

China leads global efforts to realize UN sustainable development goals for 2030

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Illustration: Xia Qing/GT

The United Nations adopted 2030 Sustainable Development Goals in 2015, which is the most significant consensus reached by the international community, centering on poverty alleviation, green energy, healthcare improvement and other development goals. As a member of the UN, China has in the past years made steady progress to achieving the SDGs.

China's central government integrated the sustainable development goals into the country's national development policy, including the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25). It has also set up an interagency coordination system and constantly released position papers and progress reports on the SDGs.

As a matter of fact, China has made the fastest progress among developing countries on how to realize SDGs at an earlier date. For example, the country of 1.4 billion residents has achieved the poverty reduction goal of the SDGs 10 years before schedule. The per-capita GDP of China is nearing \$13,000 now.

By all metrics, China has accumulated a plethora of valuable experiences in development on the way to realizing the SDGs, providing the global community, the

Global South less-developed economies in particular, with a feasible method to boost development and realize the SDGs.

There exist some challenges and even headwinds, for the world has become increasingly complicated and fragmented, due to Washington's reckless anti-globalization moves. What the world is facing is increasing geopolitical conflicts, intensified major power competition, slow-down in North-South cooperation, and expanding development gap among some countries.

According to the UN statistics, more than 800 million people still have difficulty to feed themselves, while at least 350 million people need humanitarian assistance to avoid starvation and malnutrition. The world's development agenda seems to be drifting away, and the SDGs' momentum is fading.

To help the world realize the SDG goals, China's leadership proposed the Global Development Initiative (GDI) in 2021, which could be considered as the latest guideline and action plan for consolidating global consensus and accelerating global implementation of the sustainable development goals choreographed by the UN.

The GDI has identified eight priority areas, including poverty reduction, food security, pandemic response, development financing, climate change mitigation, digitalization and green development to help realize the UN goals. As a result, more than 100 governments and international organizations have voiced support for GDI. Ever since, China has announced 32 follow-up detailed measures to help promote the implementation of the GDI and the SDGs in a well-coordinated way.

Chinese government believes the humankind today lives in a global village, and real economic growth and better living standards can be achieved only when all countries get hand-in-hand, overcome the challenges before them, and try to achieve a relatively fast economic growth. For the purpose, China also established cooperative partnerships with dozens of regional and international organizations, financial institutions and the NGOs.

To promote the GDI, China organized many activities in cooperation with various parties, including the Anti-corruption Forum on Global Development Cooperation, the Conference on China-South Asia Development Cooperation, the China-Indian Ocean Region Forum on Development and Cooperation, and the International Forum on Hybrid Rice Assistance and Global Food Security. The country also took the initiative to set up the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and the BRICS New Development Bank. In total, more than 3,000 multilateral and bilateral cooperation projects are adopted.

China is taking an active part in bilateral and multilateral free trade agreements, such as the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, and has applied to join the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership. It is the major trading partner of more than 140 countries and regions, and its foreign

investment has maintained stable development. As a matter of fact, China's trade and investment abroad have greatly promoted many countries' economic and social development.

The country is also implementing the G20's Debt Service Suspension Initiative, accounting for the largest amount of suspended debt among all G20 member countries. Through bilateral channels, China has assisted other developing countries to ease their debt burden. And as a matter of fact, no country is beset with a debt trap because of China.

In order to achieve all the targets set by the UN sustainable development goals for 2030, the world must be united and act together. First of all, there is a need to build a global consensus on sustainable development. This year marks the mid-term evaluation of the SDGs.

Now it is high time to uphold true multilateralism, and make good use of the SDGs Summit, the Third South Summit, and the First Forum on Global Action for Shared Development. All countries ought to pay special attention to resolving stark poverty and food insecurity and other issues to create a favorable environment for sustained development.

And, all countries should follow the UN's leadership, and strengthen comprehensive coordination. The UN should play the leading role in reaching the SDGs by pushing forward global development governance, strengthening policy coordination, focusing on consistent and joint actions, which must say no to empty talk.

At the same time, North-South cooperation should be promoted. By adhering to the principle of common but differentiated responsibility, the world's major governments ought to expand multilateral cooperation, seek common ground by setting aside differences on development methods, rules and standards, in order to foster a new type of North-South relationship. Only through consistent cooperation and coordination, could the world act to ramp up concerted efforts to realize all the targets set in the UN sustainable development goals at an earlier date.

Source: Global Times

<https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202306/1293251.shtml>

Discussion Questions:

Which countries should take the lead in the world's sustainable development efforts?
Why?

Is international cooperation an essential and/or effective part of ensuring sustainable development at a global scale? What are some obstacles to this approach?