

**BRINGING THE
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs)
TO LIFE IN GHANA**



AN ASSESSMENT REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION STATUS



CARITAS GHANA

October, 2016

Edited By: Samuel Zan **AKOLOGO**

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AFD	French Development Agency
APR	Annual Progress Reports
AU	African Union
CAFOD	Catholic Agency for Overseas Development
CFfD	Committee on Funding for Development
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
DMTDP	District Medium-Term Development Plan
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
GCBC	Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNP	Gross National Product
GPRS I	Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy I
GPRS II	Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy II
GSGDA	Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda
GSS	Ghana Statistical Service
HIV	Human Immune Virus
IILIC	High-Level Inter-ministerial Committee
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IGN	United Nations Intergovernmental Negotiations on the draft SDGs
ISODEC	Integrated Social Development Center
MDAs	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
MMDAs	Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MESTI	Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology and Innovations
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MFWA	Media Foundation for West Africa
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MLGRD	Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development
NCS	National Catholic Secretariat
NDPC	National Development Planning Commission

NDPS	National Development Planning Systems
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NPOs	Non-Profit Organizations
NTSC	National Technical Steering Committee
ODI	Overseas development Institute
OECD	Organization for Economic and Cooperative Development
OWG	Open Working Group
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SMTDP	Sector Medium-Term Development Plans
TCPD	Town and Country Planning Development
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNMC	United Nations Millennium Committee
UN4U	United Nations Works for You
VNR	Voluntary National Review
WACSI	West Africa Civil Society Institute
WB	World Bank

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

As part of the processes to review the expectations, achievements and challenges of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) implementation at the global level, the United Nations General Assembly in 2012, commissioned a new effort to set a new development agenda for the next fifteen years. The new development agenda, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have been considered by development thinkers as one of the boldest and ambitious effort by the international community to collectively address issues of sustainable development from ecological, social and economic dimensions.

In addition to the global adoption of the SDGs, Ghana's role and expressed commitments at the national launch, has raised citizens' expectations for the implementation of the SDGs. These expectations are noteworthy of careful and sustained scrutiny to assure the country's preparedness, and guarantee citizens' awareness and participation in the implementation process. Such scrutiny also has the potential to ensure that plans and programs at the national level are appropriate; the necessary consultations and engagements with the relevant stakeholders are secured as part of the processes for moving the country towards effective resource utilization for the implementation of the SDGs in line with the global expectations.

Purpose and Objectives of the Study

Caritas Ghana¹ is collaborating with Caritas Internationalis (CI) Working Group on the SDGs and the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD) to assess Ghana Government's commitment and efforts towards a successful implementation of the SDGs by highlighting national level structures and initiatives useful for sustaining national momentum. The study further assesses level of consultation and involvement of relevant stakeholders including civil society and the corporate sector for successful implementation. Key questions of essence to this study include the following: Is there an *enabling environment*² for the realization of the SDGs in Ghana? Will Ghana be able to implement the SDGs?

Policy Considerations

The study concluded that the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) as the lead

¹ Caritas Ghana is a Charity Organization of the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference (GCBC) and member of the global Caritas Confederation. It operates under the National Catholic Secretariat

² An enabling environment for the SDGs implementation is meant the national and subnational level structures, the socio-economic, political and environmental factors, as well as the space for participation and engagement by all relevant stakeholders including civil society, the corporate bodies to ensure successful implementation of the Goals.

agency coordinating national development planning has initiated various national and subnational level consultations with state institutions, civil society, nonprofit and nongovernmental organizations and all relevant stakeholders. The quality of consultations in terms of duration, adequate information for preparation, timing and selection of participants is the real test to pass. There is therefore the need to strengthen and improve the capacity of state agencies and other stakeholder institutions including citizens, civil society groups and media practitioners to be effective in the implementation process for mutual learning and accountability for results.

On the principle of **“leave no one behind”** with the post-2015 development agenda, the basis is that ‘no goal should be considered met unless it is met for everyone,’ and it has been considered as one of the benefits that the global community stand to derive from the SDGs. This means ensuring that every individual achieves the full package of rights and opportunities embedded in the SDGs. In relation to this report, the principle manifests in opportunities for participation from all stakeholders and citizens to assure ownership of the processes and results, while guaranteeing that projects and programs that are implemented reflects on the aspirations and priorities of the masses. The NDPC argues as follows:

Our framework is actually in tandem with the citizens' aspirations. We don't do anything without involving them. And when the framework is ready, because they are supposed to implement, we involve them by way of the plans and budgets that the MMDAs prepare, so that they can implement it to suit their needs and aspirations down there. In fact, we have in-built consultative process even in the District guidelines that we have developed. In preparing the plans, they have to consult the people, and when the plan is even done, they need to go back and tell them why the proposed issues are in or not in the plan. For policy objectives and strategies dealing with national level, and then every sector (we are dealing with about 35 of them) we have prepared development plans showing the programs and projects that needs to be implemented.

(A Senior Officer of NDPC interviewed on 29th July, 2016).

On accountability and the mechanisms for ensuring that Ghana complies with key deadlines and expectation prescribed in the post-2015 development agenda, the Civil Society Platform on SDGs implementation in Ghana is expected to play a complementary role with the NDPC to ensure that mechanisms exist for showing accountability on the part of national leadership on the SDGs:

- Seek avenues to be part of efforts to align, localize and publicize the targets and goals for Ghana's development processes;
- Review the indicators that Ghana adopts and adapts to the national and subnational contexts to guide congruence in plan and program development;

- Support capacity building and strengthening for other key players in the development process such as media practitioners and subnational formal and informal institutions; and
- Continually seek to expand the space for participation at all levels for accountability on institutions charged with specific responsibilities and budget powers.

Conclusion

The activities undertaken to generate this report were not without challenges. Significant among the challenges is the issue of access to institutions and their willingness to share information even on the most useful public interest programs their outfits are undertaking. Given the lessons learnt from the experience with the implementation of the erstwhile MDGs and also the processes that have informed the creation of the 40-year national development framework, at best, Ghana needs political will and leadership to be successful with its development agenda and hence those of the SDGs.



CHAPTER ONE



INTRODUCTION

Background to the Report

As part of the processes to review the expectations, achievements and challenges of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) implementation at the global level, the United Nations General Assembly in 2012, commissioned the effort to set a new development agenda for the next fifteen years (NDPC, 2015). The new development agenda, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have been considered by development thinkers as one of the boldest and an ambitious effort by the international community to collectively address issues of sustainable development from ecological, social and economic dimensions (Beisheim, 2016; Lucci and Lally, 2016). The intergovernmental engagements as well as the participation of different stakeholders in the SDGs review and agenda development processes that was adopted by 193 world leaders in September 2015, can only mean one thing.¹ That is, the 17 goals and its 169 targets in the SDGs can only be considered as the international community's collective resolve to holistically shape global development efforts by addressing well-documented development challenges of poverty, hunger, inclusion and environmental sustainability (Lucci and Lally, 2016; NDPC, 2015; AUECA and UNDP, 2016).

The inclusive approach to the SDGs also meant that Ghana, like several developing countries have partnered with more advanced economies at the global level to agree on and own the SDGs as a common development agenda for all countries of the world. The collaboration between the developed and developing nations is intended to overcome the major development challenges that were associated with the MDGs. These include the perception that the eight goals only were standards for ensuring that all developing nations had common metrics for evaluating or measuring their progress towards development. The expectation for the SDGs however, is that the 17 goals have been carefully agreed upon by all countries (developed and developing) and designed to include all population groups and not leave anyone behind (Beisheim, 2016; Lucci and Lally, 2016; Nicolai, Hoy, Berliner and Aedy, 2015). Additionally, the coming together of all countries further builds consensus to ensure that the financial commitments and technology that are needed for the successful implementation of the SDGs by relevant stakeholders in both developed and developing nations is given due consideration during the agenda formulation and

¹*Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, accessed from http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E

implementation stages.⁴ It is also expected that business and corporate sector participation become an important part of the collaborative effort to deliver the SDGs

Following the global launch, the President of Ghana, John Dramani Mahama, who has been appointed a Co-Chair of 16-member team of “Eminent Advocates” for SDGs implementation also launched the goals in Ghana in February 2016. He reiterated the need for the global community to work together in order to address the challenges of development and the willingness to mainstream and align the SDGs with national development plans and agendas⁵.

In addition to the global adoption of the SDGs, Ghana’s role and expressed commitments at the national launch, raised citizens’ expectations for the implementation of the SDGs. These expectations are noteworthy of careful and sustained scrutiny to assure the country’s preparedness, and guarantee citizens’ awareness and participation in the implementation process. Such scrutiny also has the potential to ensure that plans and programs at the national level are appropriate; the necessary consultations and engagements with the relevant stakeholders are secured as part of the processes for moving the country towards effective resource utilization for the implementation of the SDGs in line with the global expectations.

Purpose and Objectives of the Report

Caritas Ghana, a member of the Global Caritas Confederation and operates under the National Catholic Secretariat of the Ghana Catholic Bishops’ Conference, is collaborating with Caritas Internationalis’ (CI) Working Group on the Post-2015 Development Agenda and the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD) to assess Ghana Government’s commitment and efforts towards a successful implementation of the SDGs. More specifically, the study aims at the following:

- Highlighting national level structures and initiatives that are useful for sustaining national momentum, while strategizing for ambitious progress on the implementation of programs and projects for the SDGs agenda by Ghana.
- Identifying the opportunities, gaps and projections in Ghana’s efforts towards effective implementation of the SDGs.

⁴A write-up by Laud K. Addo of the AFD Ghana on the topic “Financing Ghana’s SDGs: Leveraging Diverse Sources,” arguing that key factors for implementing SDGs by Ghana (and many other developing economies), depends on the ability and success at leveraging all diverse sources of financing to secure sufficient sustainable funds.

⁵A report “Update on SDGs Integration into Ghana’s National Development” by the NDPC published on 12th August, 2016.

- Assessing level of consultation and involvement of relevant stakeholders including civil society and the corporate sector for successful implementation.

Key questions of essence to this study include the following:

- Is there an enabling environment for the realization of the SDGs in Ghana?
- Will Ghana be able to implement the SDGs?

Caritas Ghana intends to use findings of the study to craft strategies for increasing the awareness and participation of citizens in the implementation of the SDGs. The findings would also guide Caritas Ghana's efforts to contribute towards achieving national level policy coherence and planning for the implementation of the SDGs in Ghana. Caritas Ghana also seeks to develop a framework for engaging civil society and other stakeholders to offer effective complementary interventions to support government efforts, as well as develop key demands and advocacy messages to influence SDG implementation in Ghana. Caritas Ghana, as a member of the Ghana Civil Society Platform on the SDGs, is interested in preparing and positioning Ghana as a leader for the next round of Voluntary National Reviews (VNR).

