Samuel O. Idowu
René Schmidpeter
Liangrong Zu  *Editors*

# The Future of the UN Sustainable Development Goals

Business Perspectives for Global Development in 2030

Springer

# CSR, Sustainability, Ethics & Governance

**Series Editors**

Samuel O. Idowu, London Metropolitan University, London, UK
René Schmidpeter, Cologne Business School, Cologne, Germany

In recent years the discussion about the relationship between business and society has made immense progress. This has in turn led to a broad academic and practical discussion on innovative management concepts, such as Corporate Social Responsibility, Corporate Governance and Sustainability Management. This series offers a comprehensive overview of the latest theoretical and empirical research and provides sound concepts for sustainable business strategies. In order to do so, it gathers together the experience an in-depth contemplations of leading thinkers in the fields of management theory and the social sciences. It makes highly innovative management approaches accessible to academics from various disciplines, business leaders and interested students alike. Furthermore it brings together different perspectives from all over the world and thus contributes to the interdisciplinary and intercultural discussion on the role of business in society. The underlying intention of this series is to contribute to the world's most challenging problems by developing new management concepts that create value for both: business and society. It has been developed to suppose those managers and researchers who are willing to contribute to creating sustainable business approaches for our common future.

*CSR, Sustainability, Ethics & Governance* is accepted by the Norwegian Register for Scientific Journals, Series and Publishers, maintained and operated by the Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD).

Samuel O. Idowu · René Schmidpeter ·
Liangrong Zu
Editors

# The Future of the UN Sustainable Development Goals

Business Perspectives for Global Development in 2030

*Editors*
Samuel O. Idowu
Guildhall Faculty of Business and Law
London Metropolitan University
London, UK

René Schmidpeter
Cologne Business School
Cologne, Germany

Liangrong Zu
International Training Centre of the ILO
Turin, Italy

*Dedicated to our wives and children for their forbearance*

# Foreword

This is a book with a vitally important overall ambition: to link the international academic community who are concerned with Corporate Social Responsibility, Sustainability, Ethics and Governance, with the United Nations Agenda on Sustainable Development Goals.

The editors have assembled a formidable array of chapters from around the world, which ask honest questions about the future of the world, global capitalism and globalization, backed up by detailed evidence. The remarkable Springer Book Series has now reached 70 volumes, with numerous case study chapters from around the world, from researchers, professionals and practitioners. It provides an unmatched resource for academics, companies and policymakers. Now is the time for universities, companies and NGOs to move on from signing bland agreements and to engage in new collaborative development coalitions, working actively in support of UN agencies.

I suggest that the Springer Series, including this book, will not be sufficient to close the gap between theory and practice. The debate could now benefit from the participation from other international academic communities, such as contributors and subscribers to *AI & Society: Knowledge, Culture and Communication* and the *European Journal of Workplace Innovation*. There are relevant discourses on the changing role of technology, on the impact of globalization and on the human-centred nature of workplace innovation. These discourses can cast new light on the mass of data from around the world.

There is a new emerging agenda, involving questions which cross-borders of sectors, disciplines and countries:

- Does it make sense to talk of capitalism as one phenomenon, or should we talk of "varieties of capitalism"?
- Can business schools now progress from signing declarations of intent and contribute meaningfully to addressing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, which are embedded in the policies of the United Nations?
- Can the book, and the series, launch a sustainable and productive debate, which moves from talking the talk to walking the talk?

- What needs to be added, if the agenda of the series is to become the agenda for business around the world?
- What are the implications for social science? Can academics continue to pretend detached objectivity, rather than recognizing their own engagement in the subjects of their study?

The book and the series provide the basis for new courses in business schools around the world and for innovative collaboration with managers, workers and communities.

Kingston upon Thames, UK                                    Prof. Richard Ennals
                                    Emeritus Professor of Corporate Responsibility
                                        and Working Life, Kingston University, UK

                                                            Board Member
                                            UK National Commission for UNESCO
                                                                2004–2008

# Preface

Since the Brundtland Report 1987 on "Our Common Future", the United Nations in its drive to encourage and propagate *Corporate Social Responsibility* (CSR) has been involved in a number of CSR-related activities. In the organization's attempt to combat global warming, climate change, human rights abuses, environmental degradation, poverty, etc, the UN has championed many CSR-focused events and activities worldwide. We are all too aware of several UN Climate Change Conferences, Paris 2015, being the latest, the UN Global Compact, which has the world's largest corporate responsibility initiative, the eight UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) 2000–2015 and now the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030 which was agreed in 2015. The field of CSR is of increasing importance in all areas of human existence—business, politics, academia and the civil society in general. Issues relating to CSR are discussed, researched and propagated in all economies around the globe, an obvious statement to make! There is practically nowhere in the world today where issues relating to CSR, Sustainability, Ethics and Governance are not debated, researched, encouraged, practiced and perceived as being desirable. In fact, it is a core part of corporate strategies of many companies in most economies.

