

Namibia towards Ending Poverty, Protecting the Planet and Ensuring Prosperity for All

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Abstract

Although Namibia has made advancements towards the attainment of its National Vision 2030, a snapshot of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) shows varied results. For instance, while the country has made significant progress towards economic growth, attaining an upper-middle-income country (UMIC) status, it still faces high levels of inequality. Moreover, certain groups such as women, youth, people with disabilities, and marginalised communities lag far behind. In addition, the rural-urban divide in terms of access to public and social services such as health, education, water, energy, and sanitation inclusive of quality of services are prominent. This article presents some of Namibia's accomplishments while highlighting challenges revealed by the dichotomy of its development progress. The article paves the way for in-depth research, particularly on issues of leaving no one behind (LNOB), inequalities, and addressing the last mile challenges in an UMIC context to inform policy-makers with evidence.

Keywords: Namibia, sustainable development goals, inequalities, upper-middle-income country, poverty.

Introduction

In 2015, Heads of State and Government, including Namibia, consented to set the world on a way towards manageable advancement through the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This impetus integrates 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 (quantitative and qualitative) targets spread across social, economic, and environmental measurements, all to be accomplished by the year 2030. As expressed in the 2030 Agenda, “never before have world leaders pledged common action and endeavour across such a broad and universal policy agenda”. The 17 SDGs shape a durable and fused package of global desires. Expanding on the achievements of their ancestors, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the SDGs address the most pressing worldwide challenges of our time, calling upon all sectors, i.e., public, private and civic, as well as actors across society and between nations to fine-tune the three development dimensions: economic growth, environmental sustainability, and social inclusion.

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In July 2018, Namibia joined other States and presented the Voluntary National Review (VNR). The VNR provided the first glimpse of progress made towards the achievements of the SDGs. Under the thematic area of 'shared prosperity through inclusive growth', the report highlighted that Namibia: (i) reduced inequality from 0.58 to 0.56 in the last five years; (ii) promoted sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, averaged at 3.7% annually over the last 10 years; (iii) reduced poverty from 28.8% to 17.4% over last ten years.

While these are notable achievements, deserving of accolades at national, continental and global level, they hide contrasts of faster economic growth in Namibia. We, therefore, share segments of the Namibian story.

What is the Namibian Story?

Country Profile

Namibia is a land of contrasts, literally. For instance, it has two of the oldest deserts characterised by high temperatures, water scarcity, and lack of arable agricultural land. And yet, in the sub-tropical wetlands and savannahs in the northern, northeastern parts of the country, rainfall can exceed 600 mm in a year. Further, these combinations tolerate a mixture of livestock and crop production. Besides, the coastal areas of the country present colder temperatures in contrasts to the desert ecology.

Similarly, Namibia's total population, estimated at around 2.5 million (Namibia Statistical Agency, 2016), is unevenly spread. Likewise, Namibia's big land area, at 824,268 km² means the population density is about 1.2 people per km², which is one of the lowest in the world. Again, the Namibian economy heavily features high dependency on natural resources (diamond, uranium, tourism, agriculture, fishery), and an export-oriented economy that is highly dependent on international trade. This dichotomy within the Namibian story is highlighted in the next section in terms of the 17 SDGs.

SDG Contradictions in Namibia

Although Namibia has made advancements towards the attainment of its National Vision 2030, a snapshot of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals shows varied results. For instance, while the country has made significant progress towards economic growth, attaining an upper-middle-income country (UMIC) status, it still faces high levels of inequality. Moreover, certain groups such as women, youth, people with disabilities, and marginalised communities lag far behind. In addition, the rural-urban divide in terms of access to public and social services such as health, education, water, energy, sanitation inclusive of quality of services are prominent. Namibia ranks 111 out of 157 countries on overall SDG performance, indicating the need to accelerate progress on all 17 SDGs. To demonstrate these challenges, this article firstly presents contradictions surrounding specific developmental issues, including human development, country economic growth, poverty and inequalities, and unemployment. Secondly, a snapshot of each of the goals

clustered around the five Ps of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals is provided.

