Making Sustainable Development Goals Relevant for, in and with Societies

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Abstract

This introductory chapter sets the platform for how the global leadership that includes governments, territories, business, civil society, development partners and individuals can make the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) work and be more relevant for, in and with societies. This way, the world can move quickly towards the attainment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, for which by the time of publishing this book, there will be 10 years left. After presenting the history leading to the ratification of the SDGs in New York on 25 September 2015, the chapter profiles the need to address poverty in the context of SDGs, leadership in implementing the SDGs and a focus on service delivery and the attainment of SDGs at the local govern-

ment level. The chapter concludes with the book and chapter outline.

1 Introduction

Societies do not stop developing and growing. Hence, with the current advancement in technology and the phenomenon of Industry 4.0 (Fourth Industrial Revolution or 4IR), this is happening at an increasingly fast rate (Hofmann and Rüsch 2017; Kamble et al. 2018). Growth and development do not happen in a vacuum; advancements in society are associated with negative externalities. The society and the economy are at stake from impacts of development, while the environment bears the brunt of such externalities. In 2012, the global community, therefore, gathered for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) held in Rio de Janeiro. From the conference, global leaders made a decisive attempt to reconcile socio-economic development and environmental goals. Rio+20 is the third of the three major world conferences on sustainable development that shaped the SDGs. The first one was the 1992 United Nations

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Conference on Environment and Development, also held in Rio de Janeiro, followed by the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa. The foundation for both the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (AfSD) and the 17 SDGs was developed as part of the outcomes of the Rio+20 conference.

The SDGs intend to guide the global community in addressing sustainable development challenges. These cover current global challenges that society faces, including poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace and justice (United Nations 2015). Society has a pivotal role in changing its circumstances through the implementation of SDGs as these goals are the ultimate guide for achieving a better and more sustainable future for all. This book documents some of the key efforts to implement the 2030 AfSD by, in, with and for society (SDGs for society) in pushing towards achieving sustainable development.

2   Historical Development of the SDGs: From Rio to Rio+20

This section tracks the historical background of the development of SDGs. It focuses on three major United Nations conferences—the Rio Earth Summit, the World Conference on Sustainable Development and Rio+20. The section particularly focuses on how these major gatherings contributed to the SDGs but more specifically how society is included or reflected in the outcomes, agendas, declarations and so forth.

The Rio Earth Summit, also known as the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 3 to 14 June 1992. At that time, it was historically the largest gathering of national leaders to put their heads together in resolving the disparity between economic development and environmental well-being. As many as 700 voluntary commitments were made

at the Rio Earth Summit and many partnerships were formed to drive the goal of sustainable development (Parson et al. 1992). Some of the outcome documents of the conference are the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and Agenda 21. The Rio Declaration on Environment and Development is an embodiment of 27 principles that recognise the importance of environmental well-being and set out guiding principles for national governments on issues pertaining to environment and development.

The Rio Declaration on Environment and Development is seen as an essential part of the evolution of thinking where environmental issues are concerned as well as the envisaged solutions. Unlike the 1972 Stockholm Conference on Human Environment, which attributed environmental challenges to industrialisation and technology and emphasised technological solutions to development challenges (Hens 2005), the Rio Declaration establishes the centrality of humanity in sustainable development concerns. This is highlighted in Principle 1, which articulates that "Human beings are at the centre of concerns for sustainable development. They are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature" (United Nations 1992a, p. 1). Citizen participation is recognised as crucial in policy development and implementation in the declaration, and the youth, women, children and indigenous people all have attributed roles in sustainable development. There is a strong anthropocentric vision of the environment, where the environment is viewed as a "means to an end"; in other words: "human well-being depends upon the quality of the environment, and therefore it is in the interest of humans to preserve their environment" (Hens 2005, p. 6). Secondly, Hens (2005, p. 6) argues that the principle asserts that "care of people is the main aim of the measures taken to provide a stable environment", which is an attempt to recognise the right of humanity to a safe environment by making it a foundation, though a weak one, for the development of environmental standards.

