



UPU IB SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS REPORT

Assessing the alignment of
the UPU strategy for 2021–2025
with the UN Sustainable
Development Goals





SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



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The organization is committed to embedding the SDGs in its future strategy, fostering collaboration through a “whole-of-ecosystem” approach and aligning with key partners to contribute effectively to global sustainability.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The UPU conducted a comprehensive mapping exercise in 2023 to assess the alignment of its strategies and financial commitments with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This document outlines the meticulous process undertaken, including validation, merging of mapping data with the UPU budget, and insightful outcomes.

The UPU's 133 work proposals were found to align, to varying degrees, with 15 of the 17 SDGs. Notably, strong alignment was found with Goal 17 (Partnerships for the Goals), Goal 9 (Industry, innovation and infrastructure), Goal 10 (Reduced inequalities), Goal 1 (No poverty) and Goal 8 (Decent work and economic growth). Different UPU directorates show strategic emphasis on specific goals, reflecting a commitment to global partnerships, postal infrastructure, reducing inequalities and fostering economic growth.

This analysis goes beyond a theoretical alignment and offers concrete insights into the financial weight behind each linked work proposal. It reveals a strategic allocation of resources, demonstrating the UPU's commitment to translating intentions into impactful actions. The results underscore the UPU's crucial role in advancing global agendas and its progress in aligning its operations with the SDGs.

With 91% of work proposals contributing to Goal 17 (Partnerships for the Goals), the UPU demonstrates a robust commitment to collaborative global initiatives. This commitment is mirrored in the budget allocation, with 29% earmarked for Goal 17, reaffirming the UPU's pivotal role in nurturing partnerships for sustainable development.

The mapping exercise can serve as a proactive tool for future strategy development (2026–2029), helping to better integrate the SDGs that are supported by the core of UPU operations.

This forward-looking approach aims to establish a robust mechanism for tracking and assessing the UPU's impact, ensuring that every facet of its operations contributes meaningfully to sustainable development.

Looking ahead, the UPU positions itself as a key component of the UN 2.0 initiative, integrating the “Quintet of Change” of data, innovation, strategic foresight, digital proficiency and behavioural science. The organization is committed to embedding the SDGs in its future strategy, fostering collaboration through a “whole-of-ecosystem” approach and aligning with key partners to contribute effectively to global sustainability.

THE UPU AND THE SDGS

OVERVIEW OF THE UPU

Established in 1874, the UPU is headquartered in Berne, Switzerland, and is one of the world's oldest international organizations.

Comprising 192 member countries, the UPU serves as the primary platform for collaboration among postal sector stakeholders. Its mission extends to ensuring a universally accessible network of modern products and services.

Serving in an advisory, mediatory and liaison role, the UPU offers technical assistance where necessary. It establishes regulations for international mail exchange and provides recommendations to stimulate growth in mail, parcel and financial service volumes, thereby enhancing service quality for customers.

The UPU drafted an ambitious roadmap for the 2021–2025 period, adopted by the 27th Congress in Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire) in August 2021 and known as the Abidjan Postal Strategy. The UPU has also adopted an advocacy message called "Postal Vision 2030", which urges all key postal sector stakeholders to take action in a number of areas.

OVERVIEW OF THE SDGs

With the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015, world leaders embarked on a visionary journey towards a future free of poverty, hunger and environmental degradation. This agenda, encompassing the 17 SDGs, represents a profound commitment to fostering prosperity, equality and peace for all humanity. Its universal scope and integrated nature make it a transformative force with the potential to reshape our world for the better.

Realizing the aspirations of the 2030 Agenda requires concerted action across diverse sectors and stakeholders, transcending traditional boundaries. Governments, civil society, academia, the private sector and international organizations, including the United Nations system, must collaborate closely to translate this vision into reality.

A key aspect of the UN's approach is its commitment to integrated and coordinated efforts across different sectors and levels, from grassroots initiatives to global policymaking. This entails breaking down silos between development, humanitarian, human rights, and peace and security agendas, and fostering collaboration at every level.

To guide the UN system in supporting the agenda, the Chief Executives Board (CEB) endorsed a set of common principles in April 2016. These principles emphasize country-led, people-centred and results-focused approaches, aiming to protect human rights and dignity, and to ensure that no-one is left behind. The principles also highlight the importance of preventing crises, addressing root causes, promoting transparency and ensuring accountability. The CEB advocates an integrated and coordinated approach across diverse



Figure 1: Abidjan Postal Strategy 2021-2025



UPU MISSION

To stimulate the lasting development of efficient and accessible universal postal services of quality in order to facilitate communication between the inhabitants of the world by:

Guaranteeing the free circulation of postal items over a single postal territory composed of interconnected networks;

Encouraging the adoption of fair common standards and the use of technology;

Ensuring cooperation and interaction among stakeholders;

Promoting effective technical cooperation;

Ensuring the satisfaction of customers' changing needs.

POSTAL VISION 2030

Postal Vision 2030 is the UPU's advocacy message for the sector. It will inspire postal sector stakeholders to take action in their respective fields of competence. It will also guide the UPU's value proposition, articulated through the strategic pillars.

GOVERNMENTS

should decrease gaps in postal development through increased investments and focused policies, and promote various ways to utilize the postal network for socio-economic development;

REGULATORS

should harmonize and enhance the sector's regulatory framework;

OPERATORS

should seek to enhance their performance by implementing diversified strategies and operational improvements;

OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

from the private sector and public institutions should pursue integration into the sector by engaging with traditional stakeholders, and vice-versa. This means opening up the market, fostering partnerships and enhancing the role of the UPU.

STRATEGIC PILLARS

Postal sector stakeholders have expressed their preference for three key categories of UPU solutions that most closely match their objectives. These can be organized according to the following three main pillars, expressing what the UPU as an organization will aim to achieve by the end of the 2021–2024 cycle.

Strengthen the UPU's mandate as the foremost forum for postal sector stakeholders.

Categories of UPU solutions

Organization of events and meetings of technical working groups

Treaties and international agreements

Settlement mechanisms

Reinforce the UPU's role as a provider of affordable technical solutions for postal sector stakeholders.

Categories of UPU solutions

Consulting and capacity building

IT solutions

Standards

Enable the UPU to become the prime knowledge centre of the postal sector.