The relatively new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) target the 5Ps (people, planet, prosperity (originally profit), peace and partnership) and encompass seventeen goals which are of importance to everyone in the world. They are all about CSR. What effects will the achievement of these goals have on corporate entities—small, medium or large everywhere? How are businesses going to help the United Nations in meeting the goals in 2030—the target year of achieving these goals? All good corporations are going to have to expand their strategies to embed many if not all these seventeen goals into their strategies. How are we going to measure whether or not the goals have been achieved? What effect will the SDGs have on corporate governance? A few of the 8 MDGs have also been included in the 17 SDGs; are we to assume that these were not achieved satisfactorily between 2000 and 2015? How will government of the 196 countries that make up our world going to assist in meeting these goals? These and many other relevant SD issues are what contributors to have explored in their chapters in this book.

The intention of the book is to add to peoples understanding of issues surrounding the new UN SDGs and perhaps the old MDGs if there are pertinent issues relating to the eight goals of the old MDGs. If there are issues relating to the new SDGs and different dimensions of CSR, Sustainability, Ethics and Governance and how they will affect practitioners, scholars and stakeholders in general worldwide, contributors are encouraged to bring them into their proposed chapters.

London, UK                                                              Samuel O. Idowu
Cologne, Germany                                                    René Schmidpeter
Turin, Italy                                                              Liangrong Zu
December 2018

# Acknowledgements

The lead editor of the book owes a load of thank you to all his global friends who have stood by him with their impressive chapters in this book—these friends are everywhere in Europe, Asia and Africa. Many of them despite their busy schedules felt obliged to help in putting together this very fine informative addition to the literature on the globally acclaimed Agenda 2030 of the United Nations. He will forever remain grateful to all of them.

The three editors would also like to express their thank you to a number of people starting with their friend Prof. Richard Ennals, Professor at Agder University, Norway, who wrote a very fine foreword to the book. They also wish to thank some of their friends who are too numerous to name in a piece like this. Finally, Samuel O. Idowu is also eternally grateful to those who are always on the scene of many of his scholarly activities—his wife—Olufunmilola Sarah O Idowu and his young children—Josiah O Oluwatobi O Idowu and Hannah Ayomide O O Idowu, to whom his own part of this book has been dedicated for their great understanding that what is important to one family member is important to all members of that family, you each deserve a diamond medal from him and thank you very much from the bottom of his heart.

We would all like to thank our publishing team at Springer headed by the Executive Editor, Christian Rauscher, Barbara Bethke and other members of the publishing team who have supported this project and all our other projects.

Finally, we apologize for any errors or omissions that may appear anywhere in this book; please be assured that no harm was intended to anybody. Causing harm or discomfort to others is simply not the spirit of corporate social responsibility, not the least in a book on making our world a better place for all with the United Nations world acclaimed set of development goals.

# Introduction

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals represent one of the most powerful political visions in history. They have now been signed by almost two hundred countries around the world. This global document addresses critical issues surrounding social, economic and environmental progress, which governments and sectors have committed themselves to working towards achieving these ambitious but achievable targets. This book takes a deep look into the opportunities, struggles and current issues surrounding the achievement of the UN SDGs in key economies. The first part of the book includes numerous articles by top researches uncovering the application of the SDGs in Africa. They discuss the changes that need to be in place and what impact the agenda will have on the continent's developmental path. All kinds of topics are covered from financing to energy access and even education. In the second part, you will find a collection of the latest sustainable development research coming out of Europe. Topics such as social innovation and the role of entrepreneurs, as well as the establishment of legal sustainability investment frameworks, all come into play. The final part of the book takes us all the way to Asia, where the local researchers look at three countries, namely India, Kazakhstan and China, and how they are working towards meeting their share of the UN SDGs with a variety of different cases from business and politics. We hope that you enjoy and get inspired by the book. It is an informative read for anyone interested in global sustainability, and how various countries in different regions are adjusting themselves and for the very first time in history all are working towards the same 17 UN goals.

## Part I

In the first chapter, Researchers, David Abdulai, Ortrud Knauf and Linda O'Riordan, take a look at the UN SDGs from an African perspective. They analyse the roles and strategies that governments, policymakers and businesses can adopt in order to contribute to the goals by the 2020 target. Through a qualitative review of

secondary data, the researches discuss Western ideas of relevant sustainability concepts in order to determine their suitability and potential impact when applied to the African context. The authors point out that the ideal solution may be to consider applying a new concept of corporate responsibility, which is aligned with Ubuntu philosophy. They conclude that a model derived from the Ubuntu approach would in fact be more suitable for the African culture and environment. Therefore, it will likely be able to deal with local challenges such as poverty alleviation, access to education, health care, conservation essay access to drinkable water and overall achievement of the SDGs. A critical examination of Western sustainability and corporate responsibility concepts is conducted, and the conclusions are drawn about the ever-growing importance of sustainability within African businesses of the future.

