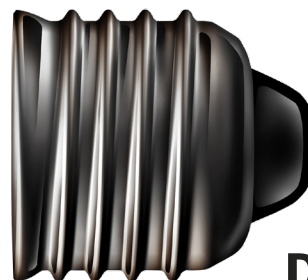




**Multilateralism  
that  
Delivers**



  
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# **Leveraging Multilateralism to Build Back Better towards a more Sustainable Future**

**Brief for Working Group On  
Sustainability**



**“There is no other way to address global challenges but to act collectively. It is not enough to proclaim the virtue of multilateralism - we must prove its added value.” Antonio Guterres in his annual report on the work of the UN.**

**— Antonio Guterres, Annual report on the work of the UN. — October 1, 2020**

## **» Working Group on Sustainability**

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The ideas expressed in this Background Paper do not necessarily represent the views of the organisers or of the individual Working Group members

As COVID-19 batters the world and its economy, it's time to rethink sustainable pathways for our planet (Naidoo & Fisher, 2020). The hopes that globalization and economic growth would be directed automatically and step by step to green investment and sustainable development are no longer realistic. The COVID-19 pandemic, coupled with the climate and ecological crises, implies that we have reached an inflection point in world affairs as well as our planetary boundaries. It will not be feasible to recover to the pre-existing trajectory and standard model of economic growth. We need to bundle forces to reduce, if not end, poverty and inequality, expand health care and overturn biodiversity loss and climate change, all by 2030. Science is demonstrating that global warming and the erosion of biodiversity could translate into large scale tipping points in the Earth system soon (IPBES, 2019; UN Environment 2019). We are in a global emergency situation. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) can only be achieved through a process of deep transformations not only in our economies and societies but also in our perceptions and thinking, decoupling wealth creation from greenhouse gas emissions, resource consumption and further pressure on ecosystems. Technological, institutional, cultural and normative innovations are needed to open the door towards a sustainable future for all. The changes needed at this stage are not only economic and political changes, but also normative changes.

In times defined by the pandemic, the health of multilateralism and sustainable development are in a fragile state. Aggressive nationalism and science denialism are undermining global cooperation at a time when we need to recognize the entrenched interdependencies and jointly address the unprecedented global challenges. We are approaching a tipping point in human civilisation.

However, the future could be bright. As a result of the Corona Crisis, stimulus packages are mobilizing large scale investments between 12-20 trillion US Dollars – yet, these are almost all concentrated in high-income countries and large emerging economies. The way these investments are made and targeted, can make a huge difference. Furthermore, the current crisis could trigger the moral, political and intellectual basis for a strategic re-orientation of the policies, partnerships and relationships that can lend human progress a more sustainable and equitable character – and facilitate a renewed multilateralism that delivers. We have to build back better, which means that “the system that will come after” will be better than the previous one. The question remains how to bring about a new type of multilateralism in the world of a disappearing old-style multilateralism. This is the problem that we are facing to solve. Current multilateralism was born in the aftermath of the World War II. In the aftermath of the COVID-19, a new

type of multilateralism may have to be born.

The General Assembly Declaration on the 75th Anniversary of the United Nations has created space for a process of reflection on the future of multilateral cooperation in a post-COVID world. The urgent need for innovative thinking on global governance and multilateralism was underscored by the UN Secretary-General António Guterres, in order to be ready and fit for the 21st century. The Secretary-General has argued for a ‘networked multilateralism’, based on strong links and cooperation between global and regional organizations, international financial institutions, global alliances of citizens, scientists, youth movements, the private sector, and cities – and a modernized UN (UN, 2020). It is up to all of us to make this happen.