Categories of UPU solutions

Research and insights on market trends

Focused analysis on various topical issues

Data storage and protection

country settings and pillars, fostering collaboration and linking normative and operational aspects to contribute effectively to the realization of the 2030 Agenda.

The UPU has two broad mandates for supporting the achievement of the SDGs. The first comes from the UPU's member countries, which, through successive Congress decisions, have approved numerous resolutions and deliverables that explicitly relate to specific SDGs. These cover activities such as financial inclusion, digital inclusion, support for small and medium enterprises (SMEs), disaster risk management, climate change mitigation and adaptation, gender equality, and technical assistance for postal operators in least developed countries, as reflected in the work proposals approved by Congress.

The second broad mandate for supporting the achievement of the SDGs comes from the UPU's status as a UN specialized agency and member of the CEB. In recognition of the need to increase sustainability ambitions and actions within the UN system, the CEB has endorsed the "Strategy for sustainability management in the United Nations system, 2020–2030", which comprises two phases. Phase I, entitled "Environmental sustainability in the area of management" and endorsed in 2019, focused on the importance of environmental sustainability (emphasizing climate change, but also covering waste management, air pollution, water use and biodiversity). Phase II, entitled "Towards leadership in environmental and social sustainability", broadened the scope of the strategy to encompass environmental and social sustainability in UN system policies, programming and support functions, drawing on over 30 existing UN system-wide strategies and action plans. Phase II outlines 10 environmental and social sustainability principles that should be mainstreamed across all UN functions. The UN Sustainability Strategy therefore places greater responsibility on the UPU to support the SDGs where possible, and to adopt effective sustainability practices across all its activities.

LINKAGE TO THE SDGs: THE UPU'S CONTRIBUTION

As a UN specialized agency, the UPU plays a crucial role in advancing the aforementioned global objectives. Beyond fostering international cooperation within the postal sector, the UPU aims to elevate the role of postal services in enhancing people's lives and fostering inclusive economic growth.

Given the extensive reach, commitment to accessibility and fundamental role of postal services in societies worldwide, the UPU is uniquely positioned to contribute significantly to the SDGs. The postal sector serves as a vital player in driving sustainable development by facilitating global communication, supporting small businesses through e-commerce and ensuring inclusive access to essential services.

UPU member countries are committed to leveraging their postal network, expertise and resources to foster sustainable development. This commitment aligns with the broader UN agenda, emphasizing the importance of collaboration, innovation and sustained action in the face of global challenges.

The UPU's efforts to integrate the SDGs into its strategic framework reflect a deep-seated belief in the power of postal services to transform societies for the better, making the world more connected, inclusive and sustainable.

MAPPING THE UPU'S WORK AGAINST THE SDGs

NEED FOR A UPU–SDG MAPPING EXERCISE IN 2023

The SDGs, with their comprehensive framework for achieving a more sustainable future for all, offer a unique opportunity for organizations such as the UPU to align their work with global priorities. However, a systematic approach to integrating these goals into the UPU's strategies and operations is essential to identify the institutional development outcomes and impact. This is where the need for a detailed mapping exercise became evident.

The connection between the UPU's activities (specifically those undertaken by the International Bureau (IB)) and their contribution to achieving the SDGs, while outlined in the Abidjan Business Plan, was not explicitly defined from the outset of the Abidjan cycle (2021–2025). A meticulous SDG mapping exercise was therefore required and conducted retroactively in 2023.

PURPOSE OF THE UPU-SDG MAPPING EXERCISE

The aim of this exercise was to establish clear links between the UPU's ongoing work proposals and the SDGs, at both goal and target level, serving several critical purposes:

Ensure strategic alignment with global goals: The mapping exercise facilitates the integration of SDG considerations into the drafting of the UPU's strategy for the next cycle (2026–2029), ensuring alignment with global development priorities;

Enhance visibility and impact: By gaining a comprehensive understanding of how its efforts intersect with the SDG framework, the UPU can more effectively communicate its contributions to the global sustainability agenda, thereby attracting additional investment and fostering partnerships;

Support progress measurement: Aligning activities with relevant SDG indicators (such as indicator 1.4.1 – Proportion of population living in households with access to basic services) enables the UPU to contribute to the UN's efforts in measuring progress toward these goals.

The mapping exercise entailed a systematic review of the IB's current initiatives to identify both direct and indirect contributions to the SDGs. This comprehensive process encompassed the full spectrum of IB activities, ranging from enhancing global postal services and infrastructure (Goal 9: Industry, innovation and infrastructure) to advocating for sustainable practices within the postal sector (Goal 13: Climate action).

The outcome was a comprehensive framework delineating how the IB's activities align with each relevant SDG. This exercise not only reinforced the UPU's role in achieving global sustainability goals, but also underscored the pivotal role of the postal sector as a driver of development and progress worldwide. By systematically mapping its work against the SDGs, the UPU is better equipped to channel its resources, innovations and global network to foster a more inclusive and sustainable future.

It is essential to acknowledge that, while this exercise mapped the IB's alignment with the SDGs, it did not measure the progress of the postal sector as a whole or assess the contributions of individual member countries' postal sectors. Nonetheless, the report provides resources to track progress at national level, facilitating ongoing monitoring and evaluation efforts.

METHODOLOGY

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

Step 1

Initial mapping of the UPU work proposals to each goal and target

The first step in the methodology involved an exhaustive mapping of the UPU's 133 work proposals against the SDGs and, where feasible, to specific targets.

This meticulous process required a detailed analysis of each work proposal to understand its objectives, activities and expected outcomes. The aim of the mapping exercise was to identify direct and indirect contributions to the SDGs, considering both the broader goals and the more granular targets within each goal.

This step was crucial in order to establish a baseline understanding of how the UPU's existing efforts align with global development priorities. The outcome was a comprehensive matrix that links each work proposal to relevant SDGs and targets, providing a clear overview of the organization's contributions to sustainable development.

Step 2

Validation of the SDG mapping by programme managers

Following the initial mapping, a thorough validation process was carried out by the relevant programme managers for each work proposal. Managers were tasked with reviewing the preliminary mapping of work proposals to the SDGs pertaining to their specific area of responsibility. This validation ensured the accuracy of the mapping exercise, enabling managers to confirm, adjust or provide additional insights into how their programmes contribute to the SDGs.

