

**UN Summit
of the Future
Background Guide**

**Cleveland Council on
WORLD AFFAIRS**



United Nations Summit of the Future Background Guide

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The Summit of the Future is set to be held from the 22nd to the 23rd of September, 2024.¹ With the goal of developing a consensus on strategies to better our present and safeguard our future, the Summit stands as the event of the year, bringing leaders from across the world together in an attempt to further global cooperation.² As the world recognizes the failures of outdated structures and strategies that are still being used in international diplomacy, the Summit encourages world leaders to change those structures for the betterment of our world.³ Moreover, the Summit highlights the large mistrust that has been developed within the international community, mistrust that is impeding global cooperation. The Summit hopes to rekindle global trust, providing a conducive platform for future international cooperation.⁴

Some of the main topics the Summit will be focusing on include climate change, technology, peace and security, and social and economic development.⁵ The Summit recognizes the fact that many current issues faced by the world are transnational in nature. In other words, many of the prominent issues that need to be combated do not exist within borders, but rather affect nations across the world. As a result, the Summit is prioritizing addressing these issues from a transnational perspective where nations come together and address the issues as a global community rather than individual nations.⁶ By sharing innovative solutions, research, and setting new global priorities as well as goals, the Summit hopes to take steps in the right direction for global progress. The Summit is unique in the way that it prioritizes including voices of youth and marginalized communities.⁷ With the goal of shaping the future, the Summit wants to include a

¹ United Nations, "Summit of the Future," United Nations, https://www.un.org/en/summit-of-the-future?gad_source=1&gclid=Cj0KCQjw2ou2BhCCARIsANAwM2Hc8F3575XcpmxD3v9_CfruooQ3hUELgu8shyhtGdcW-vEexGrKO4aAlumEALw_wcB

² United Nations, "What is the Summit of the Future?," United Nations, <https://www.un.org/en/summit-of-the-future/about>

³ United Nations, "What is the."

⁴ United Nations, "What is the."

⁵ United Nations, "What is the."

⁶ United Nations, "What is the."

⁷ United Nations Staff, "An Overview of the Pact for the Future," UNESCO, <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/overview-pact-future#:~:text=The%20Summit%20aims%20to%20enhance,effectively%20tackle%20the%20challenges%20of>

broad range of voices, taking into consideration the needs and priorities of communities across the globe, specifically the youth.⁸

As a result, it is important for the Summit of the Future committee to prioritize youth voices when developing strategies to address the following topics. The Summit's main goal is to engage the next generation in shaping the United Nations' goals and priorities moving forward.⁹ As a result, with the goal of youth empowerment, the Summit of the Future is to develop effective strategies to address the following topics in an inclusive and collaborative manner.

I. Implementation of the Pact of the Future

Statement of the Issue:

The Summit has two main goals: to accelerate efforts to meet our existing international commitments and to take concrete steps to respond to emerging challenges and opportunities.¹⁰ In order to meet these two goals, the Summit will adopt a document called the Pact of the Future.¹¹ The Pact of the Future will be debated, negotiated, and endorsed throughout the next following months leading up to the Summit as well as at the Summit in September.¹²

The Pact of the Future focuses on a variety of issues with the goal of creating an inclusive and sustainable future.¹³ The six main areas of focus include climate action and sustainability, global health and pandemics, equity and inclusion, economic development and innovation, peace and security, and education and youth empowerment.¹⁴

The Pact of the Future emphasizes the importance of immediate action to combat climate change. With a focus on reducing greenhouse gasses, carbon emissions, and transitioning to

⁸ United Nations Staff, "An Overview."

⁹ United Nations Staff, "An Overview."

¹⁰ United Nations, "What is the."

¹¹ United Nations, "What is the."

¹² United Nations, "What is the."

