

ANNEX: A FOREIGN POLICY PERSPECTIVE ON THE SDGS

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In this annex, we provide a more detailed analysis of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) under review at the High-level Political Forum 2018 and their links to peace and stability.

SDG6 WATER

Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

Water is a matter of survival and plays a critical role in social, economic and environmental activities as well. With a rise in global demand for water, water crises have consistently featured among the World Economic Forum's top global impact risks. Water insecurity, i.e., the lack of water availability for basic human needs and socio-economic development, undermines billions of livelihoods and poses significant risks for peace and prosperity by thwarting progress and fuelling displacement and conflict.

The critical importance of water for core foreign policy objectives

Water insecurity fuels displacement and instability and adds to humanitarian pressures (see target 6.1: achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all). By increasing health risks, undermining food security and limiting economic opportunities, lack of water for drinking incentivizes people to move and may fuel grievances in host communities. More broadly, it can also undermine governmental legitimacy, which has strong linkages to water management since the dawn of civilization in irrigation-focused kingdoms in the Middle East, Egypt, and China.

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THE CYCLE OF WATER INSECURITY AND FRAGILITY...

...HAS TWO DIMENSIONS: THE SHORTER-TERM FAILURE TO WATER AVAILABILITY AND THE LONGER-TERM FAILURE TO PRESERVE WATER RESOURCES.



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Water insecurity negatively impacts across many SDGs, notably on health, but, by way of coping mechanisms that often see girls spend a lot of time on fetching water, also on education and gender equality. It is particularly problematic in countries and situations of fragility.

By placing additional pressure on weak institutions, water insecurity further undermines the social compact. This can fuel a downward spiral as increasing fragility makes it even more challenging to achieve water security. The cycle of water insecurity and fragility has two dimensions: the short-term failure to water availability (e.g. to adequately supply displaced persons, or pastoralists' animals) and the long-term failure to preserve water resources, e.g. in the form of over-pumping or pollution of groundwater that ultimately undermines livelihoods¹. For example, the International Organization of Migration found that water insecurity was a key reason for internal displacement in many Iraqi governorates².

The importance of water resource sustainability is directly related to integrated water resources management. The cue on transboundary cooperation in target 6.5 is particularly relevant for foreign policymakers because transboundary cooperation is often essential for regional stability, but also a precondition for sustainable and equitable management of the water-energy-food nexus. Many of the most worrying water conflicts are a function of difficult trade-offs related to the question of whether to prioritize water use for energy (hydropower) or food (irrigation) production. Hence, water links intimately with the SDGs on poverty, hunger, energy, and peace.

Transboundary water cooperation offers significant opportunities for both upstream and downstream countries. Dams constructed in upstream countries for hydropower production, for example, can simultaneously help control downstream floods, improve downstream navigation, and increase the potential for downstream hydropower by stabilizing water flows—and may also offer downstream countries cheap electricity import options. In reality, however, dam construction in upstream countries often leads to conflict with downstream neighbours who fear the consequences of flow changes and the potential political lever against them in the hands of upstream countries. Although such conflicts are unlikely to escalate into international wars, they fuel tensions and hinder cooperation in other sectors, hampering economic development as well as sustainable and equitable water use.

Illustration: conflict and cooperation over water use in Central Asia

Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the Aral Sea basin has witnessed significant conflict over water. Upstream countries inherited big reservoirs that had been built to boost downstream irrigation. However, losing access to cheap energy post-independence has nudged them to prioritize water release for hydropower generation in

¹ Sadoff et al. 2017

² Ibid.

TRANSBOUNDARY WATER COOPERATION...

... OFFERS SIGNIFICANT OPPORTUNITIES FOR BOTH UPSTREAM AND DOWNSTREAM COUNTRIES.

winter rather than downstream irrigation in summer. Uzbekistan, which is mainly dependent on irrigation, has reacted with punitive measures and vehemently opposed the construction of additional upstream dams, going as far as to threaten military action. Limitations in cooperation have cost all Central Asian countries dearly³. Yet, a recent change in Uzbekistan's leadership led to the embrace of a new foreign policy doctrine focusing on regional cooperation, transcending competition over resources and unlocking opportunities for mutually beneficial partnership.

International efforts to improve water governance

Given the critical importance of water and its interlinkages with overarching global objectives such as stability and prosperity, it may be surprising that there is no integrated international regime on freshwater governance. There exists a well-established normative framework that can help foreign policy makers situate their efforts, in particular, the 1997 UN Convention on the Law of the Non-navigational Uses of International Watercourses that went into effect in 2014 after reaching 35 ratifications. Although it built on decades of work in the International Law Commission, primarily sought to codify customary law, and achieved widespread support in the UN General Assembly, the number of ratifications has remained limited due to concerns that it might restrict development options. A second convention by the UN Economic Commission for Europe, the 1992 Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes, has since 2016 opened for global accession. There is a broad 'epistemic community' of water managers underpinning these conventions who largely subscribe to the principles of 'Integrated Water Resources Management.' It is defined by the Global Water Partnership as "a process which promotes the coordinated development and management of water, land and related resources, to maximize the resultant economic and social welfare in an equitable manner without compromising the sustainability of vital ecosystems."

Although water is a critical issue all around the world, its management is often primarily a local challenge. As these challenges differ across (sub-) basins, it is the governance responses at these levels rather than global agreements which are most important for securing peace, prosperity, and equity. Thus, whereas foreign policy can play a helpful role in advocating for recognition of the principles underlying the global conventions, it is even more crucial that it use its influence to help shift discourse and policy toward cooperation at the sub-basin level. Such collaboration often depends on the perceived political risks of water cooperation, rather than the lack of economic incentives⁴. Diplomats can and should try to help shape political thinking over national and regional development perspectives with an aim of shifting such perceptions, drawing on their access, mandate, and skills of persuasion. For third parties seeking to foster cooperation, this means em-

³ Pohl et al. 2017

⁴ Subramanian et al. 2012

FOREIGN POLICY CAN...

...PLAY A HELPFUL ROLE IN ADVOCATING FOR RECOGNITION OF THE PRINCIPLES UNDERLYING THE GLOBAL CONVENTIONS AND HELP SHIFT DISCOURSE AND POLICY TOWARD COOPERATION AT THE (SUB) BASIN LEVEL.

bracing water management as primarily a foreign policy issue, which technical development cooperation can support⁵. A broad toolbox – from facilitating private discussions between decision-shapers to identify mutually beneficial development paths and narratives, to reducing risks by offering guarantees or joint assessments – has been developed⁶, but it often needs the political impetus and diplomatic skillset that foreign policy can provide.