Scope and Methodology of the Report

This social action research is structured in the following manner. Initially, it provides an overview of the SDGs and places the goals in the context of sustainable development from the literature as a way to situate Ghana's approach to development planning. The goal is to identify and evaluate the political, socio-economic and environmental factors that are specifically relevant to Ghana's efforts to achieve the SDGs and how the government prioritizes these factors in its attempts to implement the goals. The review of documents, baseline reports, backgrounds and project objectives is also to reconcile national and international systems and structures for effective implementation of planned and ongoing programs and projects to address the SDGs in Ghana such as the meaning of the commitment to "leave no one behind". This means ensuring that every individual achieves the full package of rights and opportunities embedded in the SDGs. In relation to this report, the principle manifests in opportunities for participation from all stakeholders and citizens to assure ownership of the processes and results, while guaranteeing that projects and programs that are implemented reflects on the aspirations and priorities of the masses.

Furthermore, an assessment of the awareness and spaces for participation from civil society groups, NGOs and relevant stakeholders in Ghana's efforts to implement the SDGs is done as a way to evaluate the overall commitment to address the challenges that militate against effective policy formulation and planned implementation for development. The aim is to assess the

preparatory activities by government and government agencies, structures and indicators for evaluating the appropriateness and suitability of planned programs and projects, and mechanisms for tracking progress. The review is also to identify gaps in the existing knowledge on planned activities, national structures, Government's priorities, level of consultation with and involvement of relevant stakeholders, as well as other structures likely to support and enhance efforts to attain the SDGs in Ghana.

This report therefore attempts to achieve the above-mentioned objectives through the combined use of documents review and key informant interviews to contextualize the SDGs from the global meanings of planning and development planning. In more specific terms, the report also highlight Ghana's efforts in development planning with references to the MDGs, and how these endeavors offer insights into the way forward for the country's preparedness for a successful implementation of the SDGs. In terms of the way forward, the report relies on key informants to demarcate national level preparedness of structures and programs, government priority and how it matches with those of the citizenry, as well as roles and spaces for participation for all relevant stakeholders as a means to proffer some recommendations especially for monitoring the implementation activities and processes.



CHAPTER TWO



CONTEXTUALIZING THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs)

Meaning of Planning

The need to contextualize the SDGs calls for a theoretical framing for the Goals from the meaning of planning and (national) development planning as has been practiced in Ghana, especially under the current Fourth Republican Constitution. To this extent, this report adopts Danso's (2014) definition of 'planning' as a blueprint for action that also involves the means for making conscious choices about how to achieve a future aim by identifying all the necessary events for deciding on the objectives and the appropriate courses of action to attain those objectives. The above definition of planning also makes it a multi-dimensional process that should result in or involve a reorganization and reorientation of the entire economic and social system (Ikcanyibe, 2009), thereby generating improvement of income and output, radical changes in institutional, social and administrative structures as well as in popular attitudes, customs and belief (Todaro, 1989).

Defining Development

The definition of planning above further calls for conceptualizing 'development' as it applies to countries where it goes beyond just economic development and its fixation on income or its inherent factors like GNP or GDP, and broadly adopts a human focus in terms of quality of life and well-being. In this vein, development should be understood as a process and not a product, since societies are in a constant change process (Barbanti, 2004), and that it transcends beyond economic and social divisions. Development planning, on the other hand, presupposes a formally predetermined rather than a sporadic action towards achieving specific developmental results (Killick, 2010; Tandoh-Offin, 2013). More importantly, it entails direction and control towards achieving plan targets (Moti, 2010).

In line with the arguments above, one can safely conclude that the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are the results of a collective desire and search for a more "peaceful, prosperous and just world" (UN, 2000). Therefore, the MDGs are a global partnership for addressing the myriad of human development challenges that bedeviled the planet towards the end of the twentieth century. The MDGs ratified by the community of nations were a package of specific strategic targets with indicators to measure progress by 2015. Thus the MDGs were intended to guarantee that communities improve or become more advanced, more mature, more complete,

more organized, more transformed (Danso, 2014). The goals which highlighted the stark reality of widespread human deprivation and environmental degradation, are credited for halving extreme poverty, improved youth literacy and declines in child mortality across much of the world. Sachs (2012) argues that the MDGs have contributed to remarkable enhancement of the developing countries people's wellbeing (Vandemoortele, 2011).

Similarly, Kendie and Martens (2008) (and also in Potts, Ryan and Toner, 2003) have all suggested that whatever the specific components of this well-being, development in all societies must at least have the following objectives: (a) increased availability and widened distribution of basic life-sustaining goods like food, shelter, health and protection; (b) raise level of living, including, in addition to higher incomes, the provision of more jobs, better education, and greater attention to cultural and human values. All of these will serve not only to enhance material well-being but also to generate greater individual and national self-esteem and expand the range of economic and social choices available to individuals and nations by freeing them from servitude and dependence not only in relation to other people and nation-states but also to the forces of ignorance and human misery" (Todaro and Smith, 2009: 22).

In spite of the opportunities offered by the MDGs for mobilizing global efforts to address the challenges of development after close to fifteen years of its implementation, a lot more support and effort is needed to eradicate poverty in all its forms and to deliver on the unfinished business of the MDGs. Countries were not able to meet most of the goals for a number of reasons, namely: the existence of structural errors such as inequality, insecurity, bad governance, wars, lack of decent work; and on the meaning of the relationship between sustainable consumption and production patterns (Lucci and Lally, 2016; AUECA and UNDP, 2016). There is also the perception that the process for selecting the eight goals were devoid of consultations. Furthermore, the failure of development partners to follow through on their promise to assist with the funding of proposed programs and projects for achieving the goals also affected successful implementation of the MDGs in most cases (Lucci and Lally, 2016; Melamed, 2015; AUECA and UNDP, 2016).

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Meanwhile, the calls for a new development paradigm based on a review and a refocusing of development, according to the World Bank's *Voices of the Poor* (2000) survey, is predicated on the principle that priorities of the poor still consists of jobs, better connections to the rest of the world, reduced threats of violence and ending humiliation and disrespect. To this end, the global community adopted in an elaborate consultative and widespread engagement processes with all relevant stakeholders, including NGOs, to address the challenges associated with the MDGs and its implementation. The post-2015 development agenda consists of 17 carefully selected and

reviewed goals, the Sustainable Development Goals⁶ (SDGs) to guide the social, economic and environmental development by both developed and developing countries. Unlike the MDGs, the SDGs adopt a human rights approach to include all population groups and “leave no one behind” in the planning and implementation of programs and projects, in the monitoring and review of progress towards the attainment of the goals.

At the local front, processes and events were set in motion to prepare and engage citizens in the post-2015 development process through the *My World Survey*⁷ which sought, among other things, to gather voices of Ghanaian citizens on the Post-2015 development process. This was a collaborative initiative between the UN and civil society organizations and coordinated by the UNDP, the UN Millennium Campaign, ODI and the Web Foundation and carried out by the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) and ISODEC, a local NGO. Proposal for addressing the development challenges in society as emerged from the survey included the need for targeted advocacy and public engagement between citizens and government to deal with low priority accorded to social protection for the vulnerable.

In agreeing on the new goals serious considerations were given to the need to not only provide for basic human needs, but also ensure essential human rights and create enabling conditions to help individuals realize their potentials (Beisheim, 2016). The legacies of the worst economic and financial crises in recent history must be addressed⁸. The implications of migration must be

⁶GOAL 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 well-being 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 inequality 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.

⁷A Ghana country report on how citizens prioritize their development needs, problems, and solutions the United Nations (UN) global survey for a better world.

⁸“Financing Ghana’s SDGs: Leveraging Diverse Sources,” by Laud K. Addo of the AFD Ghana.

considered, and the current refugee crises managed. The SDGs also call for sustained focus beyond parochial economic measures of progress to consider all aspects of well-being and sustainable development. Furthermore, deep reductions in global greenhouse gas emissions must be achieved in order to safeguard the planet for future generations.

There is no doubt that the SDGs and its framework offer a useful strategy for addressing key systemic barriers to sustainable development in terms of inequality, unsustainable consumption patterns, weak institutional capacity, and environmental degradation that were not covered by the MDGs. With its three-pronged focus on social inclusion, economic development and environmental sustainability in development over the next fifteen years, the 17 goals of the SDGs with its 169 targets ensure that the global community collectively approach development of all forms from a holistic and sustainable perspective.

The SDGs prove their relevance as global development indices by calling for a renewed emphasis on the need to create programs to generate better standards of living through inclusive growth, tackling extreme poverty and hunger through the acceleration of income growth and increased employment especially for the world's poorest 20% (Bhatkal, et al., 2015; Lucci and Lally, 2016; AUECA and UNDP, 2016). It also calls for a focus on achieving goals for education beyond primary schooling towards universal literacy and numeracy and job skills, and similarly for improved or productive life expectancy in terms of health goals for all countries (Shepard, et al., 2014). For essential human rights, the new goals are expected to promote civil and political rights, and security in addition to gender equality. Furthermore, the civil and political rights goal should promote public participation, accountability and transparency (Fukuyama, 2014; Sivhuoch and Sreang, 2015).

The new goals call for the appropriate enabling conditions by promoting universal access to information and communication technology (ICT), transportation and energy infrastructure, environmental sustainability and good global governance. The availability of appropriate indicators to underpin targets for each of the goals is critical and it is important to note that the behaviour of organizations and individuals is influenced by how success will be assessed. Without practical indicators, goals remain purely aspirational and progress cannot be measured. But there are daunting challenges to devising suitable indicators that are both measurable and motivational in order to galvanize public support for development. Serious data limitations exist, especially for the purposes of cross-country comparisons. Metrics must be sophisticated - not too crude, but also not too technocratic. Indicators should allow for disaggregation by sex, urban/rural, and identity groups and income bands to unmask the inequalities that hide behind generalized statistics.

Additionally, even the UN themselves accept the fact that the goals and targets are a highly ambitious effort to address development challenges especially for developing countries where the co-existence of peace and stability with rule of law is a difficult or an impossible dream. The tensions between high growth that can reduce poverty and the feasibility of sustaining the environment call for a re-look at the goals and targets set by the SDGs. However, it is a worthwhile endeavor to explore how Ghana is preparing to attempt implementation of the goals and targets as a means to bringing about the development that the people so badly need by looking at where we have come from with regards to development planning, especially under the current democratic political dispensation.



