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**Unpacking the 2030 Agenda
as a Framework for Policymaking**

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Unpacking the 2030 Agenda as a Framework for Policymaking

Gonzalo Alcalde

Abstract

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is more than a set of goals and targets: it is a comprehensive “plan of action” that countries are translating into relevant policies. While this plan recognizes a need for different national paths towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), it also provides guidance for policymaking, establishing means of implementation and follow-up and review mechanisms that are indivisible from the SDGs. Moreover, analyzing the 2030 Agenda as a framework for policymaking reveals general principles that are both explicit and implicit in the UN's *Transforming Our World* document. After examining previous relevant UN and OECD frameworks; official 2030 Agenda documents; current international literature on the SDGs, and consulting key 2030 Agenda stakeholders in Peru, this paper identifies eight general principles for sustainable development policymaking in 2030 Agenda implementation that are relevant to all SDGs and sectors, and suggests areas for further research.

Keywords: Sustainable Development Goals | policy capacities | public policy | 2030 Agenda | developmental cooperation

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1. Introduction

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is more than a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets. It is a comprehensive, four-part “plan of action”—according to the United Nations Development Group (2015: 6)—that includes: “(i) a Vision and Principles for Transforming our World as set out in the Declaration; (ii) a results framework of global Sustainable Development Goals – SDGs; (iii) a Means of Implementation and Global Partnership, and (iv) Follow-up and Review”.

As a plan for global transformation, the 2030 Agenda requires a fundamental change in how policies are made in each country (UNDESA 2015). Thus, the framework also provides guidance for policymaking, in explicit and implicit ways. As this paper will argue, the 2030 Agenda sets forth several general principles for sustainable development policymaking that are relevant to all sectors and levels of government, and to the attainment of all SDGs. These principles reflect key concepts and approaches that are currently in the mainstream of development theory and practice, and which have been part of previous relevant action plans at the international level.

Through an analysis of official documents related to the 2030 Agenda and its predecessors at the UN and OECD, as well as a review of relevant international literature—including academic and grey literature—this paper describes the 2030 Agenda as a policymaking framework; identifies a set of eight general, cross-cutting principles for policymaking that can be unpacked from this framework, and suggests areas for further research on the 2030 Agenda and the challenges it poses for sustainable development policymaking.

This is a timely and relatively new area for research, as national and subnational actors begin adapting and translating the 2030 Agenda into concrete sustainable development strategies and policies. It should be relevant in the following decade and a half as these processes of implementation, localization and asserting ownership of the SDG framework place demands on institutional policy capacities and on political decision making that are only starting to be assessed.

Sustainable development itself is a relatively new concept that entered the mainstream of development theory and practice in the 1980s and 1990s (Sagasti and Alcalde 1999). It should not be confused with sustainability, which has been discussed for far longer, as far back as the 18th century, and has been “linked to economic efficiency and the protection of natural resources to safeguard human well-being” (Schorr 2017:

6). Rather, sustainable development is best understood as a political strategy that includes much broader social issues (Schorr 2017).

According to a succinct and well known definition, sustainable development is:

development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs [... It is not] a fixed state of harmony, but rather a process of change in which the exploitation of resources, the direction of investments, the orientation of technological development, and institutional change are made consistent with future as well as present needs (World Commission on Environment and Development 1987: 16).

While there are significant variations in how sustainable development has been conceptualized and operationalized, these decades-old quotes still capture the essence of the concept that drives the 2030 Agenda in the 21st century.

At a conceptual level, achieving sustainable development requires, above all, a holistic understanding of the different dimensions of development, including the social, economic and environmental; some also include a political or institutional dimension of sustainable development, although this is not the case explicitly in the 2030 Agenda. Translating such an integrated approach to policy processes, however, is a challenge for conventional, sector-oriented policymaking, and is still far from the reality of policy processes or “business as usual” in most countries (UNDESA 2015: 3).

It should be noted that the challenges related to assuming the 2030 Agenda as a guide for policymaking will be relevant only in countries where governments decide to “own” and adapt this framework. This paper assumes that the SDGs—like the MDGs before them—are international norms (as defined by Finnemore and Sikkink 1998) that countries adopt voluntarily. They are not legally binding and, as Fukuda-Parr (2016: 51) notes, for national governments the “SDGs are a politically negotiated consensus that has no enforcement mechanism built-in”. As Solberg (2016) has stated:

Unless national governments show the political will and resolve to make progress on a given goal, progress will be limited or nonexistent. This means that goals must be accompanied by coherent strategies, policies, and investments. National ownership of globally-agreed upon development goals in parliaments and populations is crucial. To make a difference, global goals also have to be translated into enforceable domestic legislation, and taken into account in budget processes (Solberg 2016: 3).

One can reasonably assume, however, that national ownership and localization of these international norms will not be a rare occurrence, as it already happened frequently around the world during the MDG period—even though national adaptation was not initially a strong theme in that framework. According to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), over 110 countries had incorporated at least a subset of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) within their national development plans by 2015 (UNDP 2016).

2. General Principles for Policymaking in Previous Frameworks

At the conceptual level, the United Nations has actively promoted the need to address all three dimensions of development in an integrated manner for the past 30 years. Especially during the 1990s, however, numerous UN summits and conferences carried out relevant discussions in a rather fragmented manner (Kumar 2016), and their agreements on particular areas of social, economic and environmental development risked being quickly forgotten (Vandemoortele 2012).

At the beginning of the 21st century, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan's We the Peoples document (2000), the Millennium Declaration, and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) finally signaled the convergence of the global economic and social agendas of various international development institutions (Kumar 2016, Vandemoortele 2012) and the shift towards global goal setting, yet it was only after the 2012 Rio+20 Conference that these began to fully converge with the stream of environment-oriented summits initiated in Stockholm in 1972. It was at Rio+20 that the proposal was put forward to develop a single set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which would build upon the MDGs while incorporating criteria from the sustainable development frameworks (UN 2012).

Thus, the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs reflect a very recent convergence towards working on a single, official global development framework. This also implied incorporating into this global framework a number of principles for policymaking that have gradually evolved through conferences and declarations on aspects of human development, sustainable development, development cooperation and other related themes, both within the UN System and under the auspices of international organizations such as the OECD. These principles themselves—for example, the emphasis on participatory development or on results-based management—most often were adapted from existing discussions and practices in academia, NGOs, grassroots organizations, the private sector, and bilateral development cooperation actors. In this paper, the focus is on identifying mainstreamed principles that are relevant to all SDGs and all sectors of policymaking, at any level of government.

In order to identify the general principles for policymaking that have been gradually incorporated into relevant, UN-sponsored discussions on sustainable development and have influenced the 2030 Agenda, the following sections review elements found in: UN environmental and sustainable development global forums since the 1970s; the Millennium Declaration and MDGs, which were conceived as the culmination of a decade of UN-sponsored summits on a variety of social and economic development issues, and other directly relevant, official development frameworks proposed from the OECD and its Development Assistance Committee (DAC).

2.1 UN Sustainable Development Frameworks

The concept of sustainable development entered the mainstream of development discourse and practice after the United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development's 1987 report, *Our Common Future* (the "Brundtland report"), which defined it as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. By 1992, the UN Earth Summit convened representatives from 172 countries and produced the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, which established as its third principle that the "right to development must be fulfilled so as to equitably meet developmental and environmental needs of present and future generations" (World Commission on Environment and Development 1987: 2).

However, since the early 1970s, several United Nations summits had already called for a new, multidimensional approach to development that could address the need to integrate environmental concerns, even before the term "sustainable development"

was officially adopted in the 1980s. These international events yielded influential declarations and outlined new thematic priorities and goals for policymaking. They have also—explicitly or implicitly—proposed general principles for policymaking, cutting across conventional sectors.

