

COEP MODEL UNITED NATIONS '18

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UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME STUDY GUIDE

Introduction to UNDP

The United Nations Development Programme serves as the global development network of the UN. The main goal of this body is to forge change and advancement across the globe, and to improve the lives of many people all around the world. UNDP offers expert advice, training and monetary aid to developing countries, with particular focus on Least Developed Countries. Right from 1966, UNDP has served as a partner to people from all walks of life, in building nations that are capable of resisting crisis. Today, on the ground, and in more than one hundred and seventy countries and territories, it continues to offer global perspective and local insight to help countries rise from poverty into prosperity. Under the leadership of Kofi Annan, world leaders vowed to work together to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, which includes a crucial task of reducing poverty by fifty percent by the end of this year. It is therefore the responsibility of the United Nations Development Programme, to bridge global and national efforts, with the aim of achieving these eight major goals set.

UNDP's mandate is to help countries build and share solutions in four main areas: Poverty Reduction and Achievement of the MDG's, Democratic Governance, Crisis Prevention and Recovery, Environment and Energy for Sustainable Development. While carrying out all its activities, UNDP protects human rights, empowers women, minorities, and the poorest, most vulnerable people in society.

Voluntary contributions from member states are used to fund all the activities of the UNDP in 177 countries. Just like other UN agencies, UNDP has enlisted the voluntary services of quite a few prominent individuals as Goodwill Ambassadors to highlight its causes. They use their fame to amplify the urgent and universal message of human development and the need for countries to co-operate in solving global matters. Their activities have also been extremely helpful in the quest to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

It is believed that the perspectives of the UNDP in the future are incredibly great. UNDP will continue to work towards making this planet a better place, as it continues to propagate its principles. It believes that collaboration should be at the heart of the climate change question, breaking the corruption chain is a collective responsibility, meaningful reduction in disaster risk requires borderless efforts, and inspiring innovation to meet development challenge is crucial.

HISTORY

Although sustainable development is now a shared and defining concept of our times, there were important steps taken throughout history to make this possible. Take a look at the history of sustainable development, and how we proceeded from

- 1) thinking about environmental concerns as an international issue to
- 2) acknowledging that our development objectives today must not neglect the needs of the future to
- 3) understanding the critical balance between the integrated and interdependent spheres of environment, society, and economy.

The following are some of the landmark developments over the course of time with regards to sustainable development and climate change

1972: The UN Conference on the Human Environment (Stockholm Conference)

Environmental concerns first became a major issue at the international level. The UN Environment Programme (UNEP) was established.

1980: World Conservation Strategy

The first time governments, NGOs, and experts gathered to prepare a global document on 'conservation' and acknowledge its role in development.

1987: World Commission on Environment and Development (Brundtland Commission)*

Presented its official report, 'Our Common Future' and coined the landmark definition of Sustainable Development: "Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

1992: The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Rio Conference) and Agenda 21**

Integrated the 3 pillars of Sustainable Development (Environment, Society, Economy) as interdependent and mutually reinforcing pillars.

2000: Millennium Declaration

Set the global development agenda for the 21st century and the 8 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

2012: The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20)

Adopted the outcome document titled 'The Future We Want' whereby the 192 world leaders agreed to pursue the necessary steps to advance the world towards a more sustainable future.

2015: UN Sustainable Development Summit

Adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Millennial Development Goals pertaining to Climate Change

Introduction to MDGs

In the year 2000, 189 countries as well as other major international organisations met at the United Nations to share a global vision and a common responsibility to ensure worldwide economic and social development, human dignity and equality. The Millennium Summit in September that year witnessed the largest meeting of world leaders in history to draw up and accept the United Nations Millennium Declaration, committing their countries to a global partnership at a higher level of cooperation to eliminate extreme poverty and formulating a variety of time-bound objectives, known as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), to be achieved by 2015.