CHAPTER THREE



DEVELOPMENT PLANNING UNDER GHANA'S FOURTH REPUBLIC

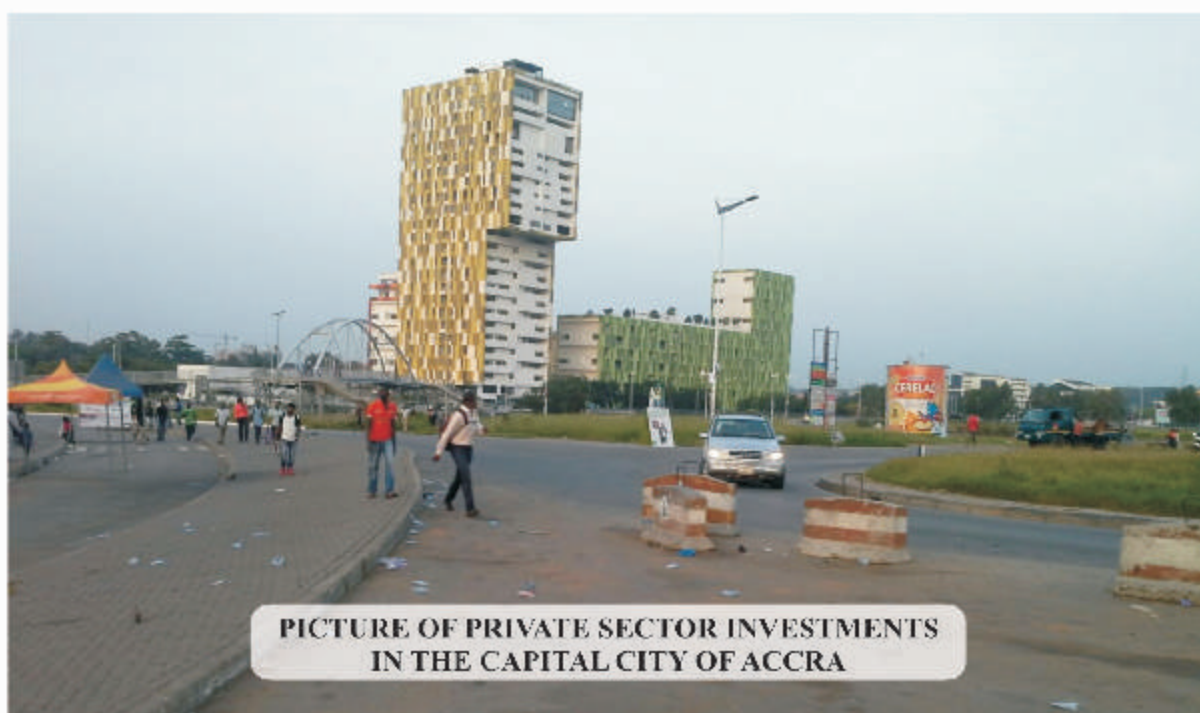
Since returning to democratic governance in 1993 under the Fourth Republican Constitution, Ghana has prepared five medium-term (mostly three- and four-year) national development policy frameworks (Tandoh-Offin, 2013). Each of the successive frameworks have paid due attention to the successes and opportunities from their predecessors, while highlighting challenges and gaps in preparing plans to guide the overall development of the national economy. It can be argued that overall, the five medium-term development frameworks have enabled Ghana to refine the strategies that are employed to guide the socio-economic, political and institutional development, as well as the environmental management that are needed to collectively and collaboratively assure human development in all its purposes and intents.

The first of these five medium-term development frameworks, Ghana's Vision 2020 (1996 - 2000), focused on a systematic development that was a human-centered, comprehensive and based on the coordinated endeavors of government and local agencies as well as private sector and civil society/NGOs (Republic of Ghana, 2005, 2008, 2010). The medium-term policy intervention program had as its objective the consolidation of the foundations for accelerated economic and social development which were partially laid under the Economic Recovery Programme (ERP). These foundations however needed to be strengthened through strategic investments in the five thematic areas of the framework namely, human development; economic growth; rural development; urban development; and an enabling environment, as a means to ensure a more rapid growth in the future to enable Ghana to join the ranks of middle-income countries in the long-term (Danso, 2014).

Meanwhile, both the second and third medium-term national development policy frameworks namely the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS I) and the Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS II) focused first on fighting poverty in line with the United Nation's Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and then on generating growth of the economy and support wealth creation and poverty reduction (Republic of Ghana, 2010). The rebasing of Ghana's economy in 2009 that moved the country into a lower middle income category partly account for why the fourth medium term framework, the Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda (GSGDA: 2010-2013) was targeted at accelerating employment creation and income generation for poverty reduction and shared growth (Danso, 2014).

It is worthwhile to note that Ghana's efforts at ensuring coordinated overall national development through the preparation of medium-term policy frameworks have not occurred in isolation but have been in tandem with the global level development expectations. Perhaps, in some instances, as is the case with the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), it is possible to see how Ghana's development frameworks have provided significant impetus for global approach to environmental management⁹.

However, the different medium term development frameworks such as Vision 2020, the first part (1997 – 2000), and both the GPRS I and II coincided with the implementation of the globally adopted development framework, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The activities and programs that were carried out under these frameworks, according to Danso (2014), have been duly credited with helping to achieve much of the improvements in socio-economic and human development indicators for Ghana under the MDGs. For instance, there has been an overall economic growth that saw GDP per capita rise significantly from about \$648 in 1995 to \$1,473 recorded for 2014, end of year inflation dropping from over 40% in the late 1990s to around 18% by 2009, among others, and which has contributed to push Ghana to become a lower middle income country since 2009.



**PICTURE OF PRIVATE SECTOR INVESTMENTS
IN THE CAPITAL CITY OF ACCRA**

The first four medium-term development frameworks have largely been responsible for much of the progress towards the attainment of some significant economic progress in the thematic areas of private sector competitiveness, governance and civic responsibility. Other thematic areas where gains have been made include human resource development and macroeconomic stability in areas of private sector growth, employment, poverty reduction, health care and lower levels of

⁹Captured from interview with officials of the NDPC as part of the information gathering process for this report.

inflation although the country can improve on its current rating. Again, the approach to planning has mostly been participatory, consultative and decentralized with the involvement of relevant stakeholders including other government agencies, private organizations, professional associations, academic institutions and civil society organizations.

The fifth medium-term national development policy framework under the current Constitutional dispensation is the Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda (GSGDA II) which is guiding development planning and implementation from 2014 through 2017. It is considered to be the operational framework of the President's "Coordinated Program of Economic and Social Policies nicknamed the Agenda for Transformation". The document states that it draws lessons from the successes and challenges from the immediate previous national development policy frameworks including GSGDA I to enhance and guarantee continuity in overall national development management and the transformation agenda represented by the Coordinated Programs.

In terms of its functions and relevance, the GSGDA II is not different from the previous development policy frameworks designed over the past two decades. The document offers a consistent set of policy objectives and strategies that guide the preparation and implementation of medium-term and annual development plans and budgets at sector and district levels, and also creates a platform for the coordination of donor support. Both the NDPC Act (Act 479) and the NDP Systems Act (Act 480) stipulates a Cross-Sectoral Planning Groups (CSPGs) mechanism to ensure the active participation and involvement of public, private as well as civil society groups in the processes and activities in the preparation of the framework (Aryeetey, et al., 2004 Danso, 2014; GSGDA II, 2014).

The decision to prepare the GSGDA II was informed by, among other things, the disparities between gains made in microeconomic indicators such as the significant expansions that catapulted Ghana into a lower middle income country but which could not manifest itself in adequate job creation and decent work for the people. Thus, significant development challenges still remain in terms of fiscal deficit and balance of payments. There is the need to address issues of poverty and inequality so that all citizens regardless of their gender, location, socioeconomic and physical status can enjoy the dividends of growth. It is essential to note that the *Transformation Agenda* of the government of Ghana involve the creation of significant number of quality jobs and promote decent work in the formal sector. These are captured in the following priority areas:

- Investing in people (human development, productivity and employment);
- A strong and resilient economy (ensuring and sustaining macroeconomic stability, enhancing competitiveness of Ghana's private sector and accelerated agriculture

- modernization and sustainable natural resource management);
- Expanding infrastructure (infrastructure and human settlements development and oil and gas development); and
- Transparent, responsive and accountable governance.

Meanwhile, the thematic anchors for the GSGDA II which are needed to attain the transformation agenda of the government also focus on the following:

- Ensuring and sustaining macroeconomic stability;
- Enhancing competitiveness of Ghana's private sector;
- Accelerated agriculture modernization and sustainable natural resource management;
- Oil and gas development;
- Infrastructure and human settlements development;
- Human development, productivity and employment;
- Transparent, responsive and accountable government.

(GSGDAII, 2014).

In addition to the GSGDA II, Ghana as a country is also relying on several frameworks and guidelines to guide socioeconomic, political and environmental development. These include the African Union's Agenda 2063, the Conference of the Parties (COP-21) of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), as well as the SDGs. The government has made commitments at the UN General Assembly to give due consideration and attention to the specific national realities, capacities and levels of developments within the country to set appropriate policies and priorities for achieving them. Therefore a number of steps and strategies have been adopted to implement policies and programs that will enable Ghana to evaluate performance towards achieving globally designed development benchmarks and improve the well-being of citizens.

In spite of the opportunities offered through the various medium-term development frameworks, the lack of a long term national development agenda, has meant that political parties' manifestoes and agenda have guided national development in Ghana under the Fourth Republic. In light of the above trend, the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) tend to suffer from politicization with the potential to inhibit long term vision for national development that will be complied with by successive governments. Meanwhile, there is a proposed 40-year national development policy framework scheduled to commence from 2018, whose preparatory processes have been deemed to be inclusive, engaging and have received broad consultations and support from relevant stakeholders. Additionally, the proposed 40-year development plan and the ongoing GSGDA II both have programs and activities that are intended to first focus on addressing some of the issues in the SDGs and then set the stage for evaluating Ghana's effort and attempts at achieving the SDGs by 2030, and the African Union's Agenda 2063.



CHAPTER FOUR



GHANA'S PREPAREDNESS FOR SDGs IMPLEMENTATION

Introduction

This section offers a detailed discussion of Ghana's experience with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as a way to show what gaps, as well as lessons should inform implementation of the SDGs from the following perspectives: national level context and structures; global and national partnerships especially with civil society and NGOs for development; urbanization and demographic evolutions, urbanization and their effects; subnational socio-economic disparities and inequalities; as well as requirements and inputs for effective monitoring of progress towards achievement of targets and goals. The review was based on the various reports that have been generated on Ghana's experience with the MDGs.

MDGs Implementation and the Transition to SDGs: Lessons Learnt

In order to fully appreciate Ghana's preparedness to implement the SDGs, it is useful to provide some overview of the progress made since 2000 towards the goals and targets of the MDGs implementation and the outcomes that were achieved for the country. In September 2015, Ghana formally launched the final MDGs report as part of the preparatory steps towards the adoption and implementation of the SDGs. The evaluation of the MDGs implementation presented in the Table 1 below offers several critical points. For example, how should Ghana approach the implementation of the SDGs? What considerations should be given to the unmet goals and partially achieved targets? The NDPC indicated that serious attention was paid to this concern in the preparations of both the GSGDA II currently running until the end of 2017, and also in the proposed 40-year development policy framework which is deemed to be implemented from 2018¹⁹.

In all, even though specific MDGs targets and indicators were not achieved, the overall assessment of the Goals has been summarized as mixed. Reflections on the outcomes of Ghana's MDGs review has suggested that factors that contributed to progress with some of the targets as indicated in the Table 1 below included the strategic and deliberate use of (medium-term) development plans and their programs and interventions to guide development planning and management at both the national and district levels.