The next chapter examines the transfer of knowledge within the construction sector in Africa and why years of foreign direct investment have not yielded more sustainable results. Today, there are still a large number of unskilled workers, although international construction companies are working in the area. This is of concern as knowledge transfer to local workers is considered a critical benchmarking indicator when assessing the progress of development projects within the industry. In Africa, this issue has not yet been adequately integrated into the CSR strategies of the locally operating international construction companies, particularly when accounting for the Chinese contractors who are conducting more and more projects on the continent. Therefore, Author Oluwasegun Seriki uncovers the nuances of this issue using Nigeria as a case study. He identifies key barriers and deconstructs the nuances of competence and skill shortages. The author calls upon the industry to better synchronize policies about knowledge transfer and place more of their CSR focus on employee training rather than image enhancement.

Energy! Energy! Energy! It keeps coming up as the foundation of sustainable development in any country. Without the steady supply and widespread accessibility of clean energy, many other sustainability initiatives tumble! Still, in 2015, the Development Factsheet released by the United Nations confirmed that 1.3 billion people are still lacking access to modern electricity and that around 3 billion rely on the burning of whatever materials can be found locally in order to generate power. In Nigeria, this is a widespread problem with power blackouts still negatively affecting social and economic development activities in the country. Researchers Nafiu Olaniyi Oladokun, Oyebola Fatima Etudaiye-Muhtar and Muhtar Adeiza Etudaiye identify inadequate financing and funding opportunities for power generation and related infrastructure as the major obstacles and explore new and innovative financing mechanisms. The paper reviews a variety of opportunities and funding models and looks into how they can best be applied to produce real results in the Nigerian energy sector. The chapter helps to find real solutions for the achievement of UNSDG 7, which calls for access to reliable, affordable and sustainable energy for all.

Afterwards, we move away from energy and towards the manufacturing sector specifically with regard to issues of income and employment generation, which is a challenge that many countries in Africa have been struggling with for decades. In

Nigeria, sustainable development within the economy requires better efficiency and heightened productivity in many sectors. However, when analysed by Author Titus Chukwuemezie Okeke, it was found that there is a lack of empirical studies and data on productivity within the country's economy. The data which is available points to low productivity with regard to the utilization of capacity, per capita added value, overall contribution to GDP, as well as other relevant value markers, thus demonstrating a need, not only for more research in the field but also for better infrastructure policies, representation of the industry and business-enabling investment. Only when such pre-requisites are met can Nigeria's manufacturing industries achieve the level of technology and industrial policies required to be competitive within the global value chain.

The financing and the funding of developmental projects are a reoccurring theme when it comes to the achievement of sustainability goals, and many countries are lacking adequate opportunities. The banking sector plays a major role. In fifth chapter, Authors Adebimpe Lincoln, Oluwatofunmi Adedoyin and Jane Croad explore the banking sector in Nigeria with regard to Goal 16, which calls for peace, justice and strong institutions. The authors focus on corruption and regulator deficiencies within the baking sector and the negative effect this can have on sustainability and proper governance. After extensive research, they determine that corruption within the baking sector is in fact a hindrance for sustainable development and that corporate governance practices within Nigerian banks are still weak. As long as a lack of accountability persists, the corruption will continue to hinder legal regulatory systems and therefore the country's potential for sustainable development.

The topic of regulation and reporting continues as the next chapter takes us on a journey to the hot and sunny islands of Mauritius, Madagascar and the Seychelles. It looks at the impact of sustainability reporting as a way to achieve the UNSDGs. Sustainability on islands is a massive challenge. Although, small island developing states together contribute less than 1% to the global issue of climate change, they are the areas which will continue to hit the first and hardest from the negative effects. Islands are also incredibly valuable for global sustainability research as the reduced scope and external influences make them ideal locations to test and model how sustainable development can occur in the rest of the world. Thus, the struggles of these small economies should never be overlooked. In this informative chapter by Sanjiv Gungadeen and Megan Paull, the authors compare private sector organizations in the African island nations and aim to create a better understanding of the complexity of sustainability reporting and the challenges of local organizations. A detailed explanation of factors including the variables in sustainability reporting processes, the involvement of stakeholders, the impact of triple bottom line reporting, as well as drivers, benefits and obstacles are discussed in depth. Finally, the study evaluates the level of efficiency of governments in their ability to implement sustainable development and contributes in filling a knowledge gap that islands around the world can learn from and apply to their own individual contexts.

