The 2023 United Nations Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR)

Astra Bonini, *Senior Sustainable Development Officer*

The Global Sustainable Development Report

Mandated in 2015 to provide follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

- Informs the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) under the auspices of the UN General Assembly (SDG Summit) and strengthens the science-policy interface
- Builds on other assessments to provide a strong evidence-based instrument to support policy-makers
- GSDR 2023 launched on 12 September 2023 at the UN SDG Summit

GLOBAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT REPORT

The Independent Group of Scientists (2020-2023)

Mr. J. Jaime Miranda, Head of School at the University of Sydney's School of Public Health and Professor at the School of Medicine at Universidad Peruana Cayetano Heredia (UPCH)

Ms. Imme Scholz, Deputy Director of the German Development Institute (DIE) and Honorary Professor of the Centre for Ethics and Responsibility at Hochschule Bonn-Rhein-Sieg

Mr. Ibrahima Hathie, Deputy Chief of Party for Feed the Future Senegal Policy Systems Services and Distinguished Fellow for the Initiative Prospective Agricole et Rurale

Ms. Shirin Malekpour, Associate Professor at Monash Sustainable Development Institute, Monash University

Ms. Nyovani Janet Madise, Director of Development Policy and Head of the Malawi office of the African Institute for Development Policy (AFIDEP)

Mr. Jiahua Pan, Member of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Director of the Institute of Eco-civilization Studies and Professor, Beijing University of Technology

Ms. Kaltham Al-Ghanim , Professor of sociology at Qatar University and Director of the Social & Economic Survey Research Institute (SESRI)

Mr. John Agard, Professor of Tropical Island Ecology and Director of the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship

Ms. Åsa Persson, Research Director and Deputy Director of the Stockholm Environment Institute, Adjunct Professor, Linkoping University

Mr. Sergey N. Bobylev, Head of Environmental Economic Division, Full Professor of Moscow State “Lomonosov” University

Ms. Opha Pauline Dube, Associate Professor in the Department of Environmental Science, University of Botswana.

Mr. Ambuj Sagar, Vipula and Mahesh Chaturvedi Professor of Policy Studies and the founding Head of the School of Public Policy at the Indian Institute of Technology Delhi

Mr. Jaime C. Montoya, Professor at the University of the Philippines College of Medicine and President of the National Academy of Science and Technology

Mr. Norichika Kanie, Professor at the Graduate School of Media Governance, Keio University, adjunct Professor at United Nations University Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability

Ms. Nancy Shackell, Senior research scientist at Bedford Institute of Oceanography in Nova Scotia, working for Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO)

The GSDR Process

• Written every 4 years by an independent group of scientists appointed by the Secretary-General with support from UN System.

P*revious report launched in 2019*

• **Global Inputs:**

Online call for inputs: 175+ submissions from 40+ countries

• **Peer Review** conducted by the International Science Council (ISC) in partnership with major scientific networks.
104 reviewers from across the globe to ensure balanced views and reflection of global scientific consensus.

Regional Consultations

To inform the GSDR as an assessment of assessments, the IGS conducted a series of regional consultations with policy makers, experts, and practitioners in different geographic regions to gather insights from a diverse range of local perspectives and experiences.

- **Latin America and the Caribbean**, 7-9 November 2022, **Peru**
- **Africa** (in French), 14-16 November 2022, **Senegal**
- **Asia and the Pacific**, 28-30 November 2022, **Philippines**
- **Africa** (in English), 30 November - 2 December 2022, **Malawi**
- **Western Asia**, 24-25 January 2023, **Qatar**

GLOBAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT REPORT

Report Findings

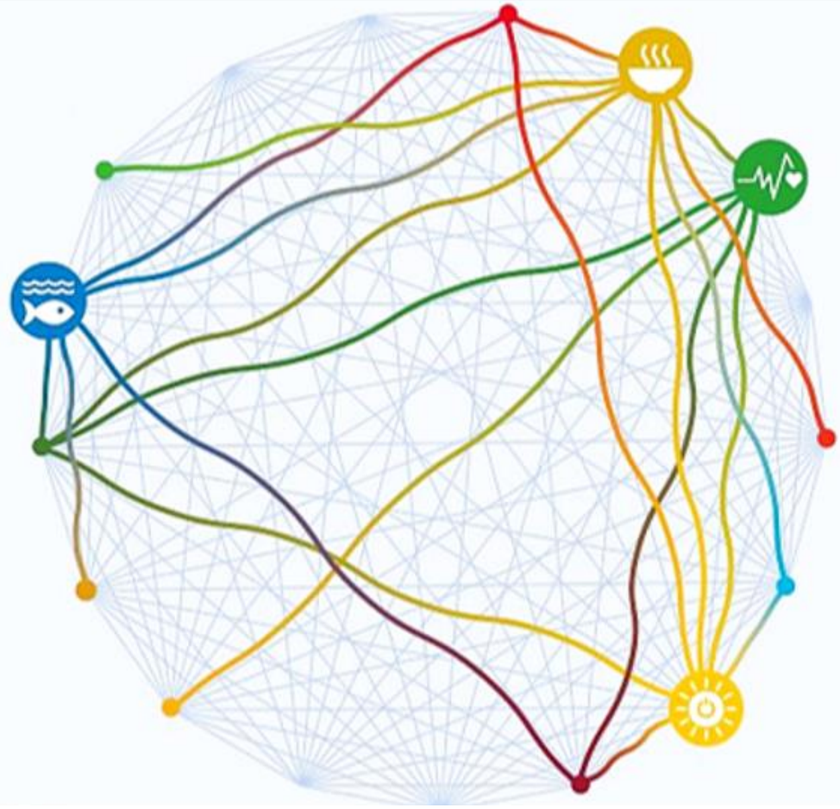
Transformation is possible, and inevitable

Halfway to 2030: Where are we?

- **The SDGs are far off track with stagnation and backslides in the face of multiple crises**
  - Before pandemic, there was some progress, but Implementation was **too slow**, and even **regressing** in areas like climate action, biodiversity loss and inequality
  - **Crises brought significant setbacks** including in poverty eradication, gender equality, education and eliminating hunger.
  - **Growing gap** between high- and low-income countries
  - **Future crises** to be expected unless urgent action is taken to build resilience through SDG implementation.

‘Business-as-usual’ pathways - the SDGs won’t be achieved by 2030.
Transformation and game-changing interventions are needed

Accelerating progress: **Addressing SDG interlinkages**



- Policymakers stand to benefit by **leveraging synergies** and **minimizing tradeoffs** between SDGs, including accounting for spillovers across national borders.