Agenda 21 (simply interpreted as the 21st-Century Agenda) is the other outcome document of the 1992 Rio Earth Summit. The heads of states adopted it at the Rio Earth Summit. It embraces both the environment and development agenda and states goals related to specific major resources as well as social and environmental issues, among others (Parson et al. 1992). Agenda 21 is an all-inclusive global plan of action for governments, the United Nations and other major groups in all areas where human beings have an impact on the environment. This is where the centrality of people is reflected in the document. Overall, the document has 40 chapters, which are subdivided into three sections focusing on (1) social and economic dimensions, (2) conservation and management of resources for development and (3) strengthening the role of major groups and means of implementation (United Nations 1992b). The first section addresses social issues, including poverty, health and consumption patterns, and is biased towards developing countries where issues of poverty are concerned. The second section focuses on specific environmental challenges and the third section emphasises the participation of different sectors of society. The youth, women, children and indigenous people, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), local authorities, workers and so forth are specifically mentioned. The means of implementation, like the 1972 Stockholm Declaration on the Human Environment, still focuses on science and technology but includes other social structures like education, international institutions and financial mechanisms (United Nations 1992b). Agenda 21 recognises the importance of genuine involvement of different social groups. Broad public participation in decision-making, especially on issues that potentially affect their communities, is argued in Agenda 21 as a prerequisite for achieving sustainable development. While Agenda 21 was not legally binding, it was a crucial document as signatories were politically obliged to pursue the set goals and targets (Parson et al. 1992) with the beginning of the twenty-first century as the ambitious target date, hence the name "Agenda 21".

Overall, the Rio Earth Summit is said to have been "a beneficial start and a necessary step" in discussing important environmental protection issues that have meaning beyond the meeting and hence with great potential for future implementation in real-world contexts (Affan 2017, p. 2). It brought about a paradigm shift in the way people think about sustainable development. The conference managed to raise public awareness on the need to integrate the environment and development leading up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD).

The WSSD, which is unofficially called Rio+10, was held in 2002 in Johannesburg, South Africa, 10 years after the 1992 Rio Earth Summit. The WSSD gathered more or less the same audience as the Rio Earth Summit to establish the means of implementation of the same goals established 10 years earlier as well as Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The focus was more on progress review since the Rio Earth Summit, rather than on establishing new commitments (Von Schirnding 2005). The gathering surpassed the Rio Earth Summit in terms of attendance.

Prior to the WSSD in 2000, a Millennium Summit was held to establish the MDGs that would be used to benchmark progress in the implementation of sustainable development. The eight MDGs focus on social issues and are integrative of poverty-related challenges, save for two. The odd two MDGs address environmental sustainability and partnerships. The MDGs had targets and indicators, which were meant to help in monitoring progress in the implementation of the goals (Nhamo et al. 2019) and were carried over in the 2030 AfSD.

Since the WSSD was not intended to develop new commitments or conventions, but to implement existing commitments, it follows that the goals and targets of poverty, environment and sustainable development in the Millennium Declaration were the same goals that were recalled in one of the WSSD outcomes documents, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPI). The other outcome of the WSSD was the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable

Development—JPI (La Viña et al. 2003). The JPI is a political document, which is not legally binding, and was meant to guide development and government decisions, among other stakeholders. The JPI put more emphasis on local issues and social issues. This was a departure from the Rio Earth Summit where climate change and other related global environmental challenges took precedence. The JPI called for action by various stakeholders and there was less emphasis on science and technology and more emphasis on human action. Hence, sustainable development was positioned as both a public and political agenda and local sustainability challenges like health energy, water and sanitation were receiving considerable attention (Von Schirnding 2005). The WSSD was momentous in achieving a significant transition in the environmental movement where ecological problems were embedded in social realities. The importance of society was brought to the fore. The fact that priority was on local versus global challenges embeds sustainability challenges in local socio-economic contexts. This was one of the major contributions of the WSSD where society can be said to have been fronted in terms of both causal factors and resolutions to sustainable development challenges.

