**SDG 17 Partnership for the goals transcript**

2023.12 ver.

**Introduction**

Have a very good day and welcome to the introductory lectures for youth engagement, you will focus on 2030 Agenda and its related Sustainable Development Goals. It is our great pleasure to have Professor David Horan to be the lecturers and speaker of the day, accompany the process will be myself from Center for Socio-Eco-nomie Development.

**Speaker**

Let me say a few more words about Professor David Professor, David is the Assistant Professor at Trinity College Dublin and he has been very much engaged in the governance for the sustainability and SDGs. (excuse me) In addition to research and teaching, David engages in actively with International and National SDG Policy Processes with a focus on SDG 17 and Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships. David not only active in teaching but he's also a major contributor to the Stakeholder Forum.

**Stakeholder Forum**

Let me say a few words about Stakeholder Forum. It's an international non-profit organization in consultative status with the UN and it promotes stakeholder engagement in policy making process as well as policy review. And the purpose is to better decision making and implementation of course engage in the UN is not an easy undertaking so Stakeholder Forum also helps stakeholders to engage with UN processes on Sustainable Development by providing advice, training and also other support.

**Lecture overview**

And today's agenda will be SDG 17 Partnerships for Implementation of Goals. And briefly I will summarize today's key topics in following points. Professor Horan will start with a brief description of the SDG 17, summarize the targets indicators and links to other SDGs because it is a very complex SDG goal 17. And he will review what is the current state as well as the challenges confronting implementation of this SDG goals and give some good examples of good practices and make some suggestions to how young people could enter and promote SDG 17 or to promote SDGs goals as a total agenda so without further elaboration…

**Q1**

I will hand it over to Professor Horan with my first question. So **what is SDG 17 and why is it important? Why should we bother?**

**SDG 17**

Hey thanks Lichia, welcome everyone and delighted to be here and to have this opportunity to speak to you about what is arguably a key goal for implementing the all the rest of the goals so just taking the text from the 2030 Agenda, Goal 17 is defined as the aim (sorry), the goal is to strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for a Sustainable Development. And this goal is often referred to as across-cutting goal meaning that if your interest is in SDG 6 for example in water and sanitation, in order to accelerate progress on that goal you will need to look at goal 17 and look at ways in which you can enable that goal in order to implement SDG now before we go any further I think it's important to understand what we mean by means of implementation so the 2030 Agenda defines seven of these means you can think of them as levers of change and these are first of all to raise finance for Sustainable Development and secondly it's to develop technology that can support the implementation of the goals so that in the environmental area that could be clean energy technologies, I could also in talk about more social aspects referred to inclusive governance types technologies. The third lever is policy coherence for Sustainable Development so often when we think a national level that's about aligning national policies with the UN developing goals it also refers to how policies say in one area to do with the environment call here with the policies we have in another area for example support the economy so these should be mutually reinforcing each other. And not canceling each other out and a fourth leader liver is capacity building and that normally means training developing skills for Sustainable Developments and it can also mean referred to infrastructure that can sustain ability. The fifth leverage trade international trade, the sixth then is data for Sustainable Development and the last one then is partnerships.

So the this goal also refers to the global partnership for Sustainable Development which means if you remember the 2030 Agreement is a voluntary agreement, it's not legally binding so we're relying on actors doing the right thing, setting their agendas to contribute to these goals and to deliver actions that support them. And so when you go back to be compared to the global partnership for Sustainable Development and the idea is that by working together we can we can achieve more we can raise more means of implementation and we can have a greater impact than any of us can have one on our own.

**Multi-stakeholder partnerships**

Yeah and very important in all of this is the idea of multi-stakeholder partnerships so these are partnerships that bring together stakeholders from different spheres or sectors of society. Organizations and individuals from the public sector private sectors non-profit or civil society working together this is seen as having the greatest potential for impact.

**Q2**

Okay well indeed this SDG 17 is very complex and covers very broad range of topic s seems to me mostly is really about mobilizing resources through alternative means other than the finance I mean money. So **what exactly are we going to use to measure SDGs in terms of progress?**

**SDG 17: Targets and Indicators**

It means a lot that's harnessing more than just finance but also the technologies, policy, expertise, training data, etc. In order to implement Sustainable Development so a bit like the health school which has a large number of targets and a large number of indicators SDG 17 is quite similar. It contains 19 targets and 25 indicators in order to assess progress on editing the means of implementation and if you look at the 2030 Agenda where at least the Sustainable Development Goals and targets what you will see is that the 19 targets are grouped according to the seven means of implementation. So we have 3 Targets in finance, we have Targets on technology, capacity building, trade and what's termed their systemic issues but that also includes policy coherence and mobilizing data for Sustainable Development. And so the actual the text the specific part of the targets and the indicators can be referred to at this link, I’m sure after the agreement was signed the working group developed a set of targets and there's been continuous work and the indicators that were used to measure progress on these reports mobilizing this and whatever.

