

वैश्वतैरण्ड

Evangelical Perspectives on Mission and Ethics



SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
GOALS

**“He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you?
To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.”**

Micah 6:8 New International Version (NIV)

Drishtikone means perspective or viewpoint in Hindi. The magazine seeks to provide a space in which Christians can share their perspectives and points of view on wholistic mission in India.

Our Vision is that **Drishtikone** will motivate change in readers. The experiences of development practitioners, theologians, grassroots workers and others demonstrating God’s love in a practical way, will influence and encourage Christians to join the struggle for peace and justice in this country.

Drishtikone seeks to present a Biblical perspective on social issues and provide readers with information and models of engagement in wholistic concerns. It is a forum for evangelical reflection and dialogue on development issues in India.

Drishtikone is published three times a year by EFICOR to mobilise Christian reflection and action. Financial contributions from readers are welcome to support EFICOR in its efforts to influence the mind towards action.

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Letters to the Editor...

Dear editor,

Greetings to you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and saviour!

I am very happy to receive your magazine Drishtikone. It is very useful for our ministry and pastoral work - in preparation of messages for sermons, etc.

Thank you.

Rev. Dr. P. Babu Rao
Church of South India, Diocese of Karimnagar
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Dear editor,

As I read through the Drishtikone Issue on 'Clean India', I could see that it has covered many facets for actual implementation of this challenging movement called - Clean India.

I am much blessed and benefiting through the issue on 'Clean India' and would recommend it to be read by every household in the country and especially by every church-goer. This will enable a Clean India Movement first from the Indian church which will then spread through the whole nation. I herewith humbly invite every Indian Christian to join hands and hearts to realistically participate in this Clean India challenge and make it a big success with a view to clean the dirt that is residing in us and in every citizen of India for making India a better place to live!

Thank you.
Mr. Steven B. Christian
Operations Executive - Community Development
Wycliffe India

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Editorial...

In 2015, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) set by the United Nations came to the end of its term and a post-2015 campaign took over its place which is known as Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Enshrined in the principles of universality and interdependence, was the premise of 'leave no one behind', setting to achieve the goals by 2030. The SDGs have expanded upon each of the MDGs and include a new set of goals designed to ensure sustainability.

Despite the fact that the MDGs provided a clear focus and have helped increase commitments to aid by developing nations, it has been shown that there are some areas where very slow progress has been made. It is encouraging that the SDGs have set goals which offer shared focus on economic development, environmental sustainability and social inclusion. The SDGs represent a global ambition to make sure economic growth is shared by all and does not harm the environment, which is part of environmental sustainability. The goals are also committed to future economic and technological progress under conditions of fairness and equitable access to public services.

While India has adopted the SDGs with prima facie commitment, we should start setting the context for us to achieve the goals. For this, we need to be aware that each one of us has a role to play in fulfilling the goals and targets set in the SDG. Sustainable development is the only viable path for humanity. And as Christians, it is equally important for us to understand the idea of social inclusion to make sure that 'no one is left behind' in the SDG implementation. We cannot afford to be mere bystanders as development happens around us. This issue of Drishtikone seeks to explore how the church and the Christian community in India could be actively integrated and involved in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals.

‘No One is Left Behind’ – Sustainable Development Goals and Our World Today

Dr. Bonnie Miriam Jacob

‘No one is left behind’ encapsulates the core sentiment of the ambitious Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). ‘Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development’ with 17 goals and 169 targets was affirmed by the world leaders in September 2015 and brought into effect in January 2016. The Preamble aptly captures the vision, “This Agenda is a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity... We recognise that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development... We are resolved to free the human race from the tyranny of poverty and want, and to heal and secure our planet... As we embark on this collective journey, we pledge that no one will be left behind.”

The contrast between wealth and want in our world today is appalling. According to the Global Wealth Report while the total wealth in the world today stands at US \$255,708 billion¹, the bottom half collectively own less than 1% of the wealth and the wealthiest 10% own

89%². Alongside reports of plenty in the hands of a few are staggering statistics of extreme deprivation. 1 in every 8 people live in extreme poverty, which is about 13% as of 2012³. Statistics on other issues confronting our world today are equally overwhelming. In such a scenario, pursuing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) hold much promise and hope for the hungry, the sick, the children out of school, the dispossessed and many others. According to economist Jeffrey Sachs, the total cost per year to end extreme poverty

“...the total cost per year to end extreme poverty would be US \$ 175 billion, which represents less than one percent of the income of the richest countries in the world. Even a portion of the wealth of a few detailed above is good enough to usher in a fairer world.”

would be US \$ 175 billion, which represents less than one percent of the income of the richest countries in the world⁴. Even a portion of the wealth of a few detailed above is good enough to usher in a fairer world. Despite unprecedented prosperity and technological advancements, there are millions of people in the world who have not been part of even a fraction of these gains. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) bring renewed hope that over the next 15 years we will carry everyone alongside and that ‘No one is left behind’ and that we will strive to create a more equitable world.

Millennium Development Goals

At the turn of the new millennium, the UN had adopted the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and committed to improve the lives of millions of people across the world. It had given the world a collective development framework for the first time at a global level. These measurable and time bound goals

gave a focus in tackling some of the world’s most pressing problems. At the outset there were reservations with regard to the goals. The MDG framework was seen as inadequate, defined narrowly and missing several critical issues. While several of these criticisms were valid it cannot be denied that these goals inspired new partnerships, increased funding, renewed interests and focused initiatives to help the countries and their governments meet the goals. Countries began paying more attention to achieve the goals with the global focus and emphasis on individual achievements. It also provided a standard to hold governments accountable to their commitments at various levels.

¹ Credit Suisse Research Institute, Global Wealth Report 2016, Switzerland, November 2016, p. 6.

² *ibid.*, p.2.

³ United Nations, The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2016, United Nations Publications, New York, 2016, p.3.

⁴ United Nations, No Poverty: Why it Matters, Sustainable Development Goals.

Ban Ki-moon, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, in his foreword to the Millennium Development Goals Report 2015 says, “The MDGs helped to lift more than one billion people out of extreme poverty, to make inroads against hunger,

to enable more girls to attend school than ever before and to protect our planet. They

generated new and innovative partnerships, galvanised public opinion and showed the immense value of setting ambitious goals. By putting people and their immediate needs at the forefront, the MDGs reshaped decision-making in developed and developing countries alike.”⁵

Other significant achievements include the reduction of the number of children out of school by about half, down from 100 million in 1990 to 57 million in 2015, under-five mortality declining by over half from 90 to 43 deaths per 1000 live births between 1990 and 2000, HIV infections down by 40% between 2000 and 2013 from an estimated 3.5 million cases to 2.1 million and 91% of the global population using improved drinking water in 2015 as against 76% in 1990⁶.

However, over the fifteen-year period several goals were not achieved or there was very little change, “Progress has been uneven across regions and countries, leaving significant gaps. Millions of people are being left behind, especially the poorest and those disadvantaged because of their sex, age, disability, ethnicity or geographical location. Targeted efforts will be needed to reach the most vulnerable people.”⁷ Amidst achievements and lapses, the MDGs now give way to the SDGs, which build “on their success and momentum, while also embracing new ambitions for the future we want.”⁸

Sustainable Development Goals

SDGs came into existence after much deliberations and consultations at different levels with various groups representing the civil society and other stakeholders and factoring in the voices of the poorest and the most vulnerable sections of the society. Their critical inputs in framing these new goals have made the goals comprehensive, inclusive and ambitious. The vision of the SDGs enthuses a deep desire for its achievement as it holds within its focus a universal aspiration for transformation. In the historic resolution to transform the world, the leaders

pledged “between now and 2030, to end poverty and hunger everywhere; to combat inequalities within and among countries; to build peaceful, just and inclusive societies; to protect human rights and promote gender equality and the

empowerment of women and girls; and to ensure the lasting protection of the planet and

“ The vision of the SDGs enthuses a deep desire for its achievement as it holds within its focus a universal aspiration for transformation. ”

its natural resources. We resolve also to create conditions for sustainable, inclusive and sustained economic growth, shared prosperity and decent work for all, taking into account different levels of national development and capacities.”⁹

People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace and Partnership are the five sections under which the 17 goals are appropriately categorised. The goals are also Universal – calling for action by all, Indivisible - to be implemented in an integrated manner and Transformative. The three core elements that the SDGs seek to accomplish are to harmonise economic growth, social inclusion and environmental protection. Cross cutting nature of the SDGs is evident in the scope of issues the SDGs want to address. The critical issue of our times have been brought to the forefront by these goals and they underscore some significant issues that are essential to see any initiative succeed in our times. So focus on inequalities, peace and security, climate action and efficient management of all natural resources are essential components of this development agenda. While there is a global ownership of the SDGs, the goals will be aligned alongside the national policies and development strategies of the individual countries. Achievement of the goals and change is a long drawn process and global partnership is vital. The developed countries have also been assigned significant roles in the implementation of the goals adding much value to the entire effort and to facilitate the rest of the countries succeed in their efforts by lending their aid in various forms and capacities.

A set of global indicators have been developed to review the progress of the goals. National, regional and global levels of accountabilities have also been developed. Strengthening data collection has been counted as vital from the outset to not only measure progress and achievements but to also facilitate efficient decision-making. Learning from the pitfalls of implementing the MDGs will keep the SDGs better poised as they take off.