¹⁹UNDP_GH_2015 Ghana MDGs Report accessed from http://www.gh.undp.org/content/dam/ghana/docs/Doc/Inclgro/UNDP_GII_2015%20Ghana%20MDGs%20Report.pdf

Table 1: Summary of Ghana's MDGs Performance

MDGs and Critical Targets	Evaluation
Goal 1: Poverty	Largely Achieved
1A: Halve extreme poverty by 2015	Halved by 2006
1B: Productive employment and decent work	Not achieved
1C: Food security and hunger	Partially achieved
Goal 2: Basic Education	Largely Achieved
2A: Complete full course in primary schooling by 2015	Targets exceeded by 12.4% points
Goal 3: Gender	Partially achieved
3A: Eliminate gender disparity primary and secondary education by 2015	Not achieved but significant progress made in gender parity in kindergarten
Goal 4: Child Health	Largely Achieved
4A: Reduce by two-thirds Under-5 mortality rates between 1990 and 2015	Under-5 mortality has reduced but remain short of the target
Goal 5: Maternal Health	Not Achieved
5A: Reduce by three-quarters the maternal mortality ratio between 1990 and 2015	Significant progress made but falls short of the 2015 target
5B: Achieve universal access to reproductive health by 2015	Significant progress made at national level but regional disparities still exist
Goal 6: Communicable Diseases	Not Achieved but significant progress
6A: Halt & reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS by 2015	On track to reverse HIV/AIDS spread
6B: Achieve universal access to treatment by 2010	Major improvement but not universal
6C: Halt and reverse the incidence of Malaria and other major diseases	Malaria remains a major public health concern for mortality and morbidity
Goal 7: Environment	Not Achieved
7A: Integrate sustainability principles into policies and reverse environmental resource loss	Depletion of forest cover continues at an alarming rates
7C: Halve the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation	Major gains in water, but sanitation still a problem mostly in rural areas
7D: Achieve a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers	Significant housing deficit exist along with presence of urban slums
Goal 8: Partnership	Largely Achieved
8B: Address the special needs of the LDCs	Reduced aid inflows since rebasing
8D: Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries	Systematic increases in public debt burden (both domestic and foreign)
8F: Make available benefits of new technologies in cooperation with the private sector	Increased mobile phone usage but reduce fixed lines use

Source: Adapted from 'Ghana Millennium Development Goals 2015 Report', Sept., 2015

The position described above is in line with Jhingan's (2005) definition of development planning as the exercise of a deliberate control and direction of the economy by a central authority that seeks to attain defined objectives and targets in a defined timeframe.

Additionally, improvements in social protection programs over the years, flows from progress made towards achieving the MDGs, and that setting goals and sticking to the goals can be beneficial in moving millions out of poverty, empower women and girls, and improve health and well-being. The review of progress towards the achievements of the MDGs showed significant gains in the fight against poverty and vulnerability; significant gains in the poverty war, health care delivery, women's empowerment and also in environmental management.

Meanwhile, Ghana's performance with the MDGs also had several shortcomings, according to reviewers who attribute them to a widened income and social inequality gaps, very low productivity in agriculture and the informal sector generally, and the uneven distribution of the growth that was experienced. There is relatively high incidence of extreme poverty and deeper depth of poverty recorded for the three northern regions, as well as a generally high incidence of vulnerable employment, considerable proportions of working people who live in poor households across the country.

Other identified challenges from Ghana's implementation of the MDGs that call for some attention going forward included the fact that targets in health raised social protection concerns. It was observed further that different progress levels were recorded for child and maternal mortality and for HIV and other diseases, and yet none of them was likely to be attained. Again, even the substantial overall gains made in gender parity in education especially at the primary levels, women still suffer from under-representation in wage employment and political decision-making processes.

In terms of environmental sustainability, Ghana's weak performance in sanitation and the rapid degradation of the country's forest cover wiped away the gains recorded for the target of improved access to safe drinking water. These challenges raise concerns for the post-2015 development focus and direction in areas of support for behavioral and attitudinal changes through sustained countrywide awareness-creation, educational and public engagement activities.

Challenges with SDGs Implementation

Having reviewed Ghana's implementation of the MDGs, this section projects the challenges and opportunities that the launch of the SDGs presents to Ghana, and the efforts and resources

available to be marshalled for effective implementation and attainment of the targets and goals. Since the inception of the MDGs in 2000, Ghana has prepared four medium-term development frameworks and their associated monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plans which have all reflected on the goals, targets, and the indicators to monitor achievements.

The first challenge from Ghana's MDGs experience for SDGs implementation is that, at the national level, Ghana saw the MDGs and its targets as very relevant and swiftly adopted, mainstreamed the goals into national planning frameworks through the various medium-term development plans over the period since 2002, and regularly reported on progress. However, the lack of inter-ministerial coordination and reporting made it difficult for the MDGs to reflect the national context and the prevailing conditions at the national level. Thus for the SDGs, a major challenge is how an inter-ministerial coordination can be developed to create the space for integrating the goals into national development frameworks and minimize distractions from the implementation process.

The second challenge is that, Ghana like most developing countries is experiencing demographic transitions that will not abate any time soon and which has serious implications for planning in terms of the labor force, access to decent jobs especially for the youth. There is also the issue of urbanization with its attendant challenges in terms of distribution of basic amenities, utility services, sanitation, urban planning and implications for structural transformations in the economy. It was obvious that the effects of these transitions escaped the attention of those who initiated the MDGs. Even though, the processes for adopting the 17 goals and 169 targets of the SDGs paid serious attention to the challenges posed by never-ending demographic transition and urbanization and their attendant constraints, their impacts on countries' abilities to successfully implement the SDGs could not be accurately envisaged.

The third challenge also is that, proponents of the MDGs failed to give due considerations to the peculiar conditions of new, lower middle-income countries like Ghana such as their struggles with structural transformations and the investments they needed to address issues of inequality and access of all forms, particularly, access to energy. There was the need therefore for global and national partnerships for development to pay attention to the challenges faced by emerging economies and their budgetary implications for implementing the Goals. Funding for the SDGs is expected to be mainly from internally generated sources which most developing countries like Ghana with their precarious balance of payment deficits and huge debt burdens therefore pose significant challenges for successful implementation of the SDGs by Ghana. Additional financial resources beyond current government allocations will be needed for implementation to be effective if the goals are to be achieved.

The fourth challenge states that, even though, Ghana was able to meet MDG 1 (poverty reduction), the extent of inequality prevalent in the country as a result of regional and sub-regional disparities can derail any effort made in poverty reduction. Sub-regional inequality is a major cause for rural-urban migration in Ghana. However, the effects of internal and external migration patterns such as sub-national disparities, spatial inequity and inequality especially, gender-based inequality at the sub-national levels and urbanization are rarely included in global and national development planning. It was still difficult or unclear how deliberate actions that target specific challenges women and children face in society such as income generating and job security issues, bridging the gaps between men and women in the formal and informal sectors, and improved workspaces that address occupational health and safety challenges for women, can be planned under the SDGs. The Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection has recently (2016) launched a National Social Protection Policy¹¹ which has the potential of providing a programming road-map to address socio-economic inequalities in the context of the SDGs.

Furthermore, a major constraint is the need to seek a balance between good governance and sustainable environmental management amidst the increased demand for energy and access to basic amenities resulting from rapid urbanization and industrialization in much of the developing world including Ghana. This push for good governance and rule of law has been mostly externally-driven by donors and development partners as conditions for support. However, Fukuyama (2014) argues that a democratic, modern and uncorrupt state is where the line between what is public and what is private is clearly marked. But most developing and transition economies are nowhere near even a hazy demarcation line between private and public interests and wanton destruction of the environment as a way to support the energy needs and provide for the basic necessities like food and shelter continue to generate environmental challenges. These activities also continue to undermine political stability and the fight against poverty reduction through climate change, soil degradation, and pollution activities. A recent report¹² of Caritas Ghana demonstrated how large scale land grabbing by multinationals and foreign nationals is affecting livelihoods of the poor, causing environmental degradation and leading to human rights infractions.

Another area of challenge is that the processes involved in generating the data and indicators to monitor progress with the implementation of the MDGs were also fraught with delays and access to institutional data and reporting on the key outcomes. The state of the national data and information collection and management coordination could not match the information needs of

¹¹Republic of Ghana (2015). *Ghana National Social Protection Policy*.

¹²Caritas Ghana (2016); Edited by Samuel Zan Akologo & Bernard Y. Guri. *Unmasking Land Grabbing in Ghana; Restoring Livelihoods; Paving way for Sustainable Development Goals*.

the MDGs in terms of national structures and institutional capacities for generating the needed information, timeliness and adequacy of the available information on key targets and indicators. Thus, a functional and up-to-date administrative statistics and information management system is utmost for successful implementation, monitoring and reporting on any national and sub-national development and even globally coordinated development endeavors. Moreover, the absence of a legal framework for freedom of information in Ghana constitute an impediment to access or verification of information by non-state actors to express independent and objective opinion on the state of affairs of development outcomes.

Finally, other challenges with the potential to militate against successful implementation of the SDGs by Ghana include availability of the appropriate capacities in terms of human and technology skills to build the expertise to facilitate implementation. The monitoring of implementation efforts to achieve the targets of the SDGs also call for sophisticated and elaborate data collection and management system, and the availability of professionals with requisite expertise to support these efforts. This is an area the NDPC confessed that the country has some challenges and is thus calling for a realignment of training and education programs at the tertiary levels to ensure that professionals with the needed skills can be produced well enough to support Ghana's implementation of the goals. There is also the issue of international environment and international influence through production commodity and exchange challenges resulting from the unfavorable terms of trade that can affect Ghana's exports and the political will to manage these relationships. While international cooperation for development is useful to leverage resources, knowledge and technology that are necessary to implement the SDGs, developing countries need to be wary of stereotyped prescriptions from notable development partners like the World Bank and International Monetary Fund that tend to override home-grown initiatives¹⁵

Opportunities for SDGs Implementation

Meanwhile, significant opportunities also exist from Ghana's MDGs implementation experience that could be useful for successful implementation of the SDGs. The first opportunity offered by the MDGs implementation is the need to integrate the goals and targets into national development plans. This position was reiterated by all the informants who participated in the study. According to the MFWA and the NDPC the existing development frameworks are already addressing many of the targets and goals and so all that is needed going forward will be to incorporate the goals that are not yet sufficiently covered into national development frameworks.

15 In May, 2014 the Government and people of Ghana initiated a consultative and consensus building agenda to address the weakening economy from the last half of 2013 into early 2014. It was called the National Economic Forum. The historic 22-point blue-print named the 'Senchi Consensus' soon fizzled out in the public domain when the IMF bail-out agreement with Ghana was signed.

The second opportunity is that, Ghana used the Annual Progress Reports (APRs) and the specific biennial reports as the M&E tool for tracking progress towards the attainment of the targets and also for planning at national and subnational levels. The case has been made that processes involved in the drafting of both the APRs and the specific biennial reports, if anything at all, should equip the national development planning system with the requisite experience needed to be effective and efficient in compiling relevant information for the reports. These experiences are deemed useful for the processes and activities that were evoked to develop the SDGs, such as, creating spaces for consultation with relevant national institutions and other relevant stakeholders, identifying government's and citizen's development priorities, and setting the prerequisites for successful implementation of the SDGs in Ghana.

The third opportunity is that the MDGs did not go far enough to address some pertinent areas of socio-economic and environmental issues for development. These issues include gender-based inequalities and its attendant implications for access to assets, employment opportunities, political participation and representation for women. Other areas include food security, urbanization and environment and climate change concerns. The SDGs therefore provide renewed energies and spaces for these issues to be critically looked at so that appropriate and specific programs and interventions can be developed to address their impacts on society.

