



## **Scoping Note – Renewing Global Commitment to Multilateralism for Sustainable Development**

### **1. Introduction: The Imperative for Renewed Multilateralism for Sustainable Development**

This scoping note aims to provide comprehensive background information on the importance of renewing global commitment to multilateralism for achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the Decade of Actions and to contribute to accelerating COVID-19 recovery and achieving the 2030 Agenda that both need strengthened multilateralism and enhanced global governance. Deepening global interdependence and interrelated and growing systemic risks call for coordinated international responses, guided by the holistic roadmap of the 2030 Agenda. A renewed commitment and innovative ways to reinvigorate multilateralism for SDGs are necessary, especially amidst a global pandemic that developed and developing countries alike are still struggling to recover from.

#### **1.1. Development Setbacks Caused by the COVID-19 Pandemic**

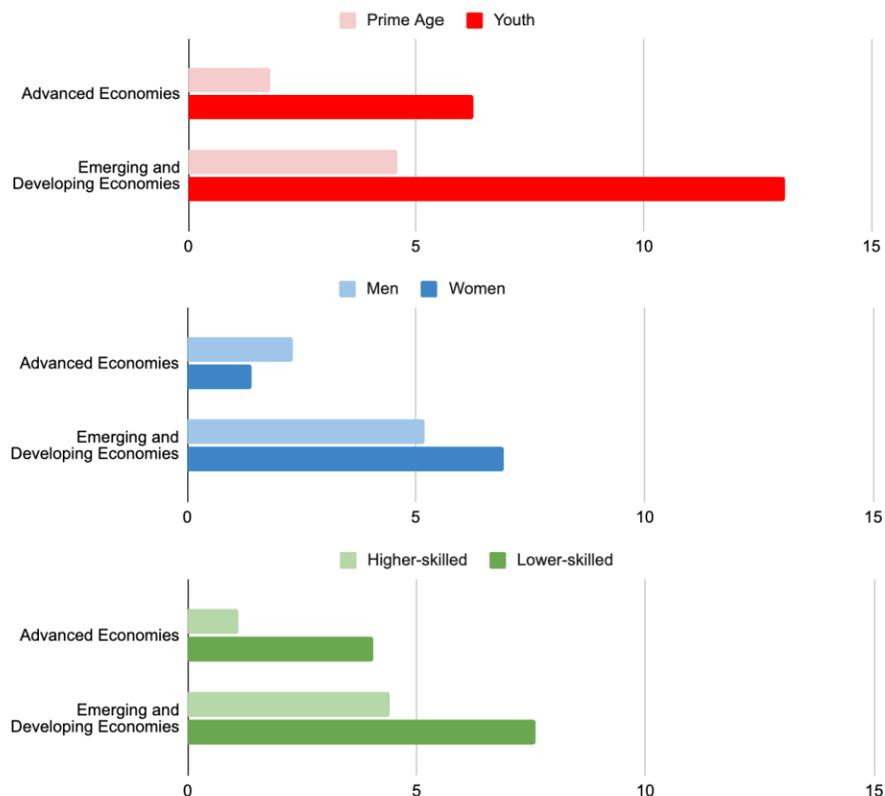
Before the COVID-19 outbreak in early 2020, the international community was collectively off-track to achieve the SDGs by 2030. At the first SDG summit in September 2019, given the slow and uneven SDG progress, UN Member States recognized that despite the breadth of initiatives the 2030 Agenda has inspired, action to meet the SDGs is not yet advancing at the speed or scale required. In their Political Declaration, UN Member States renewed their commitment to the 2030 Agenda and called for the launch of an accelerated response to the 2030 Agenda "gearing up for a decade of action and delivery for sustainable development". With the same sense of urgency and longer-term engagement, the G20 aimed to give more visibility to the G20 contribution to the 2030 Agenda and strengthen the G20's role in taking forward the sustainable development agenda and realizing the G20 leaders' commitment to "further lead efforts to foster development and address other global challenges to pave the way toward an inclusive and sustainable world, as envisioned in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" (G20 Osaka Leaders Declaration, para 3).