The eight agreed MDGs are as follows:

- To eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- To achieve universal primary education
- To promote gender equality and empower women
- To reduce child mortality
- To improve maternal health
- To combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases
- To ensure environmental sustainability
- To develop a global partnership for development

The Millennium Development Goals are quantified targets for resolving extreme poverty, including income poverty, hunger, disease, lack of adequate shelter in the least and less developing areas, and promoting gender equality, education, and environmental sustainability. Meanwhile, these targets also embrace respecting and assuring basic human rights, the rights of each person on the planet to health, education, shelter, and security.

Although MDGs set out specific development targets for global society, there were a series of critics concerning these objectives, complaining of a lack of comprehensive analysis and convincing justification behind the chosen goals, and difficulty or infeasibility of measurements for some goals and uneven progress. In spite of the fact that the challenge period saw a significant increase of aid from developed countries to accelerate the achievement of the MDGs, over half of assistance went for waiver of debts, with the majority of remainder targeted at natural disaster relief and military aid, neither of which further development.

As far as the MDGs go, the 7th MDG, i.e. “To ensure environmental sustainability” is directly related to the given agenda.

MDG 7: To ensure environmental sustainability.

Environmental sustainability is a broad and integrated goal that covers four aspects. The first sub-mission is *Target 7.A*, to integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programs and reverse loss of environmental resources. Deforestation, greenhouse gas emission and scarce renewable water resources are three main key concerns for country policies and programmes. It is reflected in the MDGs reports that millions of hectares of forest are lost every year, threatening this valuable asset. Meanwhile, global greenhouse gas emissions continue their upward trend and the current situation for renewable water resources are becoming even scarcer.

Target 7.B, the second sub-mission, has been focused on reducing biodiversity loss, achieving, by 2010, a significant reduction in the rate of loss. According to the latest estimation, the areas under protection in different regions have seen a substantial and encouraging trend. Protected areas are increasing, thus helping to safeguard natural resources. However, we must keep a clear mind of the serious fact that many species are being driven closer to extinction through declines in population and distribution

The third specific goal is *Target 7.C*, which is concerned with halving, by 2015, the proportion of the world’s population without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation. According to estimation, access to an improved drinking water source has become a reality for 2.3 billion people since 1990. Nevertheless, there are large amounts of people still relying on unsafe water sources. In terms of improved sanitation, more than a quarter of the world’s population has gained access to it since 1990, yet about a billion people still resort to open defecation. The most serious case is that the poor and minorities in rural areas, may still lack access to both improved water and sanitation.

Compared to better-off individuals, slum dwellers have more concerns and are of a higher priority. Hence, *Target 7.D* proposes that by 2020, a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers will be achieved. Currently, it must be admitted that with a growing number of MDGs on their way to achievement, the number of people living in slum conditions is also growing. Basically, one possible way to stop slums from spreading is to build more streets. Meanwhile, new geospatial data can also be helpful with addressing the slum problem better.

Sustainable Development Goals pertaining to Climate Change

Introduction to SDGs

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a follow-up effort to Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), in effect from 2000 to 2015.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), otherwise known as the Global Goals, are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity.

These 17 Goals build on the successes of the Millennium Development Goals, while including new areas such as climate change, economic inequality, innovation, sustainable consumption, peace and justice, among other priorities. The goals are interconnected – often the key to success on one will involve tackling issues more commonly associated with another.

Multi-stakeholder process for making SDGs

The Post-2015 Development Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were formed through an inclusive and multi-stakeholder process that encouraged transparency and comprehensive participation. The process of arriving at the Post-2015 Development Agenda was member State-led with broad participation from Major Groups and other civil society stakeholders, while the UN provided the platform and political leadership during this process.

As the time frame for MDGs ended in 2015, the world and our governments needed to continue with the efforts to fully achieve MDGs and build upon them by tackling new challenges. For the last few years, the UN has been discussing what the global priorities should be for the next 15 years (2016 - 2030).

In particular, the Rio+20 conference in June 2012 galvanized a process to agree upon the post-2015 global development framework and develop 17 new Goals, or global priorities, which are called SDGs.

On 1 January 2016, SDGs of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development officially came into force. Over the next fifteen years, with these new Goals that universally apply to all, countries will mobilize efforts to end all forms of poverty, fight inequalities, and tackle climate change, while ensuring that no one is left behind.