Conclusion

Conflicts over lack of access to water at both individual and state level can undermine global and national foreign policy priorities, in particular, the prevention of displacement and the maintenance of regional stability. Achieving SDG 6 also entails transformational possibilities, regarding unlocking human potential (avoiding illness, reducing gender discrimination and unlocking time for education and productive endeavours) and inter-state cooperation. Moreover, better water management is a facilitator if not a precondition for achieving numerous other SDGs, which in turn are harbingers of fundamental progress.

As developments in Central Asia illustrate, foreign policy can play a critical role in overcoming zero-sum competition over water and enabling beneficial cooperation by helping rethink and reframe issues. However, to realize this potential water diplomacy needs more agency and more constructive political engagement that will help embed technical transboundary cooperation into attractive regional development narratives and pathways. Since achieving SDG 6 is an essential element of the quest for international security, and that political engagement is often a necessary element to progress in water management, diplomats should embrace water diplomacy and help build the agreements to underpin better water management.

⁵ Pohl et al. 2014

⁶ cf. Leb et al. 2018

SDG7 ENERGY

Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all



Limited access to energy is a significant barrier to development and holds back efforts to improve living conditions in developing and emerging economies. Around the world, 1.1 billion people still do not have access to electricity, and 2.8 billion still rely on animal and crop waste, wood, charcoal and other solid fuels to cook their food and heat their homes⁷.

Dependency on fossil fuels for energy also presents significant challenges for sustainable development. With the emission from burning oil, gas, and coal being a major driver of climate change, these forms of energy are increasing the frequency and severity of extreme weather events, such as hurricanes and tsunamis, as well as droughts and other slower processes of environmental degradation, which exacerbate water, food, and livelihood insecurity⁸. Around 18.8 million people were displaced by disasters in 2017, compared to 11.8 million displaced by conflict and violence⁹, and climate change impacts are estimated to push an additional 100 million people into extreme poverty by 2030 if countries do not show greater ambition in pursuing low-carbon development¹⁰.

The links between energy and foreign policy

SDG 7 interlinks strongly with a range of key foreign policy priorities. This holds true for preventing conflicts and instability, for building the resilience of vulnerable communities and countries, and for reinforcing international cooperation through stronger trade and investments relations among partners.

Varying national contexts mean that each country will follow a different path as it implements measures to provide universal energy access (target 7.1), the expansion of renewable energy (target 7.2), and greater energy efficiency (target 7.3). As such, these varying transition pathways will differ significantly in their relevance for foreign policy and require appropriate responses. A nation's energy mix, its economic dependence on its fossil fuel industries, and the potential impact of moving away from domestic high carbon energy sources for energy independence and imports all have significant implications for how different domestic and international players and stakeholders will respond to the implementation and therefore to the peace potential of SDG 7.

⁷ IEA 2018

⁸ Rüttinger et al. 2015

⁹ IDMC 2018

¹⁰ Hallegatte et al. 2016

SUSTAINABLE ENERGY IS STRONGLY INTER-LINKED WITH KEY FOREIGN POLICY PRIORITIES...

...SUCH AS PREVENTING CONFLICTS AND INSTABILITY, BUILDING THE RESILIENCE OF VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES, AND REINFORCING INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION.

Most countries will have to make structural changes to their economies to diversify and decarbonise their energy supplies. These will not only go hand in hand with significant shifts in policy, politics, and society at the national level – which could have implications in more fragile, conflict-prone regions. Whether a country is a net importer or exporter of fossil fuels, we can also expect the process of decarbonisation to reconfigure their energy relations with other countries, and therefore have a significant impact on foreign policy. Moreover, reduced consumption of fossil fuels has the potential to reduce the overall relevance of oil and gas in the present and the future conflicts. However, the expansion of renewable energy technologies is generating major demand for new types of raw materials and resources – mainly with the establishment of new infrastructure– and this could create new conflict constellations if governance processes to manage the transition process are lacking.

The critical importance of energy for core foreign policy objectives

Achieving the targets under SDG 7 can serve core foreign policy objectives by strengthening humanitarian responses, reducing forced migration, and strengthening trade and investment – all of which have implications for the stability of fragile countries and regions.

Regarding **humanitarian responses**, increasing access to clean energy sources can help vulnerable communities to become more self-sufficient, and thus play a role in bridging the gap between humanitarian aid and development cooperation by improving livelihoods, health, safety, education, food security and nutrition, and the environment. Providing access to renewable energy sources can empower communities. From off-grid solar systems for remote rural villages to reduced fossil-fuel import needs for small island nations, installing renewable energy technologies creates opportunities by providing people with independent energy access and, potentially, new sources of income.

These clean energy technologies also create a variety of co-benefits alongside improving energy access and reducing carbon emissions. To take two examples, compared to fossil fuels, they produce minimal air pollution and therefore improve the health of the surrounding population. In communities that have traditionally burned wood for cooking and heating, energy efficient cooking stoves reduce the need for firewood and prevent deforestation.

Improving access to clean energy can also significantly **improve the lives of migrants** – both by improving the conditions in refugee camps and other types of temporary accommodation and by alleviating pressures that may force them to leave their homes in the first place. Kelly T. Clements, the Deputy United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, has noted that: “Universal access to clean energy could vastly improve the health and well-being of millions of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons.” For example, solar-powered street lighting systems have been installed in many refugee camps, improving the safety, living conditions, and livelihood prospects of those residing there.

PROVIDING ACCESS...

TO RENEWABLE ENERGY SOURCES CAN EMPOWER COMMUNITIES.

CLEAN ENERGY...

...CAN SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVE THE LIVES OF MIGRANTS.

Further, reducing energy sector GHG emissions is crucial to climate change mitigation efforts, and therefore to reduce the role of environmental changes in **decisions to migrate**. With both sudden and slow-onset impacts, climate change can be considered the ultimate “threat multiplier.” More frequent and severe extreme weather events will displace people in greater numbers, while more gradual environmental degradation will intensify competition for resources, such as water and fertile land, thereby increasing livelihood insecurity, the potential for conflict and other drivers that force people to move. German Foreign Minister Maas has stressed that Germany’s campaign “around the world for a shift towards sustainable energy production” is a response to the adverse impacts of climate change on many societies.

Energy relations often form a core component of the ties between countries (see target 7.a). The transition to low-carbon energy supply is therefore highly likely to **reconfigure existing partnerships and create new mutual interdependencies**. For example, countries that have already developed significant expertise on clean technology and innovation can come together with those urgently looking to increase access to clean energy (see target 7.b).