⁵ United Nations, The Millennium Development Goals Report 2015, New York, 2015, p. 3

⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 4-7.

⁷ *ibid.*, p. 8.

⁸ *ibid.*, p. 9.

⁹ United Nations, Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, New York, 2015, p. 4.



Photo: EFICOR

have been The Global efforts of the SDGs with its broad agenda significantly shaping the local perspectives and priorities. At the citizens' level, holding the local government bodies and local representatives accountable in implementing development programmes will be ways of contributing towards achieving the goals.

Only a year has gone by since the SDGs were introduced and initiated, therefore, it is too early to even assess a trajectory. Voluntary interim reports given by countries suggest a ownership and a focus towards a collective action. The goals have been integrated within the national programmes of the various countries. India's recent SDGs report¹⁰ reveals the various initiatives flagged off nationally that correspond to the various goals. While excellent development programmes are formulated, India's major issue lies with the implementation of these plans. The track record of India's development statistics points to the need for concerted efforts on the development front in keeping with the world leader image that India is trying so hard to secure.

Faith Community and the Global Goals

Where does the faith community figure in the face of such a wide-ranging global goals? If the leaders of the world

have such a grand vision for transformation of the world, be it on paper or for real, it is a vision nevertheless. Can such a vision inspire the church so that it can partner and contribute to such an impressive and inclusive vision where 'no one is left behind'? As Christians what hope do we hold for the world we live in? What kind of world do we want to evolve in the future? The compelling need in our times is to correct the injustices in the society, to ensure equality and provide dignity and enable people to enjoy freedom and peace. Our actions today will determine the world we will create in the future. The church's intervention is more relevant today than any other time in carrying together everyone forward to a better future. The vision of the goals definitely runs parallel to the vision of the scripture of addressing poverty, inequality and ensuring social justice. Our Christian calling compels us to factor the socio-political and economic contexts and open our eyes to huge need around us. For many this may not seem as viable options for action in a church context since the deep fault lines within the church between evangelism and social concern have robbed the church of a wholistic vision and robust approach for the world we live in today.

Several Christian NGOs and other faith-based initiatives will definitely follow the SDG trail in their engagements. But the idea of the church aligning with some aspects of the SDGs would make it such an engaging community being responsive and aware of the here and now. Faith

¹⁰ Voluntary National Review on Implementation of Sustainable Development Goals 2017, India Main Messages, 2017.

Leaders and Pastors advocating for SDGs can prompt greater engagement and involvement from the members. The mandate given by them from the scriptures to the immense needs around will be much more persuasive than the pleas by NGOs.

A campaign on SDGs and churches could generate the momentum to support and contribute to these goals. Campaign modes of communication are sure ways of arousing interest in an otherwise unaware constituency. Observing AIDS and Environment Sundays have inspired several to action especially those within the church conditioned to a different frame of reality. Such a model can be adopted for SDGs as well, picking up one theme at a time. Church is well positioned in reaching out to the poor and those on the margins with its presence at the grassroots level and in the most deprived areas. If our reach could combine hope with action several dimensions of the goals can be easily pursued. For example, Goal 2 covers 'Zero Hunger' and ensuring this in its vicinity could be something that any faith community or church could easily implement. Enrolling out of school children or helping the poor access health care are some aspects of SDGs that the church can pick up to make sure everyone is included and no one is left behind. The composition of the church with diverse expertise makes it a unique community to reach out in various capacities with compassion. We could also be facilitators to unite local groups for an audit of the governance and implementation of localised social welfare programmes.

Ideas modelled into best practices can bring much clarity. At a local congregation in the capital city an intentional effort to create awareness and increase involvement with the poor generated much enthusiasm. The young people organised themselves in several groups to live out a 'mercy week'. They looked out for needs in the city noticeable to their young minds and tried to help them out in their own small ways. Though it may not have made much of an impact for the ones they reached out to, but it did make a significant impact on the young people giving them an exposure to the cruel world of deprivation, marginalisation and neglect. 'We are living in a bubble', 'We need to be more engaged', 'It doesn't take much to reach out' were sentiments echoed by some of them at the end of their efforts. These statements may be duplicated in many a church if we nudge their social conscience.

The example of the churches in Kenya should compel us to consider our efforts to the millions deprived in India. When the impact of HIV and AIDS peaked in the 1990s and early 2000s and traditional approaches of care came under severe strain a number of faith based organisations

stepped in to fill the need.¹¹ Faith traditions gave special instruction to care for orphans. "Faith group responses to the HIV and AIDS crisis overall evolved with time and by individual leadership, place, and denomination. Some saw HIV and AIDS as a mark of sin, a punishment from God... Others, however, went to extraordinary lengths to protect orphans and affected children, whether they lived in communities or in institutions. Attitudes within faith communities and in the society at large have shifted in positive directions, but, even so, stigma associated with HIV and AIDS is still widespread. Various faith organisations thus work proactively to combat stigma and promote healthy sexual behaviours".¹²

Such proactive paradigm shift towards the need around could hold hope for several who are not included in the governments reach for various reasons. Faith leaders taking the initiative and seeking for positive influence over their members as in Kenya will yield much result.

Conclusion

SDGs have come at an appropriate time and the world's attention is drawn to implementing it. The call is for every person to be involved in small and easy ways at the least. If 'no one is to be left behind' then everyone must be engaged, more so, the ones who are aware. Accomplishing the goals and change is a long drawn process and help from every quarter will add value to the entire effort. With a simple act of engagement with the community we may simultaneously be addressing several issues. The amount of wealth and income in our planet today indicates that these goals are achievable if there is cooperation between various partners in the right direction.

Our commitment to SDGs is integral to God's creation mandate of caring for the earth and the call to love our neighbour. Therefore, let us make our voices heard in the society, share the information you have to create awareness, motivate and model to others what it means to be a caring society. Let us, as individuals and churches passionately work towards making it a reality that this time as the world leaders implement the Sustainable Development Goals, truly 'no one should be left behind'.

¹¹ Marshall, Katherine and Mui, Wilma, A Society's Responsibility: Ethics, Religion and Children at Risk in Kenya, Senegal and Cambodia, Berkeley Centre for Religion, Peace and World Affairs & World Faith's Development Dialogue, Georgetown University, p. 11.

¹² *ibid.*

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SDGs – A Way Forward?

Dr. Jamila Koshy

Dr. Bonnie Miriam Jacob has beautifully brought out the process by which the Sustainable Development Goals came into being, following, as they do, the well-known Millennium Development Goals, with the hopeful vision of combined human society to see economic growth for all, with social inclusion and environmental concern, so that no one is left behind. She has pointed out the need for these goals and the desperate urgency to see them fulfilled in a world which is teeming with inequality and is hurtling towards an uncertain future.

The SDGs do have flaws, though. Indeed they were met with a lot of critique and opposition about being idealistic, dreamy, repetitive and 'like a high-school wish list', with few quantifiable targets and too many and wide-spread to be of any use, in contrast to the MDGs, which were few (just eight) and had focussed and quantifiable targets. The expectation of many was that wishful rhetoric and long lists would not result in any actual action. The SDGs have also been critiqued for focussing off absolute poverty, not addressing the problem of over-consumption and extreme accumulation of wealth by some societies, ignoring systemic problems such as unfair international trade policies which result in global imbalance - except for a few weak comments about mutual respect for countries.

This was countered by others through the argument that life and societies are complex, and the interconnectedness of the SDGs was indeed the whole point of the exercise, to emphasise that development had to be tackled on many fronts, with no easy answers or solutions but requiring the nuanced understanding and ownership of all world leaders and societies.

These are complex issues, of course, and cannot be discussed in a short article. It is enough as a beginning to remind ourselves that the SDGs are integrated, to be worked on together, and not to be separated, even though the breakdown into quite so many segments makes them a trifle cumbersome to work with comfortably. Since the desire was to make the Goals comprehensive, it is understandable; perhaps the solution is to do exactly what Dr. Bonnie did - talk only about the broad groupings - People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace and Partnership - in the initial presentation to the faith or other communities, and get into the details only as and when required. In other words, we Partner with people to work for the Prosperity and Peace of all people while keeping the health and viability of the Planet in mind!

Obviously, the breakdown of each portion will also need to be discussed at some point because as is well known it is perfectly possible for people to work for peace and harmony, while entirely leaving out the people, race or gender groups that they personally have a prejudice against - a prejudice that people are not even aware of, operating at a sub-conscious level, so ignored or justified for years and millennia. Unless for instance, the upper classes in India are repeatedly made aware of the need to take ALL people along, it is very easy for them to work for prosperity of the country while totally excluding the sweepers, or those seen as impure and outcaste since they work with dead animals in industries such as leather or tanning. We have seen this kind of development for too long and the call for inclusivity in the SDGs needs to be taken seriously and acted upon in detail. Similarly, it has been easy for Indians to talk about sustainable development or quality education or clean water and sanitation for all, while excluding almost all women from decision-making at every level and in every sub-culture, and making hardly any move to correct the lop-sided and male-centric worldview that has been the tradition of many Indian communities, and seemingly being blind to the hindrance this causes in attaining those very goals. It is this interconnectedness of development that the SDGs seek to address.