The final opportunity is in terms of the support that civil society, CSOs and NGOs have put in place to ensure that there is widespread public awareness and national and sub-national structures are adequately prepared to engage in the activities and processes that are necessary for successful implementation of the SDGs. These include the different levels of consultations such as that which ensured that the priorities of government and citizens are in synch through the My World Surveys to identify development issues for Ghana. There is also the government-initiated consultations that has resulted in the creation of three committees to oversee coordination and support for smooth implementation. These committees are the High-Level Inter-ministerial Committee (HLIC), the National Technical Steering Committee (NTSC), and the Committee on Financing for Development (CFfD). The CFfD for instance is said to have begun processes to explore funding opportunities and sources for the different goals and targets of the SDGs¹¹.

Beyond the government-initiated consultations, there is also the civil society-initiated platform, the Civil Society SDGs Platform. All these consultations create and expand the spaces for engagement and awareness about processes and programs being churned out to address the targets and goals in the SDGs.

¹¹ Adapted from a booklet on SDGs prepared by the Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA) in collaboration with SEND-Ghana in May 2015, on "Prioritizing the Sustainable Development Goals: options for Ghana.

Caritas Ghana, as part of the global Caritas Confederation, has played an active role in relevant national, regional and global policy discourses to shape the SDGs and their implementation. The Executive Secretary of Caritas consistently addressed advocacy messages to national institutions, Africa Union, European Union, the UN Intergovernmental Negotiations (IGN, April 2015), General Assembly (GA, September 2015) and High Level Political Forum (HLPF, July 2016) on critical issues for SDG implementation. Table below has selected quotes of some key statements on the SDGs:

'We wish to propose to the National Development Planning Commission to coordinate an all-inclusive multi-stakeholder national platform on the SDGs for periodic reviews including the preparation of annual progress reports. The wide-reach of Faith-Based Organizations, especially our Catholic Diocesan Development offices can facilitate similar dialogues on the SDGs at the sub-national level to ensure that no part of Ghana is left behind in the implementation and achievement of the SDGs' targets that are priorities in our own national development planning. We are open to further discussion on this with the NDPC and any other entities interested in effective development partnership and cooperation'. (Quote from statement of Samuel Zan Akologo at Caritas Ghana National Forum on: *Responding to challenges and opportunities of the Post 2015 Development Agenda – Role of Catholic Development Organizations, 2nd July, 2015*)

'We reiterate that global peace, good governance and citizens' agency are overarching and essential pre-conditions for the implementation of the Post 2015 Development Agenda'. (Quote from statement of Samuel Zan Akologo; April, 2015 Session of IGN)

'It is important that measures and methods to end poverty and hunger places the poor at the center and builds upon their coping mechanisms'. (Quote from statement of Samuel Zan Akologo; September, 2015 UNGA On Ending Poverty and Hunger)

'I suggest that even though the entire SDG Framework is a call to global partnership, we can focus more clearly in defining and developing innovative partnerships around the five critical issues in Goal 17'. (Quote from Keynote Address of Samuel Zan Akologo on the occasion of the European Year for Development and Luxembourg Presidency of the Council of the European Union, 7th December, 2015)

'We also recommend food security approaches that builds on indigenous knowledge and coping mechanisms of local farmers; especially focusing on family-farming systems to ensure that rural farmers are not left behind. The spate of land grabbing for large commercial agriculture and other purposes in the extractive industry, is not compatible with sustainable agriculture. National policies must support the interest of farmers at all times and have safe-guards for nature's endowments'. (Intervention statement by Mr Samuel Zan Akologo, on behalf of the Together 2030 civil society coalition on 12th July 2016 on the occasion of 2016 HLPF on the theme: Food security and sustainable agriculture, climate action, sustainable oceans and terrestrial ecosystems – adopting a nexus approach)

'Governments bear onerous responsibility to ensure that the necessary conditions exist to educate, inform and inspire other stakeholders to participate in the full cycle of implementation of SDG programmes – design, implementation and review. We think that the SDGs should become the agenda for genuine dialogue at all levels and with everybody; including the poor, marginalized and excluded groups, to make poverty history by 2030'. (Intervention statement by Mr Samuel Zan Akologo, on behalf of the Together 2030 civil society coalition on 15th July 2016 on the theme: From inspiration to action: multi-stakeholder engagement for implementation)



CHAPTER FIVE



AN OVERVIEW OF ON-GOING EFFORTS

Introduction

In this section of the report is presented the discussions and interviews with key informants. This is mixed with reviewed programs and project documents and reports. Respondents represent government agencies, international development organizations and NGOs and CSOs whose work and interest bothers on the global development agendas of both the MDGs and now the newly ratified SDGs. Respondents were each asked to provide overview of Ghana's preparedness to implement the SDGs by looking at the national level structures, environmental factors (political, socio-economic, institutional, and environmental), government and citizens' priorities, and accountability mechanisms. They were also asked about levels of consultation and involvement of stakeholders, potential challenges that can affect implementation, knowledge gaps, and whether Ghana will be able to implement the goals. Below is the summarized responses on Ghana's SDGs implementation preparedness.

On the major issue of national level structures for a successful implementation, all the key informants and respondents pointed to the NDPC as the national body with the appropriate locus and structure to coordinate plans and programs on behalf of the government for implementing the SDGs:

Looking at the NDPC they also have a clear role in terms of having the national plans so that working with these national agencies, they would get it right. So that for me is a good thing. I think the NDPC clearly understands that.

(A Senior Manager at ISODEC interviewed on 26th July, 2016).

Additionally, a key lesson has been that preparatory activities for the SDGs implementation now involves the creation of appropriate national level consultations to support the coordination of activities and efforts for a successful implementation of the new goals and the NDPC specifically had the following to say:

With respect to the structure that will enhance what we are doing, we are setting up a High Level Steering Committee (HLSC) to be chaired by the President, who has been appointed as one of the Co-Chairs of the Eminent Group of Advocates for the SDGs. We have also identified key Ministries to be part of the HLSC to enhance the implementation of the goals. We also have the Technical Implementation Team (TIT) comprising of the following MDAs: NDPC, MoF, MFA, MESTI (EPA), MLGRD, and TCPD. The TIT will ensure that all issues concerning the SDGs and for that matter the AU Agenda 2063 are

taken into consideration. They are to ensure that all our policies and programs reflect on the SDGs and the AU Agenda 2063. The third committee is the Committee on Financing for Development (CFfD) and it is led by the Ministry of Finance and supported by the MFA, MoE, and the NDPC. It is charged with ensuring that critical priority financing issues are factored into the Goals and its implementation.

(A Senior Officer of NDPC interviewed on 29th July, 2016)

Beyond the national level structures, there is also the Civil Society Platform for the SDGs implementation. Members of this platform such as SEND-Ghana and the Media Foundation for West Africa (MIWA) have engaged officials of government, other national level institutions and relevant stakeholders in consultations on the post-2015 development agenda and how to ensure successful implementation by Ghana. Additionally, there is consensus among NGOs and CSOs that this time, there has been much broader and wider consultation on the goals than was the case with the MDGs. For instance, the government has SDG champions from specific state agencies like the EPA who spearhead government's activities especially from that sector's perspectives with the NDPC as they relate to program planning and implementation towards the attainment of the goals.

Still on the national structures to implement the SDGs, the NDPC by its mandate (through the NDPC Act, Act 479; and the NDP Systems Act, Act 480) is well-placed to coordinate government's and national efforts with respect to national development planning. To implement the SDGs, the Commission has identified 3 main areas namely Alignment, Adaptation and Adoption.

Alignment:

In terms of the alignment, the NDPC argues that the current medium-term development framework, the GSGDA II which is running from 2014 to 2017 and is being implemented now, have developed district and sector medium-term development plans (DMTDPs and SMTDPs) implemented by District Assemblies and MDAs respectively. Both the DMTDPs and SMTDPs also generate yearly plans which inform the national budget. Since 2017 will be the last leg of the GSGDA II, MMDAs and MDAs are being guided to align their existing plans in particular, the annual action plans for 2017 with the SDGs and the AU Agenda 2063. In fact, at the NDPC, effort is made to do some kind of mapping to see whether national development policies and strategies actually reflect the SDGs and Agenda 2063. Apparently, the NDPC reports that about 70% of the policies and strategies contained in the GSGDA II currently reflect in the global development agenda.

In order to ensure consistency with the alignment requirement at national and sub-national (MDA and MMDA) levels, there was the need to ensure that the plans and programs at the sub-national (MMDA) level reflected on or are similar to those in the national level development

plans through awareness creation and training for officials at the lower levels about the SDGs and also on the AU Agenda 2063.

The orientations and awareness programs also focus on helping officials to align the M&E systems as well, such that if the plans are actually responding to the goals then automatically the M&E system should also do same.

(A Senior Officer of NDPC interviewed on 29th July, 2016).

Thus the NDPC has developed a revised M&E formats for MMDAs and MDAs to their DMTDPs and SMTDPs program that reflect on the reporting needs of the M&E component of the SDGs to serve the alignment considerations.

Adaptation:

The Adaptation of the plans looks at the number of SDGs indicators and targets that needs to be reorganized or customized to suit Ghana's country needs. This is because the nature and form of some of the targets and indicators as they are crafted in the Goals, their relevance to Ghana's present conditions may be too far-fetched and difficult to perceive.

So we will look at those indicators and targets that needs to be worked on to see that we can actually track and report because the NDPC under the MDGs have been reporting on yearly basis and have been preparing full reports every 2 years. I am sure the pattern will also not change. We will be reporting on the SDGs and Agenda 2063 every year; prepare full report on these global development agenda.

(A Senior Officer of NDPC interviewed on 29th July, 2016).

Adoption:

The adoption as used by the NDPC is the process of picking and choosing which targets and indicators of the SDGs on which Ghana intends to focus some serious attention. There are so many of the indicators that are already identified and have been incorporated into various development plans and programs at different levels in Ghana, according to NDPC:

With the Adoption, some of the indicators and targets will be adopted as they are and we have done some work with the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) and we have seen that over 250 indicators and targets are already in our system which we can conveniently track. When I say we have identified them it means they are already there. What we are missing is the Administrative data – the routine stuff that we do every day which we don't even capture - something that we need to be doing. How many visitors have come to NDPC today? If you ask, I may not be able to tell you because even though the records say that there is a visitor's log book, but who actually reported for what? These are some of the things that we need to start taking note and reporting so that in our own annual reports, we can say that we had so many visitors who come to NDPC and what they come here for.

(A Senior Officer of NDPC interviewed on 29th July, 2016).

Thus, the NDPC is working with the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) to identify how administrative data, for instance, can be reorganized to help track daily happenings at institutions; how employees utilize their time; and generate better information on some of the issues that take place for long term planning by individual public agencies. It is envisaged that effective management of administrative data has implication also for reporting on some of the indicators and targets as mentioned in the SDGs.