As renewable energy sources offer countries a greater variety of options to independently diversify their energy mix, they may reduce the reliance of many countries on energy imports, thus altering the balance of power in relations between energy exporters and importers. This raises the possibility of geopolitical changes in many regional contexts, with stabilising but also potentially destabilising effects.

Illustration: exporting the energy transition made in Germany

The ambition that Germany has shown in expanding the use of renewable energy technologies at home has also had a profound impact on its foreign policy interests. In pioneering and promoting an innovative new regulatory mechanism for boosting renewable energy financing, the feed-in tariff, the country rapidly increased the diversity of its energy mix, decreased its dependency on energy imports, and gained an early economic and technological advantage in core sectors for low-carbon energy transition. These steps have provided new avenues for developing long-term trade and investment partnerships with other countries. Further, in significantly expanding renewables, it supported the decentralisation of its energy infrastructure, thus reducing Germany’s vulnerability to external shocks, such as interruptions to gas imports and blackouts as a result of extreme weather events or terrorist attacks.

Illustration: using renewable energy to support stabilisation processes in South Sudan

Although renewable energy technologies are rapidly becoming more affordable, they largely still have not reached fragile, conflict-prone countries like South Sudan (see target 7.b). Humanitarian operations may offer entry points to help the country reduce the use of fossil fuels like diesel and take advantages of the benefits and co-benefits of re-

RENEWABLE ENERGY SOURCES...

...CAN ALTER THE BALANCE OF POWER IN RELATIONS BETWEEN ENERGY EXPORTERS AND IMPORTERS.

renewable energy sources instead. As explained above, by expanding and diversifying its energy sector and reducing its dependence on the fossil fuel sector, South Sudan could achieve significant development gains. These could, in turn, play a role in stabilising the country, providing a peace dividend. Alongside humanitarian organisations, small-scale off-grid renewable energy systems can strengthen the operations of health facilities and NGOs hubs that work in conflict-prone areas.

International efforts to promote sustainable energy

There is no global regime for energy transition processes yet. However, there is a broad spectrum of governance arrangements to guide or inform this process. The international climate negotiations under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) – including the important Paris Agreement – have been a significant reference point for energy transition targets for decades. Given the significance of sustainable energy targets for achieving the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), the climate-energy nexus has been embedded in many national policy processes and can also help to address some of the financing challenges for investing in sustainable energy infrastructures. However, sustainable energies have become a primary focus of international initiatives beyond the climate policy arena – a prominent example being the establishment of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), which has led to increasing international recognition for the topic. The Clean Energy Ministerial for key economies covers different elements of the energy transition process including energy efficiency. Finally, various dialogue formats have been used to systematically raise awareness about the foreign policy co-benefits of improving clean energy access, and to explore the potential for bilateral partnerships and other models for strengthening cooperation. These include the SEforAll Forum, the International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development, the Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week and the Vienna Energy Forum.

Conclusion

Conflicts over energy or a lack of access to it – whether at individual and state level – can affect foreign policy priorities. Both prevention and resilience building can be strengthened by carefully considering the foreign policy entry points for supporting low-carbon energy transition. Foreign policy has a critical role to play in overcoming a lack of access to energy and enabling beneficial cooperation, by supporting processes of energy diversification and transition. Investments in clean energy sources and expanding energy access not only help to improve governmental legitimacy and strengthen the social contract; they may also support the foreign policy and trade interests of countries like Germany, which are in a position to offer technological solutions and are willing to enter into bilateral and multilateral cooperation to promote economic interdependencies.

THERE IS A BROAD SPECTRUM OF GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS...

...TO GUIDE OR INFORM A GLOBAL ENERGY TRANSITION IN THE CLIMATE POLICY ARENA AS WELL AS BEYOND IT.

SDG 11 CITIES

Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

In an increasingly urbanised world, global resilience cannot be achieved without cities. Separating a local from a national or international sustainability issue is increasingly difficult – be it climate change, migration, or economic development. 42 of the world's 100 largest economies are cities¹¹. Local and subnational governments change the landscape of international relations by increasingly participating in global city networks and even signing international agreements¹². At the same time, decentralisation does not necessarily contribute to peace and stability. Such a transition requires the right governance structures to be in place and calls for much stronger policy coordination between central government and decentralised structures. Cities face some of the most challenging trends: rising inequality, population growth, human mobility and natural disaster risks often converge in urban settings. But cities also have the potential to become laboratories for coping with these pressures in innovative ways.

The critical importance of cities for core foreign policy objectives

Around the world, cities become increasingly crucial for national security and stability. Where vulnerability, economic and political relevance and global pressures converge, fragile cities can pose a threat to the stability of entire countries. **City fragility** is not a steady state but occurs due to an aggregation of risks and stresses. Several factors can have a destabilising effect on cities, including the level of inequality, unemployment, crime, pollution, rapid urban population growth, conflict events, and natural hazards. Literature suggests that more cities are fragile than expected. While high levels of city fragility occur primarily in low-income and conflict-affected settings (especially in Asia and Africa), where the pace of urbanisation is fastest, urban fragility is also observable in medium and high-income countries. For instance, over half of European cities have a medium level of fragility¹³.

Cities already host more than half of the world's population, and much of the **population growth** will take place in urban settings in low and middle-income countries across the global South¹⁴. By 2050, 70% of the global population will live in cities¹⁵. These developments often go along with weak governance, poverty, inequality, and marginalisation, decreasing cities resilience to shocks and pressures. While the economic success of cities is often highlighted, the decrease in global



CONVERGING PRESSURES ...

... INCLUDING INEQUALITY, UNEMPLOYMENT, CRIME, POLLUTION, RAPID URBAN POPULATION GROWTH, CONFLICT EVENTS, AND NATURAL HAZARDS CAN INCREASE URBAN FRAGILITY.

¹¹ Toly and Tabory 2016

¹² Tavares 2016

¹³ Muggah 2016

¹⁴ UN 2014

¹⁵ FAO 2017

poverty rates is accompanied by growing income inequalities in 75% of the world's cities in the last two decades¹⁶. Many cities cannot provide enough jobs and livelihoods for growing populations. Moreover, much of the urban growth is expected in **informal settlements** (see target 11.1), where almost one billion people live today. Here, provision of basic rights and services like water, energy, and housing is even more challenging for municipal authorities, which affects many dimensions of the wellbeing of the inhabitants. There is emerging literature showing a relationship between political and economic exclusion experienced by the urban poor and the propensity to be recruited by criminal entities.

