



# Strategies for Implementing Sustainable Development Goals in Azerbaijan and Role of Science Diplomacy



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## Introduction

The United Nations adopted unanimously the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015, and presently that is the responsibility and commitment of the UN Member States to work for achieving them.

SDGs envisage 17 goals and 69 targets to be reached by 2030 form a pathway for UN Member -States and their Governments for smooth adaption to present circumstances and bettering to new challenges. SDGs are expected to develop and supplement to positive outcomes and lessons of the MDGs.

It is important that all countries participating in this global process should implement relevant strategies, as their effectiveness would be in their primary interest. Timely and effective accomplishment of SDGs we would be able to raise international trust in the UN and its ability for benefiting its Member-States. Meanwhile economic and social policies and conditions can be improved in respective countries by contributing to better living conditions of the people as sustainable development is quite wider in its scopes, encompassing socio-economic policies, health, education, poverty reduction, and many other fields of everyday life.

SDGs should be used as an instrument to achieve present goals as well as to gain a good first-hand experience during the process, which should also be sustainable and useful in future.

## Implementation of SDGs

As far as the process of implementation of the SDGs in Azerbaijan is concerned, it should be noted that the Coordination Council has been established in Azerbaijan in November 2016 to organize

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and coordinate work of the aiming Governmental agencies for achieving SDGs. Within the Council, headed by the Deputy Prime Minister, there are a number of Working Groups with specific goals. These groups perform their respective works and meet periodically to assess different activities undertaken, share ideas on future priorities and set out new plans. Every Ministry involved in the process prepares its own Plan of Action as well as report on the work done to be discussed at the general meetings of the Council. The Working Groups report to the Council periodically to manage the overall implementation process and monitoring wherever and whenever necessary.

Azerbaijan is preparing its National Voluntary Report (NVR) on SDGs, and has also learned from the experience of other UN Member States in prioritizing SDGs and the means of achieving them. Some of countries choose starting point of the achieved MDGs others commence only with the new goals, adopted in 2015. Circumstances and ways to achieve goals are probably more or less same in the developing countries, and there is an opportunity to learn from one another for best practices during the implementation and reporting of processes.

After the first stage of reporting by the Member-States on the status of implementation of SDGs, their assessment would be of the work already done and its effectiveness as well for setting new and more tailored made ways to achieve them. It is obvious that permanent monitoring mechanism is essential for timely and effective implementation of the SDGs at the national and international levels

## Development Plans and SDGs

Ensuring sustainable economic growth and improving employment opportunities are among the top priorities of the Government of Azerbaijan, and constitute the major part of ongoing economic reforms. Since the last many years, employment opportunities have improved and tens of thousands of new work places have been created and it is an ongoing move. Sustainable economic growth could be managed well in oil and gas sectors. Presently, the main

objective is to ensure shifting country's economy from energy resources to more diversified model including agriculture, industry, tourism, information and communication technologies and others. To perform better and more sustainably in this regard, the economic reforms should permanently integrate and effectively use SDGs in developmental policies.

Responsibility and engagement of all players of the process is prerequisite for achieving expected goals at the national and international levels. Negotiation skills with the governmental officials participating in the SDGs implementation process should be improved for better participation in forthcoming activities in the SDGs framework at different levels.

## Science Diplomacy for SDG Implementation

As for the scope of the very course on the science diplomacy, the participants should closely consider the way India has performed its development strategies with the assistance of science diplomacy and used new experience at the bilateral level for negotiations among concerned governments besides multilateral cooperation within regional and international organizations. Diplomacy should play an important role within the countries to convince people in the government that achieving SDGs is not just reporting to the United Nations and more work for them, but the new instrument would prioritize their activities and would escalate their performance in a better way. The Governments need to learn how to better utilize this new tool within their internal policies to ensure sustainable socio-economic growth.

## Conclusion

There is an increasing thrust for Azerbaijan to align its development plans with UN-Sustainable Development Goals. In the course of this process, the country has recognised targeted plans. Science Diplomacy that India has taken forward would be a good lesson for Azerbaijan to leverage its growth trajectory in all sectors to drive Azerbaijan to accelerate growth rate.