## » Sustainable Development at a Crossroads

The world has reached another “Kindleberger Moment” – bereft of global leadership and shared solutions. No single state or overarching alliance of states is either willing or able to provide global public goods. When the going gets tough, no one group by itself can provide stability—financial or political. That is what the world looked like before COVID-19 and that’s what it looks like now, too. With the emergence of the COVID-19 epidemic we face a global calamity (WTO, 2020) with no hegemonic power and with a gravely weakened system of global cooperation. We are in a global leadership crisis. The world is falling into depression (Sachs, 2020) and Covid 19 is driving new inequalities in and between countries. The pandemic is heightening risks across the board and climate change could lead to a global hot age. Humanitarian needs are growing, decades of progress on sustainable development and poverty reduction are threatened, and social unrest is increasing in many regions (UN, 2020).

We are at a crossroads. If international cooperation and joint investments are not achieved in a sustainable manner, multiple dynamics of crisis will be initiated across countries, regions, and the entire planet. At the same time there is a narrow but unique window of opportunity to leverage urgent sustainability transformations

now. The opportunity is of combining energy and investments to counter the impacts of the pandemic with policies that not just address the pandemic but also aim at creating less unequal, exclusionary and carbon-intensive, and more resilient and sustainable economies. But this will require a transformation in terms of politics and economics, a clear positive vision of the future and revitalised alliances for multilateral cooperation.

Globalization and the development paradigm have to be reinvented. Global economic growth has undoubtedly produced enormous benefits for hundreds of millions of people in both developed and developing countries. But this progress and the accompanying consumption patterns have “left behind” many and have been achieved at high environmental and social cost. The escalating scale of human impacts on ecosystems is destroying the natural base of our economies and of human civilisation. Human activities are infringing the safe boundaries of the planetary systems which sustain the conditions for human life. In reality, the established models and strategies for growth and development are failing to achieve inclusive, sustainable and equitable progress for a world population which, in several world regions, continues to increase.

The enormous financial efforts of the COVID-stimulus packages, if used wisely, could help build the

bridges towards a sustainable and equitable future. Beyond national investments into sustainability, we need to avoid nationalistic backlashes. Protectionism reduces investments, trade, tourism and technological advances, which would create jobs and higher incomes. With this, protectionism undermines the capacity of countries to build resilience. The solution is obvious, but difficult to achieve: effective cooperation across boundaries is a precondition for make globalisation resilient, inclusive and, sustainable. And this is what the SDGs and the Paris Agreement are about!

Deep systemic changes, shifts in consumption patterns, new policy approaches, and powerful transnational partnerships need to be developed further in order to create sustainable societies and a locally-rooted and people-centred globalization which leaves no one behind.

## » The New “Sustainability Consensus”

The German Environment Agency (UBA) has recently published a synthesis report on “The Green New Consensus”. It shows the broad international scientific consensus on green recovery programmes and structural reforms (UBA, 2020) - in the middle of the pandemic. The study collates and analyses the recommendations given to fight the social and economic impacts of the corona crisis in 130 reports from

across the globe. The new sustainability consensus shows that the situation is quite different from the financial crisis in 2008/2009. While climate, environment and sustainability issues did not play a major role in the recovery plans of the financial crises, there is broad scientific consensus now that recovery from the COVID-19 crisis must be “green”. A significant mindshift towards sustainability has taken place during the last decade! The key question then is, are the investment patterns following this broad scientific consensus? The current panorama is: Europe and several developing countries are implementing sustainability-oriented recovery programs to overcome the COVID-19 crisis. However, other major economies in the world are largely focused on short term priorities, investing in unsustainable growth patterns. The 130 recovery programs from around the world demonstrate that investing simultaneously in creating jobs, promoting livelihoods, social inclusiveness and longer-term sustainability is feasible.

There is also increasing public support for a more decisive and fundamental shift towards sustainability. Recent multi-country public opinion surveys show that despite the pandemic as a major threat and shock event, global climate change is rated as the top threat (Pew Research Center, 2020 ). Further, a large majority of people in seven countries surveyed support the idea of a green new deal that makes large-scale government invest-

ment towards more environmentally friendly economies (More in Common, 2020 ). This is significant in that there is broad-based support and that forthcoming transformations can be people-driven, and thus more socially sustainable and politically legitimate. However, a well-known phenomenon is that sustainability is seen as a medium or long-term challenge, rather than an urgent top priority. For example, one of the surveys found that bringing back jobs and manufacturing industries, that have been perceived as shifting overseas, is even more supported than a green new deal. These findings show the need to combine policy goals, such as climate mitigation and job creation, in a smarter and more innovative way.