The issue of sustainable development is broad and requires skill and knowledge integration from many disciplines and interrelated sectors. Therefore, it often gets a

reputation for being a difficult concept to embrace. Especially in the context of Africa where sustainability has the ability to strengthen much needed economic, social and environmental management, the establishment of sound policies is incredibly important. The next chapter, written by Sam Sarpong looks at the corporate side of things and specifically the role of firms in sustainable development processes in Africa. After diving into the many challenges associated with such a diverse topic, the author concludes that both corporations and governments can better achieve local development needs by uncovering and working towards solutions in their particular fields.

In eighth chapter, we are back to the topic of energy and specifically the potential for off-grid electricity in rural Nigeria. The Authors Babawande Sheba and Hafiz Bello discuss the correlation between a lack of access to modern electricity sources in rural areas around the world and low standard of living. When it comes to tackling issues such as poverty, gender inequality and environmental vulnerability, energy access plays a huge role. Therefore, an accessible supply can have a positive influence on people leading long and healthy lives and achieving a decent standard of living. Off-grid solutions are often talked about as a great way to give people in rural parts of the world energy access. In this chapter, find out more about and the importance of good governance in providing solutions for clean energy access to rural areas.

The final chapter in the African part of the book looks at the sustainable perspective of marketing in the quest to meet the needs of the UN SDGs 2030. Two Egyptian scholars—Yasmin Anwar and Noha El-Bassiouny—delve into this matter when they argue that even though it is generally perceived that social, ecological and economic issues could act as constraints to economic growth; Yasmin Anwar and Noha El-Bassiouny believe that achieving social, environmental and economic progress can be realized simultaneously by taking the "triple bottom line" approach. The chapter takes an extensively look at the role of marketing in achieving the goals in Agenda 2030.

# Part II

After a very enticing read about the current state of sustainable development in Africa and the SDGs, we move on to Europe for an in-depth look into European Sustainable Development topics such as innovation, social engagement and investment law. In the first chapter, Maud H. Schmiedeknecht looks at how social innovation and entrepreneurship can support sustainable development by fostering value creation within society. "Necessity is the mother of invention" and the troubling times caused by unsustainable development, which can be seen around the world, may be exactly what is needed to start fire in the hearts of entrepreneurs to work hard at solving social and environmental issues. It is critical now that business owners, whether small, medium or large, focus their creativity on solutions to sustainable development challenges.

Now that we know how important it is for businesses to focus on sustainability, what does it really mean? The following chapter by Lars Moratis and Frans Melissen helps us sort through all the definitions and unravel the concepts to gain a better understanding of the true essence of business sustainability and what it means for entrepreneurs. Not only do they discuss relevant concepts, but also within relation to the actual state of the planet. They look into the impact that sustainable business can have on whether or not we are able to achieve a future that can sustain social and economic progress. The authors unravel the complexity of "true business sustainability" in a constructive way in order to stimulate further discussion on the role of business sustainability in finding solutions to real issues.

The next chapter comes to us from Silvia Puiu who discusses the relationship between two of the UNSDGs: the fourth, which is concerned with accessibility to quality education and lifelong learning opportunities, and the eighth, which calls for the promotion of sustained economic growth, productive employment and decent work for all people. The author discusses the untapped potential of "NEETs", that is. young unemployed adults who are not currently participating in an education or training programme. Data is analysed from European countries in order to develop a better understanding of why the amount of people within this category is increasing and how they can be better integrated into society to help with the 2030 agenda. The topic of education is continued with a discussion by Mark Anthony and Adriana Caterina in the twelfth chapter, which compares the fourth UNSDG with the Europe 2020 strategy, which set the goal of creating sustainable, smart and inclusive growth within the European Union. The authors present a case study from Malta, the EU's smallest state, which is perusing a programme to reduce instances of early school dropouts and promoting lifelong learning. Simultaneously, the country has set out to address skill gaps and in its domestic labour market to increase employment. Their research indicates that continuous improvements in education do in fact have positive impacts on economic growth and societal prosperity.

Four decades after the Brundtland Report set the milestone of putting sustainable development at the forefront of the global agenda, the UNSDGs have defined a new era of getting countries around the world to agree on priority issues. With topics like access to education, poverty alleviation and environmental conservation on the agenda, many industries will have to put a halt to or at least change their socially and environmentally destructive practices. However, as there is currently no agreed-upon global government, the UNSDGs can only be achieved through the concept of shared responsibility, which is what is discussed by Rudi Kurz in the thirteenth chapter. During his article, Kurz analyses two UN-related organizations and their ability to engage stakeholders in this regard. A focus is placed on the roles of universities and companies and their engagement in socially responsible behaviour aligned with global sustainable development goals. The author determines that if conducted in a voluntary way, social "responsibilities" are not always disruptive to economic players and can be part of continuous improvement. Also noted is the need to avoid accepting voluntary activities of companies and universities as a

substitute for government activity and that true progress towards the UNSDGs can only occur when both stakeholder groups actively engage.