**Link to Leave No One Behind**

Just a link to “Leave No One Behind” principle when it comes to effective partnering for the goal, an important element of that is to have all relevant stakeholders on board and this including vulnerable groups and local communities. It's important to have their voice at the decision table and also to increase the impacts of these partnerships. And there's been a lot of research done over the last 20 years on participation in multi-stakeholder partnerships for Sustainable Developments and what we tend to see is that while we had good engagement from UN agencies and donors, National governments, International organizations such as International NGOs. We tend to have at the national and local level representation from NGO's Vulnerable Groups Grassroots Organizations. Local communities tends to be much lower than the others. And it's seen as an important for achieving it, as an important barrier for achieving impact underground so there was a recent paper by Professor Frank Biermann which looked at the political impacts of the SDGs and found that while there is we are adapting the SDGs and there's a lot of discussion on how to advance their implementation, it's not feeding through to impact underground. And one of the reasons why there is some promising initiatives particularly on local implementation, there's a need to scale up those types of activities and to engage much more with the local level in order to accelerate people.

**Q3**

I'm very happy to hear that you brought out one is the research on the missing local participation and I hope that you'll bring that out a little bit more later on because I think in order to achieve SDG goals at least approximately achieving SDG goals by 2030. Every one of us have to pull in order to make the project moving forward, especially in light of the sort of the last two or three years unprecedented challenge of Covid pandemic and also now the sort of a very high profile war in Ukraine even though it's just one of the 17 major wars going on at this moment. So I would like to ask you from your experience and observation, **how much progress have we been able to make in this particular regard?**

Thanks for the question Lichia and yeah completely agree with you, everyone is called to action and it's important despite all the challenges that we face to inspire and be inspired by each other's actions so it's very much a call to attribute to the delivery of Sustainable Developments and the goals that are contained at this Agenda.

**Progress on SDG 17**

So when it comes to assessing progress and here I'll just focus on the global level, the many of the indicators for SDG 17 unfortunately lack good data to access progress. So if you compare it to the health goal SDG 3 we have most of the indicators for that goal have widely available data there's an accepted methodology and how to access program. Unfortunately for SDG 17, there are a lot of data gaps so it's difficult for us to get a clear picture of to what extent we are making progress on the school. Now despite that we have data on some of its indicators particularly on overseas development aid, the percentage of individuals who are connected to the internet, we also on debt burden that country's have and a few other indicators as well. So most of the evidence at the global level has been neatly summarized in the Secretary General's Annual SDG Report and what it suggests is that while there is progress on some targets and considerable challenges remain. So taking for example the percentage of individuals who are connected to the internet, we've seen a large increase in the absolute numbers of people who aren't and this was aided to some extent by the pandemic but there's still a significant number of people who are existing outside the digital revolution and there's still a significant digital divide that we fixed.

And there's been a lot of negative impacts on development caused by the pandemic in the last three four years particularly reversals in poverty, food security, health and well-being among other goals. One positive thing which I think we can take from the pandemic it is that it has shown to all of the worlds the importance of partnering to address global challenges. So if you think on the level of government cooperating on restrictions to contain the virus and stop it from spreading internationally that's one example of where cooperation was important. We think of in the area of vaccine developments the international cooperation between different scientific groups and companies in order to develop the vaccine produce it and then deliberate and widely. And it's also shown the limits of how we need more patterning in order to accelerate progress if you think of the vaccine inequities that have existed and the need for collaborations which is better deliver on that.

