

Six years of SDGs – some background information to facilitate a review

by Dr. Alexander Dill, Basel Institute of Commons and Economics, dill@commons.ch

- Former member of the External Stakeholder Review of the IAEG on SDG (Inter Agency Expert Group) that set up the indicators to measure the progress of the SDGs
- Director of World Social Capital Monitor, the only Global project within the 4237 UN SDG Stakeholder Partnerships
- Contributor to the UN IATF on FfD (Inter Agency Task Force on Financing for Development) since 2017

Preface: Our report to the SDG Accord is driven by our experience and participation in six years called the *SDGs process*. We are conducting a Global survey on social goods, the World Social Capital Monitor in 50 languages and today 129 countries:

<https://trustyourplace.com/>

Unfortunately there is few information on the SDGs e.g. on their costs, on opportunities to apply for funding, on the measurement of the SDGs and as well on the stakeholders influencing the process.

Our four pages aim to give you some background information on the Global SDGs process that you may not find elsewhere. Be inspired!

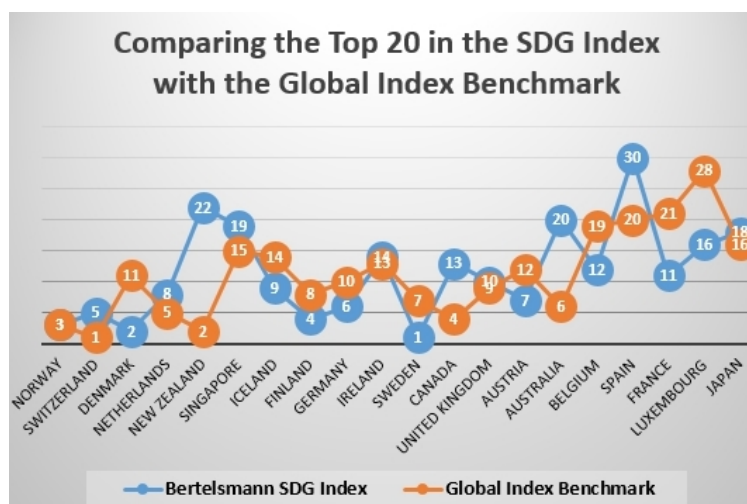
1) Why the SDG progress cannot be influenced by local governments and citizens

The indicators to measure the progress of the Goals up to 2030 are created and made by OECD countries where indicators such as 'GDP' or 'Public expenditures' can be influenced by strong National Banks and by strong taxes.

E.g., Goal 10 "Reducing Inequality" uses this indicator:

"By 2030, progressively achieve and sustain income growth of the bottom 40 per cent of the population at a rate higher than the national average." (10.1)

Imagine a poor country or region with no income growth trying to increase the income of the bottom 40 per cent without investment and credits. What a crazy idea!



As a result the comparison of country ratings by SDG indicators is almost redundant with the old measurement by wealth and GDP (see chart).

When the Basel Institute of Commons and Economics reclaimed the unilateral choice of the indicators, the External Stakeholder Group has shut down.

Now only governments and their National Statistics Offices decide on the indicators.

You can browse the SDG indicators here: <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/database/>

2) Why donor driven Goal picking damages the SDGs

Most of the SDG activities – unfortunately as well the SDG Accord – ask you where your activity is localized (Global is no option) and to which of the 17 Goals you contribute.

Here you see the results of a synopsis of the five leading Global SDG reports:

Leaving Biodiversity and Peace behind

SDG preferences in the World's five major SDG reports 2019

SDG Topic	Rank	Average Rank	Mentions
Health	1	3,2	1814
Energy	2	4,0	1328
Climate			1328
Water			1784
Education	3	4,6	1351
Poverty	4	6,2	1095
Food	5	7,6	693
Economic Growth	6	8,6	387
Technology	7	8,8	855
Inequality	8	9,2	296
Gender Equality	9	10,0	338
Hunger	10	10,6	670
Justice	11	10,8	328
Governance	12	11,6	232
Decent Work	13	12,2	277
Peace	14	12,4	282
Clean Energy	15	12,6	272
Life on Land	16	14,4	250
Life below Water	17	15,0	248
Social Inclusion	18	16,4	22

*These minimal scores result on the multiple quotation of the 17 UN Goals in the data section.

While the ranking results on the average ranking of five different reports, the number of mentions is not identical with the ranking.

Sources:

UN SDGR: UN Sustainable Development Goals Report 2019, UNDESA, 64 pages

GSDR: Global Sustainable Development Report 2019, Independent Group of Scientists, UNDESA, 250 pages

FSDR: Financing for Sustainable Development Report 2019, UNDESA, IATF on FfD, 208 pages

SDSN: Sustainable Development Report 2019, Bertelsmann Stiftung, 478 pages (including dashboards)

SDEU: Sustainable development in the European Union, Monitoring report on the progress towards the SDGs in an EU context, 2019 Edition, 372 pages

While to achieve the leading Goals as well depends e.g. on Peace (Rank 14) and Social Inclusion (Rank 18), the single Goal choice denies the interdependence and interaction between the Goals.

In 2020, Health still became more important due to the Corona Pandemic and will do so in 2021.