The concentration of the population, economic activity, and infrastructure also means that the **impact of environmental change** can be especially devastating in cities. Projections from the UN and other international bodies point to increased frequency and severity of natural disasters occurring in towns and cities (see target 11.5). The impacts of climate change are likely to be compounded by existing vulnerabilities in urban areas. This presents a significant challenge for the international development and humanitarian system; both in the scale and complexity of responding to urban development and disasters and in operating in an environment in which traditional humanitarian actors do not have significant experience and expertise. The built environment and urban planning can play an essential role in the fostering of inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable cities. For example, green urban planning (see target 11.7) has been shown to effectively support adaptation through controlling urban flooding. However, there is a lack of understanding of what these spaces should look like, how they should be developed, and who they should be created by and for whom, especially in fragile and conflict-affected urban settings.

Another significant trend that converges in cities is **migration**. While many developed countries are already highly urbanised, in developing countries urbanisation will continue due to rural-urban migration.¹ We will see increased rural-urban movement within countries, for example, due to decreasing agricultural productivity, more labour migration, and more frequent or longer lasting circular migration patterns. Already today disasters and violence have caused 50 percent of a total of 51 million refugees and internally displaced persons to flee to urban areas¹⁷. With more people moving to cities, and with many cities already facing increased vulnerability to climate and disaster risks as well as experiencing existing social, economic and political fragility, these dynamics will be a major determinant of urban resilience. For instance, a disproportionate share of slum/shack dwellers are migrants¹⁸ and are exposed to more significant climate change impacts¹⁹.

WITH MORE PEOPLE MOVING TO CITIES...

...AND WITH MANY CITIES ALREADY FACING INCREASED VULNERABILITY TO CLIMATE AND DISASTER RISKS AS WELL AS FRAGILITY, THESE DYNAMICS WILL BE A MAJOR DETERMINANT OF URBAN RESILIENCE.

¹⁶ UN-Habitat 2016

¹⁷ De Boer 2015

¹⁸ IOM 2015

¹⁹ UN DESA 2013

Illustration: converging pressures in urban areas of Guatemala

How cities manage the converging pressures will be crucial for stabilisation and countering non-state armed groups. Rapid urbanisation in post-conflict societies with rural youth migrating to the cities is often linked to youth criminality and their increased vulnerability to illicit activities. In Guatemala, rural-urban migration is already putting a strain on the receiving urban areas. Many of the urban areas are largely dominated by youth street gangs ('pandillas' or 'maras') that create a culture of violence. While urban security and anti-crime policies are needed to address this, they are not enough. Connecting the urban poor and those on the periphery of cities to the urban economy, its institutions, governance systems, and services, will be the key to improving livelihood security (see targets 11.1, 11.2, 11.3, 11.a). Some cities already have valuable lessons to share. For instance, the city of Medellin - once one of the most fragile and dangerous cities of the world - has increased urban resilience by expanding public transport to connect formerly neglected areas with the rest of the city and reinstalling social services in these areas.

International efforts to improve urban governance

On the global level, several frameworks now exist along with the 2030 Agenda that offer some real opportunities to promote resilience: the Sendai Framework for Action, the New Urban Agenda and the UN Peacebuilding Commission's Sustaining Peace Agenda. The international community needs to maximise the synergies between these frameworks and to close the gaps with regards to cities, sustainability challenges, and fragility. Foreign policy can help promote this, putting urban fragility risks on the agenda.

Integrated perspectives and approaches to urban development and planning and management that cut across thematic silos and maximise synergies between different sectors will be the keys to improving urban resilience (see target 11.b). Sustainable and resilient urban development requires municipal authorities to plan in a long-term, inclusive and integrated way to overcome silos. It is important to take into account the people, the problems, and the trade-offs that come with 'nexus' approaches. However, in fragile cities, these processes or capacity to implement these processes are often absent or weak, so financial and technical assistance in this area is needed (see target 11.c). At the same time, humanitarian and development agencies might also need to make their approaches more integrated and suitable to the urban level.

Global and national efforts to address conflict and fragility risks must be transposed to the urban scale, as highlighted by SDG11. For this, dynamic multi-level approaches involving all key stakeholders in processes relating to urban development are imperative (see target 11.3). In the humanitarian realm, the need for greater localisation was recognised at the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit. It will require a transformation of the way in which the UN system and many donor agencies operate, and it will need greater contextual knowledge of city actors - mayors, urban dwellers, municipalities and urban conflict

SUSTAINABLE AND RESILIENT URBAN DEVELOPMENT...

... REQUIRES MUNICIPAL AUTHORITIES TO PLAN IN A LONG-TERM, INCLUSIVE AND INTEGRATED WAY. HOWEVER, IN FRAGILE CITIES, THESE PROCESSES ARE OFTEN ABSENT OR WEAK.

dynamics. Sustained engagement with civil society and local communities – with an acknowledgment of the highly heterogeneous nature of urban communities and recognising the multiple identity interests an individual or group may hold – will be particularly valuable in urban environments.

Foreign policy can help leverage the potential of city networks to contribute to sustainable development effectively. In recent years, the number of international city associations has proliferated (more than 125 at present), including ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability, United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), Cities Alliance and C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group (C40)²⁰. While their work in the areas of sustainability and climate was for a long time the most visible, topics such as peacebuilding are gaining traction – a recent study found that 10.6% of networks engage with this topic. Expanding the focus of city networks to address issues related to security, resilience, and fragility more broadly could be beneficial²¹. The Municipal Alliance for Peace in the Middle East, which fosters cooperation between Israeli and Palestinian municipalities, is an example of such an effort.

Conclusion

Making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable as mandated by SGD11 is a tremendous opportunity to contribute to peace. Foreign policy should both look at urban fragility risks in detail and seek to leverage municipal agency to build resilience. For this, connecting policy processes in different sectors, coordinating action on multiple levels of governance and adapting approaches to urban settings, putting a strong emphasis on inclusion of vulnerable urban dwellers, remains imperative.

²⁰ Tavares 2016

²¹ Acuto and Rayner 2016

SDG 12 CONSUMPTION & PRODUCTION

Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

Resource consumption has grown exponentially over the past: between 1970 and 2010, the quantity of extracted materials has tripled²². Not only the overall amount of resources extracted and consumed has risen rapidly, but also the diversity of resources has grown. While half a century ago, only a few materials such as wood, brick, iron, copper, and plastics were in high demand worldwide, today products are more complex and require a wide range of materials.

The consumption of extracted natural resources is divided unequally across the globe. North America and Europe have a very high material footprint, ranging between 20 and 27 tonnes per capita in 2010. In contrast, the material footprint of all other world regions was below 10 tonnes per capita. In Africa, it was even smaller than 3 tonnes per capita²³.

