

The UN Beyond GDP Intergovernmental Process

Key Dimensions for 2026 and Beyond

Summary Report of 26-27 March 2026 Expert Workshop
(Geneva | Online)



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Disclaimer

This summary report is an output of an expert workshop with a diverse range of stakeholders, and does not represent the views or positions of the organizations listed as participants to the workshop, including that of the United Nations University.

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1. Introduction

Under Action 53 of the 2024 *Pact for the Future*, all Member States to the United Nations (UN) committed unambiguously to “develop a framework on measures of progress on sustainable development to complement and go beyond gross domestic product” (GDP).¹ While much of the political momentum driving this commitment for a UN Beyond GDP agenda (UNBGDP) has been grounded in efforts to reform development finance cooperation,² it also emerges from the growing recognition among governments, academic and policy experts, and civil society alike that there are significant shortfalls on social and environmental registers from the centrality of GDP as a measure of progress and prosperity guiding economic policymaking.³

As leading scientific research indicates, the world economy needs a “systems reset” to become compatible with ensuring sustainable development that delivers social wellbeing within planetary boundaries for current and future generations.⁴ Shifting how we measure the economy’s performance for societal goals – away from a GDP-dominated focus and towards explicit delivery of sustainable and inclusive wellbeing – is therefore understood to be an integral part of these necessary transformations, as “what you measure affects what you do”.⁵

The Pact for the Future commitment by governments to go beyond GDP contained two actions that are currently underway:

- (i) The establishment by the UN Secretary-General of an independent High-Level Expert Group on Beyond GDP (HLEG), tasked with making a set of recommendations “for a limited number of country-owned and universally applicable indicators of sustainable development that complement and go beyond gross domestic product”, to be presented within the 80th session of the UN General Assembly;
- (ii) The launch of a UN-led intergovernmental process “on measures of progress on sustainable development that complement or go beyond gross domestic product” that will, in consultation with “relevant stakeholders”, consider the recommendations from the HLEG.

The release of the report by the HLEG is forthcoming,⁶ and the subsequent intergovernmental process (UNBGDP-IGP) – negotiated under the auspices of the UN General Assembly at UN headquarters in New York City and expected to start in May 2026⁷ – will determine much of the real-world impacts of this agenda. The structure, scope and timeline of the UNBGDP-IGP remains open-ended, fully subject to the discretion – and ambition – of Member States.

In this context, an expert workshop was organized on 26–27 March 2026 at the initiative of the United Nations University Centre for Policy Research, in partnership with the MERGE and WISE Horizons projects.⁸ The two-day hybrid workshop

¹ [A/RES/79/1](#). Action 53 was also echoed in the annexed *Declaration on Future Generations*, where governments committed to: “Strengthening our systems of national and global accounting, including by [...] encouraging the use of measures of progress on sustainable development that complement and go beyond gross domestic product.”

² Muznah Siddiqui, “Beyond GDP and the Multidimensional Vulnerability Index”, *Reimagining Global Economic Governance series*, David Passarelli, ed. (New York, United Nations University, 2025). Available at <https://unu.edu/cpr/report/beyond-gdp-and-multidimensional-vulnerability-index>.

³ *Our Common Agenda – Policy Brief 4: Valuing What Counts: Framework to Progress Beyond Gross Domestic Product* (United Nations publication, May 2023). Available at <https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/our-common-agenda-policy-brief-beyond-gross-domestic-product-en.pdf>.

⁴ David Obura and others, “A systems reset for sustainable development”, *Communications Sustainability*, vol. 1 No. 1 (2026), p. 3. Available at <https://www.nature.com/articles/s44458-025-00009-3>.

⁵ Joseph Stiglitz, Jean-Paul Fitoussi and Martine Durand, *Beyond GDP: Measuring What Counts for Economic and Social Performance* (Paris, OECD Publishing, 2018). Available at https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/2018/11/beyond-gdp_g1g98ae6.html.

⁶ High-Level Expert Group on Beyond GDP, *Interim Report* (November 2025). Available at https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/interim_report_high-level_expert_group_on_beyond_gdp_251105.pdf.