¹³ United Nations Members, "Pact for the Future," Revision 2, July 17th, 2024, United Nations, https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/pact_for_the_future_-_rev.2_-_17_july.pdf

¹⁴ United Nations Members, "Pact for the Future."

renewable energy, the Pact of the Future strives to reach goals of carbon neutrality and overall environmental sustainability.¹⁵

The Pact of the Future also focuses on strengthening global health systems. By increasing pandemic and epidemic preparedness, making healthcare more accessible, and providing access to sanitation, the Summit hopes to reduce healthcare issues across the globe. The Summit recognizes the transnational nature of healthcare issues, especially pandemics and epidemics, and thus, emphasizes the importance of international cooperation for healthcare strategies.¹⁶

In addition, the Pact of the Future focuses on increasing justice and social equality across the globe. The Pact commits to increasing gender equality, rights for marginalized communities, rectifying socio-economic gaps, and more.¹⁷

Next, the Pact of the Future focuses on economic development and innovation. The document encourages economic growth through the use of new technology and innovation. Moreover, the Pact supports sustainable economic development, through emphasis on green technologies and infrastructure. The Pact also emphasizes the importance of inclusive economies, with the goal of reducing socioeconomic inequalities.¹⁸

The Pact also touches upon the topic of peace and security. It underlines the importance of global cooperation in securing global peace. Many security issues like terrorism occur transnationally, across borders. As a result, the Pact of the Future emphasizes the importance of global coordination and communication in combating such issues.¹⁹

Finally, the Pact of the Future discusses education and youth empowerment. As mentioned earlier, one of the main goals of the Summit is youth empowerment and giving the next generation a platform to influence decision making. However, a large percentage of youth across the globe are denied access to basic education. As a result, the Pact of the Future prioritizes education access as one of its goals. The Pact calls for the investment in educational systems across the world in order to provide youth with the resources and skills necessary to impact, change, and contribute to our future world.²⁰

¹⁵ United Nations Members, "Pact for the Future."

¹⁶ United Nations Members, "Pact for the Future."

¹⁷ United Nations Members, "Pact for the Future."

¹⁸ United Nations Members, "Pact for the Future."

¹⁹ United Nations Members, "Pact for the Future."

²⁰ United Nations Members, "Pact for the Future."

While the Summit's goals may seem far-fetched and ambitious, they are strategies that are being designed to combat some of our world's most pressing issues. As conflicts and crises grow in various parts of the world, it is imperative for this generation's leaders, and more importantly our youth, to take immediate action. The Summit of the Future committee must develop comprehensive strategies to ensure the effective implementation of the Pact of the Future.

History:

The origins of the Pact of the Future can be traced back to the many revisions the UN has made to its goals and strategies. In 1945, the establishment of the UN signaled a new phase of international diplomacy. The UN was a mechanism through which nations could come together to create sustainable development goals, tackle disastrous conflicts, and promote peacebuilding and cooperation. Since then, the UN has made progress on a myriad of issues from sustainability to terrorism. However, over the years the UN has evaluated many of its goals and strategies, primarily due to changing times, differing political dynamics, and new emerging issues. To make these changes and host these discussions, the UN has hosted several summits.

In 2000, the United Nations hosted The Millennium Summit.²¹ This Summit ended up marking a major milestone in the UN's history, as the culmination of the Summit resulted in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).²² The MDGs represented the UN's commitment to combating issues such as poverty, education, and health.²³

Those MDGs eventually led to the current Sustainable Development Goals of today.²⁴ In a 2012 Summit the UN adopted the "The Future We Want." This document laid the foundation for the SDGs, noting the importance of not just development but sustainable development in accordance with a continued commitment to reducing injustice and inequality around the

²¹ United Nations Staff, "Conferences," United Nations, <https://www.un.org/en/conferences/environment>

²² United Nations Staff, "Millennium Summit," United Nations, <https://www.un.org/en/conferences/environment/newyork2000>

²³ United Nations Staff, "Millenium."

