



# UPES

**CENTRE FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION**

**EMBEDDING SDGs INTO ORGANISATIONAL LEADERSHIP AT  
MEGASIZE COLLEGE TO DRIVE SUSTAINABLE SUPPLY CHAINS:  
AN INDIVIDUAL ACTION RESEARCH**

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## **AN ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION OF**

**ABSOLOM MUKONYO, for the Master of Business Administration degree in LOGISTICS & SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT, presented on 11/10/2019, to University of Petroleum & Energy Studies, Dehradun**

**TITLE: EMBEDDING SDGs INTO ORGANISATIONAL LEADERSHIP AT MEGASIZE COLLEGE TO DRIVE SUSTAINABLE SUPPLY CHAINS: AN INDIVIDUAL ACTION RESEARCH**

Despite research on green supply chain management exponentially increasing and maturing after 2013, research findings show that the current research on green supply chain management has not yet formed a core author group and quite a few authors have reported some influential literature. On the other hand, governments and consumers are calling for greening activities in the supply chain and are demanding more business responsibility for the environment, and more environmentally friendly products. Business still face real challenges in crafting and implementing sustainability policies. Social and environmental sustainability remain peripheral in mainstream sustainability research. Thus sustainability, despite much talk about it, still lacks a practical application by many businesses. While the UN SDGs are a good starting point for sustainability policy crafting and implementation by businesses, there continues to be challenges on what a good sustainability policy should contain and measure.

This dissertation practically designs an SDG-driven sustainability policy for a real organisation using an individual action research approach by a procurement and supply chain professional which is validated by a team of procurement and supply chain professionals for approval by the board for practical application in the organisation.

The outcome of this individual action research, validated by an interpretive focus group analysis and evaluation, is a practical sustainability policy implementation by the organisation and used as a key basis for its supply chain performance.

## **DEDICATION**

For my parents who helped me dream big and different, and my wife and children whose presence encouraged me to pursue my dreams, show them the way and finish everything I desired to finish including finishing this dissertation.

## EPIGRAPH

*“Your money is power, so be aware of the products you're buying and the companies you're supporting to make sure you're helping the companies that are leading the way in sustainability”.*

-Gretchen Bleiler

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am using this opportunity to express my gratitude to everyone who supported me throughout the course of this MBA dissertation journey. I am thankful for their aspiring guidance, invaluable constructive criticism and friendly advice during the research work. I am sincerely grateful to them for sharing their truthful and illuminating views on several issues related to the project.

I express my warm thanks to Mr. Golden Chikari, a seasoned Fellow and Lecturer at Botho University, for his invaluable continuous guidance, assistance and insights from the start to finish of writing this dissertation. Our interactions made me think outside-the-box and see a bigger picture of the future. This dissertation would not have been possible without him.

Many thanks to the MCIPS Procurement & Supply professionals who made up this dissertation's focus group and made an immense contribution towards shaping up the sustainable policy which is a practical outcome of this dissertation. This outcome would not have been possible without them

A special thanks also to Professor David Poe of the University of Johannesburg, my PhD supervisor, for his academic inspiration and invaluable interactions which prepared me to handle this dissertation writing with academic rigor and confidence. He bolstered my specialisation in Procurement, Logistics and Supply Chain spurring me to become an MCIPS Chartered (CIPS, UK), a Consultant in Supply Chain (IoSCM, UK), a MILT (CILT, UK) all in one year!

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## PREFACE

The basis for this dissertation originally stemmed from my passion for developing practice-oriented and sustainable methods for managing the procurement and supply chain function. In truth, this has influenced the research approach to this study to be an individual action research based on what I do as a certified Chartered Procurement and Supply Professional as well as certified Consultant in Supply Chain. The desire is to produce some real solution to a real work-based problem rather than generating a merely theoretical outcome. It is my passion to develop real tools that will enhance supply chain and procurement professionals to better do their work by observing barriers to effective procurement and supply chain management and thinking outside-the-box to arrive at own innovative solutions that will enable them not only deliver added value and value for money for their organisations and entire supply chains but also give them satisfaction in realising their fullest potential and contribution to the Procurement and Supply profession and in the process lead in game-changing and inspiring future generations joining the profession.

The sustainability policy presented in Chapter 4 is done primarily by myself and validated by a team of professional certified Procurement and Supply Chain practising professionals, culminating into a work-based sustainability policy for my organisation. I designed it with a world-view that organisations can make their best contributions to the UN SDG 2030 agenda through embedding the UN' s 17 SDGs into their sustainability policies creating a better business world that furthers progressive social and environmental outcomes while allowing organisation to boost their economic sustainability.

This dissertation is thus original, unpublished, independent work by the author, A. Mukonyo (MCIPS Chartered, CSCM, MILT). It is an original outcome work-based product.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CIPS	Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply
CSCM	Consultant Member of Institute of Supply Chain Management
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IoSCM	Institute of Supply Chain Management, UK
MCIPS	Full Member of CIPS
MCIPS Chartered	Chartered Full Member of CIPS
MILT	Member of Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TBL	Triple Bottom Line [3 Ps i.e. Profit, People, Planet]
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UJ	University of Johannesburg, RSA

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### ***1.0 Introduction***

This study seeks to highlight what organisations' sustainability policies must contain using the United Nations' 17 Social Development Goals (SDGs). The purpose of this individual action research study is to craft a sustainability policy for an organisation as well as create sustainability Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) using the UN SDGs as an informing blueprint. Sustainability as a value is demonstrated in company policies and their day-to-day activities and behaviours. (CIPS, 2019: 3).

It is anticipated that the knowledge generated from this inquiry would afford new insights and so inform organisational sustainability policy crafting practice improvement as well as practical professional creation of sustainability Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for organisations' supply chain partners.

This research employed an individual action research methodology to illustrate the practical creation of a sustainability policy for a real organisation using the UN's 17 SDGs. This study studied the actual organisation where the researcher is a newly appointed supply chain manager which is facing challenges crafting a sustainability policy as well facing difficulty in creating sustainability key performance indicators for its supply chain.

This dissertation synopsis begins with an overview of the context and background that frames the study. Following this is the problem statement and the accompanying purpose statement, research objectives and research questions. Also included in this synopsis are the preliminary review of literature, research methodology, the need for the research, a description of sources of data, sampling, and expected study outcomes. The synopsis concludes with a list of preliminary bibliographic sources.

### ***2.0 Background and Context of the Proposed Study***

Governments and consumers are calling for greening activities in the supply chain and are demanding more business responsibility for the environment, and more environmentally friendly products (Gong, Xue, Zhao, Zolotova, Ji & Xu, 2019). Businesses are under immense pressure to cut down their carbon emissions (Deng & Liu, 2019: 1).

Research on green supply chain management is exponentially increasing and it matured after 2013 (Gong, Xue, Zhao, Zolotova, Ji & Xu, 2019). Yet the current research on green supply chain management has not yet formed a core author group and quite a few authors have reported some influential literature (Gong, Xue, Zhao, Zolotova, Ji & Xu, 2019) resulting in there not many influential references in the field. This, therefore, means that there is still much room for the development in the research of green supply chain management in the future (Gong, Xue, Zhao, Zolotova, Ji & Xu, 2019: 15).

(Gong, Xue, Zhao, Zolotova, Ji & Xu, 2019: 15) on recommending future research express the need for in-depth research focusing on the "issues of enhancing enthusiasm among green producers, increasing sales to achieve supply chain resource sharing and improving supply chain efficiency".

As the world economy rapidly develops, the increasing shortage of natural resources and the deterioration caused by pollution, and the problem of environmental protection have made countries around the world realise the importance of the environmental management systems resulting in them pushing an agenda for sustainability to increase organisational competitiveness and best sustainability institutional practices (Gong, Xue, Zhao, Zolotova, Ji & Xu, 2019).

Supply chain sustainability continues to evolve. There is not just pressure from communities but from the rise of supply chain legislation such as Modern Slavery Acts for companies to take more action in monitoring themselves and their supply chains.

Although there is increasing legislative and community pressure for businesses and their 4+- supply chains to be more sustainable (Deng & Liu, 2019; Gong, Xue, Zhao, Zolotova, Ji & Xu, 2019) business still face real challenges in crafting and implementing sustainability policies (Oelze et al., 2016; Oelze, 2017; Gouda & Saranga, 2018). Despite the availability of the UN Global Compact on Sustainable Development Goals, more precisely 17 of them and the outlining of leadership qualities to drive them, the challenge to create and implement practical sustainability policy and key performance indicators still remain common among businesses.

It is against this background that this study, therefore, seeks to use action research to create a sustainability policy and a sustainability key performance indicator document that is of immediate practical implication to address the challenge. It is this problem that this study seeks to address.

### ***3.0 Problem Statement***

Research indicates that crafting and implementation of sustainability policies in organisations and supply chains is a significant challenge for businesses (Oelze et al., 2016; Oelze, 2017; Gouda & Saranga, 2018), despite sustainability becoming a popular driver of organisation's success and a key supply chain competitive advantage factor. Hence, despite their desire to have and implement robust sustainability policies, organisations and their supply chains still face sustainability policy crafting challenge. Since there is still such a challenge, there is a need to better understand what organisations must include as key areas in their sustainability policies. It is anticipated that the United Nations' 17 social development goals (SDGs) can be used as a robust blueprint to inform what must be included in the organisations' sustainability policies to ensure they transform themselves and their supply chains into sustainability driven entities. There is little research on how the UN's 17 SDGs can guide and inform the building or crafting of implementable sustainability policies for organisations as well as crafting of sustainability Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for their supply chains. Thus the problem focuses on how organisations can use the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals as a good starting point to develop their sustainable policies that they will eventually implement in their business actions and subsequently in their supply chains to ensure all their supply chain partners adopt and comply with to ensure supply chains become sustainable and positively drive the SDG agenda. The problem also focuses on what should be contained in a sustainability policy anchored on and driven by the 17 SDGs.

### ***4.0 Purpose Statement***

The purpose of this individual action research is to identify what must be included in an organisations' sustainability policy as well as its sustainability Key Performance Indicators for its supply chain partners using the UN's 17 SDGs to ensure business organisations contribute to the UN 2030 social development agenda realisation.

### ***5.0 Research Objectives***

The general objective of this action research is to create an organisation's sustainability policy as well as sustainability key performance indicators for an organisation's supply chain partners.

The specific objectives of this study are to use the UN 17 SDGs

1. To assess the sustainability benefits for an organisation
2. To describe the five organisational leadership qualities that drive sustainability in an organisation that is pro-sustainability
3. To design an organisation's sustainability policy
4. To create sustainability Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for an organisation's supply chain partners SDGs.

### ***6.0 Research Questions***

To shed light on the problem and to address the research objectives, the following research questions are specifically addressed:

1. What is the importance of sustainability to an organisation and its entire supply chain?
2. Why do organisations have problems developing and implementing sustainability policies for themselves and their supply chains?
3. What five UN Global Compact based leadership qualities an organisation that intends to build its sustainability must demonstrate?
4. If the UN's 17 SDGs can be used as a sustainability policy crafting blueprint what then must an organisation's sustainability policy contain?
5. What must an organisation include as its sustainability Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) when evaluating its supply chain partners to ensure the entire supply chain positively contributes to the realisation of the UN SDGs agenda?

### ***7.0 Preliminary Literature Overview***

The literature is reviewed from four perspectives:

#### ***7.1 Definition of sustainability & Supply Chain Sustainability***

Sustainability is the ability to exist constantly and has generally come to be defined as the capacity for the biosphere and human civilisation to coexist. It is also being defined also as the process of people maintaining change in a balanced environment, in which the exploitation of resources, the direction of investments, the orientation of technological development and institutional change are all in harmony and enhance both current and future potential to meet human needs and aspirations Global Footprints Organisation (2015). Capra (2015) observes that for many in the field, sustainability is defined through three interconnected domains or pillars: environment, economic and social. Sustainability has evolved to be seen from a sustainable development agenda angle.



The Brundtland Report for the World Commission on Environment and Development (1987) which introduced the term of sustainable development, defined sustainable development as the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

The UN Global Compact (2015) defines supply chain sustainability as the “management of environmental, social and economic impacts and the encouragement of good governance practices, throughout the lifecycles of goods and services”. From this definition, it is clear that the “objective of supply chain sustainability is to create, protect and grow long-term environmental, social and economic value for all stakeholders involved in bringing products and services to market” (UN, 2015).

### *7.2 Benefits of Sustainability to buyers & Suppliers*

The BSR (2011) case studies report shows that investing in workplace improvement programs helps suppliers achieve higher labour productivity, through reduced staff turnover and absenteeism, enhanced worker retention, and a stronger ability to recruit, improved worker-management relations, cost savings, and increased competitiveness.

The report further notes key buyer benefits as buyer improved environmental footprint, stronger confidence in supply chain compliance, enhanced supply chain security, reduced supply chain cost like reduced buyers’ waste disposal costs over and above the same benefits as those cited for the supplier (BSR, 2011).

### *7.3 Organisational Actions that Satisfy the Leadership qualities that can drive the sustainability agenda among its supply chain partners*

The Blueprint for Leadership on the SDGs highlight five qualities that are necessary for business leaders to drive sustainability across its entire supply chain. These qualities are summarised as:

- (i) Intentional* – make SDGs an integral and deliberate part of the organisation' strategy-making SDGs part of the vision and long-term goals of the organisation. Top management must ensure the SDGs become a way in which workforce/staff and the entire supply chain are managed to contribute to SDs
- (ii) Ambitious* – the company must operate as if it is the best, focusing on the value chain – from suppliers to consumers as well as to a wider group of stakeholders. The company does extend beyond the financial impact to encompass impact on people, planet and prosperity, and beyond the boundaries of its own organisation. The company's ambition is to focus on actions that will deliver long term outcomes while ensuring short-term contributions to the SDGs.
- (iii) Consistency* – the company must be consistent in its actions and approaches across the various locations and ensures that these are adapted to contextual differences. The company must embed SDGs across its functions and exertional communities. The company ensures that there is consistency between what it says and what it does throughout the entire supply chain and communities. SDGs are embedded across functions and supply chains and underpin performance required to advance SDGs.
- (iv) Collaborative* – this means that the company must collaborate with all other actors, from civic society, government, local communities, academia, and

investors to other businesses in supporting SDGs. This means adopting a proactive collaborative and partnerships approach with others. The company publicly advocates SDG action

- (v) *Accountable* – the company acts lawfully and aligns its actions to international standards and norms even when these are fall short in its domestic law and may not be legally mandated in the countries where it operates. The company is transparent, proactively engages and seeks the view of stakeholders in both its actions and decisions. The company holds its actions fully accountable regarding people and planet

UN Global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) - the start of the collective journey to 2030 – informing the key details that must be contained in the sustainability policy and the Sustainability Key Performance Indicators in the supply chain.

The Sustainable Development Goals 2016 Report (UN, 2016) gives an overview of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals as:

Goal 1: No poverty

Goal 2: Zero hunger

Goal 3: Good health and well-being

Goal 4: Quality education

Goal 5: Gender equality

Goal 6: Clean water and sanitation

Goal 7: Affordable and clean energy

Goal 8: Decent work and economic growth

Goal 9: Industry, innovation and infrastructure

Goal 10: Reduced inequalities

Goal 11: Sustainable cities and communities

Goal 12: Responsible consumption and production

Goal 13: Climate action

Goal 14: Life below water

Goal 15: Life on land

Goal 16: Peace, justice and strong institutions

Goal 17: Partnerships for the Goals

Based on each of these goals, this means that in terms of application, as the UN 2016 Report advises, businesses must ensure their operations and those of their supply chain partners work to:

Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere

- Goal 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
- Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
- Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
- Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
- Goal 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
- Goal 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
- Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
- Goal 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation
- Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries – *(which will be replaced with supply chain)*
- Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
- Goal 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
- Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
- Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
- Goal 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss
- Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
- Goal 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development

#### *7.4 Application implications – Towards a sustainable practical policy and Key Performance Indicators*

It is based on these goals and their interpretation that the sustainability policy and key performance indicators will equally have a 17-point policy in the same order as a practical outcome.

#### **8.0 Research methodology Overview**

This study's aim is to improve organisational practice with regards to sustainability policy creation and implementation within and across the supply chain through the creation of a practical policy outcome. Due to the nature of the desired outcome, this research is thus an

action inquiry, a process that seeks to improve practice by moving between taking action in the field of practice and inquiring into it (Hine, 2013). Hence this study is typically conducted by the supply chain professional working in the supply chain department of the organisation being studied to solve a practical specific problem enabling it to make a meaningful immediate and practical contribution to the organisation and the larger supply chain sustainability body of knowledge.

Research has shown that organisations face challenges in designing and implementing sustainability policies such that there is a need for practising supply chain professional like this researcher to develop a practical solution to quickly address the challenges quickly and efficiently. The goal, therefore, is to create a simple, practical and repeatable process of iterative learning, evaluation and improvement to increasingly better policy and key performance indicators creation and implementation.

The action research here used follows a process that starts with the identification of the problem, followed by a collection of data on the problem, followed by organising, analysing and interpretation of the data, followed by developing a plan to address the problem, then implementation of the plan and evaluation of the action taken. Basically the process began by an observation (of the sustainability policy and key performance indicator creation challenge) , which prompted the researcher to think (look for blueprint for which the UN 17 SDGs document was very informative and valuable) and eventually act (design the sustainability policy and key performance indicators documents) in a way Stinger (2004: 4) described.

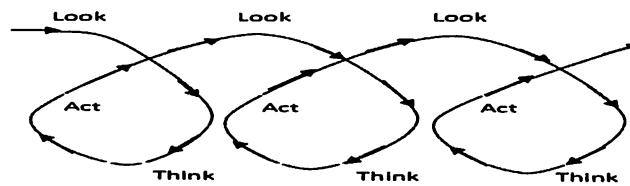


Figure 1: Action research helix (adapted from Stinger, 2004: 4)

In the look stage, the researcher gathered information by careful listening and observation of the problem. During the thinking stage, the researcher analysed the collected information to identify the important issues of the sustainability policy and key performance indicators creation challenges. In the act stage, the researcher then used what emerged from the information to devise solutions to the challenges. This process thus consolidates the definition of action research as an applied project where practitioners, using their own practical experiences, seek to effect transformations in their practices (Brown & Dowling, 2001:152; Ferrance, 2000).