⁷ *Informal meeting of the plenary to hear a briefing of the SG’s report on Beyond GDP - General Assembly, 80th session* (Accessed on 20 April 2026). Available at <https://webtv.un.org/en/asset/k1i/k1iazqdqnt>.

⁸ See respective websites, available at <https://mergeproject.eu>, <https://wisehorizons.world>. ‘WISE’ stands for Wellbeing, Inclusion, Sustainability & the Economy.

gathered experts from across research, academia and civil society to exchange ideas on how the UNBGDP-IGP could support the implementation of the HLEG’s recommendations and advance the UNBGDP agenda. This summary report is a synthesis of the rich discussions that took place during the two days.

2. The Importance of a United Nations Beyond GDP Agenda

The Importance of a Dedicated United Nations-wide Intergovernmental Process

Workshop participants stressed that this is not the first time that the world has tried to move beyond GDP,⁹ nor is this the beginning of UN efforts to go beyond GDP.¹⁰ However, the HLEG report and the UNBGDP-IGP emerging from the Pact for the Future mark a significant step forward for mainstreaming this agenda, and can constitute a real breakthrough towards inclusive and sustainable wellbeing precisely because it is a UN-wide effort that has more political attention than ever before.

Three sets of reasons were highlighted throughout the discussion which stressed the potential value-add of the UNBGDP-IGP:

1. **A universal political mandate.** The 2024 Pact for the Future is a commitment from all UN Member States, and thus constitutes a formal commitment by every government to “complement or go beyond GDP”. This raises the agenda beyond a technical level to promote stronger political engagement and coherence than previous efforts.
2. **Setting standardized operational direction and tools.** Establishing a UN-wide suite of indicators to complement and go beyond GDP can offer standardized measurements that match the universality of GDP. Any formalized outcomes from the UNBGDP-IGP can resonate across the whole multilateral system, including international financial institutions (IFIs) to better align their frameworks with resilient wellbeing and sustainability.
3. **Mainstreaming key issues, people and business models that deliver for all.** Economic policies and practices that put wellbeing, sustainability and inclusion at the centre are still considered as pioneering and remain marginal. Shifting both the technical and paradigmatic incentive structures is key to making them the new normal, and the UN basis of this process can additionally offer convergence to non-State actors across society.

A Keystone Reform

To ground the understanding of why the UNBGDP-IGP offers a “once in a generation opportunity” for effecting change across social, environmental and economic registers in support of achieving sustainable development, workshop discussants emphasized how GDP growth is fundamentally linked to a one-dimensional view of economic progress, which

⁹ Annegeke Jansen and others, “Beyond GDP: a review and conceptual framework for measuring sustainable and inclusive wellbeing”, *The Lancet Planetary Health*, vol. 8 No. 9 (2024). Available at [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanplh/article/PIIS2542-5196\(24\)00147-5/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanplh/article/PIIS2542-5196(24)00147-5/fulltext); See also the OECD Centre on Well-being, Inclusion, Sustainability and Equal Opportunity (WISE) outputs for well-being and beyond GDP, available at <https://www.oecd.org/en/topics/policy-issues/well-being-and-beyond-gdp.html> (accessed on 20 April 2026).

¹⁰ Refer to the UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) webpage on Beyond GDP for an overview on UN efforts for Beyond GDP, available at <https://unsceb.org/topics/beyond-gdp> (accessed on 20 April 2026).

treats the environment as an externality, prioritizes the short term and relies on an incomplete measure of value against holistic societal objectives.

Given the current dominant position that GDP holds in economic decision-making as the primary ‘currency’ of economists, policymakers and institutional frameworks, the dominance of GDP-focused policymaking was understood to threaten the very basis of achieving the holistic goals of sustainable development – including against planetary boundaries.¹¹ Participants emphasized how GDP is used to inform the way national accounts are constructed, the metrics that are used and the type of economic modelling that is produced as guidance for economic decisions; adjusting away from GDP-centric accounts, metrics and models would therefore promote policymaking oriented towards delivering sustainable and inclusive wellbeing as the fundamental goal of economic development.¹²