²⁴ United Nations Staff, "Conferences."

world.²⁵ This document was then transformed into the SDGs in 2015.²⁶ The adoption of the SDGs marked a significant shift in the UN’s strategic approach, as it prioritized an inclusive and integrative approach to development.

In 2018, the UN shifted its focus to youth empowerment by creating the UN Youth Strategy.²⁷ This strategy shifted the focus to include youth in the UN’s journey to achieving the SDGs. This included providing platforms for youth to be involved in future decision making as well as continuing efforts to provide youth across the globe with educational opportunities.²⁸ This commitment to youth empowerment has continued, as reflected by the Pact of the Future.

The Pact of the Future was introduced in 2023 with the goal of incorporating more perspectives in decision making and strategy building.²⁹ Over the years the UN has grown to understand the importance of including more diverse and innovative voices in future decision making. This has included youth as well as marginalized communities. The Pact of the Future has built off of lessons learned from past summits, emphasizing the importance of adaptive and inclusive global strategies.³⁰ The Pact of the Future hopes to develop frameworks that continue to stay relevant and effective in the midst of evolving conflicts and an ever-changing world.³¹

Analysis:

The Pact of the Future has a great amount of potential to make effective change to the UN’s future progress. For example, the Pact of the Future has the ability to make the UN more adaptable and relevant. By committing itself to updating its priorities and strategies, the Pact of the Future enables the UN to aptly address modern issues such as technological advancement and growing environmental challenges. This adaptability will allow the UN to tackle current and future issues in a more effective manner. Furthermore, the inclusion of various perspectives enables the UN to create more innovative, and possibly more effective solutions to rising global

²⁵ United Nations Staff, “United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, Rio+20,” United Nations, https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/rio20.html?_gl=1*1uz9pp4*_ga*MzlyMzg4MDA2LjE3MTc2OTQ2Mjc.*_ga_TK9BQL5X7Z*MTcyNDI5MjY3OC45LjEuMTcyNDI5NDM1NC4wLjAuMA

²⁶ United Nations Staff, “Conferences.”

²⁷ UNICEF Staff, “United Nations Youth Strategy,” UNICEF, <https://www.corecommitments.unicef.org/kp/un-youth-strategy.url>

²⁸ UNICEF Staff, “United Nations.”

²⁹ United Nations Staff, “An Overview.”

³⁰ United Nations Staff, “An Overview.”

³¹ United Nations Staff, “An Overview.”

issues. Specifically, the inclusion of youth allows the UN to incorporate the perspectives and ideas of a generation that has grown up facing the issues the UN is attempting to tackle such as climate change.³² Moreover, climate change is an issue that will primarily affect our youth in the future, and as a result, including youth in decision making enables the future generation to shape their future. By modernizing their approach, the UN may be able to create more impactful, creative, and effective policies. Finally, the Pact of the Future enables the UN to strengthen its role as a central body for both diplomacy and global problem-solving.³³ By reinforcing the importance of global cooperation and including a wide range of diverse stakeholders and organizations, the UN strengthens its goal of building international coalitions. The Pact of the Future has the ability to rekindle strong collaborative efforts, international cooperation, and global solidarity.

However, the UN must take into consideration challenges that could hinder the Pact of the Future's success. While transitions to new frameworks could signal positive change, it is not an easy task to take on. For one, the transition to a new strategy requires significant structural changes within existing UN policies. Moreover, the complexity lies in convincing stakeholders and member states to adopt the proposed changes. As a result, it is important for the Summit of the Future to engage in diplomacy and compromise to successfully implement the Pact of the Future.

Another lasting issue within the UN remains a lack of resource allocation. While the strategies and ideas within the Pact of the Future are remarkable, they require funding and resources. While the UN has access to funds from various organizations as well as foreign countries, it is important for the UN to consider the sustainability of the funds acquired. For the successful implementation of a long-term development plan like the Pact of the Future, it is imperative for the funding acquired to be reliable and sustainable. As a result, the Summit of the Future must brainstorm alternative funding and resource allocation methods that will be sustainable and reliable.