In 2012, 20 years after the Rio Earth Summit, the international community gathered in Rio De Janeiro again at what became known as the Rio+20 conference. The need for a post-2015 agenda was highlighted in the Rio+20 outcome document "The Future We Want". From the Rio+20 Conference, the United Nations General Assembly reaffirmed "the need to further mainstream sustainable development at all levels, integrating economic, social and environmental aspects and recognizing their interlinkages" and noted the fact that people are at the centre of sustainable development (United Nations 2012, p. 2). The commitment to accelerate the achievement of the MDGs was also made. The MDGs' implementation process, therefore, remains the foundation for implementing the SDGs. Designed along with a similar architecture to the MDGs, the SDGs seek to complete, top-up and broaden

what the MDGs could not attain based on a balance of the three dimensions of sustainable development at a much more enhanced and ambitious level. The SDGs are universal and more inclusive and they include a well-defined means of implementation. The SDGs are interlinked, and through them, the world looks to involve every citizen and organisation, hence the motto "Let no one be left behind" (Nhamo et al. 2020).

The 2030 AfSD is broad and enshrines the 17 interwoven SDGs and their 169 targets and many more indicators. It covers a wide range of goals (United Nations 2015) including poverty eradication, economic growth, social inclusion, environmental sustainability and peace for all by 2030. Post-2015, countries have been working towards meeting the SDGs. Across the globe, the challenge of domesticating and localising the SDGs in terms of national and local development priorities requires a combination of technical, scientific as well as administrative and political input. A collaborative research approach is needed to stay true to the SDGs' inclusive and bottom-up approach. Of interest is the notion that the SDGs represent a development agenda that should be realised by both the developed and developing countries. This provides researchers across and within disciplines with endless novel opportunities to engage with the SDGs. Given the foregone discussion, the SDGs remain an agenda for society, hence the need to document their implementation across societies in this book *Sustainable Development Goals for Society* (*SDGs4S*).

3 Addressing Poverty in the Context of SDGs

The need to address poverty in the context of SDGs comes out clearly under SDG 1 that looks at the desire to "End poverty in all its forms everywhere" (United Nations 2015, p. 14). Aligned with this goal are seven targets with many indicators that assist in the attainment of the goal by 2030. See Box 1.1 for more details about the targets.

Box 1.1: Targets for SDG 1: Ending poverty in All Its Manifestations Everywhere by 2030

- 1.1 By 2030, eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere, measured as people living on less than $1.25 a day.
- 1.2 By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions.
- 1.3 Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable.
- 1.4 By 2030, ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services, including microfinance.
- 1.5 By 2030, build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters.
- 1.a Ensure significant mobilisation of resources from a variety of sources, including through enhanced development cooperation, to provide adequate and predictable means for developing countries, in particular least developed countries, to implement programmes and policies to end poverty in all its dimensions.
- 1.b Create sound policy frameworks at the national, regional and international levels, based on pro-poor and gender-sensitive development strategies to support accelerated investment in poverty eradication actions.
  Source: United Nations (2015, p. 15)

There are several matters worth highlighting from SDG 1 targets outlined in Box 1.1. The call is to have all global citizens out of extreme poverty by 2030. In addition, although extreme poverty was defined at the time of approving the SDGs in September 2015 as people living below US$1.25 per day, Target 1.2 brings up another perspective on the need to reduce global citizens living in poverty, a measure that would be determined nationally. There is also the dimension of protecting citizens from extreme weather events induced by climate change, as well as any other recognised economic, social and environmental disasters and shocks. This last category brings us right into the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic that left the foundations of the world shaken and threatening to derail the attainment of SDG 3 and all other SDGs.