Moreover, the dominance of GDP as a standardized metric informing loan, debt and trade rules across international economic and financial institutions was stressed as an inhibiting factor for enacting policies which deliver across social and environmental registers. For example, GDP-centric rules can be a barrier to access for concessional finance for developing countries, as implied in the main outcome from the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD4), the *Sevilla Commitment*¹³: such access, especially from multilateral development banks and credit rating agencies (CRAs), is governed by a set of rules that in general place strong emphasis on national income levels, creditworthiness and debt sustainability, all linked to measuring economic performance in GDP terms.¹⁴ Such structural policies can therefore prevent governments from allocating finance and setting policies for health, education or climate outcomes, as doing so may not register positively for GDP growth and would thereby violate borrowing terms or other conditionalities.

Additionally, participants underscored that national alternatives to GDP have often faced challenges in their uptake against GDP-centric decision-making due to concerns over loss of competitiveness. Without a level playing field, including through the rules governing IFIs, countries may be discouraged from moving away from economic planning that maximizes GDP growth over other considerations.

Besides the international financial architecture and macroeconomic considerations, participants also discussed the implications of UNBGDP for other key sectors and processes:

- **Private sector:** Participants emphasized that business actors are facing a scattered, evolving and splintering regulatory context, with the landscape of standards, ratings and rankings across environmental, social and governance objectives crowded and fragmented. Business-led efforts have proposed unifying frameworks in recent years,¹⁵ but remain siloed across topics and are often unharmonized with the diversity of national beyond GDP initiatives. By bringing clarity on the directions of macroeconomic policies (including incentive structures and regulatory frameworks), UNBGDP can be helpful to build a “level playing field” that brings together environmental,

¹¹ M. Jones and, others eds., *Summary for Policymakers of the Methodological Assessment Report on the Impact and Dependence of Business on Biodiversity and Nature’s Contributions to People* (Bonn, IPBES secretariat, 2026). Available at <https://www.ipbes.net/business-impact>.

¹² Rutger Hoekstra and others. “Tilting the Scale: A Theoretical Framework to re-direct Public Policy away from Economic Growth towards Sustainable and Inclusive Wellbeing”, WISE Horizons Deliverable D1.4. Available at https://wisehorizons.world/cms/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/WISE_Horizons_Tilting_the_Scale_Full_Report.pdf. Also refer to the WISE Horizons project for further information on the concept of ‘Sustainable and Inclusive Wellbeing’ as the overarching goal of economic development.

¹³ [Resolution A/RES/79/323](https://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2016/06/20160623.res79323.html).

¹⁴ *Financing for Sustainable Development Report 2026: Implementing the Sevilla Commitment* (United Nations publication, 2026). Available at <https://financing.desa.un.org/iatf/fsdr2026>.

¹⁵ See Capitals Coalition ‘Integrated Decision-Making Framework’ for one such initiative, available at <https://capitalscoalition.org/capitals-approach/frameworkintegrated/>. Other standards setting bodies include the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the International Sustainability Standards Board under the IFRS Foundation, available respectively at <https://www.iso.org/home.html> and <https://www.ifrs.org/groups/international-sustainability-standards-board/>; Relevant risk disclosure initiatives include: the Taskforce on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD), the Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures (TNFD) and the Taskforce on Inequality and Social-related Financial Disclosures (TISFD), available respectively at: <https://www.fsb-tcfd.org/>, <https://tnfd.global/> and <https://www.tisfd.org/> (accessed on 20 April 2026).

wellbeing and inclusion goals, and can promote resilient investments and ‘fourth sector’ social enterprise efforts,¹⁶ especially if UNBGDP proposals were made mandatory for all.