SDGs at a Glance

The 17 Goals

1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere
2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture
3. Ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all at all ages
4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all
8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all
9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization, and foster innovation
10. Reduce inequality within and among countries
11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable
12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts (taking note of agreements made by the UNFCCC forum)
14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification and halt and reverse land degradation, and halt biodiversity loss
16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

Among the aforementioned, SDGs 12, 13, 14 and 15 are directly related or have great impact on climate change. We shall now discuss them in detail.

SDG 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

The proposed SDG 12 on guaranteeing sustainable consumption and production patterns, despite highlighting a relatively modest concept, likely represents one of the most exemplary changes in the new SDGs. In an increasingly consumption-influenced world, where many admire the Western culture, producing and consuming less is a weighty paradox. This goal is also quite important because the planet cannot sustain the increasing demand for energy, food, water and other vital necessary for sustaining the rising global population, especially the middle class.

An Essential Development Goal

SDG 12 is quite important as it underpins every other Sustainable Development Goal, from Zero Poverty to Peace and Justice. Nevertheless, its idea creates lots of resistance since it poses a significant threat to the status quo, despite being a great social, environmental and economic opportunity. Humankind must now look for ways of doing better and more with less. It is vital to note that this particular SDG covers the consumers and business sectors, and also basic services, supply chains, better jobs and an improved life quality for all.

The world has unequal patterns of life quality and consumption. Examples of this disparity include daily food consumption per capita, the number of cars per person, and also greenhouse gas emissions per capita. Regardless of whichever indicator, it's highly possible that the figures for people in the developed world will be considerably higher than in underdeveloped countries.

The food industry, specifically, accounts for approximately 30% of the total energy consumption in the world and also contributes 22% to greenhouse gas emissions. Hence, the 12th Sustainable Development Goal can only be achieved when every country makes sure that their production and consumption patterns are not undermining the environmental boundaries of the planet, and also the economic and social conditions in the other countries. It is high time we started rethinking our behavioural patterns towards a better sustainable world, especially the underdeveloped and developing nations.

A key proposal in this SDG is to reduce the inequality associated with the utilisation of essential natural resources. Developed nations are asked to lead the way in adopting sustainable consumption and production practices. In effect, it will be possible to enhance the livelihoods of underdeveloped countries and also to lower the resource demand by the affluent. For instance, reducing food waste may have an effect on lowering worldwide food prices, thus, benefitting the poor. Moreover, improving the purchasing power of poor people must ideally be aligned with increased sustainable consumption awareness.

A major requirement for successful adoption and implementation of this SDG is education. Business owners, policy makers, and consumers must know the benefits of demanding and practising sustainable consumption and production. Cooperation between these sectors is going to be very important.

Major targets of SDG 12

Shifting to the targets of SDG 12 will require essential changes in how the society operates, including our livelihoods. Such a large-scale transition is going to take substantial time; therefore given the magnitude and urgency of unsustainable development, and the key role of production and consumption, immediate and forceful action is necessary to start this transition. The SDGs that are projected to be used for 15 years, beginning from 2015, must serve as an effective catalyst for kick-starting this collective societal transformation.

Here are the proposed targets for SDG 12:

- Successfully implement the proposed 10-year guideline of programs on sustainable production and consumption, with every country taking action to their best capacity.
- Achieve the efficient use and sustainable management of all natural resources by 2030.

- Reduce universal food waste in the consumer and retail levels and also lessen food losses in supply chains and production, including losses related to post-harvesting.
- Achieve the eco-friendly management of chemical waste throughout its life cycle, based on determined global frameworks, and considerably reduce their pollution of soil, water, and air to reduce their negative effects on our environment and human health.
- Profoundly lower the generation of waste through recycling, reuse, prevention and reduction.
- Encourage companies, particularly large transnational organisations, to use sustainable practices like integrating sustainability data in their reports.
- Promote sustainable public procurement policies, in line with national priorities and policies.
- Ensure that everyone in the world has awareness and relevant knowledge of sustainable lifestyles as well as development in agreement with nature.
- Support developing nations to increase their technological and scientific capacity so as to start moving towards sustainable production and consumption patterns.
- Develop and adopt tools for monitoring effects of sustainable development for a more sustainable tourism, which creates employment opportunities and promotes the local products and culture.
- Streamline inefficient subsidies for fossil fuels that promote wasteful consumption through eliminating market distortions, based on the national context, including through phasing out the harmful subsidies and restructuring taxation.