Government and Citizen's Priorities

The need for the SDGs to reflect on the priorities of both the national government and those of the citizens is useful for several reasons, and these reasons were widely captured in the interviews with the various stakeholders for this report presented and analyzed below. For Ghana who was a member of the Open Working Group (OWG) on the SDGs, and has participated in several UN-led national level consultations that helped to define the post-2015 development agenda, having her own priorities is essentially critical so that it will reflect on the aspirations of the citizens. Additionally, the SDGs with its 169 targets and over 250 indicators tends to cover a vast number of development issues thereby making it necessary for countries to be circumspect and prioritize on the targets and issues that affect their peoples. For instance, Ghana as a developing country still experiencing significant demographic transitions and structural transformations with their attendant challenges for planning, growth and development, prioritizing on her development issues is critical.

Efforts that have been engaged to identify Ghana's priority development issues for the post-2015 development agenda formulation process include the collaborative effort between ISODEC and the UN Millennium Campaign (UNMC) and facilitated by the GSS that generated the My World Survey report. This survey provided the development needs, problems and solutions that Ghanaians considered to be priorities. In all 16 development priority categories were generated from the survey (see table 2 below).

Similarly, the Media Foundation for West Africa (MIWA) also captures the development priorities for Ghana under the following nine headings that were advanced by Ghana during the consultative period in the post-2015 development agenda discussions: employment, youth development, education, poverty, health, food security, social protection of women and children, urbanization and environment and climate change.

Table 2: Priority areas for the My World Survey - Ghana

My World Priorities	Rank
Better Healthcare	1
Access to clean water and sanitation	2
Better job opportunities	3
Good education	4
Better transport and roads	5
Reliable energy at home	6
An honest and responsive government	7
Affordable and nutritious food	8
Support for people who cannot work	9
Protection against crime and violence	10
Political freedoms	11
Equality between men and women	12
Protecting forests, rivers and oceans	13
Freedom from discrimination and persecution	14
phone and internet access	15
Action taken on climate change	16

Source: Adapted from My World Survey Report, 2015

These priorities and possible targets or solutions are important because of the potential they hold for stemming key development challenges that confronts emerging or transition economies such as Ghana in terms of decent job opportunities for the teeming youth through enhanced skills development and labor market information, and potential for enterprise and entrepreneurship development, among others.

On whether the priorities that the government of Ghana projected during their participation in the post-2015 development discussions also reflect citizens' aspirations, the NDPC argues as follows:

Talking about government priorities with respect to the SDGs, if you take the Alignment, I won't talk about the SDGs for 2018 going forward, but for what we are doing now. The SDGs are government priority. The SDGs which are in the 40-year development plan reflect what the citizens are urging for. Normally, what we do is that our process for formulating the framework is done through consultative and participatory processes. You know, for the 40-year development plan, we have gone around the country. That is the first level and then we have met with all the technical officers in the MDAs. We are consulting with identified groups. We have met with the Institutes of Surveyors, Engineers, Architects, Scientists, Mathematician, and a whole lot of gamut of agencies that we have consulted to solicit their ideas to inform the policy formulation. So that is what we do. Our framework is actually in tandem with the citizens' aspirations. We don't do anything without involving them. And when the framework is ready, because they are supposed to implement, we involve them by way of the plans and budgets that the MMDAs prepare, so that they can implement to suit their needs and aspirations down there. In fact, we have in-built consultative process even in the District guidelines that we

have developed. In preparing the plans, they have to consult the people, and when the plan is even done, they need to go back and tell them why the proposed issues are in or not in the plan. For policy objectives and strategies dealing with national level, and then every sector (we are dealing with about 35 of them) we have prepared development plans showing the programs and projects that needs to be implemented.

(A Senior Officer of NDPC interviewed on 29th July, 2016).

In similar vein, the ISODEC states that

Whether they (government priorities) are in line with the aspirations of the citizens, it is something you find with the “My world study”. Yes, very much in the sense that citizens rank some of the issues that they will actually would have like the government of Ghana to take on board or their priorities in terms of development and all those priorities if you look at it, that are all found in the SDGs and as well if you look at what so far the NDPC is doing, their framework that there are using to consult citizens to find out some of the issues to be taken on board, of course it covers a lot of those issues, so of course we can say that yes, they are adequately covered in terms of what citizens expect but as we know the SDG itself is a very broad framework and I don't know how much more you can't cover, you will always fall within whichever way you will look at it, so I think we are in there in terms of what citizens would have expected and what our National development aspiration should be

(A Senior Manager at ISODEC interviewed on 26th July, 2016).

The need to prioritize development issues and solutions is premised on the argument by Rathod (2010) that a major responsibility of planning authorities involves arranging priorities in order to distribute the needed resources among the objectives based on an order of priority. In light of the above, the assessment by both the NDPC and the ISODEC on whether the priorities of the government and those of the citizens are aligned in the SDGs provides some support for Ghana's preparedness to implement the goals. Having initiated the processes for identifying citizen's priorities and the commitment to adopt and integrate these priorities into government's development agenda as a first step and an important signal to demonstrate commitment towards the implementation of appropriate programs to ensure successful attainment of such goals. Perhaps, what may be needed is oversight by civil society organizations to ensure compliance on the part of government and all other key players involved with the implementation of various actions for the SDGs attainment in Ghana.

On the environmental (political, socio-economic and institutional) factors that may affect the successful implementation of the SDGs, the case has been made that prevailing socio-economic conditions such as continuously increasing inequality levels has the potential to derail any gains made in poverty reduction fight by Ghana under the MDGs. Of critical need for consideration is the issue of gender-based inequalities that manifest in terms of access to assets, employment opportunities, political participation and representation. Addressing these socio-economic factors are fundamental to creating the enabling environment for successful implementation of the SDGs. Political factors, on the other hand focus on the political will and political leadership to initiate the needed actions to address identified socio-economic and environmental

challenges. Discussions with other stakeholders on the political factors that are critical for getting through with successful implementation of the SDGs focused on political will.

Respondents had this to say:

Ok, in terms of the planned programs and project activities, we are always going to cover them because the goals are broad and it covers wider areas: 169 targets and over 200 indicators. So on the environment for the attainment of the goals in Ghana, I think I mentioned that the political aspect is where we have issues in the focal person I guess that's the thing. Yea, this things (SDGs) have to be driven by a kind of political will. You need personalities, you need people to stand behind them to advocate for them and as I said, the technical people in terms of the NDPC, they will do their work alright, but politically, how are we taking the SDGs as a major issue and trying to mainstream them into everything we do? This is because implementing the SDGs will not be a stand-alone program; the implementation is going to be everyday thing you do in terms of development planning and management; how do you ensure that most of the issues in the SDGs are also incorporated? So you want to see political leadership showing that, yea, this is how we are going to achieve targets. I mean always constantly referring to how you going to achieve targets because of course, the SDGs is always about targets and you want to meet certain targets, certain indicators.

(A Senior Manager at ISODEC interviewed on 26th July, 2016).

Expanding further on the positions of NGOs and CSOs above, the NDPC had this to say about the importance of political will in the SDGs adoption and implementation in Ghana:

Ghana, we are unique in formulating the SDGs. We played very key role. If you look at what we have done here, most of the SDGs reflect exactly what we have done here since 2003 (GPRS I & II). We started working on how to ensure that environmental issues are taken into consideration. In fact, we started the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) as far back as 2003. We have gone out there internationally to defend whatever we are doing as Ghana and so we have Ghana SEA. In fact, the 40-year plan that we are doing is captured around the 4 sustainable pillars of environment, sociocultural, economic, and institutional. We have the fifth one, governance. Governance with respect to Ghana's role in the international community with Ghanaian companies in the international level. And that is part of the vision we have in the 40-year development plan.

(A Senior Officer of NDPC interviewed on 29th July, 2016).

It is useful also to look at the range of planned and ongoing programs and projects that has the potential to facilitate or derail progress towards achieving adopted targets and goals within the life of the SDGs. According to Rathod (2010), development planning involves setting objectives by policy-makers who are political actors, thereby making this whole endeavor a political activity (Ikeanyibe, 2009). The NDPC describes the process for identifying programs and projects in the following words:

We have done something unique this time around. Political Parties as institutions have never been part of our planning processes. But this time around, we said, look, the 40-year development plan would be implemented by the Political Parties. The idea is that it is going to be competitive. Political parties are going to compete among themselves for its implementation through their manifestoes, so what we did was to involve the drafters of their manifestoes as part of the NDPC team that went round throughout the whole

country so that they will feel, know, smell and taste what the people are saying. So that in drafting their manifestoes, they will know, and will be guided by what we are giving them to do. So that when we finish the plan, it will be in synch with whatever they have. Again, because the political parties are going to be implementing the plan, we needed to involve them. And they keep on asking how is the plan going to be implemented? It is very simple, every year we prepare budget and it is the same budget we are going to use, except that this time around, the budgets will be more focused and more directional than the way we are doing things now. It is not 4-years versus 3-years SHS we are doing now. If it is 4-years, then it is 4 years and so we will move along. Development is a process and so no one administration can do everything.

(A Senior Officer of NDPC interviewed on 29th July, 2016).

Meanwhile, the feeling among CSOs and NGOs like ISODEC is that not much is being done on planned programs as yet. They argue that they are not seeing much activity and that it seems as if after the national launch, the national structure have gone to sleep over the SDGs. In their estimation, there should be specific programs to address specific or particular targets and goals. However, the UNDP hold a contrary view, according to a Senior Officer who was interviewed, that:

The SDGs may not need its own structures for its implementation. Look at the Goal 7 (affordable and clean energy), perhaps it is the SDGs that will make things speed up. But government will already have plans on this affordable clean energy. So it is not the SDGs that is forcing or coercing government to go clean energy. Now the Energy Commission I know is talking about providing free solar panels for households. In our office here they have had that conversation and I know it is happening elsewhere. So the SDGs are only going to augment national plans. So the institutions for implementing the SDGs is going to bring about alignment and also bring a sharp focus on the goals so that if you want to bring clean energy target like Goal 7, then all we need to do is to show that for this path you are walking we may need to double it, or take this and that steps. So I think it is essentially going to dwell on existing structures, except where there is no clear current commitment on the part of government, then we would say that, look, let us identify structures A, B, and C to ensure that we reach this and that goal. So in that respect, I would say that it looks quite promising.

(A Senior Manager in UNDP interviewed on 4th August, 2016).

Apparently, the NDPC contends that in the GSGDA II (2014 – 2017), the framework currently guiding national development, are described in much detail the strategies and policy objectives for the key issues that are captured under the seven thematic areas of the framework. These strategies are accompanied with relevant implementing and collaborative agencies to coordinate specific programs developed to address specific key issues. And in the estimation of the NDPC, to the extent that the thematic areas and their key issues in the GSGDA II were generated based on the development aspirations of the citizens and the government, the specific programs and interventions that are planned are more likely to be relevant also for addressing the expectations of the SDGs and its targets. Similarly, the 40-year development plan which will kick in from 2018 is being developed along on the same lines. What is key, according to both the NDPC and UNDP is that, these documents and their key issues ought to have indicators similar to those

prescribed in or for the SDGs.

