

# High hopes as world leaders meet to agree global survival plan

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The SDGs recognize that people and nature are interconnected. Credit: James Morgan

The expected approval of a new worldwide development deal later this week gives hope that nations can work together to eradicate poverty and

protect the environment. All 193 UN member states will formally agree the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development on Friday at what is billed to be the largest ever gathering of world leaders.

The [sustainable development](#) plan centres around goals to eliminate poverty; create food, energy and [water security](#); establish [sustainable production](#) and consumption; protect biodiversity; and build green cities. Unlike the UN's expiring Millennium Development Goals, all countries have responsibilities under the new plan and environmental priorities are featured throughout.

"This will be the largest gathering of world leaders ever, because the challenges we face are the most urgent ever," said Yolanda Kakabadse, President of WWF International. "Countries are coming together to finally recognize that the health of the economy, the health of the environment and the health of people are fundamentally linked."

The 15-year development plan will drive trillions of dollars of private and public funding, but it is less about simple spending than it is about smarter spending – and making different choices. The plan will help take resources away from wasteful, harmful practices – like reliance on fossil fuels – and move the money toward sustainable policies that help the environment and support livelihoods.

Under the plan, all nations are expected to provide development plans, changes in administrative practices and ensure supportive funding and investment measures.

"This is a better, more comprehensive agreement than we ever would have expected, and it gives us hope we can make the significant changes needed to help people and the planet," said Kakabadse. "This plan is about survival and prosperity. By accepting nature's central role in supporting human well-being, the deal will ensure that people around the

world will live happier, healthier, more prosperous and hopeful lives."

The UN estimates that global population will grow to 8.5 billion by the time the sustainable development plan comes due in 2030. In order to give the deal any chance of success, countries must move quickly to implementing the plan after it is agreed. WWF expects that nations will apply the same level of commitment to accomplishing the goals as they did toward reaching the initial agreement.

"A mission defined is not a mission accomplished," said Deon Nel, WWF International acting-Executive Director for Conservation. "World leaders coming to New York need to say 'I do' to this plan to save the planet by making concrete commitments to implement the agenda at home."

Most of the economic output of people living in extreme poverty is derived from nature through farming, fishing and herding, yet the environment is under unprecedented strain from [climate change](#) and over-exploitation. The 2030 Agenda should reverse this trend by including initiatives to protect the ocean, freshwater and forests while promoting sustainability in cities and markets.

"WWF has worked for years to make sure this plan includes the environmental elements that give it the best chance for success," said Nel. "As leaders come to the UN to commit themselves to the plan, we commit ourselves to continue to partner with governments, business and communities to see the job through."

The strong support for the new agreement and the strength of the plan itself set a high standard for the forthcoming meeting on climate change in Paris. A strong climate deal gives the UN's sustainable development plan a better chance to succeed by confronting one of the greatest threats to people and nature.

Provided by WWF

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