Although the nature of this study prevented the researcher from using triangulation of data, a comprehensive analysis of the relevant UN 17 SDGs document informed the main areas to be contained in the sustainability policy and key performance indicators documents. Thus, document analysis of the UN 17 SDGs was done to inform the contents of the sustainability policy and key performance indicator documents which were subsequently created based on the document. To achieve validity, and confirmability a peer review by other supply chain practitioners and policy experts is used.

The value of participation and the capacity of research to address practical problems in a specific environment (Street, 2003) has been the main reason for using this individual action

research (Ferrance, 2000) which is within a critical paradigm and outcomes-based driven which makes it a piece of knowledge in action approach. Besides being participatory, the action research methods were used because it is developmental and responsive and allows the researcher to learn by doing making the researcher develop and test their conceptual model that can be transferrable to other contexts with similar issues. It is more credible and valid and allows the researcher to increase control of their practice through improvement (Greenwood & Levin, 2005).

Action research paradigm was also used because the study is situation-based and context-specific and because it is developing out of practioner reflection and interpretation. It is used because it improves practice.

### ***9.0 Rationale & Need for the research***

While research in sustainable supply chains is increasing and while the research points to the practical challenges in the crafting and implementation of the sustainability policies as well as development of a sustainability code of conduct for supply chain partners, little research is available on what must be included in a sustainability policy and supply chain code of conduct that has a global appeal and practicality. A well-crafted sustainability policy based on the universally agreed UN 17 SDGs is vital making the need for a practical work-based professional-driven action research quite needed to address this gap and to enhance the knowledge of how to best address the sustainability policy content challenge confronting organisations and their supply chain partners.

Since research begins when there is need to know something, carrying out a research study increases the understanding of the issue which is the subject matter of the research which provides with the information and knowledge needed for problem-solving and making decisions. Since action research is context and practice-based it is more applied for decision-making and problem-solving allowing it to make a situation change the prescription.

Although there is increasing legislative and community pressure for businesses and their supply chains to be more sustainable (Deng & Liu, 2019; Gong, Xue, Zhao, Zolotova, Ji & Xu, 2019) business still face real challenges in crafting and implementing sustainability policies (Oelze et al., 2016; Oelze, 2017; Gouda & Saranga, 2018). Despite the availability of the UN Global Compact on Sustainable Development Goals, more precisely 17 of them and the outlining of leadership qualities to drive them, the challenge to create and implement practical sustainability policy and key performance indicators still remain common among businesses.

The research findings are that the current research on green supply chain management has not yet formed a core author group and quite a few authors have reported some influential literature (Gong, Xue, Zhao, Zolotova, Ji & Xu, 2019) resulting in there not many influential references in the field. This, therefore, means that there is still much room for the development in the research of green supply chain management in the future (Gong, Xue, Zhao, Zolotova, Ji & Xu, 2019: 15).

It is this need for further research due to the lack of influential literature and core author group that spur this research. More specifically, the lack of enough practical sustainability policy development further motivates this action centred approach.

## ***10.0 Sources of data***

The primary sources of data for this research project are the UN 17 SDGs documents. These documents specifically include the UN (2016) *Sustainable Development Goals Report*, the UN *Blueprint for Business Leadership on the SDGs*, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) *Decent Work for The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, the United Nations Global Compact (2015) *Supply Chain Stainability: A Practical Guide for Continuous Improvement (2<sup>nd</sup> ed)*. These secondary sources are the main sources for the creation of the sustainability policy and the development of a supply chain code of conduct which will be the basis of the Key Performance Indicators document

Other data sources are published books and journals on sustainability in supply chains especially for establishing mainstream reasons echoed by research for sustainability policies and to look at the reasons why there are challenges with implementation of such policies. These are used to build the business case for sustainability in supply chains.

Sources regarding action research methodology are also consulted and cited for definitions and reasons why it is seen as an accepted and good approach to improving practice within real workplace contexts.

## ***11.0 Sampling***

The sampling of the (literature) sources was very purposeful and driven by the nature of this research outputs and outcomes. Purposeful sampling is used for the identification and selection of the sustainability information-rich. Precisely, criterion sampling is the one used for the implementation of this action research. Therefore, only sources experienced and knowledge-rich (Cresswell & Plano, 2011; Suri, 2011) with sustainability are deliberately selected as these sources are seen as having the ability to communicate experiences in articulate, expressive and reflective manner (Bernard, 2002). This makes the sampling non-probability based on the selective judgement of the researcher informed by the sustainability phenomenon interest. The organisation on which this study is done to improve is the supply chain researcher's workplace which was convenient. Purposive sampling has a low margin of error and saves time and money.

## ***12.0 Expected outcome***

The rationale for this study emanates from the researchers' desire to design to craft a broadly accepted and realistic practice-based sustainability policy and key performance indicators that an organisation can use in measuring the sustainability performance of its supply chain partners. So, it is expected that the two documents to emerge out of this action research are a usable sustainability policy and key performance indicators that an organisation can immediately use to improve its own sustainability performance practice and those of its supply chain partners. These documents are expected to encourage and help other business organisations to develop sustainability policies and measure supply chain partner performance in terms of meeting sustainability goals.

Increased understanding of how to use universally agreed documents such as those adopted by the United Nations may not only help other organisations become more innovative and proactive in broadening their approaches but also make their policy decisions more acceptance and international yet effectively and efficiently crafted by those working for them.

These expected outcomes will help supply chain professionals, students and academics to rethink better and easier ways to craft policies and performance documents that are more practical and less questioned while at the same time overcome the difficulties in creating such documents in a more effective and efficient way. They will foster learning by doing approach to supply chain management giving the outcomes a very practical implication and a strong problem-solving basis.

In a nutshell, the study outcomes include that it will expands the current state of sustainability in supply chains knowledge, yield new insights and lead to more research in sustainability policy and key performance indicators as well as influence better policy development and better business practices that will make businesses more sustainable and successful.

### 13.0 The Researcher

At the time of conducting this study, the researcher was a certified supply chain consultant (Institute of Supply Chain Management – IoSCM, UK), an MCIPS Chartered Procurement & Supply Professional (Chartered Institute of Procurement & Supply – CIPS, UK) and a PhD student with the University of Johannesburg, RSA, an adjunct lecturer with the Botswana Open University and employed as a supply chain manager and lecturer. Thus, the researcher brings to the inquiry process practical experience as a working supply chain professional with both knowledge and understanding of the sustainability policy and key performance indicators challenges for organisations and their supply chains. The researcher, however, acknowledges that the same experiences that are so valuable in providing insight could bias their judgement regarding the key areas to be covered in sustainability policies and key performance indicators. Despite such a potential limitation, the researcher remains committed to engaging in ongoing critical self-evaluation by way of journaling and dialogue with other supply chain practitioners and experts. To address subjectivity, the researcher presents the crafted policy documents for checks with other supply chain professional colleagues.

### 14.0 Conceptual Framework

Figure 2: Sustainability Policy Conceptual Framework



Crafting a successful sustainable policy depends on an organisation having enabling qualities and operationalising the 17 UN SDGs. Ambition, accountability, collaboration, consistency and intentionality are key to developing and sustaining a sustainability policy which is based on UN SDGs as key contents of the sustainability policy.

This conceptual framework acts like a map organising and connecting the key ideas that shape the researcher's thinking regarding how a sustainability policy must be informed. It shows the relationship between the enabling qualities and the content required to design a sustainability policy. It thus identifies the phenomena the researcher proposes to analyse and design. It shows the relationships which the researcher is seeking to establish which will be reflected in the research questions. Thus, this framework situates this study within prior content and research questions thereby providing clues on data collection procedures and final policy content.

### ***15.0 Significance of the study***

The contributions of this research study would be of interest to practicing supply chain professionals tasked with ensuring their organisations and supply chains are sustainable and driven by comprehensive sustainability policy content. This from a practice standpoint, this study is relevant and timely for the sustainability policy development and implementation

Scholars and students in sustainability policy and [supply chain] management as well will find this study quite practical and adding to the existing sustainability policy knowledge and hence enable them to do further research and add more insight into the sustainability policy debate and research. The study will increase awareness and point to the practical usefulness of the SDGs.

The wider communities will benefit from this study as it underscores the need for the corporate businesses to adopt sustainable practices which will most likely contribute to improvement in their welfare and protection of their environments and hence contribute to the UN SDGs being achieved by the year 2030.

Megasise College will directly and significantly benefit from this study as the outcome of the action research is actually a sustainability policy document that it will use for itself and its entire supply chain leading to bolstering of its competitive advantage.

### ***16.0 Limitations***

This study did not use random sampling of both the discussion group and selection of the literature to base the sustainability policy contents. In both cases sampling was purposive. While this may significantly limit my ability to make broader generalisations from the results, purposive sampling was still the most appropriate sampling to use given the nature of this study.

The study was restricted to a only one corporate organisation where the researcher is a supply chain manager and is based on practical work experience. This means that the outcome or findings may not be generalisable to other corporate organisations because the characteristics and environment of their businesses may be different.

The action research was conducted over twelve weeks and this may not be enough for the researcher to observe all of the necessary contents to be included in the sustainability policy which are not part of the SDGs. It would be better if it was done over a longer period of time and beyond the UN SDGs blueprint.

This study is an action research in which the researcher was the principal participant leading the content of the policy and directing the group discussion of the content. Since data



collections was conducted and reported by the researcher, it is possible that a certain degree of subjectivity may be found. This was minimised by ensuring that other certified professionals become the focus group that discussed the contents one by one and upon amendments the final policy draft was again given to them to check and verify that what indeed they had contributed was all incorporated.

A lack of comprehensive studies on the sustainability policy topic and on SDGs was also another limitation. Nonetheless this limitation served as an important opportunity for the researcher to identify new gaps in the literature and to describe the need for further research.

### ***17.0 Operational definition of terms:***

*Equality of opportunity* means equality of access and life chances; equality of treatment means equality in how people are treated in day-to-day affairs and zero discrimination based on sex, race, gender and other non-work related characteristics; equality of outcome is equality of income and wealth.

*Sustainability* means ability to meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. (Brundtland Commission Report, 1987).

*Sustainable development* is the organizing principle for meeting human development goals while simultaneously sustaining the ability of natural systems to provide the natural resources and ecosystem services upon which the economy and society depend. The desired result is a state of society where living conditions and resources are used to continue to meet human needs without undermining the integrity and stability of the natural system. Sustainable development can be defined as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations (UN, 2017).

*Sustainable Development Goals* are a call for action by all countries – poor, rich and middle-income – to promote prosperity while protecting the planet. They recognize that ending poverty must go hand-in-hand with strategies that build economic growth and address a range of social needs including education, health, social protection, and job opportunities, while tackling climate change and environmental protection (UN 2019).

### ***18.0 Dissertation Chapter Outline / Structure***

CHAPTER ONE: This chapter outlines the background to the research problem, by stating the problem, specifying the research objectives, and laying out the research approach. The proposed methods and structure of the research are described.

CHAPTER TWO provides a review of the research literature relating to the UN SDGs and leadership qualities that drive sustainability, discusses current literature and the gaps or limitations emerging therefrom, and explains why the UN SDGs are best drivers for a comprehensive sustainability policy for an organisation and its entire supply chain

CHAPTER THREE reviews the research methodology used and explains why it is the most suitable approach. It also discusses the research protocol, design, limitations and analysis methods within the reliability and validity context. The chapter also discusses the ethical issues governing this research

CHAPTER FOUR presents and discusses the actual sustainability policy content that emerges from the use of the SDGs.

CHAPTER FIVE summarizes the entire research and the conclusions drawn from work as well as the recommendations for practice and further research

### ***19.0 Summary***

This chapter described the important and critical components that set in place this research study. This included the problem, purpose, and research questions. It stressed the interconnectedness of each of these components and underscored that they are at the core of the research and that everything that follows after it hinges on how well these components are constructed and aligned. In addition to these major components, the chapter also described and illustrated all the other elements that comprise a well-developed introductory chapter, including research approach, researcher assumptions and perspectives, rationale and significance, and definitions of key terminology.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### ***2.1 Introduction***

Chapter 1 introduced the topic, and its significance. This chapter is a literature review to find out what scholarship has been done, where the current debate is, and what questions or information is missing from the literature that could be explored further with regards to the topic introduced in chapter 1.

A literature review is a summary and analysis of the relevant publications on a topic. This means that the term literature refers to a collection of the relevant written sources on a topic inclusive of both theoretical and empirical works. Because there is need to draw boundaries around the sustainability concept for this study, it helps to think about how and where the information for this field is produced.

Thus, literature consists of the published works that document a scholarly conversation in a field of study. In the literature, documents that explain the background of a research topic are identified so the reader knows where the researcher found loose ends in the established research of the field and what led the researcher to carry out own project.

The overall goals of this literature review chapter are firstly to establish the significance of the general field of study, then therefore be able to identify a place where a new contribution can be made. So first the research territory is established, and then the significance of the research territory is established next. The research niche, which is the sustainability policy is established. This includes what has been found about sustainability policy crafting and implementation challenges which is, in some significant way, pointing out to the gap, and hence justifies the need for this research. The overall conclusion or summary of this chapter indicates why the action methodological approach will be used.

This chapter therefore reviews main areas related to the sustainability concepts namely: (i) the definitions of sustainability as applied in this dissertation; (ii) the sustainability business case in supply chains; (iii) organisational actions that satisfy the leadership qualities that can drive the sustainability agenda among its supply chain partners as per the Blueprint for Leadership on the SDGs, including the guiding questions and (iv) the 17 UN Global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); (v) emerging sustainability policy framework based the 17 SDGs; (vi) the SDGs justification as basis for sustainability policy; (vii) concluding discussion on current research findings; (viii) corporate code of ethics and annual sustainability reporting; (ix) a practical discussion on enforcing sustainability across supply chains; (x) discussion of challenges in implementing sustainability; (xi) solutions to the challenges; (xii) a conclusion and (xiii) ended with a summary.

#### ***2.2.1 Complexities of defining Sustainability***

The issue of sustainability topic is an important one given the gravity of environmental and social problems facing the world today and especially given that the dominant focus of sustainability research is on European and U.S corporations (Banerjee, 2011: 719).

The universal definition of sustainability is elusive with many differing worldviews (Barr, 2010) with over 300 definitions of sustainability (Dobson, 1996) making it a complex and

contested concept without any universal agreement on a particular definition (Banerjee, 2011: 719; Haugh, & Talwar, 2010: 385). As a term sustainability, as a social construct, is open to varying interpretation making meaning is contestable (Collins & Kearins, 2010: 499).

Anderies, Folke, Walker, & Ostrom, E (2013) look at sustainability as merely defining a superstructure, a skeleton to support a discourse about the interaction between human societies and the environment while Folke et al (2011) further expand that the skeleton for sustainability is the recognition that a functioning biosphere is a precondition for economic and social development.

Nonetheless there appears to be some good degree of consensus among business firms that their organizations need to integrate economic, social, and environmental dimensions of sustainability (Banerjee, 2011: 719; Haugh, & Talwar, 2010: 385).

Despite the complexities surrounding a universally agreed definition of sustainability, this research will use the two most widely accepted definitions of sustainability one being given by the British Standards Institution in Sustainable Procurement Guide (BIP 2203) as cited in CIPS (2012:2) when a business takes a “long-term view when making decisions to ensure that meeting our needs does not compromise the needs of others both today and for future generations”. A similar definition widely accepted and largely the one used for this research study is given by the UN Brundtland Report for the World Commission on Environment and Development (1987) which defined it in terms of sustainable development as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (CIPS, 2019: 2; Lysons & Farrington, 2016:389).

Both these definitions echo each other and are the ones that are the basis of sustainability discourse in this dissertation. Thus, sustainability in this context takes the triple-bottom line view: economic, social and environmental. A business’ economic sustainability is important to corporate financial success in the long run because the corporation simply cannot survive if expenditure exceeds income. The social sustainability involves the humanitarian context of business and relates to issues of poverty and income inequality; disease, access to health care, clean water, and sanitation; education, especially for females; and broader problems associated with the impact of globalization on economic development. The environmental sustainability considers the impact of business on the quality and quantity of natural resources, the environment, global warming, ecological concerns, waste management, reductions in energy and resource use, alternative energy production, and improved pollution and emissions management (Haugh, & Talwar, 2010: 384).

Sustainability, in procurement terms, considers social, economic and environmental factors alongside the typical price and quality considerations when procuring products and services. Thus, sustainability is not just about going green but is a holistic approach that considers social, environmental and economic factors together when entering into a business relationship (CIPS, 2019: 46).

### ***2.2.2 The sustainability business case in the organisation and its supply chain***

Research has proved that sustainability issues create immense opportunities and threats to business success. Considering sustainability when managing supply chains has proved to be influential in the business’ economic success more than ever. It has become a driver for both risks and opportunities for any business with studies showing that the long-term success of a

company can only be guaranteed if the concepts of sustainability are integrated in supply chain management. Carter and Rogers (2008) conclude that companies which attempt to maximize the performance of all three dimensions of sustainability outperform those only concentrating on economic performance or just achieving high social or environmental performance.

CIPS (2012: 15-16) identifies several benefits that accrue to businesses that consider sustainability in their actions. These include avoidance of penalties that a business might face when they fail to comply with laws and regulations that impose certain social and environmental responsibilities on organisations for example in relation to employment protection, consumer rights, environmental care, workplace health and safety among many others. There are some penalties that businesses will face when they fail to comply which may even range from closure, law suits and other consequences that may threaten the reputation of an organisation as a good corporate citizen.

An organisation's corporate image improves and is enhanced when the organisation takes voluntary measures and standards accreditation on sustainability. When an organisation's reputation improves the business is then able to attract and retain quality supply chain partners and stakeholders ranging from suppliers, employees to investors (CIPS, 2012: 15). Failure by an organisation to pursue sustainability will have collateral damage on it both in the short-term to long-term.

Improvement in shareholder value has been positively correlated to adoption of sustainability by those organisations that practice it. CIPS (2012: 16) cites that companies listed in the Dow Jones Sustainability Group Index outperform the general Dow Jones Index over time clearly indicating that sustainability improves shareholder value. This same conclusion is made by Carter and Rogers (2008).

Sustainability adoption often leads to a company improving and innovating. Sustainable procurement initiatives, for example, are lead to improved buyer-supplier communication, and investment in problem-solving and innovation which opens up new ways for performance improvements, product and service innovation, supplier development, enhanced collaborations and costs reductions (CIPS, 2012: 16).