Human Development: Between 1990 and 2017, Namibia’s Human Development Index (HDI) value increased from 0.579 to 0.647, an increase of about 11.7%. This HDI places the country within the medium human development category, positioning it at 129 out of 189 countries and territories assessed (UNDP, 2018). Despite Namibia’s good progress and status, poverty has not been eradicated and inequalities have not been reduced significantly. This is evidenced by the 32.9% Human Inequality Coefficient for Namibia, which is higher than the average for medium HDI countries at 25.1%, while for Sub-Saharan African it is 30.8% (ibid). Thus, when Namibia’s HDI (0.647) is discounted for inequality, it falls to 0.422, which is a loss of 34.8% due to inequality in the distribution of the HDI dimension indices. These indices are: long and healthy life, access to knowledge, and a decent standard of living. In summary, Namibia has made great strides in economic growth and human development, which are largely enabled by the government putting forward conducive and enabling policies, such as the long-term Vision 2030, the current Harambee Prosperity Plan, and the National Development Plans (National Planning Commission, 2016).

Poverty and Inequalities: Despite Namibia attaining economic growth, prosperity at the national and regional level has been particularly mixed. For instance, while a huge number of citizens have been taken out of poverty, there is still about 17.4% (Namibia Statistical Agency, 2016) not benefitting from these improvements. Nevertheless, this is also marred by geographical gaps, such as poverty rates in rural areas, which are the highest at 37% compared to 9% in urban areas (National Planning Commission, 2016). Likewise, poverty among female-headed households is high at 22%, compared to male-headed households at 18% (ibid). Besides, using the poverty line of NAD 378 or US\$29.30 per day, it is estimated that about 11% of the citizens (Namibia Statistical Agency, 2016) are living in extreme poverty. To sum up, a substantial segment of the population remains behind (extremely poor) suffering from multiple deprivations in domains of material, employment, health, education and living environment (National Planning Commission, 2015).

Notwithstanding these challenges, there is an improvement in the distribution of benefits (income) that address the inequalities and individuals and groups lagging behind. For instance, the Government has generously advanced the social protection programme (i.e. safety net) since independence in the early 1990s (National Planning Commission, 2016). Specifically, the safety net programme targets the elderly (60 years and older), youth (vulnerable), people with disabilities (PwD), and orphans and vulnerable children (ibid). Administrative data records indicated that in 2013/14, the grant covered about 98% of people above 60, an increase from 91% in 2011/12 (Ministry of Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare, 2017).

Unemployment: Fundamental to the dichotomy in Namibia’s development accomplishments is the underlying problem of unemployment. For instance, significantly

high unemployment rates at 34% of the total labour force (Ministry of Labour, 2016) contribute to disparities in the distribution of economic benefits, as indicated in Namibia's Fifth Development Plan (National Planning Commission, 2016). This may be attributed to several factors such as skills mismatch, access to, and quality of the education and training system, and responses to the evolving labour market need in a global economy (OECD, 2016). Still, due to the disproportionate social and economic statuses, women, youth (male and female), the vulnerable, and marginalised groups such as the San, Ovaherero, and Ovambo, are highly affected.

Unemployment was recorded to be the highest among females (at 38.3%) compared to 29.8% for males (Ministry of Labour, 2016). It was also recorded highest among the youth at 43.3% compared to the national figure of 34% (ibid). Additional analysis of the unemployed youth group data revealed that 54.9% of the people were aged 20–24 years, and 37.9% were aged 25–29 years (Ministry of Labour, 2016). To demonstrate this, for the three marginalised groups, those affected represent approximately 21,061 households and 105,300 individuals (National Planning Commission, 2016). According to the baseline data of the NDP 5 (National Planning Commission, 2016), the unemployment rate (for those speaking Khoisan as their main language used as a proxy for the marginalised group) is about 77%, and their poverty rate as reported in 2010 was also high at 68%. Yet again, the majority of those impacted by unemployment are located in rural areas, which also have the highest levels of poverty at 37% (National Planning Commission, 2016), bringing the development paradoxes to the fore.