- **Climate, environment and future generations:** The urgent need to incentivize sustainability within policymaking was highlighted as a critical opportunity, in underscoring the critical dependence of economic development on ecological and climatic stability.¹⁷ UNBGDP was seen to potentially provide a coherent framework for economic decision-making in understanding trade-offs and synergies between social, economic and environmental dimensions across multiple time scales (including discount ratings between current and future generations). Participants emphasized how the UNBGDP agenda could provide a harmonizing influence for metrics across the Rio Conventions and Multilateral Environmental Agreements – with their complementary economics and trade dimensions – and informed by science-policy interfaces such as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES).
- **Human rights economy:** The concept of a ‘human rights economy’ has been gaining traction in recent years, stemming from the fact that current economic structures are not enhancing human rights, and are on the contrary often a key engine behind their infringement.¹⁸ Participants noted that UNBGDP is conceptually well-aligned with the human rights economy, and that a key point of attention will be to ensure that HLEG’s proposals are well aligned with human rights norms and principles, including on proposed indicators.¹⁹
- **Inequality, poverty, labour, gender and Indigenous peoples:** GDP-centric policymaking was noted to obscure socially harmful economic effects. Participants indicated the relevance of UNBGDP with emerging efforts working to address inequality (the International Panel on Inequality, emerging from the South African G20 Presidency²⁰), poverty (the Roadmap to Eradicate Poverty Beyond Growth, developed by the UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights²¹), labour (pending disruptive labour impacts through widespread AI deployment, or reform within the International Labour Organization for unpaid labour²²), gender equity (rendering visible unpaid care and domestic work, alongside negative impacts from economic activities²³), and Indigenous peoples (accounting for non-economic and collective measures of wellbeing accordingly to Indigenous and traditional practices of prosperity and sustainability, including through the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues²⁴).
- **Trade and investment:** Participants also emphasized the implications of UNBGDP for trade and investment. In particular, they noted that the widespread use of norms established by the International Organization for

¹⁶ Heerad Sabeti, “The fourth sector: Can business unusual deliver on the SDGs?”, UNDP Blog, 1 August 2018. Available at <https://www.undp.org/blog/fourth-sector-can-business-unusual-deliver-sdgs>.

¹⁷ Amine Benayad and others, *Too Hot to Think Straight, Too Cold to Panic: Landing the Economic Case for Climate Action with Decision Makers* (Boston, Boston Consulting Group; Cambridge, University of Cambridge climaTRACES Lab and Cambridge Judge Business School, 2025). Available at <https://web-assets.bcg.com/a1/fc/811b182f481fbc039d51776ec172/landing-the-economic-case-for-climate-action-with-decision-makers-wo-spine-mar-2025.pdf>.

¹⁸ United Nations, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, “Human rights economy: seeding change for an economy that enhances human rights” (accessed on 20 April 2026). Available at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/sdgs/human-rights-economy-seeding-change-economy-enhances-human-rights>.

¹⁹ United Nations, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, “More than GDP: measuring what really matters for people and rights”, 21 October 2025. Available at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/stories/2025/10/more-gdp-measuring-what-really-matters-people-and-rights>

²⁰ Initiative for Policy Dialogue, Columbia University, “Landmark G20 report led by Nobel Laureate Joseph Stiglitz sounds alarm on ‘inequality emergency’ and calls for International Panel on Inequality”, 4 November 2025. Available at <https://ipdcolumbia.org/event/landmark-g20-report-led-by-nobel-laureate-joseph-stiglitz-sounds-alarm-on-inequality-emergency-and-calls-for-international-panel-on-inequality/>.

²¹ United Nations, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, “Roadmap for eradicating poverty beyond growth” (accessed on 20 April 2026). Available at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/sr-poverty/roadmap-eradicating-poverty-beyond-growth>.

²² Günseli Berik, “Toward more inclusive measures of economic well-being: debates and practices”, ILO Future of Work Research Paper Series, No. 2 (Geneva, International Labour Organization, 2018). Available at https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/%40dgreports/%40cabinet/documents/publication/wcms_649127.pdf.

²³ Jennifer Lipenga and others, “Beyond GDP: A Compendium of Regional Feminist Perspectives” (Oxford, Oxfam, 2024). Available at <https://policy-practice.oxfam.org/resources/beyond-gdp-a-compendium-of-regional-feminist-perspectives-621665/>.