Policy integration, including the environmental dimension, can be identified as the first relevant, cross-cutting principle for policymaking that emerged from these summits and declarations on what would later become sustainable development. The report of the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (the “Stockholm Conference”) and its Plan of Action recognized the need to reconcile the aspirations of current generations with those of future generations, which implied integrating environmental considerations into current development policies:

Developing countries could ill-afford to put uncertain future needs ahead of their immediate needs for food, shelter, work, education and health care. The problem was how to reconcile those legitimate immediate requirements with the interests of generations yet unborn. Environmental factors must be an integral part of development strategy; one of the most encouraging outcomes of the preparatory process had been the emergence of a new synthesis between development and environment (UN 1973: 45).

Although less forcefully, the 1972 Stockholm summit and conference report proposed other general principles that could apply to national development policymaking in all countries. These include the incorporation of environmental factors into development planning (“[r]ational planning constitutes an essential tool for reconciling any conflict between the needs of development and the need to protect and improve the environment”); the role of science and technology in providing solutions for economic, social and environmental development, and the participation of citizens and NGOs in environmental policies:

[The Secretary should make arrangements to] establish an information program designed to create the awareness which individuals should have of environmental issues and to associate the public with environmental management and control. This program will use traditional and contemporary mass media of communication, taking distinctive national conditions into account. In addition, the program must provide means of stimulating active participation by the citizens, and of eliciting interest and contributions from non-governmental organizations for the preservation and development of the environment (UN 1973: 30).

Ten years later, the UN-sponsored Nairobi Declaration reaffirmed the international commitment to the Stockholm Declaration and Action Plan, “as well as to the further strengthening and expansion of national efforts and international co-operation in the field of environmental protection” (UNEP 1982: 1). By 1987, the Our Common Future report (which was commissioned in 1983) aimed much more directly at initiating an agenda for change, addressing the challenges faced by many countries looking to make more sustainable development policies: since “[the] real world of interlocked economic and ecological systems will not change; the policies and institutions concerned must” (p. 17). The need for greater policy integration, and for a greater focus on prevention of environmental impacts, was very clearly addressed as a major institutional challenge for sustainable development, and this was also linked to the need for greater citizen participation:

The objective of sustainable development and the integrated nature of the global environment/development challenges pose problems for institutions, national and international, that were established on the basis of narrow preoccupations and compartmentalized concerns [...] The challenges are both interdependent and integrated, requiring comprehensive approaches and popular participation (World Commission on Environment and Development 1987: 17).

The report also called on development planning to incorporate environmental concerns, and on political systems to strengthen the participation of citizens, private sector, academia and NGOs in different aspects of policymaking (including planning and implementation). In addition, the Brundtland report noted the special challenges of poorer countries in implementing institutional changes. A significant change from 1970s official documents was the emphasis on the roles of women and children, and the special challenges and opportunities that they each face in sustainable development decision making. In discussing these, an incipient rights-based approach to development was evident.

Moreover, the Brundtland report went beyond earlier calls for policy integration by suggesting the need to align all policies, programs and budgets with sustainable development criteria and long-term plans:

Environmental protection and sustainable development must be an integral part of the mandates of all agencies of governments [...] These must be made responsible and accountable for ensuring that their policies, programs, and budgets encourage and support activities that are economically and ecologically sustainable both in the short and longer terms (World Commission on Environment and Development 1987: 258).

Twenty years after Stockholm, the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro launched, for the first time, a global partnership on sustainable development, and the Declaration of Rio contained “fundamental principles on which nations can base their future decisions and policies, considering the environmental implications of socio-economic development” (UN 1993: 1). The 27 principles outlined in the Declaration continued to expand the range of general principles for development policymaking contained in sustainable development frameworks. In addition to policy integration—with an emphasis on the environmental dimension—the Rio Declaration also proposed informing sustainable development policies through science, technology and innovation; improved citizen participation and transparency in decision making, and a substantial role for women, youth and indigenous groups in development policies.

Additionally, the summit produced the influential Agenda 21, a detailed program for sustainable development in the 21st century contained in a 700-page document, including costs for implementing different program areas. Each program area included a basis for action, objectives and activities.

Agenda 21 renewed the call to integrate economic, environmental and social criteria in all aspects of decision making, concerning all sectors and levels of government. It also elaborated further on the topic of participation in sustainable development by specifically calling for the inclusion of several priority groups, such as women and girls, children and youth, and indigenous peoples, as well as strengthening partnerships with NGOs, local authorities, workers and trade unions, business and industry, and scientists and technologists. Additionally, it called for countries to design and implement national sustainable development strategies, with significant participation, that would “build upon and harmonize the various sectoral economic, social and environmental policies and plans that are operating in the country” (UN 1993, Para. 8.7). Moreover, there is an emphasis on the need to properly monitor and evaluate progress toward sustainable development in the context of such strategies, including the design of appropriate indicators.

To a much greater extent than previous official declarations and plans on these issues, Agenda 21 specifically mentioned the need for developing countries to strengthen capacities in long-term planning (understood as strategic planning), incorporating environmental considerations in policy and project design, and managing knowledge and information, including the use of scientific knowledge and technology as a basis for decision making. Finally, another cross-cutting theme that was introduced in Agenda 21 was the need to fully integrate population concerns (and demographic trends) into national planning and policies (UN 1993).

In 1997, the 19th Special Session of the UN General Assembly carried out a comprehensive review of progress in Agenda 21 (“Rio+5”), and reaffirmed it as the fundamental program of action for achieving sustainable development, as well as calling to strengthen national progress in assuming all the principles contained in the Rio Declaration and implementing national sustainable development strategies. Interestingly, the call for furthering policy integration emphasized elements of a fourth dimension, that of politics and institutions:

Economic development, social development and environmental protection are interdependent and mutually reinforcing components of sustainable development. (...) Development, in turn, must involve measures that improve the human condition and the quality of life itself. Democracy, respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development, transparent and accountable governance in all sectors of society, as well as effective participation by civil society, are also an essential part of the necessary foundations for the realization of social and people-centered sustainable development (UN 1997: 9).

The next comprehensive review of Agenda 21 progress took place in Johannesburg in 2002, where a plan of implementation for the agenda was approved. The declaration produced at this meeting reinforced some basic guidelines and commitments and recognized a stream of negotiations beginning in Stockholm. It did not introduce new principles for policymaking, but a greater sense of urgency in adopting time bound goals and targets is evident. At the same time, the need to change how policies are made is more explicit:

We recognize that sustainable development requires a long-term perspective and broad-based participation in policy formulation, decision-making and implementation at all levels. As social partners, we will continue to work for stable partnerships with all major groups, respecting the independent, important roles of each of them (UN 2002: 2).

By this time, commitment to achieving the sustainable development objectives of Rio and Agenda 21 was also closely linked to commitment to achieving the (then) recently adopted Millennium Development Goals which, nevertheless, had been discussed and approved in a different stream of discussions, summits and official events.

Finally, the 2012 UN Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro (Rio+20) renewed the commitment of all countries to sustainable development and produced an outcome document called “The Future We Want”. This document was the first official text that recognized the need for adopting global sustainable development goals that would reflect the commitments and principles of Agenda 21 but also be:

integrated into the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015, thus contributing to the achievement of sustainable development and serving as a driver for implementation and mainstreaming of sustainable development in the United Nations system as a whole (UN 2012: 47).

2.2 The Millennium Declaration and the MDGs

Heads of state and representatives from 189 countries adopted the Millennium Development Declaration in September 2000, setting the elimination of poverty as a priority for development in the 21st century. Beyond poverty, this declaration addressed a broad range of topics, from environment to culture, and in many ways served as a rights-based reaffirmation of commitments dating back to the 1948 Universal Declaration on Human Rights.

The Millennium Declaration also proposed concrete development goals to guide a new global partnership, in order to translate “shared values into actions” (UN 2000: 1). Beginning in 2001, eight of these goals and their targets were referred to as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). These can be seen as summarizing or building on key agreements from UN global conferences and summits in the 1990s, including those on social development, education, children, nutrition, population and development, women, food, human settlements, and sustainable development.