Having presented the contradictions of key development issues (i.e., human development, economic growth, poverty and unemployment) in Namibia, we now provide highlights under the seventeen goals (17 SDGs), clustered around the five Ps of Agenda 2030. First, the People's goals are discussed, touching on the issues of poverty, hunger, health, education and gender. Next, planetary goals are covered, taking stock of issues such as water and sanitation, climate action, life on land, and life below water. Thereafter, the prosperity goals are discussed, notably economic growth, employment, industrialisation, innovation and access to sustainable energy.

The final two Ps of Agenda 2030, namely Peace and Partnership, are combined, focusing on enabling environments for peace, political stability and partnership for development. The section concludes with overriding messages on issues that need further in-depth research, particularly inclusive development to leaving no one behind (LNOB), inequalities, and addressing the last mile challenges in the upper-middle-income country (UMIC) context to inform policy-makers with evidence.

Namibia: SDG Narratives

The People SDGs

Table 1. *Snapshot highlights of the people's goals*

Goals	Highlights
SDG 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Namibia's poverty decreased over the last decade (2008-2018) from 28% to 17.4%. Institutions: Creation of Ministry of Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare; Ministry of Veterans Affairs. Policies: Key policies and strategies adopted include: Vision 2030; the Harambee Prosperity Plan; Blue Print on Wealth Redistribution and Poverty Eradication. Interventions: Adoption of social grants: i.e., old-age pension; disability; veterans; orphans and vulnerable children.
SDG 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food insecurity: Most low earners spend 57% of their income on food. Twenty-seven point eight per cent (27.8%) of Namibia's population food insecure, with rural communities, women and smallholder farmers the most affected (2016/2017). Strategic initiatives include: Adoption of the Blue Print on Wealth Redistribution and Poverty Eradication; creation of Food Banks; School Feeding Programmes; adoption of the National Zero Hunger Road Map.
SDG 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Namibia offers free medication for state patients in all public hospitals. Namibia's maternal mortality ratio at 385/100,000, a decrease from 449/100,000 live births in 2006-2007. HIV/AIDS: Overall mother-to-child transmission (MTCT) rate declined from 23.7% in 2005 to 4.1% in 2015. Namibia rated the 113th happiest country out of 180 countries in 2016.
SDG 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Namibia has made great progress in providing access to education to just over 95% of the learner-age population. Free education at lower primary and secondary levels. R&D suffers from low levels of funding (gross expenditure on R&D represented 0.14% of GDP in 2010). Percentage of TVET graduates to total higher education graduates stood at 55% in 2014.
SDG 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forty per cent (40%) of females in Namibia Parliament. Namibia ranked 115th out of 160 countries with a Gender Inequality Index value of 0.472. Poverty rates among women dropped from 22% in 2010 to 19% in 2016. High unemployment rates at 34% in 2016, with the highest rate among the youth at 43.4%; women unemployment at 38.3% compared to 29.8% for men.

Poverty: *End poverty in all forms and dimensions and ensure that all human beings can fulfill their potential in dignity and equality and a healthy environment.*

Namibia is determined to eradicate poverty (Hamunyela, 2015) and managed to significantly decrease poverty over the last decade. According to the Namibia Household Income and Expenditure Survey, poverty currently stands at 17.4% (Namibia Statistical Agency, 2016). Several factors contributed to such a significant reduction. Largely, they are ascribed to institutional, policy and strategy developments in Namibia (see Table 1) (Ministry of Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare, 2016).