For our purposes, Dr. Bonnie has rightly focussed on what is most relevant to us, and has made us think about how the faith community should look at and participate in meeting these goals. It is not possible, prudent or Christ-like for Christians to ignore the vision of the larger human community, and focus narrowly on what we see as 'spiritual' concerns; leaving the task of bringing equality, upliftment of the poor or removal of hunger to other people. Rather the church should make the SDGs her own, owning and acknowledging that justice, hope and loving concern for all expressed by the vision of the SDGs. Various ways for the church to take ownership have been expressed from working against hunger and poverty, taking part in the fight against HIV and AIDS, to working for and increasing awareness about environmental care. We can hope that the church will take the SDGs positively, as an aspiration of the world community to foster inclusive, sustainable progress and participate actively and wisely.

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Towards a Sustainable World

Mr. Ramesh Babu

The year 2016 marks the end of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) paving the way for a new global development agenda. Undoubtedly, the MDGs have guided the way for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that the world will strive to achieve in the next 15 years, further showing the way forward in achieving the new ambitious and inclusive agendas.



Photo: EFICOR

The 2030 Agenda comprises 17 new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which will guide different nations to frame development policies for the next 15 years, beginning with a historic pledge to end poverty. The concept of the SDGs was born at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, Rio+20, in 2012. The objective was to produce a set of universally applicable goals that balances the three dimensions of sustainable development: environmental, social and economic. The SDGs would have completed one year in September, 2017.

The MDGs have established measurable, universally-agreed objectives for eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, preventing deadly but treatable diseases, and expanding educational opportunities to all children, among other development imperatives.

The MDGs drove progress in several important areas:

- Income to poor
- Access to improved sources of water
- Primary school enrollment
- Decreased Child mortality.

However, the MDGs have left the job unfinished for millions of people - ending hunger, achieving full gender equality, improving health services and getting every child into school are still to be achieved by the nations. The SDGs build on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), eight anti-poverty targets that the world committed to achieve by 2015. The MDGs aimed at an array of issues that included slashing poverty, hunger, disease, gender inequality, and access to water and sanitation. Enormous progress has been made on the MDGs, showing the value of a unifying agenda

underpinned by goals and targets. Despite this success, poverty has not been ended for all. The new SDGs, and the broader sustainability agenda, go much further than the MDGs, addressing the root causes of poverty and the universal need for development that works for all people.

As Dr. Bonnie rightly said, SDGs must finish the job that the MDGs started, and leave no one behind. There

is a need to shift the world onto a sustainable path. This new development agenda applies to all countries, striving to promote peaceful and inclusive societies, creating better jobs and tackling the environmental challenges of our time - particularly climate change. Climate-related disasters in India are increasingly impacting people's wellbeing and their livelihoods which mean that these disasters hinder sustainable development. Disaster risk reduction measures with a focus on community resilience therefore needs to be a central part of the sustainable development framework. There is a need to implement measures that complement disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation and sustainable development which is possible through mainstreaming these concepts into policies and plans, monitoring and evaluation, and impact assessment as well. Climate change that interlinks sustainable agriculture, food security and nutrition, health and population dynamics, education, gender equality and women's empowerment, water and sanitation, energy, sustainable consumption and production, ecosystems and biodiversity etc. are still a challenge for climate resilient development. Women and farmers can be key agents of change in the transformation to a low-carbon and climate-resilient future by building climate-smart villages which EFICOR promotes in its project locations specifically in the arid zones of Bundelkhand and Rajasthan.

The SDGs are more ambitious than the MDGs, covering a broad range of interconnected issues, from economic growth to social issues to global public goods. To realise this vision, a just-as-ambitious plan for financing and policy implementation is needed. The magnitude of the SDG financing challenge far exceeds the capacity of any nation and demands a strong partnership among governments,

the private sector, and development organisations. Each of the goals needs to be integrated well into the nations' development goals in order to achieve progress across the multiple goals set out in the new SDGs. Indeed, all nations should work towards strengthening partnerships for implementation, and filling in the gaps. The UN Task Team report, *Realizing the Future We Want for All*, released in June 2012,¹ has broadly endorsed the need to go beyond poverty reduction to promote wholistic development, emphasising the three principles of human rights, equality and sustainability, and the four dimensions of peace and security, inclusive economic development, inclusive social development and environmental sustainability (UN, 2012).

The report highlighted the proposed road map which is based on a two-step approach for supporting Member States to develop the post-2015 UN development agenda. The first step, is to promote an open, inclusive and transparent consultation process, to take stock and encourage contributions from a wide range of stakeholders by -

// ...there is definitely a hope for a better world in the Sustainable Development Goals, where everyone is included 'from the margins to the mainstream'...

Bringing different voices into the process

In its global convening role, the UN can bring together the different sets of stakeholders who can contribute to an agenda of human progress and sustainable development, building on agreements by Member States in the Millennium Declaration, the international summits and conferences since the 1990s and successive reviews, especially the Rio+20 outcome. It will be important to capture the perspectives and contributions of civil society, the private sector, philanthropic foundations and other development partners. The UN can also bring voices that may otherwise not be heard, such as youth representatives, into it and help amplify perspectives of those marginalised.

The United Nations Development Group has taken steps to initiate outreach on several levels:

(i) Supporting at least 50 national level post-2015 dialogues in developing countries to complement the active debates already ongoing in developed countries; (ii) convening nine global thematic consultations; and (iii) stimulating and supporting citizen and stakeholder engagement with the post-2015 agenda. These different types and levels of outreach can anchor other innovative consultations and

processes taking place outside the UN.

The second step is to intensify efforts to achieve intergovernmental consensus, while sustaining an open and inclusive process. In India we have National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) and State Action Plan on Climate Change (SAPCC) which was one of the largest sub-national action plans prepared with conversation on decentralised planning for climate action. All state action plans are aligned with the national action plan on climate change. Although the process of preparing these action plans should have been bottom up approach, the government has to ensure appropriate institutional arrangements and conversance within government departments to be in place for planning and implementation. EFICOR is involved in development of district level climate resilient plans along with the state governments to align

state and national plans.

The biggest immediate challenge will be to reach consensus on the contours of an agenda that adequately identifies

the development needs of present and future generations, and is capable of crystallising these priorities in clear, easy-to-communicate development goals that will help guide coherent policy action at the global, regional and national levels. The UN Task Team is committed to supporting the broad consultation process that is already taking shape, through its analytical inputs, expertise and outreach. Therefore, the Task Team seeks to contribute to the definition of a post-2015 global development agenda that responds to the aspirations of all people for a world free of want and fear and consistent with economic development, social progress and environmental sustainability.

To conclude, we can say that there is definitely a hope for a better world in the Sustainable Development Goals, where everyone is included 'from the margins to the mainstream' and not left behind towards the creation of a sustainable world.

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¹ Realizing the Future We Want for All, Report to the Secretary-General, UN System Task team on the Post-2015 UN Development agenda, June 2012

FACTS



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



10

What is sustainable development?

- Sustainable development has been defined as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- Sustainable development calls for concerted efforts towards building an inclusive, sustainable and resilient future for people and planet.
- For sustainable development to be achieved, it is crucial to harmonize three core elements: economic growth, social inclusion and environmental protection. These elements are interconnected and all are crucial for the well-being of individuals and societies.
- Eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions is an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. To this end, there must be promotion of sustainable, inclusive and equitable economic growth, creating greater opportunities for all, reducing inequalities, raising basic standards of living, fostering equitable social development and inclusion, and promoting integrated and sustainable management of natural resources and ecosystems.

Are the Sustainable Development Goals legally binding?

- The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are not legally binding.
- Nevertheless, countries are expected to take ownership and establish a national framework for achieving the 17 Goals.
- Implementation and success will rely on countries' own sustainable development policies, plans and programmes.
- Countries have the primary responsibility for follow-up and review, at the national, regional and global levels, with regard to the progress made in implementing the Goals and targets over the next 15 years.
- Actions at the national level to monitor progress will require quality, accessible and timely data collection and regional follow-up and review.

How will the Sustainable Development Goals be implemented?

- The Addis Ababa Action Agenda that came out of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development provided concrete policies and actions to support the implementation of the new agenda.
- Implementation and success will rely on countries' own sustainable development policies, plans and programmes, and will be led by countries. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will be a compass for aligning countries' plans with their global commitments.
- Nationally owned and country-led sustainable development strategies will require resource mobilisation and financing strategies.
- All stakeholders - governments, civil society, the private sector and others, are expected to contribute to the realisation of the new agenda.
- A revitalised global partnership at the global level is needed to support national efforts. This is recognised in the 2030 Agenda.
- Multi-stakeholder partnerships have been recognised as an important component of strategies that seek to mobilise all stakeholders around the new agenda.

