

# **Promoting Peace and Prosperity Through Sustainable Development for a Shared Future**

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Peace is the never ending pursuit of humanity. It is the foundation of our shared future.

Peace is the prerequisite for achieving sustainable development, which is the pathway to prosperity. The Preamble of UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development emphatically pointed out that "there can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development."

However, the world is now experiencing unprecedented turbulence and uncertainties as the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and Ukraine war reverberate across the continents. The world has become more divided than ever since the end of the Cold War, as geopolitical competition between the big powers takes the centre stage, disrupting global flow of trade and investment, and jeopardising international technology cooperation, which are particularly crucial to sustainable development for countries in the global south.

In addition, human's indiscriminate approach to development has led to continued worsening of climate change, causing severe floods, earthquakes, hurricanes, wild fires, draughts and intense heat waves. These natural disasters have taken a toll on the environment, biodiversity, food supply and human lives.

"Climate change poses an existential threat to human civilization as none of the world's challenges loom as large as climate change," UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres has repeatedly warned the world.

Recognising the intricate link between peace and sustainable development, and the gravity of climate change, the UN General Assembly in 2015 adopted the Sustainable Development Agenda which provides a shared blueprint of

action for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, from then and into the future.

According to the Agenda, sustainable development is development that is grounded in five dimensions, i.e. people, planet, prosperity, as well as peace and partnerships. It encompasses a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at its core.

Top on the list of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is to “end poverty in all its forms everywhere”, as poverty eradication is an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. It targets to “eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere, currently measured as people living on less than \$1.25 a day” by 2030.

According to the World Bank, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused unprecedented reversals in poverty reduction that are further exacerbated by rising inflation and the effects of the war in Ukraine. The combined crises are estimated to lead to an additional 75 million to 95 million people living in extreme poverty in 2022, compared to the pre-pandemic projections. It is, therefore, more challenging than ever for the developing countries to achieve UN’s Sustainable Development Goal One, that is, ending poverty in all forms by 2030.

To realize the goals of the Sustainable Development Agenda, it is necessary to form a global partnership of all countries and all people based on the spirit of strengthened global solidarity, focussing in particular on the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable.

In September 2021, President Xu Jinping put forth the Global Development Initiative (GDI) at the general debate of the 76th session of the UN General Assembly, pointing out that development holds the key to people's well-being. In the face of the severe shocks resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, the world needs to work together to steer global development toward a new stage of balanced, coordinated, and inclusive growth.

It is noteworthy that China has successfully lifted 770 million of its people out of poverty and eradicated extreme poverty in 2021 based on the international poverty line defined by the World Bank, thus meeting the UN poverty eradication goal of the 2030 Agenda 10 years ahead of schedule. China is also leading in renewable energy production figures and is the indisputable global leader in renewable energy technology. China is,

therefore, well placed to share its experiences on poverty reduction and green development with other developing countries.

In his speech at the High-level Dialogue on Global Development held on June 24 this year, President Xi further highlighted the difficulties in implementing the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as the COVID-19 pandemic has eroded decades of gains in global development. He emphasised that development must be treated as the most important international agenda in order to reach an international consensus on promoting development. Improving the livelihood of the people is the way to sustain prosperity and safeguard security.

While developed countries need to fulfil their obligations, developing countries should deepen international cooperation. Business communities, social groups, the media and think tanks should take part in such cooperation. No country or individual should be left out in the process.

President Xi also announced at the Dialogue that “China will carry out practical cooperation with international partners, particularly developing countries, in the eight areas of poverty reduction, food security, pandemic response and vaccines, financing for development, climate change and green development, industrialization, digital economy, and digital-era connectivity.”

China will upgrade the South-South Cooperation Assistance Fund to a Global Development and South-South Cooperation Fund, with an additional contribution of \$1 billion to the fund on top of the \$3 billion already committed. To further support cooperation under the GDI, China will also increase input to the UN Peace and Development Trust Fund.

The goals of the Sustainable Development Agenda are highly interlinked. Thus the preservation of true peace requires a more holistic approach. In the context of the Sustainable Development Goals, peace is not just the prevention of violent conflicts such as war and terrorist attacks, and free from fear and violence. This is clearly reflected in Goal 16 of the 2030 Sustainable development Agenda, which is “to promote peaceful and inclusive societies, and provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.”

Good economic governance, the rule of law and equitable economic development are the prerequisites for peaceful and prosperous communities and nations. A business-friendly environment and a sound legal system are essential conditions for sustainable development. On the other hand, income

inequality, unequal access to education opportunities and healthcare services and other forms of inequitable distribution of resources could breed social discontent, thus becoming a threat to peace that would impede sustainable development.

The 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda is a universal plan of action for people, planet and prosperity. The Sustainable Development Goals are integrated and indivisible and balance the three dimensions of sustainable development: the economic, social and environmental.

China's Global Development Initiative is a timely complement to the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, which would help to speed up the implementation of the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda for developing countries.

Mankind is a Community with a Shared Future as we are all members of the global village. It is obvious that world peace and prosperity can only be achieved through sustainable development.

All countries and all stakeholders, acting as collaborative partners, must therefore take necessary, bold and transformative steps which are urgently needed to spur sustainable development across the world for a shared future of enduring peace and prosperity.

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