

Peer Review

Review of: "Appraisal of the UN Sustainable Development Goals: A Look Back and a Way Forward"

Eliudi S. Eliakimu¹

1. Independent researcher

The revised version (Preprint V2) has improved significantly towards its final approval (printing). The case studies for best performing countries per the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) offer a very insightful and thoughts provoking interventions for policy and decision makers in other countries. This review provides comments organized in two groups: (A) editorial comments, and (B) content comments. I request the author to work on all the editorial comments in order to perfect the preprint.

A. EDITORIAL COMMENTS

The Preprint V2 needs some further editorial work as highlighted in the PDF file of Version 2 attached. The areas which require some editorial work are as follows:

Overview of the Preprint

- Line one (*This study aimed to assess the progress made on the SDGs, explore remaining challenges, and*), I suggest to the author to write SDGs in long form and the abbreviation in brackets as follows: "Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- Third and fourth lines (*research design to evaluate the progress, challenges, and future prospects of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The research adopted a multi-disciplinary approach, incorporating*), I suggest to the author to replace "Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)" with its abbreviation SDGs.

Introduction

- First paragraph on page 1 – first line (*The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a collection of 17 interconnected goals*), I suggest to the author to add abbreviation for "United

Nations”, i.e., “UN” between Nations & Sustainable.

- Second paragraph on page 2 – third and fourth lines ((<https://dashboards.sdgindex.org/chapters>). *Appraising progress towards the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is crucial for several reasons. It allows us to understand which goals are on*), I suggest to the author to replace “UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)” with the abbreviations UN SDGs.

Methodology

- First paragraph on page 2 – second line (*prospects of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The research adopted a multi-disciplinary*), I suggest to the author to replace “UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)” with the abbreviation UN SDGs.

A Look Back: Evaluating the Impact of the SDGs

- I suggest to the author to edit heading “Figure 1. Summary of UN Sustainable Development Goals infographic” to be “Figure 1. Summary of UN SDGs infographic”.

2. Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

- First line on page 5 (*The UN SDGs recognize the importance of collaboration between governments, businesses, NGOs, and*), I suggest to the author to write NGOs in its long form and the abbreviation in brackets as follows: “non-governmental organizations (NGOs)”.

SDGs with Limited Progress

2. Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

- Third paragraph on page 6 – fourth line (*over long-term sustainable development goals. Conflicts divert resources away from crucial areas like*), I suggest to the author to replace “sustainable development goals” with the abbreviation SDGs.

Current State of Affairs for the SDGs: A Snapshot

- First paragraph on page 7 – second line (*remaining challenges. Data and reports from the UN Sustainable Development Goals Report*), I suggest to the author to replace “Sustainable Development Goals” with the abbreviation SDGs.

Case Studies: Successful SDG Implementation

SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being

- **Thailand, which is on page 10:**

- Second paragraph – last line (*HIV/AIDS prevention, and maternal and child health.*), I suggest to the author to write HIV and AIDS in their long form and the abbreviations in brackets.
- Last two lines at the bottom of the page (*Thailand: Significant progress in reducing maternal and child mortality rates through initiatives like the Village Health Volunteer program.*), I suggest to the author that the two lines would better be merged at the top of the page where the author started writing about Thailand.

SDG 4: Quality Education

- **South Korea, which is on page 11:**

- First paragraph – second line (*emphasis on STEM education. South Korea has emerged as a global leader in education*), I suggest to the author to write STEM in its long form and the abbreviation in brackets.
- Second paragraph – fourth line (*academic achievement and standardized testing. South Korea invests a significant portion of its GDP in*), I suggest to the author to write GDP in its long form and the abbreviation in brackets as follows: “gross domestic product (GDP)”.

Case Study: Regions with Challenges in Implementing the SDGs

- First paragraph on page 15 – first and second line (*Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) faces significant challenges in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).*), I suggest to the author to replace “Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)” with the abbreviation SDGs.
- First paragraph on page 16:
 - First line (*Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This region is characterized by a large and growing*), I suggest to the author to replace “Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).”, with the abbreviation SDGs.
 - Fourth line (*the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Political instability, conflict, economic disparities, and*), I suggest to the author to replace “Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)” with the abbreviation SDGs.
- Second paragraph on page 16:
 - First line (*High levels of poverty and inequality persist in many Sub-Saharan African (SSA) countries, with*), I suggest to the author to replace “Sub-Saharan African (SSA)” with the abbreviation SSA.

Are We on Track for the SDGs by 2030?

- First paragraph on page 17 – second line (*Sustainable Development Goals Report by UN DESA paints a sobering picture, highlighting significant*), I suggest to the author to replace “Sustainable Development Goals” with the abbreviation SDGs.

