

# Ghana and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

*National Development Planning Commission*





## **Background**

At the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), held in Rio de Janeiro in June 2012, member states agreed to launch a process to develop a set of global development goals as a successor to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). As a follow-up action, the Open Working Group (OWG) comprising 70 countries including Ghana, was established in 2013 with a mandate to propose a set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) “limited in number, aspirational and easy to communicate, addressing all three dimensions of sustainable development (social, economic and environmental)”. A 30-member Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Financing for Sustainable Development (ICEFSD) was also formed to propose a set of approaches to raising the needed financial resources towards implementation of the SDGs.

Through a process of intergovernmental negotiations, and with input from relevant stakeholders and expertise from civil society, the scientific community and the United Nations system, the OWG produced a draft report in June 2014 for consideration at the 68th United Nations General Assembly. The report included 17 goals and 169 targets. On 10 September 2014, the UN General Assembly (UNGA) adopted a resolution making the OWG’s proposal the “the main basis for integrating SDGs into the Post-2015 Development Agenda, while recognising that other inputs will also be considered in this process at the 69th session of the UNGA. Intergovernmental negotiations on the draft OWG proposal began in January 2014 and were expected to end in July 2015. It was also expected that the mechanism for financing the SDGs would be adopted at the 3<sup>rd</sup> International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD) scheduled for 13-16 July 2015 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The conclusion of the OWG and FfD negotiations will pave the way for the adoption of the Post-2015 Development Agenda by member states at the UN General Assembly in September 2015.

### **Box. 1**

#### **List of SDGs accepted by the UN General Assembly in September 2014**

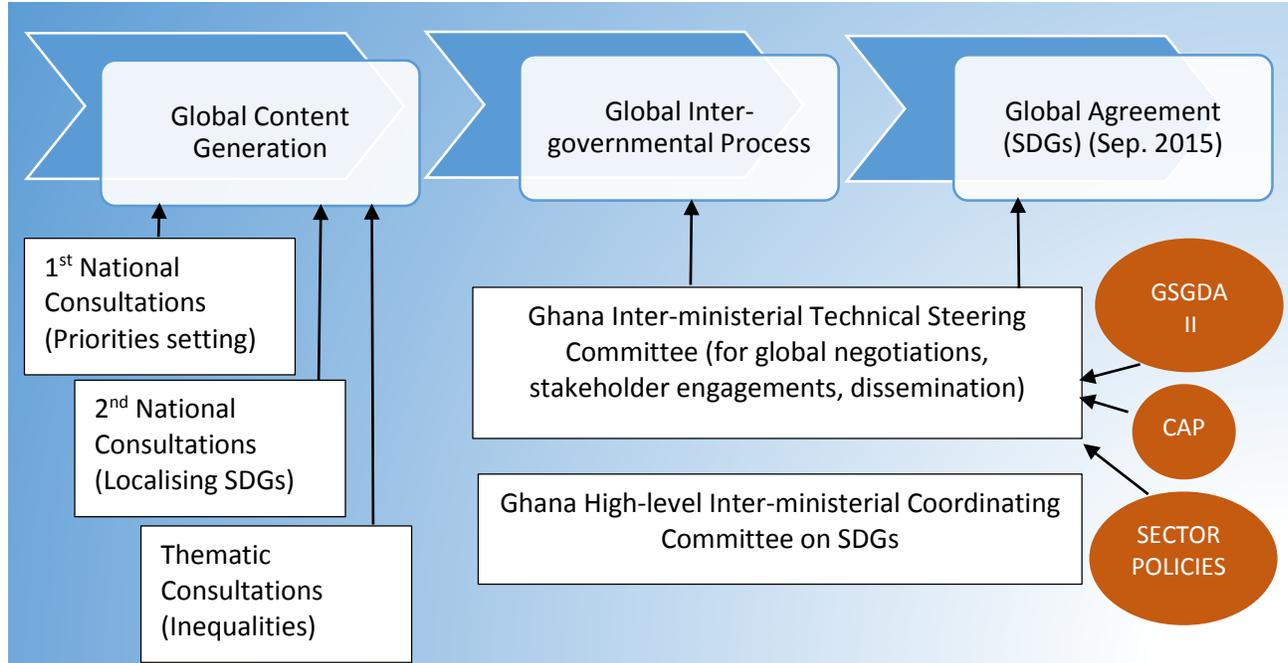
|         |   |
|---------|---|
| GOAL 1  | End poverty in all its forms everywhere.  |
| GOAL 2  | End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.                         |
| GOAL 3  | Ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all at all ages.   |
| GOAL 4  | Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.                 |
| GOAL 5  | Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.  |
| GOAL 6  | Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.                                       |
| GOAL 7  | Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.   |
| GOAL 8  | Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all. |
| GOAL 9  | Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.            |
| GOAL 10 | Reduce inequalities within and among countries.   |
| GOAL 11 | Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.   |
| GOAL 12 | Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.   |