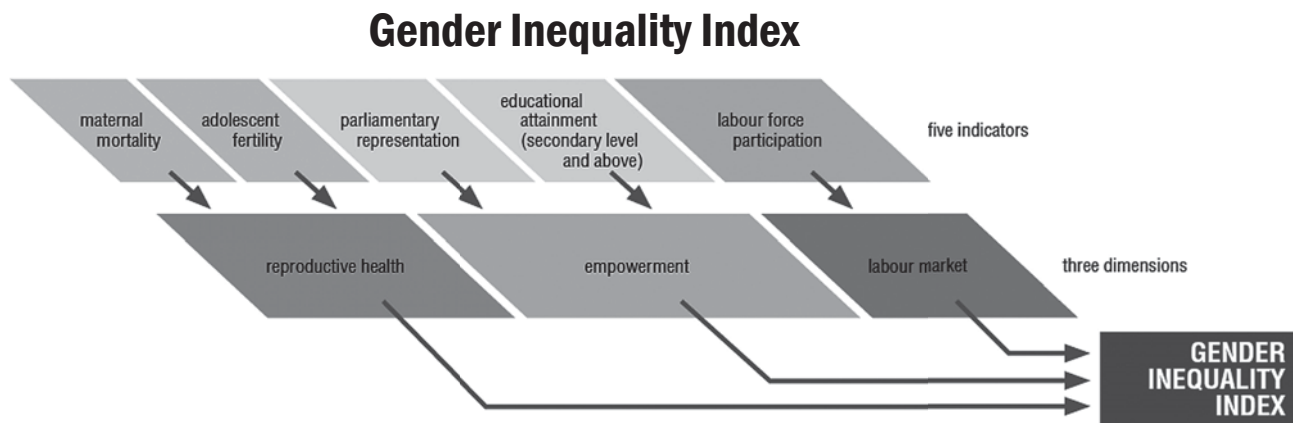
How are the Sustainable Development Goals different from the MDGs?

- The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with 169 targets are broader in scope and go further than the MDGs by addressing the root causes of poverty

and the universal need for development that works for all people. The goals cover the three dimensions of sustainable development: economic growth, social inclusion and environmental protection.

- Building on the success and momentum of the MDGs, the new global goals cover more ground, with ambitions to address inequalities, economic growth, decent jobs, cities and human settlements, industrialisation, oceans, ecosystems, energy, climate change, sustainable consumption and production, peace and justice.
- The new Goals are universal and apply to all countries, whereas the MDGs were intended for action in developing countries only.
- A core feature of the SDGs is their strong focus on means of implementation—the mobilization of financial resources—capacity-building and technology, as well as data and institutions.
- The new Goals recognize that tackling climate change is essential for sustainable development and poverty eradication. SDG aims to promote urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.

Source: <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/development-agenda/>



Note: The size of the boxes reflects the relative weights of the indicators and dimensions.

Source: UNDP Human Development Report Office



Source: www.cigionline.org and kdi.re.kr 2012

The SDGs and India – A Christian Understanding

Dr. Shantanu Dutta

The United Nations development system is a generator of ideas, technical services and country support. Comparing the work with the world of development helps to evaluate how significant the UN's contribution to human progress has been since its inception in 1945. From 1940s, the UN was a midwife at the birth of development as a discipline and as the engine of progress. The UN contributed substantially to the early genre of theories, which were equated with economic expansion, before giving more attention to social issues judging their prominence or depth. Since 1970s, things started to take a turn towards positivity, and environmental concerns have gained in prominence. Along the way, the UN has generated huge amounts of data and information, and produced much original analysis in comparison with whatever analysis had undergone before. These ideas and their evolution have been extensively chronicled. They have revealed a UN often ahead of the curve but, for various reasons to be encountered over here, with wavering influence.

As the UN intellectual history project suggests that, there can be three kinds of ideas in the world of development: first one is “positive” - based on verifiable facts; the second one is “normative” - based on beliefs of what the world should look like, and the third and final one is “casual” - which attributes outcomes to specific proposals. The UN has indulged fully in all three. They have resulted in a substantial body of research. In India, they have successfully emulated an appropriate model incorporating all three mottos. However, most important for the subject of this article, the UN has developed a large number of developmental norms and standards, which should guide its operational activities. Goal setting should be the missing link which should be fixated at first. Rest of the things come later. ‘Sustainable Development’ is seen as a prop to enhance decision making so that it can provide a more comprehensive assessment of the manifold multi-dimensional problems which our current society faces. The most required feature is an evaluation framework for categorising all the programs, projects, policies and decision making conscience which inherently bear massive sustainability potential. The word ‘sustainable’ is most often associated with signifying the meaning “being able to meet the needs of the present - socially, economically, environmentally, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs” as dictated in 1987 at World

Commission on Environment and Development.

After three years, thousands of surveys, hundreds of meetings and dozens of international summits, the United Nations on September 25 approved the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Their intent is to inspire and propel countless global efforts to improve life for all 7 billion-plus inhabitants of this planet by the year 2030. The SDGs replace the recently expired and fairly successful Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which were adopted in 2000. The original eight MDGs were fairly straightforward and tackled big problems facing the world: poverty, hunger, lack of education, gender equality, child mortality, maternal health, diseases such as HIV and AIDS and malaria, environmental sustainability, and getting global entities to work together better. Like any successful movie-franchise sequel, the operative word is “more.” If eight MDGs worked to a certain extent, then 17 new SDGs ought to be even better, right?

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This is where the critics start sharpening their pencils (or daggers). Many of them say the problem with the SDGs is too many goals and a lack of focus – much like the way directors of movie sequels go for more characters, bigger set pieces and louder explosions, yet all with less effect than the original.

We have 15 years to see who's correct. In the meantime, shared goals and common targets still do have great influence. They give people and organisations something to rally around and a common vocabulary about what needs to be done. During the 15 years of the MDGs, the number of people living in extreme poverty halved, access to clean water and sanitation increased, and the rights of women and girls across the world were enhanced. But environmental ills have become worse: hence the need for a new paradigm of sustainable global development.

For fixation of ‘goal’, one needs to identify the way to approach beforehand. The wholistic approach of human in a ‘sustainable’ way predominantly relates to cultural development in three dimensions:

- Human behaviours and lifestyles which do not harm nature;
- Human minds in line with (Eastern) ethics, stability of mind

and motivation to see other creatures as companions;
- Human wisdom that includes knowledge, understanding, attitude, norms and values in order to live in harmony with nature forever.

Apart from these three goals, four 'dimensions' are generally recognised as the main pillars of sustainable development: economic, social and cultural. Therefore, the real essence of sustainability is to take the contextual features of economy, society and environment alleviating the uncertainty, the multiple competing values and the distrust among various ethnic groups; in order to design a process that guides concerned groups to seek out and ask the right questions as a preventative approach to environmentally and socially regrettable undertakings. Based on these foundations, the following 17 goals were fixated for sustainable development project worldwide.

- (1) Poverty alleviation
- (2) Hunger eradication
- (3) Good health and well-being for all
- (4) Equal opportunity to all for getting quality education
- (5) Promoting gender equality
- (6) Clean water and sanitation for all
- (7) Affordable and clean energy
- (8) Economic growth for all countries irrespective of caste, creed and religion
- (9) Innovation and uplifting of industrial infrastructure
- (10) Reduced inequalities
- (11) Sustainable and environment-friendly cities and communities
- (12) Reduced responsible consumption and enhanced production
- (13) Climate action to prevent damages from natural calamities
- (14) Preserve life below water
- (15) Contribute towards goodness for life on land
- (16) Peace, justice and strong institutions
- (17) Sharing partnerships among the countries for fulfilling the common goals.

As per the latest information received in 2017, India is placed at rank 116th out of 157 nations with a score of 58.1 on a global index which does the assessment of the performance of all countries towards achieving the ambitious sustainable development goals (SDGs).

Targeting at the "poverty alleviation" goal, India has introduced some centrally sponsored benefit schemes like: National Urban Livelihood Mission, National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, National Rural Livelihood Mission, National Social Assistance Programme and National Land Record Management Programme. And due to their further action, related interventions took place by

introducing Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana and Atal Pension Yojana respectively. Their collated target set by Nodal Ministry of Rural Development is by 2030, they need to eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere, currently measured as people living on less than \$1.25 per day.

Targeting at the "zero hunger" goal, India has introduced some schemes like: National Food Security Mission, Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture, National Mission on Sustainable Agriculture, National Oilseed and Oil Palm Mission, Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana respectively. Their related interventions include: Targeted Public Distribution System, National Nutrition Mission, National Food Security Act and the famous Mid-Day Meal Scheme. The concerned nodal ministry of Consumer Affairs Food and Public Distribution, Tribal Affairs has set the target by 2030, they need to end hunger and ensure access by all people, particularly the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round.

Targeting at the "promoting healthy lives" goal, India's Health and Family Welfare nodal ministry has introduced some centrally sponsored schemes like: Human Resource in Health and Medical Education, National Mission on Ayush including Mission on Medicinal Plants, National AIDS and STD Control Programme and Integrated Child Development Service. Their related intervention is famous and fruitful introduction of Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana. By 2030, they have set the target to reduce the global maternal mortality ratio to less than 70 per 1, 00,000 live births. They have also fixed that by 2030, they need to end the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and hepatitis.

Targeting at the goal of "equitable quality education", Ministry of Human Resource Development has introduced schemes like: Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan and Rashtriya Uchha Shiksha Abhiyan. The nodal ministry of School Education and Literacy and Tribal Affairs has set target that by 2030, they have ensured that all girls and boys should be completing free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes. Moreover, they have also ensured by setting target that by 2030, equal access for all women and men should be able to afford quality technical, vocational and tertiary education including university education.

