

Editorial

by *Antonio Garofalo*

With less than five years to go until the deadline for achieving the 2030 Agenda's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the picture emerging from the most recent international assessments appears profoundly critical. Projections indicate that only 18% of the targets are likely to be achieved by 2030. This percentage highlights not only a significant slowdown in progress but also a structural gap between the commitments made by states and their actual implementation (ASVIS Report, 2025).

This situation highlights a dual crisis: on the one hand, a crisis of global governance, stemming from the inadequacy of coordination, monitoring, and financing mechanisms for the implementation of the SDGs; on the other, a systemic crisis linked to persistent economic and social inequalities, the worsening climate emergency, and growing geopolitical instability. These factors combine to undermine the ability of international and national institutions to ensure coherent policies and effective interventions on a global scale.

The unsatisfactory state of progress cannot be interpreted as a simple operational delay, but as a symptom of a deeper failure in the collective capacity to orient development models toward economic, social, and environmental sustainability. The slow pace of the energy transition, persistent extreme poverty, inequalities in access to basic services such as education and healthcare, and the unwise use of ecosystems are indicators of a global trajectory that is significantly deviating from the established objectives.

Faced with this scenario, a strategic review of the 2030 Agenda implementation processes is essential, accompanied by renewed political commitment, strengthened international cooperation mechanisms, and more substantial investments geared toward sustainability.

A radical economic, social, and institutional paradigm shift is now necessary across all regional systems to attempt to at least partially recover

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from the delays accumulated thus far. Only through a decisive and coordinated acceleration it will be possible to mitigate the current dramatic situation and bring the global community closer to a path more consistent with the founding principles of the 2030 Agenda.

To this end, it is even more crucial to intensify and enhance studies on the issues relating to the 17 Goals of Agenda 2030.

In this issue of the Review of Studies on Sustainability, particular attention has been given to studies on issues that can be directly or indirectly traced back to several complex and interconnected challenges. Although each of the goals considered here focuses on a specific area, the common thread that unites them is the need for *systemic change*.

A systemic change that requires:

- *Innovation and Sustainable Infrastructure* (Goal 9): development of resilient infrastructure and technological innovation are essential to support the energy transition (Goal 7), responsible production (Goal 12) and climate action (Goal 13).
- *Equity and Inclusion* (Goals 10 and 16): reducing inequalities (Goal 10) and promoting peaceful and just institutions (Goal 16) are prerequisites for ensuring that the benefits of sustainable development are shared by all and that progress leaves no one behind. Effective governance is essential for implementing ambitious policies.
- *Resource Management and Climate Action* (Goals 7, 12, and 13): these goals are closely linked to managing natural resources and protecting the planet. They require urgent action to combat climate change (Goal 13), ensure affordable and clean energy (Goal 7), and promote responsible consumption and production patterns (Goal 12) to minimize environmental impact.

In short, the concept they have in common is the transversality of global challenges: it is not possible to achieve a goal without considering the impact and dependence on others.

In order to contribute to the systemic change mentioned above, this issue of the Review of Studies on Sustainability features articles showing how technological progress and digitalization can strengthen various strategic sectors, contributing to the achievement of Goal 9 of Agenda 2030.

A second group of papers addresses the issue of social and institutional sustainability, proposing actions aimed at promoting inclusion and rights, strengthening civic participation, making institutions more transparent and creating resilient and collaborative communities.

Finally, some authors with regard to Goals 7, 12, and 13, advocate the adoption of actions by individuals, society, businesses, and institutions aimed at adopting sustainable lifestyles, reducing waste, and favoring sustainable

mobility. This is to promote sustainability, not only as an environmental necessity, but also as an opportunity to improve the quality of life, protect ecosystems, and build a more equitable and resilient future for present and future generations.

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