Is North-East Asia on Track to Achieve the SDGs by 2030?
Insights from the SDG Index & Dashboards 2018 Report

Keynote Presentation at the Northeast Asia SDSN Forum on the SDGs organized by the sub-regional SDSNs, hosted by National University of Mongolia supported by the SDSN Global and the UNESCAP-ENEA

Held on Friday, Sept. 7, 09:00am-12:30pm, at NUM Library Rm., Ulaanbaatar

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Chairman, SDSN Korea;
Leading Professor, State University of New York (SUNY) Korea
1. Issues for Discussion

1. How is the state of implementation of the SDGs in the respective countries? Difficulties in achieving some Goals? What are priority problems, tasks, and recommended solutions?

2. To what extent have the respective governments institutionalized the SDGs implementation mechanism?

3. Is there room for international cooperation among our countries in terms of policy actions and joint research?
2. UN SDSN & “SDG Index and Dashboards 2018”

www.sdgindex.org

A global network of knowledge institutions on sustainable development issues directed by Prof. Jeffrey Sachs, Special Advisor for the UN Secretary-General on MDGs/SDGs, under the auspices of the UN Secretary-General

www.unsdsn.org

Consists of national and regional networks around the world, including SDSN Korea, SDSN Japan, Tsinghua University Institute of SDGs (TUSDG), SDSN Hong Kong, to be joined by SDSN Mongolia.

Since 2016, SDSN and Bertelsmann Stiftung annually publish “SDG Index & Dashboards”

www.sdgindex.org
“From Summits to Solutions: Innovations in Implementing the Sustainable Development Goals”
Brookings Institution, 2018

Chapter 1. The Need for Innovations to Implement the Sustainable Development Goals,
By Raj M. Desai, Hiroshi Kato, Homi Kharas, and John W. McArthur

Chapter 12. A Canadian North Star: Crafting an Advanced Economy Approach to the Sustainable Development Goals,
By Margaret Biggs and John W. McArthur
4. The SDG Index of Selected Countries
Japan (15) 78.5, S. Korea (19) 77.4, China (54) 70.1, Russia (63) 68.9, Mongolia (95) 63.9
5. China’s Country Profile: Performance by Indicator

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Note</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Poverty</td>
<td>Income</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>Low income and poverty are still major challenges in China.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Health</td>
<td>Life expectancy</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>Improving life expectancy is crucial for China's development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Education</td>
<td>Literacy rate</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>A high literacy rate is essential for a skilled workforce.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Housing</td>
<td>Housing affordability</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>Affordable housing is a significant issue in urban China.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1 Pollution</td>
<td>Air quality</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Air pollution is a major concern in China's cities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1 Governance</td>
<td>Transparency</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Transparency is essential for good governance.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Keynote for NEA SDSN Forum

2018-09-07
6. Normalizing Indicators to 0~100 Scale for Goal Score

Setting the best outcome and the worst outcome

Setting the upper bound for each indicator using a 5-step decision tree:

1. Use absolute quantitative thresholds in SDGs and targets: e.g. zero poverty, when available.
2. Where no explicit SDG target is available, apply the principle of “leave no one behind” to set upper bound to universal access or zero deprivation for the following types of indicators: measurement of extreme poverty (e.g., wasting), public service coverage (e.g., access to contraception), access to basic infrastructure.
3. Where science-based targets exist that must be achieved by 2030 or later, use these to set 100% upper bound.
4. Where several countries already exceed an SDG target, use the average of the top 5 performers (e.g. child mortality).
5. For all other indicators, use the average of the top performers.