Hunger: *SDG 2 aims to end all forms of hunger and malnutrition by 2030, making sure that all people, especially children, have access to sufficient and nutritious food all year round. This involves promoting sustainable agricultural practices through supporting small scale farmers and allowing equal access to land, technology and markets.*

Namibia's society still faces food insecurity. For instance, most low earners spend about 57% of their incomes on food (Namibia Statistical Agency, 2016). Further, about 27.8% of Namibia's population was found to be food insecure, with rural communities, women and smallholder farmers being mostly affected during the 2016/2017 period (Office of the Prime Minister, 2017). To respond to these, the government has adopted strategic initiatives, further explained in Table 1, but it also included the revised Agricultural Policy of 2015 and the adoption of Namibia's Comprehensive Conservation Agriculture Programme (NCCAP) (MAWF, 2015).

Health: *SDG 3 aims to achieve universal health coverage and provide access to safe and affordable medicines and vaccines for all. This is being done by also supporting research and development for vaccines as an essential part of this process. The Sustainable Development Goals make a bold commitment to end epidemics such as AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and other communicable diseases by 2030.*

Namibia's progress towards universal health care and coverage is mixed. On one hand, Namibia offers free medication for state patients in all public hospitals across the country; yet, the access to these facilities is limited and coupled with other factors such as inhibited access, timing and locality. Gender, including girls and women, coupled with the rural-urban divide are some of the contributing factors to these mixed results (Table 1).

Education: *Achieving inclusive and quality education for all reaffirms the belief that education is one of the most powerful and proven vehicles for sustainable development. The SDGs also ensure that by 2030, all girls and boys complete primary and secondary schooling. Additionally, the SDGs aim to provide equal access to affordable vocational training, to eliminate gender and wealth disparities, and achieve universal access to quality higher education.*

Namibia has made great progress in providing access to education to just over 95% of the learner-age population. Free education at lower primary and secondary levels is offered in Namibia to encourage and allow all school-going age children to attend school. Moreover, the percentage of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) graduates to total higher education graduates stood at 55% in 2014.

Gender: *Ending all forms of discrimination against women and girls is not only a basic human right, but also crucial to accelerating sustainable development. It has been proven that empowering women and girls has a multiplier effect and helps driving economic growth and development across the board. Affording women equal rights to economic resources such as land and property are vital targets in realising this goal. So is ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive health.* In 2017, Namibia ranked 115th out of 160 countries with a Gender Inequality Index value of 0.472 (UNDP, 2018) (Table 1).

The Planet SDGs

Namibia is determined to protect the planet from degradation through sustainable consumption and production, sustainably managing its natural resources and taking urgent action on climate change and protecting life below water to support the needs of the present and future generations.

Table 2. *Snapshot highlights of the planet’s goals*

Goals	Highlights
SDG 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to safe drinking water in urban areas at 98.3% and rural at 84% (2016). • Eighty-four point four per cent (84.4%) of households use piped water as their main source of drinking water (2016). • Nationally, only 54% of the households (HHs) have access to improved sanitation. • Urban HHs with access to sanitation is 76.9% while rural HHs stands at 28% (2016).
SDG 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Management Act (in 2017), with adherence to environmental management plans standing at 57%. • Options for a green economy in 2014, with the adoption of National Solid Waste Management Strategy in 2017. • Promotion of public awareness on the reduction of all types of waste and adoption of environmental levies to address sustainable production and consumptions of the value chain. • Reduction of food losses, promoted under the National Zero Hunger Road Map.