**Mixed Picture**

And so just quickly the kind of snapshot we have at the global level is that there's been progress on tackling the digital vibe but we still have significant challenges in that area and there's also been a progress on SDGs monitoring so a lot of national statistical offices have developed SDG data sets for assessing progress at country level. There's still significant data gaps there but money is flowing into that in order to build capacities and there's a lot of action actually partnering going on in that area which I'll talk about in a bit. Over the periods and less progress has been seen on overseas development aid has only increased slightly over the periods but still a while below the commitments that OECD governments have made 0.7% across national income the pandemic had a name bit of there are other ways that countries in the developing world can and access finance so they're not just relying on domestic tax mobilization which tends to be small because their economies are relatively smaller. So in order to finance the implementation of the SDGs, there's often a large financing gap, ODA is one way of filling that gap, another one is through foreign direct investments. And so over the period, there has been an increase in that but obviously during the pandemic there was a sharp decline but it has sincere bounded and similar with remittances which is another important sort of finance for international development. However one largely permanent of the now impact of the pandemic has been the rising that burden as a result of it. What you can see is a very mixed picture on progress towards mobilizing the means of implementation for foreign.

**Progress on Partnerships**

An interesting area where we have we have indicators to measure progress on partnerships but we don't have data rapidly available for them so there has been an issue with having good data and to what extent there has been more partnerships or better quality partnerships or for the goals. So one area we can look to get a sense of this is a registry that's run by the U.N Department for Economic and Social Affairs in the division for Sustainable Development Goals, they have an online registry where any initiative who is contributing to the SDGs can register their partnership with the UN and the UN then puts this on a website and provides some summary statistics and you can read about who's involved in the partnership, what goals they're addressing, what activities they have. And it's very interesting here we see a very large group in partnerships in the period prior to the SDGs, the number of partnerships for Sustainable Developments peaked at just over 300. Today since 2015 we've seen rapids growth initiatives and we have over 6,000 individual commitments and multi-stakeholder initiatives registered with the UN, about twenty percent of them are refer to individual actions. And another thing you can also see is the wide diversity in these types of partnership they are each goal has a significant number of partnerships that is trying to implement that particular ball.

**How effective are these partnerships?**

Now that raises the question of well how effective are these partnerships in practice and the most recent study we have on this suggests that which is a study of 330 partnerships done in which was actually done in 2012 but because we've had a large number of initiatives since then we haven't had a similar study done since then but there's there isn't a big reason to doubt that the results don't persist. What it found is that only about 25 of the outputs that partnership stated they would deliver were actually delivered at practice. So this supports the view that's why they're having some quite successful partnerships and many have failed to achieve their adapters and they're not contributing to Sustainable Development in the way they should be so there's lots of room for improvements in improving the process of partnering there's also the issue to one extent these outputs actually achieve the impact for Sustainable Development which is an active area of research at the moment.

**Q4**

Comprehensive answer to my question and thank you very much David for that and I think when you look at the last research even though it's 2012, perhaps the situation has not improved much because of many competing demands for resources. So from view of you, **what are the key issues and challenges in implementing SDG 17 through partnerships arrangement?**

Okay thanks for the question Lichia, yeah there's many ways you could go on this question and thinking about challenges, I've in my answer here I've basically drawn on research that emerged in 2018, 2019.

**Six key transformations for the SDGs (Sachs 1019)**

Both from academics and international agencies who were looking at who noted that we're not on track to achieve the goals by 2030. And that's incremental changes are not going to be sufficient to get us there and their research called forum systems transformations which could enable us to make significant leads in progress towards the goals. And they have identified six different systems that if we could transform to be sustainable, we could make significant steps towards achieving all the goals by 2030.

So these six systems are first of all the education system, secondly health systems, third energy and industry, fourth is our land use and ocean use marine use, fifth urban is our urban infrastructure, and sixth is digital technology. So basically in order to achieve these types of transformations which can typically when you're talking about systems transformation if you're thinking about health it's not just you're looking at what you need is basically a portfolio of interventions that can for example upgrade health systems into a universal health access that's basically a lot of different campaigns it can involve development of new drugs, it's these are complex, it's basically a portfolio of complementary interventions that we need. If you think in the energy system case we have to develop a portfolio of different renewable energy technologies at the same time, we need to scale down possible fossil fuels. And if you're looking at the power generation sector then in the transport sector, one pathway would be to increase the supply of electric vehicles and to basically phase out the internal combustion engine type vehicles. And then when you go to aviation, we need to look at different types of fuels and so forth.

So it's a lot of different these are long-term transformational changes that we also have to agree on the pathway to achieve them what technologies to push and it has to be managed it's very important that the process is managed effectively and has brought stakeholder inputs.