The largest share of the extractive activities takes place in regions where the material footprint is low, especially in Asia and the Pacific and Latin America. In these regions, the increased demand for raw materials has led to an expansion of extraction frontiers as many countries started or increased the exploitation of natural resources. Although it offered an opportunity to increase revenue and boost the export of primary commodities, it also meant that resource extraction is increasingly happening in remote, ecologically sensitive or politically unstable regions where environmental and social standards are often either lacking or poorly implemented²⁴. At the same time, there has also been an increase in the mining of ore with low metal content, which often involves increased use of energy, water, and chemicals.

The critical importance of sustainable consumption and production patterns for core foreign policy objectives

From a foreign policy perspective, sustainable consumption and production patterns are vital in ensuring stable and peaceful development. Food, water, energy and extractive resources such as metals and minerals are the basis for our livelihoods and economies.

Overconsumption and unsustainable practices are having devastating environmental and social impacts on the local level, increasingly leading to tensions and conflicts. Tensions and local discontent arise because of various reasons: competition between different forms of land

²² UNEP 2016

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Stahr et al. 2016



RESOURCE CONSUMPTION HAS GROWN EXPONENTIALLY...

... AND EXTRACTION IS INCREASINGLY HAPPENING IN REMOTE, ECOLOGICALLY SENSITIVE OR POLITICALLY UNSTABLE REGIONS.

use (e.g., agriculture and resource extraction), water availability, pollution and environmental degradation, and displacement. Often the benefits are not distributed in a fair way, and working conditions at extraction sites are harsh beyond acceptance²⁵.

On the global level, consumption and production patterns have increased in complexity and woven a network of co-dependencies. While global supply chains have improved efficiency, they also bear significant risks regarding supply shocks²⁶. At the same time, commodity prices have become more interdependent. Price spikes in the oil and gas sector, whether caused by weather events or political crisis, affect prices of food and other sectors that rely on oil and gas, transmitting shocks across the system. Food price shocks can, in turn, contribute to political instability as seen during the food price crisis of 2008/9 and 2010/11 when high food prices sparked protests around the world. At the same time, supply shocks can increase the competition over resources between countries and lead to tensions over resource access.

Thus, improving the sustainability of resource extraction, production, and consumption does not only ensure the wellbeing and sustainable development of resource producing and consuming countries. From a peace and conflict perspective, these activities can also play an important role in minimizing negative environmental and social impacts and preventing conflicts and tensions that might follow. This links directly to SDG targets 12.1 and 2 that aim at improving sustainable consumption and production by implementing a “10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production, all countries taking action, with developed countries taking the lead, taking into account the development and capabilities of developing countries” and “by 2030 achieve the sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources”.

Companies will play a pivotal role in increasing the sustainability of consumption and production as outlined in SDG target 12.6. It encourages “companies, especially large and transnational companies, to adopt sustainable practices and to integrate sustainability information into their reporting cycle.” Efforts from the US, the EU, and the OECD to increase due diligence of companies mainly related to the so-called conflict minerals are essential starting points.

SDG 12 is a cross-cutting goal which relates to almost all other SDGs. The most apparent links are with those goals addressing specific resources such as food, energy, and water. For example, SDG 2 “Zero Hunger” calls for the resilience of global supply chains and the reduction of price volatility in its target 2.b to “correct and prevent trade restrictions and distortions in world agricultural markets” and target 2.c to “adopt measures to ensure the proper functioning of food commodity markets and their derivatives and facilitate timely access to

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Rüttinger and Sharma 2016

IMPROVING THE SUSTAINABILITY OF RESOURCE EXTRACTION, PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION...

...CAN PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN MINIMIZING NEGATIVE ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL IMPACTS AND PREVENTING CONFLICTS AND TENSIONS THAT MIGHT FOLLOW.

market information, including on food reserves, in order to help limit extreme food price volatility.”

Illustration: conflicts around extractives in the DRC and Peru

The case of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), where government forces, neighbouring countries, and several militia groups fight for dominance, and where both - state and non-state armed groups - use minerals to fund the conflicts, shows how unsustainable consumption and production patterns are linked to violence and undermine stabilisation efforts²⁷.

However, also more stable countries such as Peru and Indonesia face high levels of violence and conflict on the local level. For instance, both the attempts by the Peruvian government to formalise the artisanal gold mining in the Amazon region and to suppress the protests of Andean communities against large-scale mining projects have led to the dire confrontation of the population with the security forces. While this might not escalate into more large-scale violence, it does create pockets of fragility within states. The state of emergency was declared in several Andean provinces of Peru twice (in 2011 and 2012) after violent protests against the Conga project²⁸.

International efforts to improve governance of resource extraction

The international governance landscape on extractive resources (minerals, metals and fossil fuels) is fragmented. There is no overall framework or convention, similar to the three UN “Rio” Conventions – on Biodiversity, Climate Change, and Desertification. The existing conventions focus on specific resources and issues: for instance, the Minamata Convention on Mercury aims at minimising the adverse effects of this metal by seeking to control various products and processes in which it is used, including artisanal and small-scale gold mining. Furthermore, a number of international conventions and frameworks on human rights, labour standards, and the environment exist that are relevant and cover specific aspects of sustainable consumption and production, for example Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Rio Conventions mentioned above, the ILO Conventions, the Convention on Wetlands (or Ramsar Convention).

Financial organisations have played an essential role in ensuring certain fundamental human rights, labour, and environmental standards. In particular, the standards set by the International Finance Cooperation and the World Bank have had a global impact, and therefore an increasing number of banks and financial institutions are using them. In recent years, due diligence in supply chains and in particular regarding minerals and conflict financing has been a very dynamic policy field. Legislation in the US and Europe has been passed to improve the responsible sourcing of minerals of tin, tantalum, tungsten, and gold.

²⁷ BSR 2010

²⁸ Carbonell 2015

THE INTERNATIONAL GOVERNANCE LANDSCAPE...

...ON EXTRACTIVE RESOURCES (MINERALS, METALS AND FOSSIL FUELS) IS FRAGMENTED.

The OECD has issued guidance documents supporting the implementation of these standards.

Furthermore, a broad spectrum of public-private sector standard initiatives and certification schemes emerged to promote the sustainable production and use of specific renewable and non-renewable resources²⁹. While some standard initiatives and certification schemes for renewable resources such as the Forest Stewardship Council or Fair Trade have been around for over 20 years, these initiatives have been expanding in the past ten years to non-renewable resources, for example with the Aluminium Stewardship Initiative.