The full implementation of SDG 12 will require defining the major contributors of overconsumption and consumerism, and also unequal consumption in the modern society must be well addressed.

Dealing with only the symptoms, such as the politically and economically less challenging problems (the proverbial low hanging fruits) is not going to produce any significant changes needed to ensure sustainability. Thus, the indicators and implementation plans of this SDG ought to be developed from this viewpoint.

Moreover, SDG 12 as presented in the Sustainable Development Goals should be used in line with the ten-year framework so as to ensure synergies and complementarity. Together, both programs require a wide-ranging set of key indicators, which would consolidate social, economic and environmental elements into a shared framework for easy monitoring of progress.

In effect, a periodic intensive report would show the impact of consumption and production patterns to the health of people and how possibilities of attaining well-being by the future generations are being safeguarded or threatened by current consumption and production activities.

Final Note

Due to the interconnected nature of the planet, local collaborative actions are going to provide universal outcomes. SDG 12 seeks to open a new world to humankind, where not just a few people undertake sustainable consumption, but where reducing, reusing, preventing and recycling will be common for everyone. The effects of such a sustainable

lifestyle go beyond preserving the earth's natural resources, as it can help in reducing the increasingly widening gap between the rich and the poor.

SDG 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts (taking note of agreements made by the UNFCCC forum)

Sustainable development and climate change are goals that should not be pursued independently by any country. Members of the UN have finally recognised the interrelatedness of these two crucial goals through the inclusion of climate change as a single Sustainable Development Goal.

This SDG emphasises a major milestone since the challenge of climate change in the earlier Millennium Development Goals was not fully exhausted. Everyone is now waiting for the imminent climate talks that will be held in Paris in December 2015 where new international treaties aimed at ensuring global warming stays below 20 degrees celsius will be established.

A climate that continues warming up will affect food security, freshwater availability and energy among other necessities of life.

There is an important collective responsibility on every country to fight climate change while acknowledging the unique circumstances each nation faces in their capacity to deal with the issue. The private sector must take on this responsibility of fighting climate change, where they will take the necessary actions in agreement with potential and circumstances.

Status Quo

Climate change now affects all the countries in the world. It is currently disrupting economies, affecting lives and countries very dearly, and these effects are bound to continue if remedial steps are not taken. Some of the significant climate change effects include evolving weather patterns, extreme weather event, and a rising sea level.

Human activity is the leading contributor to rising greenhouse gas emissions, which is the driving force behind climate change. In fact, these harmful emissions are now at their peak levels in all of history. Experts predict that the surface temperature will continue rising and even surpass the 3 degrees Celsius mark this century if no action is taken. The most vulnerable persons and the poorest are the most affected by these climate change effects.

Scalable, cheap solutions are available to allow countries to make the change to more resilient and cleaner economies. The good thing is that many countries are making this change to cleaner energy and several other helpful measures at a quick pace, which will enhance adaptation efforts and significantly reduce emissions.

Climate change is not limited to one area of the world; rather it is a universal challenge that affects everyone in the world. Emissions from a certain area in the world will affect everyone everywhere. Thus, it is a challenge that demands well-coordinated solutions at the global level along with global cooperation to assist the developing nations to move towards low-carbon economies.

Global targets for climate change

The Sustainable Development Goal on climate change has clearly set out several critical targets, listed below, which every country should acknowledge and outline the specific targets and responsibilities befalling them.

Here are the main targets for SDG 13:

- Reinforce adaptive capacity and resilience to natural disasters and hazards related to climate change in every country.
- Incorporate measures to fight climate change into national planning, strategies and policies.
- Improve awareness-raising, education and institutional and human capacity on mitigation, impact reduction, early warning and adaptation to climate change.
- Implement the assurance undertaken by the countries under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change to mobilise jointly \$100 billion every year by 2020 to deal with the unique needs of the developing nations in regards to effective mitigation actions, transparent implementation and full operationalising the Green Climate Fund soonest possible.
- Promote actions for enhancing capacity for better climate change-linked management and planning in the least developed nation, including small island states, with a focus on youth, women, and marginalised local communities.

