

# Prepare for sustainable goals

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Goodbye Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), hello Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)s, is the current call within the international community.

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Responsible investment and corporate sustainability has established a common ground within the incoming SDGs.

Companies have often provided basic services such as infrastructure in retrospect to energy, telecommunications, transport, water, food security, education and health which are crucial for attaining the incoming SDGs, hence living a lot to be desired on the capacity of Zimbabwe to attain the SDG's with the analysis of the current discourse that has seen the private sector dwindling and the local government failing to play their part to cover the service delivery loophole.

With the ushering in of SDG's closer than ever, a lot stands to be questioned on the capacity and thrust to attain the goals with the outgoing MDGs' success being a bag of mixed fortune for Zimbabwe.

The vast majority, if not all developing nations, Zimbabwe being part of it, having struggled to commit to the MDG's, the coming in of a more uphill but worthy committing SDGs calls in the need for comprehensive joint stakeholder approach for the goals to be met and not to leave a trail of failure like the predecessor.

The thrust for attaining the SDGs has become the core of developmental topics at all levels of international, regional and national groupings.

The plunge has seen the call for good private sector governance and as there is need for significant levels of financing being required to achieve the sustainable development call.

As of late, the Zimbabwean government has gone on a rampant initiative to lure Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) into the nation and the government's call has also extended to the need for the private actors to be part of the implementation of ambitious post-2015 development agenda.

Statistically, according to UNCTAD (2015) World Report 2014 in the Southern Africa alone, Zimbabwe is the second least recipient of FDI, amassing poultry US\$0,5-US\$0,9 billion.

The volumes and need for responsible investment has taken the "best in class" approach that is based on the integration of environmental, social and governance issues in investment decision making processes.

The FDI volumes of responsible investment chain system calls for government to provide a viable investor-friendly environment.

At the same climax, SDG issues on private sector have ushered in the articulate need for commitment by the business sector on the responsibility to avoid harm and to respect human rights prior to, during and post-operational period.

The private sector has been called in to be the sentimental players and to be team players thus partnering with the government and other stakeholders on national issues inclined with SDG's; transparency and accountability so as maximise on the co-benefits of investment.

In the Zimbabwean retrospective aspect, two formidable governance challenges remain to be the boulder for FDI and beneficiation from the private sector operations, the concept of weak political will and interest in reforms thus reflective of inadequate efforts to promote inclusive citizenship and to empower the poor. The second governance challenge has been the concept of insufficient national and sub-national government capacity to implement reforms, deliver public services, and to be responsive, accountable and transparent to the needs of citizenry for the management of public and natural resources. The inability to adequately address these challenges has resulted in weak legal and policy frameworks, high rates of corruption and growing threats to human rights.

Despite the private sector actors inherent interest in seeing sustainable development succeed and also the initiation for beneficiation by the government, the success of such have proven to be shrouded in obscurity.

The recent Community Share Ownership Trust, ZimAsset blueprint driven initiative being subdued in corruption, politicisation and nothing more than a replica of the unlegislated Cooperate Social Invest, have done more harm than good in shunning away investors.

The level of responsiveness by the government and service providers to the rights and needs of poor people has proven to be critically low, hence insinuating a debate on the capacity for the nation to take an aim and attain the SDG's within the prescribed period.

Worth noting is the harmony of institutional investors connecting with sustainability issues through the projects and companies in which they invest by providing capital and by engaging as active owners.

Institutional investors also invest directly in the real economy through property, infrastructure, forestry, and agriculture. Despite the growth of corporate sustainability, private sector participation in financing sustainability is relatively low in Zimbabwe. The country's current turmoil

has gone beyond seeking reprieve on regional or international problem-solving formula list, but it has profound to the concept of self-retrospect and seek Zimbabwean-inclined solutions.

The success story of SDG's in the country lies in addressing social accountability issues by making service providers and public agencies more accountable and responsive to citizens.

Such initiative will usher in success in promoting democratic governance, inclusive growth and human development.

It has become a require-site for examination of ways in which accountability and transparency in the public and natural resources management, particularly the extractive sector as it has the capacity to individually sustain the Zimbabwean fiscus is of core importance.

Post-examination will initiate the need to look at the mechanisms that the nation can employ at local levels to improve service delivery.

It ought to be highlighted on the essentiality of stakeholder engagement approach in coming up with specific mechanisms for strengthening accountability and transparency in terms of taxation, beneficiation, deals negotiation thus in policy-making, planning, budgeting and the front-line delivery of services.

Strengthening accountability and transparency amplifies a voice in service delivery and fundamentally insulates SDG's matters on poverty reduction and human development.

An accountable and transparent relationship within a nation is one in which duty bearers which include the leaders at all levels of government departments and the private sector obliged to account for and take responsibility for their actions while rights holders, citizenry are able to hold these duty bearers to account.

The fairness, efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery is enhanced when both the long and short route of accountability are employed.

The concept of powerlessness, including the inability of citizenry to express their views or to have them heard is integral to poverty and marginality.

Responsive governments, service providers and enhanced citizen voice can contribute directly to empowerment and poverty reduction.

It ought to be highlighted prior to the nation's induction into the SDG's that improved accountability and transparency reinforces the voice that initiates the ability of rights holders to claim their rights and uniformly increasing the likelihood for duty bearers to meet their obligations.

It has come a point in time to adhere to a "no-blame culture", which encourages all-stakeholders to have a go and initiate a win-it-all approach at issues around business operation and viable even ground for operating.

Conclusively, a need has arisen for collective stakeholder action on social accountability is premised on action by all stakeholders thus the private sector being the engine of sustainable development, the government as the custodians, the civil society's having shared needs and interests thence rendering the call that our current operating environment is borrowed from future generations henceforth the need to develop sustainably.

*This article was written by the Institute for Sustainability Africa (Insaf)*