To assess whether the new sustainability consensus is actually gaining ground, in politics, in the public sector and in the mindset of people, a systematic monitoring of the character of the investments of stimulus packages across the globe is called for. Efforts are starting in this direction – see e.g. the Energy Policy Tracker and the Greenness of Stimulus Index – but going forward it should be an important function of multilateral institutions to promote peer review and learning on how to actually deliver green recovery. In the 2008 financial crisis, despite high green ambitions, only 16% of government resources went to green investments (Barbier, 2020). It is the opportunity to cultivate mutual accountability for investing in the sus-

tainability transformation between countries.

## » Sustainability Leadership: Role Models for Transformational Change

Leadership is needed to leverage and drive the implementation of the SDGs, the Paris Climate Agreement, and the Convention on Biological Diversity. The European Union is adopting a pioneering Green Deal for Europe. Imagine an ambitious Green New Deal in the United States in a not too far future, a sustainability-oriented Belt and Road Initiative in China, and similar steps in other regions, such as an ASEAN Green Deal and an African Union Green Deal. Geopolitical contexts can change; by cooperating globally across the world's major regions, and keeping our eye on the core concepts of sustainable development. There is a real possibility, as well as the vital need, to turn the current crisis into the first steps of a sustainable and inclusive path for the world (Sachs, 2020).

A renewed multilateralism for a sustainable future is not only about governments, but about multiple actors. One has to keep in mind that green, sustainable and responsible wealth models need various stakeholders. We emphasize the importance of sustainability-oriented leadership of many actors at international levels – to fill the gap that non-ambitious governments



produce and to overcome the inertia in the field of global cooperation. And there are already good examples and starting points:

### 1st Example: The European Green Deal

In December 2019 the European Commission presented, for the first time, a comprehensive programme for environment, climate policy, and inclusive development. The programme aims at integrating all three aspects of sustainability, the environment, economy and society into one overarching framework: the “European Green Deal”. Its ambitious agenda aims at enabling green growth that leaves no one behind. However, the European Green Deal does not focus only on European development. In the words of Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission: “By showing the rest of the world how to be sustainable and competitive, we can convince other

countries to move with us.” (European Commission, 2019) [EGD-Paper]. The EU has recently decided for a reinforced EU budget (“Next Generation EU”) with an additional 750 billion € (2021-2024) to repair COVID-19 immediate economic and social damage and to kickstart recovery. The EGD remains at the heart of this recovery plan by guiding investment in a green, digital and resilient Europe.

The EGD is a huge step forward, but its global dimensions could be developed further. In order to achieve a truly multilateral approach it will be essential to put stronger emphasis on ambitious investments in cooperation with developing and emerging economies in the context of the European Green Deal (EGD). Countries will need to transform EU foreign policy decision-making processes, deepen their cooperation in multilateral settings, and set

multilateral standards for emerging technologies (Dworkin & Gowan, 2019).

### 2nd Example: Government of California

In California 40% of the total amount of greenhouse gases are emitted by cars, trucks and other vehicles. Driving down transportation pollution remains the state’s biggest challenge in achieving its goal of slashing planet-warming emissions to 40% below 1990 levels by 2030.

As a consequence, in September 2020 the Californian Governor Gavin Newsom announced that “it shall be a goal of the State that 100 percent of in-state sales of new passenger cars and trucks will be zero-emission by 2035. It shall be a further goal of the State that 100 percent of medium- and heavy-duty vehicles in the State be zero-emission by 2045 for all operations where feasible and by 2035 for drayage trucks. It shall be further a goal of the

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State to transition to 100 percent zero-emission off-road vehicles and equipment by 2035 where feasible.”