These summits, in turn, followed a renewal of attention to human welfare and poverty reduction in development that had significant landmarks in 1990 with the publication of the UNDP's Human Development Reports and the World Bank's World Development Reports. Hulme (2009) refers to the 1990s as a period of renewed "summitry" that focused on achieving summit declarations and peaked in 1995, and then this gave way to a growing emphasis on global target-setting efforts.

The MDGs did not address all topics in the Millennium Declarations but served as a means to implement some priorities selected through political dialogue in the following months. This new global partnership around the Millennium Declaration and the MDGs was in addition to that established around Agenda 21, and had a 2015 deadline.

The Millennium Declaration itself did not reflect on details of implementation or policymaking, but did reaffirm its "support for the principles of sustainable development, including those set out in Agenda 21" (UN 2000: 7). The theme of participation is especially highlighted, including the commitment to democratic and participatory governance and to "work collectively for more inclusive political processes, allowing genuine participation by all citizens in all our countries" (UN 2000: 7).

In 2001, the "Road Map Towards the Implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration" was adopted by the UN General Assembly, outlining strategies for action in order to meet the Declaration's goals and commitments and including, as an annex, the eight MDGs. When presenting the prioritized goals (among other goals in the Millennium Declaration and in previous UN summits), this document stated:

In order to help focus national and international priority-setting, goals and targets should be limited in number, be stable over time and communicate clearly to a broad audience. Clear and stable numerical targets can help to trigger action and promote new alliances for development (UN 2001: 55).

The importance of monitoring and evaluating results, especially in terms of quantifiable goals and targets, is an important theme beginning with this document, significantly more so than in previous documents in the sustainable development stream of UN summits and documents. Several authors have seen the conceptualization and formulation of the MDGs as reflecting the incorporation of results-based management at all levels in the OECD and in the UN system (Hulme 2007 2009). This approach was mentioned in the roadmap itself: "The United Nations has reformed its budget

methodology, adopting a results-based budget approach and improving the forecasts of cash availability and needs” (UN 2001: 49).

This roadmap for the MDGs highlighted other general principles for policymaking that included the importance of ensuring participation of all stakeholders (among them, women, indigenous groups, and children); creating and implementing national plans of action and strategies in terms of MDG commitments (to 2015); integrating sustainable development principles into national policies, and applying a rights-based approach to development in all fields, as “human rights should be at the center of peace, security and development programs” (UN 2001: 19).

Some of these principles are reflected in the formulation and wording of the MDGs themselves. For example, MDG 7, target 9, reads: “Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programs and reverse the loss of environmental resources”. Also, MDG 8 promotes the participation of nongovernment actors in policies. And, as a whole, MDGs clearly reflect the guidelines of results-based management and strategic planning.

In 2005 and 2010, the UN hosted summits to evaluate progress towards the MDGs. In 2005, several targets were added or revised. By the time of the 2010 General Assembly document “Keeping the Promise: United to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals,” the lessons and principles for policymaking that were highlighted touched on areas that were not prioritized initially, and are overall much closer to the themes that are found in the 2030 Agenda.

In particular, the need for policy integration was more clearly highlighted in 2010, and this even applies to the MDG framework itself: “all the Millennium Development Goals are interconnected and mutually reinforcing. We therefore underline the need to pursue these Goals through a holistic and comprehensive approach” (UN 2010: 3). In this regard, the concept of “policy coherence for development” was introduced at this stage, referring to the idea that “achievement of the Millennium Development Goals requires mutually supportive and integrated policies across a wide range of economic, social and environmental issues for sustainable development” (UN 2010: 3). Furthermore, the document calls on all countries to “formulate and implement policies consistent with the objectives of sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth, poverty eradication and sustainable development” (UN 2010: 3).

Participation of all stakeholders in development policymaking was still a major theme, as well as pursuing alliances with different nongovernment actors in order to achieve the MDGs. Countries were urged to apply their own long-term strategies for MDG implementation, although considering consultation and participation in doing so.

Among the highlighted lessons from MDG implementation that were considered relevant as general principles for policymaking are the following:

- Supporting participatory, community-led strategies aligned with national development priorities and strategies;
- Ensuring the full participation of all segments of society, including the poor and disadvantaged, in decision-making processes;
- Respecting, promoting and protecting all human rights, including the right to development;
- Enhancing opportunities for women and girls and advancing the economic, legal and political empowerment of women;
- Promoting effective public-private partnerships;
- Strengthening statistical capacity to produce reliable disaggregated data for better programs and policy evaluation and formulation.

It is also important to note that results-based management is referenced explicitly several times in this 2010 report. For example, regarding work towards the MDGs in the UN, the report highlights “the importance of accountability, transparency and improved results-based management and further harmonized results-based reporting” (UN 2010: 11).

2.3 Contributions from the OECD

Considering the sustainable development commitments that emerged from the Rio summit and Agenda 21, as well as agreements reached at other UN summits, the OECD’s Development Assistance Committee (DAC) published the influential “Shaping the 21st Century” in 1996. From the aid donor’s perspective, this report proposed attaining six international development goals (IDGs, as they were later named) on economic well-being, social development and environmental sustainability and regeneration, by either 2005 or 2015. The report called for the formulation and implementation of national sustainable development strategies in every country by 2005, with support from international development cooperation. DAC envisaged a new “global development partnership effort through which we can achieve together [...] ambitious but realizable goals” (OECD 1996: 2).

The IDGs were very influential on the formulation of the MDGs (Hulme 2009). In fact, IDGs were embraced officially by the UN, IMF, and World Bank in 2000, and were extremely similar to MDGs and some of their targets; they should be considered a direct predecessor to the latter framework (see Table 1). By 2000, the IDGs had been regrouped into seven goals (with quantitative indicators), which were seen by the major multilateral actors in international cooperation as coming from:

the agreements and resolutions of the world conferences organized by the United Nations in the first half of the 1990s. These conferences provided an opportunity for the international community to agree on steps needed to reduce poverty and achieve sustainable development (IMF, OECD, UN and World Bank 2000: 4).

Table 1: Corresponding IDGs and MDGs/targets

OECD-DAC International Development Goals (1996, 2000)	UN Millennium Development Goals and targets (2000)
IDG 1 Reducing extreme poverty: The proportion of people living in extreme poverty in developing countries should be reduced by at least one-half between 1990 and 2015.	MDG 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger Target 1.A: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day
IDG 2 Universal primary education: There should be universal primary education in all countries by 2015	MDG 2: Achieve universal primary education
IDG 3 Gender equality: Progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of women should be demonstrated by eliminating gender disparity in primary and secondary education by 2005.	MDG 3: Promote gender equality and empower women Target 3.A: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015
IDG 4 Reducing infant and child mortality: The death rates for infants and children under the age of five years should be reduced in each developing country by two-thirds between 1990 and 2015.	MDG 4: Reduce child mortality Target 4.A: Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate
IDG 5 Reducing maternal mortality: The rate of maternal mortality should be reduced by three-quarters between 1990 and 2015.	MDG 5: Improve maternal health Target 5.A: Reduce by three quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio
IDG 6 Reproductive health: Access should be available through the primary healthcare system to reproductive health services for all individuals of appropriate ages, no later than 2015.	MDG 5: Improve maternal health Target 5.B: Achieve, by 2015, universal access to reproductive health MDG 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
IDG 7 Environment: There should be a current national strategy for sustainable development, in the process of implementation, in every country by 2005, so as to ensure that current trends in the loss of environmental resources are effectively reversed at both global and national levels by 2015.	MDG 7: Ensure environmental sustainability
-	MDG 8: Develop a global partnership for development

Source: Own elaboration based on OECD (2001) and UN (2000).

The OECD began proposing general guidelines for sustainable development policymaking in 1996, well before the MDGs or Millennium Declaration. Based on the Agenda 21 principles and on lessons from development cooperation, “Shaping the 21st Century” aimed to provide general guidelines on how national policies should be shaped towards sustainable development. For example, it outlined developing country responsibilities within a renewed partnership, and these included committing to basic

objectives of social development and increased participation, including gender equality; fostering accountable government and the rule of law, and strengthening human and institutional capacity.