To realise the goal of "achieving gender equality", several number of centrally sponsored schemes like: National Mission for Empowerment of Women including Indira Gandhi Matritav Sahyog Yojana, Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls (SABLA) by Women and Child Development. Their related interventions include: Beti

Bachao Beti Padhao, Sukanya Samridhi Yojana (Girl Child Prosperity Scheme), Support Training and Employment Programme for Women (STEP) etc. The target set by them are - to end all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere, to eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking, sexual and other types of exploitation. To realise the goal of “sustainable management of water and sanitation for all”, the Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation has introduced schemes like: National Rural Drinking Water Programme, Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan and National River Conservation Programme. Their interventions involve Namami Gange Integrated Ganga Conservation Mission and Inter-linking of rivers. Target wise, they have fixed the goal to achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all by the end of 2030.

The other targets like sustaining per capita economic growth in accordance with national circumstances and in particular, at least 7 percent gross domestic product growth per annum in the least developed countries are also set, and it is to be fulfilled soon. The nodal ministry of Labour and Employment has introduced schemes like NSS (National Service Schemes), Skill Development Mission, Social Security for Unorganised Workers including Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana etc. The goal is to promote sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all. The other goals like building resilient infrastructure, promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and fostering innovation are also being nurtured and further implementations of related schemes are on the charts in future.

Christian and other religious perspectives understand that a human being is more than the sum of their parts. We know that a sense of purpose and fulfilment in life needs more than a good education. We know that peace and contentment with life comes from more than being free of illness. And we know that hope is deeper than having enough food on the table. Not for a moment are any of those things irrelevant. On the contrary the UN should be praised for its bravery in setting out this list of goals. But they demonstrate a limited understanding of human flourishing.

A quick search of entire Agenda 2030 document reveals that there is no mention of compassion, love, sacrifice, generosity, selflessness or faith. The SDGs do a great job of articulating humans' material needs and laying out plans to meet those needs. But they make the mistake of thinking human flourishing comes from the fulfilment of those needs alone. They forget that humans are more than material inputs. In the Christian theological tradition, this entails more than the meeting of a person's physical needs: It is not just

a question of eliminating hunger and reducing poverty. It is not just a question of fighting wretched conditions, though this is an urgent and necessary task. It involves building a human community in which people can live truly human lives, free from discrimination on account of race, religion or nationality, free from servitude to others or to natural forces which they cannot yet control satisfactorily. It involves building a human community where liberty is not an idle word, where the needy Lazarus can sit down with the rich person at the same banquet table. Pope Francis has said that, in order to become ‘a Church which is poor and for the poor’, we must learn from those who are poor and ‘let ourselves be evangelised by them. Poverty therefore cannot be measured only in economic terms, by way of ‘a simple money-metric approach’. In order to enter into a dialogue with those who are poor and to allow ourselves to be evangelised by them, we must attend to the complex diversity of poor people's lives and aspirations. The economic effects of poverty are exacerbated by multiple factors such as ‘gender discrimination, lack of land and the effects of conflict’, in such a way that ‘each factor multiplies the impact of the others’. Again, this emphasises how important it is to be attentive to the complexity of poverty, and to the particularity of each person's story in the context of his or her social and natural environment. We cannot simply help ‘the poor’, for only by recognising the unique circumstances which make up each poor person's life can we begin to meet that person in a process of solidarity through dialogue which goes beyond paternalism to a truly human encounter.

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In order to reflect theologically upon such a wide variety of narratives of poverty, struggle and hope, we need to begin by asking what it means to live a fully human life. Postmodernism aims at the dissolution of so-called ‘metanarratives’ which seek to arrive at a common understanding of the good life, in favour of a multiplicity of competing and conflicting narratives arising out of different traditions, cultures and definitions of what it means to be human. The aim of justice should not be to prescribe how people must live, but to ensure that people are not deprived of the conditions they need in order to be able to choose to live well according to their beliefs, values and aspirations. Christians must not ignore the SDGs or treat them with the same suspicion that the UN treats its so-called FBOs (faith-based organisations). Rather we must accept the challenge the SDGs offer and go beyond it. We are called to bring good news to the poor, to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim freedom for the captive and the SDGs provide an excellent starting point. But they can't be the end point.

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Climate Change Impact Among Communities in Bundelkhand

Mr. Lakshmaiah Vempati (Das)

Issues with regard to climate change are evident in several parts of the poor, rural areas of India. These regions experienced disasters such as massive floods, annihilating droughts, ravaging cyclones, earthquakes, etc. Research shows that India figures in the first 10 in the world's rankings in terms of fatalities and economic losses in a variety of climatic disasters. A study conducted by the World Bank in 2003 suggested that natural disasters are major hurdles for economic development in India.

Drought affected more than one billion people between 1994 and 2013, or 25% of the global total. This is despite the fact that droughts accounted for just 5% of disaster events in this period. 41% of droughts were in Africa, indicating that lower-income countries are still overwhelmed by drought despite effective early warnings being in place. In India, one of the severely drought affected is Bundelkhand, in Madhya Pradesh. EFICOR works among the communities in Bundelkhand district to help the drought stricken communities cope up with the disaster. One of the adaptation techniques adopted by EFICOR to help the people are watershed development plans.



Photo: EFICOR

I would like to highlight the ground situation of Bundelkhand region where we are working. Majority of the people here are dependent on agriculture for their livelihood. Climate change and drought have impacted the economy of the people here. Due to this, 58% of the agro-based livelihood and food grain production 15 are severely affected due to drought.

Water scarcity is common in Bundelkhand, a region home to 18 million people spread over seven districts of Uttar Pradesh and six districts of Madhya Pradesh. For a small farmer, it is not the most favourable place to be in, with interplay of factors pitted against him. No wonder the area has a population density of less than one-third of the UP state on average. 79% live in the rural areas of which

one-third households are officially BPL (Below Poverty Line) entitling them to the state's welfare schemes. Over 75% of Bundelkhand's population continues to depend on agriculture, while 96% of the total income is derived from both agriculture and livestock. 30% of this population has a land holding between 1-2 acres. As is well documented, the region experienced a major drought every 16 years during the 18th and 19th centuries, which increased three times during the period 1968 to 1992.

In Bundelkhand region, average level of rainfall is 800–900 mm. (Ramesh et al. 2002). But, during the last six years Bundelkhand received only 400–450 mm annual rainfall. Agricultural production also decreased in this area. In 2000, this region contributed 15% of the state's total food grain production, which has now come down to 7%. Bundelkhand has witnessed major droughts in the years 2001, 2004, 2009 and 2010, as the rainfall deficiency



Photo: EFICOR

was 50% lower than the normal precipitation. The pattern of gradual rainfall decline has adverse effect on the local micro climatic zone, particularly on forest, water (surface and sub-surface) and soil, causing agricultural drought. The annual average rainfall of the districts is less than 255 mm, which caused drought in the past. Consequently, livelihood among 36.1% farmers and 43.6% agricultural labourers are severely affected by drought (Census, 2001). A once food secure zone has now become insecure. Dryness after the monsoon compels the farmers to migrate to nearby cities in search of work. Various livelihood options such as fishing, vegetable production and traditional betel leaf farming are facing one of the worst crisis ever.

In this context of Bundelkhand region, EFICOR has initiated a Project on Watershed and Food Security in Chitrakoot, Damoh and in three other districts from 2012 to work among the affected communities mainly comprising Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes. The project was set up in order to address these issues by using climate change adaptation through the project activities. The community's main source of income is from forest produce as other livelihoods are affected due to severe drought and lack of water. As mentioned by the community, the reason for this dependence is mainly because there are no other alternative sources of livelihood. Besides this, the actual cultivable land is scarce and with the limited resources available, people do not have enough to survive. Therefore, they migrate to other places in search of jobs.

One main activity is organising meetings with the Village Development Committees to plan out strategies for intervention. The staff gave focus on sustainable development through its activities. Plants are supplied to the community to set up Nurseries for gardening and agriculture for conservation of soil to the community. Free saplings were procured and given to the community free of cost which is then planted by them. Awareness is also given to the school-going children on 'Climate Change' and how to save the environment from degrading. These are enacted through skit/play and other media to give awareness to the school community. These are very useful as it helps the children to easily understand through these visual mediums. Besides creating awareness, the communities are linked to the Forest, Horticulture and Agriculture Department of the Government so that they can avail of the schemes for their own welfare.

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The community has now become much more aware of the impact of climate change. Due to these efforts, the community gradually realised the importance of protecting the forest and environment. Deforestation has been restricted somehow and their land becomes more fertile due to growing vegetation. Migration is also controlled and drop-out of the school-going children has decreased. Through these initiatives, it has been observed that our efforts show results among communities greatly impacted by climate change in this part of Bundelkhand.

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India's Journey towards SDGs

Mr. S.P. Lambard Regulus

Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his speech at the UN General Assembly on 25 September, 2015 quoted the moral might of Mahatma Gandhi and said, "One must care about the world one will not see" and endorsed the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with his unprecedented note of ownership saying, "Today, much of India's development agenda is mirrored in the Sustainable Development Goals." The Prime minister's speech highlighted India's hope to see this vision fulfilled through the implementation of various development programmes aligned with the SDGs.

After the MDGs, the SDGs provide a huge opportunity for a country like India to review its development agenda taking into account India's social fabric, economic deprivation and frequency of natural calamities. In addition, unlike the MDGs, the new goals focus on people with disabilities and those in vulnerable situations by relying on human rights principles. A big advantage of the indicators laid out in the SDGs present opportunities for civil society engagement with government at a local level for local partnership and local action. The SDGs promise a developmental framework, which is 'sustainable' and equitable. They embrace energy and governance, ending poverty and hunger, achievement of food security, sustainable economic growth and productive employment.