Durizzo et al. (2021) put across the matter of managing Covid-19 in poor urban neighbourhoods, focusing on Accra (Ghana) and Johannesburg (South Africa). From a survey of 1400 poor households, the findings confirmed that the lack of compliance with social distancing and protective hygiene had more to do with lack of adequate infrastructure and poverty than the unwillingness to change behaviours. In the USA, Finch and Finch (2020) found that in the earlier stages of Covid-19, higher infections and death rates were associated with disadvantaged (poorer) counties. Drawing from work done in the United Kingdom, Patel et al. (2020, p. 110) maintain that the commonly heard statement that "Covid-19 does not discriminate has been repeated. This, however, is a dangerous myth, side-lining the increased vulnerability of those most socially and economically deprived". Economically disadvantaged populations were likely to live in overcrowded accommodation, compounding the chances of getting infected. Linked to the poor are matters pertaining to inequality (SDG 10) (Ahmed et al. 2020). It is a situation where the Covid-19-poverty-inequality vicious cycle is created, seriously retarding progress towards the 2030 AfSD. As people stayed at home, with companies closing or wages reduced, more households were pushed into poverty putting governments under pressure

to put up social security measures. Subsequently, other governments had to borrow money to finance relief and recovery measures (Republic of South Africa 2020). Hence, poverty remains the main issue that demands resolute leadership in the lead to the 2030 AfSD.

4 Leadership in Implementing SDGs

Speaking during the World Government Summit's SDGs in Action event on 9 February 2019 in Dubai, the United Nations Deputy Secretary-General, Amina Mohammed, raised critical pillars on leadership. It emerged that the SDGs remained the global blueprint for a sustainable, inclusive and just future (Mohammed 2019). To this end, leadership was required at all spatial levels and from all stakeholders, including development partners and philanthropists. Hence, at times, unpopular decisions had to be taken to move away from the business-as-usual pathways, and stakeholders must "move out of comfort zones and embrace innovative ways of working, thinking and leading" (Mohammed 2019). Good leadership meant that the governments and other stakeholders should commit to sharing experiences and tools, be they good or bad for the greater public good of advancing the SDGs. Sharing is part of the United Nations High-Level Political Forum on SDGs that receives Voluntary National Reviews annually, which stocktake implementation progress on SDGs from members. Further, there is a need for effective and accountable public institutions built on transformational leadership (Manzoor et al. 2019).

SDGs' leadership demands that governments at various spatial levels ensure commitment and ownership of programmes and project implementation by taking such to all corners of society (Gornitzka and Pipa 2018). This approach supports Meuleman and Niestroy's (2015) early work on the principle of Common But Differentiated Governance (CBDG) and how CBDG could be applied in implementing the SDGs. Drawing from Nigeria, Akinloye (2018) introduces the need to maximise the influence of religious leaders in

implementing the SDGs. Religious leadership is viewed as an enabler that will bring more actors into the SDG space, making sure that those from the grassroots are not left behind. There is a growing body of literature demanding good leadership for SDG implementation amid the Covid-19 pandemic (Filho et al. 2020). The authors highlight that governments and other stakeholders were being pressurised to divert resources (financial, human and other) towards the pandemic, an aspect that could lead to many other SDGs not being practised for a while.

Evidence of good leadership in SDG implementation was coming up from emerging economies such as South Africa. In his address to the joint sitting of Parliament in October 2020, President Cyril Ramaphosa highlighted what the government had done and was going to urgently do to mitigate Covid-19 impacts through the proposed Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan (ERRP) (Republic of South Africa 2020). The ERRP identified four main areas, namely (1) the infrastructure build programme; (2) rapid expansion of energy generation capacity (with a substantial increase in renewables, battery storage and gas); (3) employment stimulus package to create jobs and support livelihoods, with 800,000 job opportunities envisaged in a few months; and (4) propelling of industrial growth. The identified main areas both directly and indirectly link to several SDGs, particularly SDGs 1–3 (ending poverty, ending hunger and health and well-being), SDGs 7 and 8 (sustainable energy and sustainable and decent work), SDGs 9–12 (industry and infrastructure, reducing inequality, sustainable cities and sustainable consumption and production), SDG 13 (climate action) and SDG 17 (partnerships). The ERRP presented a policy commitment to SDG 7 (gender), noting the desire to end gender-based violence and the commitment to work "with women-empowered companies to progressively reach our target of directing at least 40% of procurement spend to such enterprises" (Republic of South Africa 2020, p. 11). Lastly, the ERRP is linked to the government's National Development Plan: Vision 2030 and was to be driven by an Economic Recovery Leadership Team.