Sustainability adoption leads to cost reduction and improved efficiency. For example, an environmentally-friendly approach can lead to resource efficiency and waste product elimination which leads to cost-savings in the end (CIPS, 2012: 16). Green procurement and logistics greatly reduce costs while whole life costing can lead to better profitability through cost management.

Failure costs are greatly reduced when a business adopts a sustainability approach. There are always costs incurred when an organisation fails to meet social and environmental expectations. Costs of rectifying failures are always significant (CIPS, 2012: 16).

There is a good supply continuity when a business adopts a sustainability approach in its supply chains. For example, when a buyer supports the financial or economic sustainability of a supplier they are assured of continued supply (CIPS, 2012: 15).

Commitment to employees and the supply base by an organisation enables the business to attract and retain best suppliers and employees which in turn will enable the organisation to

commit and provide quality services and products giving the organisation a clear competitive advantage over its competitors (CIPS, 2012: 15).

Competitive advantage, differentiation and brand proposition greatly improve when an organisation adopts a strong sustainability focus. Sustainably sources inputs and product designs enable differentiation and brand proposition both of which are valued by customers (CIPS, 2012: 15).

From a procurement perspective, sustainable procurement helps organisations to eliminate waste, become more energy efficient and inevitably save money. It encompasses all issues where procurement delivers economic, social and environmental policy objectives through considering sustainability at all stages of the procurement cycle (Lysons & Farrington, 2016:389)

### ***2.2.3 Leadership qualities that can drive the sustainability agenda***

For business leadership to advance sustainability they need five qualities to drive sustainability for itself and the rest of its supply chain. These five leadership qualities it must possess are ambition, collaboration, accountability, consistency, and intentionality which can, in turn, be applied to each of the SDGs to create a sustainable organisation (United Nations, 2016b: 5; United Nations Global Compact, 2018; United Nations Global Compact 2017). These qualities are explained in the UN Blueprint for Business Leadership on the SDGs.

The aim of the UN Blueprint for Business Leadership on the SDGs is to inspire all business — regardless of size, sector or geography — to take leading action in support of the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and it also illustrates how the five leadership qualities can be applied to a business' strategy, business model, products, supply chain, partnerships, and operations to raise the bar and create impact at scale (United Nations, 2016b). Thus, the Blueprint is a tool for any business that is ready to advance its principled approach to SDG action to become a leader in sustainability implementation.

*Intentional* – the organisation makes SDGs an integral and deliberate part of the organisation' strategy making SDGs part of the vision and long-term goals of the organisation. It has its top management ensuring the SDGs become a way in which workforce or its staff and the entire supply chain work to achieve a major contribution to the SDs (United Nations, 2016b: 5). This quality is critical. The guiding questions to apply the intentionality issues on SDGs would then include;

- Is the company committed to supporting the achievement of SDGs1?
- Has the company developed a holistic strategy that reflects this commitment, covering end-to-end operations and the wider community?
- Is the company committed to learn from its actions and does it have processes in place to improve them accordingly?
- Is company strategy supported by the highest levels of management, including the Board of Directors?

*Ambitious* – the company operates as if it is the only best, focusing on the value chain – from suppliers to consumers as well as to its wider group of stakeholders. The company does extend beyond the financial impact to encompass impact on people, planet and prosperity, and beyond the boundaries of its own organisation. The company's ambition is to focus on

actions that will deliver long-term outcomes while ensuring both long-term and short-term contributions to the SDGs (United Nations, 2016b: 5). The guiding questions to apply the intentionality issues on SDGs would then include;

- Do company actions achieve long-term outcomes that greatly exceed those resulting from current industry practice?
- Are company actions aligned with what is needed to achieve SDGs?

*Consistency* – the company is consistent in its actions and approaches across the various locations and ensures that these are adapted to contextual differences. The company embeds SDGs across its functions and exertional communities. The company ensures that there is consistency between what it says and what it does throughout the entire supply chain and communities. It ensures that SDGs are embedded across functions and supply chains and underpin performance required to advance SDGs (United Nations, 2016b: 5). The guiding questions to apply the intentionality issues on SDGs would then include;

- Is support for SDGs embedded across all organizational functions?
- Are staff and board incentives aligned with achieving SDGs?

*Collaborative* – the company collaborates with all other actors, from civic society, government, local communities, academia, and investors to other businesses in supporting SDGs. Clearly, this means adopting a pro-active collaborative and partnerships approach with others. The company publicly advocates SDG action across its functions and across the entire supply chain which it is part to (United Nations, 2016b: 5). The guiding questions to apply the intentionality issues on SDGs would then include;

- Does the company proactively look for opportunities to partner with Governments, UN agencies, suppliers, civil society organizations, industry peers and other stakeholders to inform how to advance SDGs?

*Accountable* – the company acts lawfully and aligns its actions to international standards and norms even when these lack and fall short in its domestic law and may not be legally mandated in the countries where it operates. The company is transparent, proactively engages and seeks the view of stakeholders in both its actions and decisions. The company holds its actions fully accountable regarding people and planet (United Nations, 2016b: 5). The guiding questions to apply the intentionality issues on SDGs would then include;

- Does the company publicly express its commitment to advance SDGs?
- Does the company identify, monitor, and report on impacts, including potentially adverse impacts?
- Does the company mitigate risks associated with its action?
- Does the company remediate negative impacts associated with its action?
- Does the company engage its stakeholders in a meaningful way?

These five leadership qualities of ambition, collaboration, accountability, consistency and intentionality can be applied to a business' sustainable policy to raise the bar and create a huge sustainability impact (United Nations, 2016b: 5; United Nations Global Compact, 2018; United Nations Global Compact 2017).). Leading action on the SDGs needs these five leadership qualities prioritised, acted on, and shared both internally and externally.

#### **2.2.4 The 17 UN Global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**

The Sustainable Development Goals 2016 Report (UN, 2016) gives an overview of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and the Blueprint for Business Leadership on the SDGs discusses the basics of each goal and suggests business actions deriving from that goal in a practical way.

*Table 1. UN Sustainable Development Goals*

<b>Goal#</b>	<b>Goal</b>
1	End poverty in all its forms everywhere
2	End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
3	Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
4	Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
5	Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
6	Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
7	Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
8	Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
9	Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation
10	Reduce inequality within and among countries
11	Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
12	Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
13	Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
14	Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
15	Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss
16	Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
17	Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

*Goal 1: No poverty*



Poverty is a violation of human dignity, and an obstacle to the realization of all other rights. The effects of poverty are exacerbated by various forms of discrimination, including for women and persons with disabilities. Poverty eradication is central to the Global Goals, and achievement of all Goals is closely tied to the achievement of Goal 1. Poverty impedes the full participation of people in society and the economy. A society free from poverty is more peaceful, stable, innovative, and equal.

Vitality, all business has a responsibility to prevent and address human and labour rights violations, and it should identify and avoid practices that perpetuate poverty traps. Business should respect fundamental human and labour rights; adopt responsible taxation practices; and ensure that end-to-end operations do not exacerbate poverty in any way. This includes providing decent work (work that is productive and delivers a living wage); security in the workplace; social protection for families; better prospects for personal development and social integration; freedom for people to express their concerns, organize, and participate in the decisions that affect their lives; and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men. Business should also adopt responsible taxation practices and should robustly assess whether its activities carry the risk of contributing to poverty, directly or indirectly. Useful tools for assessing such impacts include the UN Global Compact's Poverty Footprint Tool. All companies are linked to global poverty, particularly through their supply chains, and have a responsibility to work towards eliminating negative impacts to the Goal.

To achieve this sustainable goal, a business must act in a way that:

- Engages in the creation of secure and decent jobs, especially in least developed countries and for vulnerable populations
- Implements programs to economically empower disadvantaged groups
- Ensures decent working conditions for all employees across the business and supply chain
- Creates and market goods and services that specifically cater to, and aim to improve the lives of, vulnerable groups

The actions to end poverty involve targeting the most vulnerable, increasing basic resources and services, and supporting communities affected by conflict and climate-related disasters (UNDP, 2019).

### *Goal 2: Zero hunger*

Hunger and malnutrition pose significant barriers to human wellbeing and economic development. Intensifying pressures on natural resources, while impacts from climate change will also frustrate food systems. Further, farmers around the world, making up a large share of employment in developing countries, struggle to make a livelihood from agricultural activities. Businesses play a central role in providing food to communities and combating hunger and malnutrition. Businesses in all sectors should ensure that land used throughout their supply chain is not, and has not, been taken without free, prior and informed consent from local communities. Companies can also negatively impact communities by restricting access to agricultural inputs including seeds, water supplies, knowledge and finance. Responsible supply chain practices that respect land rights and support smallholder farms can help two-thirds of the world's population address hunger and achieve economic development. Business is also an emitter of greenhouse gasses, which contribute to climate change and

thereby can exacerbate hunger through impacting yields. Business in the agriculture and food sectors, but also a variety of related sectors such as chemicals and biotechnology, are crucial to eliminating hunger through product and process innovation that reaches all global regions and communities. A keyway to address hunger is by improving productivity and sustainability, market access, and access to opportunities for upgrading into more value-added activities for small-scale agriculture. This serves to provide more abundant and secure food supply for local communities and directly raise incomes of smallholder farmers. Companies can innovate, invest, and share knowledge to help increase the productivity of farmers in its supply chain and wider communities; and, they can restructure their supply chains such that a greater proportion of revenues goes to the farmers and their workers by reducing the need for intermediaries that exploit their vulnerability for their own gain. Companies can also lead by improving food distribution channels to combat malnutrition in areas with limited access to healthy foods and develop fortified crops and processed foods that are compatible with development goals for human and environmental health. To combat the significant global food waste problem, companies can lead in the development of technologies and processes to eliminate food waste from their end-to-end operations, to ensure better food availability to communities around the world.

Businesses can benefit from ending hunger as it allows them to access new and previously underserved markets. Business actions to support this goal will include:

- Supporting farmers to increase yields and incomes from sustainable, small-scale agriculture
- Altering food manufacturing, distribution and retail to contribute to ending malnutrition and hunger in all communities surrounding company operations
- Working towards eliminating food waste and loss

Actions to meet this goal and making sure all people—especially children—have sufficient and nutritious food all year involve promoting sustainable agricultural, supporting small-scale farmers and equal access to land, technology and markets. Actions also involve cooperation and investment in infrastructure and technology to improve agricultural productivity (UNDP, 2019).

### *Goal 3: Good health and well-being*

The world's major health priorities include reproductive, maternal and child health; communicable, non-communicable and environmental diseases; universal health coverage; and access for all to safe, effective, quality, and affordable medicines and vaccines. A business's own operations and supply chain can have direct negative impacts on health including through local pollution, disposal of hazardous waste, and health and safety standards on the work floor. The use of chemicals in the workplace can negatively impact workers' health and make work particularly hazardous for children. Business products and services can also impact on health: negatively as, for example, in the case of unhealthy foods, addictive substances, and defective products; and positively, for example through the development and provision of affordable medication and medical devices. Business should also recognize the right to safe and healthy working conditions as set out in the International Covenant on Economic & Social Rights, taking steps to understand, monitor, and minimise negative health impacts throughout their end-to-end operations. building on core responsible business practices to understand, monitor, mitigate, and remediate negative impacts on

health. Leading companies can leverage their expertise, resources, and knowledge, and their vital role in product, process, and business model innovation for the benefit of global health. Further, business, with the strength of its convening power, can take an active role in multi-stakeholder initiatives that encourage healthy behaviours and improve access to healthcare.

Specific business actions to meet this SDG might include:

- Ensuring the best possible health outcomes for employees and surrounding communities across own and supply chain operations
- Researching, developing, and deploying products, services, and business models for improved health outcomes
- Leading on multi-stakeholder initiatives that encourage healthy behaviours and improve access to healthcare

Multisectoral, rights-based and gender-sensitive approaches are essential to address inequalities and to build good health for all (UNDP, 2019).

#### *Goal 4: Quality education*

Business has a responsibility to provide living wages and decent working conditions to their employees so that employees can fulfil their role as caregivers by sending children to school without having to seek supplementary income. Critically, business should and ensure that there is zero child labour across its operations and supply chain – a key barrier to education for children worldwide. Business is uniquely placed to ensure skills-development for working adults and can take proactive steps to support education at all levels.

Leading companies go further in these activities and drive good practices in support of education throughout end-to-end operations. Business can lead by facilitating access to vocational training and life-long learning opportunities to employees across their own operations and their supply chain. Not only does leading business ensure that all employees throughout end-to-end operations earn a living wage that allows them to support the education of dependents, but it encourages suppliers to do the same. Business can lead with the implementation of programmes to support access to higher education and access to free, equitable, and inclusive primary and secondary education. They can innovate for education through research, development, and deployment of products and services that will improve educational access and learning outcomes.

Business leadership in advancing Goal 4 can boost profitability, employee retention, and quality of work. Having a skilled and well-educated labour force to draw from is an advantage for any business as it can bolster innovation and growth. A business can also set itself apart and attract the best talent by making its workplace conducive to skills-development and learning. Business action should therefore:

- Ensure that all employees across the business and supply chain have access to vocational training and life-long learning opportunities
- Ensure that all employees across the business and supply chain earn a wage that allows them to support the education of dependents and that there is zero child labour
- Implement programmes to support higher education and access to free, equitable, and inclusive primary and secondary education

- Research, develop, and deploy products and services that improve educational access and learning outcomes

Efforts to provide equal access to affordable vocational training, eliminate gender and wealth disparities, and achieve universal access to a quality higher education have to be made to achieve this goal (UNDP, 2019).

#### *Goal 5: Gender equality*

Gender equality is a fundamental and inviolable human right. Yet women around the world continue to face significant economic, social, and legal barriers to equality. Women are more likely than men to be unemployed, are overrepresented in low wage jobs, hold fewer managerial, entrepreneurial and leadership positions. Women continue to bear disproportionate responsibility for unpaid care work and often experience maternity-related discrimination. Women entrepreneurs also face particular challenges to building and growing their businesses including lack of access to financing and business networks. All businesses have a fundamental responsibility to respect the rights of women and girls, as per the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. Leading companies recognize that their greatest contribution to SDG 5 is ensuring that they meet this responsibility and will prioritize the management of potential human rights risks accordingly. Leading companies will also seek to maximize their positive impact towards gender equality across all levels and functions of their business, throughout their supply-chain and within the communities where they operate, rather than only identifying the easiest point of entry. By ensuring respect for women and girls and supporting gender equality, businesses can unlock vast amounts of economic potential. Research demonstrates that gender diversity helps business perform better. Business actions to meet this SDG include:

- Implementing policies and practices that are free from and prevent gender-based discrimination across the workplace, marketplace, and community
- Supporting women's employment and strive for gender balance at all levels across the business and supply chain
- Developing products and services and implement marketing practices that empower women
- Promoting gender equality through investment, community initiatives, and advocacy

Encouraging more women leaders will help achieve greater gender equality and giving women equal rights land and property, sexual and reproductive health, and to technology and the internet will help meet this goal (UNDP, 2019).

#### *Goal 6: Clean water and sanitation*

Sustainable water management is essential for human dignity and wellbeing, economic productivity, and environmental resilience. Businesses are impacted by and directly impact the quality and quantity of water resources through the production of goods and services, primarily through consumption of water and discharge into shared water resources. To help deliver on Goal 6, all businesses must respect the rights of communities to water and sanitation and are encouraged to support government, business and other stakeholder efforts to provide universal access to clean water and sanitation. . This involves understanding impacts on local ecosystems and communities, particularly the cumulative impacts that

businesses have on water resources; monitoring own water use; and taking appropriate action ranging from internal (improving water efficiency, reducing water inputs, investing in wastewater treatment, water reuse) to external collaborations to address risks and impacts in water intensive sectors such as manufacturing, agriculture, and extractives. Leading businesses build on responsible business practices and take extraordinary steps to understand and respond to identified water risks to, and impacts of, their end-to-end operations on watersheds and communities. They can do so by implementing water stewardship plans developed in consultation with other water users. Leading action can also involve improving access to clean water and sanitation across own facilities, throughout supply chains, and the wider community. Business can do this through investment and engagement with government and civil society for the provision of water and sanitation (WASH) and the holistic management of water resources to meet social, economic and environmental needs. They can also protect and restore natural infrastructure that supports clean water provision.

Business action to meet this SDG must include:

- Developing and implementing holistic water strategies that are socially equitable, environmentally sustainable, and economically beneficial in watersheds around company and supply chain operations
- Protecting and/or restoring water-based ecosystems around own operations and supply chain
- Ensuring access to water and sanitation by addressing impacts of company and supply chain operations on local water supplies and supporting stakeholders to deliver clean water and sanitation

Safe and affordable drinking water requires investment in adequate infrastructure, provision of sanitation facilities, and encouragement of hygiene. Protecting and restoring water-related ecosystems is essential (UNDP, 2019).

#### *Goal 7: Affordable and clean energy*

Despite improvements, many of the world's largest energy consuming countries are not increasing their rates of energy efficiency at the speed that the global community has agreed is necessary. Businesses have an essential part to play in driving the financing and development of technologies needed to achieve Goal 7. The private sector accounts for half of the world's energy consumption, so it has significant scope to increase energy efficiency and source energy from renewable sources. Businesses supply energy and energy-consuming products and services to consumers, which they can make clean and efficient in use. They can also make these affordable to enhance access for underserved populations.

Companies with energy intensive operations can significantly increase energy efficiency and source remaining energy needs from renewable sources. Where companies have energy intensive supply chains, they can promote similar action through supplier selection and build capacity among their suppliers to do the same. Leading companies can also leverage their skills to create and deploy new, affordable sustainable energy and energy efficiency products and services. They can also develop and implement business models to deliver sustainable energy and energy efficiency technologies to new markets and communities, supporting the goal to create universal access to sustainable energy. Business must ensure:

- Significantly increasing energy efficiency, source remaining energy needs from renewable sources, and promote the same action across the supply chain through supplier selection and support
- Researching, developing, and deploying affordable sustainable energy and energy efficiency products and services
- Developing and implementing business models to deliver sustainable energy and energy efficiency technologies to new markets and communities

Investing in solar, wind and thermal power, improving energy productivity, and ensuring energy for all as well expanding infrastructure and upgrading technology to provide clean and more efficient energy will encourage growth and help the environment (UNDP, 2019).