It also served as an opportunity to identify any linkages or potential areas for enhancing the UPU's impact on sustainable development that may have been overlooked. This collaborative and iterative process enhanced the credibility of the mapping exercise and ensured that the UPU's comprehensive efforts towards achieving the SDGs were accurately reflected.

Step 3

Merging the SDG mapping data with the UPU budget for 2021–2025

In this stage, the results of the mapping exercise were integrated with the UPU budget data for 2021–2025 to provide a comprehensive picture of financial commitment to sustainable development. This merging process revealed the financial weight behind each work proposal, offering insights into how budget allocations supported the UPU's strategic contributions to the SDGs.

By analyzing the budgetary implications, it was possible to discern the extent to which the UPU prioritizes actions aligned with specific goals. This step was crucial to ensure transparency and accountability in how the UPU directs its financial resources towards achieving the SDGs. The merged data served as a vital tool for both internal strategic review and external communication with stakeholders regarding the UPU's role in the global sustainability agenda.

This report results from the exercise outlined above and incorporates feedback received from member countries at the CA Committee 3 meeting of May 2023 (S3).

LIMITATIONS OF THE MAPPING EXERCISE

The mapping exercise conducted in 2023 represents a retrospective analysis of the UPU's alignment with the SDGs, focusing on existing work proposals and budget allocations. However, to reiterate, this mapping exercise does not dictate or drive current or future strategic directions for the UPU.

While it sheds light on the extent to which UPU activities currently support the SDGs, *it does not advocate for strategic adjustments or the introduction of new objectives based solely on SDG targets*. As such, there is a limit to the ability of this analysis to guide the UPU proactively.

It should also be acknowledged that the structure and functioning of the IB, and the broader postal and SDG context in which it operates, have evolved during the current cycle. This potentially opens up significant new opportunities for the UPU to support the SDGs that have not been captured within the retrospective mapping exercise.

This exercise should not be mistaken for an impact assessment. While it examines the alignment of the IB's activities and budget with the SDGs, it does not measure the outcomes or effects of these activities towards achieving the SDGs.

The primary focus is on assessing alignment and the extent of budgetary commitment to the SDGs, rather than the effectiveness or tangible benefits of these allocations. Consequently, this limits the ability of the mapping exercise to inform stakeholders as to the actual progress or success in meeting the SDGs through the UPU's interventions. These elements are all currently under consideration in defining the UPU strategy for the 2026–2029 cycle.

OUTCOMES OF THE SDG MAPPING

UPU–SDG MATRIX BY GOAL

Scrutiny of the UPU's 133 work proposals reveals alignment, albeit to varying extents, with 15 of the 17 SDGs. Only two goals – Goal 6 (Clean water and sanitation) and Goal 14 (Life below water) – have no clear correspondence with the UPU's work proposals.

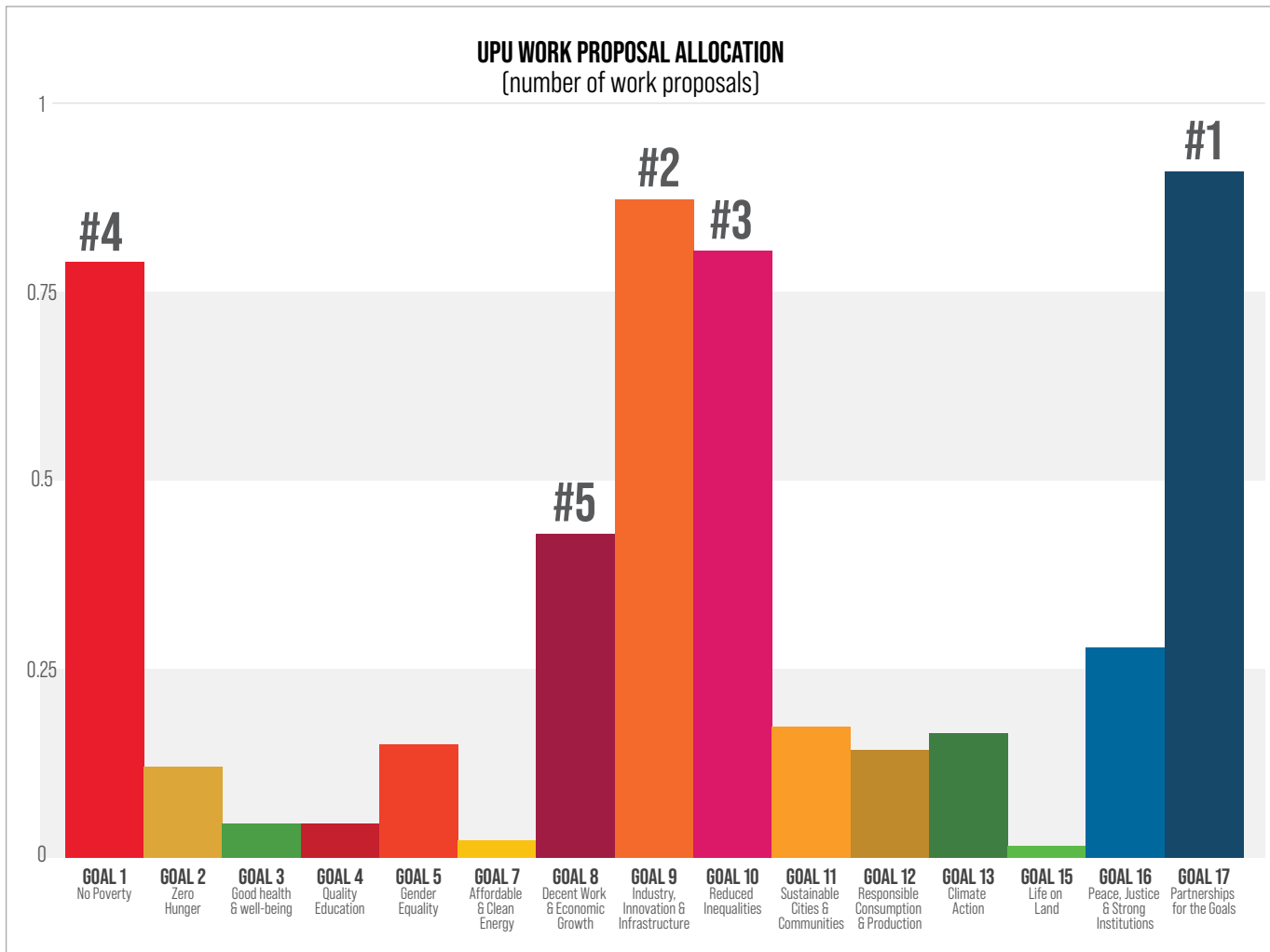
Figure 2 illustrates that a significant majority (91%) of the UPU's work proposals are geared towards advancing Goal 17 (Partnerships for the Goals). This is closely followed by contributions towards Goal 9 (Industry, innovation and infrastructure) at 87%, Goal 10 (Reduced inequalities) at 80% and Goal 1 (No poverty) at 79%. Goal 8 (Decent work and economic growth) also emerges as another significant focal point for UPU initiatives, reflecting contributions from a considerable proportion of the organization's work proposals.

