

# Bond SDG Group Recommendations for Commitments at the 2023 SDG Summit

July 2023

## I. Overview

**The 2023 SDG Summit provides an important opportunity for the UK Government to take a transformative approach and play an influential role in advancing the 2030 agenda.** Even before Covid-19, achieving the transformative potential of the SDGs was a huge challenge, but the events of the past few years mean we need to redouble our efforts. In an era of instability, the SDGs provide us with a framework to build resilience and address the interconnected crises of climate change, Covid-19, conflicts, poverty and inequality, whilst leaving no one behind. Reflecting on the [Guidance Notes for States](#), Bond's SDG Working Group has developed the below recommendations for accelerating UK's progress in actioning its commitment to the SDGs.

We would welcome the opportunity for FCDO to announce a technical consultation with civil society and other stakeholders on the UK's commitments at the Summit as per the Guidance's call for engagement.

## II. Scope for National and Global Commitment to SDG Transformation

### National Commitments: UK

#### a. Policy Coherence

The SDGs provide us with a framework to address the interconnected themes of sustainable development, including climate, poverty, inequality, and peace. From the International Development Strategy (IDS) to the Integrated Review (IR), the International Women and Girls Strategy (IWGS), the Disability Inclusion and Rights Strategy along with many other recently published strategies, the SDG summit offers an opportunity to bring current UK Government policy into action and thread SDG commitments to forge needed policy coherence. Pathways to achieve this include:

- Outlining how consistency and coherence across all policies that guide and influence the UK's relationships with other countries will be built and sustained. This should include recognising the role of devolved governments in the UK, and outlining how they will work together on international development.
- Clearly articulating how programme design and monitoring will balance cross-cutting issues and interlinkages, for example how promoting one area of SDG implementation will link with the achievement of another goal whilst avoiding harm in other areas.
- Outlining how the UK government will ensure that other international actions (for example diplomacy, trade, economic, investment and growth strategies) do not undermine the progress on SDGs in other countries, help to promote inclusion and are aligned with SDGs and international standards and principles supporting sustainable economic development and 'leave no one behind' commitment'.
- Upscaling ambition to locally-led initiatives and the localisation of the SDGs. The IDS and the IWGS recognise the importance of locally driven partnerships, and acknowledge that achieving SDGs will only be possible if they are implemented and owned at the local level.

## **b. Monitoring and accountability**

The UK has made some strides in building the capacity of national statistical systems in partner countries and promoting data disaggregation. But it needs to go further in ensuring that everyone is counted and that evidence-based solutions to meet the SDGs, based on timely, quality, disaggregated data, are being implemented. The SDG Summit is an influential forum to enact commitments to monitoring and accountability, we recommend that the UK Government:

- Commit to reporting through the OECD DAC SDG field in the Creditor Reporting System (CRS) to track all ODA-funded programmes against SDG targets.
- Report on SDG implementation in the FCDO Annual Report and publish timely, accurate disaggregated data on SDG progress including for all potentially furthest behind groups as listed in the [UN General Assembly 2030 Agenda resolution](#) in the UK SDG database and UN database.
- Make it clear how the UK will promote a rights-based approach and inclusive development through its work with multilaterals to ensure that their work is aligned with, and measured against, the SDGs including delivering on Leave No One Behind.
- Publish a new Inclusive Data Charter Action Plan, outlining how the UK government will ensure its data collection and systems will allow for a better understanding of the poorest and the most marginalised, and lead to better decisions about the UK's international development spending.
- Use the Summit as an opportunity to commit to publishing a second VNR in 2024 and publish a detailed timeline to ensure that the consultation process is as meaningful and inclusive as possible and commit to a regular schedule for reporting and follow-up on progress and challenges using disaggregated data.
- Considering that about 4% of ODA is spent via BII, introduce clear ways of measuring and assessing BII's contribution to SDGs disaggregated by targets.