#### *Goal 8: Decent work and economic growth*

Exploitation and labour rights violations are still endemic around the world. An estimated 168 million children are victims of child labour. There are major forces that are changing labour market dynamics such as automation, globalisation, and demographic changes. The impact of these forces must be reconciled with the need to create 600 million new jobs by 2030, mostly in developing countries, to sustain economic growth and maintain social stability. The foundation of supporting decent work is implementation of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, through which companies can address their own impacts on employees and workers in their value chains. Decent work as defined by the International Labour Organization (ILO) is work that is productive and delivers a fair income; security in the workplace; social protection for families; better prospects for personal development and social integration; freedom for people to express their concerns, organize and participate in the decisions that affect their lives; and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men. Business can lead on Goal 8 by investing in innovation, labour and capital to achieve strong, sustainable and equitable economic growth that provides decent jobs. Four key areas lend themselves particularly well for business leadership. Businesses can lead by putting in place policies and practices to support decent working conditions for all employees across the business and supply chain. They can partner with suppliers to build their capacity for doing so, and support other stakeholders in their efforts, too. Business can also lead by educating and training the labour force, including workers across end-to-end operations and in surrounding communities, and focusing particularly on vulnerable groups including women, young people and persons with disabilities, so that they acquire the skills needed to provide productive labour or transition from informal to formal sector work, and remain employable in a changing labour market. Business leadership can also involve creating formal-sector jobs in labour-intensive sectors, especially in least-developed countries, including through inclusive sourcing practices. Businesses can further be leaders through making a large contribution to sustainable economic growth and productivity, which can take the form of investing in R&D, upgrading skills, and supporting growing businesses. Where businesses take action to support decent work, they should build an understanding of how they can complement existing initiatives by Governments and other stakeholders, and ensure that they do not interfere with or otherwise negatively impact other initiatives.

Businesses benefit from higher growth as it results in stronger returns, generates demand, and helps boost profitability. Business actions must include:

- Supporting decent working conditions for all employees across the business and supply chain, with partnerships to build suppliers' capacity to do the same
- Educating and training the labour force, focusing on vulnerable and economically disadvantaged groups
- Creating decent formal-sector jobs in labour-intensive sectors, especially in least-developed countries
- Driving economic growth and productivity by investing in R&D, upgrading skills, and supporting growing businesses, in a way that is compatible with sustainable development

Encouraging entrepreneurship and job creation are key measures to eradicate forced labour, slavery and human trafficking. Full and productive employment, and decent work, for all women and men are key (UNDP, 2019).

*Goal 9: Industry, innovation and infrastructure*

Industry, infrastructure and innovation are key drivers of economic growth and social value creation. Sustainable industrialization can lift communities out of poverty but needs to be managed carefully to avoid additional pressures on people and planet. In developing countries alone this requires a \$1 trillion gap in annual investment spending needs to be addressed. Industrialization and, more broadly, economic development crucially depend on quality, reliable infrastructure. Without it, communities and businesses remain deprived of access to markets, quality products and services, and jobs. Globally, 2.6 billion people cannot access a reliable electricity source and over 4 billion do not have internet access. As these gaps are filled, industry and infrastructure assets must be resilient to changes in social, economic, and environmental conditions. To achieve inclusive and sustainable industrialization and deliver quality, resilient infrastructure, technological and process innovations must be developed and deployed at scale.

Business delivers through its research, development and deployment of technologies and processes, and its financing and production of capital assets and infrastructure. But business is also instrumental in creating an enabling environment for innovation and investment through its engagement with other stakeholders such as Governments on innovation, policy, and accessibility to their intellectual property and other assets. Business, of course, has an obligation to comply with relevant laws designed to protect people and the environment. However, responsible business practice moves beyond strict legal compliance toward supporting internationally recognized standards of conduct.

They can support inclusive and sustainable upgrading of industries in developing countries through global value chains, by focusing on transferring technologies and skills to build local capabilities. Leading companies can create innovation systems for sustainable development by providing access to finance, fostering entrepreneurship, and pooling financial and research resources in a global knowledge base. They can also lead in upgrading and retrofitting of infrastructure and industry assets across own and supply chain operations to make them sustainable and resilient

Business actions must include

- Researching, developing, and deploying products, services and business models to deliver sustainable and resilient infrastructure
- Supporting inclusive and sustainable upgrading of developing country industries in global value chains
- Creating innovation systems for sustainable development by providing access to finance, fostering entrepreneurship, and pooling financial and research resources in a global knowledge base
- Upgrading and retrofitting infrastructure and industry assets across own and supply chain operations to make them sustainable and resilient

Investment in infrastructure and innovation as well as increasing access to internet will ensure equal access to information and knowledge, as well as foster innovation and entrepreneurship (UNDP, 2019).

### *Goal 10: Reduced inequalities*

Equality is fundamental to a stable, just, prosperous, and peaceful society. Many groups, such as women, racial minorities and indigenous populations, still do not have equal access to opportunities - facing exclusion from business ownership and corporate decision making and discrimination related to wages, employment, and access to financial services.

Intergenerational inequality is also a critical challenge – ensuring that future generations do not inherit a far-more polluted planet. Business impacts inequality through the decisions it takes on how to distribute the economic value it generates, including by deciding whether it pays living wages and how it structures executive pay; by paying or not paying taxes (in different countries) that are essential for funding inequality-reducing social security and public investment in health, education, and infrastructure; through the way it uses its economic and political influence to shape the marketplace and its regulatory environment. Business impacts inequality through the decisions it takes on how to distribute the economic value it generates, including by deciding whether it pays living wages and how it structures executive pay; by paying or not paying taxes (in different countries) that are essential for funding inequality-reducing social security and public investment in health, education, and infrastructure; through the way it uses its economic and political influence to shape the marketplace and its regulatory environment

Leading companies can assess how they impact the distribution of economic value across stakeholder groups and implement policies and practices to make it more equal. They can support the establishment and expansion of social protection measures at the national level, where they may complement government efforts with their expertise and resources. Business can lead through the implementation of policies and practices to support equality of opportunity, treatment, and outcome for all across own and supply chain operations, and it can have a leading impact on the reduction of inequality through design and implementation of products, services, and business models that target the needs of vulnerable and marginalized populations.

Reducing inequalities benefits businesses as it helps create a more stable and predictable business environment. It also introduces greater diversity of thought into the workplace, boosting innovation and profitability. Economic research shows that reducing income inequality boosts economic growth



Business actions include;

- Assessing the distribution of economic value across stakeholder groups and implement policies and practices to make it more equal
- Supporting the establishment and expansion of social protection measures at the national level
- Implementing policies and practices to support equality of opportunity, treatment and outcome for across own and supply chain operations
- Designing and implementing products, services, and business models that explicitly target the needs of disadvantaged and marginalized populations

These widening disparities require sound policies to empower lower income earners, and promote economic inclusion of all regardless of sex, race or ethnicity. Income inequality requires global solutions like improving the regulation and monitoring of financial markets and institutions, encouraging development assistance and foreign direct investment to regions where the need is greatest as well as facilitating the safe migration and mobility of people is also key to bridging the widening divide (UNDP, 2019).

#### *Goal 11: Sustainable cities and communities*

Over half of the world's population live in urban areas; this is expected to increase to two thirds by 2050. Cities are centres of commerce, generating more than 80 per cent of global GDP, and play a key role in boosting productivity needed for economic development. Urbanization can make it easier to put in place the infrastructure needed for essential services such as grid-connected energy, water and sanitation. However, urbanization also brings significant challenges. All over the world, cities are facing critical levels of air pollution. Many cities in developing countries face rapidly growing numbers leading to slum dwellers and unplanned urban sprawl, as infrastructure provision has not kept pace with population growth. Much of this urban sprawl is in geographies vulnerable to disasters, risks that are being magnified by climate change. These challenges call for better urban planning and management to make the world's urban spaces more inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

Businesses are core to the development of cities, livelihood, and services to urban populations. They are well positioned to deliver on Goal 11's promise of universal access to quality housing, transport, green, and heritage sites, in collaboration with Governments and municipalities. Leading companies can contribute to Goal 11 through research, development, and deployment of products and services that improve access to resilient buildings, transport, green spaces, and utilities including electricity, water, and waste management services. Businesses can also leverage their convening power and expertise to protect and invest in cultural and natural heritage. Further, they can play a central role in supporting access to essential services across the workplace, marketplace and community.

As the social and environmental impact of rapid urbanisation increases, businesses can benefit from opportunities to develop more connected, resilient and sustainable urban areas. A concerted effort to improve the sustainability of communities will necessitate investment across a range of sectors including transport, energy, waste management and recreation. The next 10 years will require \$78 trillion of investment in city infrastructure. This is likely to be delivered through private sector solutions including public private partnerships. A concerted effort to improve the sustainability of communities will necessitate investment across a range

of sectors including transport, energy, waste management and recreation. Benefits of more sustainable cities and communities include a healthier more productive work force, and improved labour market functioning and market access because of better transport links.

By improving mobility and reducing pollution, developing more sustainable cities will contribute to the SDGs related to health (Goal 3), education (Goal 4), sustainable energy (Goal 7), decent work (Goal 8) and equality (Goals 5 and 10). Life on land (Goal 15) and climate action (Goal 13) can be positively impacted by ensuring that urban areas have a reduced environmental footprint. While investment in sustainable cities will improve the quality of life for their residents, it may also have negative impacts on housing affordability, the tax burden, and accelerate urban migration

Business action can include:

- Researching, developing, and deploying products and services which improve access to resilient buildings, transport, green spaces, and utilities
- Protecting and investing in cultural and natural heritage
- Supporting access to essential services across the workplace, marketplace, and community

Making cities sustainable means creating career and business opportunities, safe and affordable housing, and building resilient societies and economies. It involves investment in public transport, creating green public spaces, and improving urban planning and management in participatory and inclusive ways (UNDP, 2019).

#### *Goal 12: Responsible consumption and production*

Responsible consumption and production are fundamental to sustainable development. unsustainable consumption and production has, to differing extents around the world, caused greenhouse gas emissions to surge, contributed to severe air pollution, decreased agricultural productivity threatening livelihoods and social cohesion, and heightened water scarcity. Waste production has led to burgeoning landfills with large methane emissions and negative health impacts as well as serious plastic pollution in the world's oceans. Food production and consumption is also one of the primary causes of biodiversity loss through habitat degradation, overexploitation of fish, pollution, and soil loss.

As producers of much of the world's output, businesses have a central role to play in advancing responsible production and consumption. They can manage sustainability of their own operations by improving efficiencies, look to source more sustainable inputs, improve the sustainability of products and services at the point of use with credible sustainability information, report publicly on their sustainability performance and that of their supply chain, and take steps to ensure their products are not misused to violate human rights. Businesses can radically overhaul their existing models by designing and adopting responsible, circular business models. They can significantly narrow or even close the material and energy loops across own and supply chain operations using existing and new technologies and materials. They can shift to a portfolio of goods and services that require, and promote, negligible use of resources and negligible production of waste when used, including developing products and services with extended useful lifetimes, accurate sustainability labelling, and education of consumers on use phase and disposal. There is also scope for leadership in transparency and reporting, particularly by developing, implementing, and sharing solutions for tracking and

reporting on sustainability of production and consumption across end-to-end operations and their impact on surrounding communities. These leading actions can have both significant environmental benefits and major positive impacts through respecting and supporting human rights, as new business models and sustainable products and services find their way to vulnerable populations, supporting human development. Business should, however, ensure that they manage any risk of negative impact on human rights associated with new business models, ways of producing, and product designs; especially where they might impact vulnerable populations in developing countries.

The business case for leadership on Goal 12 includes substantial reductions in production costs for companies with resource intensive production processes.

Business action will include:

- Designing and adopting a responsible, circular business model
- Significantly narrowing or closing material and energy loops across own and supply chain operations
- Shifting to a portfolio of goods and services that require and promote negligible use of resources and produce negligible waste
- Developing, implementing, and sharing solutions for tracking and reporting on sustainability of production and consumption across end-to-end operations and impact on surrounding communities

Reducing ecological footprint, efficient management of shared natural resources, and disposal of toxic waste and pollutants, as well recycling and reducing waste are as equally important as supporting sustainable patterns of consumption (UNDP, 2019).

### *Goal 13: Climate action*

Climate change is caused by human emissions of greenhouse gases associated with electricity and heat production, industry, buildings, transport, and land use. Climate change impacts the planet through higher temperatures, an increase of extreme weather events, changing precipitation patterns, rising sea levels, and ocean acidification. It disrupts ecosystems and human livelihoods, particularly of vulnerable groups such as women, children, and the elderly as resources, food, and water become scarcer. Business plays a vital role in holding the increase of the global average temperature to well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, recognizing that this would significantly reduce the risks and impacts of climate change – the Goal that is at the heart of the 2015 Paris Agreement on Climate Change, an international treaty adopted by the vast majority of countries in the world. Business, together with Governments, must act urgently and decisively to fundamentally change the greenhouse gas emissions associated with their products and processes in order to achieve global net zero emissions by the second half of the century. Businesses also play a central role in anticipation, building resilience, and adaptation to the current and expected impacts of climate change.

Leading companies develop and implement innovative, far-reaching solutions to cut emissions in their operations and value chains, contribute to climate resilience, and/or bring about step changes in climate change awareness. They do so in a manner that inspires, and

can be replicated in, the world around them. To this end, they can integrate their commitment to Goal 13 into corporate strategy, assess the implications of climate change, create and align policy positions and seize these opportunities to provide constructive input and demonstrate responsible policy engagement to policy-makers while setting ambitious emissions reductions targets in line with climate science. Leading business actions to advance Goal 13 can include building resilience to environmental hazards and shortages of resources, food, and water in their operations, supply chains, and Business, together with Governments, must act urgently and decisively to fundamentally change the greenhouse gas emissions associated with their products and processes in order to achieve global net zero emissions by the second half of the century. Businesses also play a central role in anticipation, building resilience, and adaptation to the current and expected impacts of climate change.

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Business actions to do include:

- Ensuring climate resilience of company and supply chain operations, and the communities surrounding them
- Substantially reducing emissions associated with own and supply chain operations, in alignment with climate science
- Shifting to a portfolio of goods and services that have, and promote, negligible emissions from use
- Promoting climate conscious behaviour and build capacity for climate action

Efforts to integrate disaster risk measures, sustainable natural resource management, and human security are important just like increased investment, and using clean technology to limit the increase in global mean temperature (UNDP, 2019).

*Goal 14: Life below water*

Healthy oceans are critical for life on earth through their regulation of global climate and water systems, and through sustaining the natural resources that provide 17 per cent of the global population's animal protein intake. Many communities also rely on oceans for their livelihoods. The earth's oceans are under ever increasing pressure from direct pollution and eutrophication, climate change, and fishing and aquaculture. Ocean plastic and debris are increasing rapidly; at this rate, it is estimated that there will be more plastic debris than fish in the world's oceans by 2050, presenting a huge risk to ocean and human life. Ocean acidification can lead to weakening of the shells and skeletons of many marine species. Overfishing negatively impacts food production, the functioning of ecosystems, and biodiversity.

Businesses play a key role as responsible stewards of oceans, seas, and marine resources. Oceans underpin the global economy. Over 90 per cent of the world's trade is carried by sea, supporting more than USD \$2.5 trillion of commercial activity every year. Maritime transport can impact ocean habitats by emitting exhaust, leaking chemicals and dumping waste into waters. Extractive activities including fishing, offshore drilling for oil and gas, and mineral mining can cause great damage to ocean environments if not managed sustainably. Land-based activities also generate by-products that are carried to oceans and disrupt marine ecosystems through pollution and eutrophication of habitats. All businesses have a responsibility to abide by environmental law and international treaties on the protection of marine resources. There is significant scope for business leadership on Goal 14. Yet today, Goal 14 is rarely identified as a priority for business action despite many businesses relying on maritime resources for inputs and transportation. Business leadership on Goal 14 requires first understanding the business link to oceans across end-to-end operations. Leading companies can then implement policies and practices to protect ocean ecosystems affected by their end-to-end operations. They can also contribute with their strong research, development, and deployment capabilities to provide new products, services, and business models which negate impacts on ocean ecosystems and contribute to their restoration. They can lead by galvanizing finance for the protection and further development of ocean ecosystems and water system flows, including through multi-stakeholder partnerships. Leading action can also involve the design and implementation of solutions to accurately value and respect natural capital and enabling others to do the same.

Maintaining healthy ocean environments is a fundamental precondition for businesses to operate in the long term, and addressing the current challenges provides a significant business opportunity. Global markets for ocean resources including energy, food, fresh water, minerals and recreation are large and growing, but a lack of sustainable products, processes and business models make many activities unsustainable. Technologies such as aquaponics, tidal energy, and energy efficient desalinization can address this challenge while presenting significant opportunities to reap rewards from the sustainable use of ocean resources.

Business action will include;

- Implementing policies and practices to protect ocean ecosystems that are affected by business and supply chain activities
- Researching, developing, and deploying products, services, and business models which negate impacts on ocean ecosystems and contribute to their restoration

- Galvanizing finance for the protection and further development of ocean ecosystems and water system flows
- Designing and implementing solutions to accurately value and respect natural capital, and drive wider adoption of these solutions

Better management and protection of marine and coastal ecosystems from pollution, as well as addressing the impacts of ocean acidification, enhancing conservation and the sustainable use of ocean-based resources through international law will help mitigate some of the challenges facing oceans (UNDP, 2019).

### *Goal 15: Life on land*

Terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems are under immense pressure as challenges including biodiversity loss, land degradation and illicit wildlife trade mount. Many biodiversity hotspots, including biodiverse savannahs, grasslands, and tropical rainforests, are under heightened threat from activities linked to global supply chains. The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment states that biodiversity is the foundation on which human lives depend. Biodiverse ecosystems not only provide essential goods including food, water, fibre, and medicines, but also irreplaceable services such as the regulation of disease and the purification of air and water.

Business should, at a minimum, respect applicable environmental laws governing pollution, land-use, and life on land. Responsible business practice also adopts and integrates international standards that have been developed to support the core principles of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Nagoya Protocol. Crucially, these international standards recognize that natural resources are not infinite, and that genetic resources should be shared equitably.