Continuing with the engagement of governmental entities for sustainable development, the next chapter, written by Małgorzata Żmuda, looks into the common misconception that national competitiveness and sustainability are mutually exclusive. The author goes into detail in defining national competitiveness and demonstrates that even in the current era of globalization, individual countries can succeed with regard to productivity. Important is that they go beyond the GDP to include socio-economic progress without environmental degradation. The suggestion is that a new "sustainable competitiveness" model be adopted, which links national competitive ability and strategy with global socio-economic and environmental goals.

An underlying theme throughout this book is the role of monetary value and investment for sustainable development, whether through financing or enhanced turnaround resulting from a better educated population, more socially innovative entrepreneurs, and even rural access to clean energy investment is key. Therefore, the final chapter in the European part looks into the potential of global sustainable investment laws that promote the engagement of investors in solutions that make an impact on some of the world's most critical challenges. The Author Jens Magers looks into the legal possibilities for the implementation of sustainability standards through investment as a way to promote global investment turnaround. The article discusses a basic legal structure of sustainable investing with regard to two different types of investments: passive investments (e.g. mutual funds) as well as more active investments (e.g. dedicated start-up). Finally, the author dives into challenges of the future with regard to more conscious investments such as innovations like artificial intelligence.

# Part III

The final part of this book focuses on business perspective of Agenda 2030 in Asia where governments, practitioners and private sectors continue to make concerted efforts to achieve the UN Agenda 2030. The role and importance of Asia and the Pacific region need to play in the achievement of the UN 2030 Agenda that has been recognized widely because of the region's dynamic economic growth, international trade and human resources. The part covers the following three Asian countries: China, Kazakhstan and India.

The first chapter discusses the Chinese way of achieving the 2030 Agenda, which is concerned mainly with the power of youths, innovation and entrepreneurship. The chapter analyses the challenges, strategies and methods that the Peoples Republic of China has faced and developed in the realization of the SDGs by holding on to the core principle of the Agenda "ensuring no one is left behind". This principle is completely in alignment with the Chinese traditional wisdom of Taoism: "*making the best use of everyone, nobody is left behind, making*

*the most use of everything ensuring, nothing is left to waste*". The target population for the pledge to leave no one behind is various, some may choose to focus on the disadvantaged members of society, and others focus their attention on reducing inequalities between countries, but in the chapter, by a famous Chinese Scholar Liangrong Zu "Ensuring no one is left behind" will focus on the youths. The author addresses four broad questions. First, it tries to answer the question "who are those left behind?" Second, why are they left behind? Third, what methods and mechanisms exist to reach and involve them? And fourth, what types of appropriate strategies and policies have the national authorities developed in order to leave no one behind? The purpose of the 2030 Agenda is to realize the commitments to the achievement of the SDGs and without leaving anyone behind. Succeeding in achieving the purpose of SDGs requires national authorities to empower today's youth as tomorrow's global leaders and to engage them in the realization of the SDGs by creating an enabling the environment that promotes innovation and entrepreneurship. Fostering innovation and youth entrepreneurship call for multi-pronged strategies, implementation and involvement at all levels including the government, industry, politicians, the civil society, as well as the educational sector. The author examines the implications of "ensuring no one is left behind" for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The author will briefly discuss the connections between the commitment to leave no one behind and three related strategies for the achievement of the SDGs which are innovation, youth and entrepreneurship. The author then reviews some of the concepts and methods used to identify those left behind, as well as some of the methods that are used to reach them in practice. Finally, the author highlights examples of developmental strategies that the Chinese government has used in the achievement of sustainable development goals.

The second chapter, which comes to us from Sam Sarpong, discusses the current situation in Kazakhstan and the challenges being faced by local companies faced with pressure to meet the growing demands of global sustainable development initiatives. The author focuses on how obstacles can be transformed into opportunities. He proposes that the country uses its current situation as a way to achieve economic growth while at the same time minimizing their environmental and social risks.

In the final chapter, we look to Nayan Mitra and Bhaskar Chatterjee of India who discuss the contribution of one of the India towards the new global development agenda. The authors discuss the 2013 adopted CSR statute in India and the newly amended Companies Act. A point of particular interest is that according to recent statute interventions, India has not only committed itself to the global SDGs, but also streamlined sustainability activities within the country's own national development agenda. The paper reviews applicable parts of the Companies Act and pinpoints differences and similarities to the UNSDGs.

With sustainable development at the forefront of the UN global agenda, we hope that the following chapters will not only provide insight into some of the many

sustainable development issues in Africa, Europe and Asia, but also spark debate and plant the seeds for new questions, ideas and research topics. Now, join us on a journey through the current state of research in the UN SDGs from around the globe.

