In addressing the World Bank in Sept 2014, Professor Jeffrey Sachs quoted J.F. Kennedy: “We hold in our mortal hands the ability to end all forms of human poverty and all forms of life.”

LESSONS FROM Millennium Development Goals

1. Value of Millennium Development Goals
Bill Gates has stated that the Millennium Development Goals have become a type of global report card for the fight against poverty for the 15 years from 2000 to 2015, generating incentives to improve performance. For more than a decade they have remained a focus of global policy debates and planning.

The reasons for their longevity include: they are reasonably easy to state, they are not legally binding (little time lost in negotiating exact words of the goals) and they could be pursued through practical and specific measures adopted by governments, businesses and civil society

2. Weaknesses
a. Shortfall
Success in reducing poverty has come with an environmental cost: environmental objectives need a higher profile alongside poverty-reduction objectives. Dangerous climate change has not been integral to planning. Gender discrimination and violence have limited progress, so that suffering has continued for people of low income.

b. Some areas for improvement
1. Fifteen year period had no intermediate milestones – Sustainable Development Goals should include intermediate objectives and milestones with clear dates. Accurate and timely data should be available to managers, policy makers and the public.

2. The private sector should be crucially engaged from the very start. The leadership of private companies, large and small is essential. Multinational companies bring unique strengths: a worldwide reach, cutting-edge technologies, and massive capacity to reach large-scale solutions, which are all essential to success. Many large companies are also lobbyists for policies antagonistic to sustainable development, so engagement with business has to be done cautiously, but it should also be active, forward-looking and intensive,

c. Financing Mechanisms
Millennium Development Goals relied on voluntary financing mechanisms, e.g. foreign aid voted by each parliament. Very few abided by the promise to give 0.7% of Gross Domestic Product.

Sustainable Development Goals should be more focused and realistic re financing; countries should agree to transparent and specific standards of financing, e.g. quotas and assessments, (e.g. International Monetary Fund quotas and UN dues) related to national incomes and levies on national greenhouse emissions.

The Sustainable Development Goals will need societies worldwide to invest adequately in their success. Sustainable development will not be achieved unless a small part of consumption spending is turned into investments for long-term survival.

The investments for sustainable energy (e.g., transition to low-carbon energy systems) will not be heavy, compared with the massive costs if no investment is made.

d. Effect of poverty, gender discrimination and violence on Education Goals
More than 12 million children in the Middle East cannot attend school because of poverty, gender discrimination and violence. See Appendix for report: Millions of Middle East children out of school
IMPORTANT QUESTION re SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

What are we doing to make sure we aren’t making conditions that will cause poverty tomorrow?

It is proposed that the Sustainable Development Goals be organised into the three broad categories of economic development, environmental sustainability, and social inclusion.

These three bottom lines will depend on a fourth condition: good governance at all levels, local, national, regional, and global.

1. The economic dimension should build on the Millennium Developments Goals. Between 2015 and 2030, the world should aim not merely to achieve the Millennium Developments Goals where they have not been met, but to carry on with the task initiated at the very start of the UN itself (and represented in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights): to secure the basic material needs - and human rights - of everybody on the planet.

To declare that by 2030, all extreme deprivation - hunger, extreme income poverty, and avoidable disease and deaths - can be eliminated is both realistic and profound.

All individuals should be able to access safe water and sanitation, electricity, connection to information and communication technology, and primary health care, and be protected from natural hazards. Many places will remain poor, but no place should be destitute, unable to meet these basic needs. A key challenge is to adopt a meaningful standard of basic needs worldwide.

One of the notable facts about poverty nowadays is that well over half of the 1 billion people with a low income are living in middle-income countries, which means that they are living in societies with the financial and technological means to address their remaining poverty.

Food Production
Rising world population and rapidly rising incomes per person in large emerging economies will result in an increasing demand for food grains and feed grains and rising meat consumption in the emerging economies. About 1 billion people are already chronically hungry, mainly in Africa and south Asia. In the past two decades, increases in productivity of food and feed grains have slowed worldwide. A substantial share of US maize production has been diverted into biofuel. Increased grain production is increasingly difficult, and threatens continued destruction of natural habitats, climate change, water stress, increased fertiliser pollution, decrease in biodiversity, and more.