²⁴ See Victoria Tauli-Corpuz. (2008). Indigenous Peoples’ Indicators of Well-being, Poverty and Sustainability. Summary Report of Regional and Thematic Workshops on Indicators Relevant for Indigenous Peoples, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Report submitted to the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. Available at https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/E_C19_2008_9.pdf; See also Mark Podlasz and others, “Centering First Nations concepts of wellbeing: toward a GDP-alternative index in British Columbia” (Vancouver, British Columbia Assembly of First Nations, 2020). Available at <https://www.bcafn.ca/sites/default/files/docs/reports-presentations/BC%20AFN%20FINAL%20PRINT%202020-11-23.pdf>.

Standardization (ISO) was linked to their uptake in trade rules and agreements.²⁵ While conversations at the World Trade Organization connecting trade to systemic discussions around sustainability remained challenging, UNBGDP presents the opportunity to bridge ministries and break silos, especially between environmental and trade ministries. Participants also noted the important links of UNBGDP to debt sustainability assessments, cost of capital, and investor confidence – especially through implications for sovereign credit ratings and the methodologies of CRAs.²⁶

The workshop discussion therefore made it clear why a strong UNBGDP outcome could be considered a keystone reform, in helping provide an enabling environment for policies compatible with long-term sustainability and human flourishing within planetary boundaries.

3. Key Dimensions for the Intergovernmental Process

Organizing the Sequence Ahead: A Short- and a Longer-term Process?

Without pre-empting the structure and outcomes of the forthcoming UNBGDP-IGP, workshop participants reflected on possible considerations that could help ensure transformative outcomes from the UNBGDP agenda. These ideas were drawn from the experience of other UN processes and from a consideration of the wider context under which the intergovernmental process will take place.

Participants highlighted that UN intergovernmental processes on topics of this breadth are usually organized in different phases: informal meetings to probe for political appetite, information gathering to calibrate the discussions, consultations to broadly map positions, and only then negotiations based on working documents. Such processes therefore usually require a multi-year phased process with short- and mid-term goals; a process exceeding several months.

In this regard, participants highlighted the utility of Member States adopting a General Assembly resolution within its current 80th session, which could mandate a longer-term open-ended process that Member States could use to discuss and agree upon mechanisms that could implement identified needs and/or statistical indicators responding to the HLEG recommendations, including through establishing UN-wide standardized indicators that could work to curb a potential further proliferation of beyond GDP indicators following the HLEG report release.

Were a secondary process to be established following an initial General Assembly resolution mandating a UN-wide adoption of beyond GDP indicators, such a process could request the UN Statistical Commission (UNSC), in partnership with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs and other relevant bodies, to provide technical suggestions that would subsequently be debated and agreed upon by the General Assembly. Consultative inputs by relevant bodies among financial institutions, scientific bodies and civil society constituencies could then take place throughout the subsequent process in considering UN-wide indicators and/or implementation mechanisms. The design,

²⁵ Noting the importance of connecting any outcomes from UNBGDP to the relevant ISO process on Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) alignment, ISO/PC 343, 'Sustainable development goals management.' Available here <https://www.iso.org/committee/9634841.html> (accessed on 20 April 2026).

²⁶ António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations, "Turn credit ratings from barriers into contributors to sustainable development", statement to the Economic and Social Council Special Meeting, New York, 30 March 2026 (SG/SM/23070). Available at <https://press.un.org/en/2026/sgsm23070.doc.htm>.

scope and considerations of this longer-term process could draw lessons from other emergent processes, such as the UN Framework Convention on International Tax Cooperation currently under negotiation.²⁷

A longer-term process could also build upon and integrate the current ongoing work by the UNSC's Expert Group on Well-Being Measurement,²⁸ which will have produced by January 2027 a first version of the Framework for Inclusive and Sustainable Wellbeing that will contain recommendations on what the HLEG proposal means for every country in the world, notably in terms of data and reporting interoperability.

Given the important challenges for shifting decision-making and paradigms away from an overarching focus on GDP growth as the primary measure of progress, UNSC recommendations would need to be backed by, and be part of, a stronger mobilization of Member States and of the UN system to ensure UNBGDP uptake and implementation. Providing adequate space within an intergovernmental process for political exchange and negotiation following a technical phase was therefore stressed by workshop participants as critical to ensure system-wide uptake and mainstreaming.