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- SDG 13**
- Vulnerabilities to floods, droughts, veldt fires; pest and disease outbreaks, including anthrax, cholera, and hepatitis E.
 - Key sectors impacted: Water, Agriculture, Tourism, Human Health, Coastal areas, and Infrastructure.
 - Opportunities: Climate change mitigation through renewable energy; climate-smart agricultural production; ecosystem-based adaptation in production landscapes.
 - Country commitments to UNFCCC and international frameworks, such as Paris Agreement high; regular reporting and pursuing strategies to address negative impacts, such as the National Policy on Climate Change, NCCAP, and Namibia Determined Contributions.
 - Namibia's percentage contribution to Global emissions in the year 2010 was 0.059% (2015).
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- SDG 14**
- The fisheries sector is the third-largest earner after mining and tourism and contributes about 15% of the total exports.
 - Namibia hosts regional bodies such as the South-East Atlantic Fishery Organisation and the Benguela Current Convention.
 - Namibia participates in the Okavango River Basin Water Commission (OKACOM) and the Orange-Senqu River Commission (ORASECOM).
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- SDG 15**
- Forty-four per cent (44%) of the landmass is under conservation management.
 - Community participation contributed to the increase of Conservancies from 66 in 2012 to 83 in 2017.
 - In total, 5,808 jobs created in 2014; NAD 91.2 million of local communities' benefits generated.
 - Annual revenue generated from state protected areas (PAs) and CBNRM Programme about NAD 147.4 million (2014).
 - Challenges: Fire, human-wildlife conflicts; illegal wildlife trading.
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Water and Sanitation: Ensuring universal access to safe and affordable drinking water for all by 2030 requires investment in inadequate infrastructure, provision of sanitation facilities, and encouraging of hygiene at every level. Protecting and restoring water-related ecosystems such as forests, mountains, wetlands and rivers is essential if water scarcity is to be mitigated.

In Namibia, access to safe drinking water in urban areas stood at 98.3% and in rural areas at 84% in 2016. Moreover, in 2016, 84.4% of households use piped water as their main source of drinking water. However, nationally, only 54% of households have access to improved sanitation, with statistics of urban households with access to sanitation at 76.9% while rural households stood at 28% in 2016.

Consumption and Production: Achieving economic growth and sustainable development requires that we urgently reduce our ecological footprint by changing the way we produce and consume goods and resources. Agriculture is the biggest user of

water worldwide, and irrigation now claims close to 70% of all freshwater for human use. The efficient management of our shared natural resource, and the way we dispose of toxic waste and pollutants are important targets to achieve this goal. Encouraging industries, businesses, and consumers to recycle and reduce waste is equally important, as is supporting developing countries to move towards more sustainable patterns of consumption by 2030.

Namibia prepared the first Green Plan in 1992, a forward-looking plan, which considered the challenges and opportunities of economic, social and environmental issues (MET, 1992). This predated the adoption of the three Rio Conventions. Per Table 2, several instruments have been pursued.

Climate Action: *Global warming is causing long-lasting changes to our climate system, with threatening irreversible consequences if we do not take action now. SDG 13 aims to address the needs of developing countries and help mitigate climate-related disasters. Helping more vulnerable regions such as landlocked countries and island states, the adaptation to climate change must go hand in hand with efforts to integrate disaster risk measures into national strategies.*

Namibia is vulnerable to floods, droughts, veldt fires, pests and disease outbreaks. The national communication reports highlight the vulnerabilities and key sectors affected by climate change (UNFCCC, 2016). Nonetheless, there are opportunities to try and curb the negative impacts through renewable energy, reducing vulnerabilities, and building resilience through climate adaptation (MET, 2015).

Life below Water: *Oceans absorb about 30% of the carbon dioxide produced by humans, and we see a 26% rise in ocean acidification since the beginning of the industrial revolution. Marine pollution is reaching alarming levels, with an average of 13,000 pieces of plastic litter found on every square kilometre of ocean. SDG 14 aims to sustainably manage and protect 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 also help mitigate some of the challenges facing our oceans. In Namibia, the fisheries sector is the third-largest earner after mining and tourism and contributes about 15% of the total exports. Moreover, Namibia hosts regional bodies such as the South-East Atlantic Fisheries Organisation (SEAFO), which is an intergovernmental fisheries science and management body. The primary purpose is to ensure the long-term conservation and sustainable use of all living marine resources in the South-East Atlantic Ocean and safeguard the environment and marine ecosystems in which the resources occur. Additionally, Namibia also hosts the Benguela Current Convention (BCC), which is a multi-sectoral inter-governmental initiative of Angola, Namibia and South Africa. It aims to promote the vision of the Benguela Current Large Marine Ecosystem (BCLME), sustaining human and ecosystem well-being. Furthermore, Namibia participates in the