There is significant scope for business leadership on Goal 15. Leadership involves understanding and valuing natural ecosystems, ensuring that activities across internal operations and the value chain contribute to protecting ecosystems, and innovating and providing finance for preservation and enhancement of ecosystems. To achieve this, they can adopt the highest environmental standards and implement procedures to protect natural ecosystems that are affected by business and supply chain activities, including land remediation and rehabilitation, and habitat protection and restoration. They are encouraged to do so through multi-stakeholder partnerships and standards where they can. As drivers of innovation, companies can commit to research, development and deployment of new technologies to help decouple economic activity from the degradation of natural ecosystems. Businesses can lead by galvanizing

finance to create awareness, protect, and further develop natural ecosystems. Furthermore, current economic structures tend to undervalue natural ecosystems leading to the disproportionate conversion of these systems for agricultural or urban development uses. Businesses can play a key role in developing and adopting natural capital accounting protocol to correct for this.

Healthy natural ecosystems are foundational to many business activities and caring for them can deliver huge benefits to companies. Natural ecosystems that provide critical services to business and the business environment include food provision, water purification, hazard protection and nitrogen regulation. Forests and other highly biodiverse and carbon rich

ecosystems have an irreplaceable role in air purification and carbon sequestration, which improves health outcomes for workers and boosts economic productivity

Business action can include:

- Implementing policies and practices to protect natural ecosystems that are affected by business and supply chain activities
- Researching, developing, and deploying products, services, and business models to help decouple economic activity from the degradation of natural ecosystems
- Galvanize finance to create awareness, protect, and further develop natural ecosystems
- Designing and implementing solutions to accurately value and respect natural capital, and drive wider adoption of these solutions

Reduction in wildlife tracking, reduction of the loss of natural habitats and biodiversity and supporting global food and water security, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and peace and security will help meet this goal (UNDP, 2019).

#### *Goal 16 Peace justice and strong institutions*

Progress in promoting peace and justice - together with fostering effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions - is a decisive challenge across the globe. Violence cost 12.6 per cent of world GDP in 2016. While homicides have declined and more citizens around the world have better access to justice, violent conflicts have increased in recent years. A few high-intensity armed conflicts are causing many displaced persons and threatening rule of law. In 2016 IMF estimated the annual cost of bribery alone at about \$1.5 to \$2 trillion. Bribery and corruption impede business growth, raise transaction costs, and create an unlevel playing field. This ultimately creates social instability, fuels mistrust in public officials and institutions, and undermines the rule of law. Indeed, an estimated 4 billion people world-wide continue to live outside the protection of the law. There is also still a gulf between quality of governance globally, including government effectiveness, regulatory quality, and, pertinent to the private sector, control of corruption. Corruption and bribery scandals can cause major societal instabilities.

Businesses have a vitally important role to play in respecting and supporting peace, justice, and strong institutions, both globally and in the countries in which they operate. Now more than ever, a growing number of business leaders are recognizing they have a crucial role to play in advancing anti-bribery and corruption, peace and rule of law efforts, as a complement to, not substitute for, government action. In a society that is based on the rule of law, all actors - including Governments, businesses, and individuals - are accountable to clear, fair, and predictable laws, regulations and impartial institutions. As such, businesses should respect the rule of law, and, wherever possible, work with all relevant stakeholders including Governments, civil society, and non-governmental organizations to strengthen institutions and the rule of law, working as a complement to Governments. Businesses can also strive to achieve zero violence, abuse, exploitation, and corruption across their own operations and supply chain while businesses operating in areas of conflict should regularly consult with international bodies and, where possible, relevant Governments and embassies to ensure that their activities contribute to advancing peace, justice, and strong institutions. At the same time, businesses should respect the lines of separation that are critical for well-functioning

Governments taking care that their involvement in Goal 16 does not cross into domains that are exclusively the remit of government.

Business leadership on Goal 16 is about respecting and supporting Governments in efforts to advance peace, justice, and the proper functioning of effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions. Leading businesses will critically examine the direct and indirect consequences of their end-to-end operations to ensure that they are respecting and supporting the rule of law, including strengthening efforts to combat corruption, protect human rights, and reduce violent conflict. To this end business can implement such measures that ensure robust supply chain management and transparency of financial flows. Businesses can also be leaders through support of accountable and inclusive institutions and peace-building efforts by building organizational capacity in the public sector and the provision of technologies, skills, and logistical solutions in areas of conflict and humanitarian crisis

Business action includes;

- Identifying and taking robust action against corruption and violence in own operations and the supply chain
- Working with government to strengthen institutions and increase respect and support for the rule of law
- Working with government and/or international institutions in areas of conflict and humanitarian crises to contribute to peace and institution building.

The reduction of all forms of violence, and working with governments and communities to end conflict and insecurity, promoting the rule of law and human rights are key as is reducing the flow of illicit arms and strengthening the participation of developing countries in the institutions of global governance (UNDP, 2019).

### *Goal 17: Partnerships for the Goals*

Partnership and cooperation are essential for achieving the Global Goals. The international community has encouraged the development of partnerships between stakeholders, including business, to achieve common goals. It is only by forging partnerships that leverage the core competencies of all partners that the ambition of the SDGs can be achieved.

Companies are major players among SDG stakeholders, offering expertise, experience, resources, access to knowledge, and capabilities to innovate. But, companies cannot create transformative change acting alone. Business may not fully take account of all voices and be aware of all areas of need; and they may not have access to the best available knowledge. To support the achievement of the SDGs in all countries, companies should work alongside national and regional Governments, multilateral organizations, civil society, the scientific community and academia, and their peers to participate in and establish multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technologies and financial resources. At a minimum, all companies can seek to be aware of the key partnerships in the context of their end-to-end operations and become active participants wherever they might make a significant contribution.

A leading company will create and promote stronger partnerships by galvanizing finance for sustainable development, fostering exchange of technology and knowledge with stakeholders in developing regions, engaging in capacity building activities, and taking a leading role in



establishing coalitions to create innovative technologies and business models. A leading company will look across borders to find ways to increase partnerships for sustainable development, especially in least developed countries, and tackle systemic challenges through joint leverage. It will also ensure to include vulnerable communities that are at risk of being excluded from discussion. Such partnerships will be principles-based and needs-driven, build on local capacity, and reflect the undiluted values of the United Nations to ensure they are transparent, accountable, and inclusive.

Action on Goal 17, and thereby advancing all Global Goals, is essential for business success. There are significant revenue opportunities and costs savings from business practices that integrate respect and support for human rights and protection of the planet. These can be harnessed more fully in collaboration with other stakeholders. Partnerships facilitate the exchange of information, knowledge and technologies that allow for enhanced risk management, value protection, and identification of joint business opportunities

Business action can include:

- Leading on partnerships to improve domestic resource mobilisation through responsible tax practices
- Galvanizing private sector finance to support sustainable development initiatives in developing countries
- Building regulatory, organizational, and staff capacity in developing countries
- Leading on partnerships to develop and share new and existing technology, knowledge, and business models
- Leading on partnerships that address systemic challenges for achieving the SDGs

Enhancing North-South and South-South cooperation by supporting national plans to achieve all the SDGs, promoting international trade, and helping developing countries increase their exports is all part of achieving a universal rules-based and equitable trading system that is fair and open and benefits all (UNDP, 2019).

### ***2.2.5 The sustainability policy framework emerging from SDGs.***

Based on each of these goals, this means that in terms of application, as the UN 2016 Report advises, businesses must ensure their actions and operations and those of their supply chain partners work to:

Eradicate poverty in all its forms everywhere they operate to contribute to SDG 1

End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture among its employees and communities to contribute to SDG 2

Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all its employees and their communities to contribute to SDG 3

Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for its employees and communities to contribute to SDG 4

Promote gender equality and empower all women and girls among its employees and communities to contribute to SDG 5

Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation in its organisation and communities to contribute to SDG 6

Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy in its organisation and communities to contribute to SDG 7

Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for among its employees and communities to contribute to SDG 8

Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation in its organisation, across its supply chains and in the larger community to contribute to SDG 9

Engage in action that will reduce inequality within and among its people, communities, supply chains and countries where they operate to contribute to SDG 10

Contribute to making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable for its people, communities and across entire supply chains to contribute to SDG 11

Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns to contribute to SDG 12

Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts to contribute to SDG 13 through reduction of carbon footprint and other climate promoting actions.

Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development to contribute to SDG 14

Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably encourage best management of forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss to contribute to SDG 15

Support and promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels to contribute to SDG 16

Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development to contribute to SDG 17

### ***2.2.6 Justification of using the UN SDGS as the sustainability policy framework***

CIPS (2019: 6) points that the UN is an influential leader in the field of sustainability and is a strong influence on global companies. The SDGs are used because they offer organisations a roadmap to business growth while addressing social and environmental goals and because they are based on shared values (CIPS, 2019:7). The shared value idea is that profit-only approach is unsustainable in the long-term (CIPS, 2019:7).

### ***2.2.7 Concluding discussion on current research findings***

While of the three dimensions economic sustainability has dominated research the social and environmental issues have remained quite peripheral research topics in management (Banerjee, 2011: 719).

Despite many years of research on stakeholders and corporate social responsibility (CSR), very little is about the outcomes of CSR for society. This is because the primary focus in the literature is on the financial impact on the company of CSR initiative (Banerjee, 2011: 720).

Considering SDGs is fitting because people's lives are rapidly becoming "unsustainable because their livelihoods are disappearing as a result of industrial expansion" (Banerjee, 2011: 729).

While company action to implement sustainable management solutions implicitly assumes that managers and employees are aware of and implement corporate sustainability policies and procedures the reality is that "many employees may be unaware of sustainability issues beyond their immediate work responsibilities" (Haugh, & Talwar, 2010: 384). This lack of understanding of the issue might be contributing to challenges organisations face in implementing sustainability policy such that Haugh and Talwar (2010) advocate that employees need to learn about sustainability to extent that they conclude that "the dissemination of information about sustainability should be companywide and not restricted to small groups of selected employees" (p.393).

### ***2.2.8 Corporate Code of Ethics & Annual Sustainability Reporting***

CIPS (2019) expresses that the organisations adopting the Code will need to commit to the following:

#### *Understanding and commitment*

- ensure consistent understanding of business ethics across the organisation at all levels
- continually enhance knowledge of all relevant laws and regulations in the countries in which the organisation operates, either directly or indirectly
- commit to eradicating unethical business practices including bribery, fraud, corruption and human rights abuses, such as modern slavery and child labour

#### *Ethical practice*

- conduct all business relationships with respect, honesty and integrity, and avoid causing harm to others because of business decisions
- treat all stakeholders fairly and impartially, without discrimination or favour
- actively support and promote corporate social responsibility (CSR)
- avoid any business practices which might bring the procurement profession into disrepute.

#### *Professionalism*

- use procurement strategies to drive unethical practices from the supply chain
- ensure procurement decisions minimise any negative impact on human rights and the environment whilst endeavouring to maximise value and service levels
- put ethical policies and procedures in place, regularly monitored and updated, and ensure compliance
- mandate the education and training of all staff involved in sourcing, supplier selection and supplier management to professional standards
- practise due diligence in all business undertakings.

## *Accountability*

- accept accountability and take ownership of business ethics
- foster a culture of leadership by example
- take steps to prevent, report and remedy unethical practices
- provide a safe environment for the reporting of unethical practices.

### ***2.2.9 Enforcing sustainability across supply chains: a practical discussion***

An organisation committed to best practice sustainability must develop its Corporate Code of Ethics and Sustainability as part of its commitment to reinforcing ethical and sustainability values across all procurement and supply practices. This must be a self-made and voluntary code that can be adopted by the organisations which sets out the values, business culture and practices the organisation must demonstrate and what it would expect those in its supply chain to also demonstrate (CIPS, 2019). Thus, an organisation must demand that all its supply chain partners get signed up to a sustainability code if they are still doing business together. The organisation and its supply chain partners must further commit to an annual sustainability reporting.

To ensure an organisation's suppliers are ethical and sustainable sources, the organisation will need to audit them. This must be carried out as part of an organisation's supplier assessment through a suitable questionnaire. The questionnaire must be posted to all suppliers, but a more proactive method would be to visit the suppliers and assess in person whether they are operating ethically and sustainably.

Of course, distance, time and cost may prevent visit feasibility but where there are limitations still references must be obtained from reputable customers of the supplier as well as information from government agencies in the country where the supplier is situated. More importantly suppliers must become approved against one of the social accountability standards, such as SA8000, ISO 14001, ISO 9001, ISO 20400 (for ethical and sustainability issues), ISO 26000 (social responsibility) – (CIPS 2019: 128)

(CIPS, 2019: 128-129) states that ISO 26000 gives standards and guidelines on seven core subjects of social responsibility which are

- Organisational governance
- Human rights like food, adequate shelter and clean water.
- Labour practices like safety, rest periods, hours of work and fair pay, equal pay, diversity and inclusivity
- The environment like reducing electronic waste, air waste and water waste.
- Fair operation practices like safe and quality products and services, taking customer concerns seriously and providing clear product information
- Consumer issues
- Community involvement and development like community engagement, local sourcing and local employment, uplifting disadvantaged people and providing education

Issued as the first international standard for sustainable procurement in 2017, the ISO 20400 gives standards and guidance on how to judge suppliers on ethical and sustainability issues

that is their contribution to reducing their impact on the environment and tackle human rights issues as well as manage supplier relations (CIPS, 2019: 19).

### ***2.2.10 Challenges in implementing sustainability***

CIPS (2019: 20-21) identifies several challenges that organisations which want to be successful in implementing sustainability must overcome. These include lack of training and reliable information on social, ethical, and environmental principles and processes (p.20); shortage of suppliers who can fulfil sustainability objectives (p. 20); the need to justify the principles of sustainability to management (p.20); that sustainability is time consuming and costly than worthwhile (p.21) and the difficulty in measuring the result of social factors (p.21).

### ***2.2.11 Solutions to the challenges***

Solutions to these challenges include the need to have a sustainability organisational policy (CIPS, 2019:20); training and guiding all employees and supply chain partners on sustainability principles, (p.20); educating and supporting suppliers on sustainability issues (p.20); illustrating how sustainability pays back over time and performing regular monitoring and achievements (p.21). Annual sustainability reporting and demanding certifications and corporate codes of ethics and sustainability can be used to overcome the challenges.

### ***2.2.12 Conclusion***

Findings emerging from this literature reveal a lack of significant extant literature on the specifics of the topic under investigation with the research on the social and environmental issues still remaining quite peripheral research topics making the current literature not inclusive enough of the totality of sustainability . It is also clear that sustainability should not be talk but practice-driven and should be embedded and included in all business actions internally and externally and that it must be based on shared values which are best represented by the UN SDGs. Also emerging from the literature review is that the UN SDGs are the best basis for a sustainable sustainability policy framework.

It also emerges from the literature that Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a business approach that contributes to sustainable development by delivering economic, social and environmental benefits for all stakeholders. CSR has increasingly been at the forefront of global corporate sustainability initiatives.

While there are many ways, four effective ways your company can improve its sustainability initiatives includes through:

- Company Mission
- Waste Reduction
- Employee Engagement
- Measurement & Certification

The UN SDGs eventually came up with a list of 17 items which included amongst other things:

- The end of poverty and hunger

- Better standards of education and healthcare - particularly as it pertains to water quality and better sanitation
- To achieve gender equality
- Sustainable economic growth while promoting jobs and stronger economies
- All the above and more while tackling the effects of climate change, pollution and other environmental factors that can harm and do harm people's health, livelihoods and lives.
- Sustainability to include health of the land, air and sea

A business striving to implement a sustainability strategy needs the support of its employees and top management to make it stick. This is because employees and top management are at the heart of any organisation, and without their buy-in, a policy will likely fail.

### ***2.2.13 Summary***

This chapter reviewed main areas related to the sustainability concepts namely: (i) the definitions of sustainability as applied in this dissertation; (ii) the sustainability business case in supply chains; (iii) organisational actions that satisfy the leadership qualities that can drive the sustainability agenda among its supply chain partners as per the Blueprint for Leadership on the SDGs, including the guiding questions and (iv) the 17 UN Global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); (v) emerging sustainability policy framework based the 17 SDGs; (vi) the SDGs justification as basis for sustainability policy; (vii) concluding discussion on current research findings; (viii) corporate code of ethics and annual sustainability reporting; (ix) a practical discussion on enforcing sustainability across supply chains; (x) discussion of challenges in implementing sustainability; (xi) solutions to the challenges; (xii) a conclusion and (xiii) ended with a summary. The next chapter, chapter 3, explains the research methodology for this study.

## **CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### ***3.1 Introduction***

The purpose of this methodology chapter is to give an experienced action research investigator enough information to replicate the study. A research design is used to structure the research and to show how all of the major parts of the research project, including the sample, measures, and methods of assignment, work together to address the central research questions in the study. This chapter begins with a paragraph reiterating the purpose or aim of the study as well as research objectives and research questions. Also covered are the research approach and design and an explanation of appropriateness of these. The setting and the participants, procedure and instrumentation, data processing and analysis, validity and ethical consideration are all discussed in this chapter.

### ***3.2.1 Research aim***

The aim of this individual action research was to identify what must be included in an organisations' sustainability policy as well as its sustainability Key Performance Indicators for its supply chain partners using the UN's 17 SDGs to ensure business organisations contribute to the UN 2030 social development agenda realisation.

### ***3.2.2 Research Objectives***

The general objective of this action research was to create an organisation's sustainability policy as well as sustainability key performance indicators for an organisation's supply chain partners.

The specific objectives of this study are to use the UN 17 SDGs

5. To assess the sustainability benefits for an organisation
6. To describe the five organisational leadership qualities that drive sustainability in an organisation that is pro-sustainability
7. To design an organisation's sustainability policy
8. To create sustainability Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for an organisation's supply chain partners SDGs.

### ***3.2.3 Research Questions***

To shed light on the problem and to address the research objectives, the following research questions are addressed:

6. What is the importance of sustainability to an organisation and its entire supply chain?
7. Why do organisations have problems developing and implementing sustainability policies for themselves and their supply chains?
8. What five UN Global Compact based leadership qualities an organisation that intends to build its sustainability must demonstrate?
9. If the UN's 17 SDGs can be used as a sustainability policy crafting blueprint what then must an organisation's sustainability policy contain?
10. What must an organisation include as its sustainability Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) when evaluating its supply chain partners to ensure the entire supply chain positively contributes to the realisation of the UN SDGs agenda?