At the time, the pace of poverty eradication was already slowing down, as the percentage of people below poverty line decreased from 15.7% in 2010 to 10% and continued to decline but with a slower pace at 8.2% in 2019. With this trajectory, around 500 million people (6%) were projected to remain in extreme poverty by 2030. After the COVID-19 outbreak, the situation seriously deteriorated, and with less than a decade to go, the SDGs have been thrown even further off track (UN SDGs Report, 2021).

The COVID-19 pandemic caused setbacks to years of progress made for sustainable development across the board, revealing our shared vulnerability and interdependence. Economic and social costs are enormous: The pandemic has pushed a further 124 million people into extreme poverty; nearly one in three people in the world (2.37 billion) did not have access to adequate food in 2020, an increase of almost 320 million people in just one year; early estimates suggest a potential increase of up to 45 percent in child mortality because of health-service shortfalls and reductions in access to food; total working hours fell by 8.8 percent in 2020, the equivalent of 255 million full time jobs; restricted movement, social isolation, and economic insecurity are increasing women's vulnerability to violence in the home around the world (UN SG, 2021). The COVID-19 crisis takes a toll on the youth and women. Gender poverty gap is widening with a poverty rate of women expected to increase by 9.1 percent. By 2021, the gender poverty gap will be 118 women to 100 men and could even rise to 121 women to 100 men by 2030. This picture is made much worse since women typically earn less and hold less secure jobs than men, making them particularly vulnerable to layoffs and loss of livelihoods (UN Women, 2020).

The long-term impact of this economic divergence on sustainable development can be seen through the differential impact of the pandemic on employment and its implications for poverty, living standards and social stability (See graphic 1 below on the Unequal Economic Impact of Covid-19). In advanced and emerging/developing economies alike, the young suffered bigger employment losses. But the impact on emerging markets and developing economies has been significant on the most vulnerable people, many being reliant on informal labor markets and absent or meager social safety nets.

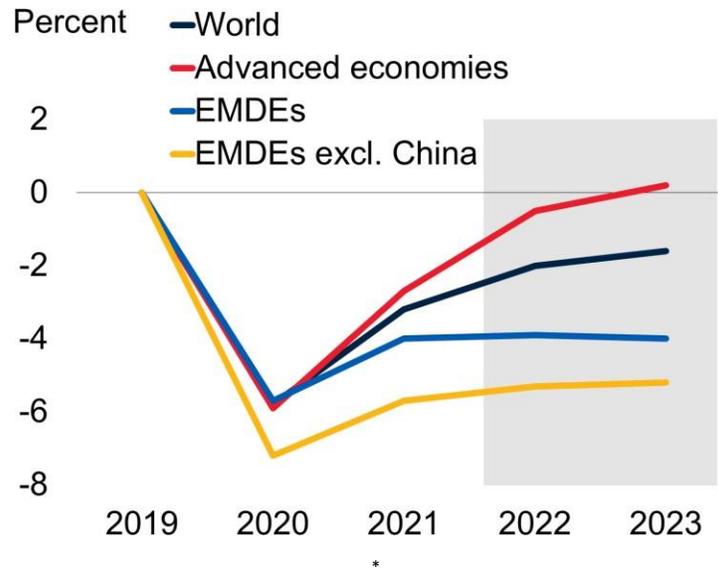
**Graphic 1. Percentage Point Decline in the Employment Rate (Q4, 2019-Q1, 2021), by Demographic**



**Source:** Global Commission for Post Pandemic Policy; data: IMF/ILO

Efforts to bring SDGs progress back on track are now facing unprecedented challenges. The pandemic hit the global economy hard and developing and least developed countries suffered more impacts. Globally, the world experienced a significant output contraction in 2020, 3.5% according to IMF or 7% loss relative to its 3.4% growth forecast back in October 2019 (IMF, 2021). For developed countries, successful vaccination programs provided a basis for optimism that recovery could be just around the corner, although this is also not a certainty due to the virus mutations. For developing and least developed countries, since the pandemic disrupted important sectors such as tourism, manufacturing, and commodities, many of them are now in recession. This is compounded by multitudes of problems, from limited fiscal capacity to health system capacity to limited access to vaccines. While emerging markets and developing economies (EMDEs) are likely to bounce back quickly and restore their pre-pandemic output trend in 2022, most emerging and developing countries are still stuck in slow growth and are not expected to return to pre-COVID level before 2023 or 2024. (see Graphic 2 below). Divergence in the global economy is happening now.