René Schmidpeter
Cologne Business School, Cologne, Germany
e-mail: r.schmidpeter@cbs.de

Samuel O. Idowu
Guildhall School of Business and Law
London Metropolitan University, UK
e-mail: s.idowu@londonmet.ac.uk

Liangrong Zu
International Training Centre of the ILO, Turin, Italy
e-mail: l.zu@itcilo.org

Bonnie Lewtas
TurtlCo—Sustainable Island Management
Amsterdam, The Netherlands
e-mail: Bonnie@turtlco.com

# Contents

# Editors and Contributors

## About the Editors

**Samuel O. Idowu** is Senior Lecturer in Accounting and Corporate Social Responsibility at London Guildhall School of Business and Law, London Metropolitan University, UK. He researches in the fields of corporate social responsibility (CSR), corporate governance, business ethics and accounting and has published in both professional and academic journals since 1989. He is Freeman of the City of London and Liveryman of the Worshipful Company of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators. He is Deputy CEO and First Vice President of the Global Corporate Governance Institute. He is Editor-in-Chief of three Springer's reference books—the Encyclopedia of Corporate Social Responsibility, the Dictionary of Corporate Social Responsibility and the Encyclopedia of Sustainable Management (forthcoming); he is Editor-in-Chief of the International Journal of Corporate Social Responsibility (IJCSR), Editor-in-Chief of the American Journal of Economics and Business Administration (AJEBA) and Associate Editor of the International Journal of Responsible Management in Emerging Economies (IJRMEE). He is also Series Editor for Springer's books on CSR, Sustainability, Ethics and Governance. One of his edited books won the most Outstanding Business Reference Book Award of the American Library Association (ALA) in 2016 and another was ranked 18th in the 2010 Top 40 Sustainability Books by, *Cambridge University, Sustainability Leadership Programme.* He is Member of the Committee of the Corporate Governance Special Interest Group of the British Academy of Management (BAM). He is on the Editorial Boards of the International Journal of Business Administration, Canada and Amfiteatru Economic Journal, Romania. He has delivered a number of keynote speeches at national and international conferences and workshops on CSR and has on two occasions 2008 and 2014 won Emerald's Highly Commended Literati Network Awards for Excellence. To date, he has edited several books in the field of CSR, Sustainability and

Governance and has written seven forewords to CSR books. He has served as External Examiner to the following UK Universities—Sunderland, Ulster, Anglia Ruskin, Plymouth, Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen, Teesside University, Middlesbrough, Sheffield Hallam University and Leicester De Montfort University.

**René Schmidpeter** holds Dr. Juergen Meyer Endowed Chair of International Business Ethics and Corporate Social Responsibility at Cologne Business School (CBS), Germany. He is Director of the Center for Advanced Sustainable Management (CASM) and General Secretary of the World Institute for Sustainability and Ethics in Rising Economies (WISE) as well as Vice President of the Global Corporate Governance Institute (GCGI) and Founder of M3TRIX, a sustainable transformation company. He is Series Editor for Springer's *CSR, Sustainability, Ethics and Governance* books, Section Editor of the *Encyclopedia of Corporate Social Responsibility* (ECSR) and Editor of the *Dictionary of Corporate Social Responsibility* (DCSR) as well as Editor-in-Chief of the International Journal of CSR (IJCSR—Springer). His research and teaching activities focus on the management of corporate social responsibility, international perspectives on CSR, Social Innovation and Sustainable Entrepreneurship as well as the relationship between business and society.

**Dr. Liangrong Zu** is Specialist in corporate social responsibility (CSR), business ethics, sustainability science, social innovation, social entrepreneurship, Taoist leadership, emotionally intelligent leadership, etc. He has been working for the central government and the United Nations for over 20 years. He currently works as Senior Programme Officer, the Founder and Dean of Global Youth Leadership Academy at International Training Centre of the International Labour Organization (ILO), the unique training and learning base of the United Nations system in Turin, Italy. He holds Ph.D. in business and management at the Nottingham University Business School in UK in the areas of CSR, business ethics, corporate restructuring and governance. He received his master's degree in economics of education from Beijing Normal University. He has been Programme Manager for developing, organizing and delivering training programmes for government officials, business executives and managers and academic professionals over past twenty years. The programme covers CSR, socially responsible restructuring and downsizing, sustainable enterprise development, responsible and sustainable leadership, sustainable supply chain management, responsible management education, social and green entrepreneurship, youth leadership development for the UN 2030 Agenda, etc. He is Member of several academic committees and boards: IMD-Syngenta Advisory Board (Lausanne, Switzerland); Organizational Committee for International Conference on CSR, Sustainability, Ethics and Governance; Member of Springer Board for the Series Books on CSR, Sustainability, and Ethics and Governance. He is also Visiting Professor of Zhejiang University, Nanjing University, Northwestern Polytechnical University, Fuzhou University, etc. He is Author of the book: "Corporate Social Responsibility, Corporate Restructuring and Firm's Performance:

Empirical Evidence from China" and Co-Editor of Encyclopedia of CSR; Dictionary of CSR; Sustainable Entrepreneurship: Business Success through Sustainability. He has also authored many articles published in Journal of Business Ethics and other national and international journals. He over the years has co-operated with some academic professors and ILO professionals in developing two training packages for global business schools on labour dimensions of CSR and sustainable supply chains.