³² United Nations Thailand Staff, "Summit of the Future 2024: What Will it Deliver?," United Nations, <https://thailand.un.org/sites/default/files/remote-resources/6191edbf0cd33245655a00516984b564.pdf#:~:text=a%20stronger%20participation%20of%20developing,account%20all%20forms%20of%20vulnerability>

³³ United Nations Thailand Staff, "Summit of."

The Summit of the Future must also consider the integration of the Pact of the Future. While the Summit must develop strategies to implement the Pact successfully into current UN operations and policies, it must also consider methods to hold nations accountable for the implementation of these policies in their respective countries. For example, the Pact of the Future outlines certain carbon neutrality and overall sustainability goals. How can the Summit of the Future ensure that countries meet these goals? In other words, how can the Summit hold nations accountable to bring about effective change? Many UN strategies and policies have failed in the past due to a lack of cooperation from member states and a lack of accountability. As a result, to ensure the successful implementation of the Pact of the Future, the Summit of the Future must develop policies to hold member nations accountable for progress on the discussed issues.

Finally, with youth empowerment being a key goal in the 2024 Summit, it is important for the committee to develop strategies to integrate youth voices in decision making. Firstly, it is important for the UN to provide young people with skill training, resources, and platforms to participate effectively.³⁴ Moreover, it is extremely easy for the idea of youth empowerment in the UN to turn into a symbolic measure rather than a substantive reformation. As a result, it is important for the Summit of the Future to create detailed plans and policies to ensure the effective implementation of youth voices in decision making. Building upon that, with the goal of making youth involvement a long-term policy, the Summit of the Future must develop strategies to ensure the sustainability of the framework. The committee must develop sustainable policies that support, encourage, and instill youth engagement over time.

Conclusion:

As the Summit of the Future occurs, it becomes clear that effective change can be made with proactive policies and committed work. With evolving conflicts across the globe, urgent climate change and global warming crises, and growing global inequality, transformative change becomes imperative. The UN will not make progress change to adapt to evolving times without structural. As a result, it is up to the Summit of the Future to develop effective strategies to bring about that transformative change, securing a prosperous global future.

This committee must think out of the box, brainstorming ways to ensure the successful implementation of the Pact of the Future. While the Pact of the Future contains comprehensive

³⁴ United Nations Thailand Staff, "Summit of."

and extraordinary ideas, the Pact is useless without successful implementation of those ideas and strategies. This committee must brainstorm ways to effectively compromise and convince stakeholders to implement the outlined solutions, hold countries accountable for future progress, acquire sustainable sources of funding and resources, empower youth and marginalized voices, and ultimately secure a brighter future for communities across the world. The Summit of the Future holds the power to change the course of our future and bring about transformative change. By utilizing diverse voices and ideas, this committee must ensure the effective implementation of the Pact of the Future.

Questions to Consider:

1. How can we ensure that youth and marginalized voices are heard in the long-term?
2. What are ways to bring about change on the mentioned issues in a way that has not been implemented before?
3. Why have previous strategies to combat the mentioned issues failed, and how can we avoid failure this time around?

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- United Nations. “What Is the Summit of the Future?” United Nations. Accessed August 22, 2024. <https://www.un.org/en/summit-of-the-future/about>.

II. Re-evaluating the Sustainable Development Goals for 2030

Statement of the Issue:

The Summit of the Future is a convention in which the UN hopes to bring about transformative change.³⁵ In other words, the UN hopes to bring about structural change, changing systems and strategies that are outdated and have lost effectiveness. One of those strategies is the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs were created in 2015 with the aim of jumpstarting sustainable development while combating current global challenges in an inclusive and adaptive manner where no one is left behind.³⁶ The SDGs include 17 goals: no poverty, zero hunger, good health and well-being, quality education, gender equality, clean water and sanitation, affordable and clean energy, decent work and economic growth, industry, innovation, and infrastructure, reduced inequalities, sustainable cities and communities, responsible consumption and production, climate action, life below water, life on land, peace, justice, and strong institutions, and partnerships for the goals.³⁷ The SDGs established measurable targets that the UN hopes to achieve by 2030.