**Graphic 2. Deviation of Output from Pre-Pandemic Trends**



Source: World Bank, Global Economic Prospect, January 2022.

### **1.2. Bringing SDGs Achievements Back on the Right Track: Delivering Global Public Goods**

The 2030 Agenda and SDGs are “global” in nature because many problems they aim to tackle are related to global challenges and because causes and impacts are entangled with what is happening at planetary level. Climate change mitigation and adaptation, global health, global economic and financial stability, among other areas, are global public goods impacting development paths and the provision of which depends on international cooperation.

To the UN Secretary General, “the purpose of international cooperation in the twenty-first century is to achieve a set of vital common goals on which our welfare, and indeed survival, as a human race depend” (UN-SG, 2021). All global public goods have in common that their provision can be justified by the well-understood and enlightened self-interest of sovereign states – that remain the basic units of the international order – and cry out for a commensurate ethics of collective responsibility.

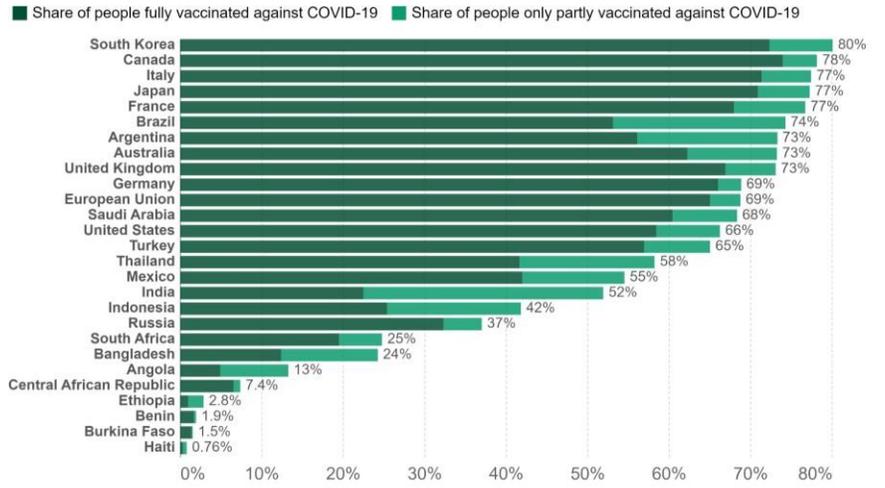
Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, the way to achieve global public goods needs to be significantly improved in a world that is increasingly interdependent and interconnected, and renewing multilateralism is key for achieving SDGs. The pandemic has provided us with a strong lesson that our fates are deeply connected. Stronger multilateralism will not hinder national sovereignty, but rather strengthen it by helping states to find effective solutions.

## **2. Renewed Multilateralism for Recovery and Sustainable Development**

Developing a renewed multilateral cooperation to end the COVID-19 pandemic has become a litmus test for collective action. The COVID-19 crisis does not only create a stronger realization that we need to reinvigorate multilateralism, but it also provides us with concrete and measurable problems to tackle collectively, which we can focus on to relaunch both multilateralism and our collective actions for achieving SDGs. In the near term we need to direct this renewed multilateralism effort with a specific purpose to support pandemic mitigation and recovery in developing and least developed countries, especially in dealing with the problem of vaccine access and manufacturing.

Access to vaccines is a case in point to accelerate global recovery. At domestic levels, the limited availability of vaccines created concerns about unequal access between different social groups. At the international level, there is a glaring gap on the ability to access and to develop vaccines. As of 29 December 2021, 67.08% of people in high income countries have been vaccinated with at least one dose, while only 1 in 10 people in low-income countries have been vaccinated (10.28%). With an average cost per COVID-19 vaccine dose ranges between USD 2-40 and the estimated distribution cost is USD 3.70 per person vaccinated with two doses (after accounting for vaccine wastage), low income countries need to increase their health spending by 56.6% on a on average to cover cost of vaccinating 70% of their population (UNDP, 2021). As of October 2021, 49% of the world population has received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, with 6.94 billion doses have been administered globally and 23.67 million are now administered each day, but only 3.1% of people in low-income countries have received at least one dose (Our World in Data, 2021). The following graphic shows the comparison of COVID-19 vaccination rate in G20 countries and some selected countries recognized as Least Developed Countries by the United Nations (UNCTAD, 2021).