This report also highlighted the importance of results-based management in development: “In this report we have focused on indicators of development progress outcomes rather than the volume of inputs” (OECD 1996: 16), and mentions the importance of results-based monitoring and evaluation. Finally, it also touched on the issue of achieving a more integrated approach to different areas of development policy: “The ramifications and opportunities of policy coherence for development now need to be much more carefully traced and followed through than in the past” (OECD 1996: 17) .

OECD principles for sustainable development policymaking were made much more explicit in the 2001 document “Strategies for Sustainable Development: Guidance for Development Co-operation”. At the most conceptual level, OECD is fully aligned with sustainable development as defined in UN summits and declarations, considering it to mean “integrating the economic, social and environmental objectives of society, in order to maximize human well-being in the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs” (OECD 2001:12). It adds to this, however, that when integration is not possible, making difficult decisions and trade-offs will be necessary.

Many of the principles for policymaking recommended by the OECD are contained in its definition of a strategy for sustainable development:

A coordinated set of participatory and continuously improving processes of analysis, debate, capacity-strengthening, planning and investment, which seeks to integrate the short and long term economic, social and environmental objectives of society – through mutually supportive approaches wherever possible –and manages trade-offs where this is not possible (OECD 2001: 25).

Moreover, most of the individual principles put forward for sustainable development strategies and for capacity development can be taken directly as general principles for policymaking:

- Broad consultation, including particularly with the poor and with civil society, to open up debate on new ideas and information, expose issues to be addressed, and build consensus and political support on action.

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- Ensuring sustained beneficial impacts on disadvantaged and marginalized groups and on future generations.
 - Building on existing strategies and processes, rather than adding additional ones, to enable convergence and coherence.
 - A solid analytical basis, taking account also of relevant regional issues, including a comprehensive review of the present situation and forecasts of trends and risks.
 - Integration of economic, social and environmental objectives through mutually supportive policies and practices and the management of tradeoffs.
 - Realistic targets with clear budgetary priorities.
 - Strengthening and building on existing country capacity — public, civil society, and private — as part of the strategy process.
 - Linking national and local levels, including supporting devolution, in all stages of strategy development and implementation.
 - Establishing continuous monitoring and evaluation systems based on clear indicators to track and steer progress (OECD 2001: 12-13).

In addition to these, the guidance for sustainable development provided by the OECD highlights the role of strategic planning that is based on a shared vision and considers existing plans and necessary structural change, and integrates sustainable development in all its processes. Beyond planning, OECD proposes a strategic approach to sustainable development, which can help countries to:

- Move from developing and implementing fixed plans, ideas and solutions towards operating an adaptive system that can continuously improve governance to promote coherence between responses to different challenges.
- Move from a view that it is the state alone which is responsible for development towards one that sees responsibility with society as a whole.
- Move from centralized and controlled decision-making towards sharing results and opportunities, transparent negotiation, co-operation and concerted action.
- Move from a focus on outputs (e.g. projects and laws) towards a focus on outcomes (e.g. impacts of projects and legal changes).
- Move from sectoral towards integrated planning.
- Move towards a process which can accommodate monitoring, learning and improvement (OECD 2001: 24).

Another influential OECD reference for development policy guidance that preceded the 2030 Agenda is the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005) and its five principles for effective aid, together with the Accra Agenda for Action (2008). The Paris Declaration was arrived at by both donors and “partner countries”, with the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) expressly in mind. Goal-

setting, monitoring and evaluation of results are key aspects that are underlined, within a framework that prioritizes results-based management. Here, “managing for results” refers to focusing on desired results and using information to improve decision-making. For developing countries, this implies “strengthening linkages between national development strategies and annual and multi-annual budget processes,” and establishing “results-oriented reporting and assessment frameworks that monitor progress against key dimensions of the national and sector development strategies” (OECD 2001: 7).

Moreover, the Paris Declaration states that the “capacity to plan, manage, implement, and account for results of policies and programs, is critical for achieving development objectives – from analysis and dialogue through implementation, monitoring and evaluation” (OECD 2008: 14). Building such capacities “needs not only to be based on sound technical analysis, but also to be responsive to the broader social, political and economic environment, including the need to strengthen human resources ” (OECD 2008: 14).

2.4 Eight General Principles Found in Previous UN and OECD Frameworks

There are distinct general principles for sustainable development policymaking that are found in the major UN and OECD frameworks discussed above. These are relevant to all sectors and levels of policymaking, as well to all SDGs, and they complement a number of more specific, thematic guidelines. These principles may be grouped in the following eight categories:

- **Policy integration and coherence.** Integrating environmental and sustainability considerations into all aspects of development policies (especially social and economic) has been proposed since Stockholm in 1972. This has evolved into a call for policy coherence across a wide range of issues in all dimensions of sustainable development, as well as coherence between such policies and established objectives for development at the national and international level.
- **Participation, accountability and partnerships with nongovernment actors.** Participation of citizens in policy processes, including the implementation and evaluation stages, has been a strong theme since Stockholm, and was strongly featured in Agenda 21. This includes participation in vertical accountability processes, that is, those in which public actors are held accountable by civil society for the attainment of development goals and targets. However, participation in policymaking and accountability is not seen as restricted to ordinary citizens and their organizations; there is also a call for a variety of nongovernment actors to

be part of all stages of policymaking—from agenda-setting to implementation—including private business, academia, international agencies and nonprofit organizations.

- **Rights-based approach and inclusion.** Declarations and frameworks on sustainable development were not explicitly rights-oriented at first. However, after Agenda 21 and the Millennium Declaration, the link between basic human rights (as expressed in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights) and the goals of sustainable development was made explicit; the MDGs, for example, were considered by the UN to be fundamentally based on a human rights approach. Closely related to this, since the 1990s there has been greater emphasis on increasing efforts to guarantee the rights of groups that have been traditionally excluded from the benefits of development and from decision making, especially women, children and youth, people in poverty and extreme poverty, and indigenous peoples.
- **Gender.** In the 1972 Stockholm Declaration, there were no references to distinctive development challenges and opportunities for men and women. The Brundtland Report began highlighting these different challenges faced by women, and after the influential 1995 Beijing World Conference on Women, gender mainstreaming became the norm in international cooperation, seeking to ensure that policies and programs were sensitive to the needs of women as well as men. This was very evident later in the IDGs and MDGs.
- **Decentralization.** The important role of local actors in all aspects of policymaking—not just in implementation—has been highlighted in all frameworks reviewed above. However, beyond this recognition of existing roles, there is also a call since at least the Brundtland Report to empower and expand the decision making capacities of subnational governments as an integral aspect of promoting sustainable development. For example, that report states that promoting the common interest “is best secured by decentralizing the management of resources upon which local communities defend, and giving these communities an effective say over the use of these resources” (UN 1987: 56).
- **Strategic long-term planning.** The need for long-term public planning that considers all dimensions of development, including environmental factors, is stated in all the above mentioned frameworks. Beginning in the 1990s this was explicitly associated with the concept of strategic planning (more flexible, participatory and vision-oriented than traditional planning) and with long-term development goals, which should be set on the basis of shared visions and priorities. More specifically, demographic trends are often underlined as a fundamental aspect to be considered in strategic planning.

- **Results-based management, monitoring and evaluation.** UN and OECD frameworks since the 1990s have stressed the importance of applying a results-based approach to development strategies and policies. This was made explicit in the MDG framework and OECD guidelines. At the same time, the results-based management paradigm (distinct from a traditional operational approach that focuses on inputs and outputs, rather than outcomes) highlights the role of monitoring and evaluation as a key to successful development policies, and this central role of results-based M&E has been evident in all relevant frameworks in the last two decades. Successful M&E, for its part, requires quality information from statistical systems at all levels of decision making, which is seen as an important challenge for sustainable development.
- **Knowledge management and evidence-based policymaking.** Since Stockholm, there has been a call in subsequent frameworks for policies to be better informed by knowledge from science and technology and academic communities, among other groups of experts, so that they can provide solutions for economic, social and environmental development. In addition to suggesting a strengthening of science, technology and innovation systems, this suggests a focus on what would later be widely known as evidence based policymaking, that is, policymaking that “uses the best available research and information on program results to guide decisions at all stages of the policy process and in each branch of government.” (Pew-McArthur 2014) Knowledge management becomes, therefore, crucial for sustainable development, as it is necessary to clearly convey available evidence on practices and lessons to a wide variety of development actors. This has been made explicit especially since Agenda 21.