India's Commitment to the SDGs

India's strong commitment to the wholistic implementation of the seventeen SDGs has been primarily reflected in generating a document by RIS (Research and Information System for Developing Countries) with a set of nineteen papers dealing with various aspects of SDGs. It deals with each of the seventeen goals and the cross-cutting themes of technology and finance as well.

The government expects that in convergence with their line departments, each Indian state government would implement these plans by designing their programmes that influence all the social and economic parameters in the SDGs. Secondly, the central government has linked these SDGs to the existing flagship programmes like Make in India (to make India a global manufacturing hub); Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojna (to achieve 100% financial inclusion); Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Antyodaya Yojana (to alleviate poverty in urban and rural areas); Digital India (to achieve digitally

empowered knowledge economy); Skill India (to fast-track skill development efforts); Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana (to achieve water efficiency by 2020); Soil Health Card Scheme (to improve farm productivity); Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (to address the declining child sex ratio); Swachh Bharat Mission (to make India 100% open defecation free by 2019); Smart Cities Mission (to make urban areas more liveable and inclusive); Shyama Prasad Mukherji Rurban Mission (to develop smart village on the line of smart cities); Mission Indradhanush for Immunization (to achieve full immunization coverage by all children by 2020); Pradhan Mantri Ujjawala Yojana (to provide LPG connections to five crore BPL families); Stand Up India, Start Up India (to promote bank financing for start-ups); Nai Manzil Scheme (to address educational and livelihood needs of minorities). In addition to the Central government's initiative, a state-level vision and roadmap for achieving these programmes are being developed.

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Challenges for India in attaining the SDGs

As SDGs are multi-dimensional and inter-connected, the magnitude of its challenge is quite high. Some of the noted challenges are discussed below:

“ The SDGs promise a developmental framework, which is 'sustainable' and equitable. ”

Financing SDGs:

The availability and management of finance is a key driver in achieving the SDG agenda. The implementation of SDGs needs additional finance even though many of its goals and targets have been aligned with the existing programmes and policies. A study estimates that implementing SDGs in India by 2030 will exclusively cost more than US \$ 14.4 billion. It is clear that public finance alone would be inadequate and the magnitude of this financing challenge demands a strong partnership among government, the private sector and the development agencies. And with many International funding agencies withdrawing from India based on the country's development index, finance will be a huge hurdle.

Non-inclusion of Primary Stakeholders in Planning:

Making development efforts participatory and inclusive is an indispensable aspect for sustainable development. Most of the policies and plans for social development in India do

not reflect the voices of primary stakeholders such as men, women, children, and people with disability which reduces ownership and accountability during the implementation.

Lack of Veritable Monitoring and Evaluation System:

Lack of credible data for monitoring the status of each goal is a major roadblock in India. The National Institution for Transforming Data (NITI Aayog), the National body responsible for implementation of the SDGs in India, has already expressed its apprehensions on its ability to track and gather data to evaluate comprehensively the accomplishments of the SDGs.

Lack of Convergence between SDGs and Development Framework:

Implementing the SDGs in India will depend on the 'political situation' or the extent to which the SDGs align with domestic priorities and interests. However, India needs to judiciously prioritise and adapt the goals and targets of SDGs in accordance with local challenges, capacities and resources available.

Lending a Hand and Filling the Gap

The SDGs are not legally binding, so a huge onus lies on us, the citizens, as change makers through our work on the ground as well as in holding our leaders accountable. To create active and vigilant grassroot workers, local authorities should be empowered to design micro-level plans, deliver and manage services, increase transparency and accountability while delivering SDGs at the grass roots.

Second, involving young people at the grass root in the SDG agenda can play a vital role. Since India has the largest number of youth population in the world with about 356 million within 10-24 years, involving young people will play a crucial role in equipping and enabling future leaders. The Rio+20 outcome document *The Future We Want* also emphasises the need for broad public participation, acknowledging the need to involve diverse stakeholders especially youth in planning and decision making.

Third, another area of concern is climate change which interlinks sustainable agriculture, food security and

nutrition, health and population dynamics, education, gender equality and women's empowerment, water and sanitation, energy, promoting sustainable consumption and production, ecosystems and biodiversity. It is still a challenge to ensue climate resilient development. For this to happen, women and farmers can be key agents of change in leading the transition to a low-carbon and climate-resilient future by building climate-smart villages. Climate-related disasters

in India are increasingly impacting people's wellbeing which means that these disasters hinder sustainable development. Disaster risk reduction measures therefore need to be a central part of the sustainable development framework. There is a need to implement measures

that complement disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation and sustainable development which is possible through mainstreaming these concepts into policies and plans, monitoring and evaluation, and impact assessment as well.

Fourth, as important participants in society, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) can play a vital role in localising the SDGs in India. CSOs can mainly localise these goals in four areas: giving a voice to the poorest and most marginalised citizens, serving as agents ensuring accountability, acting as a service delivery provider and monitoring progress through data collection and reporting.

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If the SDGs are implemented with increasing collaboration and inclusion of various stakeholders, the positive note with which the Prime minister adopted at the post-2015 development agenda will become a reality. However, that would also entail us to aspire and to work towards ensuring these goals are met by us, by our local government, and our nation.

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Weaves Of Change

(Adapted from the book 'Turning the Tide: Good Practices in Community Based Disaster Risk Reduction', published by EFICOR and Sphere India, 2010, pp. 88-89)

J. Pullaiah, a resident of Gothakam village under Ghantasala Gram Panchayat in Andhra Pradesh's Krishna district, is a contented man. He rarely slips hint about his past but is ever ready to narrate it to convince anyone on how to fight hazard.

The 130-odd weaver families of Gothakam were relocated by the Government of Andhra Pradesh in 1972 after a massive fire destroyed their earlier houses. However, they soon realised that the settlement, beside the Gunderu drain of the Krishna River, is prone to severe flooding during rainy season. Being in a low lying area, their houses would remain flooded for three to four months every year. They did not have any alternate option either. This set in a downward spiral of poverty laying a debt trap. Pullaiah recalls how indebtedness forced many of them to send their young children away to work. They used to come back home only when needed to assist in weaving. He himself lost a son to ill health and malnourishment.

Arthik Samata Mandal (ASM) first came in contact with the community in the course of their emergency relief activities following the cyclone of 1990. They realised that the problems of the weavers were manifold and needed intervention on several fronts. This realisation resulted in ASM adopting an integrated approach while dealing with the vulnerabilities of the community to natural hazards. ASM's programmes worked to reduce the vulnerability of the communities, establish a safe and secure living environment and to improve the standard of living of the weavers by raising their levels of income.

Weavers in the settlement were perpetually in debt and depended on the master weavers for their credit needs. Master weavers provide yarn and also purchase the finished products from them. The master weavers understood markets and always exploited the weavers to their benefits.

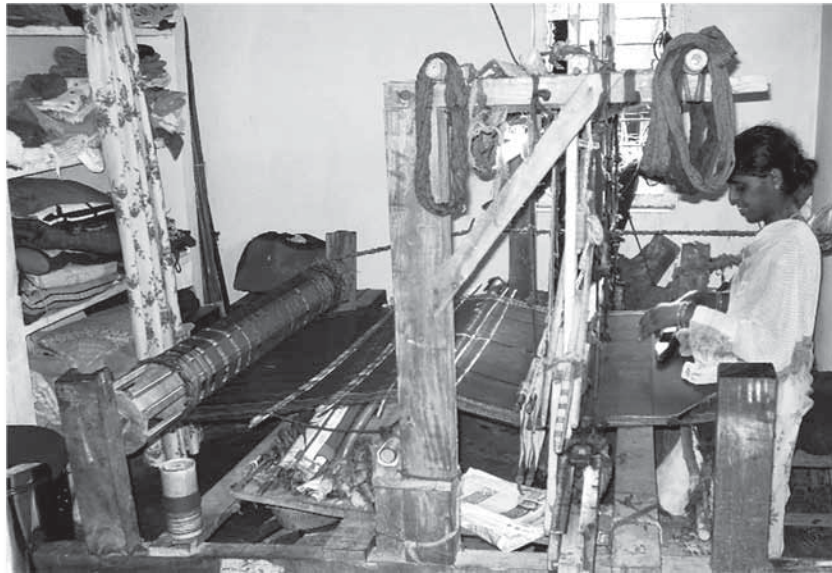


Photo: A weaver community crafts a new design for life in a flood prone area.

They took advantage of the weavers' dependence on them by extending loans at very high rate of interest and paying them low rates for the products purchased from them.

In an effort to wean the community off its dependence on the master weavers, ASM facilitated collaboration between the National Institute of Design (NID), Ahmedabad and the weaving community. A visiting

team from NID helped the weavers in moving away from solely weaving traditional sarees in limited colours and designs to lucrative dress material which is marketable.

From the year 1990, ASM supported by SCF (UK), Oxfam (UK) and Plan International embarked on an integrated development scheme for the weavers. This included elements of flood control. It constructed 330 metres of flood bund along the Gunderu drain to prevent flood waters from entering the village. It upgraded pit looms to stand looms, provided financial assistance for the purchase of dobbies and provided market linkages by organising exhibitions and sales for the weavers across India. In addition, ASM provided vocational training to youths to shift to other livelihoods. ASM also facilitated formation of SHGs and Community Based Organisations (CBOs). They built elevated houses and increased the height of roofs to accommodate stand looms. During the construction, it was made mandatory to have a work place, living place and kitchen. Government subsidies for housing were also accessed for this housing project. House owners also contributed labour.