While the SDGs have been transformative for the UN's goal on sustainable development, they must also be re-evaluated as we approach their deadline. In a changing world, the UN must prioritize reassessing the needs of communities across the world, and thus, reassessing its strategies to progress socially, economically, and environmentally. Our primary challenges are not the same as the challenges we faced two decades ago. As a result, it is imperative that the UN reassess its development priorities and strategies. Thus, the Summit of the Future conference committee is being tasked with reassessing the UN's sustainable development goals to ensure they continue to inspire and drive progress towards a more sustainable and equitable world. This involves evaluating whether the goals are achieving their intended purpose, identifying gaps in progress, areas for improvement, and considering whether new goals should be introduced. It is up to the Summit of the Future to reassess the world's priorities and challenges along with the

³⁵ United Nations, "What is the Summit of the Future?," United Nations, <https://www.un.org/en/summit-of-the-future/about>

³⁶ UNDP Staff, "What are the Sustainable Development Goals?," UNDP, <https://www.undp.org/sustainable-development-goals>

³⁷ UNDP Staff, "What are."

SDGs, developing a consensus on how to effectively secure future progress on the world's challenges. The committee may add to the existing goals, take away any goals, completely redo the goal agenda, etc. At the end of the day, the power is given to the Summit to decide the best way to ensure sustainable development in our future, promoting international cooperation with the goal of creating a framework that effectively addresses our world's current and future challenges.

History:

The origin of the SDGs can be traced back to the year 2000.³⁸ In 2000, the United Nations hosted a summit called the Millennium Summit. The Millennium Summit was held to address global challenges and establish common goals and an agenda for the 21st century.³⁹ The Summit was the largest gathering of world leaders in history at the time.⁴⁰ The culmination of the Summit resulted in the production of a document called the "Millennium Declaration." This document outlined the UN's commitment to combat global poverty, promote peace and security, protect human rights, and ensure environmental sustainability.⁴¹ This document also established the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), a set of measurable goals that aimed to reduce poverty, improve education, combat climate change, and much more.⁴² These goals aimed to combat various global challenges by the year 2015.⁴³

The MDGs consisted of eight primary goals: eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, achieving universal primary education, promoting gender equality and women empowerment, reducing child mortality, improving maternal health, combating global diseases, ensuring environmental sustainability, and developing a global partnership for development.⁴⁴ Each of these eight goals were accompanied with specific targets the UN hoped to reach by the year 2015. While the MDGs led to significant progress within several global issues, it still faced

³⁸ World Health Organization Staff, "Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)," World Health Organization, [https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/millennium-development-goals-\(mdgs\)](https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/millennium-development-goals-(mdgs))

³⁹ United Nations Staff, "Millennium Summit," United Nations, <https://www.un.org/en/conferences/environment/newyork2000>

⁴⁰ United Nations Staff, "Millennium Summit."

⁴¹ World Health Organization Staff, "Millennium."

⁴² World Health Organization Staff, "Millennium."

⁴³ World Health Organization Staff, "Millennium."