## **Global Commitments**

### **a. Financial Commitments**

The impact of ongoing cuts to funding by the UK Government continue to disproportionately impact marginalised communities including those living with disabilities, women and girls, ethnic religious, linguistic minorities, indigenous peoples, LGBTQI individuals and those affected by conflict, displacement and climate change. The SDG Summit provides a forum for the UK Government to demonstrate its ambition with its global financial commitments to ensure no one continues to be left behind. The UK Government should:

- Support more national action to redistribute wealth and tackle inequality, including through international cooperation such as the Addis Tax Initiative, to enhance capacities for domestic resource mobilisation. It should use its influence to challenge policy agendas that seek to reduce the tax burden on companies and cut public spending, and support enhanced representation of low- and middle-income countries in economic and financial institutions. The UK should support a universal UN Framework Convention on Tax and a global tax body and advocate for the introduction of comprehensive beneficial ownership registries in all countries and jurisdictions to curb illicit financial flows and global tax avoidance and evasion.
- The UK should support - and encourage other Member States to support - the adoption of a governing instrument for the Loss and Damage Fund at COP28 this year; set an ambitious New Collective Quantitative Goal for climate finance in 2024 to replace the \$100 billion per year goal; and a significant second replenishment of the Green Climate Fund (GCF) at the pledging conference in October 2023. Delivery of climate finance should prioritise the UNFCCC climate funds with their balanced governance structures and climate finance priorities (the GCF, Adaptation Fund, and the forthcoming Loss and Damage Fund) and must be additional to aid.
- Deliver political and financial pledges made to multilaterals, and other funding mechanisms and Summits. This also includes transparency on commitments made, with detailed financial plans

broken down by programmes, beneficiaries, countries, reach targets etc, to allow a better monitoring and evaluation of progress made towards meeting pledges.

- Call for stronger commitments on debt - besides multilateral coordination we need cancellation of debts (without economic conditionality) by external creditors and refresh of global debt architecture which includes more concessional finance. This includes core, long-term accessible funding for locally led initiatives to ensure financial support for sustainable long term resilience building. The UK should also use its position to support the UN's call for a review of the G20 Common Framework and integrating private creditors into debt restructuring discussions. In the short term, we call on the UK government to support the establishment of an emergency debt suspension mechanism, including a revamped DSSI, to respond to emergencies.
- Support the UN Secretary-General's call to "massively scale-up affordable long-term financing for development, including through multilateral development banks (MDBs). The UK should use its position as a creditor to support calls from its development partners to support MDB reform and ensure that lower-income and climate vulnerable countries have greater say and agency in these reforms in support of a fairer and more inclusive international financial system.
- Set a clear timeline for restoring ODA to 0.7% and cease increasing the overall level of ODA spending through other government departments and in-donor refugee costs until steps are taken to ensure all ODA is spent transparently and is primarily focused on poverty reduction and reducing inequality.

#### **b. Leave No One Behind**

Leave no one behind (LNOB) is the central transformative principle of Agenda 2030. This compels the UK Government not only to transform the lives of those who are the furthest behind but to also fight discrimination and the root causes of inequality within and among countries. Whilst LNOB interweaves within every SDG indicator, for the UK Government to be transformative in its approach to the 2023 Summit it must be intentional and clear with its commitments to LNOB and in particular, SDG 10 on Reduced Inequalities. The UK Government should:

- Publish a renewed LNOB policy paper, with a recommitment to this key principle of the 2030 Agenda and clearly outline how it will deliver on the promise in a way that is both inclusive but also practical for decision making.
- Ramp up its support to boost national statistical capacity and willingness in developing countries to monitor, collect and publish transparent, timely, accurate and fully disaggregated data on SDG progress and challenges and to encourage its development partners to report on efforts to reach the furthest behind first in their Voluntary National Reviews.
- Improve transparency and accountability towards commitments and targets aimed at those furthest left behind. Commitments made at the 2023 SDG summit and in strategies should be implemented through clear delivery plans, with clear timelines, indicators, funding allocations and accountability mechanisms that are developed by meaningfully engaging communities that have been marginalised.
- Commit to participatory analysis of at-risk and left behind groups in all programme countries and commit to developing, funding and implementing LNOB approaches with any groups that are not, for reasons of feasibility, sensitivity, cost or capacity, included in data disaggregation plans; and to address multiple and intersecting identities that impact development outcomes.

#### **About the Bond SDG Group**

Bond is the UK network of over 400 UK organisations working in international development. The Bond SDG group has over 150 of these organisations as members and is advocating for the full implementation of the SDGs with a strong focus on their global impact. We focus on the implementation of the SDGs by the UK International Development Sector and the UK Government.

The current co-chairs of the SDG Group are Lilei Chow (Save the Children) and Andrew Griffiths (Sightsavers).