- High-income countries face more trade-offs than **low- and middle-income countries** where actions have a relatively **high share of synergies.**

- Synergies are higher for **female, younger,** and **rural populations** for whom trade-offs are more negligible - *i.e., progress on a given SDG indicator for these groups will generally foster progress for the group on other SDG indicators.*

Calls to action:

1. Carry out context-specific analyses of SDG interlinkages to guide priority setting

2. Closer collaboration between science and policy is needed; use available science-based tools (e.g., SDG Synergies and the iSDG framework)

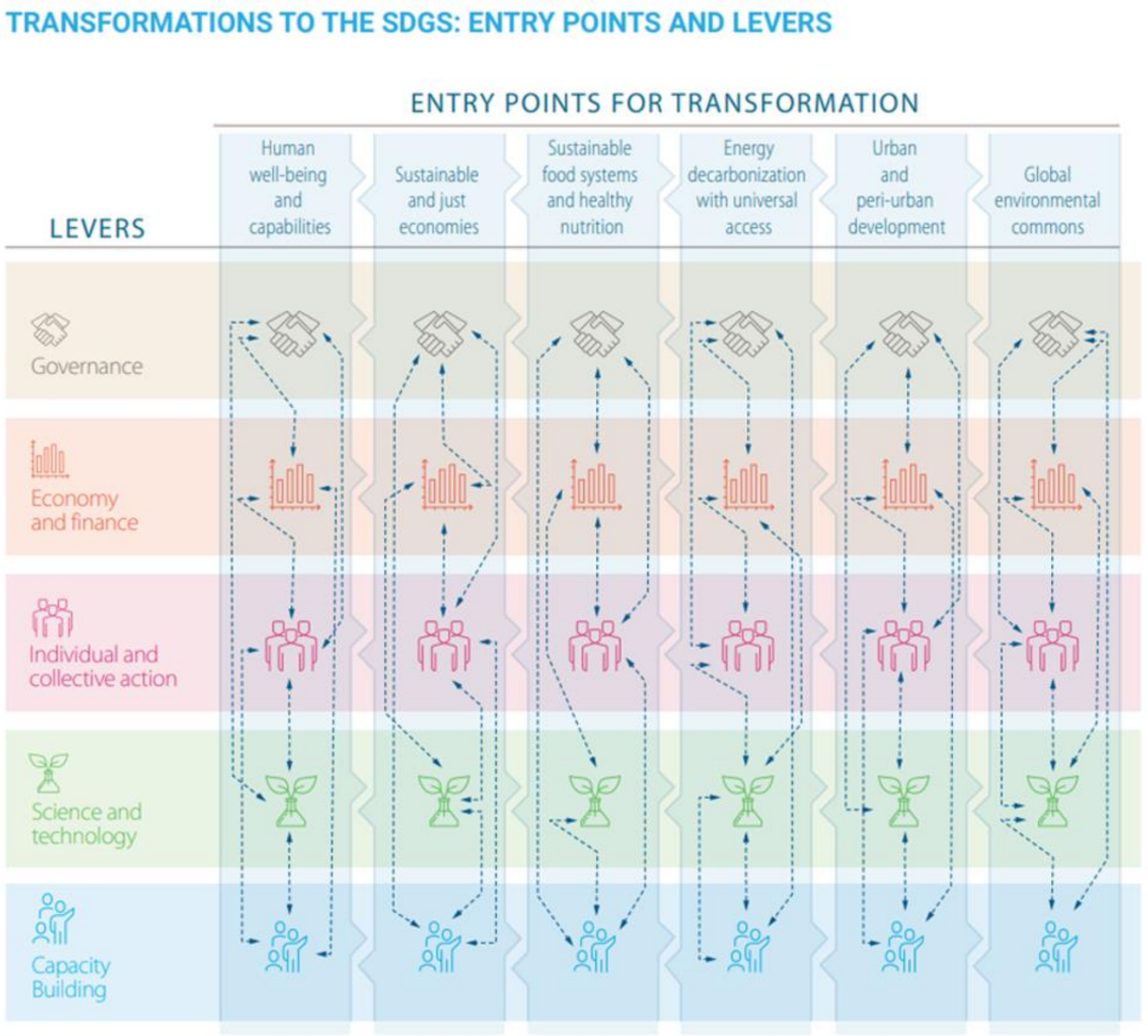
3. Institutionalize the SDGs in policy impact assessment procedures (OECD recommendation on PCSD)

Working through *entry points* for transformation

- Business-as-usual strategies will not deliver the SDGs by 2030 or even 2050 but working through **key entry points** to leverage **interlinkages** could unleash rapid progress.

- Locally relevant, synergistic and integrated implementation processes will be needed that break down the silos of public service and policymaking.

- **Identifying key interventions**
  - 6 entry points to transformation (2019 GSDR)
  - 5 Levers for transformation (2019 GSDR + capacity building)
  - Review of scenario literature



Transformative Shifts for

Entry Points

1

ENTRY POINT:
Human Wellbeing & Capabilities

- Scaling up investment in primary **health** care and ensuring access to life-saving interventions
- Accelerating secondary **education** enrolment and completion and ensuring all girls are enrolled
- Increased investment in **water and sanitation** infrastructure to deliver universal piped water access and halving of untreated wastewater.