Okavango River Basin Water Commission (OKACOM), which commits the member states to promote coordinated and environmentally sustainable regional water resources development, while addressing the legitimate social and economic needs of each of the riparian states. Namibia also participates in the Orange-Senqu River Commission (ORASECOM), which promotes the equitable and sustainable development of the resources of the Orange-Senqu River. ORASECOM provides a forum for consultation and coordination between the riparian states to promote integrated water resource management and development within the basin. Underlying all of these initiatives are the challenges to balance economic, environmental and social benefits, particularly from the perspectives of contributions to GDPs, and ultimately those accruing to local fishing communities and groups such as women, the vulnerable and the marginalised.

***Life on Land:** Human life depends on the earth as much as the ocean for our sustenance and livelihoods. Plant life provides 80% of our human diet, and we rely on agriculture as an important economic resource and means of development. Forests account for 30% of the Earth's surface, providing vital habitats for millions of species and important sources for clean air and water, as well as being crucial for combating climate change. Halting deforestation is vital to mitigating the impact of climate change. Urgent action must be taken to reduce the loss of natural habitats and biodiversity, which are part of our common heritage.*

Namibia's Constitution provides for the highest safety guards to the conservation of ecosystems that underpin its goods and services (Republic of Namibia, 1990).

The Prosperity SDGs

Namibia is determined to ensure that all human beings can enjoy prosperous and fulfilling lives and that economic, social and technological progress occurs in harmony with nature. The world is shifting to sustainable consumption and production patterns that do not deplete natural resources for future generations and that promote prosperity for all.

Table 3. *Snapshot highlights of the prosperity goals*

Goals	Highlights
SDG 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fifty point four per cent (50.4%) of Namibian households (HHs) nationwide have access to electricity. • About 75% of urban households with access to energy in their homes. • Only 24% of rural households with access to electricity in their homes (2015).

SDG 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human Development Index (HDI) increased to 0.640 (2015) from 0.578 (1990). • Economic growth averaged 4.6% over a decade but slowed down to 1% over the past two years. • Unemployment increased from 28% in 2016 to 34 % in 2017. • Youth unemployment at 43.4%. • In total, 129,500 people employed in small micro, and medium enterprises (SMMEs).
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SDG 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gross Expenditure on Research and Development (GERD) as a percentage of GDP grew from less than 0.02% in the 1990s to 0.35% in 2016. • A total of 750 full-time equivalent personnel in R&D—350 are full-time equivalent researchers.
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SDG 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Namibia is classified as an upper middle-income country, yet it is still one of the unequal countries with a Gini coefficient of 0.560. • Fifty-one per cent (51%) of women are employed in the informal sector—Global Gender Report. • Public sector managerial positions at 43% (female) in relation to 57% (men). • Fifty-five point 4 per cent (55.4%) of the San population has not attended formal education at all. • Rural poverty is at 34%.
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SDG 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forty-six point nine per cent (46.9%) of the population currently lives in urban areas. • Fifty-three point one per cent (53.1%) lives in rural areas. • Nineteen per cent (19%) of households live in informal settlements (2016). • Urban land challenges: Limited municipal serviced land; high prices in urban land and properties. • Rural land challenges: Arid land; water scarcity; limited agricultural (crop and livestock) production.

Sustainable Energy: *A global economy reliant on fossil fuels and the increase of greenhouse gas emissions is creating drastic changes to our climate system. SDG 7 aims to ensure universal access to affordable electricity by 2030 through investing in clean energy sources such as solar, wind and thermal. Adopting cost-effective standards for a wider range of technologies could also reduce global electricity consumption by buildings and industry.*

Expanding infrastructure and upgrading technology to provide clean energy in all developing countries is a crucial goal that can both encourage growth and help the environment. According to 2015 statistics, approximately 50.4% of Namibian households nationwide had access to electricity; about 75% of households in urban areas had access to energy, while only 24% in rural households had access to electricity.