**Graphic 3. Share of People Vaccinated Against COVID-19, Selected Countries, as of 27 Oct 2021**

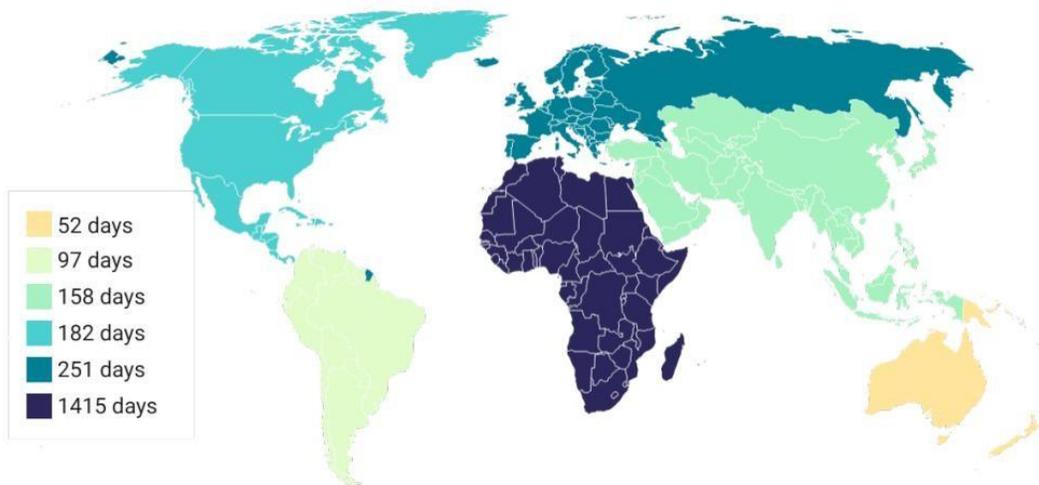


Source: Official data collated by Our World in Data  
 Note: Alternative definitions of a full vaccination, e.g. having been infected with SARS-CoV-2 and having 1 dose of a 2-dose protocol, are ignored to maximize comparability between countries. CC BY

**Source:** Official data collated by *Our World in Data*

After a one year roll-out, the global vaccination gap can be seen through the lens of how rapidly, at the current daily rate of inoculations, each region of the world can expect to have vaccinated 80% of their populations. Time is of the essence. The graphic 4 below shows the unequal vaccine clock as the number of days needed in each region to vaccinate 80 percent of adult residents at the current vaccination rate, as of 13<sup>th</sup> October 2021, based on the seven-day rolling average of daily vaccination doses. Variance is stark: barely a few months for Europe, North America and the richer parts of Asia; more than three years for Africa.

**Graphic 4. Unequal Vaccine Clock**



**Source:** Global Commission for Post Pandemic Policy, “Our Global Condition”, data: Our World in Data

Vaccine production was at the outset the major constraint weighing on global vaccination. From a slow start, worldwide monthly output is now over 1.5 billion doses. Total output for 2021 is likely to exceed 12 billion doses, enough to inoculate over 70% of the world's population if only they could get hold of them. Vaccine development has been a remarkable and rapid breakthrough, but public policy, leadership, and international cooperation in advancing the necessary global distribution of vaccines did not keep pace with it. The direct cost of developing, producing, procuring and distributing vaccines is far smaller than the economic and social costs caused by every month that the pandemic continues. This policy approach is a combination of half-hearted, belated commitments to global vaccination programs and too-modest financial support for low-income and distressed countries. COVAX initiative for vaccine distribution to low-income countries has adequate funding for purchasing vaccines but cannot obtain sufficient supply and is running behind schedule. Aid to support vaccination programs in low income and developing countries is insufficient to stand a chance of matching or outpacing the spread and evolution of the virus.