## Contributors

**David Abdulai**  African Graduate School of Management and Leadership, Accra, Ghana

**Oluwatofunmi Adedoyin**  Nordea Bank, London, UK

**Yasmin Anwar**  Marketing Department, Faculty of Management Technology, The German University in Cairo (GUC), New Cairo City, Egypt

**Hafiz Bello**  Greenwich School of Management, London, UK

**Adriana Caterina Camilleri**  Department of Psychology, University of Bath, Bath, UK

**Mark Anthony Camilleri**  Department of Corporate Communication, Faculty of Media and Knowledge Sciences, University of Malta, Msida, Malta

**Bhaskar Chatterjee**  Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs, Gurgaon, India

**Jane Croad**  Cardiff Metropolitan University, Cardiff, UK

**Noha El-Bassiouny**  Marketing Department, Faculty of Management Technology, The German University in Cairo (GUC), New Cairo City, Egypt

**Muhtar Adeiza Etudaiye**  Department of Jurisprudence and International Law, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria

**Oyebola Fatima Etudaiye-Muhtar**  Department of Finance, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria

**Sanjiv Gungadeen**  Rushmore School of Business, Quatre Bornes, Mauritius

**Ortrud Knauf**  KompetenzCentrum for Corporate Social Responsibility, FOM University of Applied Science, Essen, Germany

**Rudi Kurz**  Business School, Pforzheim University, Pforzheim, Germany

**Adebimpe Lincoln**  University of Liverpool, Liverpool, UK

**Jens Magers**  Munich, Germany

**Frans Melissen**  Breda University of Applied Sciences, Breda, The Netherlands

**Nayan Mitra** Sustainable Advancements (OPC) Private Limited, Kolkata, India

**Lars Moratis** Antwerp Management School, Breda University of Applied Sciences, Breda, The Netherlands

**Titus Chukwuemezie Okeke** Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria

**Nafiu Olaniyi Oladokun** Department of Finance, Curtin University, Sarawak, Malaysia

**Linda O'Riordan** KompetenzCentrum for Corporate Social Responsibility, FOM University of Applied Science, Essen, Germany

**Megan Paull** Murdoch University, Perth, Australia

**Silvia Puiu** University of Craiova, Craiova, Romania

**Sam Sarpong** School of Economics and Management, Xiamen University, Malaysia, Selangor, Malaysia

**Maud H. Schmiedeknecht** ESB Business School, Reutlingen University, Reutlingen, Germany

**Oluwasegun Seriki** School of Surveying and Construction Management, College of Engineering and Built Environment, Technological University Dublin, Dublin, Ireland

**Babawande Sheba** Greenwich School of Management, London, UK

**Małgorzata Żmuda** Cologne Business School, Cologne, Germany

**Liangrong Zu** International Training Centre of the ILO, Turin, Italy

# Part I
# African Business Perspectives of Agenda 2020

# Achieving Sustainable Development Goals 2030 in Africa: A Critical Review of the Sustainability of Western Approaches

**David Abdulai, Ortrud Knauf and Linda O'Riordan**

## 1 Introduction

Triggered by the serious developmental challenges faced by the African continent, including: poverty, education, health, industrialisation, and environmental protection, this Chapter explores how to accomplish the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) from an African perspective. Focusing on how the strategies of governments and policy makers, as well as the Corporate Responsibility (CR) of business can contribute to meet the SDGs 2030, the Chapter is structured in two parts. In Part I, the authors trace the development of western concepts of Sustainability,[1] CR[2] and

---

[1] The terms 'the west' and 'western concepts' refer to Europe and the United States signifying their context-specific value systems. This includes capitalist market economy, based on a secular Western modern, democratic world view. Many former European colonies in countries such as: Latin America, Australia, New Zealand, and Asia are also understood to possess these value systems and are accordingly interpreted for the purpose of this study to adopt a 'western' approach.

[2] The term CR is interpreted to reflect the key concepts inherent in the various definitions of CSR defined by the EU commission (EU Commission 2002, p. 3) and social responsibility defined by the ISO 26000 (BMAS 2011, p. 11). For clarification, this chapter uses the terms CR & CSR synonymously, with the exception of quotations and definitions.

D. Abdulai (✉)
African Graduate School of Management and Leadership, Accra, Ghana
e-mail: dabdulai@africasml.edu.gh

O. Knauf · L. O'Riordan
KompetenzCentrum for Corporate Social Responsibility, FOM University of Applied Science, Essen, Germany
e-mail: mail@drkamps.de

L. O'Riordan
e-mail: linda.oriordan@fom.de

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)[3] to investigate their suitability, relevance, and impact for achieving the SDGs 2030 in an African-specific context. In Part II, a new proposal is presented aimed at achieving Sustainable Triple Bottom Line (TBL) Development relevant to the specific context of the African dilemma.

