

Frequently Asked Questions

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

What is sustainable development?

Sustainable development has been defined as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It calls for concerted efforts towards building an inclusive, sustainable and resilient future for people and planet. For sustainable development to be achieved, it is crucial to harmonize three core elements: economic growth, social inclusion and environmental protection. These elements are interconnected and all are crucial for the well – being of individuals and societies.

What are the Sustainable Development Goals?

On 25 September 2015, at the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit, the 193 Member States of the United Nations reached consensus on the outcome document of a new sustainable development agenda entitled, “Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”. This agenda contains 17 goals and 169 targets.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and targets are global in nature and universally applicable, taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities. They are not independent from each other — they need to be implemented in an integrated manner. The SDGs are the result of a three-year-long transparent, participatory process inclusive of all stakeholders and people’s voices.

What is the link between the MDGs and the SDGs?

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that were launched in 2000 set 2015 as the target year. Recognizing the success of the Goals—and the fact that a new development agenda was needed beyond 2015—countries agreed in 2012 at Rio+20, the UN Conference on Sustainable Development, to establish an open working group to develop a set of sustainable development goals for consideration and appropriate action.

The SDGs and associated targets are broader in scope and will go further than the MDGs by addressing the root causes of poverty and the universal need for development that works for all people. These goals will cover the three dimensions of sustainable development: economic growth, social inclusion and environmental protection. Besides, the new goals are universal and apply to all countries, whereas the MDGs were intended for action in developing countries only.

When are the SDGs expected to start and end?

The SDGs are expected to start on 1 January 2016 and to be achieved by 31 December 2030. However, some targets that build on pre-set international agreements are expected to be achieved even earlier than the end of 2030.

The United Nations Multi-country Sustainable Development Framework (UN MSDF)

Why replace the six national United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs) by a unique UN Caribbean MSDF?

The underlying rationale to do a single UN MSDF instead of six (6) national UNDAFs (Barbados and the OECS, Belize, Guyana, Jamaica, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago) is to reap several benefits. The UN will seek to reach sustained national and regional impact by addressing the needs of national counterparts while creating synergies at the regional level. The year 2016 is a key moment for this shift, since it follows the thrust of the countries of the Caribbean to enhance integration and it brings to the forefront efforts to localize the SDGs as an agenda setter. The value added for national partners is accessing the full comparative advantage of the UN in reaching goals and priorities at national level.

What are the priority areas identified for the UN Caribbean MSDF?

Based on the commonalities found in the region, through the national consultations and the Strategic Planning Retreat (SPR), four priority areas and related outcome statements were identified to guide the UN MSDF:

- An inclusive, equitable and prosperous Caribbean
- A healthy Caribbean
- A safe, cohesive and just Caribbean
- A sustainable and resilient Caribbean

What is the UN MSDF Regional Steering Committee (SC)?

The SC is the oversight body for the MSDF. The membership includes the five UN Resident Coordinators who cover the six UN Country Teams (UNCT) involved in the MSDF. The membership has been broadened, in June 2016, to include at least one member of each Country Team. The SC meets every two weeks to approve the budgetary strategy, define and realize outcomes, monitor risks, quality and timelines, make policy and resourcing decisions, and assess requests for changes to the scope of the MSDF.

What is the Common Multi-Country Assessment (CMCA)?

The CMCA analyses the main development challenges facing the Caribbean region within the context of the Post-2015 Agenda and human rights commitments, the Samoa Pathway and the SDGs. Based on an ECLAC analysis, the CMCA provided a foundation for the region to identify its strategic priorities and goals during the national consultations and the Strategic Planning Retreat (SPR).