2

ENTRY POINT:
Sustainable Food Systems & Healthy Nutrition

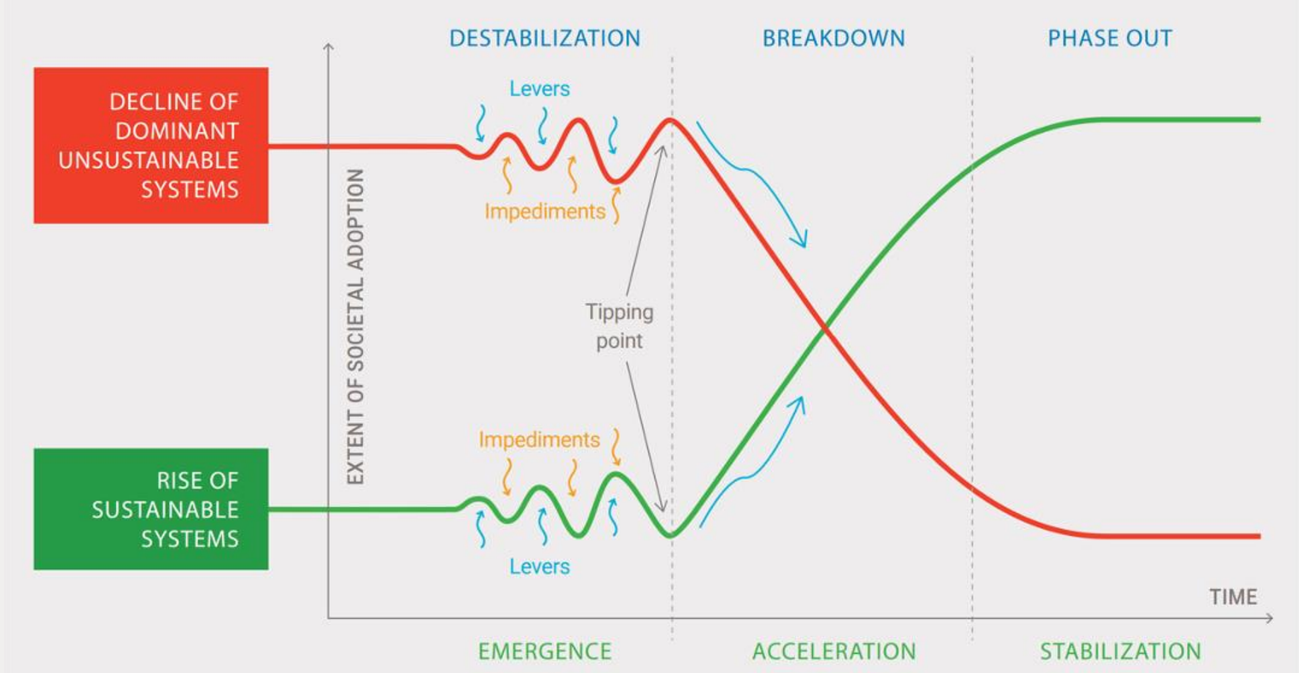
- Encouraging **inclusive, pro-poor growth** including progressive redistribution measures, doubling welfare transfers in low-income countries
- Rollout of **good practice** climate policies and global carbon pricing
- Encouraging **lifestyles** that promote sufficiency levels
- Investment in **green innovation**, and **circular and sharing economy models.**

3

ENTRY POINT: Energy Decarbonization & Universal Access

- Large-scale deployment of **renewables** and best available technologies, appliances and equipment
- Rapidly scaling up **infrastructure** investment and support for universal electricity **access** and clean cooking alternatives
- Phasing down of **fossil fuels** by 2030 in a domestically and globally just manner
- Major changes in global **consumer behaviour** to reduce energy consumption and end-use electrification.

Driving Transformation through its phases



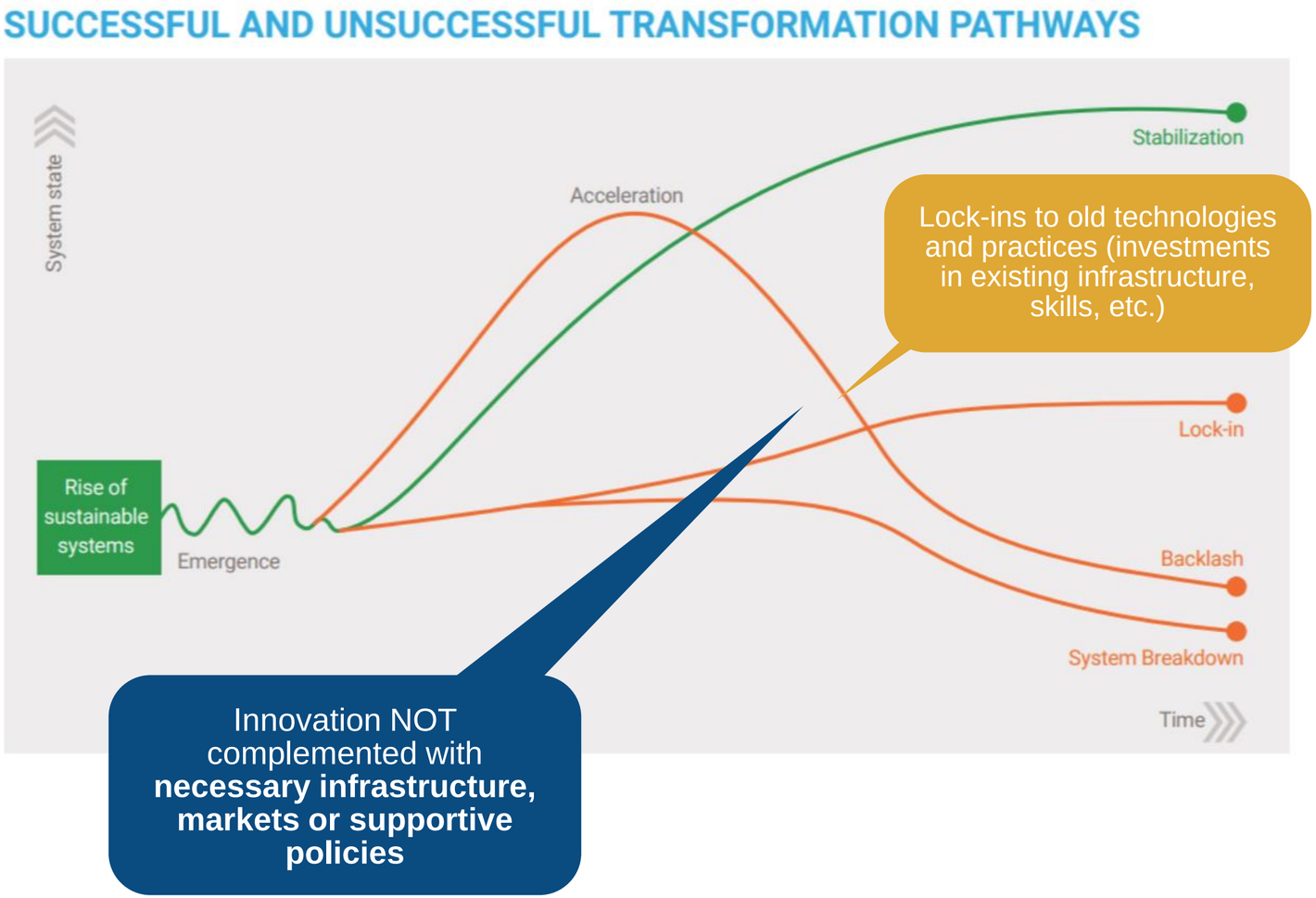
- Strategies for the SDGs must minimize impediments and support promising solutions specific to different phases of transformation:
  - ***Emergence***
  - ***Acceleration***
  - ***Stabilization***

- Tracing the "**S-curve**"

