

# South-South Cooperation for Achieving Sustainable Development Goals in Tajikistan

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Muhabbat Malikova\*

*Abstract:* This paper examines the impact of South-South cooperation in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Tajikistan, taking into account various South-South cooperation issues in the National Development Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan for the period up to 2030, which is the main document including the implementation of development goals and increasing green investment contributes in improvement of social and environmental sustainability; provide sustainable alternatives livelihoods for people.

*Keywords:* South-South cooperation, Tajikistan, SDGs

## Introduction

As we know, in 1978, the United Nations established the unit for South-South Cooperation (SSC) to promote South-South trade and collaboration within its agencies and guided by the principles of respect for national ownership independence, equality, non-conditionality, non-interference in domestic affairs and mutual benefit. SSC is a tool used by governments, international organizations, academics, social partners, civil society

and the private sector to collaborate and share knowledge, skills, expertise, and good practices in decent work and lifelong learning approaches that are both effective and sustainable. SSC is a manifestation of solidarity among peoples and countries of the South that contributes to their national well-being, their strengthening of national and collective self-reliance and the attainment of internationally agreed development goals outlined in the 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development Goals.

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\* Chief Specialist, Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, Republic of Tajikistan

## **Good Practices in South-South Cooperation for Sustainable Development**

The first few years of the Decade of Action for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030 have been fraught with unprecedented obstacles, including the COVID-19 pandemic, climate issues, and the conflict in Ukraine. In these crucial times, SSC can be fundamental for moving forward in the recovery from losses and furthering the global commitment of leaving no one behind. At the core of SSC is the understanding that exchanging knowledge, skills, experiences and lessons learned between and among countries of the global South serves as a powerful catalyst for development. Fulfilling its mandate and the commitments expressed in the BAPA+40 Outcome Document, the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation works to record, systematize and facilitate access to development knowledge from and for the global South (UNOSSC, 2021).

While COVID-19 and other recent crises have challenged our ambitious global agenda, it has also shown the importance of global solidarity. South-South and triangular cooperation can help us stay on the right track towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. We believe that by disseminating actionable knowledge, the development stakeholders are likely to connect with the providers of the good practices to support their own efforts in adopting and scaling up innovative solutions and making strong collaborations that

will advance the achievement of the SDGs. Through engagement in the discourse on South-South trade and investment opportunities, it becomes less challenging to promote regional policies and economic frameworks that facilitate regional trade and investment for the achievement of the SDGs.

## **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as the Global Goals, were adopted by the United Nations at the 70th session of the UN General Assembly in September 2015 as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that by 2030 all people enjoy peace and prosperity. The 17 SDGs are integrated - they recognize that action in one area will affect outcomes in others and that development must balance social, economic and environmental sustainability.

Countries have committed to prioritize progress for those who are at the farthest end of the prosperity-poverty scale. The SDGs, among others, are designed to end poverty, hunger, AIDS, and discrimination against women and girls. Realizing the SDGs will need the collective efforts of the whole global community, investing their time, energy, expertise, and resources. It should be noted that the Republic of Tajikistan, taking into account its national obligations, has developed its own National Development Strategy for the period up to 2030. National Development Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan for the period up to 2030

National Development Strategy (NDS) of the Republic of Tajikistan for the period up to 2030 (hereinafter - NDS-2030) was developed taking into consideration the Republic of Tajikistan's international commitments on the agenda of the 21st century and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Tajikistan, 2016). The main focus of SDGs is the concept of sustainable human development. Therefore, the complete eradication of poverty, replacement of unsustainable development practices and promotion of sustainable consumption and production patterns, and protection and sustainable use of natural resources to ensure further economic and social development are some of the primary objectives and crucial conditions for sustainable human development. National consultations on SDGs Agenda revealed the main priorities of the country's development after 2015 and its economic ideology, basic principles, and a set of measures, specified in NDS-2030 that are intended to implement these priorities. These priorities include education, healthcare, employment, inequality, corruption, food security and nutrition, good governance, social welfare, prevention of potential conflicts, energy security, environmental protection and management of demographic processes. Democratic governance in the country, the rule of law, the protection of rights and the expansion of human capacity will be the important priority issues. Strengthening social protection, ensuring access to safe food, improving water supply, sanitation and nutrition patterns, reducing all forms

