



Launch of the 2nd Edition of the SDG Index & Dashboards in Africa

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PRESS RELEASE

The Sustainable Development Goals Center for Africa (SDGC/A) and the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) hosted the launch of the 2nd Edition of the SDG Index & Dashboards on 11th July 2017, in Kigali, Rwanda. During the launch in Kigali, participants from government, UN agencies, civil society, business, academia and other stakeholders were invited to better understand the SDG Index and Dashboards and provide inputs on how these tools can be leveraged in the implementation of SDGs in Africa and Rwanda specifically.

The *SDG Index and Dashboards Report* is produced annually by the Bertelsmann Foundation and the SDSN. The SDG Index and Dashboards provide a report card for tracking SDG progress and ensuring accountability. The report uses SDG indicators for which data is available today and fills data gaps with metrics from internationally reputable sources. It presents the data in an easy-to-use format to help countries establish baselines for the SDGs and to identify priorities for action across the 17 goals.

Dr. Belay Begashaw, Director General of the SDGC/A, and Mr. Guido Schmidt-Traub, Executive Director of the UN SDSN, presented the report, followed by a lively discussion of the findings by participants from government, UN agencies, civil society, business, academia and other stakeholders.

In his introductory speech, Dr. Begashaw highlighted the importance of building reliable data system in order to give a clear direction, as the second edition of the SDGs and Dashboards report on Africa provides a report card for tracking SDG progress and ensuring accountability. The second edition of the report is much more comprehensive revises and adds additional metrics for the SDGs bringing the total to 99 indicators and extends the coverage from 149 to 157 countries.

Observing domestication of the SDGs, Dr. Begashaw highlighted this process goes beyond matching the government's national plans, "The rendered support entails the integration of SDGs with national economic planning processes and the introduction of mechanisms for tracking progress of these plans through robust monitoring and

evaluation and reporting (MER) systems. The SDGC/A is already working with a number of African countries in this regard.” In addition, several challenges still faced by sub-Saharan African economies were addressed including poverty, hunger and health as major concerns. Dr. Begashaw stated that “developing countries are struggling to meet basic social services and infrastructure access to their populations. There is hope the SDG Index and Dashboards will help African economies identify gaps and pull resources from all partners in order to achieve SDGS by 2030.”

Mr. Schmidt-Traub underlined the special importance of the way in which SDGs can be made operational. It was noted that the SDG Index and Dashboards will help establish SDG baselines & quantify implementation gaps; support national debates on SDG localization, help identify SDG data gaps and find ways to close them, as well as complement official monitoring efforts on the SDGs. Mr. Schmidt-Traub explained that the SDGs were achievable, which is demonstrated by the top 30 countries on SDG Index with Sweden that emerged first in the world followed by Denmark and Finland ranked third. He indicated that the development patterns of the rich countries are analyzed to show how they generate “spillovers” that may hinder the ability of poorer countries to achieve the SDGs. Many of the adverse spillovers tend to be neglected or poorly measured in official development statistics. The 2017 SDG Index and Dashboards therefore reviews the scientific and policy literature to identify the best available data for quantifying such complex spillovers. In sub-Saharan Africa, of the 39 countries, Gabon ranks first (85th) globally, followed by Mauritius, (103rd) in the world and South Africa is third in Africa and 108th globally. Furthermore, the report ranks Rwanda top in East Africa, seventh in sub-Saharan Africa and 117th globally.

According to the report, many high-income countries perform well in areas such as economic development but still fall short of achieving a good all-round SDG performance. The countries closest to fulfilling the SDGs are not the biggest economies but small developed countries. Poor and developing countries score lowest on the SDG Index as they have little resources at their disposal, according to the index.

Of the key findings, it was noted that the SDGs are stretch goals for all countries. The SDG Index and Dashboards can help to identify the greatest challenges, and these “spillover” effects are equally important. However, major data gaps require investments in statistical capacity and use of new data, and there is a lack of coherence between national and international data. Furthermore, there is the need for a regional dashboard for Africa, as it is more interesting to compare African countries amongst themselves. There is also an opportunity to develop sub-national dashboards and indices.

The SDGC/A and SDSN intend to collaborate to contextualize the SDG Index and Dashboards for Africa in the coming year. This will show a snapshot of SDG progress and status for African countries, help understand key implementation challenges, and detect policy gaps.

The SDG Index and Dashboards launch was organized by the SDGC/A, an autonomous non-profit international organization, the policies of which are formulated and carried out by a high level board of directors representing African and global leaders in government, business, academia and civil society.

For more information visit: www.sdqindex.org