Setting the lower bound:

To remove the effect of extreme values, which can skew the results of a composite index, the OECD’s approach of censoring the data at the bottom 2.5th percentile as the minimum value for the normalization was applied.
7. China (70.1, 54/156): SDG Dashboard, SDG Trends & Scores by SDG
8. Color Indicators of SDG Trends
“The SDG Index and Dashboards 2018”

Figure 22 | The 5-arrow system for denoting SDG Trends

Figure 23 | Graphic representation of the SDG Trends methodology

- Decreasing
- Stagnating
- Moderately Increasing
- On track
- Maintaining SDG achievement
9. China (70.1, 54/156): SDG Dashboard, SDG Trends & Scores by SDG
10. Japan (78.5, 15/156): SDG Dashboard & SDG Trends
11. S. Korea (77.4, 19/156): SDG Dashboard & SDG Trends
12. Russia (68.9, 63/156): SDG Dashboard & SDG Trends
13. Mongolia (63.9, 95/156): SDG Dashboard & SDG Trends
14. DPRK: SDG Dashboard & SDG Trends
SDG Index value not calculated due to lack of sufficient data
### 15. Number of SDG Indicators by Policy Trend by Country

Policy trends classified by arbitrary judgment by this speaker in cases of ambiguous or missing color coding of indicators.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Achieved or On track</th>
<th>Acceleration needed</th>
<th>Breakthrough needed</th>
<th>Reversal required</th>
<th>Data wholly missing by Indicator</th>
<th>Number of Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>85</td>
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<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Korea</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mongolia</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DPRK</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
16. Challenges of Implementation: 5 Core Principles
UN System Staff College

Universality
Applicable in all countries, in all contexts, and at all times, subject to CBDR

Leaving no one behind
Reach out to all people in need and deprivation, wherever they are, in a manner which targets their specific challenges and vulnerabilities → An unprecedented demand for local and disaggregated data to analyse outcomes and track progress.

Interconnectedness and indivisibility
Treat SDGs in their entirety instead of approaching them as a menu list of individual goals from which they pick and choose.

Inclusiveness
Calls for the participation of all segments of society—irrespective of their race, gender, ethnicity, and identity—to contribute to its implementation.

Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships
Mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the achievement of SDGs in all countries.
17. The Ultimate Challenge: Institutionalizing the Implementation Mechanism Geared to 5 Core Principles

Figure 2 | National coordination and implementation mechanisms for the SDGs in G20 countries, 2018

Composite score from 0 (lowest) to 1 (highest)

Note: Based on the sum of answers to q1, q2, q3, q4, q5, q6, q6a, q7, q8, q9, q10, q11, q12, q14. Best response option was allocated 1 point, intermediate response 0.5 points, and worst response 0 points. Responses computed on a scale from 0-14 were rescaled on a 0-1 scale. Data reported correspond to the situation as of May 2018.

Source: Authors' analysis
18. Some of the SDSN-Bertelsmann’s G20 Survey Questions on Institutionalization of the Implementation Mechanisms for the SDGs

Has the Head of State mentioned in a public and official context, endorsing the SDGs and stating how the country plans to operationalize their implementation?

Did the government map the alignment of existing national strategies with the SDGs?

Did the central government adopt an action plan to implement the SDGs?

Did the National Statistical Institute identify official key national indicators to monitor SDGs implementation? If so, how many indicators are included in this list?

Has the National Statistical Office been officially mandated to lead the work on data and indicators for the SDGs?

Since January 1st 2016, has there been a comprehensive assessment coordinated by the central government looking at where the country stands with regards to its distance to achieving the SDGs?

Have key national priorities been identified, and explicitly mentioned, regarding the implementation of the SDGs?

Is there a lead central government unit responsible for supporting the implementation of the SDGs across line ministries and agencies?

Does the latest central budget reflect incremental SDG investment needs?
19. Key National Indicators to Monitor SDGs Implementation Identified?

Figure 4 | Did the National Statistical Institute or any mandated central/federal institutions identify official key national indicators to monitor the implementation of the SDGs?

Source: Authors’ analysis
None of our three countries have completed the establishment of the SDGs implementation mechanism subject to the 5 core principles of the SDG Agenda – the governance arrangements for SDGs implementation.

The priority task is to build this mechanism. Doing so requires the meeting of two processes – the top-down process led by HOS and the bottom-up process led by the civil society and the private sector – in order to overcome the societal inertia.

The knowledge institutions of the respective countries should contribute to both processes with research and public education of key issues and solutions, based on international collaboration among them.