Conclusion

As countries are transitioning to greener and more sustainable technologies and lifting themselves out of poverty, resource consumption will continue to grow. Improving the sustainability of consumption and production patterns will be vital in ensuring that these transition processes do not create new tensions and challenges. Foreign policy makers and diplomats have several entry points that can help prevent the risks that unsustainable production and consumption patterns create. On the global level, foreign policy and diplomats can play an important role in consolidating the fragmented governance landscape in particular regarding extractive resources. The goal would be to mitigate conflict risks on the local level by improving social and environmental standards, and ensuring the participation of affected population groups, and on the global level to improve the overall resilience of supply chains against supply shocks and crisis.

²⁹ Kickler and Franken 2017

SDG 15 LIFE ON LAND



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

Around 1.6 billion people depend on forests for their livelihood, and about 2.6 billion people rely directly on agriculture.³⁰ Deforestation, land degradation, and unsustainable management of ecosystems threaten those livelihoods and may contribute to resource-related conflicts and social unrest. Shrinking spaces and unjust tenure systems can make parts of the population more receptive to terrorist recruitment or force people to migrate away from places that are no longer hospitable. Sustainable land and forest management thus needs to be an essential part of SDG16 activities on peace, justice, and good institutions.

The critical importance of land, forest, and biodiversity for core foreign policy objectives

As deserts spread, partly due to a changing climate, food insecurity and competition for the remaining fertile land increase. When forests stop providing fibre, fuelwood, shelter, and habitat for wildlife, rural livelihoods fall under pressure. When corrupt elites prevent efforts to manage resources better and share the benefits of the land and the forest equally, social and political conflicts loom. In Sudan, Somalia or the Lake Chad Basin where nomads clash with sedentary farmers, these processes add to an already conflicting and chaotic situation and hence undermine international efforts to de-radicalize communities and combat terrorism. Non-state armed groups are likely to exploit the changing access to and availability of natural resources. Decreasing land and soil productivity may also become one of the drivers of environmental migration, both voluntary and forced. People may migrate in quest of a more liveable and less vulnerable environment³¹, or move as a reaction to risks and tensions posed by conflicts resulting from resource scarcities³².

Fragile societies with weak economic foundations and insufficient state services, where conflicts are latent or manifest, are much more vulnerable to such environmental degradation - be it barren land or loss of forests and species. At the same time, the challenges of implementing SDG 15 in fragile countries and risks of unintended side effects are much more significant. For instance, deforestation and forest degrada-

SUSTAINABLE LAND AND FOREST MANAGEMENT...

...NEEDS TO BE AN ESSENTIAL PART OF SDG16 ACTIVITIES ON PEACE, JUSTICE AND GOOD INSTITUTIONS, ESPECIALLY IN FRAGILE STATES.

³⁰ UN Environment 2018

³¹ FAO 2016

³² Nett and Rüttinger 2017

tion can increase in post-war situations, if forest territory earlier in control of armed rebels becomes accessible. Sustainable forest and land management in fragile and conflict contexts thus require a different, specifically conflict-sensitive approach.

Foreign policy can play a critical role in supporting sustainable management of land and forest resources by facilitating data exchange across borders, supporting the implementation of key international agreements in international fora, investing in and co-designing local restoration programmes and support community-based environmental stewardship. By promoting and supporting development plans that integrate conservation efforts and by investing in modern land management technologies, structural drivers of human insecurity can be eliminated, while at the same time creating resilience against slow and sudden onset disasters such as droughts and floods, which again can contribute to forced displacement³³.

The UN Security Council has called for risk assessment and management strategies that include coordinating policies, strategies, and programs addressing humanitarian needs, livelihood insecurity, climate change adaptation, and peace building. However, these considerations have not been adequately integrated into foreign/humanitarian policy processes yet.

Forests deliver a range of services to humans. They support the freshwater cycle (SDG6), infiltrate soils, and increase the overall resilience of landscapes and communities. They also offer habitat to biodiversity, which in turn provides essential services for human well-being and influences societies' ability to alleviate poverty (SDG1), ensure food security (SDG2) and more generally, withstand shocks and respond to various disturbances. Conserving, managing and restoring forests and their services (addressed under target 15.2) are not only necessary to reduce CO2 emissions (SDG13), but will maintain and in some cases reinstate livelihoods and biodiversity, and help in preventing and strengthening the foundation of a socially and economically stable society (SDG16). The same holds true for combatting desertification and land restoration (addressed under target 15.3).

Biological diversity, which is addressed under target 15.5, provides essential services for human well-being and influences societies' ability to alleviate poverty, ensure food security and more generally, withstand shocks and respond to various disturbances. Combatting the alarming trend of biodiversity loss and broadening the participation in decision-making processes for biodiversity conservation can, therefore, be a means to build peaceful and resilient societies. Besides, illegally sourced and traded wildlife products are often used by radical organizations as a source of income³⁴ and indirectly endanger security³⁵.

³³ IDMC 2018

³⁴ UNODC 2016

³⁵ e.g. the so-called "Sutherland Report", submitted to the UN General Assembly (UN General Assembly 2017)

FORESTS...

... MAINTAIN LIVELIHOODS AND BIODIVERSITY. THEY OFTEN BUILD THE FOUNDATION OF A SOCIALLY AND ECONOMICALLY STABLE SOCIETY

BIODIVERSITY...

...PROVIDES ESSENTIAL SERVICES FOR HUMAN WELL-BEING AND INFLUENCES SOCIETIES' ABILITY TO WITHSTAND SHOCKS

Illustration: poor forest governance fuels conflict in Myanmar

Forced migration of more than hundreds of thousands of people is a result of more than six decades of armed conflict and recurring outbursts of violence. Although Myanmar is in the process of negotiating peace, the southeast of the country is still facing acute humanitarian vulnerability with little prospects for stable livelihoods³⁶. How is this linked to SDG15? Myanmar has the third highest deforestation rate in the world, losing about 2% of its forests per year³⁷ due to unsustainable logging and extensive agricultural development. Land property rights in forested regions are poorly developed, and undemocratic governance and mismanagement of forest resources have fuelled political grievances and non-state actors taking control of territories using violence. The perception of unequal distribution of timber revenues sustains the tensions³⁸. For a democratic transition and successful peace negotiations, the fair management of Myanmar's natural resources is vital. Progress towards sustainable forest management (SDG target 15.2) and ensuring the conservation of mountain ecosystems, including their biodiversity, to enhance their capacity to provide benefits that are essential for sustainable development (SDG target 15.5) would yield high peace dividends.