How can companies assist with these climate change mitigation efforts?

The private sector, including businesses and companies, have increased their part in fighting climate change, but there is still more to be done. There are numerous risks facing companies today including reputational risks, market risks and risks related to climate change policies. It is vital for businesses to act quickly and deal with this risk by seizing opportunities such as new streams of revenue or new investment.

For instance, HSBC has even realised how this field has great potential and has set up innovative climate change indices for investment through the bank. Additionally, business should also be aware that switching to low-carbon economies will result in more than \$2 trillion in savings.

There are various interrelated actions that businesses can consider taking, and some have already started taking, in response to SDG 13. Simply lowering emissions is not enough. The latest target that companies should strive for is the positive net goal.

A notable champion in this regard is Dell, which seeks to be net positive through having their consumers do at least 10 times better than their carbon footprint. They have created a plan that includes key objectives to be completed by 2020, which includes cutting their product portfolio energy intensity by 80%, cutting their overall carbon footprint by fifty percent and also using waste-free packages for their products.

You cannot manage what you cannot measure

More complex measurement metrics and systems are essential for industries to allow better monitoring, evaluation and reporting of climate change impacts at all the levels of

operations. These measurement resources will make climate change mitigation easier to manage as greener operational goals can be set.

Supply chains that are more climate-resilient are needed both for reducing emissions and implementing better adaptation levels to future climate-related risks. Businesses must also set high targets and expectations with all their suppliers in regards to greener practices. Liberty Global implemented an ambitious environmental program and recently announced \$325 million worth of savings in 2014, along with an improvement of 31% in carbon efficiency.

Innovative processes and technology will continue playing a vital role in not only mitigating climate change impacts but also reversing them. Moreover, companies must show governance through making their position on climate change known and clear. Some of the suggested ways of greener governance include lobbying for climate change mitigation and making meaningful pledges. There is also a need for collaboration through creating partnerships between voluntary, public and private sectors.

Final Note

In closing, a crucial element in achieving SDG 13 on climate change is taking urgent action towards reducing carbon emissions and the degradation of the environment. In fact, it is one of the most easily achievable goals in the September 2015 Sustainable Development Goals dossier.

SDG 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

Oceans are the biggest ecosystems on planet earth, and they are essential to our survival. They cover 65% of the surface of the earth, generate nearly half of the air we breathe in and also 16% of animal protein, besides playing an important role in the global economy.

Over 3 billion people across the world depend on coastal and marine resources, generating many jobs in various industries such as tourism, biotechnology, fishing, and shipping. The ocean has a significant part to play in the worldwide development, and it can help fight poverty. However, marine ecosystems across the world are currently being threatened by our human activities. We must start protecting our oceans' health if we are to prosper and survive.

Introducing SDG 14 on conserving the oceans

There is optimism that with the latest dedicated goal of ocean conservation under the Sustainable Development Goals, companies will acknowledge the value and importance of our coastal areas and oceans. In the previous Millennium Development Goals, oceans were covered in the broader target of securing environmental sustainability. The new SDGs, however, give oceans the important dedicated attention with distinctive underlying targets. Goal 14 seeks the conservation and sustainable use of marine resources, seas, and oceans.

Quantifying the ocean

One of the main challenges to ocean conservation faces is that estimating the true value of oceans and accounting for the exploitation costs is difficult. The WWF released a report about the Ocean Economy that estimates the financial worth of oceans is about \$24 trillion. This high value of the ocean includes the direct outputs from the ocean like seafood, its contribution as an essential shipping medium, the worth of its vast coastline and also its capacity of absorbing nearly 30% of our total carbon emissions.

Nevertheless, this appraisal only based on current value of marketable services and goods; it does not consider the intangible worth of oceans, such as biodiversity, water filtration by wetlands and mangroves, as well as climate regulation. We must, therefore, move towards properly accounting the worth of our ecosystems, so as to deliberate the full benefits and costs in political and economic decision-making.