Five Key Dimensions for the Intergovernmental Process

Notwithstanding the open questions on the form, timeline and outcomes of the intergovernmental process as determined at the discretion of Member States, five key cross-cutting dimensions were identified by workshop participants that should be taken into consideration for the UNBGDP-IGP. Participants agreed that addressing them with care could maximize the chances for a robust outcome of the UNBGDP agenda.

- 1. Strong political ownership and procedural integrity:** Participants highlighted that the design of the process would benefit with strong political ownership and direction, in consultation with Member States. The President of the General Assembly has named Guyana and Spain as the two co-facilitators to lead the process, who should be strongly aware of the balance between the technical and political dimensions of this agenda. Participants noted that informal groups of relevant stakeholders, such as finance ministries, IFIs and statistical offices, should also be engaged and consulted to ensure sufficient alignment and coherence with other efforts and priorities. The discussion emphasized the importance of balancing clarity and direction of the process provided by the co-facilitators, while allowing for the process to be adaptive and responsive to developments emerging from discussions among Member States and relevant stakeholders.
- 2. Multidisciplinary and multi-stakeholder participation:** The release of the HLEG report will very likely spur many reactions from different expert communities beyond economics or statistics, commenting on both the report content and how to organize its uptake.²⁹ The process will need an explicit science-policy or knowledge-policy feature, to organize all the received feedback and translate it into the intergovernmental discussions.³⁰ The process should also promote wider civil society participation out of principle, and ensure UNBGDP outcomes respond to the actual needs of diverse constituencies who are directly concerned by or have expertise on beyond GDP measures (including labour, women and girls, youth, Indigenous peoples, faith-based organizations, the business sector and academia).
- 3. Fairness and adaptability to national and regional realities:** A key theme raised throughout the workshop concerned the means of achieving balance between universality and the specificities of national circumstances. Participants suggested that an overall needs-based approach, with dedicated mechanisms through which Member

²⁷ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Financing for Sustainable Development division, "Intergovernmental Negotiations for UN Framework Convention on International Tax Cooperation" (accessed on 20 April 2026). Available at <https://financing.desa.un.org/unfcitc>.

²⁸ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Statistics Division, "Expert Group on Well-being Metrics" (accessed on 20 April 2026). Available at <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/groups/EGWM/>.

²⁹ See for example: Richard Samans and others (2026). Progressing Beyond GDP: Towards a Multidimensional Living Standards Index (MLSI) and Integrated Headline Measure of Gross National Sustainable Development (GNSD). UNEN Working Paper No.1. Available at https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/unen_working_paper_no_1_0.pdf.

³⁰ Noting the relevance of connecting with the various nexus and values assessments of the IPBES, and of connecting with the scientific inputs informing the preparation of the Global Sustainable Development Report.

States could make explicit their implementation needs balanced against the benefits of universal indices, could be a constructive way to bridge the two levels. Additionally, the availability of data, resources, technology transfer and capacity-building both downstream and upstream of the UNBGDP-IGP, were stressed as essential to implement any newly adopted frameworks. The reality of country-level implementation being constrained by factors such as declining official development assistance, fiscal space, debt and access to finance was also emphasized, where the alignment of public finance to support implementation – concerning budget allocation, tracking and monitoring of beyond GDP frameworks – was linked to the need of reforming wider structural frameworks such as international finance, trade and North-South cooperation.