3) Why ESG and SDG criteria for stocks and bonds create zero value for the SDGs

Hundreds of Funds now pretend to invest by using alleged ESG (Environmental-Social-Governance) or SDG criteria. The investment goes to stocks and bonds of A+ rated



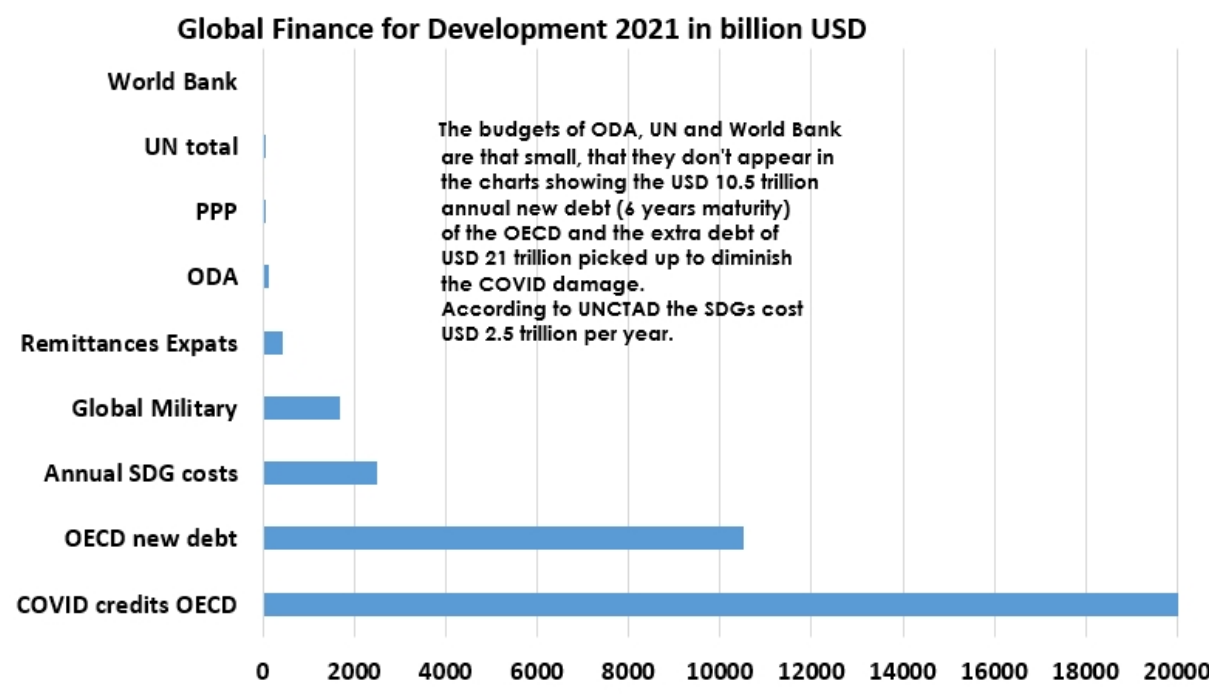
companies at the stock exchanges of OECD countries. Unfortunately, the funds only invest in existing companies,

neither in Start-Ups, nor in IPOs and – of course, not in Frontier Markets and developing countries.

So even in case the companies meet the ESG-SDG criteria – no extra Dollar will be fundraised to finance any of the 17 Goals. The money goes to the investors only.

Same in research: you may rebrand your research activity by one or several donor friendly SDGs – but you will not get any extra funding.

4) Why there is no extra finance for the SDGs



As you can see in our chart that we published in the UN, the annual budgets of the World Bank, the UN and even the ODA (around USD 150 billion) are not visible when we compare them with the USD 20 trillion the OECD country will pick up in 2021 only for their own purpose.

The annual costs for the 17 SDGs estimate by USD 2.5 trillion per year by UNCTAD – no problem for the OECD countries if they only would. Sources of our recent UN IATF Papers:

https://developmentfinance.un.org/sites/developmentfinance.un.org/files/The_SDGs_are_public_goods_IATF_2019.pdf

https://developmentfinance.un.org/sites/developmentfinance.un.org/files/Financing_the_UN_Goals_under_Corona_Policy_Paper_to_the_UN_IATF_on_FfD.pdf

5) Why you cannot apply for SDG related projects

There are around 40 recommended SDG Initiatives that include smiling UN officials, famous foundations, 'smart' companies and busy governments. They have one thing in common: you cannot contact them and neither apply for any funding for any SDG related project.

Their agenda is to 'promote' the commitment for the SDGs, but not the SDGs itself. Here is a shortlist of initiatives without any opportunity to apply for your SDG project. None of them as well can be contacted by phone or mail (which we tried).

Name	Donors	Action
GISD Alliance Global Initiative for Sustainable Investment Alliance https://www.gisdalliance.org/	Members: 30 Global leading companies such as Allianz, Santander, Bank of America, Pimco	Zero action No process for funding
UNSDSN Sustainable Development Solutions Network https://www.unsdsn.org/	Ted Turner Foundation Bertelsmann Jeffrey Sachs	Promotes membership and training – and the statements of Jeffrey Sachs No process for funding
Act 4 SDGs https://act4sdgs.org/	UN	Promotes an "Action Week" for the SDGs. No process for funding
United Nations Foundation https://unfoundation.org/	Ted Turner Foundation Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Disney Johnson&Johnson and some more	Supporting agenda driven smaller other initiatives such as "Data for Sustainable Development" No process for funding.
UN Global Compact https://www.unglobalcompact.org/	Initiative by private companies e.g. the German Military company Rheinmetall	PR mostly for Carbon Reduction and Health Zero action, no process for funding