Key targets of SDG 14

The following targets were agreed upon by the UN member states to help guide decision making with regards to oceans:

- Prevent and considerably reduce all kinds of marine pollution, including nutrient pollution and marine debris.
- Sustainably protect and manage coastal and marine ecosystem to prevent considerable adverse effects, including through fortifying their resilience as well as taking restorative actions to attain productive and healthy oceans.
- Address and minimise ocean acidification through increased scientific cooperation from all levels.
- Effective regulation of harvesting and stopping overfishing, unregulated, unreported and illegal fishing and also detrimental fishing practices. Implement effective, science-based plans for restoring fish stocks within a short timeframe.
- Conserve roughly 10% of marine and coastal areas, in agreement with international and national law and using the latest scientific information.
- Prohibit certain types of fisheries subsidies that support overfishing and overcapacity, abolish subsidies that support unregulated and illegal fishing and desist from the introduction of such subsidies in future.
- Increase the financial benefits to least developed nations and Small Island countries from using marine resources sustainably, including through better management of aquaculture, tourism, and fisheries.
- Improve research capacity, scientific knowledge and share marine technology to not only enhance ocean health but also to improve the role of marine biodiversity in developing countries.
- Ensure easy access for the small-scale fishers to markets and marine resources.
- Improve the sustainable use and conservation of oceans through implementing the necessary international law, in agreement with the UNCLOS, which sets out the legal outline for these efforts.

Collaboration is important

Our oceans do not recognise political or international borders. Thus, we must deal with coastal and ocean issues internationally, using a collaborative strategy. Efforts by one company to prevent ocean pollution or control overfishing can have a very small effect if others are not contributing to the solution. For instance, an issue like the extensive garbage patch found in the Pacific Ocean, an area much bigger than Texas filled with plastic waste, is caused by several number of contributors internationally. The solution to such a problem will require simultaneous universal commitment.

Collaborative platforms are necessary to address ocean conservation. A good example is an initiative for sustainable shipping, which is a collaborative effort between the main players in the maritime industry that seeks to attain the vision of both a sustainable and profitable shipping industry. Collaborative efforts between leading companies in a certain industry will create an innovative space for related companies to start using a systematic strategy to resolving maritime challenges and also maximises impact.

Focus on solutions

It is critical for organisations to study this SDG 14 and identify the specific maritime issue that is most substantial to the company and emphasise on an exact solution. The various ocean issues, such as overfishing and acidification, require different strategies and businesses can maximise the impact through choosing solutions that are aligned closely with their expertise, supply chain or business model.

Existing business initiatives towards ocean conservation tend to emphasise on awareness raising, without offering a meaningful solution. For instance, the partnership between Adidas and Parley for the Oceans NGO illustrates the consumer-facing awareness raising approaches that businesses are taking. In this particular partnership, Adidas is designing shoes made from ocean waste. While this is commendable, it fails to clarify how the brand plans to stop actively footwear plastic from ending up dumped into the ocean.

In contrast, Project Ocean, a collaboration between Selfridges and ZSL, also seeks to raise awareness about ocean issues but reinforces the program with practical actions. For instance, they banned all water bottles and carrier bags made from plastic across all their department stores.

Also, the company has also removed all endangered species of fish from its menus. Even though these steps are arguably modest, they show just how organisations can move further than awareness raising to making real, tangible impacts.

Final Note

It is about time governments, companies and citizens realised how valuable oceans are, both the intangible and tangible benefits. We must start taking action to enhance and protect our coastal areas and seas so that they can carry on enabling, supporting and improving our lives on earth.

SDG 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification and halt and reverse land degradation, and halt biodiversity loss

Do you enjoy going camping? Reading a good book? That ice-cream you recently had? Whether you appreciate it or not, you cannot deny the important role our earth's natural habitats have in our daily lives.

We depend on terrestrial ecosystems and forests as an essential source of materials, food, product ingredients and also for livelihoods. The Sustainable Development Goal 15 on 'life on earth' is all about protecting, restoring and promoting the sustainable use of all terrestrial ecosystems so that we can have a better future.