Employment and Sustained Economic Growth: *Over the past 25 years, the number of workers living in extreme poverty has declined dramatically, despite the lasting impact of the 2008 economic crisis and global recession. In developing countries, the middle class now makes up more than 34% of total employment—a number that has almost tripled between 1991 and 2015. SDG 8 promotes sustained economic growth, higher levels of productivity, and technological innovation. Encouraging entrepreneurship and job creation are essential to achieve SDG 8, as are effective measures to eradicate forced labour, slavery and human trafficking.*

Namibia's growth is overall good; thus, the Country is progressing towards prosperity for all. However, the growth is marred by disparities across different economic groups (e.g., youth), gender (women and men), and geographical-regional divides (urban and rural). Investment in infrastructure and innovation is a crucial driver of economic growth and development. Challenges such as land access for secure living in both rural and urban settlements need further elaborations.

Industry, Innovation: *For SDG 9, investigations for potential growth in new industries and information and communications technologies, as well as promoting sustainable industries and investing in scientific research and innovation are all important ways to facilitate sustainable development. Innovations for skills and business acumen on e.g. wildlife knowledge and understanding to address national, regional and international illegal trades are not yet fully explored. In Namibia, Gross Expenditure on Research and Development (GERD) as a percentage of the GDP grew from less than 0.02% in the 1990s to 0.35% in 2016. There are about 750 full-time equivalent personnel in R&D, of which 350 are full-time equivalent researchers.*

Addressing Inequalities: Inequalities in income require the adoption of sound policies to empower the bottom percentile of income earners and promote economic inclusion for all regardless of gender, race, or ethnicity. Income inequality is a global problem that requires global solutions. This involves improving the regulation and monitoring of financial markets and institutions and encouraging development assistance and foreign direct investment to regions where the need is the greatest. SDG 10 aims to facilitate the safe migration and mobility of people, which is also essential to bridging the widening divide. Namibia is classified as an upper middle-income country, yet it is still one of the unequal countries with a Gini coefficient of 0.560. Fifty-one per cent (51%) of women are employed in the informal sector according to the Global Gender Report. However, public sector managerial positions stand at 43% for females compared to 57% for males. Moreover, 55.4% of the San population has not attended formal education at all and rural poverty stands at 34%.

Sustainable Cities and Communities: More than half of the world's population live now in urban areas. Sustainable development cannot be achieved without significantly transforming the way we build and manage our urban spaces. The rapid growth of cities in the developing world coupled with increasing rural to urban migration has led to a

rise in mega-cities. SDG 11 aims to make cities safe and sustainable by means ensuring access to safe and affordable housing and upgrading slum settlements. It also involves investment in public transport, creating green public spaces, and improving urban planning and management in a way that is both participatory and inclusive. In Namibia, 46.9% of the population currently lives in urban areas, whereas 53.1% of the population lives in rural areas. In 2016, about 19% of households were in informal settlements. Several land challenges face Namibia: urban land challenges include limited municipal serviced land and high prices of land and properties, while rural land challenges include arid land, water scarcity, and limited agricultural (crop and livestock) production.

The Peace and Partnership SDGs

Table 4. *Snapshot highlights of the peace and partnership goals*

Goals	Highlights
SDG 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Namibia’s score at 83.9 in 2016—Ibrahim Index of Africa Governance. • Namibia has 5th highest score in Good Governance out of 54 African nations. • Namibia ranked 53/180 on Corruption Perceptions Index in 2017—Transparency International Perception Corruption Index.
SDG 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Namibia’s domesticated Agenda 2030 in national planning documents. • Namibia is aligned to Africa Agenda 2063. • Adoption of public-private partnerships (PPPs). • Good national statistical institution (NSA). • Strategy strengthening the national statistical and overall monitoring and reporting of the SDGs.

