

Linking environmental emergency with the reduction of inequalities :

A universal need for transformation with specific national pathways

The Universal Aspiration of the SDGs

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Challenges to assess how Agenda 2030 has been implemented, particularly on *inclusiveness*

- 2015 : the finest products of (as *inclusive* as possible) **multilateral** negotiation and coordination
 - Paris Agreement
 - Addis Abeba Action Agenda
 - Agenda 2030 and SDGs
- Compared to MDGs, a much more **politically ambitious project** a « miracle » that ***inclusiveness*** is so explicitly present ?
 - Major efforts from civil society and research, notably SDG10 inequalities
 - The rights based approach is not present enough
- What happened since 2015 – **multilateralism endangered** ?
 - Implementation efforts, but also questioning rules based system
 - Geopolitical tensions increased – structural trends revealed
 - Covid Crisis – systemic risks exposed and experienced, need for cooperation



Promises of Agenda 2030, still (more) valid (than ever) in the context of recent crises

- **Interactions** between SDGs are essential
 - Tackle the root causes of the vulnerability of our global socio-ecological system...
 - ...and of the unequal exposure to risk
- « **Leaving no one behind** » - We will not reach inequality reduction and poverty reduction without tackling biodiversity degradation and climate change
 - Dealing with trade offs and synergies
 - Understanding the **root causes of unsustainability** in each specific situation, and how the whole system needs to change
 - But **there is no instructions manual in Agenda 2030** (some more guidance in GSDR)
- **Universality** is key : all countries need to **transform**, for their own sake
 - Each country faces specific challenges, **specific path-dependencies** to a model of development, inertia in institutions, political factors of resistance to transformations
 - But in each country it is about a radical transformation, which will face both socio technical lock ins and political resistance

Beyond « just transition », jointly tackling inequalities and environmental degradation

Numerous examples of the necessity to analyse **past and current unsustainability patterns and trends**, and how they link environmental degradation, inequalities and exclusion

- Latin America, CEPAL (*La ineficiencia de la desigualdad*, 2018)

Inequalities are embedded in extractivist models of growth, oriented on the export of raw materials, that is also causing the major threats to the environment (biodiversity, pesticides, deforestation)

- South Africa, *Deep Decarbonization Pathways* (ddpinitiative.org ; 2015)

Inequalities are rooted in the dominance of the mining sector in the structure of the economy, that maintains an important proportion of the black workforce in a poverty trap

- Mali, *Agricultural and rural transformation pathways* (Cirad, 2017; Schwoob et al., 2018)

Labor intensity of growth in the AgriFood sector will be key, and not only productivity of land, to face demographic growth and ensure decent jobs for all, and to fight desertification.

- *Coal transitions* (coaltransitions.org, 2018)

Jobs are also threatened because of tech progress and competition, preparedness is key

17 goals but 6 transformations pathways : recent conceptual tools (2019)

- **Pathways** to 2030 and 2050 – a sequence of progressive but radical transformation
- **6 entry points** to tackle jointly social and environmental unsustainability trends

6 transformations of **GSDR** (2019)

- Human well-being and capabilities
- Sustainable and just economies
- Food systems and nutrition patterns
- Energy decarbonization and universal access
- Urban and peri-urban development
- Global environmental commons

- Sachs, Schmidt Traub, Mazzucato, Messner, Nakicenovic, Rockström (2019, Nature Sust.)
 - Education, gender and inequality
 - Health, Wellbeing and Demography
 - Energy decarbonization and sustainable industry
 - Sustainable food, land, water and oceans
 - Sustainable cities and communities
 - Digital revolution for sustainable development

- In each of these « subsystems » or « entry points »
 - Win/win solutions possible for the LT
 - **Avoid being trapped in path dependency and enable bifurcation**
 - Assess the **distance to transformation**
 - Distance to target
 - Blocking factors and levers of change

What political theory of change behind Agenda 2030 ?

