



January 31, 2014

RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (UN SDGs):

By the United States Council for International Business (USCIB)

USCIB supports the development of the proposed U.N. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) because they promote important objectives to eradicate poverty, improve quality of life and advance sustainability. Business views the SDGs as an opportunity to shift the U.N. focus from development aid to empowering countries to develop without the need for aid, building on the Millennium Development Goals.

To be successful in this, the new SDGs should engage:

- all countries to do what they can at the national level, engaging their domestic resources, in line with their priorities and circumstances;
- all stakeholders, particularly business, because there is a clear business case for finding solutions to the world's most pressing trans-border challenges.

U.S. business has an important stake in this UN effort. USCIB members operate in and do business with countries all over the world and depend on strong and stable societies characterized by the rule of law, respect for human rights, stable economies and protection of the environment.

USCIB seeks SDGs that can make a difference and be implemented. For this reason, USCIB's recommendations emphasize the development of national policies and institutions that will lead to good governance, economic growth, environmental protection and social progress – the mutually reinforcing objectives of sustainable development.

There are four broad themes, which are particularly meaningful for business and which we see as **prerequisites and catalysts for progress toward sustainable development**:

- ❑ **Enabling Frameworks and Good Governance**
- ❑ **Economic Growth and Economic Empowerment** – Generating economic opportunity and livelihoods, enabling enterprise creation, raising standards of practice
- ❑ **Innovation** – Delivering new products and services to meet consumer needs and wants, reducing environment impacts and pursuing continuous improvement
- ❑ **Infrastructure** – Constructing and investing in new infrastructure; Improving access and building resilience and sustainability into water, energy, transport, distribution, agriculture, information, health etc. systems, while managing and reducing negative environmental impacts

USCIB is pleased to offer the following recommendations for the Sustainable Development Goals, which build on the four key themes above, and requests that the UN and its member governments consider these recommendations as it moves forward.

The SDGs should:

- Be short and simple, focused on clear priorities;
- Integrate relevant environmental, economic and social aspects;
- Build on existing economic, social and environmental frameworks, rather than creating new ones;

- Involve all countries in actions appropriate to their circumstances and priorities;
- Focus on measurable and achievable commitments at the national level;
- Reflect sound science, a risk (rather than hazard) based approach and rigorous economics; and
- Recognize synergies and interconnections where they exist, such as with food, water and energy.

USCIB has identified 10 priority issue areas for the SDGs (see attached Annex of Priority Issues).

Implementation and Tracking of SDGs

USCIB believes that national implementation is fundamental to the SDGs' success, supported by international cooperation. The SDGs should reflect the political will of UN member governments and serve as a basic agenda to guide the entire UN system.

The SDGs should catalyze and recognize private sector partnerships and actions. Voluntary public-private sector and other types of partnerships can supplement and build on government actions at national and international levels.

Each SDG should be supported by measurable, practical targets for tracking and reporting by national governments. The targets should be framed to allow national governments to set concrete objectives reflecting their own particular circumstances and priorities. Metrics to measure sustainability are being developed by individual companies and sectoral groups through a range of voluntary and business led initiatives. These could provide user-friendly and meaningful metrics relevant to the SDGs.

The newly created UN High Level Political Forum (HLPF) will monitor national and international cooperation on the SDGs. It should also provide a forum for sharing good practices and partnerships. HLPF should include a dedicated recognized channel for business input in policy formulation and implementation.

We urge the U.S. to pursue an inter-agency approach to the post-2015 Development Agenda and SDGs, involving the Agency for International Development (AID), the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the Departments of Commerce, Energy, Health and Human Services, Labor, and State, among others. USCIB also encourages government delegations to the HLPF to include representatives from their social, environmental, labor and economic ministries.

Going Forward

- U.S. business engagement is indispensable to both forming and implementing SDGs, as a source of trade, investment, innovation and know-how. Business can provide valuable input to policy agenda-setting, and formulation. Business is instrumental in many aspects of implementation and investment, and business connections through value- and supply-chains will help deploy knowhow and good practices.
- USCIB is ready to work with the UN, U.S. Government and others to develop SDGs that make a difference on the ground and incent business to advance economic, social and environmental improvements.

About USCIB:

USCIB promotes open markets, competitiveness and innovation, sustainable development and corporate responsibility, supported by international engagement and regulatory coherence. USCIB's vision and strength are provided by an active membership of leading U.S. corporations and business organizations. USCIB is the U.S. affiliate of the International Chamber of Commerce, the International Organization of Employers (IOE) and Business and Industry Advisory Committee (BIAC) to the OECD.



ANNEX of Priority Issues

USCIB Recommendations for the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

- 1) Peace and Security:**
 - Absence of violence; Security of movement for people and goods.
- 2) Good Governance:**
 - Rule of law, accountable governments and independent courts; Individual liberty and human rights, including property rights; Anti-corruption; Address informality through title, right to national identity etc.
- 3) Inclusive and Sustainable Economic Growth:**
 - Sound monetary and fiscal policies; Conducive domestic business and investment environments; Open international trade and investment.
- 4) Enterprise Creation and Job Growth:**
 - Encourage the creation of all types of businesses, and promote entrepreneurship;
 - Simplified enterprise registration; Efficient and clear business regulation and competitive markets;
 - Flexible labor markets that promote job creation; sustainable social protection systems.
- 5) Infrastructure for Development:**
 - Transportation networks: roads, rail, air, sea ports; Information & Communications systems: phone, internet
 - Incentivizing and encouraging investment; public-private partnerships.
- 6) Green Growth and Innovation:**
 - Cost-effective environmental regulation that works in synergy with free markets; Policies and frameworks that support innovation and deployment of cleaner technologies and know-how;
 - Cleaner production; Offering consumers more sustainable choices.
- 7) Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment:**
 - Equal legal rights for men and women; Non-discrimination; Women's economic empowerment.
- 8) Demographics and Population, Youth, Education and Health Care:**
 - Advancing ethnic and racial equality
 - Universal primary education; Skills development and training;
 - Offering opportunities for youth, preventing child labor, preparation for employment
 - Planning for and adjusting to aging populations, with appropriate care and opportunities
 - Addressing migrant and refugee populations, immigration policies, skilled workers
 - Access to basic health care; Availability of family planning; Addressing non-communicable diseases.
- 9) Enabling all Energy Options:**
 - Address energy access and security challenges and opportunities; Facilitate the deployment of all energy options;
 - Enhance energy efficiency through innovation.
- 10) Food and Water Security:**
 - Increase agricultural productivity (including through clear property rights); Improve nutrition; Address food waste and loss; Open trade and investment in agriculture; Improve access to safe drinking water and sanitation.