in the energy ecosystem, improving usage of energy efficiency, and reducing non-energy emission from agrarian and manufacturing production (Watson et al. 2014b).

The proposed guideline, associated with affordable production and usage of clean energy, must postulate innovative advancement in making the production of energy less carbon-intensive, thus assuming higher role of sustainable and affordable usage of energy. The guideline must permit universal access to affordable and capacitated clean energy. The advance in less carbon-intensive usage of energy will promote clean energy production and usage as well as nurturing sustainable energy usage across all important sectors in Australia including infrastructure, construction, agriculture and industry, etc (Watson et al. 2014a, 2014b). The abatement in carbon-intensive production and consumption of energy must be nurtured, thus the diversification process of clean energy must be implemented and made accessible.

Scrutinizing procedure and standardised practice should be executed in tracking the progress of the proposed programs and guidelines. Furthermore, the use of sustainable fuel for all modes of transportation must be employed to abate the use carbon-intensive productions of fossil fuel (Watson et al. 2014b). The accessibility in term of production and consumption of clean energy can be disseminated to other manufacturing and agrarian usages, furthermore uncultivated lands can be used for sustainable development project such as reforestation. Usage of fossil fuel can be abated through standardised practices in the manufacturing and agrarian sectors, and this can be nurtured by providing incentives to switch clean energy usage given accessible capital and technology.

The Australian government must invest heavily in the research and development procedure that promote diversification of clean and affordable energy in order to bridge into a less carbon-intensive economy. Advance in innovation and technological breakthrough will be the changing catalyst for households and industries to switch to less carbon-intensive energy usage (Watson et al. 2014b). Consequently, the Australian government must provide short-term incentives and subsidies for boosting the access and usage of clean energy.

*Objective 10: Reduced Gender Inequality and Increased Social Inclusion.*

The 10<sup>th</sup> objective promotes increased income for households or individual at the lower 40 percent bracket of population, but Australia has witnessed the contradictory scenario. The disparity in wealth distribution between different brackets of households, especially the indigenous and the non-indigenous group. This issue brings forth many detrimental factors for Australia in creating solution from the income gap, employment opportunities, welfare and education. Consequently, the alignment of solutions must be advocated correctly in order to shrink the wealth distribution and abate further inequalities. Social inclusion is a key instrument in upholding the level of national opulence, sustainability and. Australia must coerce and

promote fairness and universal access to employment opportunities, human right, distribution of resources and eradication of discrimination (Watson et al. 2014b).

Rising detrimental factors to social inclusions comprise of discrimination and inequitable access in many factors such as public service delivery, employment opportunities, wealth distribution, ethnicity and religions, etc (Watson et al. 2014b). The guideline advocated must warrant equitable and universal access to employment opportunities. Higher weight is placed on the indigenous group, so that the social inclusion gap can be shrunk thus ensuring universal and equitable access for every individual to access the same employment opportunities, human right, healthcare and education. Australia is a developed country thus the effort to eliminate acute poverty by abating the percentage of household bracket with income less than half the national median; abate the percentage of dependent children in low-income household bracket; and abatement of long-term welfare dependents (Watson et al. 2014b). Furthermore, the wealth disparity between rural and urban area must be thoroughly deliberated.

Social inclusion further emphasizes on the abatement of income disparity between male and female cohort, access to childcare and equal employment opportunities for female to pursue senior positions the employment market (Watson et al. 2012b). Additionally, effective guidelines and objectives of the SDGs can target reduced household violence against women and children, so the awareness in this area is crucial in raising both social inclusion and abating inequality.

#### *Objective 12: Responsibility in Consumption and Production*

This twelfth objective is crucial in the case of Australia, given that sustainable consumption and production is important in warranting long-term sustainable development, cost-effectiveness and growth (DFAT 2016). The emerging problem in term of production would emphasize on mining industries, where carbon-intensive usages of natural resource and pollution emitters are detrimental in the nurturing of sustainable and accountable production. The accountability in consumption should initially incorporate universal access to food's affordability and security. The guideline should highlight that production of food must utilise sustainable technological advancement that minimises the risks to the environment, while maximising the production with minimal inputs (Watson et al. 2014b).

In accordance to Watson et al (2014b), the aims of this objective are to contemplate accountable and sustainable production emphasizing on benchmark practices that are productive and sustainable. The benchmark practices will be accessed across different industries in term of sustainable production and reform given a set period of time. Additionally, the benchmark must warrant profitable margin to farmers and Australian export industry given the cost-effectiveness, minimal usage of energy and input, increased research and development by the government and private sectors. The benchmark must abate usage of harmful chemical and carbon-intensive technology (Watson et al. 2014a).

A scrutinizing procedure must be enforced in upholding sustainable benchmark practices that frequently monitored. Consequently, the practice must account for minimal use of input, especially inputs with carbon-intensive quality. The benchmark will be employed at the regional and national level in order to warrant ethical conduct and performance across all industries. The guidelines aligned with this objective can target to promote sustainable and accountable benchmark practices, as well as account for social and environmental impact and provision of incentives to farmer and industries (Watson et al. 2014b).

## **RESPONSE TO REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS**

The assessment of the three objectives are crucial in order to ensure that Australia has monitored its progress relative to the global benchmark, while pursuing sustainable development archetype grounded on the progressive magnitudes of the Australian economic growth, development of society and sustainable environment (Watson et al. 2014a). The growth aspect of the archetype signifies to the level of wellbeing, the societal aspect refers the impartial wealth distribution and environmental aspect refers to the sustainability development. Furthermore, the three magnitudes of the sustainable development archetype are highly inter-dependent thus necessary to achieve simultaneously. The sustainable development archetype will not be fully applicable, even if one of the magnitudes is not achieved. In an example of high quality of wellbeing applied to only one groups with the highest bracket of income, this exhibit low social-inclusion and inequitable distribution of wealth. Therefore, the overall development is not sustainable. Even if two magnitudes of high quality of wellbeing and equitable distribution of wealth are achieved, the environmental magnitude can post unsustainable growth in the long run (Watson et al. 2014a).

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