⁴⁴ World Health Organization Staff, "Millennium."

criticism for being too narrowly focused and looking over many pressing issues, such as environmental sustainability.⁴⁵ Moreover, the MDGs faced criticism for their lack of adaptability, as it failed to consider inequalities and situations within various countries that could hinder progress.⁴⁶ As result, while progress occurred, many nations were unable to reach the far-fetched goals set by the MDGs for the year 2015.⁴⁷

Following the Millennium Summit, the UN hosted the Rio+20 Conference in 2012.⁴⁸ The Rio+20 Conference, also known as the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, was a monumental event in reshaping the UN's development agenda. The culmination of this conference resulted in the creation of the "Future We Want" document that reentered the UN's focus on creating more inclusive global development strategies.⁴⁹ The Rio+20 Conference acknowledged the importance of creating a new development framework beyond the MDGs that prioritized inclusivity and sustainable economic, social, and environmental development.⁵⁰

The aftermath of the Rio+20 Conference wielded the creation of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. In 2015, the UN hosted the United Nations' Sustainable Development Summit.⁵¹ This Summit was held to reassess the UN's development agenda, prioritizing sustainable development. This Summit created the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development that was adopted by all UN member states.⁵² The 2030 Agenda presented the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. The SDGs consist of 17 goals that cover a wide range of global issues from poverty to gender equality to climate action.⁵³ Like the MDGs, the SDGs set specific measurable goals that the UN hopes to achieve by the year 2030.⁵⁴ The key characteristics of the new SDGs are its inclusiveness and large scope. For one, governments, civil society, the private

⁴⁵ Maya Fehling, Brett D. Nelson, and Sridhar Venkatapuram, "Limitations of the Millennium Development Goals: A Literature Review," National Library of Medicine, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3877943/>

⁴⁶ Fehlin, Nelson, and Venkatapuram, "Limitations."

⁴⁷ Fehlin, Nelson, and Venkatapuram, "Limitations."

⁴⁸ United Nations Staff, "Conferences," United Nations, <https://www.un.org/en/conferences/environment>

⁴⁹ United Nations Staff, "United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, Rio+20," United Nations, https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/rio20.html?_gl=1*1uz9pp4*_ga*MzlyMzg4MDA2LjE3MTc2OTQ2Mjc.*_ga_TK9BQL5X7Z*MTcyNDI5MjY3OC45LjEuMTcyNDI5NDM1NC4wLjAuMA.

⁵⁰ United Nations Staff, "United Nations."

⁵¹ United Nations Staff, "Conferences."

⁵² United Nations Staff, "Conferences,"

⁵³ UNDP Staff, "What are."

⁵⁴ UNDP Staff, "What are."

sector, and the general public were given the chance to participate in the development of the SDGs.⁵⁵ In addition, the SDGs created strategies that focused on both developing and developed states. While the MDGs only focused on improving conditions in developing countries with use of aid from developed countries, the SDGs wield a broader scope, presenting goals for both developing and developed countries with the recognition that sustainable development can only be achieved through a global effort.⁵⁶

Over the past few years, the SDGs have remained a core pillar of the UN's efforts for global sustainable development. The UN has shifted much of its focus to climate change action and equity. With growing threats of global warming and climate change, the international community has taken strides to take immediate action to ensure future environmental sustainability.⁵⁷ In addition, the UN has made it a priority to ensure that vulnerable populations and marginalized communities are not left behind, with a focus on providing such communities with necessary resources to jump start sustainable development.⁵⁸ However, as we get closer to the year 2030 that marks the end of our current SDGs, the international community has started discussions on what our new development goals should look like.⁵⁹ As times change and global dynamics and challenges evolve, it becomes imperative for the UN to reassess its global development strategy. With the Summit of the Future, the UN hopes to jump start discussion on developing new goals for the future.⁶⁰ As a result, it is up to the Summit of the Future conference committee to take charge, reassess global progress and needs, and create a new set of goals that will secure our future global development.

Analysis:

As the Summit of the Future conference committee meets to reevaluate the SDGs, it is important to take into consideration the success and failures of the UN's previous development strategies. For example, understanding the reason for the success and failures of both the MDGs

⁵⁵ Sanjiv Kumar, Neeta Kumar, and Saxena Vivekadhish, "Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Addressing Unfinished Agenda and Strengthening Sustainable Development and Partnership," National Library of Medicine, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4746946/>

⁵⁶ Kumar, Kumar, and Vivekadhish, "Millennium Development."