The governor’s order directs the state Air Resources Board to develop and propose regulations requiring “increasing volumes of new zero-emission vehicles sold in the State towards the target of 100 percent of in-state sales by 2035.”

### **3rd Example: Private Sector**

The private sector is already in a process of re-thinking. For example, insurers face an increasing number of claims due to natural disasters caused by climate change. Volvo, in 2017, became the first traditional global car maker to commit to electrification of its entire fleet. Even some companies in the oil- and gas industry are interested in sustainable and green investments. The private sector and insurance sector can be core part leaders, e.g. by defining “Green-Finance” and by developing sustainable insurance policies. Considering the sciences-based targets initiative, that companies are committing to be consistent with the 1,5-degree pathway, is highly relevant to move towards sustainability. Over 1000 large companies have made high commitments. The key questions are: How do private businesses adapt to reach the Sustainable Development Goals? And how could the sector mainstream investment strategies to shape and foster sustainability transformations and standards?

The new multilateralism needs to include new initiatives coming from the private sector, through new means of ‘orchestrating’ other actors and developing accountable hybrid arrangements. Private sector leaders like Paul Polman argue that the business sector should no longer only serve the interests of the shareholders, but those of all stakeholders too. Different initiatives already show that the private sector could become a major driver of sustainability transformations and global stewardship for global commons alike.

### **4th Example: Civil Society**

In a time of nature emergency, there is increasing need for more systematic public engagement and information, including accessible scientific and risk assessment information, linked, however, to positive action pathways to empower citizens and civil society movements.

Civil society movements, particularly those led by young people, are already global leaders on climate issues. Pioneering cities around the globe are leading global climate action. International science networks are developing solutions for sustainable futures. Citizens can play a crucial role not only in terms of the efforts and actions towards the achievement of the goals, but also in terms of the associated monitoring of the progress towards the goals.

Some partnerships of cities do already exist, e.g. the Citizen Science Global Partnership, a network of networks that seeks to promote and advance citizen science for a sustainable world. Also, the United Nations University is engaged to make the global agenda a citizens’ agenda (UNU-CS). In the end all the efforts of transformation must be people driven transformations and all programs and recovery plans must deliver for the people.

### **5th Example: Clusters of States**

A growing number of “clusters of states” exist, spear-heading with progressive climate and sustainability action. The Climate Governance Commission is currently mapping such alliances, and how they might be connected and scaled up; for example:

- I. [Leader’s Pledge for Nature;](#)
- II. [Leadership Group for Industry Transition,](#) Co-Chaired by Sweden and India;
- III. [Coalition of Finance Ministers for Climate Action,](#) co-chaired by Ministers of Finance of Chile and Finland;
- IV. [SITRA \(Finnish Governmental Fund\) work on Circular Economy;](#) catalysing national road maps for over 20 countries so far;

V. ISA, International Solar Alliance, a coalition of solar-resource-rich countries

Clusters of states can guide by example and convince for more ambitious action of states and governments. It is easier for states to join an existing cluster, than establishing something new. So also the role of frontrunner states should not be underestimated. We are living in an era of aggressive nationalism, but we might also witness the emergence of a renewed, more inclusive, and comprehensive

## » Moving forward on the SDG Agenda: Six transformations for sustainability

SDGs are used as a common language around the world, yet still have to be translated into measurable actions and actionable measurements. The system of the 17 goals is complex. Governmental agencies struggle in translating them into real political action. Cherry picking of specific goals is taking place, neglecting the interdependencies and co-benefits between the goals. Experts in decision science, cost-benefit analysis and

analysis of co-benefits and trade-offs, as well as the interconnectedness between the 17 goals, a global team of scholars demonstrate that six transformations arenas are key to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (Lit). The six-transformation approach, which is being support and developed further by the GSDR (2019) reduces the complexity of the 17 SDGs and supports the development concrete action plans on local, national, and global levels. We now have the knowledge to translate the vision of the 2030 Agenda into concrete pathways to sustainability and social