3. General Principles for Policymaking in the 2030 Agenda

The 2030 Agenda is set out officially in the UN’s 2015 document Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which is complemented by the indicators framework found in the 2016 Report of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators. As a plan of action for sustainable development, the 2030 Agenda’s results framework, means of implementation, and follow-up and review guidelines propose a distinctive approach to policymaking that is integral to realizing an ambitious long-term vision. While the UN’s Transforming Our World text recognizes that “there are different approaches, visions, models and tools available to each country, in accordance with its national circumstances and priorities, to achieve sustainable development” (UN 2015: 16) not all means to achieving the agreed SDGs and targets are considered equally relevant by the UN in these documents.

There are several general principles for policymaking in the 2030 Agenda—both explicit and implicit—just as in the UN global development frameworks that preceded it. Moreover, these basic guidelines for bringing about global transformation should not be seen as optional for those pursuing the SDGs: “this Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals and targets, including the means of implementation, are universal, indivisible and interlinked” (UN 2015: 34). In different forms, this mandatory indivisibility is repeated five times in the 2015 document, and guidelines for UN country teams in helping governments to mainstream the SDGs in national planning and strategies highlight the need to maintain the agenda’s integrity as an imperative (UNDG 2015).

First, this section of the paper succinctly reviews how different groups of actors are perceiving the 2030 Agenda in terms of its guidance for policymaking, since its adoption in 2015. Then—considering current perceptions and the general principles for sustainable development policymaking that were identified in the main frameworks that influenced the 2030 Agenda—it analyzes which principles are indeed present in the current framework, and in what form.

3.1 Perspectives on the 2030 Agenda as a Framework for Policymaking

Documents from the UN, OECD, other international development actors, and academia generally agree that adopting the 2030 Agenda and pursuing the SDGs require changes in how policies are made, at the national and subnational level (Alcalde 2017). However, there are different outlooks on what those changes imply exactly, and on what types of challenges come with them. In addition to analyzing documents from UN, other international development cooperation bodies, and academia, some key stakeholders on 2030 Agenda implementation were interviewed in Peru in order to complement the literature review.

3.1.1 Perspectives from the United Nations

Since 2015, different UN agencies and bodies have elaborated on the implications of the 2030 Agenda for policymaking. The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) recognizes that the 2030 Agenda’s transformative nature requires “fundamental changes in the way policymaking takes place in countries, rather than simply an alignment of resources and development cooperation with targets” (UNDESA 2015: 5). Moreover, comparing the SDGs to their predecessors, the MDGs, UNDP has stated that “the SDGs differ in their insistence, not just on technical fixes and financing, but also on doing things differently” (UNDP 2016: 2).

What exactly does this fundamental change in policymaking entail? In addition to maintaining the overall plan of action's integrity, UN documents discussing the 2030 Agenda continue to especially highlight the need for policy integration in each country. Integrating policies is seen as the key policymaking challenge posed by the multidimensional nature of the 2030 Agenda, across its different dimensions, sectors, and levels of implementation (UNDESA 2016b). It is also a key governance challenge in attaining the SDGs (UNDESA 2015). In UN documents, policy integration for the 2030 Agenda does not only refer to an integrated perspective on the three dimensions of sustainable development, but should have three key characteristics, according to UNDESA: focus on the long-term, go beyond monetary cost-benefit analyses and focus on outcomes and impact, and engage a wide range of stakeholders. Thus, it is also closely related to strategic planning, results-based management and participation, among other aspects.

The United Nations Development Group has designed a common approach for supporting national 2030 Agenda implementation, which is known by the acronym MAPS (Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support). MAPS provides eight guidance or practice areas to help governments leave behind "business as usual" approaches, and these provide clues as to what aspects of policymaking should be strengthened or modified. The MAPS areas include: applying multi-stakeholder approaches; reviewing plans and adapting the SDGs to national contexts; creating horizontal policy coherence; monitoring, reporting and accountability; achieving vertical policy coherence; financing and budgeting for the future, and assessing risk and fostering adaptability (UNDG 2015, UN 2016, UNDG 2017).

Finally, assessing the need for public administration capacity building for attaining the SDGs, former UNDP Administrator Helen Clark (UNDESA-UNDP 2016) mentioned that governments should be able to achieve the following: translate the global goals into national and local programming; engage a wide range of national and local stakeholders in policy design and implementation; monitor and evaluate progress through data collection and analysis; strengthen evidence based policy-making, and include the voices of vulnerable and marginalized people in policymaking, as well as foster accountability and trust in the public sector.

Therefore, recent UN discussions on the 2030 Agenda as a policymaking framework are highlighting several principles for policymaking, including most of the key principles that had been gradually introduced since the 1970s, from policy integration and participation to strategic planning and results-based management.

3.1.2 Perspectives from the OECD

The OECD also views the 2030 Agenda as a framework that is qualitatively different from the MDGs and which requires new ways of policymaking and strengthened policy capacities. In December 2016, this organization created its own Action Plan for supporting SDG attainment, stressing the need for greater policy coherence, as well as effective policies that are based on evidence. Among the areas prioritized for providing OECD policy expertise are: enhancing policy and institutional coherence, including capacities for identifying policy trade-offs; knowledge and data sharing; aligning national development strategies to SDGs, and considering the role of subnational actors.

The OECD publication *Better Policies for Sustainable Development 2016: A New Framework for Policy Coherence* (OECD 2016) states that:

The implementation of the 17 integrated SDGs and 169 associated targets requires whole-of-government approaches, strengthened co-ordination... It also calls upon all countries to “enhance policy coherence for sustainable development” (PCSD) which is an integral part of the means of implementation (SDG target 17.14). Policy coherence is critical to capitalize on synergies among SDGs and targets, between different sectoral policies, and between diverse actions at the local, regional, national and international levels. It is a central policy tool to inform decision-making for managing potential trade-offs and inconsistencies among economic, social and environmental policy objectives, to consider trans-boundary and inter-generational impacts, and take into account enabling or disabling factors, as well as the role of different actors (OECD 2016: 3).

Also in 2016, the OECD introduced the Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development (PCSD) Framework, in order update the policy coherence approach that had been in place for the MDGs. It aims to provide practical support in adapting institutional mechanisms, policymaking processes and practices to implement the SDGs in a coherent manner. During the MDG period, policy coherence for development (PCD) focused on “avoiding or minimizing the negative spill-over effects of various policies on the development prospects of developing countries” (OECD 2016: 19), while PCSD goes further and moves towards a partnership approach based on “win-win” solutions. Moreover, PCSD:

will be fundamental for fostering synergies between economic, social and environmental policies in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and take into account more systematically the effects of policies on the well-being of people living in other countries as well as of future generations (OECD 2016: 19).

Applying PCSD involves several key principles found in UN frameworks, as it should help governments to:

i) fully engage the whole government [...]; ii) have the mandate and capacity to manage policy tensions, trade-offs and synergies across sectors and between domestic and international policies; iii) ensure a more systematic consideration of the effects of policies ex ante, during and ex post; iv) involve key stakeholders particularly CSOs and the private sector, and v) mobilize the national installed capacity for strengthening monitoring and reporting systems” (OECD 2016: 20).

3.1.3 Perspectives from International Development Actors

The group of twenty major global economies (G20) has been especially active in establishing spaces and guidelines for supporting 2030 Agenda implementation. The G20 Action Plan on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted in 2016, declared the G20’s intention to align their work with the objectives of the 2030 Agenda and the 17 SDGs. One prioritized area for this is helping to create a global enabling environment for sustainable development, including aspects of trade and economic growth. In general, the plan reaffirms the universality of the 2030 Agenda, its transformative, indivisible and integrated nature, the importance of leaving no one behind, the dignity of every person on the planet, and people-centered sustainable development.