This distribution highlights the UPU's robust commitment to nurturing global partnerships as fundamental pillars of its mission and vision. As the UN specialized agency dedicated to the postal sector, the UPU uniquely positions itself to champion cooperation and foster economic growth through its collaborative endeavours.

The significant focus on reducing inequalities and combating poverty underscores the UPU's unwavering dedication to fostering social inclusion and economic empowerment across its extensive global network.

Moreover, the prioritization of initiatives aimed at promoting decent work and fostering economic growth reflects the UPU's recognition of the postal sector's immense potential to drive sustainable development and stimulate economic activities worldwide.

Figure 2: Alignment of the UPU’s work with the SDGs –Percentage of the 133 work proposals aligned with each SDG



Source: UPU internal survey, February 2023

Note. – This figure is based on the number of the UPU work proposals that are relevant to each goal, not on the allocation of financial resources to each goal.

Figure 3: Resource allocation by SDG for all UPU work proposals 2021–2025



Source: UPU internal survey, February 2023, and UPU budget 2021–2025

Note. – This figure is based on the total amount of financial resources allocated, from all sources of funding, to each SDG.

UPU-SDG MATRIX BY RESOURCE ALLOCATION

To complement the mapping of the UPU's work with the SDGs, figure 3 provides an estimation of the proportion of the budget spent in relation to each SDG for the Abidjan cycle (2021–2025). All three pillars of funding – regular budget, voluntary contributions and revenue from sales of products and services – were taken into consideration.

The findings reveal a strategic allocation of resources by the UPU for the current strategic cycle (2021–2025), with 29% of the total budget directed towards advancing Goal 17 (Partnerships for the Goals), thus reflecting the organization's steadfast commitment to fostering the collaborative efforts and global alliances crucial for sustainable development. Furthermore, significant investment, amounting to 19% of the budget, was earmarked for Goal 9 (Industry, innovation and infrastructure), underscoring the UPU's proactive stance towards promoting technological advancement and enhancing infrastructure within the postal sector.

The allocation of 18% towards Goal 1 (No poverty) demonstrates the UPU's dedication to addressing socio-economic disparities and fostering economic inclusivity through its initiatives. Similarly, the allocation of 14% towards Goal 10 (Reduced inequalities) underscores the UPU's concerted efforts to mitigate inequalities and promote social equity across its operations.

Lastly, the allocation of 8% towards Goal 8 (Decent work and economic growth) reflects the UPU's commitment to promoting dignified employment opportunities and fostering sustainable economic growth within the postal sector and beyond.

Although this SDG mapping exercise was conducted retroactively for the current business cycle (2021–2025), rather than as a deterministic strategy prioritization exercise, the allocation of the budget inherently reflects strategic focal points and underscores the UPU's role in forging partnerships and bolstering the postal sector worldwide.

The substantial investment directed towards combating poverty and reducing inequalities underscores the UPU's commitment to harnessing postal services as a catalyst for social and economic inclusion. Moreover, the emphasis on fostering decent work and stimulating economic growth underscores the UPU's acknowledgment of the pivotal role played by the postal sector in facilitating sustainable employment opportunities and driving economic advancement.

By comparing figures 2 and 3, it is evident that the outcomes of work proposal alignment and resource allocation are largely congruent, as shown in figure 4.

Figure 4: Results of work proposal alignment and resource allocation

SDG	WORK PROPOSAL ALIGNMENT RANK	RESOURCE ALLOCATION RANK
Goal 17: Partnerships for the Goals	1	1
Goal 9: Industry, innovation and infrastructure	2	2
Goal 10: Reduced inequalities	3	4
Goal 1: No poverty	4	3
Goal 8: Decent work and economic growth	5	5

Source: UPU internal survey, February 2023, and UPU budget 2021–2025

UPU–SDG MATRIX BY IB DIRECTORATE

Figure 5 showcases the alignment of the various work proposals with the SDGs by IB directorate. The analysis shows a clear strategic alignment towards certain goals by the three substantive IB directorates.

Figure 5: **Percentage of work proposals aligned with the SDGs by directorate**

SDG	DCDEV	DOP	DPRM
Goal 1 (No poverty)	75%	91%	76%
Goal 2 (Zero hunger)		11%	12%
Goal 3 (Good health and well-being)		2%	15%
Goal 4 (Quality education)			15%
Goal 5 (Gender equality)			45%
Goal 6 (Clean water and sanitation)			

Goal 7 (Affordable and clean energy)			9%
Goal 8 (Decent work and economic growth)	38%	47%	52%
Goal 9 (Industry, innovation and infrastructure)	75%	98%	94%
Goal 10 (Reduced inequalities)	25%	97%	79%
Goal 11 (Sustainable cities and communities)	13%	30%	6%
Goal 12 (Responsible consumption and production)		28%	
Goal 13 (Climate action)	13%	23%	12%
Goal 14 (Life below water)			
Goal 15 (Life on land)			
Goal 16 (Peace, justice and strong institutions)		34%	36%
Goal 17 (Partnerships for the Goals)	25%	98%	88%

Source: UPU internal survey, February 2023

Note. – Dark blue cells indicate the three highest results, i.e. the greatest number of aligned work proposals expressed as percentages of the total number of work proposals, for each directorate. Goals with no alignment are shown in grey text. This table covers only three substantive directorates of the IB. For this reason, Goal 15 remains blank, as it was linked to another directorate.