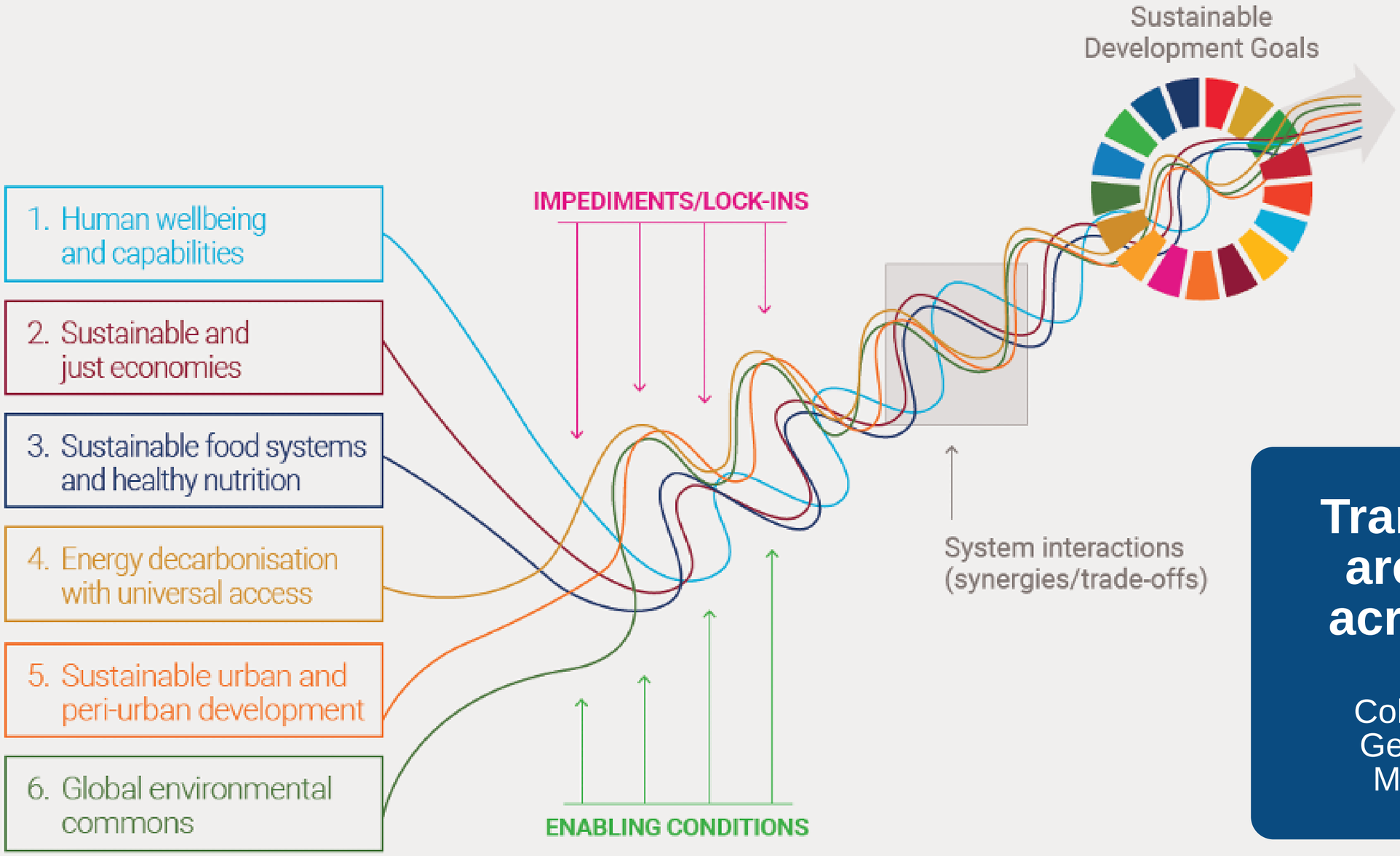
- **Tipping points** examples:
  - Major societal shifts in perspectives (single-use plastics)
  - Innovations suddenly become easier to use or more socially desirable (smart phone)

- **Which strategic combination of levers enable SDG solutions to move from emergence, to acceleration, to stabilization?**

Tools and Levers for dynamic transformations



- **Acceleration** is Key
- Nurture **innovation**
- Give **strategic direction**
- Goals Matter
- **Foresight** capacity
  - Scenario and Models Matter
- Standardization and quality assurance
- Innovation (COVID-19 and virtual meetings)
- Powerful actors support new ways of thinking, doing and acting (electric car)



Transformations are interlinked across systems

Coherent Actions can Generate Synergies/ Manage Trade-offs

Calls to Action

- **Establish an SDG Transformation Framework for Accelerated Action**
  - Member states should set national plans prioritizing key SDGs and bottlenecks
  - Business and local government roadmaps
  - Provide finance and integrate in budgeting
- **Build capacities for transformation**
  - Training, foresight, public engagement, negotiation skills
- **Drive transformation through its phases and manage interlinkages**
  - Interventions for six entry points, assess interlinkages and international spill-overs using science-based tools
- **Improve critical, underlying conditions for SDG implementation**
  - Prevent conflict, ensure fiscal space, focus on marginalized groups
- **Work with science**
  - Invest in evaluation research, global South R&D, knowledge sharing

Shifting course at the HLPF and SDG Summit

- The HLPF in July and the SDG Summit in September represent critical opportunities to arrest the negative trends on many SDGs, including those triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic and the crises resulting from the war in Ukraine.

- The Summit needs to rekindle the hope and energy of the SDGs and sound the alarm bell about the need for urgent actions.

- It should be pervaded by a “can do” spirit stressing that **positive transformation is possible,** despite the challenges with knowledge, technologies and resources unprecedented in history.

- The Secretary-General calls for us all to use these resources to deliver a **‘Rescue Plan for People and Planet’** to achieve the SDGs, enabled by an SDG Stimulus of $500 billion per year between now and 2030.

