



Legal
&
Economic
Empowerment
Global
Network

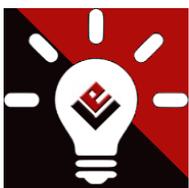
SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
GOALS



A *pro bono* initiative of
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LEEG-net: a global *pro bono* initiative leveraging legal innovation and empowerment towards realizing the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

LEEG-net (Legal and Economic Empowerment Global Network - <https://www.leeg-net.org/>) is a multi-disciplinary network of economists, IT/ business consultants and lawyers representing a number of major legal systems of the world. It is a registered partnership for the UN Global Goals – URL: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/partnership/?p=13929#>

LEEG-net plays a catalytic role in implementing the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Guided by a business-friendly and human rights-based approach, LEEG-net’s mission is to promote legal innovation and empowerment of people including the poor and disadvantaged groups in advancing the 17 SDGs and their 169 targets.

Legal innovation and empowerment in accelerating the SDGs

According to LEEG-net, the focus on legal innovation in the development realm is an ongoing quest for new strategies and ways of thinking about the role of law in promoting inclusive growth and equality. The focus on legal empowerment is an attempt to make the law work for the poor and disadvantaged groups by enhancing their capacity to resist poverty and get over it. LEEG-net’s work attempts to link the two themes by virtue of their shared importance in finding solutions to sustainable development challenges.



Empowerment of people including the poor and vulnerable groups is a human rights-based multi-dimensional and multi-disciplinary (i.e. legal, economic, technological, etc) approach to development. “*Empowerment is the process of enhancing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and then transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes*” (World Bank, 2001. World Development Report 2000-2001 Attacking Poverty. Washington, DC).

Empowerment of people including the poor, women, girls and other vulnerable persons is central to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Goals 5 and 10.2 explicitly deal with empowerment.

Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

5.b Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women

5.c Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of Gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels

Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries

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.

Legal empowerment

“Legal empowerment is rooted in a human rights based approach to development, which recognizes that poverty results from disempowerment, exclusion and discrimination. Thus legal empowerment fosters development through empowering and strengthening the voices of individuals and communities, starting at the grassroots and from within” (Report of the Secretary General of United Nations (2009) prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 63/142 on the legal empowerment of the poor and eradication of poverty).

Economic empowerment

"Economic empowerment is the capacity of poor women and men to participate in, contribute to and benefit from growth processes on terms which recognize the value of their contributions, respect their dignity and make it possible for them to negotiate a fairer distribution of the benefits of growth. Economic empowerment means people thinking beyond immediate survival needs and thus able to recognize and exercise agency and choice" (R. Eyben et al, Conceptualizing empowerment and the implications for pro poor growth. A paper for the DAC Poverty Network Sep, 2008).

Technological empowerment

LEEG-net adopts the working definition for 'technological empowerment' as the actions or process of strengthening the capacity of all people either individually or collectively to use the technology including information and communication technologies to advance their rights and interests, to improve their lives and livelihoods, and to alleviate or escape poverty.

According to the 2030 Agenda, the Agenda itself, and the Sustainable Development Goals and targets including the means of implementation, are universal, indivisible and interlinked (paragraph 71). In such a context, the multidimensional role of empowerment can be considered as a universal means of implementing the SDGs.

Human rights foundation of the SDGs

As stated in the 2030 Agenda (paragraph 10), *“The new Agenda is guided by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, including full respect for international law. It is grounded in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, international human rights treaties, the Millennium Declaration and the 2005 World Summit Outcome. It is informed by other instruments such as the Declaration on the Right to Development.”*

Each of the 17 SDGs and their 169 targets correspond with provisions of either one or several international human rights treaties or instruments. This "human rights foundation" of the SDGs paves the way for, and justifies the adoption of a rights-based approach to implement the seventeen Goals while addressing the *“greatest global challenge of eradicating poverty”* as stated in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

What is a human rights-based approach to development?

It is increasingly recognized that human rights are essential to achieve sustainable development ([UN OHCHR](#)). A human rights-based approach to development seeks to achieve development objectives by following a legal roadmap. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the two International Covenants adopted in 1966 respectively on Civil and Political Rights, and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights along with other human rights instruments operative at the international, regional and national levels constitute the legal roadmap of a rights-based approach to development.

“A human rights-based approach is a conceptual framework for the process of human development that is normatively based on international human rights standards and operationally directed to promoting and protecting human rights. [...] Under a human rights-based approach, the plans, policies and processes of development are anchored in a system of rights and corresponding obligations established by international law. This helps to promote the sustainability of development work, empowering people themselves—

especially the most marginalized—to participate in policy formulation and hold accountable those who have a duty to act” ([UN Practitioners’ Portal on Human Rights Based Approaches to Programming](#)).



“Legal empowerment is the process through which the poor become protected and are enabled to use the law to advance their rights and their interests, vis-à-vis the state and in the market ...”

- UN Commission on Legal Empowerment of the Poor (2005- 2008)

The role of Social Protection in achieving the SDGs

Social protection, or social security, is a set of policies and programs designed to reduce and prevent poverty and vulnerability across the life cycle (ILO, [World Social Protection Report 2017–19](#), p.2). Social protection is a universal human right which is recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 22) and several other international human rights treaties including the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights - ICESCR (Article 9 and 10.2), Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination – ICERD (Article 5), Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women -CEDAW (Article 11), and the Convention on the Rights of the Child – CRC (Articles 26, 18.2, and 20).

