

# What are the SDGs?

We've all heard of the MDGs – the Millennium Development Goals – but what are the SDGs?

## The post-2015 agenda

'SDG' stands for Sustainable Development Goal. These are the goals that will *replace the Millennium Development Goals* when they expire this year (2015). The SDG time period is 2016-2030.

- The Sustainable Development Goals** seek to end poverty, achieve gender equality and ensure food security in every corner of the globe by 2030.
- There are **17 Sustainable Development Goals**
- There are **169 Sustainable Development Goal targets**

Civil society and UN member states have been debating the selection and wording of the goals for *more than two years*. The final goals, and their targets, were approved by the 193 member states of the United Nations on **August 2<sup>nd</sup> 2015**. The SDG targets will be formally adopted by UN member states at a special summit in September.

The SDGs can be divided into six themes:

1. **Dignity** – end poverty and fight inequality
2. **People** – ensure healthy lives, knowledge, and the inclusion of women and children
3. **Planet** – protect our ecosystems for all societies and our children
4. **Partnership** – catalyse global solidarity for sustainable development
5. **Justice** – promote safe and peaceful societies and strong institutions
6. **Prosperity** – grow a strong, inclusive, and transformative economy

## How do the SDGs compare to the MDGs?

The MDGs focused on achieving development for *some*, while the SDGs aim to reach key milestones for *all*. Important differences include:

- Specific targets to fulfil the rights of people with disabilities
- An entirely new 'sustainable industrialisation' goal to foster research and innovation
- Attention to mitigating the effects of rapid urbanization, and making cities a safe and healthy place to live
- A strong focus on ecology, including goals on sustainable consumption, conservation, protection of the oceans, and climate change
- A new goal on justice and rights-based institutions
- Recognition of and support for global partnerships and mutual accountability among nations

## What are the goals?

The seventeen SDGs are:

1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere (MDG 1)
2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture (MDG 1)
3. Ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all at all ages (MDGs 4,5,6)
4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all (MDG 2)
5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls (MDG 3)
6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all (MDG 7)
7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all (MDG 7)
8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all (MDG 1)
9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation
10. Reduce inequality within and among countries (MDG 1)
11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts (MDG 7)
14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development (MDG 7)
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 (MDG 7)
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
17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development (MDG 8)

## What's next?

In order to implement the SDGs, member states will need funding. Developing countries have committed to spending targets for education and health, but more will be needed. The UN estimates that the new goals will cost up to USD 172.5 trillion over the fifteen years.

## For more information

- [Final text of the Sustainable Development Goals](#)
- [Interactive Sustainable Development Goals text](#)
- [Sustainable Development Goals knowledge platform](#)
- [Sustainable Development 2015 stakeholder engagement website](#)