Conclusion

Protecting life on land is essential to securing livelihoods of many populations around the world. Deforestation, desertification and biodiversity loss increase the grievances, exacerbate conflict and can be a driver of migration. Protection and fair distribution of natural resources provided by functioning terrestrial ecosystems is thus an important part of reducing conflict, especially in fragile societies, while conservation activities themselves can be a vehicle for building peace. Foreign policy can benefit from analysing the complex interaction of life on land and conflict and use its unique tools to set off positive dynamics of better resource management and socio-political gains, with a view to building resilience.

³⁶ Norwegian Institute of International Affairs 2018

³⁷ EEAS 2018

³⁸ Finaz and Wah 2016

SDG 17 GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS



Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

The SDG 17 calls for getting the foundations right for substantial progress on the 2030 Agenda. It includes key conditions for successful sustainability action that are relevant across all actor groups, and most of them depend on international cooperation. However, from a foreign policy perspective that focuses on (global) geopolitical and (local) conflict cycle implications, some targets stand out. Finance and trade flows that secure an economic and environmental basis for resilience need to inform promotion of foreign trade and investment (targets 17.1-17.5, 17.10-17.12). Policy and institutional coherence (targets 17.13-17.15) and multi-stakeholder partnerships (targets 17.16-17.17) are essential for making a foreign policy contribution to the 2030 Agenda, particularly, to prevent conflict and cope with geopolitical shifts.

Finance & Trade

The extent to which international finance and trade affect both sustainable development opportunities of states and global commons must not be underestimated³⁹. These complex dynamics transcend national boundaries and governance levels, challenging a state-centred world order. Besides, sustainable trade and investment are essential for global peace and stability. Promotion of foreign trade and investment (and economic diplomacy in general) has been gaining importance during the last decades⁴⁰, has been facilitating economic relations, e.g., through conferences and support of delegation trips, and has become an essential part of diplomacy. Many interest groups are involved with forming trade and investment policies, which can be highly sensitive and include points on balancing strong domestic interests. However, economic foreign policy needs to be guided to a greater extent by resilience and stability priorities as opposed to the mere facilitation of international economic relations between different actors. This also means actively promoting sustainable development.

Currently, trade and investment flows often get locked in unsustainable dynamics, making it more difficult for poorer and fragile countries to develop sustainable, productive economies while fuelling environmental degradation⁴¹. This can exacerbate and prolong conflict, undermining progress on SDG 16. Thus, to achieve SDGs, we need to

ECONOMIC FOREIGN POLICY ...

...NEEDS TO BE GUIDED BY PRIORITIES OF RESILIENCE AND STABILITY TO A GREATER EXTENT.

³⁹ Chakraborty and Sacchidananda 2013

⁴⁰ Woolcock and Bayne 2013

⁴¹ Chakraborty and Sacchidananda 2013, UNEP 2017

transform global trade and investment. International trade regulations (e.g. WTO regime), regional (e.g. EU trade agreements with other regions) and bilateral trade relations need to promote a sustainable use of developing countries' natural assets and provide them with a sound economic basis for sustainable development⁴², fostering local development and opportunities for stability and peace. The coherence of investment and sustainability policies needs to be strengthened in export promotion, investment protection, development and humanitarian finance.

This requires a transformation at an enormous scale that will impact geopolitics. Making international investment flows compatible with planetary boundaries will likely bring about devaluation of many national assets as well as a major shift in economic structures in developing and fragile countries, for example, certain forms of agricultural production or extractive activities will change drastically or stop⁴³. Without proactive multilateral and multilevel transition governance, this can threaten geopolitical stability⁴⁴. To minimise stability risks and to be able to steer these highly complex internationalised processes, there is a pronounced need for international solutions. At the same time, if guided accordingly, such transformation can provide significant peace dividends, giving fragile societies the means to satisfy the needs of their populations in the long term and improving institutions as mandated by SGD 16.

Policy and institutional coherence

Foreign policy must work to improve coherence in external action to promote sustainability as well as contribute to resilience and geopolitical perspectives to sustainable development activities. Policy and institutional coherence is a central requirement for implementing the 2030 Agenda. Firstly, all political actors need to prioritise the 2030 Agenda and seek for effective instruments to implement it. Secondly, sustainability in general and implementing the 2030 Agenda, in particular, is per se a balancing act: the overall purpose is only served by achieving all of the different goals together. Inevitable trade-offs thus need to be resolved. For instance, one cannot combat poverty by endangering life on land or promote education that hampers gender equality. Simultaneously achieving the goals of the 2030 Agenda requires understanding how negative and positive co-impacts emerge in specific contexts, as the interpretation of goal achievement, concrete measures, and possible feedback loops will differ significantly between countries, sectors, etc. Without increasing policy and institutional coherence, there is little prospect of societies accomplishing this complex exercise. Coherence is also closely linked to the institution-related targets of SDG 16.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT NEEDS TO BECOME A COMPASS OF ALL FOREIGN POLICY...

...RATHER THAN AN 'ADD-ON' TOPIC, AS IT IS NEEDED TO SUSTAIN PEACE.

⁴² OECD 2015, GCEC 2016

⁴³ Ivleva et al. 2017, Rautner et al. 2016

⁴⁴ de Jong 2017

From a foreign policy perspective, we can infer the following points: 1) sustainable development needs to become a compass of all foreign policy rather than an 'add-on' topic, as it is needed to sustain peace; 2) it is important to increase the understanding of how priorities of peace and stability interact with the implementation on the 2030 Agenda; 3) it is crucial to identify the actions that can make the implementation of the 2030 Agenda compatible with these priorities and 4) these actions need to be coherently implemented across the actors' spectrum.

While many actors are involved in the external action, foreign policy has the task to lead the way, shape strategies and bring together national priorities and international challenges at hand. Inherently political interaction and professional diplomatic networks cannot be replaced, making foreign policy a suitable driver of policy integration needed to enhance sustainable development in the international realm. Diplomats can help mainstream conflict-sensitive sustainability action into peacebuilding, humanitarian aid and if the respective responsibility lies with them, development cooperation. They also need to integrate sustainable development throughout the strands and forums of foreign policy.

For this, different instruments are available. A portfolio screening, specific to the responsibilities of a given country's foreign affairs ministry, can be an appropriate starting point. Overarching planning divisions or working groups of ministries of foreign affairs can be tasked with portfolio integration – provided they receive sufficient backing from the leadership. Aligning foreign policy spending with sustainable development goals is a powerful integration instrument. Training activities, tailored to the different target groups, present another major opportunity to mainstream sustainable development into foreign policy.