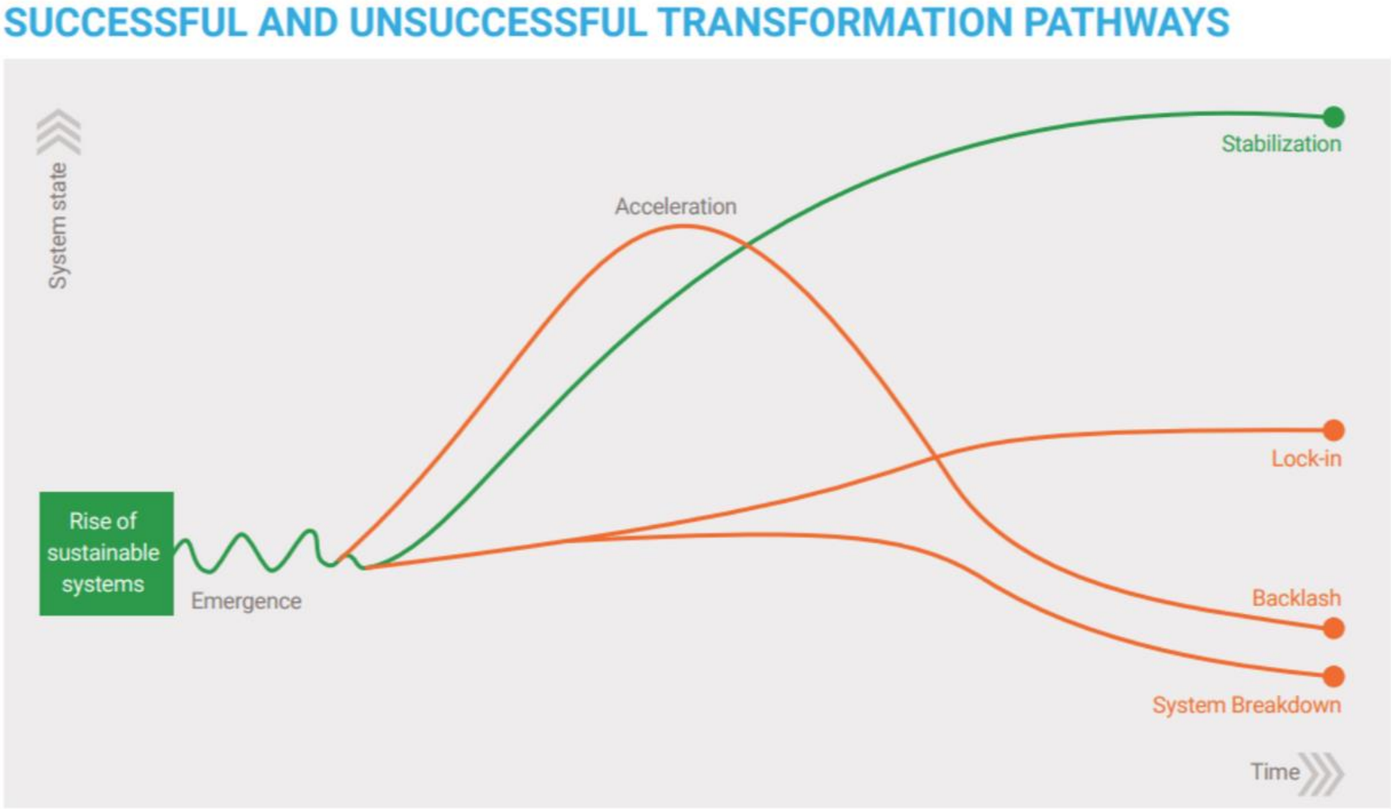
In closing...

- **Transformations are possible, and inevitable**
- A better future does not rest on one source of security, but on **all necessary securities**, including geopolitical, energy, climate, water, food and social security
- Working as a **human collective**, time and resources must be used as judiciously and effectively as possible
- Against the backdrop shocks crises, the **2030 Agenda** for Sustainable Development remains a strong and valid agenda for a desirable future.

Q&A

Common Impediments to Transformation

- Deficits in governance, institutional capacities, financing and infrastructure
- High upfront capital costs, immaturity of technologies and markets, gaps in financing and large sunk investments
- Political feasibility can be undermined by influential actors and vested interests and concerns about potential trade-offs for jobs and livelihoods
- Engrained practices and behaviours can be very difficult to change.



ENTRY POINT:
Human wellbeing and capabilities

Key Shifts

- Scale-up investment in core primary **health** care interventions, ensure that every pregnant woman and neonate has access to lifesaving interventions, optimize existing health systems and expand community-based health initiatives.
- Accelerate secondary **education** enrolment and completion rates, ensure all girls are enrolled in secondary education by 2030, expand tertiary education and education on sustainability issues.
- Increased investment in **water and sanitation** infrastructure, particularly in SSA and South Asia; transition to universal piped water access and halve untreated wastewater that by 2030 (and halve again by 2050).

Interventions

POLICY

Health: policy and population-wide interventions (e.g. regulatory interventions, taxes, restrictions and bans); periodic outreach and schedulable services (e.g. vaccines, family planning, nutrition, supplements); first-level and above clinical services (e.g. disease treatment, counselling, mammography, asthma, pulmona). Optimising health systems to address staff shortages, retrain workers, reinforce infrastructure and supplies, strengthen networks and expand services

Education: eliminating school fees, improving local access to schools, increasing the number of years of compulsory schooling, and providing food, stipends, and other resources for children at school

FINANCE

Health: additional USD200 billion per year from 2020 to 2030 for core PHC in LMICs

Water & Sanitation (W&S): reallocate financing away from conventional freshwater supply systems combined with massive ramp-up in investment in efficiency and clean supply projects. Incremental investment in piped water access and water treatment reaches USD260 billion per year by 2030.

TECHNOLOGY

W&S: rapid expansion of desalination and wastewater recycling in water stressed regions

BEHAVIOUR

W&S: additional 10% end-use efficiency improvement beyond baseline due to behaviour change

ENTRY POINT:

Sustainable urban and peri-urban development

Key Shifts

- Shift towards **sustainable urban development** by doubling of the recycled and composted share of municipal waste by 2030 and increased circularity in the waste cycle; implementing mandates for electric vehicle market penetration; increasing demand and provision of public transport; rollout of good practice climate policies for transport, buildings and waste; investing in innovation to reduce plastic and solid waste; transition to smart cities using modern digital technologies. water access and halve untreated wastewater that by 2030 (and halve again by 2050).

Interventions

POLICY	Expanding municipal waste collection systems, incentives and educational initiatives for composting and recycling;32 investment in public transport networks, multi-modal transport and incentives or mandates for electric vehicle uptake (e.g. 50% new sales by 2030), regulations or standards to improve fuel efficiency of passenger cars and aviation,7,12,16 building standards to improve final energy intensity of new residential and commercial buildings and no new installations of boiler capacity;12 retrofitting of existing building stock to improve energy efficiency (6-11% by 2030);12 reducing waste emissions by 28-55% by 2030.
TECHNOLOGY	Investing in innovation to reduce plastic and solid waste14 and modern digital technologies to transition to smart cities.
BEHAVIOUR	Incentives and educational initiatives for behaviour change around composting and recycling and public transport.

ENTRY POINT:
Global Environmental Commons

Key Shifts

- Protect and restore life on land by expanding protected areas to all priority conservation areas and biodiversity hotspots reaching 40-50% of terrestrial areas by 2050; preserving 85% of tropical/ boreal forest and 50% of temperate forest on each continent; abandoning agricultural land in protected areas or areas with >5% threatened species; ambitious reforestation of all degraded forest areas; and implementing a 1.5°C land-sector roadmap for 2050 combining avoided deforestation and land conversion, restoring forests and wetlands, improving forest management, lifestyle changes (diets, waste) and reduced reliance on BECCS. Protect other global environmental commons including ensuring environmental flow requirements; greater conservation of water by households, farms and industry, and improved air quality control.