A Call for Global Commitment to a Sustainable Future

- First paragraph below Figure 2. *Decision tree for recommended actions to achieve the SDGs* on page 22:
 - Second line (*actions to overcome challenges in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) [28]. It is*), I suggest to the author to replace “Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)” with the abbreviation SDGs.
- Third paragraph on page 23 – first and second line (*The state of our planet and the well-being of humanity hang in the balance. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) offer a roadmap, a beacon of hope, a blueprint for a future where we can*), I suggest to the author to replace “Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)” with the abbreviation SDGs.

A. CONTENTS COMMENTS

The author has raised key issues that are threatening the achievement of SDGs by 2030, in which he has clearly noted that we are not on track to achieve SDGs by 2030. The effects of wars and conflicts on the attainment of SDGs are increasingly being seen. For example, the conflict in Sudan has caused half of the country’s population, i.e., “*more than 24.6 million people experience high levels of acute food insecurity*” [1].

The case studies provide good lessons for other countries to copy and adapt interventions that have been seen to be working in other countries. There are countries that have succeeded in some areas of the SDGs, although not probably to the extent of meeting a case study lesson. For example, Tanzania, in the period of 2015–2022, has succeeded in reducing maternal mortality to 104 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births, in which the success has been contributed to by sustained political leadership with cumulative interventions from 2007 [2], [3].

The call “*to educators: empower the next generation with the knowledge and skills to build a sustainable future.*”, is very timely. The current (including *generation Z* and *generation Alpha*) and next generations need to be empowered to address the current and future challenges [4]. In achieving that, countries need to set up visions that set fertile grounds for the future generations; for example, The United

Republic of Tanzania has recently revised its Development Vision 2025 to get a Draft Tanzania Development Vision 2050 – written in Kiswahili with the title “*Rasimu ya Dira ya Taifa ya Maendeleo 2050, Desemba*”, 2024” [5].

The need for having an “*effective global governance and collaboration*” can’t be more important than now, as the world experiences multiple crises happening concurrently. Improving global governance will boost collectiveness in addressing the expanding geopolitical fragmentation, conflicts, and the need for resources to finance the effects of climate change on our planet [3], [6], [7].

References

[1] Fletcher ER. (2024). One Half of Sudan’s Population Face Extreme Food Insecurity as Famine Belt Widens. Health Policy Watch, Humanitarian Relief, 26 December 2024. Available at: <https://healthpolicy-watch.news/one-half-of-sudans-population-face-extreme-food-insecurity-as-famine-belt-widens/>

[2] Ministry of Health (MoH) [Tanzania Mainland], Ministry of Health (MoH) [Zanzibar], National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), Office of the Chief Government Statistician (OCGS), and ICF. 2022. *Tanzania Demographic and Health Survey and Malaria Indicator Survey 2022 Final Report*. Dodoma, Tanzania, and Rockville, Maryland, USA: MoH, NBS, OCGS, and ICF. Available at:

<https://www.moh.go.tz/storage/app/uploads/public/653/f6e/8e7/653f6e8e709ef921643323.pdf>

[3] Eliakimu E. *Prospects in global, public and one health in the era of syndemic global challenges: political leadership, collectiveness and widening our engagement*. JGPOH 2024, posted: 08/01/2024. DOI : 10.61034/jgpoh-2024-3 <https://jgpoh.com/archives/26311>

[4] Eliakimu E et al. (2024). Editorial at the one-year anniversary of the Journal of Global, Public and OneHealth (JGPOH): Focusing on the survival of planet earth. JGPOH. Posted: 28-11-2024. DOI: 10.61034/JGPOH-2024-21 <https://jgpoh.com/archives/28087>

[5] “*Jamhuri ya Muungano wa Tanzania. (2024). Rasimu ya Dira ya Taifa ya Maendeleo 2050, Desemba*”, 2024. Available at:

https://www.planning.go.tz/uploads/documents/en-1734087225-RASIMU%20YA%20DIRA%20YA%20TAIFA%20YA%20MAENDELEO%202050_.pdf

[6] Kickbusch, I., & Bright, R. A. (2024). Governing global health with a planetary mindset. *BMJ (Clinical research ed.)*, 387, q2822. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.q2822>

[7] Jiang, Y., Zhong, A., Bajaj, S. S., & Guyatt, G. (2022). Reforming global health governance in the face of pandemics and war. *BMJ (Clinical research ed.)*, 378, o2216. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.o2216>

Attachments: available at <https://doi.org/10.32388/4XA15Y>

Declarations

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.