



## **Talking Points**

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**Business contributions to Sustainable Development Goals  
(SDGs)**

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## 1. Why the SDGs

Let me start by posing a question: If you wanted to make the world a better place, not only for you, but your children and your children's children, what goals would you set?

- Would you end poverty and inequality?
- Would you provide health care for everyone?
- Or would you educate children, including all girls around the world?

In answer to this very same question, World Leaders came together at the turn of the century and agreed the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Fast forward 15 years, these goals were implemented and the results were measured with some success:

- The proportion of people living in extreme poverty was halved between 2002 and 2012, from 26 to 13 per cent.
- The number of hungry people declined from 15 to 11 per cent.
- The number of the world's workers, living on less than USD1.90 per day declined from 28 to 10 percent.

Building on, and encouraged by these lessons, the world agreed a new set of goals: more ambitious in their scope, set to be achieved by 2030, and designed to change the world for the better.

Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals--17 in number—were thus born. This agenda is meant to end poverty and inequality; protect the planet; and ensure prosperity for all.

Arriving at this agenda was a bottom up and consultative process where over 7 million people, institutions (including private sector) were consulted. The SDGs therefore represent the aspirations of the world and its people.

## 2. SDGs relevance to Namibia

Since independence, Namibia has logged many successes. Today the World Bank classifies Namibia as an Upper Middle Income Country.

- Namibia has effected one of the fastest reductions in poverty on the continent (from 69% to 18%); Namibia is ranked number 5 in Africa by the Mo Ibrahim Index of African Governance (2016 IIAG)<sup>1</sup>;
- Namibia ranks #1 in Africa in the provision of education<sup>2</sup>; ranks #4 in Africa in terms of gender parity in parliament<sup>3</sup>; #1 in Africa in terms of press freedom<sup>4</sup>;
- Namibia has an open economy with good quality infrastructure and has managed to reduce inequality while growing its gross national income (GNI)<sup>5</sup>.

Despite these successes:

- Namibia is one of the most unequal countries in the world with a Gini coefficient of 5.4; And we know, that a 1% increase in income in the most unequal countries, produces a mere 0.6 %

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<sup>1</sup> 2016 Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG, Oct 2016).

<sup>2</sup> 2016 Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG, Oct 2016).

<sup>3</sup> Inter-Parliamentary Union "Women in national parliaments as at 1 August 2015"

<sup>4</sup> UNAids, 2017.

<sup>5</sup> World Income Inequality database (last dat av 2010).

reduction in poverty, while in the most equal countries, it could yield up to a 4.3% decrease in poverty<sup>6</sup>.

- Namibia is one of the driest countries in the world with 98% of rainfall lost through some form of evaporation.
- Namibia is experiencing significant drop out rates in grade 12, the youth and the future of this country.

H.E. the President, and indeed Namibia, has declared War on Poverty as a result.

### **3. Moving forward**

What is clear is that the global development agenda is also relevant for Namibia.

What is also clear is that this agenda cannot be tackled by any one entity alone, including government. New partnerships will need to be forged if progress is to be made: we need to foster a new era of collaboration

We believe the private sector has a unique opportunity to embrace this development agenda (and challenge) and recognise it as a driver of sustainable business strategies, innovation and investment decisions.

- By 2050, the world will need to produce twice as much food as was produced in the year 2000, but with the same amount of land and using less water.
- The World through the Paris Agreement has called for a rapid transition to a low carbon world calling for clean ways of generating energy and innovation in the way we build and operate our transport systems.
- It is estimated that an investment of \$2-3 trillion a year will be required to realize the SDGs
- The financial requirement for addressing Africa's infrastructure needs is estimated at \$93 Billion per year.

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<sup>6</sup> Ravallion, 2013; Kireyev, 2017.

Achieving these goals therefore also offers economic and investment opportunities for business.

**Private Sector is known for its efficiency, innovation and talent. Some of the questions that are being asked include:**

- How could we develop an effective partnership where society learns and benefits from private sectors expertise, innovation and resources?
- How can private sector can work with Academia to deliver the new generation of Namibians with the right type of skills required to solve the challenges ahead.
- How can companies develop inclusive business models that engage people at the base of the economic pyramid (BoP) – people with less than US\$8 per day in purchasing power – as consumers, producers, suppliers, distributors of goods and services and employees.

#### **4. Conclusion**

I started this conversation, by asking what goals you would set to make the world a better place. The world, and indeed Namibia has set the agenda.

So in conclusion, I ask one more question, how will you as private sector, contribute to its realization.

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