- A theory of change (1) that is **not explicit**, and (2) that is the best that can be designed in terms of **realpolitik** and strategy
- Acknowledging the **come back of the national state**
 - Which does not mean underestimating the power of transnational actors
 - But insists on the national political space as being critical for citizens to feel some sovereignty over their destiny and choices, and to feel protected / very rapid changes
- Organising a **two level game**
 - **Each gvt states how they expect to reach SDGs** : A sequence of investments, avoiding getting locked into an unsustainable devt pathway
 - **(National) civil society and science** can criticise both the end point of the pathway, and the path chosen to get there, the insufficient progress on each of the transformations
 - **Regional scale discussions** can help identify common challenges and solutions (ex. biodiversity in Latin America) and reinforce political space for civil society and science
 - HLPF : An international « **peer review/pressure** » **mechanism** : public policy evaluation, pointing the blocking factors, socio technical lock ins, but also exposing political resistance
 - « name and shame » (civil society) + independent scientific assessment (GSDR, IPCC, IPBES..)
 - Identify **needs for international cooperation** : learning process + common levers of change (trade, for instance)

- Now everything is (conceptually) in place
- ... but we are already 5 years after the adoption of Agenda 2030...
- ... and the situation has worsened on some of the SDGs

- HLPF – revise its functioning
- Decade to accelerate action

What has happened since 2015 ?

- Generally : overcoming policy silos within government
- In some cases : efforts to put Agenda 2030 at the heart of major macroeconomic and political and planning decisions
- Donors and funders : alignment with Agenda 2030
 - Climate alignment, Biodiversity alignment
 - Inequality alignment
 - From **do no harm** (Envt and social safeguards) to **do good** (Accelerating the 6 transformations)
- Specific examples of Agenda 2030 as a political project : example of Colombia and peace agreement
- Overall :
 - Emphasis on creating the policy processes and implementation institutions
 - Distance to target has not decreased significantly since 2015
 - Diagnosis of the reasons why is still insufficiently shared

The EU case

- One key lesson about Agenda 2030 :
Its existence and availability is critical when the political debate is ripe
- Before EU elections 2019
 - Despite the mobilisation of a coalition of civil society for Agenda 2030, no interest of European Commission in SDGs, impossibility to include them in the Semester
- After the elections : the **EU Green Deal**
 - Radical transformation objectives (climate neutrality, zero pollution, radical reduction in material footprint, biodiversity degradation stopped), and consistent set of policies in critical sectors
 - « industrial policies » organised around functions in society (food, mobility...) not existing industries
 - **Semester** includes SDGs : debt, growth, employment + progress on transformations
- With the Covid crisis : assessing **recovery plans** (jobs and equity, cohesion, resilience, sustainability) : **using the Semester, including SDGs**

The role and political space of global science and civil society

Inclusiveness : Two critical pillars for the political theory of change to function

- Independent assessment of progresses organised at all governance scales (Local, national, regional, global)
- Political space for civil society linking national and global legitimacy

On the environmental side : different attempts to complement existing governance

- Regional agreements on participation : Aarhus (UNECE), Escazu (ECLAC)
 - Global Pact for the Environment => Stockholm + 50 ?

The example of food security : UN CFS, HLPE, Civil society mechanism

On the social side : the example of ILO

- Multilateral organisation not restricted to gvts but including social partners
- Universal access to social protection as the key to unlock transformations

Inclusiveness between countries

Navigating geopolitics

- What is the strength of multilateral institutions in the current context ?
- **Recognizing power, but also rules and people**
- Different visions of a rules based system, but Agenda 2030 still the common thread
- *How to hold China and the EU both accountable to Agenda 2030*
- Trade, investment, finance : at the heart of strategic discussions
- *EU China Leipzig Summit postponed : finding ground for adversative AND cooperative conversations*
- No unique leadership : **distributed leadership**, strategic ad hoc coalitions, not restricted to governments

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!

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