Interventions

GOVERNANCE

- Conservation policies, establishment of protected areas, land use regulation and law enforcement, integrated land use planning, sustainable forest management (optimising rotation and stocks, low-impact logging, certification, fire management), improved land tenure, sustainable commodity production, improved supply chain transparency, procurement policies, commodity certification, cleaner cookstoves, investments in ecosystem restoration and nature-based solutions, integration of agroforestry into agricultural and grazing lands, limit water extraction to local environmental flow requirements in low, intermediate and high flow periods.

BUSINESS & FINANCE

- Payment for Ecosystem Services schemes, including Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+).

INDIVIDUAL & COLLECTIVE ACTION

- Shift societal preferences from production to conservation land use and enable lifestyle changes around diets and waste.

CAPACITY-BUILDING

- Build capacities to implement each lever and overcome impediments including for managing trade-offs between food production and biodiversity protection, designing and implementing effective financial conservation schemes, establishing sustainable land management regulations, institutions and governance systems.

ENTRY POINT:

Energy Decarbonisation & Universal Access

Key Shifts

- Large-scale deployment of **renewables** and best available technologies, appliances and equipment
- Rapidly scaling up **infrastructure** investment and support for universal electricity access and clean cooking alternatives
- Phasing down of **fossil fuels** by 2030 in a domestically and globally just manner
- Major changes in global **consumer behaviour** to reduce energy consumption and end-use electrification.

Interventions

GOVERNANCE

- **Access**: subsidies to stimulate the adoption of cleaner cooking fuels/technologies or regulations to near-complete phase out biomass cookstoves by 2030.
- **Decarbonisation**: carbon pricing of fossil fuel CO, emissions and subsidies for renewables. Energy system policies for faster phase out of coal and near-complete phase out of traditional biomass by 2040, restrictions on nuclear capacity additions and bioenergy potential, and faster phase out of fossil energy subsidies by 2030. Mandatory targets to increase share of renewables in electricity generation and ban new installations of coal power plants by 2025 (HICS) or 2030 (LMICs).
- **Demand**: introduction of a progressive carbon tax affecting energy demand, regulations to improve energy efficiency, incentives to improve dwelling energy performance and change behaviour to reduce energy consumption; designing and enforcing national standards and labelling for household appliances and efficient equipment; subsidies, appliance rebates and access to credit for lower income households to benefit from modern energy technologies.

BUSINESS & FINANCE

- **Access**: increase public and private investment in electricity infrastructure in Africa from 1% to 3% GDP per annum to 2030.
- **Decarbonisation**: divestment from fossil fuel activities reaching more than 170 Billion USD per year by 2030 and used to partially fund USD910 billion per year on efficiency and low-carbon resources. Recycling of carbon revenues whereby developed countries devote part of their revenues to an international fund that supports clean energy and R&D in developing countries (USD50 billion per annum).

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

- **Decarbonisation**: public and private investment in innovation in renewable energy technologies; spatially optimised bioenergy with carbon capture/storage.
- **Demand**: promote digital technologies for energy use, transmission and monitoring and innovation in high quality housing with highly efficient facilities for cooking, storing food and washing, low-energy lighting.

INDIVIDUAL & COLLECTIVE ACTION

- **Demand**: incentivize behaviour change to reduce energy consumption.

CAPACITY BUILDING

- Build capacities to implement each lever and overcome impediments including for designing and implementing market conditions, incentives and regulatory settings for investment in sustainable energy infrastructure and improving revenue collection, navigating political resistance from sunk investments in capital stocks, managing trade-offs and competition between socioeconomic and environmental goals, building coalitions and public support in favour of decarbonisation, and shifting towards sustainable consumption behaviours.

ENTRY POINT:
Sustainable and just economies

Key Shifts

- Encouraging inclusive, pro-poor growth including progressive redistribution measures, doubling welfare transfers in low-income countries
- Rollout of good practice **climate policies** and **global carbon pricing**
- Encouraging **lifestyles** that promote sufficiency levels
- Investment in **green innovation**, and **circular and sharing economy models.**

Interventions

GOVERNANCE

- **Just Economy:** policies for redistribution, income transfers, and redirecting public investments to focus on productive capacity and raising the incomes of the poor, including universal cash transfers, universal insurance coverage, or instituting a basic income. Social transfer schemes can include equal per capita payments or progressive redistribution inversely proportional to income.
- **Sustainable Economy:** good practice climate policies including economy-wide measures such as differentiated carbon pricing through taxes or cap- and-trade. Environmental policies and taxation to accelerate behaviour change, for example when applied to transport or energy. Governments can also create markets for new innovations through regulations, tax exemptions, deployment subsidies and labelling.

BUSINESS & FINANCE

- **Just Economy:** recycling revenue raised from carbon taxes in all countries to households to alleviate poverty, with shortfalls in LICS to be met by a portion of revenues raised in HICS and committed to a global fund. Greater concessional finance and debt relief for developing countries to ensure scope for social spending.
- **Sustainable Economy:** global carbon tax revenue potential of USD436-1360 billion by 2030 under different mitigation pathways. Rollout of good practice climate policies would cost 0.02% in annual GDP growth to 2050.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

- **Sustainable Economy:** industry technology measures include carbon capture and storage (HICS 1.5% of total CO, emissions by 2030), improving final energy efficiency (HICS 11% and LMICS 6% by 2030); and reducing N,O emissions. Support from state investment banks, public-private financing facilities, and government science funding mechanisms for green innovations. Divestment in current business-as-usual practices and technologies and increasing investment in R&D.

CAPACITY BUILDING

- Build capacities to implement each lever and overcome impediments including building institutional capacities for navigating revenue collection and redistribution, overcoming political resistance, managing environmental and economic trade-offs, designing and delivering carbon taxes to address financing gaps, developing markets for sustainable innovations, and shifting ingrained unsustainable behaviors and attitudes.