The G20 has also published a set of High Level Principles on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda, some of which are directly relevant to national policymaking. These include implementing the 2030 Agenda domestically according to national priorities, needs and capacities; recognizing the importance of sustainable development in all its dimensions (economic, environmental and social) in a balanced and integrated manner; integrating sustainable development into domestic policies and plans as well as international development efforts, and achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. In its support for SDG implementation in each country, G20 favors evidence-based practices, strategic planning, engagement of multiple stakeholders, and strengthened accountability.

The World Bank's Country Development Diagnostics Post-2015 framework (Gable et al. 2015) recognizes that individual countries face the challenge of translating the SDGs into "feasible strategies with clear targets and specific policies based on country circumstances and initial conditions, and linked to country priorities". However, although the World Bank has a close, treaty-based relation with the UN group, its perspective on the 2030 Agenda as a framework for policymaking is somewhat different. Recent publications do not highlight the need for comprehensive changes in how policies are made in each country but, rather, the need to continue strengthening areas of problem solving and capacity-building. In line with its role as a development finance institution, for the Bank these include working with the private sector to finance physical and human capital development, service delivery, the use and availability of quality data, monitoring and evaluation, and evidence based implementation (World Bank Group 2017). Nevertheless, while the overall outlook at the World Bank is more "business as usual" than the UN's, the guidelines for action within these areas do reflect principles of inclusiveness, participation, policy integration, and gender equality.

There are other important actors in international development that are actively studying 2030 Agenda perspectives but are not yet focusing on how policymaking must change in each country. For example, the United Kingdom's Overseas Development Institute's (ODI) Flagship Report on the 2030 Agenda recognizes the importance of the SDGs as "the closest humanity has come to agreeing a common agenda for a truly inclusive future where no one is left behind" (Nicolai et al. 2015: 12) and identifies a transformative agenda ahead that will require revolutionary change and even the reversal of current trends if SDGs are to be reached. However, there is no focus on principles for formulating new policies in each sector or across sectors.

In contrast, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC, part of the UN group) considers the SDGs as representing a planning and monitoring tool that countries should adopt, nationally and locally, and which should help to transform policymaking towards greater sustainability, inclusiveness and long term perspective. It is assisting the countries of the region in integrating the SDGs into national strategies, development plans, budgets and statistical systems (CEPAL 2017). It has proposed to align all public policies with the 2030 Agenda to achieve sustainable and inclusive development.

3.1.4 Perspectives from International Experts and Academia

A review of articles from academia and experts reveals a diverse range of views on the 2030 Agenda as a framework for policymaking. Some, such as Costanza et al. (2016), even consider that in effect the agenda provides no significant guidance on how to achieve the goals or how they are interconnected, “including their synergies and trade-offs in contributing to overall human and ecosystem well-being” (Costanza et al. 2016: 20). Other critical views include those that consider the 2030 Agenda cannot guide policymaking properly because it starts out from an incorrect conception of sustainable development; Holden et al. (2016) reject the three-pillar model that seeks to balance social, environmental and economic targets and suggest that “the moral imperatives of needs, equity and limits should guide policy-making” (Holden et al. 2016: 2).

Stevens and Kanie (2016), on the other hand, consider that the SDGs do not define concrete implementation methods but, in doing so, promote creating thinking and application in the implementation stage. Fukuda-Parr (2016) sees some risks in this and highlights the need for national implementation of the 2030 Agenda to maintain the transformative nature of global guidelines. According to this author, there is a risk that the most transformative goals and targets would be neglected in implementation through selectivity, simplification, and national adaptation. First, selectivity could lead to neglect of goals and targets that would address more complex, structural issues. Second, there are intangible qualitative objectives of equitable and sustainable development that have led to a complex language in the 2030 Agenda, and there is a risk in countries attempting to simplify this language. Finally, the process of national adaptation is a risk in itself, insofar as national governments could choose to be less ambitious and avoid addressing the political causes of poverty and inequality.

Stafford-Smith et al. (2017) consider that the SDGs are significantly geared towards means of implementation, with 42 targets focused on this. While these authors consider that systemic implementation is encouraged by this, they also find that “the implementation targets are largely silent about interlinkages and interdependencies among goals” (Stafford-Smith et al. 2017: 912) which could undermine the agenda’s goal to be universal, indivisible, and interlinked. Among other things, this could lead to neglect long term outcomes and the rights of certain groups. From another perspective, Arts (2017) sees the SDGs as substantially rights-based in their guidelines, and finds that human rights have significant visibility the 2030 Agenda, the UN document that contains the SDGs and related targets.

3.1.5 Perspectives from Key Stakeholders in Peru

As part of the research project from which this working paper stems, several key stakeholders in the national implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Peru were interviewed in mid to late 2017. It should be noted that Peru is a country that has not only approved the 2030 Agenda at the international level, but also adopted the SDGs as official references for national and subnational planning and policymaking since 2016 (Gobierno del Peru 2017).

Among interviewees were the heads of the national planning agency (Centro Nacional de Planeamiento Estratégico, CEPLAN), the Decentralization Bureau (Secretaría de Descentralización), the Roundtable for Poverty Reduction (Mesa de Concertación para la Lucha contra la Pobreza, MCLCP, which is a state-civil society linking organization that practices consensus-based monitoring of key social policies and programs), the National Accord (Acuerdo Nacional, a forum that establishes long-term public policies, based on agreements between levels of government and key political and social actors), and the Resident Coordinator of the United Nations System, as well as other experts on national and subnational development policymaking. Among other topics, all of these informants were asked about their perceptions of the 2030 Agenda as a framework for policymaking at the country level.

While individual assessments of challenges and opportunities ahead were diverse, the general consensus among interviewees was that, indeed, SDGs implementation requires some adjustment of how development policies are conceived and carried out in Peru; that the 2030 Agenda clearly contains some principles for such policymaking, and that, while policymaking processes in a country like Peru are still not fully aligned with such principles, it shows progress in some cases.

It is interesting to note that the principles for sustainable development decision making that were identified in global frameworks are not entirely new to policymakers in Peru. Prior to the establishment of the 2030 Agenda, different reform processes—including the decentralization process that began in 2002—already had set most of the principles for policymaking found in international development frameworks as official guidelines for all levels of government. This is illustrated in Table 2, and it highlights how the principles for policymaking found in UN frameworks are those that are gradually becoming part of the mainstream of development practice around the world.

Table 2: Principles for Development Policymaking Officially Adopted in Peruvian Decentralization before the 2030 Agenda

Principles for development policymaking found in UN international frameworks	Also legal guidelines for decentralization in Peru?	Oldest relevant norms
Rights-based and inclusion	Y	Organic Law of Regional Governments (2002)
Gender equity	Y	Organic Law of Regional Governments (2002)
Policy integration (multidimensional approach)	Y	Organic Law of Regional Governments (2002)
Participation and vertical accountability	Y	Organic Law of Regional Governments (2002)
Results-based Management	Y	General Law of the National Budget System (2005) Instructions for Participatory Results-Based Budgeting (2010)
Evidence-based Policymaking	N	-
Strategic planning	Y	Organic Law of Regional Governments (2002)

Source: Own elaboration

The need to strengthen a territorial approach to policymaking is one particular factor that emerged in most interviews, and it could be understood as an additional, relevant principle for sustainable development policymaking. The policymaking challenges brought by the particularly complex, multi level governance system that is still under construction in Peru is a likely reason for focusing on this issue.

A territorial approach to development, which has been formally adopted in recent years by UN agencies like the Food and Agricultural Organization of the UN (FAO), suggests that sectoral approaches to policymaking, still relevant to MDGs, must give way to a multi-sectoral, multi-dimensional perspective on policymaking for any particular geographical area. Especially in the 21st century, this has been highlighted as relevant for rural development in Latin America, and more recently for 2030 Agenda implementation at the subnational level by such actors as the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments. “Territories”, from this perspective, are not just physical contexts or political-administrative units, but unique entities with social, economic and political features, among other dimensions of development: a territory is inclusive of “spaces, agents, markets and public intervention policies” (Sepúlveda et al. 2005: 1). Thus, a territorial approach to development policymaking may be considered highly pertinent to the policy integration that is essential to SDG implementation.