What could have been a triumph of effective multilateral cooperation is turning into a symbol of weak commitment and disjunction between domestic and global interests. Distributional and logistical challenges require urgent attention to support global recovery, and in the medium-term technology transfers and capacity building will be indispensable to sustain recovery through vaccine production in low-income regions. **We need to develop stronger and fairer multilateral mechanisms for ensuring equal global distribution of COVID-19 vaccines, and this should be the building block to reinvigorate multilateralism for a sustainable and inclusive global recovery.**

In this context, the following developments in multilateral cooperation that discussed COVID-19 vaccines access are noteworthy and should be carried out:

- The Rome Declaration at the Global Health Summit underlines the urgent need to scale up efforts, including multilateral efforts, to enhance timely, global and equitable access to safe, effective and affordable COVID-19 tools including vaccines, as well as recognizing extensive immunization as a “global public goods.”
- The G20 Rome Leaders’ Declaration that highlights the main points of multilateral cooperation and equitable COVID-19 vaccines access.
- The Multilateral Leaders’ Taskforce on COVID-19 (MLT) that recommends the G20<sup>1</sup> to take action on vaccine distribution and financing, for low- and middle-income countries fully enabling AVAT and COVAX, requires the urgent cooperation of vaccine manufacturers, vaccine-producing countries, and countries that have already achieved high vaccination rates, to achieve the global target of 70% of the populations vaccinated in all countries by mid-2022 (Joint Statement, “From Vaccines to Vaccination”, 17 December 2021).
- The High-Level Independent Panel on Financing the Global Commons for Pandemic Preparedness and Response (HLIP), as part of the G20 Finance Track under the Italian G20 Presidency in 2021 calling on the G20 to detail actions aiming at strengthening the global

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<sup>1</sup>G20 Finance deputies meeting, 13-14 September 2021. The Multilateral Leaders Taskforce on COVID-19 (MLT) is made of the heads of the International Monetary Fund, World Bank Group, World Health Organization and World Trade Organization, and met with leaders of the African Vaccine Acquisition Trust (AVAT), Africa CDC, Gavi and UNICEF.

governance architecture of global health as a Global Public Good, and to ensure the system is tightly coordinated, properly funded and with clear accountability for outcomes.

- The Joint Communique of G20 Finance and Health Ministers announced the establishment of a Joint Task Force for Pandemic Preparedness to enhance collaboration and international cooperation in issues relating to pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response.

All these developments highlight a momentum towards stronger, more inclusive, and networked multilateralism. To cultivate this momentum, we can and must start from developing concrete collective actions to ensure equal global distribution of COVID-19 vaccines. While there is evidently some progress on this aspect, we need to further decentralize vaccine production and manufacturing by supporting the capacity of developing countries to produce vaccines. Furthermore, fairer, and more sustainable production and distribution of COVID-19 vaccines is the prerequisite for sustainable recovery, and sustainable recovery is the prerequisite of bringing SDGs progress back on the right track. As the Joint Communique of G20 Finance and Health Ministers had pointed out, “the pandemic has exposed significant shortcomings in the world’s ability to coordinate the global health response...and are hampering the advancement of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).”

Another important element to develop stronger, more inclusive, and networked multilateralism is ensuring more effective mechanisms for international collaboration for SDGs. Before the pandemic, experts calculated that to achieve the SDGs by 2030, between USD 3.3-4.5 trillion per year needs to be mobilized. To reach this number, developing countries face a significant funding gap, which is estimated to be at around USD 2.5 trillion per year (UNDOCO - Dag Hammarskjold Foundation, 2018). Due to the pandemic, the gap is expected to be wider. The OECD’s Global Outlook on Financing for Sustainable Development argued that there is an additional shortfall of USD 1.7 trillion in the financing, adding to the existing gap. The report also predicted a significant drop in external private finance in 2020 (USD 700 billion), which is coming from the decline in investments and remittances (OECD, 2020). Worse, the impact of the pandemic will be long lasting, further deteriorating the ability of developing countries to finance SDGs. To enable more effective international collaboration for SDGs, we need to develop a stronger framework for collective action. This can be initiated by agreeing on some principles for renewing multilateralism for achieving SDGs.