Development and Cooperation Directorate (DCDEV): The DCDEV's work proposals exhibit significant alignment with Goal 1 (No poverty), with 75% of this directorate's initiatives geared towards addressing poverty-related challenges worldwide. Additionally, the directorate shows a substantial focus on Goal 8 (Decent work and economic growth), with 38% alignment, emphasizing its commitment to fostering sustainable employment and economic development. Goal 9 (Industry, innovation and infrastructure) is also a key priority for the DCDEV, with 75% alignment, reflecting the directorate's efforts to promote innovation and build resilient infrastructure in developing countries.

Postal Operations Directorate (DOP): The DOP's work proposals demonstrate a clear alignment with Goal 9 (Industry, innovation and infrastructure), at an impressive 98%, underscoring its emphasis on advancing industrialization and enhancing infrastructure worldwide. The directorate also prioritizes Goal 10 (Reduced inequalities), with 97% alignment, indicating its commitment to promoting social inclusion and reducing disparities. Additionally, the DOP shows a strong focus on Goal 17 (Partnerships for the Goals), with 98% alignment, highlighting its dedication to fostering collaborative efforts for sustainable development.

Policy, Regulation and Markets Directorate (DPRM): The DPRM's work proposals are varied and its work was therefore aligned with a larger number of SDGs. The directorate exhibits significant alignment with Goal 9 (Industry, innovation and infrastructure), at 94%, emphasizing its focus on promoting innovation and enhancing infrastructure within the postal sector. Furthermore, the DPRM prioritizes Goal 10 (Reduced inequalities), with 79% alignment, indicating its commitment to promoting equality and social inclusion. Additionally, the DPRM shows a notable focus on Goal 17 (Partnerships for the Goals), with 88% alignment, underscoring its dedication to fostering collaborative partnerships to achieve sustainable development objectives.

Other SDGs, such as Goal 3 (Good health and wellbeing), Goal 4 (Quality education), Goal 11 (Sustainable cities and communities) and Goal 13 (Climate action), receive less emphasis, indicating potential areas for future strategic expansion and resource allocation.

There is consistent emphasis on Goal 9 (Industry, innovation and infrastructure) across all three directorates, highlighting the importance placed on advancing technological innovation and building resilient infrastructure within the postal sector. Additionally, Goal 10 (Reduced inequalities) and Goal 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) emerge as key priorities, reflecting the UPU's commitment to promoting social inclusion, reducing disparities and fostering collaborative efforts for sustainable development. While there are variations in the alignment percentages among the directorates, the overarching trend underscores the UPU's holistic approach to addressing diverse global challenges and contributing to the attainment of the SDGs through its programmes.

The substantial investment directed towards combating poverty and reducing inequalities underscores the UPU's commitment to harnessing postal services as a catalyst for social and economic inclusion.

THE UPU'S SDG AMBITIONS: EMBEDDING THE 2030 AGENDA IN THE UPU'S CURRENT STRATEGY AND ACTIVITIES

Reflecting on the alignment of the Abidjan Business Plan (2021–2025) and the corresponding resource allocation with the SDGs, it becomes evident that the UPU's work inherently supports specific goals. The UPU's de facto priority alignments are examined below.

LEADING, CONTRIBUTING TO AND STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS FOR SUSTAINABLE OUTCOMES

Goal 17 (Partnerships for the Goals): The UPU's mission to facilitate global communication through a universally accessible and efficient postal network inherently supports the focus of Goal 17 on strengthening partnerships for sustainable development. By ensuring the free flow of postal items across interconnected networks, the UPU fosters international collaboration, which is a cornerstone of Goal 17.

Furthermore, through its commitment to a single postal territory, stakeholder cooperation and technical assistance, the UPU exemplifies the partnership ethos espoused by Goal 17.

The UPU also plays a pivotal role in facilitating North–South and South–South cooperation, particularly by facilitating trade and commerce through a robust and resilient interconnected global network, as represented by the concept of a single postal territory.

In a bid to extend its influence and maximize the efficacy of its resources, the UPU is committed to engaging in multi-stakeholder partnerships that are strategically aimed at advancing the SDGs. This collaborative approach not only amplifies the UPU's impact, but also ensures that its contributions are sustainable and aligned with global development aspirations.

Figure 6: **SDG topics covered by the UPU – What are the issues relating to Goal 17 to which the UPU contributes?**

Goal 17: Partnerships for the Goals	Finance: including domestic resource mobilization, official development assistance targets and additional financing for the SDGs
	Technology: enhancing international cooperation, technology transfer and an innovation capacity-building mechanism
	Capacity building: at national level and through South–South cooperation
	Trade: including a universal, nondiscriminatory and rules-based trading system
	Systemic issues: global policies, multi-stakeholder partnerships for results, data monitoring and accountability

HELPING TO SHAPE THE GLOBAL AGENDA FOR GOALS 9, 10, 1 AND 8

The UPU's primary remit is to ensure the optimal functioning of global postal infrastructure and to foster the sustainable and resilient innovation thereof. It contributes to shaping the global agenda for the following goals:



Goal 9 (Industry, innovation and infrastructure)

The UPU leads a number of initiatives contributing to this goal, such as facilitating the building of resilient and sustainable infrastructure in regional and cross-border contexts. In addition, it serves as the official data keeper for indicator 9.1.2 on sustainable infrastructure. Furthermore, the UPU fosters technological development in member countries by supporting research and innovation, and ensures increased access to ICTs through member countries' large network of physical touchpoints for access to digital services and the Internet.



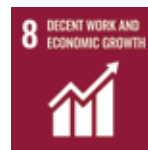
Goal 10 (Reduced inequalities)

The UPU helps to shape the global agenda regarding this goal through three main areas of focus. Firstly, it supports the provision of basic social services through member countries' vast network of post offices that enable social and citizen services to reach the most remote and underserved corners of the world. Secondly, the UPU network ensures access to affordable financial services: four out of five Posts offer some type of postal financial service, with domestic and international remittances being the most commonly offered services.¹ Finally, the UPU supports member countries in enabling socio-economic inclusion at national level, and has undertaken reform initiatives to ensure greater representation of developing countries in decision-making processes.