|         |   |
|---------|---|
| GOAL 13 | Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.*   |
| GOAL 14 | Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.   |
| GOAL 15 | Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss. |
| GOAL 16 | Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.            |
| GOAL 17 | Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.   |

### ***Post-2015 Development Agenda Activities in Ghana***

Ghana has played a major role at both national and international levels in defining the post-2015 development agenda. Figure 1 below shows the various activities that Ghana has been involved in at different stages of the Post-2015 Development Agenda formulation process.

**Figure 1:** *A schematic representation of Ghana's involvement in the Post-2015*



### ***First National Consultations***

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The Post-2015 Development Agenda process in Ghana began with the first round of national consultations in 2013. Led by the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) in partnership with the UN country team, these consultations solicited views on the priorities that should be the focus of the post-2015 agenda. Two key objectives of the consultations were to stimulate broad national debate on these priorities and to provide opportunities for marginalised sections of society to participate in the global debate and policy processes connected with the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

During the consultations, participants were keen not just to express their views on the content of the agenda, but were also interested in understanding how it would be implemented, including the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders. Some of the key implementation issues raised included ownership, localisation, participation, capacities, monitoring and accountability systems and partnerships. A list of the top 12 priority issues identified by participants is attached as Annex 1.

### ***Second National Consultations***

Following the success of the first round of consultations on the post-2015 agenda, a second round of national consultations was organised in 2014. This time, the focus was on the means of implementation and the consultations sought to identify and explore critical elements that would ensure the successful implementation of the post-2015 agenda at local level. See Annex 1 for the key factors identified by participants.

### ***Thematic Consultations***

Ghana and Denmark jointly coordinated global consultations on inequalities. The final meeting was held in Copenhagen and was jointly chaired by the then NDPC Chair and the Danish Minister for Foreign Affairs. As a follow up, Ghana, in collaboration with UNDP and various partners, hosted a Pan-African Conference on Inequalities from 28 March to 3 April 2014. The theme for the conference was “Tackling Inequalities and Promoting Structural Transformation in Africa”.

### ***Inter-Ministerial Technical Steering Committee***

In February 2014, the Ghanaian government established an Inter-Ministerial Technical Steering Committee (TSC) to review the initial 19 focus areas proposed by the OWG for the post-2015 agenda. The TSC evaluated the focus areas and made proposal to the OWG to ensure that they reflected Ghana’s situation and aspirations. The TSC has subsequently discussed and proposed amendments to all the documents sent out by the OWG. These discussions have formed the basis of Ghana’s position at intergovernmental negotiations at the UN. The TSC also provided a platform for different government agencies and institutions as well as civil society organisations to make inputs and recommendations that reflect national priorities.