Leadership in implementing SDGs for, in and with societies is critical in the business sector. To this end, the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC) came up with a plan for business leadership in the SDGs. The plan highlights that business leadership on the SDGs is informed and evolves through three cyclical steps that harness the desire to prioritise, act and learn (UNGC 2017). Companies are supposed to prioritise their engagements drawing from their multiplier and effective contribution towards the SDGs, the idea being to maximise the positive impacts. To act, five leadership qualities should be embodied, namely intentionality, being ambitious, consistent, collaborative and accountable. The leading companies should learn about their actions' impact on the SDGs. This takes companies back to the need to report and share lessons like the state actors, revealing both the good and bad testimonies. The involvement and collaboration with stakeholders become part of responsible leadership (Muff et al. 2020). Further elaborations of the five SDG leadership qualities are reflected in Fig. 1.1.

Drawing from a sample of 25 multinational companies (MNCs) from Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS), Ali et al. (2018) determined the extent to which the MNCs had adopted the SDGs in their vision and mission statements. They found that while progress was being made, there was a gap in that crucial SDGs were missing. Such important SDGs included quality education (SDG 4), climate action (SDG 13) and life below water (SDG 14). Yu et al. (2020) made similar findings from a study involving 100 Chinese companies that were on the

Shanghai Stock Exchange from 2016 to 2018. These companies were found to focus more on infrastructure development, industrial innovation and economic growth and placed some emphasis on affordable and clean energy (SDG 7), dignified and respectable working environment (SDG 8), as well as peace, justice and strong institutions (SDG 16). From Australia, Noh (2020) raises the concept of creating shared value (CSV). Although the companies were managing to frame SDGs around the CSV, the operationalisation left a gap as there was a weak connection to the SDGs.

Pedersen (2018) presents the notion that SDGs are a huge gift to business as these present opportunities and guidance for long-term investment, as well as new business opportunities. The SDGs are said to have presented global priorities for the business, with big and quick wins potentially availing themselves for harvesting. Hence, the private sector is a key stakeholder and should shoulder responsibility in accelerating SDG implementation (Rashed and Shah 2020). The authors present engagements in corporate social responsibility, the circular economy and the environmental initiatives as pathways towards the realisation of the 2030 AfSD. The lack of influential leadership and appropriate indicators to measure implementation are flagged as some of the major drawbacks for business entities. However, the 2030 AfSD and its 17 SDGs may not be attained from a business-as-usual trajectory and leadership approach (ElAlfy et al. 2020). Therefore, to be visible and effective, the business sector should address some of the actions listed in Table 1.1 as proposed by the UNGC.
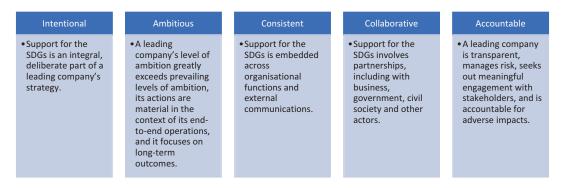
Intentional	Ambitious	Consistent	Collaborative	Accountable
• Support for the SDGs is an integral, deliberate part of a leading company's strategy.	• A leading company's level of ambition greatly exceeds prevailing levels of ambition, its actions are material in the context of its end-to-end operations, and it focuses on long-term outcomes.	• Support for the SDGs is embedded across organisational functions and external communications.	• Support for the SDGs involves partnerships, including with business, government, civil society and other actors.	• A leading company is transparent, manages risk, seeks out meaningful engagement with stakeholders, and is accountable for adverse impacts.

