A whole-of-society approach to realizing the SDGs
I. What is the original contribution of the Sustainable Development Goals, and why are they a significant step beyond the Millennium Development Goals?

II. What makes it so difficult for our societies to shift to a more sustainable pathway, in line with the SDGs?

III. What governance reforms should be imagined in order to allow our societies to be transformative? – the “whole of society” approach
The original contribution of the SDGs

- Reduce inequality within and among countries (Goal 10)
- Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable (Goal 11)
- Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns (Goal 12)
- 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 16)
The increase of inequality in OECD countries, 1985-2008

**Source:** OECD, *Divided We Stand. Why Inequality Keeps Rising* (2012)
THE KEY ISSUE OF EQUALITY

Sources: Ortiz and Cummins (UNICEF, 2011), data from World Bank and Eurostat
### THE CONTRIBUTION OF EQUALITY TO THE PURSUIT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INEQUALITY</th>
<th>EQUALITY</th>
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<tr>
<td>Reduces impact of growth on poverty reduction – therefore the tension</td>
<td>Maximizes impact of growth on poverty reduction</td>
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<td>between ecological footprint and poverty reduction increases</td>
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<td>Increases competition between the satisfaction of basic needs and the</td>
<td>Reduces competition between the satisfaction of basic needs and the</td>
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<td>satisfaction of superfluous desires</td>
<td>satisfaction of superfluous desires</td>
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<td>Increases « positional » competition and « status » achievement through</td>
<td>Reduces the pressure to conform or to compete through consumption</td>
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<td>conspicuous or imitative consumption</td>
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<td>Makes social transformation more difficult to achieve: the « rentier</td>
<td>Facilitates social transformation</td>
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<td>economy »</td>
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Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable (Goal 11)

11.3 By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries.

11.3.2 Proportion of cities with a direct participation structure of civil society in urban planning and management that operate regularly and democratically.

11.7 By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities.

11.7.1 Average share of the built-up area of cities that is open space for public use for all, by sex, age and persons with disabilities.
Recognizing cities as key actors in social innovation and livable urban spaces as essential to well-being
Examples in Belgium: Gent en garde, Ceinture Aliment-Terre Liégeoise, Brussels Good Food Strategy
The original contribution of the SDGs

- Reduce inequality within and among countries (Goal 10)
- Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable (Goal 11)
- **Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns (Goal 12)**
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The need for lifestyle changes – overcoming the “rebound effect” following cleaner technologies

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Two varieties of the “rebound effect” – improved technologies insufficient unless accompanied by reduced consumption.

- Improved energy efficiency
  - Energy is less expensive
    - Individuals consume more energy (substitution effect) and spend savings on other consumption items (income effect)
- Improved energy efficiency
  - Individuals believe less is required from them to reduce consumption
  - Individuals consume more (compensation effect)
The Ehrlich/Holdren equation (I=PAT): the seduction of “green growth”
The “middle-class effect” towards 2030 – multiplier effect after a country reaches approx. 6,000 USD/capita/year

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The need to move from the Ehrlich/Holdren equation \((I=PAT)\) to the equation of Schulze \((I=PBAT)\)

\[
I: \text{Ecological impact} \\
P: \text{Population} \\
A: \text{Affluence (income/capita)} \\
T: \text{Technology} \\
B: \text{Behavior}
\]

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The tragedy of the inert society – five lock-ins have co-evolved

- **Socio-technical choices** favoring standardisation and economies of scale
- **Dominant economic positions** and growth of inequalities
- **Lifestyles** – based on time, space and gender roles that demand convenience and high levels of consumption
- **Political economy**: capture of the political decision-making
- **Governance**: concentrated and focused on short-term objectives
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Three components of a « whole of society » transition towards sustainable societies

I. The « partner government »: ensuring (horizontal) alignment of different sectoral policies, (vertical) coordination across different policy levels, monitoring of progress, stakeholder participation / feedback to ensure permanent learning; and supporting citizens-led social innovations

II. « Green competition »: aligning economic incentives with sustainable development objectives by the internalization of externalities and supporting research and development efforts towards « clean » technologies

III. The « energetic society »

- Citizens’ initiatives
- Consumers
- Civil society
- Cities

- Social innovations that prepare the transition

- Enabling policies removing obstacles and facilitating citizens’ involvement
Realizing the SDGs: A whole-of-society approach

Realizing the SDGs: A whole-of-society approach

Source: P2P Foundation, A commons transition plan for the city of Ghent