Social outcomes could be deeply destabilising, because sharp increases in food prices threaten to push hundreds of millions of people into chronic hunger.

2. Environmental Sustainability
Global economic growth per person and an increasing population are combining to put unprecedented stress on the earth’s ecosystems, pushing crucial global ecosystem functions past a dangerous threshold. These pressures, which are both global and local, impinge simultaneously on several different crucial earth systems, including the carbon, nitrogen, and water cycles.

The many overlapping crises of environmental sustainability include:
- climate change as the result of human-caused emissions of greenhouse gases;
- massive environmental pollution (e.g. the poisoning of estuaries and other ecosystems as a result of heavy runoff of nitrogen-based and phosphorus-based fertilisers);
- the acidification of the oceans, caused mainly by the increased concentration of atmospheric carbon dioxide;
• the massive loss of biodiversity caused by unsustainable demands on forests (e.g. logging for timber or wood fuel);
• the continuing conversion of forests and remaining wilderness into farms and pastures;
• the depletion of key fossil resources, including energy (oil, gas, coal) and groundwater.

3. Social Inclusion requires the commitment to future economic and technological progress
This needs to occur under conditions of fairness and equitable access to public services. The government must counteract social discrimination on the basis of gender, ethnic origin, religion, and race.

Special attention will be given to:
• early childhood – period of crucial brain development, formation of cognitive skills, vital health outcomes
• youth – ensure all young people, especially girls, can complete secondary education and make transition from school to skills in the labour market
• elderly people – targeted programs and social protections

Governance
A fourth basic determinant of the world’s ability to achieve Sustainable Development Goals will be the quality of governance at all levels, from local to global, and in the private sector as well as government:

• Government and official agencies should be responsive to the citizenry.

• Companies need to recognise and act on their responsibility to a wide range of stakeholders. The private sector is the main productive sector of the world economy, and the holder of much of the advanced technologies and management systems that will be crucial for success of the Sustainable Development Goals. Companies should refrain from lobbying and political activities that might endanger the Sustainable Development Goals.

• Governments will ensure that the rights of future generations are respected.

• Societies will promote the notion of subsidiarity - i.e. that governance should be as close to the people as functionally possible, giving individuals and families maximum freedom of action.

• Governments will share information, exchange ideas, encourage meetings and brainstorming, and work in good faith across cultures. They will also shape a new sustainable and decent approach towards human migration, recognising the growing economic and environmental pressures on people to leave their homelands, and protecting the rights of migrants to resettle their families and meet their basic needs.

• Private philanthropy and volunteering will be encouraged.

NB IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

1. Social Protection Floor
The Social Protection Floor is a system that guarantees income security and access to basic services across the life course. In particular, a social protection floor comprises of four social security guarantees:

1. Access to essential healthcare, including maternity care
2. Basic income security for children (providing access to nutrition, education, care and any other necessary goods and services)
3. Basic income security for persons in active age unable to earn sufficient income (especially in cases of sickness, unemployment, maternity and disability)
4. Basic income security for older persons.
In the current version of the Sustainable Development Goals, we see social protection and the social protection floor mentioned in only three places: Goal 1 - hunger and poverty; Goal 10 - inequities between and among countries; Goal 5 – gender equality and empowerment of women and girls.

This opportunity needs to be seized more forcefully to make the thinking around the Social Protection Floors something that everyone is referring to when talking about the development agenda.

**NEEDS**

A. We have to be more visionary than in the past. This includes being much more outspoken on universal rights. There is a right to education, there is a right to health, there is a right to water, and there is a right to social protection.

B. We must bring the economic impact into the discussion because that is what obviously will have more impact on pragmatic policy decisions. In terms of finance and budgets, it is also important to emphasize how diverse forms of social protection have made a difference:
   - in European countries income inequalities are well evened out by the different social transfers.
   - in many countries social protection has helped disadvantaged children go to school; school meals have helped improve children’s concentration levels.

C. **Role of the government in delivering social protection**

   Much more discussion is needed concerning the role of the state. Questions to be addressed include: “What is the role of public goods and services, what needs to be provided and delivered, or at least properly regulated by the government?” These are goods and services that *every citizen has a right to.*

   The government has a responsibility to provide public goods. This must be funded from government resources (taxation) for two reasons:
   - Government funding gives a stronger guarantee to a social protection floor initiative because it would be very hard to dismantle.
   - The government is responsible for evening out income inequalities. This function is most easily attained if there are progressive forms of national and international taxation.