Fig. 1.1 Five qualities of SDG leadership. Source: Authors, based on UNGC (2017, p. 5)

Table 1.1 Business actions in support of SDGs

The SDGs	Selected business actions
Goal 1: No poverty	• Create sustainable and decent jobs, especially in the least developed countries and for vulnerable populations • Implement programmes to economically empower disadvantaged groups • Ensure decent working conditions for all employees • Create and market goods and services that improve the lives of vulnerable groups
Goal 2: Zero hunger	• Support small-scale farmers to increase yields and incomes from sustainable agriculture • Alter food logistics to contribute to ending malnutrition and hunger in all communities surrounding company operations and eliminate food waste and loss
Goal 3: Good health and well-being	• Ensure the best possible health outcomes for employees and surrounding communities across own and supply chain operations • Deploy products, services and business models for improved health outcomes and lead initiatives encouraging healthy behaviours and improve access to healthcare
Goal 4: Quality education	• Ensure that all employees have access to vocational training and lifelong learning opportunities • Ensure that all employees earn a wage that allows them to support the education of dependents and that there is zero child labour • Implement programmes to support higher education and access to free, equitable and inclusive primary and secondary education • Deploy products and services that improve educational access and learning outcomes
Goal 5: Gender equality	• Implement policies and practices that are free from and prevent gender-based discrimination across the workplace, marketplace and community • Support women's employment and strive for gender balance at all levels across the business and supply chain • Develop products and services and implement marketing practices that empower women • Promote gender equality through investment, community initiatives and advocacy
Goal 6: Clean water and sanitation	• Implement holistic water strategies socially equitable, environmentally sustainable and economically beneficial in watersheds around company and supply chain operations • Protect and/or restore water-based ecosystems around its own operations and supply chain • Ensure access to water and sanitation by addressing impacts of company and supply chain operations on local water supplies and supporting stakeholders to deliver clean water and sanitation
Goal 7: Affordable and clean energy	• Increase energy efficiency, source remaining energy needs from renewable sources and promote the same action across the supply chain • Deploy affordable, sustainable energy and energy efficiency products and services • Develop and implement business models to deliver sustainable energy and energy-efficient technologies to new markets and communities
Goal 8: Decent work and economic growth	• Support decent working conditions for all employees across the business and supply chain, with partnerships to build suppliers' capacity to do the same • Educate and train the labour force, focusing on vulnerable and economically disadvantaged groups • Create decent formal sector jobs in labour-intensive sectors • Drive economic growth and productivity by investing in research and development (R&D), upgrading skills and supporting growing businesses
Goal 9: Industry, innovation and infrastructure	• Deploy products, services and business models to deliver sustainable and resilient infrastructure • Support inclusive and sustainable upgrading of developing country industries in global value chains • Create innovation systems for sustainable development by providing access to finance, fostering entrepreneurship and pooling financial and research resources in a global knowledge base • Upgrade and retrofit infrastructure and industry assets across own and supply chain operations to make them sustainable and resilient

Table 1.1 (continued)