Three key stakeholders from the state, international cooperation and state-civil society coordination provided an illustrative sample of the range of interpretations of the 2030 Agenda as a policymaking framework among relevant actors in Peru. First, a top public official considered that implementing the 2030 Agenda implies analyzing long-term, sustainable development policies with a particular set of perspectives in mind, including strategic planning and foresight, participation, an integrated view of different policy sectors, and results-based management.

In a decentralized governance system like Peru's, from this view, pursuing the SDGs implies a need to strengthen coordination between levels of government and policy areas, as well as aligning plans with programs and budgeting processes. For this public official, as well for the majority of interviewees, adopting a territorial approach is crucial in a decentralized state with significant development gaps, and this requires looking at development challenges beyond political-administrative boundaries and being able to continually monitor and address local development gaps.

Second, for a top state-civil society coordination official, at a general level SDG implementation requires prioritizing an integrated approach to all dimensions of development—including the fourth political-institutional dimension that is not explicitly in the 2030 Agenda—and also being able to move beyond a sector-oriented approach to policymaking. It also requires localizing and owning the agenda; improving data from statistical and administrative systems; aligning SDG monitoring and evaluation with those of existing national and regional governance agreements, strengthening decentralization so that standardized, quality data on local conditions is made available and addressed by all levels of government and no one is left behind; and an active role of civil society that includes proposing solutions to development problems. The areas highlighted by this key actor also would require a renewed, territorial approach to policymaking, so that subnational governments can address problems that affect areas not limited to conventional, political-administrative divisions.

The third example is that of a top international cooperation official who considered that, although all countries assume the SDGs in a different way (even within Latin America), adopting the 2030 Agenda does imply a different approach to policymaking, especially in regards to the need to move beyond sectoral thinking. Two approaches that were particularly highlighted by this stakeholder were gender and human rights, and also that it is particularly important to be able to maintain these perspectives on all policy areas even as administrations change; in this sense, the 2030 Agenda cannot be understood without a rights-based approach. According to this official, other key, cross-cutting considerations when implementing the SDGs are: strengthening strategic planning;

ensuring important roles for subnational governments, civil society and the private sector; incorporating the 2030 Agenda in government plans at all levels; using the SDGs as a common language between sectors and levels of government; maintaining an integrated view of SDGs and not dividing them between sectors; aligning budgets with policies and plans; and being able to identify and address groups of greatest need in all policy areas. As with other interviewees among Peruvian stakeholders, there was an emphasis on the need for a more territorial way of thinking about development, transcending formal borders between regions and districts in order to achieve greater intergovernmental and intersectoral collaboration.

3.2 Unpacking the 2030 Agenda

The 2030 Agenda reaffirms “the outcomes of all major United Nations conferences and summits which have laid a solid foundation for sustainable development and have helped to shape the new Agenda” (UN 2015: 4). Thus, as one would expect, the general principles to guide sustainable development policymaking that were identified in previous relevant frameworks are also found, to different extents, in the Transforming Our World document and the 2030 Agenda indicator framework. Some, like a rights-based approach to public policy, are explicit in the 2030 Agenda (see Table 3), while others are more or less implicit in the framework’s approach and guidelines for implementation and follow up and review.

Table 3: General Principles for Policymaking that are Explicit in the 2030 Agenda

General principles for policymaking	Evidence in <i>Transforming Our World</i>
Policy integration and coherence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The “interlinkages and integrated nature of the Sustainable Development Goals are of crucial importance in ensuring that the purpose of the new Agenda is realized” (2). Furthermore, “(each) Government will also decide how these aspirational and global targets should be incorporated into national planning processes, policies and strategies. It is important to recognize the link between sustainable development and other relevant ongoing processes in the economic, social and environmental fields” (13).
Participation, accountability and partnerships with nongovernment actors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “We are determined to mobilize the means required to implement this Agenda through a revitalized Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, based on a spirit of strengthened global solidarity, focused in particular on the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable and with the participation of all countries, all stakeholders and all people” (2). - Target 16.7: Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels - Regarding follow-up and review: “A robust, voluntary, effective, participatory, transparent and integrated follow-up and review framework will make a vital contribution to implementation” (30). - Also, an emphasis on vertical accountability mechanisms, as the agenda “will promote accountability to our citizens [...]” (30).
Rights-based approach and inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The “new Agenda is guided by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, including full respect for international law” and it is “grounded in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, international human rights treaties, the Millennium Declaration and the 2005 World Summit Outcome”. The document adds that “the Agenda is to be implemented in a manner that is consistent with the rights and obligations of States under international law” (United Nations General Assembly 2015: 6). - Follow-up and review processes will be: “open, inclusive, participatory and transparent for all people and will support reporting by all relevant stakeholders” (67).
Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “The systematic mainstreaming of a gender perspective in the implementation of the Agenda is crucial” (6). While there is a goal for gender equality (SDG 5), the gender approach should be considered in all SDGs.
Decentralization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “Governments and public institutions will ... work closely on implementation with regional and local authorities, subregional institutions, international institutions, academia, philanthropic organizations, volunteer groups and others” (11).

Source: Own elaboration based on UN 2015.

There are three general principles that were found in previous, relevant frameworks and are also found in the 2030 Agenda, although in an implicit manner: strategic planning, results-based management and evidence-based policymaking.

The first—strategic, long-term planning—is alluded to throughout the 2030 Agenda, and the 2030 Agenda itself is defined as a “plan of action”. However, a strategic planning approach, which is not necessarily the same as plainly “planning”, is not explicitly recommended for member states. Strategic planning is only mentioned explicitly when describing the UN’s role, as the 2030 Agenda stresses “the importance of system-wide strategic planning, implementation and reporting in order to ensure coherent and integrated support to the implementation of the new Agenda by the United Nations development system” (UN 2015: 34).

Nevertheless, one can consider this to be an implicit principle because SDG implementation is described as a long-term enterprise that aligns priorities with expected future trends and is guided by a vision and goals (a central feature of strategic planning); national strategies to 2030 for attaining SDGs are explicitly encouraged, and planning/plans/plan are mentioned frequently (17 times) throughout Transforming Our World. Designing and implementing national sustainable development strategies that consider this global plan of action and the SDGs is encouraged by this framework in the following manner:

We encourage all Member States to develop as soon as practicable ambitious national responses to the overall implementation of this Agenda. These can support the transition to the Sustainable Development Goals and build on existing planning instruments, such as national development and sustainable development strategies, as appropriate (UN 2015: 33).

These processes are expected to vary in each country, as each government “will ... decide how these aspirational and global targets should be incorporated into national planning processes, policies and strategies” (UN 2015: 13).

Second, universal, time-bound and goal-based international objectives like the SDGs aim to keep action focused on outcomes and results, and should be seen as an application of lessons learned from implementing Result-Based Management (RBM), at least partially. RBM is a principle drawn from new public management approaches that has been officially adopted by the UN (Bester 2016). The intimate relation between UN global development goals and RBM was already widely perceived in the MDG

era, and as Hulme (2007) pointed out: “RBM was applied to the MDGs in a very direct fashion. At times goals, targets and indicators were screened for how ‘SMART’ they were and judgments made on RBM principles impacted directly on MDG form and content” (Hulme 2007: 17). The same is also true for the SDGs, and guidelines for follow-up and review are in line with RBM principles. Governments are called upon to carry out follow-up and review processes at the national, regional and global levels, in terms of progress made in implementing the goals and targets until 2030, considering indicators that are largely oriented towards development outcomes, rather than inputs and outputs.