**Fig. 1 | Six SDG Transformations.** Each Transformation describes a major change in the organization of societal, political and economic activities that transforms resource use, institutions, technologies and social relations to achieve key SDG outcomes (represented by the SDG wheel in the centre). Figure adapted from ref. 1, TWI2050; SDG colour wheel courtesy of UN/SDG.

culture of cooperation.

socio-ecological systems should complement political decision makers in determining how co-benefits between SDG targets could be mobilized. Based on a comprehensive

justice – combining governance reforms, investment plans, technology, behavioural changes, and normative mind shifts.



Climate protection and sustainability strategies require above all a global response and global initiatives that must be tackled multilaterally. Global challenges, which are to be countered globally through a common global agenda, the SDGs, require not only a common goal and a common roadmap but also joint action. The cooperation of states and other stakeholders is essential for the implementation of SDGs. The “old” multilateralism is obsolete, new ideas are needed to find a way to a new multilateralism in order to achieve the goals of Agenda 2030. The next chapter will deal with recommendations for ways towards a new multilateralism.

## » Moving forward on the SDG Agenda: Six transformations for sustainability

Multilateral sustainability thinking is essential, not only to take account of critical interactions between key issues but also to understand the risks, vulnerabilities and consequences of the non-linear behaviour of complex, interconnected dynamic systems, such as the climate and the economy.

Multilateralism is at stake, aggressive nationalism as well as pervasive discontent with existing multilateral institutional structures is threatening our systems of global cooperation. The accelerating ecological crisis could escalate into dangerous, irreversible, large scale collapses of ecosystems. But times of crisis and comprehensive challenges could also translate into

a new era of sustainable futures and a new age of a united humankind. It could mean that the present moment could become multilateralism’s finest moment, e.g. with groups of states finding ways to practically ensure the levels of action necessary and to work together in unprecedented and novel ways. The majority of governments around the world reaffirm their commitment to multilateralism and a rules-based international order, e.g. the Alliance for Multilateralism, initiated by the Foreign Ministers of France and Germany, now including dozens of like-minded states, or the Declaration on the Commemoration of the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the United Nations adopted at the UN GA high-level meeting (UN, 2020)

And, as we argued, [not only states] could pave the way into a better, more resilient future, leaving no-one-behind. But how to foster the pioneers for sustainable societies and the drivers of the next generation of cultures of global cooperation? Concrete actions and monitoring are key, also taking contradicting trends, like the emerging populism into account. Important are concrete SDG strategies and roadmaps for all organizations, also better monitoring and transparency to leverage the SDGs as a dashboard to be adapted by each individual country. Transparency is an essential element to answer the question if we are on track, if we are successful and how successful countries are in the SDG implementation. There is a need for

accountability through indicators and metrics.

While a new sustainability-consensus is emerging, new populism and nationalism is also growing. The Corona crisis has an intensifying effect on both trends, as described earlier.

However, taking into mind our interdependencies and considering the fact that there is a congruence of national interests with global ones, it must be possible to find a minimum agreement on a multilateral way forward by considering the following four points:

- I. Ensuring COVID-19 rescue funds accomplish the multiple goals of eliminating the pandemic, restoring livelihoods, and achieving greater sustainability of our societies,
- II. Reducing barriers to international scientific collaboration and enhancing international collaboration and coordination among countries to help find solutions to problems,
- III. Strengthening public trust in science, and
- IV. Reducing inequalities in societies.