The SDGs	Selected business actions
Goal 10: Reduced inequalities	• Assess the distribution of economic value across stakeholder groups and implement policies and practices to make it more equal • Support the establishment and expansion of social protection measures at national level • Implement policies and practices to support equality of opportunity, treatment and outcome for all across own and supply chain operations • Design and implement products, services and business models that explicitly target the needs of disadvantaged and marginalised populations
Goal 11: Sustainable cities and communities	• Deploy products and services that improve access to resilient buildings, transport, green spaces and utilities • Protect and invest in cultural and natural heritage and support access to essential services across the workplace, marketplace and community
Goal 12: Responsible consumption and production	• Design and adopt a responsible, circular business model and narrow or close material and energy loops across own and supply chain operations • Shift to a portfolio of goods and services that require and promote negligible use of resources and produce negligible waste • Develop, implement and share solutions for tracking and reporting on the sustainability of production and consumption across end-to-end operations
Goal 13: Climate action	• Ensure climate resilience of company and supply chain operations and the communities surrounding them • Reduce emissions associated with own and supply chain operations, in alignment with climate science, and shift to goods and services promoting negligible emissions • Promote conscious climate behaviour and build capacity for climate action
Goal 14: Life below water	• Implement policies and practices to protect ocean ecosystems that are affected by business and supply chain activities • Deploy products and business models that negate impacts on ocean ecosystems and contribute to their restoration • Galvanise finance for the protection and further development of ocean ecosystems and water system flows • Design and implement solutions to accurately value and respect natural capital and drive wider adoption of these solutions
Goal 15: Life on land	• Implement policies and practices to protect natural ecosystems that are affected by business and supply chain activities • Deploy products, services and business models to help decouple economic activity from the degradation of natural ecosystems • Galvanise finance to create awareness of, protect and further develop natural ecosystems • Design and implement solutions to accurately value and respect natural capital and drive wider adoption of these solutions
Goal 16: Peace, justice and strong institutions	• Identify and take robust action against corruption and violence in own operations and the supply chain • Work with the government to strengthen institutions and increase respect and support for the rule of law • Work with the government and/or international institutions in areas of conflict and humanitarian crises to contribute to peace and institution building
Goal 17: Partnerships for the goals	• Lead on partnerships to improve domestic resource mobilisation through responsible tax practices • Galvanise private-sector finance to support sustainable development initiatives in developing countries • Build regulatory, organisational and staff capacity in developing countries • Lead on partnerships to develop and share new and existing technology, knowledge and business models • Lead on partnerships that address systemic challenges for achieving the SDGs

Source: Authors, based on UNGC (2017, pp. 7–163)

Bissinger et al. (2020) bring another dimension of leadership in SDG implementation by linking it to voluntary standards. The authors found that the voluntary sustainability standards (VSS) that were developed by industry, civil society and other key stakeholders extensively cover three SDGs (2, 8, 12). SDGs 13, 14 and 17 were found to have few or no links to the VSS. Such VSS remain useful in the remaining period of implementation of the SDGs to 2030.

5   Service Delivery and SDGs at the Local Government Level

There is no contestation that most goods and services are consumed at the local government level. To this end, the SDGs will be attained through several programmes and projects implemented at this spatial scale (Dawkins et al. 2019). Linking up SDG 2 (ending hunger) and SDG 11 (sustainable cities), Ilieva (2017) brings the concept of urban food systems strategies (UFSS) as a promising tool for the implementation and attainment of the SDGs. The recommendation comes out of research work that looked at the application of the UFSS in the megacities of New York, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, Chicago (all from the USA) and Toronto in Canada. Kawakubo et al. (2018) bring another dimension when they focus on cities in the context of SDGs and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Interfacing this with the 2015 Paris Agreement on climate change, the authors believe that the involvement of local government was significant in promoting sustainable development and attain 2030 AfSD overall.

Zinkernagel et al. (2018) raise additional advantages that the SDGs have brought in tracking progress in implementing sustainable development. In their view, traditional indicators for measuring progress in implementing sustainable development in cities focused on health and safety, environmental sustainability and economic growth. Such indicators lacked dimensions on gender equality (SDG 5) and the need to reduce inequality (SDG 10). To this list, Dawkins et al. (2019) add sustainable consumption and production (SDG 12) that touches on food procurement and waste, water, waste prevention, clothing and other consumables. Talking of water and sanitation (SDG 6) and the World Health Organization's call for "safe hands" for Covid-19, Zvobgo and Do (2020) pick up a real challenge in many cities and settlements from developing nations. Using Chitungwiza in Zimbabwe as a case study, the authors found that the demand for domestic water and sanitation increased by 90%, which added to an already existing water scarcity. An additional 4.5 L of water was needed per person per day to attain "safe hands". The water issue draws us further into the 2030 AfSD as it is also a human rights matter (Carrard et al. 2020) and in many countries, water provision remains a local government mandate.