of social and gender inequality, as well as environmental sustainability will be considered as important areas in the performance of legislative, executive and judicial institutions. Ensuring country's sustainable development in the long term is impossible without the use of innovations in all social and economic spheres. The strategic benchmarks of sustainability must take into account the growth of investment and economic activity in the Central Asian region, the role of Central Asian countries in the region and the intensification of cooperation between countries in the framework of SSC. In the next decade, there comes a new technological, economic and political cycle of the world economy, which will slow the pace of global economic growth until the middle of the 21st century. We must be ready to adequately embrace this process and even today outline the areas of the future growth model and determine its qualitative features. The key factor to achieve sustainable development only be the human capital and its main core components - education and science - as the most important conditions for enhancing national security and encouraging national economic competitiveness.

The rich historical and cultural heritage of Tajikistan, its distinct nature with unique lakes, rare animals and plants, as well as the high mountains are important conditions for the development of tourism and increasing contribution of this sector to the country's GDP. Further development of hydropower capacity and implementation of regional transport

and communication projects will allow Tajikistan to become a regional leader in the production and transmission of cheap and environmentally clean energy. They would also help expand the transit capabilities of the country, thereby making a worthy contribution to the sustainable development of developing Southern and Southern-Eastern countries of the Asian region, including Central Asian countries, and thereby demonstrate the benefits of South-South cooperation. SSC is required to contribute to bolstering both energy and transport sectors in Tajikistan, thereby bringing economic and social welfare dividends to the entire region.

## **SDG Implementation in Tajikistan**

The Republic of Tajikistan considers improving the quality, impact and effectiveness of all types of development cooperation crucial to ensure that Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are achieved. Since the beginning of 2020, the whole world has been hit by a series of crises. The pandemic has negatively affected the world economy, public budget, foreign trade, and activities of industrial and service provider enterprises. An unstable global political state has created a lot of uncertainty and triggered a cost-of-living crisis in many countries through abnormal hikes in food and fuel prices. The current global developments should provide the backdrop for analyzing trends at the national level. We have worked in a tense global economic and financial situation in

the last few years. Despite the challenges we faced, we have taken a number of immediate actions in close collaboration with the donor community and civil society to prevent the consequences of the crisis and protect our economic security. Despite the negative impact of these factors, the immediate actions undertaken by the Government of the country made it possible to ensure the stability of macroeconomic indicators and maintain positive trends in improving the living standards of the population.

## **Macroeconomic Performance of Tajikistan**

The economy of Tajikistan grew by 4.5 per cent in 2020 and by 9.2 per cent in 2021. The GDP reached 82.5 billion Tajikistan Somoni (TJS) in 2020 and 98.2 billion TJS (USD 8.68 billion) in 2021. During this period industrial production increased by 9.7 per cent in 2020 and by 22 per cent in 2021, agriculture by 6.6 per cent in 2020 and by 8.8 per cent in 2021, foreign trade by 0.8 per cent in 2020 and 9.5 per cent in 2021, including export by 19.8 per cent in 2020 and 52.6 per cent in 2021. These factors created a foundation for the country's economic growth. In particular, food production increased by 28.3 per cent in 2020 and by 47 per cent in 2021, which facilitated a greater supply of local products in the domestic market. Also, the country is grateful for the financial support provided by the international financial institution as grants and preferential loans of more than USD 384.3 billion, directed towards the prevention and reduction of the economic and social

impact of the COVID -19 pandemic on the country (Government of the Republic of Tajikistan, 2021)

The government of the Republic of Tajikistan is committed to continue collaboration towards building back better from the crisis by paying much attention to the Sustainable Development Agenda, including Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In 2018, the Republic of Tajikistan, one of the pilot nations, presented the UN Headquarters with its National Progress Report on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). According to the Rapid Integrated Assessment<sup>1</sup>, 78 per cent of SDGs targets are reflected in the national, sectoral and local development strategic documents of the Republic of Tajikistan.<sup>2</sup>

### **Green Energy to Tajikistan**

Also, the Republic of Tajikistan has ratified the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and set ambitious clean energy goals, including coal phase-out policies and renewable energy and energy efficiency targets. Tajikistan is already a rather green country since 99.6 per cent of the power it produces is generated by hydro, renewable and green energy. Given its 16 trillion KWT of solar energy capacity as well as wind energy the Government of the Tajikistan will pay particular attention to sustainable economic development through the increased deployment of modern renewable energy and energy-efficient technologies to improve social and environmental sustainability.