The “old” multilateralism, which originated through the governments of nation states and through international organisations, is no

longer operational and acceptable is has to be build back better. The question now arises from whom a new multilateralism can start and which sectors of society it involves. New drivers and actors can play a role that had not been considered before, e.g. civil society and cities, science, the private sector, etc. Digitalization and new possibilities though artificial intelligence, blockchain technology, etc. can be drivers to better implement the SDGs. Their potential has not yet been explored enough in the field of sustainability. It should be borne in mind that the old model of economic growth no longer works to make people believe that this is for their benefit. A new development must include and implement social components in order to gain global acceptance. Inequalities and social injustice should be avoided in the new developments. Getting global justice right sustainability has the advantage that it creates benefits for everyone and improves livelihood for all. The road to sustainable transformation may be bumpy but will in the end with its benefits for all counteract populism. To fight these counter-transformations, we need to develop and communicate better narratives of attractive futures.

### **1) Strengthen multilateral approaches and coherence**

While multilateral environmental, social and economic agreements are important international instruments for achieving sustainable development, there has been too little

focus so far on their contribution to policy integration. If policy and institutional coherence is a key global governance target in the post-2015 era, a concerted effort will be required to improve the extent of policy integration by multilateral environmental agreements (Azizi, Biermann, & Kim, 2019). Different from the financial crisis in 2008/2009, in the Corona crisis multilateralism is eroding. Strengthening multilateral approaches, especially the UN, is therefore key. The SDG approaches call for an integrative approach. However, the UN, as a multilaterally operating body, is clustered in various thematic areas. A defragmentation of the institutions and better cooperation would be very important. However, this can only be realised if nation states provide multilateral organisations and institutions with sufficient financial resources.

### **2) Create strategic partnerships and connect societies**

Linking societies and groups have the potential to create strategic partnerships between the public sector, civil society, non-profit organizations, science, youth, women and different business sectors – as envisioned by SDG 17.

Strategic partnership can “tighten links between science and analysis on the one hand with policy and action on the other to better address global challenges through the development

of systems approaches.” (OECD report – insert detailed reference).

Careful policy analysis based on a systems approach, coupled with intelligent anticipation of emerging problems and the strengthening of resilience to shocks, can reduce the risks and costs of intervention. In fact, many of our policy failures are the result of applying partial, short-term, sectoral measures to systemic problems, principally because of our reductionist approach and also because many policy makers do not recognise their systemic nature. All these aspects of the systems approach are reflected in the aims and activities of the Strategic Partnership. Therefore, those partnerships must be fostered.

#### **a. Building a locally rooted global system**

The Covid crisis is an opportunity to shape a new normal, a sustainable one. In this process, there is demand for decentralisation and localisation, situating the problem in local context. Local processes and solutions need greater space to better implement the SDGs and enable local actors to become regulators of change and give informal economies more value. At the same time there is a recognition that globalisation and access to global progress and technologies are vital to us. A more conscious kind of globalisation, localisation and the combination

of the two to be able to address the issues of inequity of sustainable development and of poverty would be helpful.

**b. Assess and multiply contributions of the private sector and the financial sector**

Norms can give a framework for the private and financial sector. The sectors understand the need to adapt to multilateral decisions and agreements and contribute to it. What is missing is, that the private as well as the financial sectors should assess how they can contribute to the SDGs and the circular economy, for instance.

Green pioneers alone are not enough, but are an important signal for others to move into the same direction. Financial flows and investments are highly relevant to sustainable development. The role of the private and financial sector but also of other actors in the finance sector, such as regulators and central banks on climate should not be underestimated and can build strategic partnerships.

**c. Create a people-centred multilateralism**

The Corona crisis increases inequalities even more than before. Bridging inequalities however, is the basis in a development that leaves no one behind. A new social contract and a people-oriented

recovery are needed. There must be a strong link with people, vulnerable groups, women, the youth, especially with them who have been marginalised. We need to find ways of reengaging with these groups of people in a focused agenda and social contracts. Multilateralism can only work if it is people-oriented. The old multilateralism also failed because it was too far away from the people and they felt at the mercy of the system. This must change by planning and implementing multilateralism together with the people, so that they feel they are taken seriously.