Useful materials for presentations to

GOVERNMENTS

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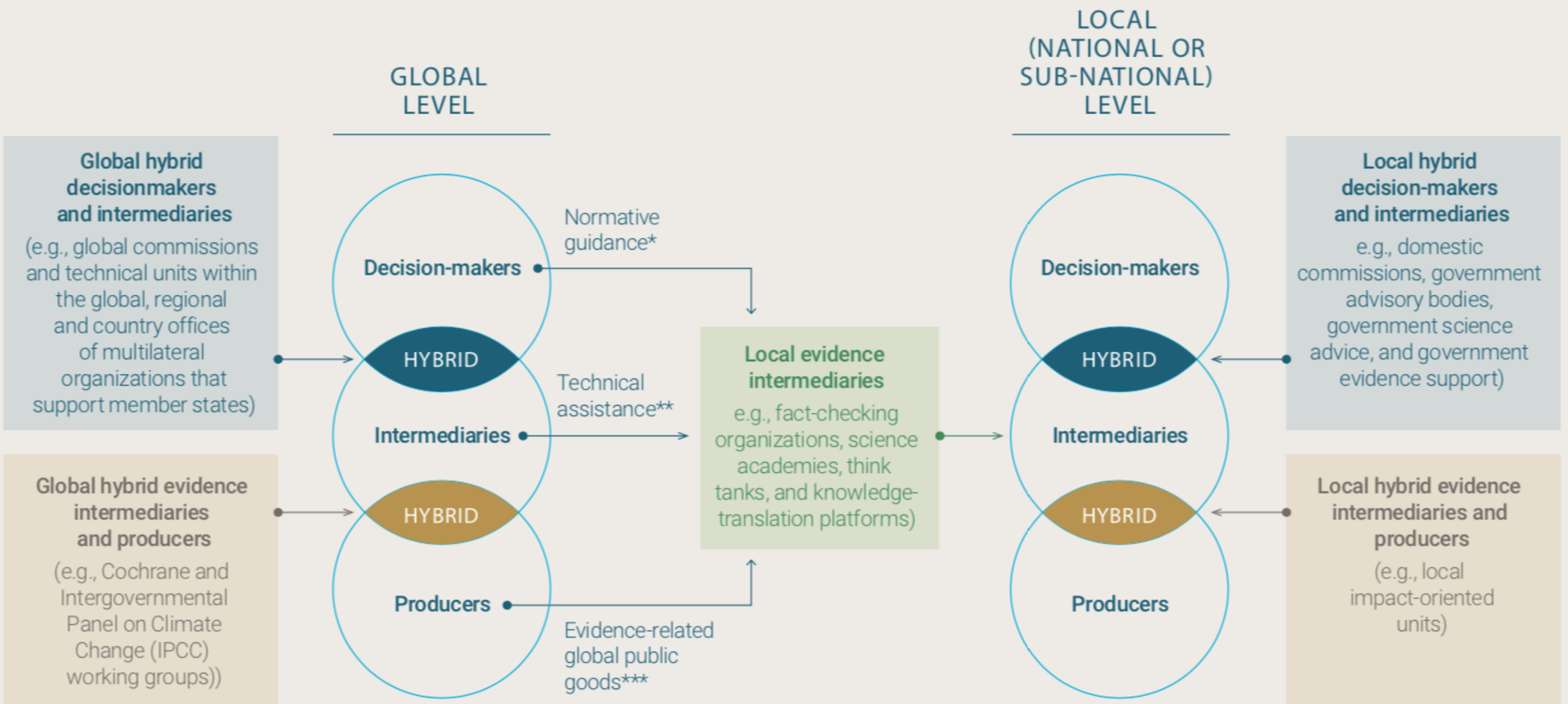
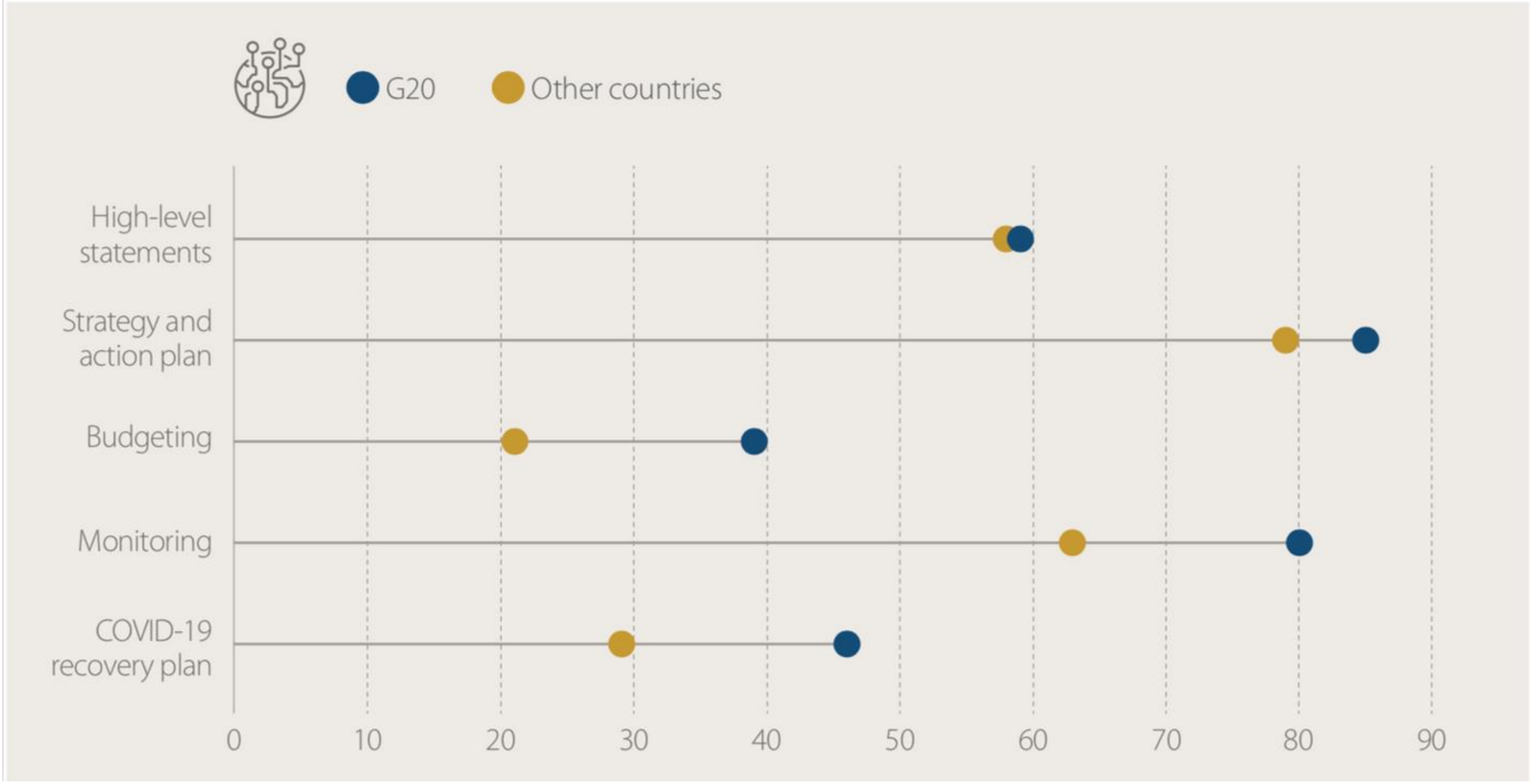
THE DYNAMICS OF SCIENCE PRODUCTION AND POLICY DECISION MAKING