The new implements and training have resulted in considerable improvements in their wage rates. Pullaiah says the wage has gone up from a paltry Rs. 3-5 per metre to Rs. 18-25 per metre. "Never in our lifetime did we imagine we would come this far," says Pullaiah. Villagers attribute the house construction intervention as the game changer as it has improved their quality of life as well as livelihood.

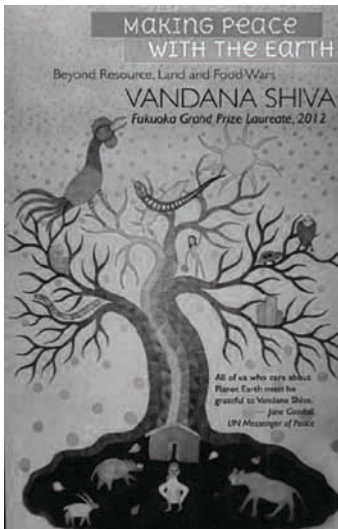
Books on our Desk

Making Peace with the Earth: Beyond Resource, Land and Food Wars

by Vandana Shiva

Published by Women Unlimited, 2012 edition

Mrs. Joan Lalromawi



The book outlines how a paradigm shift to earth-centred politics and economics is our only chance of survival. The book is grown out of the author's Sydney Peace Prize lecture 'Making Peace with the Earth' in 2010 and from 4 decades of engagement with movements to protect the earth and people's rights, beginning with Chipko movement.

The book has two parts - Part 1 deals with Wars against the Earth and has 5 chapters. Part 2 with its 4 chapters deals with Food Crisis, Food Justice and Food Peace. The author argues that there is an on-going war against the earth - which has its roots in an economy which fails to respect ecological and ethical limits - limits to inequality, injustice, greed and economic concentration. Even though both economy and ecology have roots in *oikos*, our home, the planet, the economy has separated itself from ecology in our minds, even as the intensity of exploitation and dependence on nature has increased.

Every vital, living resource of the planet that maintains the fragile web of life is in the process of being privatized, commodified and appropriated by corporations. Protecting the commons is vital to making peace with the earth, and maintaining peace within and between communities. The author concludes by saying that making peace with the earth must begin in our minds, by changing our paradigms and our worldviews from those based on war with nature to those that recognise that we are a strand in the web of life. It involves a shift from violence, rape, and torture as modes of knowing to non-violence and dialogue with the earth and all her beings.

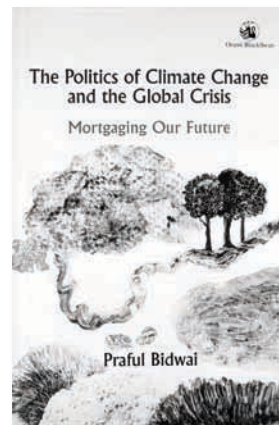
(Mrs. Joan Lalromawi works with EFICOR. She can be reached at joan@eficor.org)

The Politics of Climate Change and the Global Crisis: Mortgaging Our Future

by Praful Bidwai

Published by Orient Blackswan, 2011

Mr. Prem Livingstone Navaneethar



When one think about Climate Change, many questions with anger come out without any solid answers. This book takes these questions seriously. How might the disadvantaged peoples of the South articulate and press their concerns given the asymmetries of power between the developed and developing countries? Since the developed countries account for three-fourths of the greenhouse gases (GHGs) accumulated in the atmosphere, they must shoulder the 20

bulk of this responsibility. How can they be made to do this? How can the world's citizens, who have a vital stake in a global solution to the climate crisis, become actors in the effort to resolve it? The year 2010 witnessed 950 natural disasters, 90% of which were weather-related. They cost the global community over \$130 billion. This book envisages the scenario of the world at large as well as it is addressing the specific climate action outcomes.

There is a growing agreement among scientists and among governments around the 1.5° C ceiling. But on current emissions trends, the earth is set to become 3 to 4°C, or even 5°C warmer than pre-industrial levels by the end of the century. Even if the world stopped emitting GHGs instantly, atmospheric CO2 concentrations would fall only very gradually because the gas has an atmospheric residence-time of thousands of years. Unless urgent action is taken to phase out fossil-fuel burning irreversible change will follow.

The South is vulnerable to climate change and is liable to erode the food and water security of millions of its people. It is doubly unjust that the principal cause of climate change lies in the rich industrially developed countries, but that its victims are mainly in the South. This double crisis cannot be resolved unless the world upholds the twin principles of environmental effectiveness and development with equity.

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The Age of Sustainable Development

By Jeffrey D. Sachs

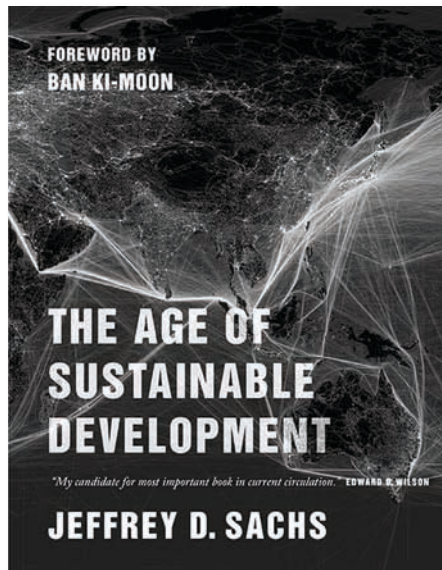
Published by Columbia University Press, 3rd March, 2015

Mr. Prashant B. Missal

The author, Jeffrey Sachs, a leading economist, offers a brilliant analysis of the worldwide need to balance economic development and environmental sustainability. He explains what sustainable development means and why it matters. It describes how the pattern of growth we have followed has placed intense strains on our planet and generated severe risks to our lives and livelihoods.

This book reflects like a “looking glass” through which one could glimpse the future - a future still characterised by more questions than answers as to how 9 billion will together govern the sustainable development in our planet. Sustainable Development is a central concept of our age. It is both a way of understanding the world and a method for solving global problems. The starting point is our crowded planet. There are 7.2 billion people on the planet. The world population continues to rise rapidly, by around 75 million people per year. Soon enough there will be 8 billion by the 2020 and perhaps 9 billion by early 2040s. In short 7.2 billion people are looking for economic improvement. They are interconnected through trade, finance, technology, production flows, migration and social network.

Ours is a world of fabulous wealth and extreme poverty. The world economy is not only remarkably unequal, but also remarkably threatening to Earth itself. Like all living species, humanity depends on nature for food and water, materials for survival, and safety from dire environmental threats, such as epidemics and natural catastrophes. Humanity is changing Earth’s climate. The gigantic world economy is creating gigantic environmental crises, one that threatens the lives and wellbeing of billions of people and the survival of millions of other species on the planet. Thus we arrive at sustainable development. If we as individuals simply pursue income per capita as our main goal in life, we will lose out on many counts. Our society will be more hierarchical. Higher income per person should be what societies should strive for but we should also focus on other areas like health, social inclusion, honest government, and networks of social support and altruism. Societies will benefit if they find ways to promote the values of generosity, compassion and



volunteerism rather than the values of individualistic materialism. In the end, the overriding goal is not only about higher income, but satisfaction of life and well being. This book describes the key challenges and provides pathways for every nation to be involved in problem solving, brainstorming, and determining new and creative ways to ensure inclusive and sustainable growth.

Sustainable development calls for a world in which economic progress is widespread; economic poverty is eliminated, social trust is encouraged through policies that strengthen the community; and the environment is protected from human induced degradation. There are at least five kinds of concerns about the distribution of well being. The first is extreme poverty.

Are some people still exceedingly poor in the midst of plenty? The second is inequality. Are the gaps between rich and poor very wide? The third is the social mobility. Can a poor person today hope to achieve economic success in the future, or are the practical barriers to advancement too high? The fourth is discrimination. Are some individuals such as women, racial minorities, religious minorities or indigenous population disadvantaged by their identity within a group? The fifth is social cohesion. Is the society riven by distrust, animosity, cynicism and the absence of shared moral code? 21

The essence of sustainable development in practice is scientifically and morally based problem solving. We have continuous life-threatening poverty in the midst of plenty. We have built-up inequalities of wealth and poverty. In order to accomplish the SDGs, every part of the world will have to be involved in problem solving, in brainstorming, and in determining new and creative ways to ensure inclusive and sustainable growth.

The book provides fascinating insights into the challenges of high-level negotiation processes of governments and stakeholders, and into how the SDGs were debated, formulated and agreed. It is essential reading for all interested in the UN, sustainable development and the future of the planet and humankind.

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Church Engaged!

Mrs. Sushila Ailawadi

What is the purpose of a local church? Are we meant to make a difference to the location we exist in? Who are we to be as the body of Christ? If our head is Christ then what would He have us do? These were questions we grappled with as we contemplated our life together as a church in the city.