One example of where it acted and happened was in in France, they put a carbon price on fuel, they had a few a carbon tax for fuel, for use of fuel and transports and then you this didn't take into account that in rural areas people would depend huge amounts on the personal car to get around and that was an unfairly distributed tax on them and as a result they protested against this policy change and that could have been avoided with much more transparency and dialogue without stakeholders about the transformation process problem with it.

**Donor Support**

So the issue is that so my take on this is and others as well that governments alone cannot achieve these types of transformations and it requires broad stakeholder participation and involvement in the post transformation both to decide what type of road maps and pathways we need to transform these systems and also to bring together a greater amount of resources to achieve a higher level of impact. Now if you think about it in an international development context, we would need a much greater scaling up of overseas development aids to achieve these types of transformations particularly in developing countries. And basically if you look at the data, what's we're not seeing this large increase, we're seeing a flatlining in which countries public support to the developing world. And I think going forwards, it's going to be even harder to get the governments to actually fulfill on their commitments at 0.7 percent of growth national income at the moment they're running at about 0.3 percent of BNI on average and partly this is because we're entering an era of crisis, we've seen the pandemic we've done various wars around the world just the climate and nature crisis coming down the world, down the road. So you have government budgets are shooting king are likely to be affected by these modern developed and developing countries.

**Need a New Approach to Partnerships**

So I think what we need to look at is a new approach to partnerships that can help us achieve these types of transformations. And in 2019 I wrote this paper which was published in sustainability and looked at what role in partnerships could stay in achieving energy transformation for the goal. And but what it was novel in the sense that up to then that type of perspective in the governance literature hadn't really been taken how do we think about partnerships to achieve transformation it was more like published their contribution to governance of Sustainable Development. And basically, it identified five challenges to developing the types of partnerships that we need for transformation so one challenge is political and there are typically transformations will lead to losers and they can they anticipate this and they can strategically back policy changes or they can delay the transition so there is a need somehow to partner with these entities in order to like just transition is an example of its results of farming lobbies but it there could be other examples outside of that to. So that's one challenge how to partner with losers and from transformations in order to speed up the transformation. Second thing is that what is organizational capacity to partner for forensically. If we really need these cross-sector multi-stakeholder partnerships often organizations are used to operating in silos, they're not engaging, they're not they need to have these staff and up and capacity to actually engage across sectors. Third one is often organizations focus on the short term but these are long-term transformational processes and we need to take a longer term view that's you know maybe sacrificing some economic profits for social and environmental returns is and taking a slightly longer horizon viewpoint is important for the types of partnerships that are needed for information. Another issue is how having a coordination mechanisms in society that can bring together the stakeholders in order to facilitate change and the fifth one then is making sure we're not engaging in SDG watching but we're actually to the goals.

**Key challenges**

So I think key challenges going forward are to get a much clearer idea of well what type of partnerships are needed to achieve transformation and what type of structures and infrastructure can we put in place in in society to ensure we get the right types of partnerships and that they are managed effectively. Well it's not just certain stakeholders who are kind of calling the shots and others are being excluded but there's a fair sharing of the risks and rewards of these different partnerships and a kind of a collective decisioning on what the vision is and how to move forward.

But I think one of the most important challenges is trying to figure out in what way can your partnership really contributes to moving society towards the goal of system transformation whether you're working in health or education or energy that's not easy to do at the outset.

**Q5**

All right thanks David for giving us that the more in-depth analysis and looking at partnerships for transformation indeed in all transformation there are losers and winners how do we overcome such reluctance and also find with innovation and creativity more win-win kind of arrangement will be very important because at the moment from this situation it looks like more people communities and countries are concerned about losing or their status or quality of life because of this global effort. So I was wondering whether that could there are good examples, I'm sure they are good examples but in view of time **could you give us one example that we should all go and study and do research on.**