### ***High-Level Inter-Ministerial Coordinating Committee***

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The High-Level Inter-Ministerial Coordinating Committee (HLICC) was formed in February 2015 to provide policy direction and political backing to the work of the TSC. The key objectives of the HLICC were to ensure greater coordination among the state agencies participating in the Post-2015 Development Agenda process and identify national priority issues that could be canvassed for inclusion in the SDGs. The Committee is also supervising the transition from the negotiation to the implementation phase of the post-2015 agenda.

### ***Committee on Financing for Development***

The third round of consultations on financing for development (FfD) took place in July 2015 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, with a particular focus on the SDGs. As with the TSC, the goal of the committee working on the FfD is to ensure that critical priority financing issues are factored into the debates on financing the post-2015 development goals.

### ***Role of NDPC***

NDPC has been actively involved in the post-2015 process both locally and internationally. The Commission is represented on the TSC and has contributed to defining Ghana's position on the post-2015 and SDG targets. Staff from the Commission have also taken part in the intergovernmental negotiations held at United Nations headquarters. In line with its mandate, NDPC will assume a leading role during the implementation of the Post-2015 Development Agenda in Ghana. The Commission will coordinate and report on SDG-related activities in the country, and provide technical support to implementing agencies where required. Some of the key activities that the Commission will undertake include:

### ***Dissemination/public engagement***

The Commission, together with the TSC and other stakeholders, will carry out a number of activities across the country to create public awareness and galvanise support for the implementation of the SDGs. These activities will provide opportunities for members of the public to make suggestions for the implementation strategy. Parliamentarians, political parties, community-based organisations, youth groups, faith-based organisations, women's groups, marginalised communities, persons with disability, academia, and professional bodies, among others, will be engaged in the process.

### ***Incorporating SDGs into national plans***

The SDGs will form an integral part of the forthcoming long-term national development plan. The Commission will ensure that the SDGs are properly reflected in subsequent medium-term development frameworks and it will provide relevant guidelines for MDAs and MMDAs to prepare their development plans. NDPC will then review all sector and district plans to ensure compliance with the guidelines and approve them for budgetary allocation.

### ***Monitoring and evaluation***

Together with Ghana Statistical Service and the Cross-Sectoral Planning Groups, the Commission will prepare a list of indicators for tracking the SDGs, as well as other national indicators. The Commission will also develop an M&E framework to collect and collate data from all relevant sources for reporting, in line with the follow-up and review process of the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

## ***Conclusion***

The Post-2015 Development Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide an ambitious framework for eradicating extreme poverty and shifting the world onto a sustainable path, ensuring that no one is left behind. Great effort will be required from the various development actors to implement the SDGs. It will be very important to get everyone working together and creating synergies with orderly monitoring and timely assessment of implementation progress.

Innovative ways of working will be required to ensure successful implementation of the SDGs. Governmental and non-governmental development actors, including faith-based, philanthropic and political organisations, will have to forge strong partnerships to implement, monitor and evaluate the SDGs. We simply cannot continue with business as usual. In addition, access to reliable and useable data will be essential. The great strides made in data collection during the MDGs' era will have to be developed further to provide strong data to support development.

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**ANNEX 1****DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED DURING THE FIRST ROUND OF NATIONAL CONSULTATIONS**

1. Employment for all, including PWDs.
2. Access to quality health service for all.
3. Quality education for all up to secondary level.
4. Food security for all.
5. Inequalities.
6. Environmental sustainability.
7. Strengthened governance at all levels.
8. Population dynamics.
9. Support system for PWDs.
10. Slum upgrading.
11. Address climate change and its consequences.
12. International migration.

**SUCCESS FACTORS IDENTIFIED DURING THE SECOND ROUND OF NATIONAL CONSULTATIONS**

- Stakeholder engagement in planning and social campaigns;
- Targeted education of men and women to eradicate adverse cultural beliefs and practices;
- Transparency and accountability in resource mobilisation and service delivery;
- Timely disbursement of funds for development activities;
- Access to reliable and useable data.