Goal 1 (No poverty)

With more than 676,354 permanent post offices, the UPU network enables inclusion and access to postal services for all. In order to close the physical-digital divide – and thus potentially foster socio-economic growth and improve the lives and livelihoods of vulnerable communities – the UPU has launched its Connect.post initiative to enable connected post offices, particularly in remote areas where post offices are often the only public service access point. UPU support for member countries to improve and enhance social- and financial-inclusion services also goes a long way towards ensuring sustainable economic growth for economically vulnerable populations. Finally, the UPU contributes substantially to building the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations, and to reducing their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters.



Goal 8 (Decent work and economic growth)

The global postal network employs 4.7 million individuals, offering meaningful work to women and men alike across a single global postal family. The UPU supports the development of the postal sector in each of its 192 member countries, with a strong correlation between the robustness of a country's postal services and the capacity to absorb the impact of disruptive events (such as the COVID-19 pandemic) and demonstrate signs of quicker economic recovery. UPU studies also show that, in the hypothetical case of the complete absence of postal infrastructure, there would be a median reduction of 6.96% in a country's annual gross domestic product (GDP). This figure is considerably greater than the traditionally cited direct contributions of postal services to GDP, which range from 0.5% to 1%.² The UPU provides multiple solutions to enable its member countries to strengthen their postal sectors, including technological innovations, operational standards and solutions, and support for policy development.

¹ UPU Global Panorama on Postal Financial Inclusion 2023.

² UPU State of the Postal Sector 2023: A Hyper-Collaborative Path to Postal Development.

Figure 7: SDG topics covered by the UPU – What are the issues relating to the four priority SDGs to which the UPU contributes?

Goal 9 Industry, innovation and infrastructure	Resilient infrastructure: including regional and cross-border infrastructure. Sustainable infrastructure (UPU as official data keeper for 9.1.2)	Goal 1 No poverty	1.4 – By 2030, ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services, including microfinance.
	Inclusive finance: increase access of SMEs to financial services, value chains and markets		1.5 – By 2030, build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations, and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters.
	Sustainable infrastructure: retrofit industries to make them sustainable and environmentally friendly	Goal 8 Decent work and economic growth	8.2 – Achieve higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation, including through a focus on high-value added and labour-intensive sectors.
	Domestic technology development: foster research and innovation in developing countries		8.3 – Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services.
	Increased access to ICTs: provide universal and affordable access to ICTs and the Internet		8.5 – By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value.
Goal 10 Reduced inequalities	10.2 – By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status.		
	10.6 – Ensure enhanced representation and voice for developing countries in decision making in global international economic and financial institutions in order to deliver more effective, credible, accountable and legitimate institutions.		
	10.c – By 2030, reduce to less than 3% the transaction costs of migrant remittances and eliminate remittance corridors with costs higher than 5%.		

CONTRIBUTING AND COLLABORATING WITH PARTNERS TO ACHIEVE OTHER SDGS

Further to the five SDGs that benefit most significantly from the UPU's core activities, the Abidjan Congress approved several work proposals that explicitly focus on advancing one or more other SDGs.

For each of these SDGs, the UPU champions, advocates and enthusiastically partners with a broad range of public- and private-sector partners with the view to enabling governments, policymakers and designated operators to achieve their ambitions and plans in relation to the SDGs.

Goal 2 (Zero hunger): In keeping with its commitment to the sustainability efforts of the wider UN system, the UPU supports Posts in embracing the circular economy. For instance, Swiss Post offers regional delivery for locally-sourced and in-season food products, and ensures contributions to the circular economy by reusing materials and putting delivery routes to multiple uses. The increasing expectation of same-day delivery is also resulting in the expansion of the sector to incorporate the transportation of more perishable food commodities.

Goal 3 (Good health and well-being): The role of the postal sector as a provider of economic and social services was well-established through the delivery/collection of medical materials and the provision of sites for medical checks and blood donation drives. However, the scope, prominence and versatility of the sector were brought to the fore during the COVID-19 pandemic, with the delivery of personal protective equipment and medicines, the provision of money transfers and social benefit payments, and facilitation of

e-commerce and access to vaccines. For instance, La Poste (France) services include the delivery of temperature-sensitive products, applications for remote aftercare at home, hosting of the population's personal healthcare data and even the provision of loans to build health-related infrastructure. The UPU's Post4Health facility, a multi-stakeholder donor platform, aims to catalyze the capacity of postal operators to deliver health products, policies and services worldwide.

Goal 4 (Quality education): The UPU supports the postal sector's provision of social services relating to education, such as reduced-price or free delivery of materials for the visually impaired, delivery of school books and teaching materials, and distribution of computers to students. Several postal operators are also responsible for managing public education campaigns and providing various training programmes.³

Goal 5 (Gender equality): Reducing inequality is at the heart of the UPU's mission, and the organization's support for gender equality is outlined in Congress resolution C 10/2021 (Gender equality and the empowerment of women at the UPU and in the postal sector). The UPU supports its member countries in offering services designed to strengthen community participation and inclusion, with these services ranging from public transport and the delivery of aid to mothers and children living in poverty, to the provision of social services for older populations, the majority of whom are women. Furthermore, the evolution of the percentage of female postal workers and women in senior management is measured in official UPU postal statistics.

Goal 7 (Affordable and clean energy): The UPU supports its member countries in offering various services contributing to this goal, including registering customers with utility providers, meter reading, invoicing and bill payment. In addition, designated operators are encouraged and provided with support to purchase or generate energy from renewable sources, and to support local communities in accessing alternative energy sources.

Goal 11 (Sustainable cities and communities): The postal sector traditionally enjoys a position of trust with many

3 UPU Guide to Postal Social Services 2021.

communities. This enables Posts to provide more sensitive services, such as the management of personal health data and checking on vulnerable people in their homes. The UPU also supports the global postal sector by promoting the development of delivery networks that are safe and resilient to shocks, and that seek to improve local air quality.

Goal 12 (Responsible consumption and production):

Recent sector analysis has shown a rise in “slow consumption” – namely less frequent and slower deliveries, longer intervals between an online purchase and receipt of the goods, and a move towards more local sourcing and deliveries – as a result of pressure to reduce carbon emissions. As multiple postal operators begin to offer these choices, the UPU continues to support them in these efforts.