Much dialogue and many conversations led us to conclude that our life together must have an outcome beyond just our own healing and restoration. Or beyond evangelism and church planting. We get together on a Sunday morning, we listen to an inspiring (hopefully!) message, we offer up our sacrifices of praise and then return to our lives, often to carry on as we have always done. What difference does that make? Have we become far too comfortable with the way things are?

If we are to reveal the manifold wisdom of God to powers and principalities in an unredeemed world, what would that look like? Do we just take structures and systems around us for granted, presuming that the church has no role in transforming these? God's purpose is the reconciliation of all things to Himself. Reconciliation in the wider sense of the word. Not just people, but of all things: even human constructed systems, be these economic, political, social, or environmental. If justice and righteousness are the foundations of His throne, then we as the people of God are to be agents of His righteousness and justice, mercy and truth.

The prophets wept, grieved and cried out to God. They pleaded with the people of God for the way they lived their lives. The Jews were meant to be a light to the Gentiles, to reveal God's heart to the world. Most of them spoke of how Israel had transgressed the laws of God. Isaiah asked the people to return by seeking justice, rebuking the oppressor, defending the fatherless, pleading for the widow (Isa 1:17). Ezekiel spoke of Sodom and Gomorrah being destroyed because they were rich, overfed, arrogant and indifferent to the poor and needy (Eze 16:48-50). Micah said that the Lord desired His people to act justly, love mercy and walk humbly before Him (Mic 6:8).

Jesus came to fulfill the law and the prophets. This is our mandate even today.

We are meant to bring flavor and beauty to the world for the good pleasure of God. Salt and light only have relevance to those that will be affected by the presence of these elements. We do not live for ourselves and get driven by personal agendas that are more shaped by the world rather than the word of God. The presence of a few righteous men in the city of Sodom and Gomorrah would have changed their history. Jeremiah 5:1 tells us that judgement is stayed, by the presence of one righteous man in a city.

Towards this end we stirred ourselves and looked for ways to take responsibility and get involved. All it took was a willing heart. Providing resources was God's part, being concerned and doing something was ours. However pitiful

and inadequate our efforts might seem, we are doing what we can and in the process, find healing and purpose for ourselves.

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Since we started the Hub Church in 2004, people in the church were challenged to get involved with those in need. Those

inspired started their own projects, exploring their own potential, finding their calling, grappling with their vision. They are completely responsible for their finances and budgets. The past thirteen years has seen growth through various projects with the trafficked, people with living with HIV and AIDS, drug addicts, refugees, school and college students, informal education, values education, and a few more.

Our lives are meant to serve others. We are to do to them what we would have others do to us. An unjust world system leaves a few with much and many with very little. We cannot avert our gaze from the unfortunate victims of an exploitative world. There is always a way to turn the tables and restore to people the dignity and worth they have been robbed of. This we believe is why the church exists.

A witness to the world that God cares.

(Mrs. Sushila Ailawadi, with her husband Pastor Sanjiv Ailawadi, lead the Hub Church and New Generation Trust. She can be reached at sushila.ailawadi@gmail.com)

“ If justice and righteousness are the foundations of His throne, then we as the people of God are to be agents of His righteousness and justice, mercy and truth. ”

Poverty & Hunger

Rev. Kennedy Dhanabalan

Context:

Under the reign of Jeroboam II (788-747 BC) Israel flourished. It expanded its territory factoring in its weak neighbours and trade was at its peak. Since Israel was doing well financially and was in power it could be assumed by the people that the rest given to the country was God's blessing. It is in this context that Amos pronounces God's judgement upon Israel. The book of Amos vividly describes cause of poverty and hunger.

As of 2016, the World Bank estimated that there were 896 million poor people in developing countries who live on \$1.90 or less a day. The image of countries like India for the world is of economic growth and progression and advanced technology to even send rockets to Mars. Unfortunately India accounts for 224 million of the world's poor people. Despite India's 50% increase in GDP since 1991, more than one third of the world's malnourished children live in India. The glaring difference between rich and poor is evident only when you intentionally observe below the surface as the Lord saw Israel while it was flourishing.

Currently the world is planning and working towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and it is important for us to check God's expectation in removing poverty and hunger from this world.

Exploitation of the poor and Social Disparity

While the Lord expects the people to be generous to the poor (Exodus 22: 25 – 27; Leviticus 19: 9, 10; Deuteronomy 26: 12) and do justice (Exodus 23: 2,3) through his commandments very clearly, Amos brings to their attention that the poor were exploited and the gap between rich and poor had widened.

Read the passages Amos 2: 6–8; 3: 10; 4: 1 and 5: 11–12.

- 1) From the passages above, list down the ways in which the poor were exploited.
- 2) Identify similarities of exploitation, with our present context?
- 3) What do you think the Lord is asking you to do?

Wealth Display and God's response

David's song of praise in II Samuel 22: 28 exhorts people to humble themselves. Ecclesiastes 5: 10 – 6: 9 warns us that as Christians we are expected to live a life of simple living. Our focus should not be on getting rid of what we have, but rather upon cultivating the disposition of 'a life of joyful unconcern for possessions' (Richard Foster).

Such a disposition will lead to actions and behaviours of simple living.

Read

Amos 3:15; 4: 1–3; 5: 11–13 and 6:4–7.

- 1) What is the lifestyle of the people in the passages you have read above?
- 2) How would you understand the causes of wealth creation?
- 3) Why do you think the rich ladies were condemned?
- 4) In the present context who are the people on whom God would pronounce judgment?
- 5) What would the Lord be happy about your lifestyle?
- 6) Take time to think about how you can use your surplus income.

Religious Piety and Unethical Practices

We are very good in being very spiritual – attending Sunday Worship regularly, not missing the Fasting prayer, reading the Bible regularly and meditating upon it. But sometimes we compromise on the ethical practices, which are expected from us. Isaiah 58: 1 – 10 clearly states this. 23

Read

Amos 5:21–24; 8:4–7.

- 1) List out the religious practices the people of Israel faithfully followed.
- 2) Identify the unethical practices followed by the people of Israel.
- 3) What was the reaction of the Lord in these circumstances?
- 4) Reflect and assess your lives to see if your lifestyle and practices are similar to the people of Israel?
- 5) What is the Lord teaching you on the ethical practices you have to follow?

Conclusion:

The Lord is not only concerned about the soul of human beings but also about their physical well-being. The church is expected to address the issue of poverty and hunger in the world while saving souls. While we are expected to show piety in our life, the Lord also wants us to live as the people of God doing the right things (Justice) in the right way (ethics). Then our worship will be acceptable to the Lord. The Lord is looking for people like Amos to speak on behalf of the poor (Proverbs 31: 8,9).

(Rev. Kennedy Dhanabalan is the Executive Director of EFICOR. He can be reached at kennedy@eficor.org)

IDEAS FOR ACTION

Things you can do from your couch

- Save electricity by plugging appliances into a power strip and turning them off completely when not in use, including your computer.
- Stop paper bank statements and pay your bills online or via mobile. No paper, no need for forest destruction.
- 'Share', don't just 'Like'. If you see an interesting social media post about women's rights or climate change, share it so people in your network see it too.
- Speak up! Ask your local and national authorities to engage in initiatives that don't harm people or the planet.
- Don't print. See something online you need to remember? Jot it down in a notebook or better yet a digital post-it note and spare the paper.
- Turn off the lights. Your TV or computer screen provides a cosy glow, so turn off other lights if you don't need them.
- Do a bit of online research and buy only from companies that you know have sustainable practices and don't harm the environment.
- Stay informed. Follow your local news and stay in touch with the Global Goals online or on social media at@GlobalGoalsUN.
- Inform about your actions to achieve the global goals by using the hashtag #globalgoals on social networks.
- In addition to the above, offset your remaining carbon emissions! You can calculate your carbon footprint and purchase climate credits from Climate Neutral Now. In this way, you help reduce global emissions faster!"

Things you can do at home

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- Air dry. Let your hair and clothes dry naturally instead of running a machine. If you do wash your clothes, make sure the load is full.
- Take short showers. Bathtubs require gallons more water than a 5-10 minute shower.
- Eat less meat, poultry, and fish. More resources are used to provide meat than plants.
- Freeze fresh produce and leftovers if you don't have the chance to eat them before they go bad. You can also do this with take-away or delivered food, if you know you will not feel like eating it the next day.
- Compost - composting food scraps can reduce climate impact while also recycling nutrients.
- Recycling paper, plastic, glass and aluminium keeps landfills from growing.
- Buy minimally packaged goods.
- Avoid pre-heating the oven. Unless you need a precise baking temperature, start heating your food right when you turn on the oven.
- Plug air leaks in windows and doors to increase energy efficiency.
- Adjust your thermostat, lower in winter, higher in summer.

Things you can do outside your house

- Shop local. Supporting neighbourhood businesses keeps people employed and helps prevent trucks from driving far distances.
- Shop Smart - plan meals, use shopping lists and avoid impulse buys.
- Bike, walk or take public transport. Save the car trips for when you've got a big group.
- Use a refillable water bottle and coffee cup.
- Bring your own bag when you shop. Pass on the plastic bag and start carrying your own reusable totes.
- Take fewer napkins. You don't need a handful of napkins to eat your takeout. Take just what you need.
- Maintain your car. A well-tuned car will emit fewer toxic fumes.
- Donate what you don't use.
- Vaccinate yourself and your kids. Protecting your family from disease also aids public health.
- Take advantage of your right to elect the leaders in your country and local community.

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