4. **Synergies with other processes and institutional uptake:** A major point identified by participants was how the intergovernmental process could facilitate the uptake of UNBGDP indicators and recommendations across the UN system (e.g. in alignment with the 2025 update to the System of National Accounts) and wider international landscape (including the international financial architecture) to truly shift decision-making beyond GDP-centric approaches. Participants noted that political leadership and coalitions of the willing, such as the Global Alliance for Beyond GDP, the Coalition of Finance Ministers for Climate Action or the Network for Greening the Financial System,³¹ could play a key role in mainstreaming any new statistical frameworks. Similarly, participants stressed that the process – as both a technical and political effort – should at an early stage find ways to include relevant bodies to discuss how UNBGDP could be integrated, mainstreamed and harmonized with other relevant institutions and multilateral processes. There are many connections with other agendas, and an early mapping and interfacing (similar to relevant efforts currently underway through the UN80 initiative) was viewed as a critical action by participants, in order to work against fragmentation and duplication.
5. **Accountability:** Workshop participants stressed that if the intergovernmental process will work to seriously address implementation, then questions of accountability through monitoring and reporting would be crucial to address. The HLEG is likely to propose an annual reporting and reviewing process, but how to connect this with progress on implementation will have to be assessed closely. In particular, as the IFIs are a key uptake audience for UNBGDP, it will be particularly important to follow how IFIs may respond to the HLEG recommendations and the UNBGDP-IGP, and how this influences country implementation. The potential integration with Voluntary National Reports was proposed as an option, albeit with reservations concerning their efficacy for incentivizing implementation. Participants also stressed the importance of strengthening mechanisms that link monitoring to actual resource use: to understand whether and how public spending is effectively aligned with stated priorities.

4. Connecting to Deeper Change

Throughout the workshop participants stressed that substantive changes to policymaking will not come from the UNBGDP-IGP *per se*, but rather from how actors will choose to utilize any agreed UN-wide reforms. Participants converged on the idea that raising the public profile of UNBGDP was crucial this year and in 2027, including on the road to the post-2030 sustainable development agenda. The post-2030 agenda discussions will formally start during the July 2027 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and will be informed by the next edition of the Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR). The post-2030 agenda – as well as the GSDR currently under preparation – represents another anchor point for UNBGDP, where a UN-wide statistical framework would serve as the statistical foundation for any potential post-2030 agenda in a manner more integrated than previous efforts, as seen with SDG 17.19.³² In order to increase momentum on the importance of structural reforms in the global economy to align it with delivery of the SDGs

³¹ See respective websites available at <https://www.oecd.org/en/events/2025/07/new-approaches-for-renewed-international-cooperation-insights-for-the-beyond-gdp-global-alliance.html>, <https://www.financeministersforclimate.org/>, and <https://www.ngfs.net/en> (accessed on 20 April 2026).

³² United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Statistics Division, "SDG Indicators Metadata: Target 17.19" (accessed on 20 April 2026). Available at <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/metadata/?Text=&Goal=17&Target=17.19>.

and whatever may succeed them, a longer more ambitious UNBGDP-IGP would certainly be conducive towards building strong uptake.

Beyond UN and intergovernmental institutions and organizations, workshop participants identified the need for the wider ‘Beyond GDP community’ to engage and support the UNBGDP agenda. For instance, media literacy on new economic models and metrics needs to be greatly improved across a range of constituencies, and the mobilization surrounding the UNBGDP-IGP could be an important window to do so. Educational content for both students and the wider public were mentioned as useful resources as the initial phase of the UNBGDP-IGP begins.³³ Participants considered that the ‘Beyond GDP community’ in its multidisciplinary of knowledge, practice and form (e.g. networks, networks of networks, inclusive coalitions or smart coalitions) could use this same window to become more coherently structured, connected and internationally organized by 2027 in order to promote linkages with relevant multilateral fora and contribute to shaping real economy transformations that deliver sustainable and inclusive wellbeing.

In the shorter-term: in 2026, after the release of the HLEG report, four key moments were identified during the workshop. The beginning of the eighty-first session of the UN General Assembly will give a clear indication of whether the intergovernmental process will continue further. The International Monetary Fund and World Bank Group Annual Meetings (October 2026) were identified as a key moment to follow, as having these major IFIs engage with UNBGDP proposals was identified as a priority outcome. The Sixth UN World Data Forum taking place in Riyadh at the start of November also offers a moment for data communities to respond to the HLEG recommendations. Finally, the new UN Secretary-General will be selected in the last quarter of 2026. Carrying the UNBGDP vision forward will be a key task for the new incumbent.

³³ See online course on the basics of BGD from the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), available at <https://www.iisd.org/projects/learning-beyond-gdp> (accessed on 20 April 2026); See also the Youth Network on Beyond GDP, led by the Beyond Lab, available at <https://www.thebeyondlab.org/initiative/beyond-gdp> (accessed on 20 April 2026).

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