### **3. Opportunities and Challenges: Building on Existing Efforts and Translating Momentum**

Global leaders have increasingly recognized the importance of renewing the commitment for multilateralism. At the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the United Nations, the UN Secretary-General remarked that “we know that we need more — and more effective — multilateralism, with vision, ambition and impact” (UN SG, 2020). This call was further elaborated in his Report, “Our Common Agenda,” which highlights that “humanity faces a stark and urgent choice: breakdown or breakthrough.” The report argues that there is no other viable option than a “strengthened, inclusive and networked multilateralism” to achieve these goals (Secretary-General of the United Nations, 2021).

Since the upgrade of the G20 at the Leaders level in the aftermath of the financial crisis (2008), G20 members have frequently called for stronger commitments for multilateralism: From David Cameron Report on “Governance for growth: Building Consensus for the Future” (Cannes, 2011), to the “G20 5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Vision Statement” released by G20 Leaders at the Saint-Petersburg Summit (2013), the G20 Action Plan on the 2030 Agenda (Hangzhou 2016), and to the G20 Eminent Persons Group Report on Global Financial Governance, “Making the Global Financial System Work for All” (Buenos Aires 2018), G20 members stressed many times their commitment to reinforcing efforts for policy coordination and collaboration to achieve an inclusive, strong, balanced and sustainable growth, contribute to the provision global public goods, and improve global governance for sustainable development.

Established itself as an innovation in the global governance architecture, bringing together large advanced and emerging economies, the G20 is well positioned to take up the challenge to inspire the global community to collectively renew commitments and reinvigorate multilateralism for sustainable development. Accounting for more than 80% of world GDP, 75% of global trade and 60% of the population of the planet, G20 is a group of countries with strong contribution, and at the same time dependency, to the stability of the global economy and other issues with global consequences. G20 has both the responsibility and capacity to open new pathways of global cooperation. If we want the world to heed the call for strengthened multilateralism seriously, G20 must show the world that its members are committed to multilateralism and show how it can be done.

This will only be possible if we recognize and address three important issues.

**The first is the recognition of Global Public Goods to be provided through international cooperation to build our common future.** Collective actions are often difficult to agree upon and implement without clear identification of what the collective goal is. Since any efforts to reform international institutions can be contentious, the recognition of several global public goods and the benefits of international cooperation will provide a clearer direction and expectation which could minimize distrust. International cooperation aims at minimizing the negative impacts/spillover effects of unilateral actions and reap mutual gains as a positive sum game; and providing global public goods.

G20 leaders already recognized the provision of global public goods as a key objective of their collective action. The Rome Declaration of the Global Health Summit, for example, declared extensive immunization as global public good. The High-Level Independent Panel on Financing the Global Commons for Pandemic Preparedness and Response goes further by declaring that we need to invest for global public goods for pandemic prevention, preparedness, and responses (G20 High Level Independent Panel on Financing the Global Commons for Pandemic Preparedness and Response, 2021). The UN Secretary-General even plans to ask a High-level Advisory Board, led by former Heads of State and Government, to identify global public goods and other areas of common interest where governance improvements are most needed, and to propose options for how this could be achieved (UNSG, 2021). G20 members can accelerate this process by deliberating among them to identify these global public goods and how we can improve multilateral collaboration to deliver them. SDGs can be the starting point to identify these global public goods where multilateralism is needed the most.

**The second is the recognition that we need to rethink the role and rules of key institutions in our existing multilateral arrangements to make the whole system work better.** The UN Secretary-General rightly suggests that multilateralism must be anchored within the UN. However, that must also come with the recognition that the UN can and must be able to adapt to the evolving global challenges. The same could be said to other key institutions inside and outside the UN system, including International Financial Institutions and Multilateral Development Banks. Fortunately, G20 countries are also prominent members of those key institutions. Thus, if the G20 can elaborate on a common vision on the role and rules of the key institutions in the renewed multilateralism, we can expect that the much-needed reforms will be possible to be materialized.