**Noteworthy partnerships**

Thanks Lichia, yes so the one that I found particularly interesting and they've been quite successful, it's a particular type of partnership so what if there's four examples of it here. The first I'll just name out the examples you the global partnership with Sustainable Development, scaling up Nutrition Alliance, the Global Alliance for Vaccine Immunization and the Dutch Energy Agreement and what all of these partnerships did was they brought together a large number of partner organizations so in the case of the global partnership with Sustainable Development there are 270 partners, scaling up Nutrition Alliance about 2,300 organizations. And through a process that was quite institutionalized these particular initiatives have been very successful in generating new projects and new packages so it's like a partnership and partnership abroad. So in the case of the global partnership for Sustainable Developments the transformed that into 70 initiatives, scaling up nutritional lines has been very active at the country level and has had many different country level initiatives spin out of it. So I think what's helped these types of Partnerships to be effective is that they generally have a Secretariate that helps coordinate the different partners and they're well funded, they have budgets behind them and typically they have multi-stakeholder boards or they emphasize the engagement of stakeholders and decision making in some form or other. And they also have well thought out work programs and they do it in different ways the Global Alliance for Vaccine Immunization relies on a kind of a project funding between for project funding in order to decide it's part of action but the other partnerships the global partnership with Sustainable Development those are more true workshops and they're allowed to figure out the spin I need. Well I think it's kind of broad bringing together of stakeholders and then churning out a lot of very relevant initiatives is a promising approach that we can take not just the global level but also at more national and even local levels so the Dutch Energy Agreement that's brought together a wide variety of stakeholders in the Dutch Society to basically forge out an energy plan to I think for energy transition and that has resulted in a large number of measures and actions allowed to decarbonization. I think that's a nice example at a more local level.

**Q6**

Yeah thank you David for bringing out this Dutch example indeed is, it is a very interesting and worse further knowing to see how that can be fostered so at the country level with, regardless of current state of development effort could be made in order to transform the local situation and for young people what do you suggest to get started, young people age should not be the determinant for being a spectator of what's going on around each person but rather there are things can learn, can be done and to put and can be advocated as we have seen from Sweden. So **could you give us a few ideas so that our audience, listeners could ponder and possibly follow?**

**Recommendations for Youth**

Sure, I think yeah it's the first one is probably relevant to everyone in society we can all have a role to play in raising awareness of the SDGs. In my own country here in Ireland just it's I think I forget the latest data but I think it's about 20 percent of the population I've heard of the SDGs that should be much higher. And a good example a good country a country that is on quite a lot in terms of having a high level of awareness of the SDGs as Denmark and would be it's a good case study to look at for examples of you can do it through social media activism that's just sharing content online talking with family and friends right through to writing magazine articles or I there's so many innovative ways to do. You can there's always opportunities to find ways to get the word out, the second thing is more to do with training I think if particularly to build skills and knowledge for how to do SDG implementation. At universities now there's a lot of courses[Music]available programs at undergraduate, master's level postgraduate programs related to Sustainable Development that the strong SDG content where you can learn hard skills like statistics and data or I think which is just as important and maybe even more important is the soft skills, how to interact across sectors, how to be able to persuade negotiate these types of upskills and great opportunities emerging in the area of working across sectors like internships work to the work experiences whether in industry a national government. I did a fellowship which involved a two-year as the government at the U.N which coming from an academic world was just you know totally opened my eyes to a different way of doing things and I felt really energized and inspired by the whole experience and you don't have to do it formally through education, you can also do It through volunteering as well.

A big message coming out from in discussions on SDG implementation is the need to localize the SDGs in our communities and contribute to the local implementation of the Sustainable Development Goal. So certain cities are really leading on this, the local authorities are developing SDG action plans they're reporting and the progress, they're making usually there are meetings that are open to participation you can go along to these. If your city isn't doing it, you should let your local representatives know that they should be doing it and get in contact with them. Lastly that is to build and contribute to partnerships for Sustainable Development to either through participation or if you spot a gap of a partnership that should be there and you think these partners should be in it often it's whoever leads that's the key coordinator that helps get the process going and then it can take on a life.

Big message coming up from in discussions on SDG implementation is the need to localize the SDGs in our communities and contribute to the local implementation of the Sustainable Development Goal. So certain cities are really leading on this, the local authorities are developing SDG action plans, they're reporting and the progress, they're making usually there are meetings that are open to participation you can go along to these. If your city isn't doing it you should let your local representatives know that they should be doing it and get in contact with them. Lastly then is to build and contribute to partnerships for Sustainable Development to either through participation or if you spot a gap of a partnership that should be there and you think these partners should be in it often it's whoever leads that's the key coordinator that helps get the process going and then it can take on a life.

I said thank you very much David for give us this very concrete advice from knowing the subject which is about Sustainable Development and related transformation and to observe and to watch and to identify potential gaps that need to be actual and take action accordingly through partnerships for through a mobilizing sort of the local resources or join the global campaign if one can do that and then make a difference. And that is a very encouraging and inspiring message and I want to thank you very much for you giving this very valuable lecture on SDG 17 and it's related and analysis and also the necessary actions that need to be taken place. Thank you David once again.

Thank you very much.