Goal 13 (Climate action): The UPU is taking a leading role in advancing climate action by the postal sector, aiming to tackle climate risks and seize opportunities relating to climate change. For instance, the UPU provides OSCAR – the Online Solution for Carbon Analysis and Reporting – to measure and analyze the postal sector’s carbon footprint. Through this online interactive platform, Posts in the UPU’s 192 member countries can analyze and report their greenhouse gas emissions and identify mitigation opportunities. Moreover, Congress resolution C 7/2023 (UPU climate action) has led to the establishment of voluntary climate action targets for the sector, as well as the establishment of a UPU climate facility aimed at securing greater access to climate finance, increased capacity building and stronger integration with the global climate community. In short, the UPU’s ambitious global aspiration is to provide adaptation and mitigation services in line with member countries’ local, national and regional strategies.

Goal 15 (Life on land): The UPU supports member country initiatives relating to waste management and recycling, with regard not only to postal customers but also postal operators and their staff. These initiatives are a prime example of supporting progress towards the achievement of Goal 15 and protecting a flourishing life on land.

Goal 16 (Peace, justice and strong institutions): People’s ability to receive social security payments, pay taxes, apply for licences and vote is essential to their full participation in society, and is central to the delivery of many UN SDGs, including Goal 16. The postal sector is a key partner to governments in the delivery of services to citizens, including postal voting and maintenance of electoral registers, payment of taxes and fines, organization of driving tests and the administration of criminal or background checks. The UPU encourages and supports close partnerships between governments and postal operators in its member countries.

For each of these SDGs, the UPU champions, advocates and enthusiastically partners with a broad range of public- and private-sector partners with the view to enabling governments, policymakers and designated operators to achieve their ambitions and plans in relation to the SDGs.

REFLECTIONS ON THE FUTURE: FURTHER EMBEDDING THE 2030 AGENDA IN THE UPU'S FUTURE STRATEGY AND ACTIVITIES

THE SDGS AND THE UPU'S FUTURE STRATEGY

The UPU's strategy for 2026–2029 is calibrated so as to integrate the SDGs at the core of the UPU's strategic and operational frameworks.

This alignment signifies a considerable commitment not only to monitor but to actively measure the contributions of the UPU towards achieving the SDGs. By incorporating the SDGs into its overarching strategy, the UPU aims to establish a robust mechanism for tracking and assessing its impact and progress in line with the global sustainability agenda.

Examining the existing linkages between the UPU's activities and the SDGs also brings to light the synergies that naturally exist between them, and sets the stage for greater efforts towards a more targeted contribution to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.

During the next strategic cycle (2026–2029), the UPU's strong emphasis on partnerships and collaborative progress will continue, with increased urgency as to achieving the SDGs. Through such collaboration, the UPU aims to harness collective strengths, expertise and resources to address complex challenges and advance common objectives. It is envisaged that the interconnectedness facilitated by such collaboration will enhance the effectiveness of initiatives, programmes and policies aimed at promoting sustainable development across various dimensions. Furthermore, additional opportunities to contribute to the SDGs will be identified.

With data sharing and digitalization as a bedrock, hyper-collaboration will shape the way that our world functions. When facilitated by artificial intelligence (AI), hyper-collaboration can lead to rapid innovation, accelerate product development cycles and foster the creation of entirely new markets and sectors. The essence of hyper-collaboration is reflected in the UPU's approach, particularly for the upcoming cycle.⁴

By strategically aligning itself with key partners, the UPU seeks to proactively shape and influence outcomes that resonate with the broader objectives of the sustainable development agenda on a global scale.

DEVELOPMENT OF POLICY FRAMEWORKS

The UPU has demonstrated its commitment to sustainability by formulating comprehensive policies across various themes. Noteworthy among these are the two policies addressing gender equality and the empowerment of women (GEEW), and sustainable development. These policies underline the UPU's dedication to global priorities.

The UPU Policy on Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women 2023–2025 establishes a framework for the UPU's work to achieve specific and applicable targets under Goal 5 during the Abidjan cycle. The policy defines the measures and actions to be taken in mainstreaming the gender perspective, promoting GEEW and ensuring the equal representation of women and men in leadership and decision-making processes, so as to ensure that the UPU contributes to the achievement of the SDGs and improves its performance against UN-SWAP 2.0 (UN system-wide action plan on gender equality and empowerment of women) indicators.⁵

Furthermore, since its first UN-SWAP 2.0 report in 2018, the UPU has substantially improved its performance and compliance rate with the 17 UN-SWAP performance indicators, with an increase from 5% to 35%. In addition, the UPU will join its UN system counterparts in implementing the recommendations of the Gender Equality Acceleration Plan, which aims to catalyze transformational change and enhance the UN's capacity to deliver more effectively for women and girls, and will feed into the future UN-SWAP 3.0.

The UPU is guided by the CEB's UN-wide strategy on gender parity, as well as the UN-SWAP on gender equality and empowerment of women. In addition to providing support to UN member countries on reaching Goal 5 (Gender equality), UN agencies are charged with improving their own organizations with regard to achieving true parity among genders within their leadership, as well as mainstreaming gender equality concepts into strategies and projects. Through Congress resolution 10/2021 (Gender equality and the empowerment of women at the UPU and in the postal sector), the UPU has the mandate to provide guidance to its member countries and designated operators with regard to the principles of gender equality and the mainstreaming of associated concepts.

Concurrently, the UPU's Sustainable Development Policy was designed to orient IB activities towards actively contributing to the realization of the SDGs. The objective is to seamlessly integrate sustainable development principles into the functions of the IB. The policy establishes a definitive sustainability vision for the IB, encapsulated in the following statement: "The International Bureau substantively contributes to achieving the UN SDGs across all its activities, supports all core stakeholders in achieving the SDGs, and sets a leading example for the broader postal sector in embedding sustainable development principles."⁶

4 UPU State of the Postal Sector 2023: A Hyper-Collaborative Path to Postal Development.

5 Social sustainability priorities: UPU gender equality (CA C 2 2023.1–Doc 14).

6 Adoption by the International Bureau of an agency-specific sustainability strategy or equivalent (CA C 2 2023.1–Doc 13).

Through this policy, the UPU also reaffirmed its commitment to mainstreaming the 10 environmental and social sustainability principles outlined in Phase II of the “Strategy for sustainability management in the United Nations system, 2020–2030”, as endorsed by the CEB. These reflect the values, principles and standards of the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the report of the UN Secretary General entitled “Our Common Agenda” and the Model Approach to Environmental and Social Standards in United Nations Programming.