### **SDG 5 – Gender Equality**

To ensure SDG 5 – Gender Equality, the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan has provided favourable conditions for the effective engagement of women and girls in social and economic spheres, including science and education, civil service, agriculture, industry, transport, energy, communications, construction and architecture, banking, law enforcement agencies and even Armed Forces of the country.

Currently, women and girls make up almost 68 per cent of the healthcare staff, more than 73 per cent of education workers, 27 per cent of scientists and more than 23 per cent of agriculture staff. In this regard, and with a view to achieving the objectives of the National Development Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan for the period up to 2030, which envisages increasing the number of Civil Servants by up to 30 per cent and the number of female leaders by up to 25 per cent. A State programme on training, selection and appointment of talented woman leaders for 2023-2030 has been adopted.

### **Second Voluntary National Performance Review (VNR)**

A focused and long-lasting multi-stakeholder engagement forum has been formed to address the issue of SDG finance in order to guarantee continued SDG implementation. The national, sectoral and local development strategic documents of the Republic of Tajikistan enable stakeholders to discuss the socio-economic implications of COVID-19 in

the context of achieving national SDG targets and agree on a meaningful policy response.

The Republic of Tajikistan is undertaking the second voluntary national review (VNR) which will be officially submitted in June 2023 at the high-level political forum (HLPF) that meets under the auspices of ECOSOC. The VNR seeks to strengthen policies and institutions to mobilize multi-stakeholder partnerships for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as well as facilitate the sharing, of experiences, including successes, challenges and lessons learned in this process.

As mentioned, the COVID-19 crisis was a major reversal for countries to realize Agenda 2030. The current conflict in Ukraine has further stalled recovery and is already having a spill over effect on global food and energy supplies, which has resulted in increased prices. Global financial markets have seen an increase in volatility. Access to financial capital is becoming even harder for developing countries as they continue to struggle with a narrow fiscal space amidst rising debts. There are also indications that official development assistance (ODA) may fall. In the current environment, national development will require governments to tap into different and innovative types of financing both domestic and international. South-South cooperation is one such modality available to developing countries.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

The government of Tajikistan recognises the value of SSC, which it details in its national plan. This will facilitate cooperation in all perspectives; it could be trade, development assistance, political support, technological transfer, and cultural exchange. Tajikistan believes in the promotion of SSC. In this regard, we would like to suggest relevant proposals on strengthening the joint efforts to overcome mentioned crises to SDGs.

- Ensuring the simplification of trade procedures among the countries worldwide;
- Increasing green investment contributes in the improvement of social and environmental sustainability, provides sustainable alternative livelihoods for people;
- Creating conditions for free competition in the domestic labour market;
- Providing incentives for businesses to create jobs and productive employment of labour resources;
- Ensuring the adequacy of vocational education to the needs of the labour market and the economy;
- Provide economic and social support for self – employed; and
- Diversify and improve the quality of labour migration processes
- We must participate in enhancing global cooperation to recover our national economies from global crisis consequences and to achieve SDGs.

## Endnotes

1. The Rapid Integrated Assessment (RIA) Tool aims to support countries in mainstreaming the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into national and subnational planning, by helping assess their readiness for SDG implementation\_ [https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/publications/RIA%20Tool%20-26.12.201-Final\\_0.pdf](https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/publications/RIA%20Tool%20-26.12.201-Final_0.pdf)
2. Midterm Development Programme of the Republic of Tajikistan for 2021-2025 years adopted by Government Resolution dated April 30, 2021, #168, 283 p. P27
3. <https://unsouthsouth.org/2022/01/28/south-south-ideas-the-importance-of-south-south-cooperation-in-strengthening-global-south-trade-investments-and-regional-integration-a-contextual-overview/>
4. [https://nafaka.tj/images/zakoni/new/strategiya\\_2030\\_en.pdf](https://nafaka.tj/images/zakoni/new/strategiya_2030_en.pdf)

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