Part of a people-centred multilateralism must also consider the risk of misinformation and distortion of the integrity of information ecosystems as a live risk (see e.g. Bulletin of Atomic Scientists -- information ecosystem integrity). In other words, putting people in the centre of the multilateral, also means awareness rising and access to information on climate and ecology. It must be part of a strategic communication to avoid risk-full disinformation. The more people understand sustainability and its challenges, the less are people left behind.

**d. Start to find a “coalition of the willing”**

Such a coalition, focused on sustainability could feed into the post UN75 process to propose ways to implement, strengthen and connect the currently fragmented global environmental governance regimes; consolidate and further the implementation of the “sustainability consensus” across countries and sectors. It could focus policy attention on novel ways to raise and mobilize the requisite levels of international funding for the necessary energy transition, nature-based solutions and other imperative ecological investments; establish a platform to scale up national best practices in environmental governance in a systematic and near-universal way. It could also consider the establishment of a well-resourced green tech sharing / innovation platform, necessary to scale up to meet targets; chart clear new business leadership / private sector action agendas across jurisdictions, to scale up needed action; etc. For example, the international community could also consider rallying around and implementing key, positive science-based, technical action pathways, as, e.g. articulated in the Exponential Climate Action Roadmap (e.g. endorsed by Christiana Figueres) that show the positive pathways and actions across key sectors,

areas. The complementary Playbook for business shows concrete pathways, using existing technologies, to achieve the Paris Agreement goals. This could e.g., be considered as one fundamental tool of the action plan of a sustainability “coalition of the willing.”

### **3) Create strategic partnerships and connect societies**

The global economy needs a new direction, one that is not only focused on growth. Therefore, we need a model for recovery from the crisis with the opportunity to link economy and growth, economy and climate. This may be the way to eliminate poverty and create new jobs while adopting to environment and climate. In addition, this could be a chance to change careers for example from the fossil fuel sector to alternative energy, e.g. hydrogen or geothermal. At the same time, a new model of growth means promoting consumption patterns that neither harm the environment nor workers – and discouraging energy and resource inefficiency and waste (SDG 12).

It is a decision how to deal with economic development, sustainable, environmental and climate measures. A “big model”, like a new climate model for recovery that takes already existing efforts and agreements into account – that also includes future generations. Binding credits, supports, donations

and other financial instruments, e.g. by the IMF, World Bank or national states, to green conditions could be a crucial towards a responsible model of growth.

### **4) Getting global justice and fairness right**

We are living in a world of disappearing traditional multilateralism. In the final analysis, the lack of cooperation makes everyone worse off. In the de-globalized world, there will be no more free riders and no solid structure for solidarity between countries. As a consequence, poor countries will suffer more. Digitalization could push a re-globalization process and reduce the divide between south and north. Digital transformation could leverage the multilateralism and become a new horizon for humanity and development.

Partnerships can make sustainability efforts strong, whereas sometimes single-handed approaches sometimes are weak. For instance, the EU Green Deal may not be efficient without Africa’s contribution. Most African countries decided to go with their fossil fuel resources or the Mega-Cities – most of the emissions are coming from land and land systems. Africa trades very closely with the EU. The EU therefore will not be able to become a truly sustainable region if Africa is not part of this process.

The United Nations have prioritized the strategic partnership with the African Union as the relationship is characterized by shared values, mutual respect and common interests. According to Antonio Guterres the AU-UN partnership is a model we should emulate in our relationships with other regional organizations.

This also applies for many of the countries in the Global South which have often, and also in this crisis been left alone, without financial and practical resources. In these countries programming for green investment is especially important. Some low- and middle-income countries face a crushing debt burden as they try to respond to the crisis. Strong relations with the global south are beneficial for all.

In this respect multilateralism is not only a tool to meet today’s challenges, but it is also a fundamental value which, if based on sustainability and justice, can bring unprecedented prosperity and peace.

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# Multilateralism that Delivers

## Organiser



## Co-organiser



## Partners



Federal Foreign Office



**Robert Bosch**  
Stiftung

## Supporters



## Institutional Partners



## Endnotes