THE UPU’S ROLE IN IMPLEMENTING UN 2.0

As the world passes the half-way stage in the timeline for the 2030 Agenda, the UN Secretary General is steering the UN 2.0 initiative, which encapsulates his vision for a revitalized UN by emphasizing a forward-thinking culture and advanced skills, dubbed the “Quintet of Change” – data, innovation, strategic foresight, digital proficiency and behavioural science. Aimed at turbocharging support for the 2030 Agenda, this initiative seeks to reshape the UN into a more agile, diverse and impactful organization. UN 2.0 strives to cultivate an organizational culture rooted in agility, creativity, diversity and sustainability, setting the blueprint for international organizations in the 21st century.

In the next few years, the UPU plans to embed the UN 2.0 Quintet of Change in the following ways:

Data

Propelled by its expansive global network and management of big data in relation to international postal services, the UPU is at the forefront in terms of transforming how global logistics and e-commerce are understood and optimized. Leveraging cutting-edge data analytics and communication technologies, the UPU is poised to significantly enhance its role as a pivotal data-driven entity within the international community and UN system.

A central element in this transformative endeavour is the development of a unified big data analytics platform. For the first time, this ambitious project aims to integrate postal data with aviation and international trade insights, alongside predictive analytics and forecasts from the UPU, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), UN Comtrade and the UN Statistics Division department, which is responsible for producing official international trade statistics.

This will result in a consolidated and AI-enhanced single version of truth across the UN system, will contribute significantly to enhanced trade efficiency, economic growth and sustainability, and will position the UPU as a leader in data innovation in the UN system.

Innovation

Building on its commitment to foster a culture of research and evidence-based decision making, the UPU plans to approach innovation through two main dimensions: firstly, by increasing capacity for innovation and, secondly, by introducing initiatives that contribute to the betterment of the UN system as well as member countries.

For the first dimension, the UPU will consolidate the space for innovation within the organization through a dedicated innovation lab. The lab will serve as a hub for the identification, prototyping and scaling of new technologies and practices that will help to overcome current challenges in the sector. In addition, the lab will build a culture of innovation within the organization through a cross-directorate and cross-competence innovation-related community of practice, and through the achievement of results via pilot projects, prototype development, hackathons, solve-a-thons and full-scale projects.

To contribute to the second dimension, the UPU plans to identify areas where it can add value through innovative approaches to strategic, regulatory and operational issues faced by stakeholders in member countries. Embracing the centrality of the innovation lab, the UPU will lead the development of cutting-edge innovative applications that will benefit its member countries and the UN system at large.

Strategic foresight

With its extensive knowledge of global postal trends and networks, the UPU can contribute to foresight initiatives. By anticipating emerging trends and potential shifts in the postal sector and in the needs of SDG stakeholders, the UPU can actively participate in shaping the future of international postal services. In keeping with the ecosystem approach, the UPU can share its foresight with partner UN organizations.

Digital proficiency

Recognizing the critical importance of digital services in the postal sector, the UPU can have an impact on change through the adoption and greater integration of digital tools and platforms into postal operations. The UPU is one of very few UN agencies that provides IT solutions to the sector that it serves, and is the only one that has been allocated and is operating a critical part of the domain name system, namely the .POST top-level domain. In addition, the UPU offers multiple avenues for innovative digitalization, such as hackathons and digital post office initiatives. Therefore, the UPU is enabling the digitalization of the global postal network, while providing support to advance digital, financial and social inclusion through this network.

Behavioural science

By promoting a culture that values experimentation, continuous learning and behavioural insight, the UPU can optimize internal processes to enhance the effectiveness of its initiatives. Integrating behavioural science into the fabric of the UPU's internal innovation framework will reflect its adaptability and a human-centric approach.

UN SUMMIT OF THE FUTURE

The Summit of the Future, scheduled for September 2024, emerges as a response to the shared challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, technological advances and stagnation in achieving the SDGs. The Secretary General's "Our Common Agenda" report envisions the summit as a once-in-a-generation opportunity to renew the multilateral system and accelerate the implementation of existing commitments. The proposed outcome is an action-oriented Pact for the Future containing chapters on sustainable development, financing, international peace and security, science and technology, youth engagement and the transformation of global governance.

One of the key focuses is on accelerating the impact of the SDGs, with specific proposals addressing poverty reduction, inequality, sustainable cities, healthcare, gender equality and clean energy. The proposals emphasize the leveraging of digital technologies, adoption of metrics that complement GDP, and embracing foresight, behavioural science and innovation to create a more inclusive and sustainable global future.

The Summit of the Future aims to bring about transformative changes in global governance, financial architecture, collective security, education, information integrity and the responsible use of outer space. The envisioned Pact for the Future encompasses commitments to address pressing challenges, such as economic disparities, climate change, gender inequality and the impacts of technological advancements.

By advocating for a holistic approach that integrates digital cooperation, sustainable finance, youth participation and scientific advancements, the Summit of the Future strives to shape a more resilient, equitable and interconnected world. The proposed initiatives, if adopted, have the potential to redefine international cooperation, contributing to the UN's overarching goal of creating a future that leaves no-one behind.

As a specialized agency of the UN, the UPU can align its strategies and operations with the vision of the Summit of the Future by embracing digital transformation, fostering inclusivity, promoting sustainability and actively participating in global initiatives that contribute to peace, education and the well-being of future generations.

Equipped with a robust analysis of its existing contributions, the UPU strides confidently towards an enhanced commitment to advancing the SDGs. This strategic approach underscores the UPU's proactive stance, ensuring that its ongoing efforts are effectively aligned with the broader global agenda for sustainable development.





RESOURCES

UN Global Compact

unglobalcompact.org/sdgs

globalcompact.at/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/un-global-compact_2022-annual-report.pdf

How Your Company Can Advance Each of the SDGs: unglobalcompact.org/sdgs/17-global-goals

Better Business, Better World: unglobalcompact.org/library/5051

United Nations Development Programme

SDG Accelerator: www.undp.org/sdg-accelerator/tools

World Business Council for Sustainable Development

CEO Guide to the Sustainable Development Goals: goo.gl/6QWi9P

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