2. **Measures of Human Wellbeing = Human Happiness, Life Satisfaction, Freedom from Suffering**
   It is important to use not only traditional measures of economic performance, i.e. gross domestic product and household income, but also to use social trust, honest government, empowerment in workplace, mental health services, high level of civic participation

   “The gross national product does not allow for the health of our children, the quality of their education, or the joy of their play. It does not include the beauty of our poetry or the strength of our marriages; the intelligence of our public debate or the integrity of our public officials. It measures neither our wit nor our courage; neither our wisdom nor our learning; neither our compassion nor our devotion to our country; it measures everything, in short, except that which makes life worthwhile.” J. F. Kennedy

   During the 15 years of the Sustainable Development Goals, all governments should agree to introduce new multidimensional measures of citizen wellbeing and the distribution of wellbeing in the population.

2. **Financial Reality** cannot rely on “The market will do it.” We need 1 or 2% of global GDP.

   The strategy is **NOT** – we have only this much so this is all we can do,
   **BUT** – This is what we want to do. How much do we need? Where do we get it from?

3. **Forced Migration, Asylum Seekers and Refugees**

   - The occurrence of forced displacement, especially internal displacement, and statelessness must be understood as indicators of development. They are indicative of whether societies are peaceful and stable and enjoy good governance. They also tend to impact on other development indicators, including those related to poverty, health, and education.
The disruption of existing development planning and macro-economic indicators in countries affected by war, terrorism and persecution of minority peoples illustrates why displacement must be taken seriously as a development concern, impacting not only the human development outcomes of those displaced, but also of the communities and countries that host them. This also applies to the effects of major climate events especially in countries lacking essential infrastructure.

Noting the huge forced migrations from Africa, Middle East and Asia, the states must address the impact of humanitarian crises and the needs of asylum seekers, refugees and Internally Displaced Persons, ensuring their human rights and providing safe and dignified living conditions, by making necessary allocations for this purpose. It is disheartening that the Australian Government treats asylum seekers with so little dignity.

It is imperative to ensure that displaced persons and stateless people are included in any listing or definition of vulnerable groups across goals and targets, as they are particularly vulnerable.

CONCLUSIONS

The Sustainable Development Goals will need unprecedented mobilisation of global knowledge operating across many sectors and regions.

Governments, international institutions, private business, academia, and civil society will need to work together to identify the critical pathways to success, in ways that combine technical expertise and democratic representation.

Global problem-solving networks for sustainable development - in energy, food, urbanisation, climate resilience, and other sectors - will therefore become crucial new institutions in the years ahead.

APPENDIX
(This provides some further information re the effect of poverty, gender discrimination and violence on Education Goals)

Millions of Middle East children out of school

More than 12 million children in the Middle East cannot attend school because of poverty, gender discrimination and violence. (UN children's agency)

An additional 3 million children in Syria and Iraq have been forced out of school by conflict (Report from UNICEF & UNESCO's Institute for Statistics) making a total of 4.3 million primary-aged children and 2.9 million lower secondary-aged children out of school.

An additional 5.1 million children are not receiving pre-primary school education, bringing the total number of the region's children out of school to 12.3 million. That figure represents around 15 per cent of the children in the Middle East who should be receiving pre-primary, primary or secondary education.

Yemen had the worst rate of pre-primary school age children receiving an education, with only six per cent in school. Djibouti and Sudan had the worst rates for secondary school-age children, followed by Iran and Morocco.

The report says a study of nine countries in the region revealed a range of reasons why children were out of school, including poverty. In many cases, families could not afford costs associated with schooling, including books and uniforms, or the loss of income from a child who could be put to work.

"Children from poor, disadvantaged families are most likely to be excluded from schooling, even though they have the most to gain. Girls are undervalued and, since they are not expected to work, their families see no need for them to learn. Early marriage is also an issue in most countries in the region. (Maria Calivis, UNICEF's regional director)

cf AFP quoted in The Age (Melbourne) 16 April 2015