⁵⁷ UNDP Staff, "What are."

⁵⁸ UNDP Staff, "What are."

⁵⁹ United Nations, "What is the Summit."

⁶⁰ United Nations, "What is the Summit."

and the current SDGs can be extremely beneficial for the Summit of the Future in reevaluating and creating new development goals.

The MDGs were notable for their time as they were one of the first targeted and measurable development goals the UN established. By focusing on reducing poverty, and increasing access to education, the MDGs signaled an era of efforts to bring about structural change. While the MDGs were revolutionary, they failed to be fully effective. One of the main issues that stagnated growth on the MDGs was a lack of adaptability. While the MDGs provided solutions that resulted in overall progress, the framework did not take into consideration the disparities that existed within countries.⁶¹ For example, the MDGs resulted in progress in some countries, while other countries were struggling to meet the set 2015 goals.⁶² Moreover, marginalized groups and underprivileged minorities did not benefit equitably from the MDGs development efforts.⁶³ With a lack of adaptability, progress in many underprivileged areas was stunted, increasing inequalities globally.

As mentioned earlier, the MDGs also set out measurable targets that the UN hoped to reach by 2015. While these measured goals helped countries and the UN track progress globally, increase accountability, and provide concrete motivation for development, they also deteriorated the quality of development efforts.⁶⁴ With many countries focused on reaching the 2015 numeric target, services provided to reach those targets lacked significantly in quality.⁶⁵ For example, countries increased educational opportunities for children with the goal of reaching universal primary education. While children had access to education, many communities were not learning efficiently due to a lack of quality in the education offered.⁶⁶ While the MDG goal was technically met, progress was not made as at the root of it, children were ultimately not getting more educated. The same lack of quality occurred with healthcare systems. While countries reduced mortality rates, they did so without addressing the root cause of the issue: widespread

⁶¹ Fehlin, Nelson, and Venkatapuram, "Limitations."

⁶² Fehlin, Nelson, and Venkatapuram, "Limitations."

⁶³ Fehlin, Nelson, and Venkatapuram, "Limitations."

⁶⁴ Fehlin, Nelson, and Venkatapuram, "Limitations."

⁶⁵ Fehlin, Nelson, and Venkatapuram, "Limitations."

⁶⁶ Deon Filmer and Adam Wagstaff, "Policymakers Need to Focus on the Quality and Not Just the Quantity of Services Delivered," World Bank Blogs, <https://blogs.worldbank.org/en/developmenttalk/policymakers-need-focus-quality-and-not-just-quantity-services-delivered>

diseases and improper healthcare systems.⁶⁷ As a result, long-term progress continued to stagnate.

The MDGs also failed to include the private sector and civil society in its development plans. Involvement of the private sector and civil society is crucial for achieving progress in global development. Without the involvement of these two groups, the MDG framework failed to reach its full potential, further stagnating global development.⁶⁸

The SDGs built off the MDGs by making significant improvements to address these criticisms. The MDGs also received significant criticism for its lack of attention to environmental sustainability. While the goal of environmental sustainability was included in the MDGs, progress was not made on the issues of climate change, biodiversity loss, and global warming. Further, the MDGs did not make an effort to integrate environmental sustainability into economic growth strategies.⁶⁹ As climate change and environmental challenges grew, the need for urgent attention on environmental sustainability also increased. As a result, during the development of the SDGs in 2015, environmental sustainability efforts were prioritized. Since the adoption of the SDGs, efforts to combat climate change have been significant.⁷⁰ In addition, the private sector, civil society, and general public were called to participate during the development of the SDGs.⁷¹ As a result, the SDGs did not face the same problems the MDGs did when addressing development without the inclusion of the private sector and civil society. While the SDGs made significant improvements from the MDGs, they have still faced challenges and setbacks.