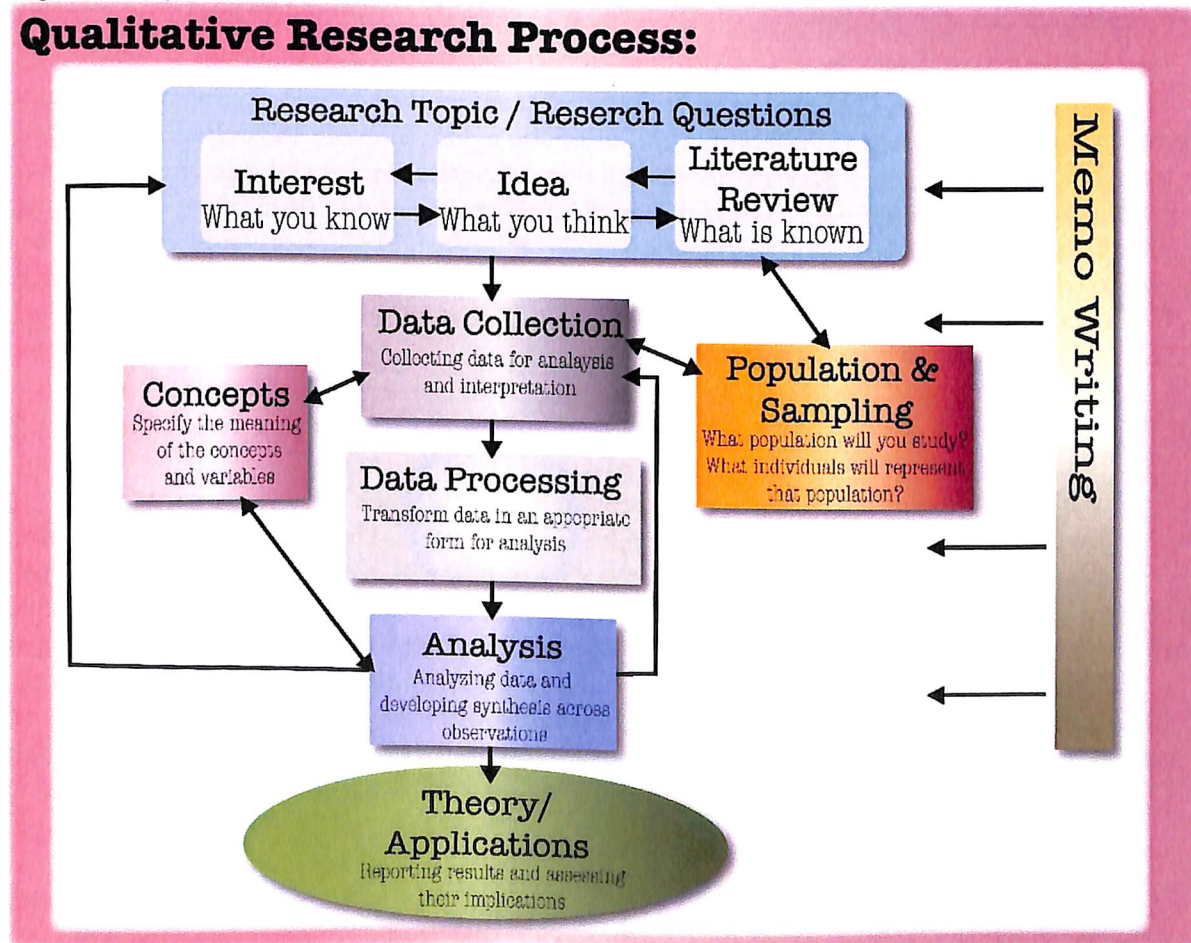
### 3.3 Research Approach and Design

The purpose or aim of this study was to design a sustainability policy as a practical outcome to be adopted and implemented by a real organisation to solve the problem of absence of a comprehensive sustainability policy in the organisation. Critical action research was therefore the most appropriate design to do this making it adopt a qualitative paradigm. This approach allowed a practice-based real outcome.

#### 3.3.1 Appropriateness of the Qualitative Action Research Design

Because the study aimed to produce a complete detailed description of the contents that must drive a sustainability policy document, it was merely natural that adopted a qualitative approach rather than a quantitative one to enable the research to produce a rich document as its outcome. Being a supply chain and procurement professional, the researcher is immersed in the subject matter which might seem a subjectivity limitation but which nonetheless allowed for real experience application in an outcome to resolve a practical problem in the workplace. Data used was in the form of words or simply documents with the researcher being the data gathering instrument. This qualifies this research to be qualitative since to has all the Miles and Huberman (1994: 40) characteristics of a qualitative research design. So, this design matched the purpose of the study. A qualitative study is appropriate when the goal of research is to explain a phenomenon by relying on the perception of a person's experience in each situation (Stake, 2010).

Figure 3.0 Qualitative Research Process





The figure above reflects how this qualitative action research process was done.

In this qualitative research, all of work was done in cycles because the researcher was not testing a hypothesis based upon previous findings, rather the researcher was exploring unknown terrain. As the researcher conducted the data collection and analysed the data, new concepts emerged forcing the researcher to continuously refine the research questions and consulting the literature as the research moved into new areas of inquiry. Your sample size used was deemed large enough to ensure that a full variety of experiences relating to sustainability is captured to address the topic and aims of the research. Once it was felt that there was no longer need for generating new findings from the data collection, the researcher analysed the results obtained and began to develop a cogent descriptions of the phenomenon as observed. No counterfactual possibilities regarding how to draft the sustainability policy besides using the UN SDGs were considered.

### ***3.4 The Researcher***

At the time of conducting this study, the researcher was a certified supply chain consultant (Institute of Supply Chain Management – IoSCM, UK), an MCIPS Chartered Procurement & Supply Professional (Chartered Institute of Procurement & Supply – CIPS, UK) and a PhD student with the University of Johannesburg, RSA, an adjunct lecturer with the Botswana Open University and employed as a supply chain manager and lecturer. Thus, the researcher brings to the inquiry process practical experience as a working supply chain professional with both knowledge and understanding of the sustainability policy and key performance indicators, challenges for organisations and their supply chains. The researcher, however, acknowledges that the same experiences that are so valuable in providing insight could bias their judgement regarding the key areas to be covered in sustainability policies and key performance indicators. Despite such a potential limitation, the researcher remains committed to engaging in ongoing critical self-evaluation by way of journaling and dialogue with other supply chain practitioners and experts. To address subjectivity, the researcher presents the crafted policy documents for checks with other supply chain professional colleagues. Having done year 1 of a Doctor of Business Administration at Horizons University, France and taken a policy development seminar, the researcher has a practical working knowledge of how to design a policy.

### ***3.4 Setting, Participants & Sampling***

This qualitative study which is largely individual action research the researcher is the principal participant. However, for validity's sake ten certified procurement and supply professionals with experience in sustainability were purposefully selected based on their experience and knowledge on the study's subject matter. This sample of ten proved enough in evaluating and validating the sustainability policy document derived from the UN SDGs. The sample size was determined through a purpose power analysis. The study is based on the Megasize College work context. Purposeful sampling was done because for the purposes of this action research, only supply chain practising professionals with expertise in sustainability were chosen because they were considered as information-rich both in terms of policy content and the SDGs which are robust factors with respect to the purposes of the study.

Besides purposefully sampling the supply chain practicing professionals to form the interpretive focus group, the study also purposefully sampled the UN SDGs and the Blueprint for Business Leadership on the SDGs as two basic documents for the development of the

sustainability policy draft. This is because the UN SDGs are universal and are shared values and therefore using them for such a policy resonated with best broad practice. The documents were also seen as very useful in defining best leadership practices that can promote sustainability.

### ***3.5 Instrumentation & Procedure***

Data regarding the contents of the sustainability policy was drawn from the readings of the UN SDGs and the Blueprint for Business Leadership on the SDGs documents. Permission was sought from Megasize College to conduct the study and ten supply chain and procurement professionals were invitation to participate following a briefing of the research aims for their informed consent forms.

The study is deemed to be one of minimal risk to participants such that probability and magnitude of harm or discomfort anticipated in the research was perceived to be not greater than any ordinarily encountered in daily life, or during the performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests.

After the researcher drafted the sustainability document, the ten, as sustainability practioners and supply chain professionals collaborated in the analysis of the draft sustainability policy document through a focus group discussion.

These ten formed the interpretive focus group which discussed the sustainability policy areas in terms of relevance captured from their experiences and views regarding specific sustainability issues closely related to research. This meant a focus group data collection method became most suitable for this study since multiple perspectives needed to be obtained regarding the same sustainability policy content.

The focus group was led by the researcher who also acted as a moderator responsible for ensuring that the group discussion remained focused on the research area. The advantages of focus groups included the possibility of obtaining primary data through non-verbal channels, as well as, verbal channels and approaching the research area from various perspectives.

The researcher provided the UN SDG documents to those in the group two weeks prior to the policy evaluation discussion to allow them enough time to familiarise themselves with the SDGs. The draft policy document was also given to each at the same time to allow individuals to make comparisons of the SDGs and whether the draft captured the sustainability concept comprehensively

### ***3.6 Limitations***

The use of the qualitative individual action research and focus group discussions present some methodological limitations. Group discussions moderated by the researcher were heavily influenced by the researcher and two other dominant individuals in the group. Some members of the focus group were discouraged from participating in discussions due to lack of confidence and some were not fully aware of the UN SDGs and the sustainability key areas in general. To overcome these challenges the researcher provided the UN SDG documents to those in the group two weeks prior to the policy evaluation discussion to allow them enough time to familiarise themselves with the SDGs. The draft policy document was also given to each at the same time to allow individuals to make comparisons of the SDGs and whether the

draft captured the sustainability concept comprehensively. Although such analysis by the focus group is much more difficult compared to questionnaires and interviews, the researcher felt it was the best methods for this research study.

### ***3.7 Data Processing and Analysis***

The researcher drafted the sustainability policy document using the UN SDGs. This was made available to the ten focus group members for two weeks to compare its contents to the SDDs. Individually they each made notes on similarities and differences and between the SDGs and the policy document for the entire 17 SDGs since the policy was based on all the 17 SDGs. Then the group met to discuss and analyse the policy document under the moderation of the researcher with the researcher fine-tuning the policy point by point as the discussion progressed. At the end of the 17 SDG content thematic discussion analysis the final sustainability policy was drafted and was recirculated to all ten for second analysis to ensure all their views were verified before being incorporated into the final document which was present to the College Board for approval and for implementation kick off

### ***3.8 Validity***

Anderson et al (1994) identified five criteria for validity of action research. In this case, the whole study itself should answer the point of whether the research was worth doing. They identified the criteria such as democratic validity which answers the question, "Have the multiple perspectives of all of the individuals in the study been accurately represented?"; outcome validity which answers the question, "Did the action emerging from the study lead to the successful resolution of the problem?"; process validity, which responds to the question, "Was the study conducted in a dependable and competent manner?"; catalytic validity, which responds to the question, "Were the results of the study a catalyst for action?" dialogic validity, which asks whether the research was reviewed by peers.

This study meets all the five validity criteria tests. While the study was largely based on the researcher experience it achieved democratic validity by incorporating the multiple perspectives of other individual procurement and supply chain individuals to ensure the outcome sustainability policy is accurately represented. Outcome validity was assured by making sure that a sustainability policy was to be designed and be used as the company's applied sustainability policy both within the organisation and across the organisation's supply chain to fill in the gap or problem of lack of a clear sustainability policy. Involving others in discussing each content of the sustainability policy did not only help achieve democratic validity alone but also process validity. The outcome of the study was a policy document which must be implemented with the organisation and its supply chain, hence enabling catalytic validity. Review of the sustainability policy content by peers ensured that the study achieves dialogic validity. Review of sustainability policy document by the interpretive focus group offered good triangulation which enhanced the validity of findings. Triangulation also validated the methodology by an examination of the results from several perspectives.

### ***3.9 Ethical Considerations***

In this action research study, the procedures for the protection of participants were considered through careful planning, conducting and evaluation of the sustainability policy document in a manner presented no risk to participants. Care was taken to ensure that the participants fully

understood the nature of the study and the fact that participation was clearly voluntary. A confidentiality statement regarding the participants guaranteed, always, their anonymity. Identification of participants was not made available during or after the study.

### ***3.10 Summary***

The purpose of this methodology chapter was to give an experienced action research investigator enough information to replicate the study through explaining the research design used to structure this research and showing how all of the major parts of the research project, including the sample, measures, and methods of assignment, work together to address the central research questions in the study. The chapter began with a paragraph reiterating the purpose or aim of the study as well as research objectives and research questions. It then went on to discuss the research approach and design and explained the appropriateness of these. The setting and participants, procedure and instrumentation, data processing and analysis, validity and ethical consideration were all discussed in this chapter. The next chapter reveals the findings and discusses those findings.

## CHAPTER 4

### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter organizes and reports the study's outcome which is the sustainability policy draft following the focus group discussions which is an equivalent of the main findings in a qualitative research and which is often a narrative. Due to the research action genre that this research adopted, presentation of the results in the form of a draft documents which shows the vision, commitment, objective, rationale for adopting the UN SDGs as the policy basis, scope, reporting, policy provisions including values, leadership qualities, company sustainability themes and goals actions, summary sustainability policy framework, sustainability management framework responsibility, definition and acronyms and versioning which are all typically contained in policy documents. Thus chapter 4 presents the complete sustainability policy document emerging from the sustainability focus group discussion.

#### 4.1 Vision

The College strives to operate in the most sustainable way for a better planet, better community, better supply chain, and better employees and staff. The College will always demonstrate concern for the environment and promote a broader sustainability agenda that is integral to all its activities and the management of the organisation. The College aims to follow and to promote good sustainability practice, to reduce the environmental impacts of all its activities and to help its key stakeholders and partners to do the same.

#### 4.2 Commitment

The College attention to environmental, social and economic responsibility includes working within the law and voluntarily exceeding legal requirements in order to be innovative and demonstrate leadership on the issues that are important to it and its stakeholders. As the College designs experiences, execute events and evaluate its success it is able to choose every day in big and small ways how its actions and words build a better quality of life for its employees, clients, community, and entire supply chains including suppliers.

#### 4.3 Objective

The objective of this Sustainability Policy is to provide the framework for expressing the College's commitment to the incorporation of sustainability principles and practices in its procurement, teaching, research, community engagement and operations as deriving from the UN SDGS. The College commits to:

- Minimize environmental impacts in the areas of waste, water, energy and air quality
- Give back to communities by volunteering and donating resources
- Ensure its supply chains have responsible social and environmental practices
- Create innovative approaches to minimize negative environmental impacts, improve economic bottom lines and integrate the social elements in to delivering meetings.

#### 4.4 Rationale for a Sustainability Policy based on SDGs

UN SDGs were used because they define the international community of states and all sectors of societies future development agenda for 2015-2030. The company also adopts a sustainability policy based on such SDGs because of their shared and proactive agenda

## **4.5 Scope**

This Sustainability Policy applies to all College employees, staff, students and agents engaged in College activities or activities reasonably considered related to the College and its entire Supply Chains.

## **4.6 Reporting**

The College will externally report on Sustainability progress against these goals once per year in the Annual Sustainability Report

## **4.7 Policy Provisions**

### **4.7.1 Values**

*The College operates within the 11 values of sustainability outlined below:*

- Justice
- Human Dignity
- Sustainability
- Sharing
- Accountability
- Participation
- Solidarity
- Intentionality
- Collaboration
- Consistency
- Ambitiousness

### **4.7.2 Leadership qualities that can drive the College sustainability agenda**

*The College Sustainability Policy is based upon Five principles, outlined below:*

- *Intentionality* – as shown in the company committed to supporting the achievement of SDGs, holistic strategy that reflects the commitment, covering end-to-end operations and the wider community, committed to learning from own actions, having improvement processes in place and sustainability strategy supported by the highest levels of management.
- *Ambitiousness* – as reflected in the company operating as if it is the only best, focusing on its value chain – from suppliers to consumers and to wider group of stakeholders. The company does extend beyond the financial impact to encompass impact on people, planet and prosperity, and beyond the boundaries of its own organisation. The company is guided by actions that help achieve long-term outcomes that greatly exceed those resulting from the current industry practice and company actions aligned with what is needed to achieve SDGs.
- *Consistency* – in its actions and approaches across the various locations and ensures that these are adapted to contextual differences. The company embeds SDGs across its functions and external communities ensuring that there is consistency between what it says and what it does throughout the entire supply chain and communities. It ensures that SDGs are embedded across functions and supply chains and underpin

performance required to advance SDGs with staff and board incentives aligned with achieving SDGs.

- *Collaboration* – as shown in the company collaborating with all other actors, from civic society, governments, local communities, academia, and investors to other businesses in supporting SDGs via adopting a pro-active collaborative and partnerships approach with others, publicly advocating SDG action across its functions and across the entire, proactively looking for opportunities to partner with Governments, UN agencies, suppliers, civil society organizations, industry peers and other stakeholders to inform how to advance SDGs.
- *Accountability* – as shown in the company acting lawfully and aligning its actions to international standards and norms even when this lack and fall short in its domestic law and may not be legally mandated in the countries where it operates. The company is transparent, proactively engages and seeks the view of stakeholders in both its actions and decisions. The company holds its actions fully accountable regarding people and planet, The company publicly expresses its commitment to advance SDGs, identifies, monitors, and reports on impacts, including potentially adverse impacts, mitigates risks associated with its action, remediates negative impacts associated with its action, and engages its stakeholders in a meaningful way to advance sustainability.

#### **4.8 Company Sustainability Themes and Goal Actions – Goal by Goal**

##### *Goal 1: No poverty*

1.1 The company believes declares that poverty is a violation of human dignity, and an obstacle to the realization of all other rights whose effects are exacerbated by various forms of discrimination, including for women and persons with disabilities.

1.2 The company commits to the full participation of people in society and the economy The company commits to prevent and address human and labour rights violations and to identify and avoid practices that perpetuate poverty traps by respecting fundamental human and labour rights; adopting responsible taxation practices; and ensuring end-to-end operations do not exacerbate poverty in any way.

1.3 To meet this sustainability target, the company commits to treat women and men equally and offer them equal opportunities and security in the workplace ensuring that they both have equal chances of development, protection, and freedom to organise and express their concerns regarding all aspects that affect their lives, while both have a decent and productive work that is coupled with a living wage.

1.4 The company adopts responsible taxation practices and robustly assesses whether its activities carry the risk of contributing to poverty, directly or indirectly throughout its supply chains, and have a responsibility to work towards eliminating negative impacts to this goal by engaging in the creation of secure and decent jobs for vulnerable populations, economically empowering disadvantaged groups, ensuring decent working conditions for all employees across the business and its supply chain.