A third general principle that is implicit in the 2030 Agenda is the need for policymaking to be evidence-based. Evidence based policymaking (EBPM) gained relevance in the 1990s, also as part of the new public management approaches, and it aims to base decision making on rigorous reviews of quantitative or qualitative evidence of what works and what does not. By linking decision makers with the work of academics and experts, it seeks to enhance government effectiveness and efficiency, foster innovation, and strengthen accountability, all elements that are addressed in the 2030 Agenda. The UN, World Bank and OECD are among the organizations that have expressly promoted EBPM in developing countries in recent decades, through different programs and projects (Milani 2009). The emphasis on follow-up and review processes that are “rigorous and based on evidence” is one aspect that points to the importance of knowledge and evidence in SDG policymaking, as do several mentions of “lessons learned,” “best practices,” or “mutual learning” regarding implementation and follow-up and review.

Capacities for knowledge management are closely linked to EBPM, and the 2030 Agenda does explicitly address an aspect of this. The need to strengthen national statistical capacities in order to properly carry out follow up and review and for improved decision making is highlighted:

Quality, accessible, timely and reliable disaggregated data will be needed to help with the measurement of progress and to ensure that no one is left behind. Such data is key to decision-making. Data and information from existing reporting mechanisms should be used where possible (UN 2015: 12).

The territorial approach to development, which interviewed stakeholders in Peru highlighted (see previous subsection), could also be interpreted as an implicit principle in the 2030 Agenda texts, and this could be supported by the evidence of the explicit

policy integration and decentralization principles that have already been described. However, it has not been a feature of guidelines in previous global frameworks for sustainable development.

4. Areas for Further Research and Conclusions

4.1 Areas for Further Research

Having identified eight general principles for sustainable development policymaking that are found in the 2030 Agenda—a framework that is set to influence national development policies around the world for the next decade and beyond—some important questions emerge that could orient further research on this topic.

Are policymakers and public institutions capable of applying these principles? Capacity building is a key challenge, and adequately applying any of these principles requires some basic training, information and often technology. While the 2030 Agenda emphasizes the need to strengthen national statistical systems, many other areas for capacity building can be clearly anticipated in order to apply strategic planning, results-based management, evidence-based policymaking, and others. Diagnosing needs for capacity building and identifying best practices and lessons learned in building capacities in each of these areas should be valuable areas of research for 2030 Agenda implementation. Even after capacities are built, however, questions remain regarding mechanisms for fully integrating these principles into policymaking processes.

Are policymakers and public institutions willing to apply these principles? Applying these cross-cutting principles is not a purely technical challenge. Politics may be very relevant when considering the prospects for policymaking that is rights-based and considers gender equity in more conservative countries, for example. Also, participation and accountability may not be easily expanded in certain political contexts that are not fully democratic. Political analyses of different avenues for SDG implementation would be a relevant area of research in this respect, as well as mapping political viability of certain SDG-related policy reforms.

This area of research could raise other, related questions: Is the application of these principles really necessary in order to pursue the SDGs? Analyzing progress and implementation patterns for the 2030 Agenda could conceivably reveal that desirable

outcomes may be achieved without attending to some of principles that are part of the SDG results framework, means of implementation and follow-up and review mechanisms. And, on the other hand, it would be important to know how states ensure that different sectors and levels of government that these principles are followed: What rules are in place to ensure sustainable development policymaking? Which of these are successful?

How do these principles translate to different levels of government? The 2030 Agenda recognizes subnational governments as important actors in the achievement of the SDGs, and decentralization is an explicit principle for policymaking. However, political contexts, intergovernmental relations, resources and capacities are different at each level of government, as well as relations with civil society and private actors. Research on local and regional implementation of the SDGs could consider how different approaches to policymaking yield particular outcomes at the subnational level, in terms of the 2030 Agenda results framework.

Are there other general principles that are relevant for certain countries? As the subsection regarding Peruvian stakeholders illustrates, it is possible that decision makers in national contexts interpret the 2030 Agenda as containing other, implicit general guidelines for policymaking. Case studies of implementation in different national contexts, beyond standard reports, could include such research questions.

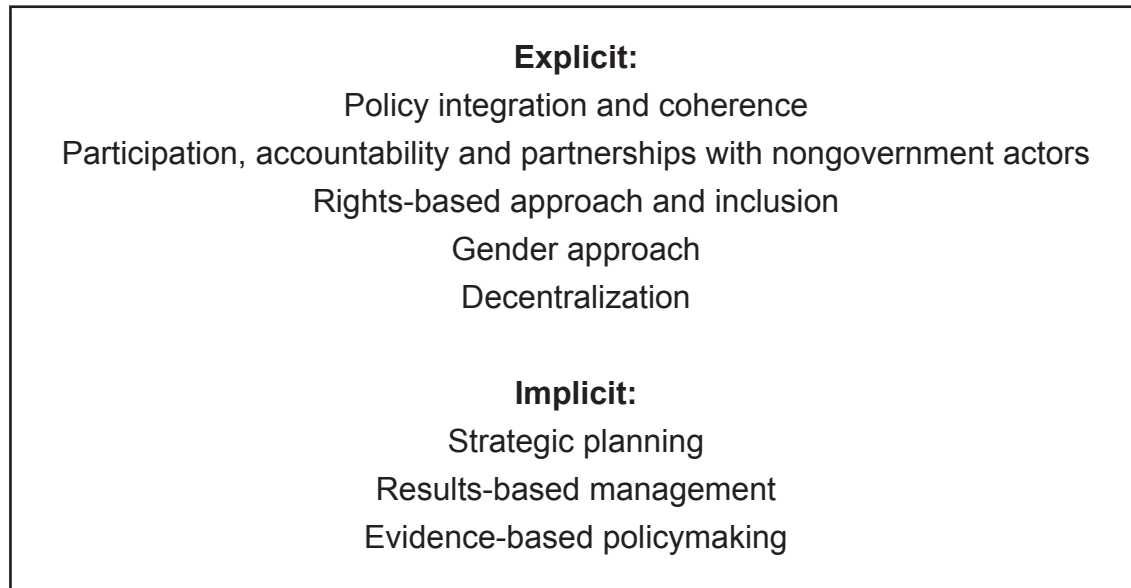
4.2 Conclusions

This working paper has argued that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development should be considered a comprehensive plan of action that countries voluntarily adopt and localize, rather than a set of global goals and targets to be implemented as each country sees fit. Therefore, it also serves as a policymaking framework that is relevant at the national and subnational level, and the challenges of achieving its 17 goals and 169 targets are only fully understood in light of such a framework.

Examining its different sections in light of previous frameworks and expert assessments, one can unpack the 2030 Agenda's means of implementation and follow-up and review mechanisms to reveal eight general principles for policymaking that are relevant to any SDG or policy sector. These principles range from rights-based and gender approaches, on the one hand, to strategic planning and results-based management, on the other hand (see Figure 1). As analyzed in this paper, these have been gradually incorporated into the discourse of UN and OECD global development frameworks,

from the 1972 Stockholm Conference to the adoption of the 2030 Agenda in 2015, and including Agenda 21, the OECD's International Development Goals, and the Millennium Declaration.

Figure 1. Eight General Principles for Sustainable Development Policymaking in the 2030 Agenda



All of these principles are also, to varying degrees, approaches that have been widely embraced and adopted as guidelines for development practice by key international development actors in recent decades—including the UN System—as well as by institutions in many countries that are now implementing the 2030 Agenda. That is, these principles are now firmly in the mainstream of development theory and practice. However, in many contexts they have not yet been fully integrated into policymaking processes that are relevant to the 2030 Agenda, and adopting them may involve significant capacity-building and political challenges that are still to be assessed.

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About trAndes

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trAndeS seeks to create and promote knowledge that can contribute to the realization of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals in the Andean Region. It focuses its efforts linking two dimensions: sustainable development as addressed by the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that the United Nations established for the year 2030, and the serious socioeconomic, sociopolitical and socioecological inequalities that persist in the Andean region. Our goal is to identify how these inequalities present challenges to achieving the SDGs and how progress toward the SDGs can contribute to reduction of these inequalities.

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