One of the main challenges the UN faces in integrating development goals is a lack of funding and resources. With the SDGs trying to implement a wide range of 17 goals, adequate funding and access to resources is necessary to see progress. However, with funding shortages and concerns about the equitable distribution of resources, progress continues to stagnate.⁷² It is important for the Summit of the Future to not just find sources of funding, but to prioritize

⁶⁷ Filmer and Wagstaff, "Policymakers Need."

⁶⁸ Fehlin, Nelson, and Venkatapuram, "Limitations."

⁶⁹ Fehlin, Nelson, and Venkatapuram, "Limitations."

⁷⁰ Kumar, Kumar, and Vivekadhish, "Millennium Development."

⁷¹ Kumar, Kumar, and Vivekadhish, "Millennium Development."

⁷² Brett D. Schaefer, "The United Nations' Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals Fall Flat," The Heritage Foundation, January 31, 2023, <https://www.heritage.org/global-politics/commentary/the-united-nations-agenda-2030-and-the-sustainable-development-goals>

finding funding sources that are sustainable and will support development goals in the long-term. Even with sustainable, long-term reliable funding sources, progress on global sustainable development will continue to be slow for the foreseeable future. As a result, it is imperative for the Summit of the Future to develop sustainable funding approaches to support its new development goals.

The SDGs have faced challenges with integration and coordination as well. The UN has struggled to ensure that the SDGs are integrated into national policies. In other words, the UN has struggled to hold countries accountable for their actions. With gaps in annual reports and a lack of consistency in evaluating countries' annual progress, the UN struggles to hold countries accountable for the progress they are making on the SDGs.⁷³ In addition, coordination with stakeholders to enact the SDGs has been minimal and ineffective.⁷⁴ As a result, it is important for the Summit of the Future to develop strategies to rectify these problems to secure the success of its new goals.

Conclusion:

While the task to reevaluate the Sustainable Development Goals and create new goals is demanding, it is extremely important to achieve global progress and combat current challenges across the world. Every few years, the UN creates a set of goals or an agenda that seems far-fetched. Achieving 17 goals in a span of 15 years is near to impossible, that too, with goals such as eradicating poverty and hunger by 2030. However, these goals are important to the mission of the UN. For one, the creation of an Agenda unites the various UN committees, partners, and entities to achieving shared aims. Without a clear focus, the UN's collective work can easily derail. Thus, even though the UN's development goals seem far-fetched, they are the building blocks, pillars, and driving motivation for the UN's work in the following years and future.

As a result, the Summit of the Future conference committee must focus on developing guiding goals that are appropriate and needed for the state of our world currently. Rather than focusing primarily on when these goals will be achieved by (ex. 2050, 2070, etc.), it is important for the committee to consider enabling the UN and its members to work together to combat

⁷³ Clara Fong and Diana Roy, "What are the UN Sustainable Development Goals?," Council on Foreign Relations, November 2nd, 2023, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/what-are-un-sustainable-development-goals>

⁷⁴ Fong and Roy, "What are."

challenges currently faced by the globe. Reassessing the SDGs includes both analyzing the need for new goals, but also creating definitions and details that allow member states to effectively integrate those goals and make them successful.

The power is given to this committee to do what they see fit; whether it is adding a new goal, taking a current goal away, completely redoing the SDGs, developing a new set of goals to be released after 2030, or keeping the same goals and refining the implementation strategy. Through creating new goals, reassessing and refining old targets, refining funding systems, developing plans for coordination and execution, and more, the Summit of the Future can develop an achievable and transformative development agenda for the United Nations and larger international community.

Questions to Consider:

1. If the committee were to create new goals, how can these new goals build on the successes of the SDGs while also addressing their limitations?
2. How can the SDGs better support marginalized and vulnerable communities?
3. Considering a variation of disparities within countries, what are ways to make the SDGs more adaptable and efficient for countries across the globe?

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