## 2 The African Dilemma

A new day could be dawning in Africa, signaled by a range of signs pointing to a positive growth trajectory. Looking ahead, Sub-Saharan Africa is expected to see a constant increase in activity, with growth rising to 3.2% in 2018 and 3.5% in 2019. This increase is mainly led by Nigeria, South Africa, and Angola (World Bank 2018a). Within Africa, there are 400 companies with revenue of more than US$1 billion per year growing faster and more profitably than their international competitors. Household consumption in Africa is projected to increase at 3.8% per year to reach US$2.1 trillion by 2025. At the same time, business spending can be expected to boost from US$2.6 trillion to US$3.5 trillion by 2025. Politically, much has been achieved. There is an increasing move by most of the countries towards democracy. Moreover, African countries are increasingly holding multi-party elections, and in many countries, the development of democracy, including opposition parties, and numerous civic organisations, has become the norm. In addition, a new generation of African leaders are emerging who are taking on more responsibility for the future development of their countries. Such efforts are co-ordinated through institutions, unions and agencies such as the African Union, the East African Community, the Economic Community of West African States and the New Partnership for Africa's Development/NEPAD to mention a few (Abdulai 2015, p. 428; McKinsey Global Institute 2016, p. 8; The Economist 2013; UNECA 2012; Visser et al. 2006, p. 11). Despite these efforts, Africa still faces serious developmental challenges particularly regarding issues, including poverty eradication, education, industrialisation, health, and environmental protection, which need addressing.

Notwithstanding these issues, potentially, Africa could be considered the wealthiest continent on earth. It is endowed with immense natural resources which, if effectively utilised and managed, can contribute to the continent's exponential growth and development. Paradoxically however, Africa also has one of the largest populations of poor people in the world. The number of Africans living in extreme poverty has almost doubled between 1981 and 2006, from 164 to 314 million. 34 of the 48 poorest countries on this planet are located in Africa (Hayes 2006, p. 95). The problem has even further deteriorated based on data which indicate that in 2013 in Sub-Saharan

---

[3]The term 'Corporate Social Responsibility' (CSR) is typically the most common label employed in Europe. However, given that not only social, but additionally broader societal, moral, and ecological, as well as other key responsibilities are implied, of which social aspects are merely one (albeit highly salient) component, the term CR is employed in this Chapter to more aptly reflect the broader context of corporate responsibility beyond the social focus (please refer to Footnote 2 for further details).

Africa alone, more than half of the total population[4] lived on less than US$1.9 per day (World Bank 2018b).

What has contributed to Africa's current and sustained poverty and under-development? Numerous internal and external reasons ranging from domestic instability in some African countries to economic mis-management, as well as international economic and global forces are noted causes.[5] A key African dilemma is that although the continent holds abundant natural resources and while its economies are partially operating quite effectively, ultimately too few people profit from the wealth that is created. This is partly due to foreign corporations extracting Africa's mineral resources at immense profit for shareholders with minimal reward for African populations. Due to this, Africa loses approximately US$62.2 billion in illegal outflows and price manipulations each year, mainly due to exports by multinational companies (Smith 2013).

## 3 The Sustainable Development Goals 2030 (SDGs)

A sustainable wealth-creation approach advocates strategic regard for the interests of present and future generations (Brundtland 1987). The United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development published a report in 1987 under the name of the then Managing Director, Brundtland entitled "Our Common Future" addressing the increasing negative impact of global industrialisation on human and environmental development. This established, the term "sustainable development" as "a way of satisfying the needs of the present without risking the ability of future generations to satisfy their own needs" (United Nations 1987).

The UN leit-motiv can be conceived as closely related to the triple bottom line (TBL) principles: Profits (development of a solid economic structure which facilitates industrialisation and reduces unemployment); People (elimination of poverty, facilitation of human health and education); and Planet (protecting the environment) (Elkington 1997, p. 2).

Today, almost 30 years later, the need for sustainable development and sustainable commerce is more relevant than ever. As part of this initiative, CR can be interpreted as an attempt by organisations to combat global warming, climate change, human rights abuses, and poverty, among others. The UN has championed many CR-focused events and activities worldwide based on the premise that supplying the rapidly increasing world population with healthy food, clean drinking water, air and energy can only succeed if all the necessary and possible measures are taken to design business strategies which leave a 'liveable' world for our descendants. The rationale being that by following an economic approach which is conscious of its impact on

---

[4]390.26 million people from a total of 768.51 million people.

[5]Africa's economic under-development and its causes are significant topics in their own right. While they represent some of the key the forces which have triggered the need for this Chapter, their detailed discussion goes beyond the feasible scope of this Chapter.