Krellenberg et al. (2019) argue that urban sustainability strategies should now be guided by the SDGs. Hence, the SDGs have brought up a more balanced and integrated matrix to monitor urban sustainability (Zinkernagel et al. 2018). However, more work still needs to be done to localise the SDGs so that they become context specific and more relevant. This proposal makes sense given that cities are and will be at different stages of development, as well as have differentiated implementation ability and capabilities. Considering the set-up of cities, it is inevitable that authorities continue to move swiftly to localise all the SDGs. Therefore, there are several chapters in this book addressing the role of local governments in propelling the world forward along a sustainable pathway. The next section briefly presents the methodological orientation applied in this book.

6   Methodological Orientation

This book is a compilation of chapters from diverse authors and contexts from Africa, Europe and Latin America. Therefore, there is no single methodological orientation informing this work. The authors have also used diverse methods, which reflect their different research background

contexts. The methods were mostly influenced by the research questions addressed by each of the chapters. Specific theoretical, methodological orientations are discussed as part of each chapter. This section will highlight the broad categories of the research orientations.

The focus of the book is society. Hence, the research documents can be categorised as social research. Social scientists employ social research methods to gain a better understanding of society (and people) and find solutions to social issues (Mogalakwe 2006). Social research mostly depends on the collection of primary rather than secondary data; thus, it relies on primary methods of data collection. Research topics are diverse in social research as any aspect of society can be a topic of research. Social research can be either quantitative or qualitative, depending on the problem being researched. In either case, it follows a well-organised research plan. Qualitative research focuses on establishing people's opinions, attitudes, actions and behaviour through interviews, focus group discussion and documentary reviews and the results are textual and non-quantitative (Kothari 2004). Quantitative research relies on measurement and generates numerical data, which is analysed through quantitative analytic methods: for example, student t-test, correlation and regression (Kothari 2004). Examples of quantitative methods include a questionnaire survey and structured observations. The next and last section of the chapter presents the book and chapter outline.

7   Book and Chapter Outline

This book is divided into five parts. Part I provides the introduction and background and is made up of a single chapter looking at making the SDGs relevant for, in and with societies. Part II addresses poverty in the context of SDGs and comprises five chapters. Chapter 2 presents an overview of SDG policies in Brazil, while Chap. 3 looks at the localisation of SDGs in rural Uganda. Chapter 4 considers ending extreme poverty in the Chegutu District of Zimbabwe,

with Chap. 5 dedicated to programmes to support SDGs through social, inclusive and transformative innovation. Chapter 6 articulates financial inclusion as a complementary strategy to address the SDGs for society.

Part III is made up of another five chapters that focus on leadership in the implementation of SDGs. Chapter 7 documents mentoring women in the resources sector, while Chap. 8 explores leadership capabilities in a multi-sector road infrastructure and innovation (SDG 9) and partnership (SDG 17) in South Africa. Chapter 9 discusses the role of leadership capacities in the response of the South African National Statistics System to the SDGs, with Chap. 10 presenting the unique role of libraries in promoting the SDGs. Chapter 11 considers leadership capacities in multi-stakeholder partnerships contributing towards the SDGs using a case study of Project Last Mile in Eswatini.

Part IV is dedicated to service delivery and the attainment of SDGs at the local government level and comes in seven chapters. Chapter 12 brings up the Global Water Partnership, South America, and the transboundary implementation of integrated water resources management (SDG target 6.5). Chapter 13 narrows down to sustainability reporting through UNGC looking at opportunities and challenges in mainstreaming the Global Reporting Initiative Standards and the SDGs. Chapter 14 considers leadership and the implementation of SDGs in Finnish municipalities, while Chap. 15 presents opportunities and challenges for local government institutions in localising SDGs in Zimbabwe. Chapter 16 considers water, energy, health and sanitation challenges in Masvingo's low-income urban communities in the context of SDGs in Zimbabwe. Chapter 17 pitches the trends in research around the SDG objectives from a bibliometric analysis, with Chap. 18 dedicated to harnessing the potential of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in agribusiness for youth employment. The last part of the book is also made up of a single chapter, which presents the summary of findings, conclusions and policy recommendations.

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