* e.g., UN Assembly resolutions and UN agency guidelines
** e.g., capacity to respond to questions with best evidence
*** e.g., Cochrane evidence syntheses and IPCC modeling

INTEGRATION OF SDGs INTO KEY POLICY PROCESSES, G20 COUNTRIES AND OTHER COUNTRIES

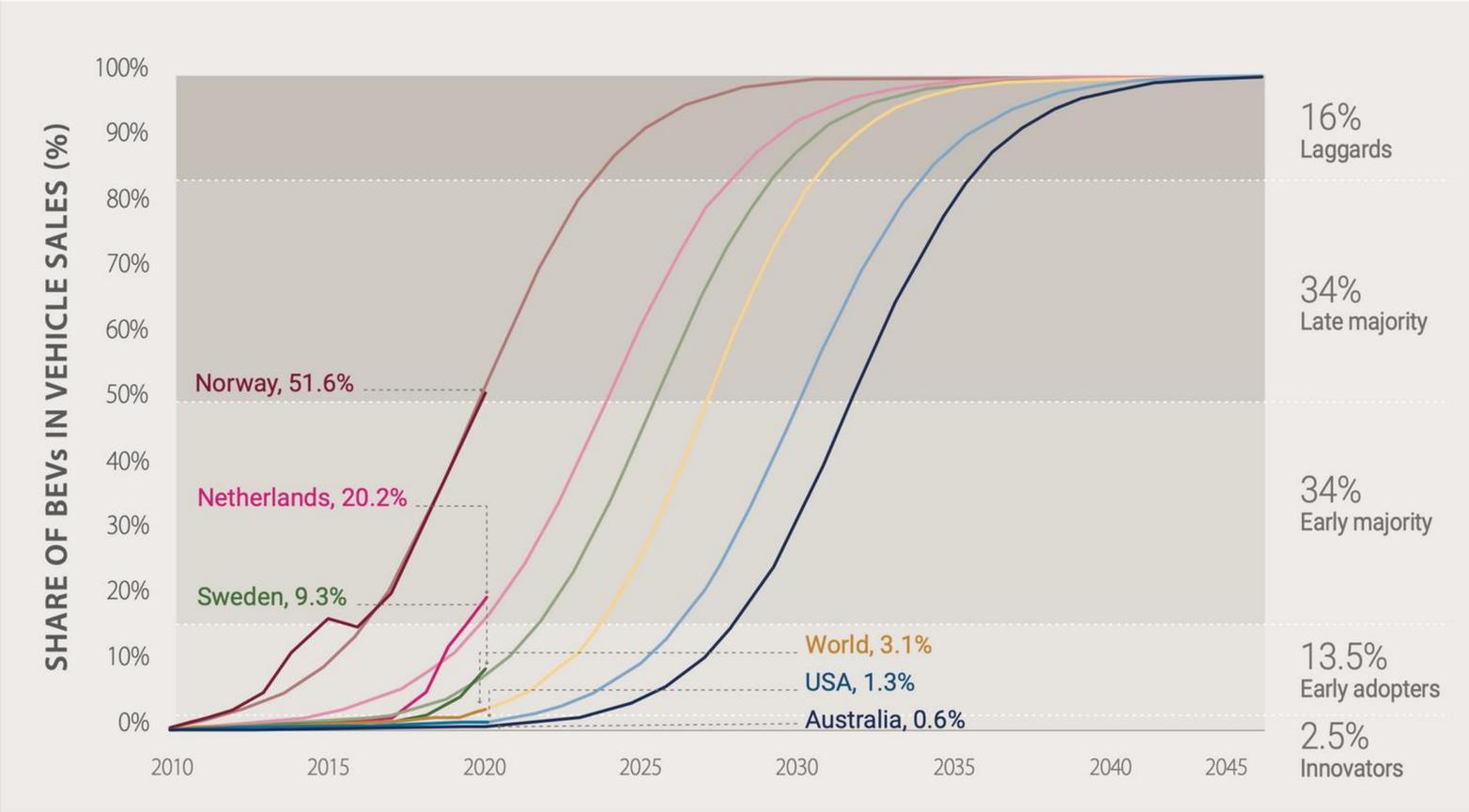


Source: Sachs et al. (2022a) Sustainable Development Report 2022: From Crisis to Sustainable Development

Aspirations, Commitments, and Partnerships

- A recent survey of 60 countries showed that by 2021, **75% of governments had developed SDG strategies and action plans.**
- **G20 countries** on average have been **less ambitious** than other countries despite representing the majority of the world's population and income.

The S-Curve in Practice: Electric Vehicles



- Several countries advanced rapidly along the S-curve. Key factors for potential adopters are the upfront **costs** and **availability** of an adequate charging network. **Governmental policy and tax incentives** also helps acceleration.
- However, this transition can also cause **damage** and **trade-offs,** and **spillovers** must be accounted for and managed.

Useful materials for presentations to the

PRIVATE SECTOR

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Corporations & Foundations for the SDGs

- Amidst an overall declining trust in institutions, **people are looking to the private sector to fill that gap** – holding CEOs and businesses to a new standard of leadership.
  - *According to one survey, business has emerged as the most trusted institution (61%), followed by NGOs (59%) and governments (52%).*

- **Increasing stakeholder support** for sustainability, investors are engaging in conversations about long-term growth and **ESG**-integrated investment decisions.

- **Corporate foundations** may actively contribute to the achievement of the SDGs by acting as **broker organizations in cross-sector collaborations for the SDGs.**

Useful materials for presentations to

ACADEMIA

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Scenario Frameworks for Global Change

SSP1 - Sustainability

The world shifts gradually, but pervasively, towards a more sustainable path, emphasizing more inclusive development that respects perceived environmental boundaries. Management of the global commons slowly improves, educational and health investments accelerate a demographic transition, and a shift from economic growth towards a broader emphasis on human well-being. Driven by an increasing commitment to the SDGs, inequality is reduced both across and within countries. Consumption is oriented towards low material growth and lower intensity use of resources and energy.

SSP2 – Middle-of-the-road

A business-as-usual scenario. The world follows a path in which social, economic and technological trends do not shift markedly from historical patterns.

SSP3 - Regional rivalry

A resurgent nationalism, concerns about competitiveness and security, and regional conflicts push countries to increasingly focus on domestic or, at most, regional issues.

SSP4 - Inequality

Highly unequal investments in human capital, combined with increasing disparities in economic opportunity and political power, lead to increasing inequalities and stratification both across and within countries.

SSP5 - Fossil-fuelled development

This world places increasing faith in competitive markets, innovation and participatory societies to produce rapid technological progress and development of human capital as the path to sustainable development.