##### *Goal 2: Zero hunger*

2.1 The company believes that hunger and malnutrition pose significant barriers to human wellbeing and economic development, intensifies pressures on natural resources and knows that climate change frustrates food systems.

2.2 The company will work with NGOs and government to provide food to communities and combating hunger and malnutrition and will ensure that land used throughout its supply chains was acquired legally, with informed consent from local communities. The company supports land rights and smallholder farms to address hunger and achieve economic development and commits to reducing emitting greenhouse gasses, which it believes contributes to climate change and therefore to exacerbating hunger through impacting yields.

2.3 The company commits to directly raising the incomes of smallholder farmers by offering them contracts. The companies will innovate, invest, and share knowledge to help increase the productivity of farmers in its supply chains and wider communities; and, restructures its supply chains such that a greater proportion of revenues goes to the farmers and their workers by reducing the need for intermediaries that exploit their vulnerability for their own gain.

2.4 The company commits to improving food distribution channels to combat malnutrition in areas with limited access to healthy and to combating significant global food waste problem by eliminating food waste from its end-to-end operations, to ensure better food availability to communities around the world. The company will support farmers to increase yields and incomes from sustainable, small-scale agriculture and works towards eliminating food waste and loss.

### *Goal 3: Good health and well-being*

3.1 The company believes its business's own operations and supply chain can have direct negative impacts on health including through local pollution, disposal of hazardous waste, and health and safety standards on the work floor. So, the company adopts the least use of chemicals in the workplace especially those that can negatively impact workers' health and make work particularly hazardous.

3.2 The company educates on healthy foods, non-addictive substances, and non-defective products while it commits to the provision of affordable medication and medical devices at its workplace. The company recognizes the right to safe and healthy working conditions as set out in the International Covenant on Economic & Social Rights, takes steps to understand, monitor, and minimise negative health impacts throughout its end-to-end operations and engages in responsible business practices to understand, monitor, mitigate, and remediate negative impacts on health.

3.3 The company takes an active role in multi-stakeholder initiatives that encourage healthy behaviours and improve access to healthcare, ensuring the best possible health outcomes for employees and surrounding communities across own and supply chain operations, deploying products, services, and business models for improved health outcomes and leading on multi-stakeholder initiatives that encourage healthy behaviours and improve access to healthcare.

### *Goal 4: Quality education*

4.1 The company believes it has a responsibility to provide living wages and decent working conditions to their employees so that employees can fulfil their role as caregivers by sending children to school without having to seek supplementary income.



4.2 The company critically ensures that there is zero child labour across its operations and supply chain while it uniquely ensures skills-development for working adults by taking proactive steps to support education at all levels throughout end-to-end operations.

4.3 The company facilitates life-long learning opportunities to employees across their own operations and their supply chains, ensures that all employees throughout end-to-end operations earn a living wage that allows them to support the education of dependents and encourages suppliers to do the same.

4.4 The company supports access to higher education and access to free, equitable, and inclusive primary and secondary education, engages in research, development, and deployment of products and services that will improve educational access and learning outcomes.

4.5 The company will have a workplace conducive to skills-development and learning, ensures that all employees across the business and supply chain have access to vocational training and life-long learning opportunities, earn a wage that allows them to support the education of dependents and that there is zero child labour, implements programmes to support higher education and access to free, equitable, and inclusive primary and secondary education and engages in research, development, and deployment of products and services that improve educational access and learning outcomes.

#### *Goal 5: Gender equality*

5.1 The company believes gender equality is a fundamental and inviolable human right and has a fundamental responsibility to respect the rights of women and girls. The company seeks to maximize their positive impact towards gender equality across all levels and functions of their business, throughout their supply-chain and within the communities where they operate.

5.2 The company ensures respect for women and girls and supporting gender equality to unlock vast amounts of economic potential. Thus the company commits to implementing policies and practices that are free from and prevent gender-based discrimination across the workplace, and its entire supply chains, employment of women, striving for gender balance at all levels across the business and supply chain, develop products and services and implements marketing practices that empower women.

#### *Goal 6: Clean water and sanitation*

6.1 The company believes that sustainable water management is essential for human dignity and wellbeing, economic productivity, and environmental resilience. The company respects the rights of communities to water and sanitation and supports the government, and other stakeholder efforts to provide universal access to clean water and sanitation.

6.2 The company will continuously monitor own water resources and takes appropriate action that improves water efficiency, reduces water inputs, investing in wastewater treatment, and water reuse collaborates with other stakeholders to address water risks.

6.3 The company implements water stewardship plans developed in consultation with other water users, works improve access to clean water and sanitation across own facilities, throughout supply chains, and the wider community.

6.4 The company will invest and engage with government and civil society for the provision of water and sanitation (WASH) and the holistic management of water resources to meet social, economic and environmental needs. The company will work to protect and restore natural infrastructure that supports clean water provision, develop and implement holistic water strategies that are socially equitable, environmentally sustainable, and economically beneficial in watersheds around company and supply chain operations, protect and/or restore water-based ecosystems around own operations and supply chain and ensure access to water and sanitation by addressing impacts of company and supply chain operations on local water supplies and supporting stakeholders to deliver clean water and sanitation.

*Goal 7: Affordable and clean energy*

7.1 The company will finance, develop and use clean energy technologies in the workplace, communities and supply chains. The company will engage in actions that promote energy efficiency and source energy from renewable sources, and only engages suppliers to do the same.

7.2 The company will significantly increase energy efficiency, source remaining energy needs from renewable sources, and promote the same action across the supply chain through supplier selection and support.

7.3 The company will research, develop, and deploy affordable sustainable energy and energy efficiency products and services as well as develop and implement business models to deliver sustainable energy and energy efficiency technologies to new markets and communities.

*Goal 8: Decent work and economic growth*

8.1 The company will provide decent work that is productive and delivers a fair income; security in the workplace; social protection for families; better prospects for personal development and social integration; freedom for people to express their concerns, organize and participate in the decisions that affect their lives; and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men.

8.2 The company will invest in innovation, labour and capital to achieve strong, sustainable and equitable economic growth that provides decent jobs and will demand that suppliers put in place policies and practices to support decent working conditions for all employees across the business and supply chain.

8.3 The company will partner with suppliers to build decent work and economic growth capacity and support other stakeholders in their efforts, lead by educating and training the labour force, including workers across end-to-end operations and in surrounding communities, and focusing particularly on vulnerable groups including women, young people and persons with disabilities, so that they acquire the skills needed to provide productive labour or transition from informal to formal sector work, and remain employable in a changing labour market.

8.4 The company will invest in R&D, upgrading skills, and supporting growing businesses, supporting decent working conditions for all employees across the business and supply chain, with partnerships to build suppliers' capacity to do the same, educating and training the labour force, focusing on vulnerable and economically disadvantaged groups, creating decent

formal-sector jobs in labour-intensive sectors, especially in least-developed countries and driving economic growth and productivity by investing in R&D, upgrading skills, and supporting growing businesses, in a way that is compatible with sustainable development.

*Goal 9: Industry, innovation and infrastructure*

9.1 The company believes that industry, infrastructure and innovation are key drivers of economic growth and social value creation and that sustainable industrialization can lift communities out of poverty.

9.2 The company will finance research, development and deployment of technologies and processes, as well as the production of capital assets and infrastructure. It will also be instrumental in creating an enabling environment for innovation and investment through its engagement with other stakeholders such as Governments on innovation, policy, and accessibility to intellectual property and other assets.

9.3 The company will comply with relevant laws designed to protect people and the environment, support inclusive and sustainable upgrading of industries through focusing on transferring technologies and skills to build local capabilities.

9.4 The company will create innovation systems for sustainable development by providing access to finance, fostering entrepreneurship, and pooling financial and research resources in a global knowledge base, lead in upgrading and retrofitting of infrastructure and industry assets across own and supply chain operations to make them sustainable and resilient.

*Goal 10: Reduced inequalities*

10.1 The company believes that equality is fundamental to a stable, just, prosperous, and peaceful society. The company will ensure that women, racial minorities and indigenous populations, have equal access to opportunities – do not face exclusion from business ownership and corporate decision making and discrimination related to wages, employment, and access to financial services across its supply chains.

10.2 The company will assess how it and its suppliers impact the distribution of economic value across stakeholder groups and implement policies and practices to make it more equal. The company will support the establishment and expansion of social protection measures, implement policies and practices to support equality of opportunity, treatment, and outcome for across own and supply chain operations.

10.3 The company will design and implement products, services, and business models that target the needs of disadvantaged, vulnerable and marginalized populations.

*Goal 11: Sustainable cities and communities*

11.1 The company believes that cities are centres of commerce, generating more than 80 per cent of global GDP, and play a key role in boosting productivity needed for economic development.

11.2 The company will work with city authorities and governments for better access to quality housing, transport, green, and heritage sites in cities through research, development, and deployment of products and services that improve access to resilient buildings, transport, green spaces, and utilities including electricity, water, and waste management services. The

company commits to reducing pollution improve city health, education, sustainable energy, and provision of decent work and equality. It will ensure that urban areas have reduced environmental footprint.

11.3 Company actions will include researching, developing, and deploying products and services which improve access to resilient buildings, transport, green spaces, and utilities, protecting and investing in cultural and natural heritage and supporting access to essential services across the workplace, marketplace, and community.

*Goal 12: Responsible consumption and production*

12.1 The company believes that responsible consumption and production are fundamental to sustainable development such that it commits to playing a central role in advancing responsible production and consumption by improving efficiencies, look to source more sustainable inputs, improve the sustainability of products and services at the point of use with credible sustainability information, report publicly on their sustainability performance and that of their supply chain, and take steps to ensure their products are not misused to violate human rights.

12.2 The company will shift to a portfolio of goods and services that require, and promote, negligible use of resources and negligible production of waste when used, including developing products and services with extended useful lifetimes, accurate sustainability labelling, and education of consumers on use phase and disposal.

12.3 The company will engage in transparency reporting on sustainability of production and consumption across end-to-end operations and their impact on surrounding communities. The company will engage in designing and adopting a responsible, circular business model, significantly narrow energy loops across own and supply chain operations, shift to a portfolio of goods and services that require and promote negligible use of resources and produce negligible waste, develop, implement, and share solutions for tracking and reporting on sustainability of production and consumption across end-to-end operations and impact on surrounding communities.

*Goal 13: Climate action*

13.1 The company believes that climate change is caused by human emissions of greenhouse gases associated with electricity and heat production, industry, buildings, transport, and land use. The company will act urgently and decisively to fundamentally change the greenhouse gas emissions associated with its products and processes in order to achieve net-zero emissions where possible.

13.2 The company will develop and implement innovative, far-reaching solutions that cut emissions in its operations and value chains, contribute to climate resilience, and/or bring about step changes in climate change awareness.

13.3 The company will radically improve its carbon efficiency of own operations; source low-carbon materials and energy inputs from renewable sources; and reduce the carbon footprint over the life cycle of products and services. The company will promote climate conscious behaviour and build capacity for climate action across its supply chain.

*Goal 14: Life below water*

14.1 The company believes that healthy oceans are critical for life on earth. The company will implement policies and practices that protect ocean ecosystems that are affected by business and supply chain activities, research, develop and deploy products, services, and business models which negate impacts on ocean ecosystems and contribute to their restoration. The company will finance the protection and further development of ocean ecosystems and water system flows.

*Goal 15: Life on land*

15.1 The company believes that terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems are under immense pressure as challenges including biodiversity loss, land degradation and illicit wildlife trade mount.

15.2 The company will respect applicable environmental laws governing pollution, land-use, and life on land and will only deal with suppliers able to do the same. It will adopt and integrate international standards that have been developed to support the core principles of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Nagoya Protocol.

15.3 The company will value natural ecosystems, ensuring that activities across internal operations and the value chain contribute to protecting ecosystems, and innovating and providing finance for preservation and enhancement of ecosystems.

15.4 The company will adopt the highest environmental standards and implement procedures to protect natural ecosystems that are affected by business and supply chain activities, including land remediation and rehabilitation, and habitat protection and restoration.

15.5 The company will do so through multi-stakeholder partnerships and standards where they can, commit to research, development and deployment of new technologies to help decouple economic activity from the degradation of natural ecosystems.

15.6 The company will lead by galvanizing finance to create awareness, protect, and further develop natural ecosystems, implement policies and practices to protect natural ecosystems that are affected by business and supply chain activities, research, develop, and deploy products, services, and business models to help decouple economic activity from the degradation of natural ecosystems.

*Goal 16 Peace justice and strong institutions*

16.1 The company believes that violence, homicides, and conflicts have increased in recent years. High-intensity armed conflicts are causing many displaced persons and threatening the rule of law. Bribery and corruption impede business growth, raise transaction costs, and create an unlevel playing field. Social instability, fuels mistrust in public officials and institutions and undermines the rule of law and many people worldwide continue to live outside the protection of the law.

16.2 The company will respect and support peace, justice, and strong institutions, advance anti-bribery and corruption, peace and rule of law efforts, as a complement to, not substitute for, government action. The company adopts a zero violence, abuse, exploitation, and corruption tolerance across own operations and supply chains.

16.3 The company will respect and support government efforts to advance peace, justice, and the proper functioning of effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions. The company will

identify and take robust action against corruption and violence in own operations and the supply chain, work with governments to strengthen institutions and increase respect and support for the rule of law and work with government and/or international institutions in areas of conflict and humanitarian crises to contribute to peace and institution building.

#### *Goal 17: Partnerships for the Goals*

17.1 The company believes that it is one of the key SDG stakeholders and believes it will participate in and establish multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technologies and financial resources.

17.2 The company will seek to be aware of the key partnerships in the context of their end-to-end operations and become active participants wherever they might make a significant contribution, promoting stronger partnerships by galvanizing finance for sustainable development, fostering exchange of technology and knowledge with stakeholders in developing regions, engaging in capacity building activities, and taking a leading role in establishing coalitions to create innovative technologies and business models.

17.3 The company will form partnerships to improve domestic resource mobilisation through responsible tax practices, galvanize finance to support sustainable development initiatives in developing countries and communities, build regulatory, organizational, and staff capacity, develop and share new and existing technology, knowledge, and business models, and lead on partnerships that address systemic challenges for achieving the SDGs.

#### **4.9 The sustainability policy framework end goals summary emerging from SDGs.**

Based on each of these goals, this means that in terms of application, as the UN 2016 Report advises, the company must ensure their actions and operations and those of their supply chain partners work to:

Eradicate poverty in all its forms everywhere they operate to contribute to SDG 1.

End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture among its employees and communities to contribute to SDG 2.

Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all its employees and their communities to contribute to SDG 3.

Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for its employees and communities to contribute to SDG 4.

Promote gender equality and empower all women and girls among its employees and communities to contribute to SDG 5.

Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation in its organisation and communities to contribute to SDG 6.

Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy in its organisation and communities to contribute to SDG 7.

Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for among its employees and communities to contribute to SDG 8.

Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation in its organisation, across its supply chains and in the larger community to contribute to SDG 9.

Engage in activities that will reduce inequality within and among its people, communities, supply chains and countries where they operate to contribute to SDG 10.

Contribute to making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable for its people, communities and across entire supply chains to contribute to SDG 11.

Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns to contribute to SDG 12.

Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts to contribute to SDG 13 through reduction of carbon footprint and other climate promoting actions.

Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development to contribute to SDG 14.

Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably encourage the best management of forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss to contribute to SDG 15.

Support and promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels to contribute to SDG 16.

Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development to contribute to SDG 17.

#### **4.10 Sustainability Management Framework**

The sustainability management framework consists of this policy, a strategy, management plan and annual action plans as required.

#### **4.11 Responsibility**

The College Principal is committed to, and has the ultimate responsibility for, the effective implementation and coordination of this Sustainability Policy and, via the Senior Management Team and the Sustainability Committee which reports to it, will direct initiatives to:

- Develop and implement a sustainability strategy.
- Ensure compliance with all relevant laws and regulations.
- Continuously improve environmental, social and economic performance and go beyond compliance to maximise social good and minimise adverse environmental impacts.
- Promote, facilitate and integrate principles of sustainability within all procurement, curriculum and teaching programs, and research in sustainability.
- Lead by example in addressing College impacts on the community and the environment.

- Raise awareness and encourage action for sustainability through training and general education of staff, students and the wider College community.
- Require all independent operators and contractors on College campuses and property to comply with the requirements of this policy.
- Monitor and evaluate performance on a regular basis, using agreed targets and indicators.
- Records and Information that support these activities will be created, managed and retained in accordance with College Records Management Policy, Procedures and Guidelines.

#### 4.12 Definitions & Acronyms

The following terms and acronyms shall have the assigned definitions for all purposes under this policy:

Table 2 Term/Acronym Definition

<b>Term/Acronym</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Sustainability	Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. (Brundtland Commission Report, 1987)
Sustainable Development (SD)	Development that improves the quality of life, both now and in the future, in a way that maintains the ecological processes on which life depends.
Life Cycle Cost Assessment	A systematic process for evaluating the life cycle costs of a product, product line, process, system or facility -- from raw material acquisition to disposal -- by identifying environmental consequences and assigning monetary value.
Post-Consumer Waste	A finished material which would normally be disposed of as solid waste, having completed its life cycle as a consumer item.
Waste prevention	To reduce the amount of solid waste generated or resources used, without increasing toxicity, in the design, manufacture, purchase or use of products or packaging
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UN	United Nations

#### 4.13 Versioning

<b>Version(s)</b>	Version 1: <i>Sustainability Policy</i> ; approved October 2019
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#### **4.14 Summary**

This chapter organized and reported the study's outcome which is the sustainability policy draft following the focus group discussions which is an equivalent of the main findings in a qualitative research and which is often a narrative. Due to the research action genre that this research adopted, presentation of the results was in the form of a draft documents which shows the vision, commitment, objective, rationale for adopting the UN SDGs as the policy basis, scope, reporting, policy provisions including values, leadership qualities, company sustainability themes and goals actions, summary sustainability policy framework, sustainability management framework responsibility, definition and acronyms and versioning which are all typically contained in policy documents. Thus chapter 4 presented the complete sustainability policy document emerging from the sustainability focus group discussion

## CHAPTER 5

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter will provide a summary of the purpose, methodology, and results of this study. Then, conclusions will be discussed based on researcher insights gained regarding study findings and limitations. In addition, two sets of recommendations are presented. The first set of recommendations is directed toward practitioners in the field, described in this study as sustainability directors. Finally, a set of recommendations is presented for professionals interested in pursuing additional research to exceed the scope and findings of this study.

