

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS  
AND THE POST-2015 AGENDA

2014

*Business Manifesto*



## 2015 is a once-in-a-generation decision point for the whole world

The creation of new global Sustainable Development Goals in 2015 offers the opportunity not only to **end absolute poverty by 2030**, but also to set in motion the **transition towards the sustainable, inclusive economy** that we so urgently need.

2015 is also the year in which governments have the chance – perhaps our last chance – to design a new **architecture for sustainable development**; to forge a **new trade agenda that works for the world's poor**, and to agree to a binding **climate change deal**.

**Opportunities like this only come once a generation.** And for better or for worse, the choices that we make over the next few months will impact the generations that follow us.

### We're going to have our work cut out

While the Millennium Development Goal to halve income poverty by 2015 was met several years early, **there is more work to be done** and the world's remaining poor will be far harder to reach.

The **'breakout generation' of people who escaped poverty during the last fifteen years is at risk of sliding back into it** – whether because of insecure or low incomes, rising levels of unemployment and slowing economic growth, heightened political instability or the ongoing impacts of the financial crisis. This is compounded by often weak or non-existent safety nets for the poorest.

The **fundamental conditions that support human life are threatened**. We're entering a new era of scarcity, hallmarked by competition for land, water, food, and energy. Carbon dioxide emissions have continued to rise and are pushing us closer to catastrophic tipping points like the collapse of the West Antarctic Ice Sheet.

### It's time for a new approach

The **Sustainable Development Goals set out an ambitious agenda** for all 7 billion of the world's people, not just the poorest. Their success will depend on the ability to mobilize different mechanisms from traditional overseas aid models delivered by governments, to new models of partnership requiring co-investment and collaboration by a diverse range of actors.

### Business has a lot to contribute

Of course, **respecting the rules is the foundation for everything else**. Obeying the law. Adhering to human rights and core labour standards. Not giving bribes. Paying our tax (and providing resources for countries to finance their own development). Being transparent and accountable, and reporting on our performance.

**Business and investors are already the biggest engine of poverty reduction and economic growth in the developing world.** On average, business provides 60% of GDP, 80% of capital flows and 90% of jobs in developing countries. It is the major source of the US\$1 trillion a year needed to finance development.

We are already seeing the emergence of **new business models with far more development impact and far smaller environmental footprints**. Ultimately, it is about promoting more sustainable

## But we can do much more when there's a real enabling environment

It starts with **getting the nuts and bolts right**. Contracts need to be enforced. Customs systems need to function. Workforces need to be educated. Infrastructures from roads to electricity and communications networks have to be dependable.

And **it's also about making markets work better**. Markets aren't perfect – as where there are perverse subsidies, or where investors lack the information they need.

**Governments can help markets work more effectively**. That's why we need them to create long-term predictability in climate policy. And to agree to new trade rules to prevent food import and export bans that make food spikes worse.

Above all, **we need to leverage the power of the financial markets**. With \$62 trillion in global equity markets, small changes to investment allocations can trigger huge progress. But that will only happen if financial rules, accounting standards, and investor information take more account of social and environmental impacts.

## The SDGs: A 10 Point Manifesto

1. **Universality is the right principle to underpin the new goals**. Ours is a world increasingly defined by shared challenges – we need to get much more serious about shared approaches to tackling them.

2. **The goals must be simple, resonant, clear, and make intuitive sense to real people** – not just to negotiators, policymakers and experts.

3. **While recognizing the breadth of the Open Working Groups recommended goals, we think the UN High Level Panel's proposed goals are still resonant**. We would welcome goals on food and nutrition; public health, water, sanitation, and hygiene; and environmental protection. And we think goals on gender equity, education, and governance are key elements of any enabling environment.

4. **We are pleased that Climate Change is now on the agenda**. True, global climate policy has its own process but we believe that it is essential to recognise the climate change will have potentially significant impacts on poverty alleviation and reduction goals.

5. **All goals need to be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound - SMART**. Goals with no clear delivery plan are worse than no Goals at all.

6. **There must be clarity about how the SDGs will be delivered as well as what is to be achieved**. We concur that there needs to be specificity about 'means of implementation' – including recognition that the SDGs will only be achieved with business as part of the solution.

7. **We think there should be a global multi-stakeholder partnership for each and every goal**. While much of the SDG delivery effort will need to be adapted at national, regional and local levels it makes sense to look at how different sectors and value chains map on to the goals at global level.

8. **Partnership is about an integrated approach to addressing the biggest issues of the 21st century that we all know we need** – including getting the enabling environment right, and being clear about business's own responsibilities.

9. **We should look actively for areas where things aren't working as they should** – and then bring key players together to work out what needs to happen to solve the problem. With a framework for different stakeholders to do so systematically in every country, and on every goal.

10. **The key ingredient for all this to work is trust**. Perhaps more than anything else, the SDGs and plans for making them happen need to be built on real transparency – including honesty about where perspectives or interests differ – and genuine accountability for delivery of what's been promised by all stakeholders.



BRIGHTLINE



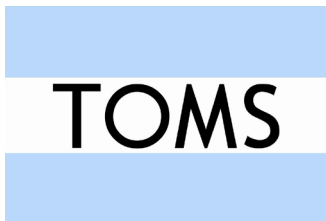
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Signatories as of 19th September 2014