Peace: *Without peace, stability, human rights and effective governance, based on the rule of law, we cannot hope for sustainable development. We are living in a world that is increasingly divided. Some regions enjoy sustained levels of peace, security and prosperity, while others fall into seemingly endless cycles of conflict and violence. SDG 16 aims to significantly reduce all forms of violence and work with governments and communities to find lasting solutions to conflict and insecurity.*

Strengthening the rule of law and promoting human rights is essential to this process, as is reducing the flow of illicit arms and strengthening the participation of developing countries in the institutions of global governance. Namibia’s Ibrahim Index of Africa Governance score stood at 83.9 in 2016. Additionally, Namibia has the 5th highest score in Good Governance out of 54 African nations, and was ranked 53rd out of 180 countries on the Corruption Perceptions Index in 2017, according to the Transparency International Perception Corruption Index.

Partnership: *The SDGs can only be realised through a strong commitment to global partnership and cooperation. Humanitarian crises brought on by conflict or natural*

disasters continue to demand more financial resources and aid. Many countries also require Official Development Assistance to encourage growth and trade. Improving access to technology and knowledge is an important way to share ideas and foster innovation. Coordinating policies to help developing countries manage their debt and promoting investment for the least developed SDG is achievable.

SDG 17 aims to enhance North-South and South-South cooperation by supporting national plans to achieve all the targets. Promoting international trade and helping developing countries increase their exports is all part of achieving a universal rule-based and equitable trading system that is fair and open, and benefits all. Namibia domesticated Agenda 2030 in national planning documents. Agenda 2030 is also aligned to Africa Agenda 2063. Namibia furthermore adopted the public-private partnerships (PPP) concept. The Country has a good national statistical institution, the Namibia Statistics Agency, which is fully mandated to provide national data and key population figures. Namibia also has a strategy that aims to strengthen the national statistical and overall monitoring and reporting of the SDGs while improving data quality control and assurance.

Conclusion

Namibia is on course towards ending poverty, protecting the planet, and ensuring prosperity for all. Namibia has attained faster economic growth and is on course towards sustainable development. Economic growth contributed to human development, gender equality, and good environmental management. Despite this good growth and progress towards the realisation of the SDGs, the evidence in this article demonstrates that Namibia still has a long way to go in certain areas. For example, while the country has managed to accomplish an upper middle-income country (UMIC) status, it still faces eminent amounts of disparities, notably in certain groups (women, youth and marginalised), but also between urban and rural areas.

Some decent partnerships and actions contributed to Namibia's progress towards the SDG targets. In particular, Namibia domesticated Africa Agenda 2063 and Agenda 2030 in national planning documents. Such a move is in the right direction; however, a concrete implementation needs to follow this course. Namibia also has a good national statistical institution (Namibia Statistics Agency) that assists with obtaining relevant and disaggregated data, which can be attributed to the realisation of the goals.

Finally, some issues for further research and development are:

People. With several safety nets in place, Namibia could explore a single framework (i.e., single registry) to ensure improvement in the efficiency and effectiveness of the system.

People. With improvements to the education system, Namibia could look at options that link, for example, safety nets for orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) to educational incentives such as attendance.

Prosperity. Specific action or participatory research could be explored in which

researchers identify several OVCs across the 14 regions and follow them through stages of their learning towards careers and their future social settings, becoming adults. *Planet*. With many global and national commitments to sustainably use, manage and share benefits accruing from ecosystem services and natural resources, Namibia could expand the Community-Based Natural Resource Management policy, and test a national compensation model clearly linked to individual farmers (i.e., forest, energy or wildlife) or communities (community forests, conservancies, conservation, agricultural farmers) for good environmental stewardship and sustainable land-use practices.

All in all, action-oriented research should be considered, where the identification of beneficiaries and targets is deliberately done to ensure that no one is left behind; furthermore, long-term consideration should be done for real empowerment economically and socially.

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