Social protection helps create the enabling environment for economic empowerment of the poor and disadvantaged groups. For more information, please visit "[Access to Social Protection: the Springboard for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals](#)" (blog post) and [A2SP \(Access to Social Protection\)](#) - a global initiative of LEEG-net.

The way forward: “SDG Temple of Justice” – a business-friendly and rights-based blueprint to advance the SDGs

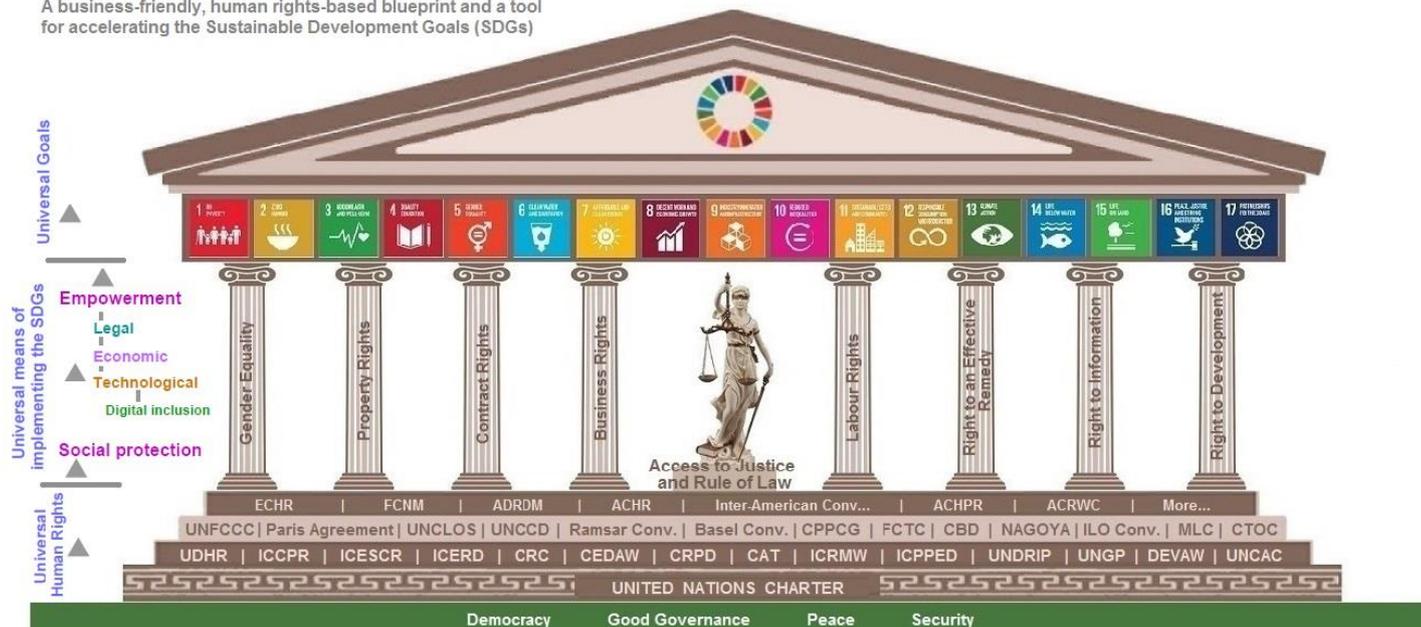
After carefully studying the challenges facing most developing countries that keep them out of track to achieve the SDGs by 2030, the LEEG-net team by using their foresight and innovation skills have developed an outline of a blueprint -- the “SDG Temple of Justice”. This blueprint helps address the “greatest global challenge of eradicating poverty” by leveraging the human rights foundation of the SDGs through legal, economic and technological empowerment of the poor and disadvantaged groups. An infographic of the *SDG Temple of Justice* (<https://www.leeg-net.org/sdg-temple-of-justice>) visualizes the process of adopting a business-friendly and human rights-based holistic approach to tackle the challenge of eradicating poverty towards achieving the SDGs.

LEEG-net adopts this blueprint in implementing the following three *pro bono* projects developed in consultation with national SDG policy makers of several developing countries:

- a) **Action 4 Digital Inclusion (A4DI)** (<https://www.leeg-net.org/a4di>) – A4DI campaigns for promoting digital inclusion of people living in developing countries as a universal means of accelerating the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);
- b) **SDG-enabling Law Reform Drive** (<https://www.leeg-net.org/sdgs-enabling-law-reform-drive>); and
- c) **Access 2 Social Protection Global Initiative (A2SP)** (<https://www.leeg-net.org/a2sp>).

The SDG Temple of Justice

A business-friendly, human rights-based blueprint and a tool for accelerating the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)



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The SDG Temple of Justice - mobile app



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Get involved

Lawyers, economists, academics and professionals in other disciplines, and organizations from anywhere in the world who are interested in learning more about LEEG-net's *pro bono* work and / or interested in joining LEEG-net as a pro bono consultant, are kindly invited to fill-out and send [this form](#). In the alternative, you can contact us via info@lexecongroup.com or leegnetwork@gmail.com