Why SDG 15 is important

The world has lost over 12 million hectares of forest every year from 2000 to 2010. Expansion of commercial agriculture, especially large-scale farming, has largely caused this significant loss of forest cover. Nevertheless, damaging the environment, particularly forests, comes at great costs.

Here is an illustration of the chain effect:

1. When forests get lost through deforestation, biodiversity is also lost, leading to low crop productivity and value.
2. When forest cover is affected, climate change effects increase – deforestation accounts for nearly 15% of worldwide emissions – which enhances desertification, a problem that already negatively affects over 1 billion people around the world.

SDG 15 Key targets

Due to the importance of this SDG goal, it has some tough targets that include:

- Ensure the sustainable use, restoration and conservation of inland and terrestrial freshwater systems, particularly forests, mountains, drylands, and wetlands, according to the obligations set out in international agreements.
- Promote sustainable management of forests, stop deforestation, considerably increase reforestation and afforestation globally as well as repair degraded forests.
- Ensure the effective conservation of ecosystems around mountains, including their rich biodiversity, to improve their ability to offer the essential benefits necessary for real sustainable development.
- Fight desertification, restore damaged soil and land, including land ravaged by floods, drought and desertification.
- Take crucial action so as to reduce dilapidation of natural habitats, stop biodiversity loss and prevent and protect threatened species against extinction.
- Promote equitable and fair sharing of benefits that arise from the use of any genetic resources as well as promoting suitable access to these resources, as globally agreed.

- Take swift action to put an end to poaching and subsequent trafficking of all protected species and also address the supply and demand of prohibited wildlife products.
- Introduce new measures to reduce significantly or prevent the unwanted introduction of foreign invasive species on water and land ecosystems and eradicate or control the main species.
- Integrate biodiversity and ecosystem values into local and national planning, poverty reduction plan, and development processes.
- Significantly increase and mobilise financial resource to ensure the sustainable use and conservation of ecosystems and biodiversity.
- Mobilise essential resources from every available resource at all financial levels to finance truly sustainable management of forests, and offer sufficient incentives to the developing nations to use such management, particularly for reforestation and conservation.
- Improve universal support for all efforts to fight trafficking and poaching of all protecting species, by enhancing the ability of local affected communities to seek sustainable employment opportunities.

So far, we have only managed to safeguard about 14% of coastal marine and terrestrial areas, but that is not enough. The main challenge of this particular SDG is to enhance our efforts and to take conservation more seriously.

Conserving the environment is an important task for all

It should not go unobserved that meeting the targets of this particular SDG will assist in addressing others. For instance, deforestation reduces biodiversity and clean water accessibility (SDG 6), and in the developing nations it may mean fewer opportunities for indigenous people, women, and rural communities (SDG 5 and 8).

Thus, protecting the forests, preventing desertification and conserving biodiversity are crucial goals. It is no longer enough for businesses just to think of the environmental effects arising from their operations. Businesses must instead act and grow in a unified manner that recognises the pressure points and connects across supply chains and industries to sustain the natural habitats and effect widespread positive change.

Financing for Climate Change

One of the key areas under sustainable development and SDGs is 'climate change.' Take a look at some of the efforts taken to finance this particular area:

Green Climate Fund(GCF)

The Green Climate Fund(GCF) was established by 194 governments to support actions on limiting or reducing greenhouse gas emissions in developing countries, and to help adapt vulnerable societies to the unavoidable impacts of climate change. Working within the framework of UNFCCC, the Fund is a central mechanism for catalyzing climate finance at international and national levels. It intends to raise \$100 billion per year by 2020.

Global Environment Facility(GEF)

The Global Environment Facility(GEF) was established on the eve of the 1992 Rio Earth Summit to help tackle our planet's most pressing environmental problems. Since then, the GEF has provided \$14.5 billion in grants and mobilized \$75.4 billion in additional financing for almost 4,000 projects. The GEF has become an international partnership of 183 countries, international institutions, civil society organizations, and private sector to address global environmental issues.