Another relevant issue related to the discussions about the availability of specific programs and interventions to move Ghana towards achieving the SDGs and its targets by the set date is the issue of accountability. Respondents intimated the paramount need for accountability mechanisms to ensure compliance with the implementation of programs and interventions, and also to track progress towards achieving the targets of the SDGs. From the perspective of the NDPC, the newly created Legislative Instrument, National Development Planning Systems Legislation (LI 2232) in 2016 has the potential to improve the way development planning has been approached by national and sub-national agencies over the years. Among other things, the LI 2232 affirms provisions in the Local Government Act 1993 (Act 462) which mandates MMDAs to prepare and submit development plans for approval and certification by the NDPC.

With the new LI opportunities for MMDAs and MDAs to get budget approval from the Ministry of Finance and to source for funding becomes contingent on the certificates of approval from the NDPC that you have complied with provisions and satisfied the requirements for developing the plans. Similarly, the LI stipulates sanctions that should be initiated against agencies that fail to comply as well. Additionally, the LI clearly provides mechanisms through the NDPC's M&E system for tracking progress, identifying gaps and for generating progress information on ongoing development arrangements that feeds into the mid-year review report that is presented to Parliament by the Minister of Finance. Meanwhile, there is huge responsibility for civil society and other relevant stakeholders to be interested in ensuring compliance by making sure appropriate programs and interventions are developed and implemented to make the needed impacts on beneficiaries. In this light, other stakeholders who participated in the study also agree that having appropriate indicators should be of prime importance to guarantee compliance and proper accountability for SDGs implementation in Ghana. The UNDP had this to say:

Because when it comes to measurements issues and reporting I think it is there. But the bottom line is in the indicators. Once the indicators will be made public, and civil society can pick it and run with it; media can pick it and run with it. It is the indicators that will say that, look, we hope to provide 2000 pieces of solar panels by December 2016. So at the end of the day we check; how many solar panels out of the 2000 you were able to provide. If you are somewhere 100, 200, then you are far off from the target, and civil society can say that you said you were going to do this or that. And what is of interest is the indicators; the fact that we need to make the indicators available to people, and on the basis of that, I think we have it covered.

(A Senior Manager in UNDP interviewed on 4th August, 2016).

To this end, NDPC therefore suggest that:

We need to create a lot of awareness among the citizens to ensure accountability to know what to do when something is going wrong, so they can take action.

On the need to create awareness among citizens to, among other things, ensure accountability

and also be part of the process, stakeholders in the study such as ISODEC could not agree more because in their view, significant knowledge gaps still persist among large majority of citizens on what the SDGs is all about. And that has the potential to prevent citizens from satisfying the accountability requirement. The view is that one needs to be familiar with a program and the processes involved to be able to monitor and assess its effectiveness. Significant effort should be directed towards rallying citizens about the goals and targets of the SDGs especially for the purposes of building their capacity and the attitude to ensure compliance with implementation and attainment of targets and goals. The perspective of ISODEC is that:

Well, that is the expectation but now, as it is, we are not seeing those things (planned programs and interventions for implementing SDGs) clearly and that's why I'm saying that, we want to hear people talk to them, refer to them even if they are not there, we are going to do this or do that but eventually that leads to the programs and the real achieving but if they are not saying that then you are wondering whenever are we going to have specific programs that are focus that they are actually going to achieve the SDGs.

(A Senior Manager at ISODEC interviewed on 26th July, 2016).

In this light, activities and programs by the Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA) and other partners towards building the capacity of Journalists and media houses to affect citizens and civil society as described below is apt:

MFWA, we have worked with SEND-Ghana to produce a booklet/brchure that summarized the SDGs for circulation during the period when Ghana was preparing to launch the Goals. It also highlighted Ghana's priority areas, as well as the process adopted by Ghana to generate its post-2015 development agenda. The idea was to find out which of the SDGs Ghana was prioritizing ahead of the signing. We published the goals to provide a brief on the transition from the MDGs to the SDGs and focused on what it meant for Ghana; the different areas and the interventions that already were in existence; and the frameworks that exists to help implement the SDGs. Since then, we have also collaborated with UNFPA, UNDP and UN Communications Group to organize series of trainings for Journalists on getting to know the SDGs and how they could cover/mainstream SDGs in development reporting. The focus of these training include thinking about what we did with the MDGs; what to look for as Journalists in our reportage on the SDGs.

(A Senior Manager at MFWA interviewed on 17th August, 2016).

It deserves to be mentioned that the booklet "*Prioritizing the Sustainable Development Goals: Options for Ghana*"¹² is another product of the collaborations between the MFWA, SEND-Ghana and the other partners that is intended to enhance public awareness of the SDGs and garner support for its implementation in Ghana. Despite the usefulness of these efforts from NGOs and CSOs, some of the stakeholders think that government's role in creating awareness and enhancing the support of the public for the SDGs has not been visible enough. ISODEC, for

¹²A booklet prepared for SEND-Ghana and the Media Foundation for West Africa, May 2015

instance, argue that making some 'noise' about the goals and targets is very essential in keeping the public's attention on the SDGs:

There should always be some reference to it, you know, yeah. In terms of those of us in civil society, those are how we are able to monitor with the indicator and all those things that is why we have indicators, so it makes it easier to be able to monitor because you can refer to it. Of course you may say the real things, the real program activities is what matters but the narrative also matters, the narrative also guides you.

(A Senior Manager at ISODEC interviewed on 26th July, 2016).

The Department of Human Development of the National Catholic Secretariat and Caritas Ghana devoted their 2015 national forum of Diocesan Development Officers and other Partners to educate themselves and plan to engage with the SDGs framework. This report is building on that effort as explained earlier.

Consultations and Engagements for Implementation

The awareness and the space for participation in the processes associated with planning and implementation of activities, programs and interventions targeted at achieving the SDGs are critical considerations from the perspective of Civil Society, NGOs and all relevant stakeholders. There seems to be a lot of effort that the various stakeholder groups are organizing to support Ghana's successful and efficient implementation of targets and goals to achieve the SDGs. From the perspective of the UN agencies in Ghana particularly, the UNDP, preparatory activities put in place address four major areas of importance for successful implementation namely advocacy, domestication or mainstreaming, data, and resource mobilization.

The advocacy leg of their effort is targeted at building the capacity of journalists, media houses and practitioners, civil society, and students to become aware of the goals and targets of the SDGs. For the Journalists and media houses, the UNDP is collaborating with other partners like MFWA to train them on how they can report on the SDGs and development generally, instituting special awards and prizes for Journalists and media houses. The program for students is mainly an awareness and capacity development initiative through the UN4U program:

The UN4U is an initiative of the UN system here in Ghana that brings information on the SDGs to the doorstep of the youth. Basically, we talking about students and we target secondary schools level. And we learning about the SDGs. Every year we do about three workshops on the SDGs. The next one coming up will be in September and that will be the number three since we launched the SDGs.

(A Senior Manager in UNDP interviewed on 4th August, 2016).

Mainstreaming or domesticating the SDGs implies how to integrate the goals into national plans, policies and programs, and the UNDP collaborate with the NDPC to mainstream or domesticate the SDGs. Specific initiatives under this leg of support by the UNDP include:

- Training and capacity building for District/Municipal Planners, and Coordinating Directors on how to integrate the SDGs into national development plans.

- Incorporating concepts from the SDGs into the 40-year national development plan.
- Production of promotion materials (brochures, leaflets, placards, booklets) on SDGs to aid the advocacy and public education by CSOs and other youth groups that want to help with the promotion of the goals.
- Translation of the SDGs into Ghanaian languages: Twi and Dagbani for now with plans to translate the Goals into Ga, Ewe and another local language¹⁶.

The purpose is just so that where people are able to speak any of these local languages they may also get the basic message on SDGs in a language that they can best understand.

But we are doing all these things on the back of national leadership shown by the NDPC. The UN thinks that, and in fact that is the concept that we do not act ahead of governments. The SDGs have been signed by national states; they are committed to implementing them. So we only facilitate and coordinate the work of government. So we basically work with the government of Ghana to implement the SDGs. And we had the participation of all members of parliament and both political divides just to give it a national ownership. So yes, we have the president fronting the SDGs but it doesn't mean that it is an agenda of the ruling government. Anything can happen either now or in the next four years. So we want to get all political parties interested. So beyond that launch, we work with political parties. We have done some workshops on the SDGs with the Political parties. The idea is that, as they prepare their manifestoes and plans for governing, they may want to do so with some SDGs consideration.

(A Senior Manager in UNDP interviewed on 4th August, 2016).

The case for the UNDP's data support is we should be able to monitor progress with implementation and by extension, we should be able to have clear indicators that guide us to see when gains are made towards achieving specific SDG target or even a Goal. The UNDP in particular is working with the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) on the data-related issues to ensure that appropriate statistics and data is available on targets.

The statistics team here have traveled with some staff from NDPC and Statistical Service twice this year on data support services.

(A Senior Manager in UNDP interviewed on 4th August, 2016).

The effort is also to strengthen the mechanisms for monitoring or for reporting. Because at the end of the day, the government of Ghana would have to report on achievements annually, and that report will form part of a global report that will be submitted by the UN Secretary General as achievements of the Goals so far.

The resource mobilization in support of government's implementation of the SDGs is to complement government's own efforts in mobilizing resources both internally and externally, and it is the biggest thing that the UNDP is currently doing now. It should be pointed out that the UN Resident Coordinator is actually leading on that effort. The UN agencies in Ghana have all

¹⁶<file:///C:/Users/PTANDOH/AppData/Local/Temp/LTNDP+Brochure,+March+9,2016,-1.pdf>

identified specific areas where they can help the government of Ghana as far as implementation is concerned, depending on the mandate the UN agencies have. The UNDP, for instance, identifies itself with about 2 or 3 areas: one is on Poverty, another is on Gender and the third is on Climate Change.

Now we talk about "Life on Land" where we talk about deforestation and things like that, but basically it is climate change, gender and then poverty for the UNDP. So an Organization like UNICEF may look at Goal 3 on health; education; on water and sanitation; and so on and so forth.

(A Senior Manager in UNDP interviewed on 4th August, 2016).

According to the UNDP official interviewed, different agencies within the UN system such as UNICEF have all identified different goals of the SDGs and their work will cut across. The idea is for the agencies to be strategically positioned so that as and when resources come in they will be able to offer the requisite support to government and other institutions involved with the implementation of specific programs and interventions towards meeting the goals.



CHAPTER SIX



KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This final section summarizes the key recommendations on the core issues of this report, namely on Ghana's preparedness, extent of awareness and spaces for consultation and engagement for successful implementation by Ghana. In light of the discussions presented above, the following recommendation are discussed as a response to key questions and objectives for the study which include, among other things, assessing Ghana's preparedness to implement the SDGs and whether an enabling environment exist for the implementation of the goals. Other issues of interest relates to extent of engagement and involvement or participation by relevant stakeholders in processes for implementing targets and also mechanisms for ensuring accountability to planned programs for the attainment of the targets especially those that specifically apply to Ghana.

The first set of recommendations address Ghana's preparedness. The study concluded that the NDPC as the lead agency that coordinates national development planning has initiated various national and subnational level consultations with state institutions, civil society, nonprofit and nongovernmental organizations and all relevant stakeholders. These engagements have been useful in assuring confidence among the stakeholders on government and for that matter, Ghana's readiness to implement the targets and goals in the SDGs.