**The third is the recognition of the importance of multiple stakeholders: states and non-states alike.** The increasingly interconnected global challenges, from the pandemic to climate change, call for more inclusive participation from more developing and least developed countries. As the pandemic also shows, the involvement of the private sector in global cooperation is also indispensable. According to an OECD Report, Multi National Enterprises (MNEs) account for half of global exports, almost one-third of world GDP and about one fourth of employment (OECD, 2018). Apart from the state and the private sector, global and transnational networks of civil society are also emerging as influential global actors that heavily contribute to international cooperation such as managing or channeling developmental aids. There is also a growing realization that we need to hear the voices of those who are underrepresented at global level, such as indigenous communities, who are at the forefront of our struggle to avoid climate catastrophe. The choice by the UN Secretary-General to use the terms “inclusive” and “networked” show that the intention for greater recognition of multiple stakeholders is there. We need to push that further into feasible practical arrangements.

Against this backdrop, it is important to stress that global cooperation for vaccination and pandemic recovery is a developmental issue. While other G20 Working Groups or Task Force such as the Joint Finance-Health Task Force will be responsible to detail how the cooperation on issues related to pandemic prevention, preparedness and response, the Development Working Group can contribute through elaborating the pathways for developing strengthened, inclusive, and networked multilateralism to support such initiatives. At the same time, the multilateral cooperation for COVID-19 vaccine production and distribution, and strengthening pandemic preparedness and response which are now gaining momentum, can be used to jumpstart a turning point to reinvigorate multilateralism.

#### **4. Objectives and Recommendations: 3 Pillars of Renewed Multilateralism to Achieve SDGs**

Based on these recent developments and aiming to contribute to the implementation of this common agenda, G20 DWG Ministerial Meeting could develop concrete proposals to enhance global governance for sustainable development with the view of developing/strengthening partnerships and cooperation between the G20 and other relevant international stakeholders (UN system, IOs, private sectors, NGOs, and other stakeholders) for the realization of the 2030 Agenda and leave no one behind.

The initiative to strengthen and renew multilateralism must address simultaneously the challenges for SDGs at three different levels:

**(1) Prerequisite and immediate: Renewed Multilateralism for Pandemic Mitigation and Management**

We can only bring our SDGs progress back on track if we can ensure sustainable recovery from the pandemic. One important component of this is to ensure equal access of COVID-19 vaccines, particularly in developing countries, including strengthening and supporting local production capacities. Furthermore, we also must ensure that we invest enough resources to ensure that all countries are better prepared to prevent or mitigate the impacts of future pandemics. In this context, the DWG can support existing G20 and other global initiatives by **acknowledging Global Health as a Global Public Good** and developing a **Global Vaccination Plan** for COVID-19.

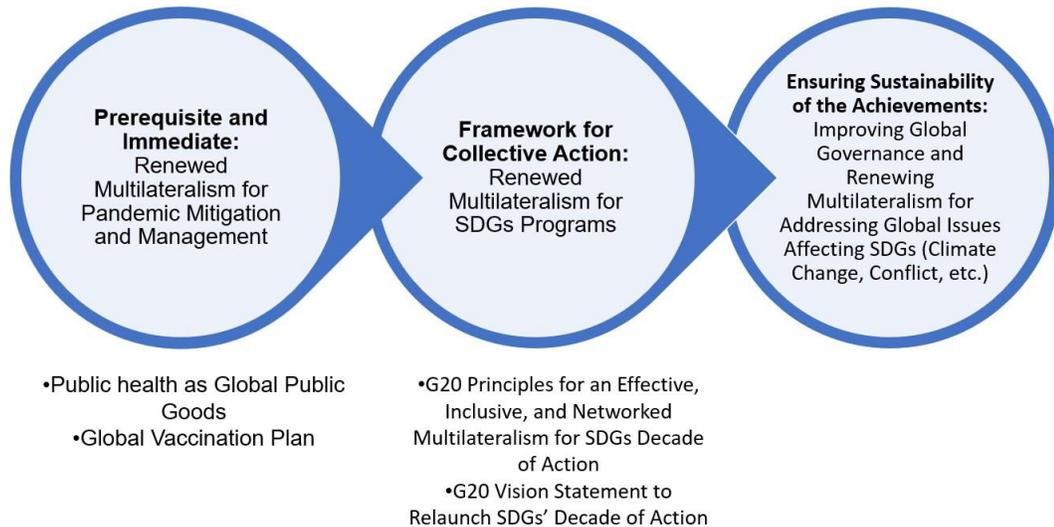
**(2) Framework for Collective Action: Principles for a Renewed Multilateralism for SDGs Decade of Action**