Multi-stakeholder partnerships

Strong cross-sectoral partnerships and strong multilateral governance are necessary for implementing the SDGs. Both aspects are crucial from a foreign policy perspective. Making the full use of the diplomatic toolbox is essential to create a broad backing and enable effective, innovative partnerships for sustainable development. But a global sustainable transition is likely to bring about power shifts, with new governance challenges, risk complexes, and other unintended consequences. Strengthening multilateral interaction is essential to being able to cope with this, making sure the international community comes together in the process instead of drifting apart.

Implementing the 2030 Agenda is a whole-of-society effort rather than a top-down task exclusively for national governments. Fully recognising this cross-sectoral dimension can also allow for maximising the peace dividend of sustainable development, promoting SDG 16. Foreign policy can play an important facilitating role for partnerships with investment institutions, the private sector, and the civil society. Balancing of interests is central to a sustainable transformation, as it has distributional implications, that is, creates winners and losers or faces opposition by vested interests. Where these impli-

IMPLEMENTING THE 2030 AGENDA IS A WHOLE-OF- SOCIETY TASK

cations are international, diplomacy has a pivotal role to play and is called upon to tap into its capabilities to seek a balance of interests for ambitious action. One of the specific modes is brokering or mediation: here, foreign policy can help achieve an agreement on contested and conflict issues, for instance, in the case of transboundary water agreements.

Moreover, foreign policy needs to come to terms with broader trends of change in international relations. The framework of international engagement includes multiple levels of forums and arenas. The boundaries between actors that we see as 'domestic' and 'foreign' are permeable. Managing heterogeneous, fluid and often complex networks is indispensable⁴⁵. In regards to this, foreign policy's role in securing effective multilateral arrangements to promote SDG implementation, cushioning risks, is also vital.

Joint action and pooling capacities are an essential part of accelerating a transition. These can include:

- Alliances of front-runner states that seek to accelerate specific technologies and alliances between front-runners and laggards to help the latter to advance;
- Regional alliances for cooperation on transboundary issues or topics of joint concern (e.g., regional water and energy cooperation, insurance initiatives);
- Capacity-building partnerships (e.g., NDC Partnership, research collaboration).

Illustration: entry points for sustainable finance and trade

Trade affects ecosystem services and economic complexity of states including factors such as natural resource dependence or technological capacities, showing its potential to influence resilience. Trade arrangements could support or disrupt local food production in developing and fragile countries. In 2015, WTO members agreed to eliminate agricultural export subsidies, which is considered the most significant reform of agriculture trade rules in the history of WTO⁴⁶. A regional example is the EU's association agreement with Central America with provisions to foster sustainable development through trade⁴⁷. The volatility of commodity prices is another major risk for fragile societies. To secure food supply, there is an interim agreement at the WTO not to challenge public stockholding programmes as trade distortion⁴⁸.

Export promotion efforts can concentrate on sustainable technologies. Trade regimes and agreements can promote trade in environmental goods and services, e.g., by tackling tariff and non-tariff barriers. These negotiations are a complex diplomatic task: the lists of products that are considered sustainable and receive preferential tariff treat-

TRADE AND FINANCE POLICIES NEED TO SUPPORT RESILIENCE...

...ON GLOBAL, REGIONAL AND BILATERAL LEVELS.

⁴⁵ Cooper et al. 2013, Heine 2013, Hocking et al. 2012

⁴⁶ WTO, no date

⁴⁷ CIFCA 2016

⁴⁸ WTO, no date

ment are contested, as this benefits or harms trade balances of specific countries⁴⁹.

The criteria applied by finance institutions should ensure investment patterns consistent with SDGs. For example, the OECD restricted export credit finance that is directed to coal power plants. International investment agreements (IIAs) should not undermine national environmental regulations or sustainable taxation as private enterprises often receive broad rights to go to court with national governments over their regulation⁵⁰. International investments should not incentivise resource use against resilience principles, e.g., land or water grabs. Sustainability criteria need to play a much stronger role in commodity investment, while investors should closely monitor climate and environmental risks and make them transparent⁵¹.

Illustration: EU Global Strategy for a more coherent external action

The EU Global Strategy seeks a consistent security agenda based on resilience and sustainability. The strategy highlights the “notion of a joined-up Union” working across policy sectors, an integrated approach to conflicts and the importance of internal-external nexus. The strategy states: “A prosperous Union also hinges on an open and fair international economic system and sustainable access to the global commons. The EU will foster the resilience of its democracies. Consistently living up to our values will determine our external credibility and influence⁵².” Already in the drafting phase, the EEAS gathered input from several Directorates-General (as well as from the civil society and the private sector)⁵³.

Illustration: harnessing innovative partnerships and approaches to diplomacy

Ad-hoc coalitions: Often, policies such as renewable energy deployment are promoted by groups of states based on a joint understanding of a specific issue, but not supported by a binding agreement or a clear institutional structure (e.g., Mission Innovation). Ad-hoc coalitions offer excellent opportunities to tackle specific barriers to sustainable action as they are flexible in structure, based on a voluntary commitment of like-minded actors and concentrate on particular areas of work. They can kick-start action through several front-runners and decrease the barriers for others.

The “ecosystem approach” of the EU Climate Diplomacy is based on the assumption that climate action and its ambition level are formed by an ecosystem of domestic and external actors from politics, business, administration, civil society, academia and the media. To promote climate action, diplomacy should harness the potential of the whole ecosystem rather than focussing on policymakers. For instance, during

**FOREIGN POLICY
CAN HARNESS
THE POTENTIAL
OF INNOVATIVE
PARTNERSHIPS...**

**...SUCH AS AD-HOC
COALITIONS AND EU'S
“ECOSYSTEM DIPLO-
MACY”.**

⁴⁹ Bacchus 2016, Droege et al. 2016

⁵⁰ SRU 2016

⁵¹ HLEG 2018, WWF 2012

⁵² EU 2016

⁵³ Tocci 2016

the EU Week of Climate Diplomacy, the EU Delegation to Australia organised a broad variety of events on climate security with over 1,000 participants to bring different parts of the “climate-ecosystem” together⁵⁴.

Conclusion

Foreign policy has a substantial role to play in leveraging broad partnerships for sustainable development, providing coherent strategies for states’ external action and making international finance and trade more compatible with sustainability and resilience. Implementing SDG 17 also offers opportunities to strengthen multilateralism and improve international policy effectiveness. In the end, SDG 17 embodies what foreign policy is about – building and strengthening partnerships for mutual benefit and understanding.

⁵⁴ Wolters and Schaller 2018

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Download the Paper

In this annex, we provide a more detailed analysis of the SDGs under review to complement the paper: A foreign policy perspective on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Please download the main paper from www.climate-diplomacy.org/publications.

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