In respect of this ongoing favorable development on Ghana's readiness, it is further recommended that the structures¹⁷ be fully and continually utilized in information dissemination, public education, advocacy for support and reporting on progress made with the implementation of the targets and goals. Caritas Ghana reiterates its earlier call to the NDPC in July 2015 to coordinate an all-inclusive and multi-stakeholder platform for the purpose of follow up and review of the implementation of the SDGs. The purpose of such a platform should be the facilitation of learning from implementation and promoting accountability of Government for the SDGs.

Additionally, there is the need to strengthen and improve the capacity of state agencies like the Parliament and accountability institutions (Audit Service, Accountant General's Department,

¹⁷various consultations among state agencies, subnational agencies, CSOs and NGOs such as the NTSC, HLIC, CFJD, Civil Society Platform on SDGs, as well as UN, UNDP initiated consultations and platforms to support successful implementation of the SDGs by Ghana

etc.) and other stakeholder institutions including citizens, civil society groups and media practitioners to be effective in their watchdog roles.

On the part of state institutions (national and subnational), capacity building could be directed towards enhancing the potential to raise the needed financial and material resources to support implementation of planned programs and targets; and also for their data gathering, management and communication needs for the overall benefit of development planning in Ghana.

The Principle of “Leave No One Behind”

On the principle of “ensuring that no one is left behind” with the post-2015 development agenda, Ghana's National Social Protection Policy needs actualization to correct some of the imbalances from the MDGs. The basis of this principle is that 'the goals are not considered to have been met if those who are most vulnerable and hard to reach are not included'²⁵ and it has been considered as one of the benefits that the global community stand to derive from the SDGs. This means ensuring that every individual achieves the full package of rights and opportunities embedded in the SDGs (Melamed, 2015).



PICTURE OF CHILDREN SLEEPING ON ROAD PAVEMENTS IN ACCRA

²⁵Caritas Internationalis (2016). *Sustainable Development Goals, Action towards 2030: Page 7. Advocacy Messages for the 2016 HLPF.*

According to Kabeer (2010), every society has groups that are typically excluded from progress and are usually over-represented in many of the indicators to measure deprived groups. It is these series of groups which usually consists of people with disabilities, minorities (ethnic and religious), women and girls, which the SDGs recognizes and expects to make speedy improvements as part of the prerequisites for the attainment of the SDGs (Melamed, 2015). Faith-Based Organizations like Caritas Ghana would likely have the potential to reach those marginalized and at the periphery of access to socio-economic services. A partnership¹⁷ framework for this purpose can be explored, especially at the sub-national level. Workable templates on how Faith-Based Organizations have successfully reached out to marginalized groups in society can be adopted for the partnership framework to ensure programs and interventions intended to address basic needs of citizens are achieved.

Specific Policy Recommendations

The space for participation and levels of consultation are important guideposts for the SDGs implementation processes. The survey concluded that the NDPC, as the lead agency for coordinating activities around the SDGs implementation for Ghana, has demonstrated awareness and benefits of these principles. These benefits are well-documented in terms of identifying and sourcing for financing for the development process; direct involvement of international NGOs, donors and development partners in rolling out programs and interventions for specific targets; data and information organization, communication and advocacy support, and technical assistance for capacity development in critical skill set for the overall success with the implementation.

Similarly, the UN country offices in Ghana (UNDP, UNFPA, and UNICEF), CSOs, other NGOs, corporate institutions, bilateral and multilateral relations serve as useful targets for the kinds of support enumerated above. What is needed now is to find ways of institutionalizing and expanding on these processes so that vulnerable social segments are identified and conscious efforts are made to seek their opinion. The NDPC can devise ways of including the criteria of participation and consultation in their monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to ensure that all sectors and especially MMDAs are also in compliance. Vayrynen (2005) contends that implementation and monitoring and evaluation of development goals requires an effective and impartial public administration system that implements faithfully the relevant policy decisions. Thus, the new LI for the NDPC (LI 2232) and relevant provisions of both the Local Government

¹⁷*Most Rev. Gabriel A. Mante – President of Caritas Ghana and Bishop of Jasikan Dioceses stated at the official launch of Caritas Ghana on 2nd June, 2016 that 'The Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference is happy to further contribute to civil society activism and national development by offering its unique caritas brand in Ghana'*

Act (Act 462) of 1993 and the NDPC Act (Act 479) of 1994 could be fully employed to ensure compliance from the MMDAs on core issues in development planning and by extension for the implementation of targets for the SDGs.

Accountability and the mechanisms for ensuring that Ghana complies with key deadlines and expectation prescribed in the post-2015 development agenda will be useful in the entire implementation phase in Ghana. It needs to be stressed that despite the voluntary nature of the goals, they offer a useful template to guide national development planning. As a result, national and relevant stakeholders interested in good and effective governance can bring enough pressure to bear on government and the state to ensure compliance with national level structures and frameworks for addressing the development needs of citizens.

In the light of the above, the civil society platform on SDGs implementation in Ghana should undertake the following steps to ensure that mechanisms exist for showing accountability on the part of national leadership on the SDGs:

- Seek avenues to be part of efforts to align, localize and publicize the targets and goals for Ghana's development processes;
- Review the indicators that Ghana adopts and adapts to the national and subnational contexts to guide congruence in plan and program development;
- Support capacity building and strengthening for other key players in the development process such as media practitioners and subnational formal and informal institutions; and
- Continually seek to expand the space for participation at all levels for accountability on institutions charged with specific responsibilities and budget powers.

Caritas Ghana, like the other members of the CSOs platform on SDGs implementation in Ghana are strongly calling on the Government to sign up to the 2017 Voluntary National Review (VNR) process towards the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) and use the opportunity to highlight key achievements and innovations in Ghana. This, in our view, would enhance President Mahama's role from his appointment²⁰ by the UN Secretary General as a Global Advocate for the implementation of the SDGs. The theme for the 2017 HLPF scheduled for 10 – 19 July is '**Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world**'. The goals to be reviewed at the meeting would be 1, 2, 3, 5, 9, 14 and 17. As at the time of concluding this report Ghana was not yet included in the list of 28 countries²¹ who submitted for review

²⁰The United Nations Secretary General – Ban Ki Moon this year (2016) appointed His Excellency John Dramani Mahama as a Member of the UN High Level Committee for the promotion of the SDGs.

²¹<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf>

Conclusion

The activities undertaken to generate this report are not without challenges. Significant among the challenges is the issue of access to institutions and their willingness to share information even on the most useful public interest programs their outfits are undertaking. Thus delays in getting scheduled interviews with key informants (see Annex A for interview guide) and also for accessing needed information contributed to delays in generating the report. This has bigger implications for the coordination and collaborative role that is expected from these institutions to ensure successful and effective implementation of the SDGs in Ghana.

The absence of a legal framework for freedom of information in Ghana remain an impediment to access or verification of information by non-state actors to adequately be able to express independent and objective opinion on the state of affairs of development outcomes. Going forward, this essential gap in legislation need attention to maximize multi-stakeholder participation.

The experience of this research in access to information epitomizes the culture of institutional silos. Unless policy integration is backed by practical effort; including participatory and learning processes, the likely threat of Ghana missing the opportunity to deliver the SDGs would be real. Given the lessons learnt from Ghana's experience with MDGs implementation and also the processes that have informed the development of the 40-year national development framework, political will and leadership can be considered as necessary ingredients for Ghana's success with its development agenda and hence those of the SDGs. The role and participation of the corporate sector would also need careful harnessing. This report has not been able to establish the readiness of Ghana's corporate sector in the processes thus far with respect to the implementation of the SDGs.

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ANNEX A: INTERVIEW GUIDES

1. Interview Guide: NDPC

Caritas Ghana has commissioned an action research on the “*National Monitoring Report on SDGs Implementation Status in Ghana*”. The study seeks to review Ghana's preparedness towards effective implementation of the SDGs; citizens and relevant stakeholders' awareness and participation in the process; and propose a framework and means for Caritas Ghana and collaborators to engage in broad-based advocacy for effective implementation of the SDGs. Your Agency is considered a key player that can help fill in gaps in the knowledge development process on Ghana's SDGs implementation. The information you provide will only be used in line with the objectives of the study as set out above. Thank you for your participation.

1. Kindly provide an overview of Ghana's preparedness for implementing the SDGs by addressing the following:
 - a. National level structures to support and enhance the processes.
Kindly describe and assess the adequacy of these structures?
 - b. Government's priorities
Are they in line with aspirations of the citizens?
 - c. Planned programs, projects and activities
What specific programs and activities are planned for the implementation?
 - d. Level of consultation and involvement of stakeholders
Who has been consulted and engaged in implementation processes?
 - e. The environment for the attainment of the SDGs
Political, socioeconomic, environmental factors and their impacts on the Goals?
 - f. Accountability mechanisms to ensure compliance in program planning and implementation towards achieving the Goals.
Mechanisms to track progress, identify gaps, and document best practices?
National follow-up and the Voluntary National Review (VNR) processes
 - g. Challenges and constraints that can affect implementation of the Goals
2. What contributions are expected from corporate bodies and nongovernmental organizations towards the realization of the SDGs in Ghana?
3. What is meant by the term “leave no one behind”?
How can we evaluate government's commitment to the “leave no one behind” policy?
4. Speak to any possibility of knowledge gaps in any of the above and their ability to enhance or impede the process towards the attainment of the SDGs.
5. Will Ghana be able to ever implement the SDGs?

2. Interview Guide: Stakeholders (ISODEC, UNDP, MFWA)



Caritas Ghana has commissioned an action research on the “*National Monitoring Report on SDGs Implementation Status in Ghana*”. The study seeks to review Ghana's preparedness towards effective implementation of the SDGs; citizens and relevant stakeholders' awareness and participation in the process; and propose a framework and means for Caritas Ghana and collaborators to engage in broad-based advocacy for effective implementation of the SDGs. Your Agency is considered a key player that can help fill in gaps in the knowledge development process on Ghana's SDGs implementation. The information you provide will only be used in line with the objectives of the study as set out above. Thank you for your participation.

6. Kindly provide an overview of Ghana's preparedness for implementing the SDGs by addressing the following:
 - a. National level structures to support and enhance the processes.
Kindly describe and assess the adequacy of these structures?
 - b. Government's priorities
Are they in line with aspirations of the citizens?
 - c. Planned programs, projects and activities
What specific programs and activities are planned for the implementation?
 - d. The environment for the attainment of the SDGs
Political, socioeconomic, environmental factors and their impacts on the Goals?
 - e. Challenges and constraints that can affect implementation of the Goals
7. How do you assess the level of consultation and involvement of stakeholders on the SDGs? Who has been consulted and engaged in implementation processes?
8. What contributions are expected from corporate bodies and nongovernmental organizations towards the realization of the SDGs in Ghana?
9. What accountability mechanisms exist to ensure compliance in program planning and implementation towards achieving the Goals? Mechanisms to:
 - a. Track progress,
 - b. Identify gaps, and
 - c. Document best practices
 - d. National follow-up and the Voluntary National Review (VNR) processes
10. Will Ghana be able to ever implement the SDGs?

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