The recovery from the pandemic must go simultaneously with the initiative to provide a more effective framework for Collective Action in the Decade of Action. The pandemic had affected the capacity and priority of many international stakeholders. It is important to convince them that achieving SDGs is aligned with recovery. To do so, we need to develop a more effective and inclusive framework for collective action. For this purpose, the DWG can propose **G20 Principles for an Effective, Inclusive, and Networked Multilateralism to Achieve SDGs Targets** and **G20 Vision Statement to Relaunch SDGs' Decade of Action**.

**(3) Ensuring Sustainability of the Achievements: Improving Global Governance for Sustainable Development and Renewing Multilateralism for addressing global challenges affecting SDGs**

Our collective initiatives to achieve SDGs are embedded in the larger context of increased interdependence and intertwined global challenges. Achievements for SDGs are affected by dynamics such as Climate Change, international conflict, refugee crisis, and other issues. Thus, to ensure that we can achieve the SDGs targets, we must work to provide the basis for global governance that is effective enough to tackle global challenges.

**Graphic 5: Three Pillars of Renewed Multilateralism for Achieving SDGs in the Decade of Action**



Accordingly, the main deliverable of the DWG for the 2022 G20 Summit will be a **Ministerial Vision Statement: Multilateralism for SDGs Decade of Action**. The document will consist of the following components:

**1. Ministerial Declaration on Global Vaccination Plan for COVID-19.**

Call to action on implementing the renewed multilateralism and existing international cooperation that ensure equal access to COVID-19 vaccines in developing countries as a prerequisite for recovery and resilience. This may include a statement to push investment in strengthening the health system and vaccines manufacturing capacity in developing countries.

**2. Recognition of Global Health as a Global Public Good.**

A statement by G20 Leaders on the recognition of Global Health as a Global Public Good will provide a clear and concrete objective for multilateral cooperation. By declaring Global Health as a Global Public Good, the G20 would provide a strong normative basis to develop stronger cooperation to ensure equal and more sustainable vaccine production and distribution of vaccines.

**3. Statement to Relaunch SDGs' Decade of Action.**

The G20 needs to reiterate its commitment for the SDGs, especially amidst the global disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Since the SDGs progress had been off the

track and further affected by the pandemic, a strong political statement to relaunch SDGs Decade of Action can help to create a turning point to bring SDGs progress back on the right track. This may also include the launching of a High-Level Group made of international and renowned personalities (Policy makers, academia, etc.) to elaborate on the new basic principles that would help regenerate political momentum, reinvigorate the multilateral system, lead innovative cooperation initiatives, and strengthen partnerships. The High-Level group could submit a G20 Report on the New Multilateralism for Sustainable Development to the G20 Leaders, and would be assisted in this work by a secretariat supported by the UN system.

#### **4. Principles for an Effective, Inclusive, and Networked Multilateralism for SDGs Decade of Action.**

The G20 could regenerate political momentum and advance the global agenda for a renewed multilateralism by agreeing on the principles for an effective, inclusive, and networked multilateralism built from the UN Secretary General’s report on “Our Common Agenda” to achieve of SDG targets in the Decade of Action.

The **Ministerial Vision Statement: Multilateralism for SDGs Decade of Action** will also be summarized and integrated in the **Development Ministerial Communiqué**, which includes one specific paragraph of the **Public Ministerial Declaration on the Global Vaccination Plan**.

*“UNDP is the leading United Nations organization fighting to end the injustice of poverty, inequality, and climate change. Working with a broad network of experts and partners in 170 countries, UNDP helps nations to build integrated, lasting solutions for people and planet. Learn more at [undp.org](http://undp.org).*

*The views expressed in this scoping note are those of the author(s) and the G20 Indonesian Presidency, and do not necessarily represent those of the United Nations, including UNDP, or the UN Member States.”*

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