#### 5.2 Overview of the study

CHAPTER ONE: This chapter outlined the background to the research problem, by stating the problem, specifying the research objectives, and laying out the research approach. The proposed methods and structure of the research were described.

CHAPTER TWO provided a review of the research literature relating to the UN SDGs and leadership qualities that drive sustainability, a discussion of current literature and the gaps or limitations emerging therefrom, and explained why the UN SDGs are best drivers for a comprehensive sustainability policy for an organisation and its entire supply chain

CHAPTER THREE reviewed the research methodology used and explained why it was the most suitable approach. It also discussed the research protocol, design, limitations and analysis methods within the reliability and validity context. The chapter also discussed the ethical issues governing this research

CHAPTER FOUR presented and discussed the actual sustainability policy content that emerged from the used of the SDGs.

CHAPTER FIVE summarized the entire research and the conclusions drawn from work as well as the recommendations for practice and further research

#### 5.3. Summary

The purpose of this study was to produce a real sustainability policy document based on the UN 17 SDFs. This action research manuscript began with the identification of the UN SDGs and a brief discussion of each and potential actions to achieve each SDG.

Five principles of quality leadership requirements to drive sustainability as defined by the Blueprint were identified and explained prior to the 17 UN SDGs. Both the principles and the SDG summary documents are further put as an annexe to this document at the end.

While there is increasing studies and research being conducted about sustainability especially after 2013, the reality emerging from such research is that sustainability policy development and implementation by organisations continue to remain a huge challenge. Also emerging is that there lacks a realistic focus on the social and environmental sustainability aspects despite much written about business economic sustainability. Without these two aspects well researched on, the sustainability policy debate will be incomplete, and any sustainability policy developed therefrom will be inadequate and insufficient. Their little or no discussion

in mainstream sustainability literature will also make the triple bottom line (TBL) mantra not complete.

The lack of a sustainability policy driven and based on the UN SDG gives a picture of sustainability policies being, debatably, questionable. And the lack of UN SDG driven sustainability policy in the corporate world in the mainstream literature on sustainability makes the sustainability policies for organisations less appealing and less comprehensive while also less universal and divorced from the shared goals of the UN. Consequently, the sustainability policy development and implementation by businesses would remain incomplete and less whole if UN SDGs cannot drive them. It is this current literature limitation that this study addressed and took to a practice.

A review of the sustainability literature shows that almost all time the research that is conducted regarding sustainability is theoretical and lacks the pragmatic outcomes that really address the workplace problems. It is this methodological limitation too that gave this research its action-oriented approach based on professional practice.

#### **5.4 Major findings and Conclusions**

The purpose of this study was to use the UN SDGs to craft a sustainability policy using an action research approach. The Blueprint leadership qualities were used as the principles that will drive a widely acceptable sustainability policy.

The outcome of the action research confirmed that for corporate organisations the drafting of sustainability can best be done by a team of practising professionals practically doing the job in the unit. With a likeminded focus group of professionals in the same unit across other organisations the challenge of drafting a comprehensive and shared sustainability policy can easily be overcome while at the same time making the draft policy outcome both collaborative and more meaningful.

The action research has also led to the conclusion that the 17 UN SDGs are the best key drivers and context within which sustainability policies can be crafted because of their global acceptance and universality. Thus, a sustainability policy will have to address all the 17 SDGs as its contextual content for its sustainability policy.

It can also be concluded that the qualities of intentionality, ambitiousness, consistency, collaboration and accountability are a sustainable organisation's sustainability enablers and principles that will enable and sustain the SDG-driven sustainability policy.

#### **5.5 Limitations of the Study**

The use of the qualitative individual action research and focus group discussions present some methodological limitations. Group discussions moderated by the researcher were heavily influenced by the researcher and two other dominant individuals in the group. Some members of the focus group were discouraged from participating in discussions due to lack of confidence and some were not fully aware of the UN SDGs and the sustainability key areas in general. To overcome these challenges the researcher provided the UN SDG documents to those in the group two weeks prior to the policy evaluation discussion to allow them enough time to familiarise themselves with the SDGs. The draft policy document was also given to each at the same time to allow individuals to make comparisons of the SDGs and whether the draft captured the sustainability concept comprehensively. Although such analysis by the

focus group is much more difficult compared to questionnaires and interviews, the researcher felt it was the best methods for this research study

## **5.6 Recommendations**

### *5.6.1 Recommendations relating to practice*

Despite the limitations, the conclusions do suggest practical collaboration of supply chain professionals to lead the sustainability policy formulation and implementation to overcome policy content challenges and enhance a broad-based comprehensive sustainability policy.

The sustainability policy formulation process starts with an inward-looking self-examination by an organisation's supply chain and procurement leaders based on practical experiences and then an outward approach regarding what must such a policy contain that is likely to have a wider appeal and acceptance to create a draft policy that will be group discussed by other certified practicing supply chain and procurement professionals purposefully selected on the basis of their subject matter practical expertise.

It is this collaborative approach based on the UN universally agreed SDGs that good sustainability policies that this study recommends for adoption by the corporate organisations.

### *5.6.2 Recommendations for further studies*

More intensive further studies obviously need to be conducted to better aid generalizations. This study suggests that the sustainability policy conversation needs to be more broadened and discussed at an international level to produce a universally accepted corporate sustainability policy that can be adopted universally just like other areas. Such a study is seen as of more urgency.

To address the challenges to the design and implementation of sustainability policy this study further recommends using other methods outside action research to draft such. There is need for more qualitative investigation of sustainability policy formulation to establish how this can also be done.

An investigation into the relevance and completeness of SDGs to inform corporate sustainability policies need further research beyond Masters studies and by practising academics. Other models besides the UN SDGs can also be used in the sustainability drafting and implementation practice using.

A survey of the best sustainability policies must be made, and common themes be comprehensively compiled to answer the question: What are the best sustainability issues that the most progressive sustainability policies must contain?

## **5.7 Concluding Remarks**

From this action research study, the most significant finding seems to be that a broad sustainability policy that can be used by an organisation and its supply chain is one based the UN SDGs. Individual organisational sustainability policy seems to be less broad and lacking in connection to the 2030 UN Sustainability agenda and therefore seems to be of lesser importance in drafting a comprehensive sustainability policy that is viewed as best practice in

the supply chain. On the other hand, sustainability policy drafting requires a collaborative approach by practicing supply chain and procurement professionals.

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## **APPENDICES**

### **APPENDIX 1**

#### **INFORMED CONSENT FORM - ©Absolom Mukonyo- UPES 2019**

#### **CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION**

I volunteer to participate in a research project conducted by Mr. Absolom Mukonyo (MCIPS Chartered, MILT, CSCM) from University of Petroleum & Energy Studies. I understand that the study is designed to gather information about academic work for his partial fulfilment of his MBA LSCM dissertation. I will be one of approximately 10 people of the focus group to discuss the contents of the sustainability policy based on the UN SDGs.

1. My participation in this project is voluntary. I understand that I will not be paid for my participation. I may withdraw and discontinue participation at any time without penalty. If I decline to participate or withdraw from the study, no one will be told.
2. I understand that most focus group discussions are interesting and thought-provoking. If, however, I feel uncomfortable in any way during the discussion session, I have the right to decline to answer any question or to end the discussion.
3. Participation involves discussing the researcher drafted sustainability policy and comparing it with UN SDGs. The discussion will last approximately 60 - 20 minutes. Notes will be written during the interview. An audio tape of the interview and subsequent dialogue will be made. If I don't want to be taped, I will not be able to participate in the study.
4. I understand that the researcher will not identify me by name in any reports using information obtained from this discussion, and that my confidentiality as a participant in this study will remain secure. Subsequent uses of records and data will be subject to standard data use policies which protect the anonymity of individuals and institutions.
5. Executives and other staff from my organisation will neither be present at the discussion nor have access to raw notes or transcripts. This precaution will prevent my individual comments from having any negative repercussions.
6. I understand that this research study has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for Studies Involving Human Subjects: Behavioral Sciences Committee at the University of Petroleum & Energy Studies. For research problems or questions regarding subjects, the Institutional Review Board may be contacted through the UPES Centre for Continuing Education via [cce@upes.ac.in] of the university

7. I have read and understand the explanation provided to me. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

8. I have been given a copy of this consent form.

\_\_\_\_\_  
My Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
My Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Investigator

For further information, please contact:

**Suman Grover**

Assistant Manager

Centre for Continuing Education

University of Petroleum & Energy Studies

Email – [sgrover@upes.ac.in](mailto:sgrover@upes.ac.in)

Website | [CCE-Helpdesk](#)

Contact:-011- 41730151-53, ext- 3218, +91-7290091165

## APPENDIX 2

### GUIDE DECLARATION

#### BOTSWANA

**Gaborone Campus:** Botho University Park, Kgale, P.O. Box 501184, Gaborone, Botswana. ☎ Tel: +267 391 8939 ☎ Fax: +267 318 7508  
**Francistown Campus:** Plot 5434, Taf. Ruen Plaza, P.O. Box 7457, Francistown, Botswana. ☎ Tel: +267 244 0280 ☎ Fax: +267 244 0645

#### LESOTHO

**Maseru Campus:** Masaru Mafu Mafu Wing, Pekaane, P.O. Box 1156, Maseru, 5700, Lesotho. ☎ Tel: +266 2724 7508 / 6229 2521 / 5418 5051 ☎ Fax: +266 2239 2521

#### NAMIBIA

**Windhoek Campus:** Higher Education Institution Office No. 1509, Aussenplan Platz 11 13, D. Augustus, New O. Er. 8259A, P.O. Box 40271, Antjeperstraße, Windhoek, Namibia. ☎ Tel: +264 61 4123433 / 294453 ☎ Fax: +264 61 61294453

#### ESWATINI

**Musina Campus:** Plot No. 1235, Riverside Mall, Musina, eSwatini. P.O. Box 5330, Musina, Eswatini. ☎ Tel: +268 2526 2208 ☎ Fax: +268 2526 2295

**BLENDED & DISTANCE LEARNING CAMPUS:** @ Email: [bl@bothouniversity.ac.bw](mailto:bl@bothouniversity.ac.bw) @ Website: [bl.bbothouniversity.ac.bw](http://bl.bbothouniversity.ac.bw)



## APPENDIX – III

### A Declaration by the Guide

This is to certify that Mr. **Absolom Mukonyo**, a student of **Master of Business Administration in Logistics and Supply Chain Management**, SAP ID 500066084 of UPES has successfully completed this dissertation report on

*“Embedding SDGs into Organisational Leadership at Megasize College to Drive Sustainable Supply Chains: An Individual Action Research”*

under my supervision.

Further, I certify that the work is based on the investigation made, data collected and analysed by him and it has not been submitted in any other University or Institution for award of any degree. In my opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and utility, as a dissertation towards partial fulfillment for the award of degree of **MBA Logistics and Supply Chain Management**

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

**Golden Chikari,**

Name & Designation: Fellow (Faculty of Business and Accounting)

Address : Botho University

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Mobile : +26773251414

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Date : 11 October 2019

Place : Botho University, Gaborone, Botswana

BOE ISO 9001:2015 Certified Organisation  
[www.bothouniversity.com](http://www.bothouniversity.com)

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1

UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



# ANNEX 2

## BLUEPRINT LEADERSHIP QUALITIES FOR SDGs

BLUEPRINT FOR BUSINESS LEADERSHIP ON THE SDGs

**1**  
NO  
POVERTY

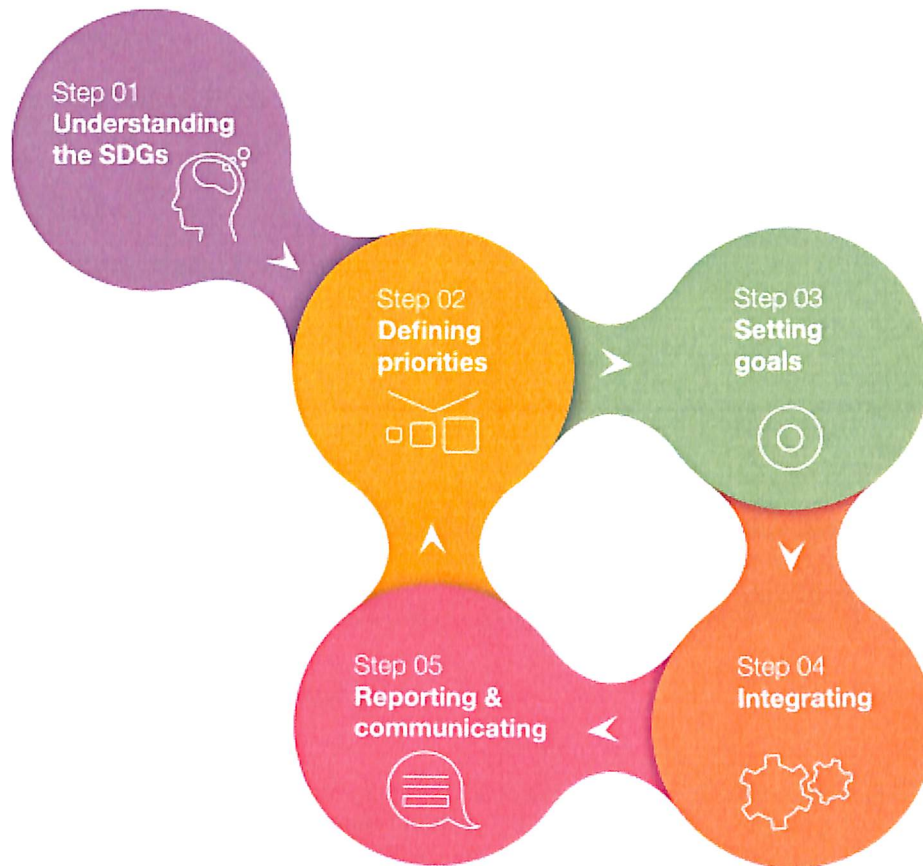
### Do your actions satisfy the Leadership Qualities?

**Guiding Questions**  
to apply to the Leadership Qualities to your business

	Intentional	Ambitious	Consistent	Collaborative	Accountable
<p><b>Guiding Questions</b> to apply to the Leadership Qualities to your business</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is your company committed to supporting the achievement of Goal 1? Have you developed a holistic strategy that reflects this commitment, covering end-to-end operations and the wider community?</li> <li>• Are you committed to learn from your actions and do you have processes in place to improve them accordingly?</li> <li>• Is your strategy supported by the highest levels of management, including the Board of Directors?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do your actions achieve long-term outcomes that greatly exceed those resulting from current industry practice?</li> <li>• Are your actions aligned with what is needed to achieve Goal 1?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is support for Goal 1 embedded across all organisational functions?</li> <li>• Are staff and board incentives aligned with achieving Goal 1?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you proactively look for opportunities to partner with Governments, UN agencies, suppliers, civil society organisations, industry peers and other stakeholders to inform how to advance Goal 1?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you publicly express your commitment to advance Goal 1?</li> <li>• Do you identify, monitor, and report on impacts, including potentially adverse impacts?</li> <li>• Do you mitigate risks associated with your action?</li> <li>• Do you remediate negative impacts associated with this action?</li> <li>• Do you engage stakeholders in a meaningful way?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Key Considerations</b> for Goal 1</p>	<p>Bidirectionality and top-level leadership are key to achieve poverty alleviation goals. It is essential to build missions for reviewing the effectiveness of implementation strategies targeting poverty alleviation. It similarly takes support from all levels of the company and management to ensure activity (including markets).</p>	<p>Ambitious action to reduce poverty involves working into economically disadvantaged communities and creating opportunities for groups who have been marginalised, such as women, ethnic and racial minorities, and the disabled. It means community-wide engagement and employment.</p>	<p>Actions to reduce poverty should be consistent across all organisational functions. Consistency requires that companies embed responsible practices across all functions, including legal and responsible taxation practices. External contributions on poverty alleviation must be aligned with internal efforts.</p>	<p>Action to alleviate poverty involves deep stakeholder engagement with Governments, NGOs, industry peers, economically disadvantaged groups and other stakeholders and holders to the drivers of poverty traps and side effects that equate. Collaboration is necessary for business action to be informed, targeted and effective.</p>	<p>Making commitments public and progress transparent is key to drive poverty alleviation. Rate of negative impacts on people and planet must be understood and managed. Poverty alleviation initiatives must responsibly engage all concerned stakeholders, especially local communities.</p>

## ANNEX 3

### FIVE STEPS FOR COMPANIES TO MAXIMIZE THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO THE SDGs



## VITA

School of Business  
University of Petroleum & Energy Studies, Dehradun

### Contact Information

Absolom Mukonyo

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Tel: +267 71 420 500

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[amukonyo@gmail.com](mailto:amukonyo@gmail.com)

### Educational & Professional Qualifications

Zimbabwe Open University

Master of Business Administration

Sept. 2010

Amity University

Bachelor of Business Administration – 1<sup>st</sup> Class Distinction

Nov. 2016

Chartered Institute of Procurement & Supply, CIPS, UK

Professional Diploma in Procurement & Supply

May 2018

Advanced Diploma in Procurement & Supply

May 2019

Diploma in Procurement & Supply

May 2019

University of Zimbabwe

Diploma of Education, Secondary

Nov. 2000

### Professional Affiliations

Chartered Institute of Procurement & Supply [CIPS (UK)]

No. 005703628

Chartered Institute of Logistics & Transport [CILT, UK]

No. 4117831

Institute of Supply Chain Management (IoSCM, UK) -CSCM

No. 06650

Association for Supply Chain Management [ASCM, US]

No. 2106691

Humanitarian Logistics Association, UK -Full Member

I.D No. 61 (WorldPress)

Institute of Supply Management [ISM (USA)] Academic Member

No. 000000492213

Institute of Supply Management [ISM-INDIA] Full Member

No. 00736

South African Facilities Management Association [SAFMA (RSA)]

No. 6609

### *Professional post-nomials*

- MCIPS Chartered, CIPS
- Consultant, IoSCM
- MILT, CILT

### Lecturing Experience

Botswana Accountancy College

2018 – present (Full time)

- Programme: Procurement & Supply – CIPS – all levels

Botswana Open University

2011 – present (Adjunct)

- Programmes: BCom, BBA, BBE

Megasize College

2007 – 2019

Programme: Procurement & Supply – CIPS – all levels, BSc Procurement & Supply