17 Rooms
Global Flagship Meeting

New York City
September 22, 2019

SUMMARY REPORT

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The ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION

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Co-organized by The Brookings Institution & The Rockefeller Foundation
In New York City
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Time is running fast for the bold set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that the world's governments have agreed to achieve by 2030. Without more significant action soon, too many targets will fall short. That's a big reason why a clock, and the dreaded words "Time's up!", are central features of the closing session of 17 Rooms, a meeting designed to focus attention on identifying practical steps to accelerate progress on each of the goals. What better way to concentrate minds than by fostering awareness of the few available moments closing in on zero?

One danger of a vision so bold as the SDGs is that the new world they envisage is so different from present reality that it can be hard for those trying to create it to know where to begin. When confronting so much embedded complexity, it can feel like trying to boil the ocean. 17 Rooms aims to help tackle that challenge by focusing on next steps – not the perfect step nor the complete set of steps that might define long-term strategy, but an ambitious set of next steps that could make a big difference through collective action. Then, because there are so many goals, it can be hard for any individual specialist working on a specific problem to see the big picture. So why not bring all the Room specialists together to share top priorities and learn from each other in rapid succession?

When the first experimental 17 Rooms was convened by The Brookings Institution and The Rockefeller Foundation in New York in September 2018, it seemed we were on to something: bring together people who spend their working lives on aspects of one or another global goal, to have them identify the most impactful actions that could be taken in the next year or so. Six to eight people per room. No panels or presentations. Just informal conversations among peers.

In 2018, at the start of the always insanely busy week of the UN General Assembly, we found there was an appetite to get away from the usual speechifying and panel discussions, and instead hole up in small groups for some real in-depth practical conversations about what to do next. As well as coming up with some good ideas for action, participants even had fun, especially as they watched specialists in other groups try to sum up their own rich discussions in their two minutes before the clock said stop. Please do it again in 2019, the vast majority urged. So we did.

As we set out in this report, the 2019 edition of the 17 Rooms event was bigger and better than the first one a year earlier – not least because a lot more preparatory work was done ahead of the gathering itself on September 22nd. Roughly 10 people per Room, with a greater diversity of voices at the table, and more curated interactions between the Rooms. Each Room's moderators (see Appendix) also played a crucial role to identify key issues ripe for action and invite cross-sections of specialists who could naturally contribute to the discussion.

The 2019 edition's closing plenary included keynote remarks from Rajiv Shah, President of The Rockefeller Foundation, and John R. Allen, President of The Brookings Institution. Both leaders underscored their strong personal and institutional commitments to the SDGs, alongside the need for broad-based societal

leadership to follow-through on the historic consensus that forged the goals in 2015. Noting that the 17 Rooms meeting was taking place on the heels of more than 4 million young people gathering around the world to call for greater action, Dr. Shah drew inspiration from their reminder that, "simply not having faith in our political leaders or political institutions to get the job done is not enough, and that we need to come together and be constructive in crafting solutions." General Allen similarly stressed how the 17 Rooms approach "brings a sense of urgency, and importantly camaraderie, across all the specific issues of SDG implementation," with all the participants being "shining examples of how principled and committed people can lead and make an impact."

Among the roughly 170 people who participated – representing dozens of countries and several dozen organizations – there were agriculturalists and zoologists, economists and explorers, climate change negotiators and impact investors, charity workers, social entrepreneurs and management consultants, plus an entire room full of university presidents, focused on how their institutions can become the embodiment of the partnership approach at the heart of the SDG vision. This year, unlike in 2018, a number of public officials joined too – although generally only forming up to a third of each Room – to foster connectivity with relevant levers of government.

Key ideas emerging from the Rooms

This year's 17 working groups each differed in substance and style, and no two Rooms took the same approach to their task. Yet participants conveyed a common sense of optimism, community, and action. The optimism was driven by awareness of opportunities for progress. The sense of community was driven by a spirit of collaboration and shared purpose across goals. The focus on action was driven by pervasive impatience with the status quo.

Each Room focused on particular priorities within its Goal, rather than the full waterfront of its respective domain. Discussions were informed by the specific mix of expertise in each Room, participants' outlooks on current status, and near-term opportunities for gains. In the limited amount of time available, some Rooms focused on a single big idea while others developed longer lists of targeted issues they consider ripe to move forward. Some Rooms made their own direct commitments for 2020 while others identified opportunities for action over the year to come, recognizing that broader stakeholders will often be decisive for generating progress.

Table 1 at the end of this document presents a synopsis of actionable priorities put forward by all the Rooms, distilled across seven categories: new entities, new initiatives, key events, policy shifts, new standards, advocacy priorities, and research priorities. Without pretending to capture the richness of each Room's discussion, the following offers a distillation of key priorities by category.

1) New entities

A number of Rooms identified new entities or organizations that could help generate decisive gains for their respective Goals:

- Room 2 focused on the need for a new Intergovernmental Panel on Food Systems (IPFS), building on the spirit of the existing Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. An IPFS would be an impartial consortium of top-level, diverse scientists, which collates and updates data for the United Nations and the international community on the state of food systems, their resiliency, their impacts on diets, and their impacts on climate.

- Room 7 proposed the launch of a $50 billion Universal Electrification Fund for Africa, guided by an ambition of connecting 100 million people to reliable and least-cost sources of electricity. A pilot could be launched in early 2020, building on discussions over the past year among a wide range of public and philanthropic actors.

- Room 8 proposed the launch of a Center for Advancement of Global Workers, which would be tasked with designing firm- or industry-level ratings based on inclusivity and degree of protection for vulnerable workers. The Center could be the hub of a coalition to define the "S" in ESG – meaning economic, social, and governance measures of performance for private industry.

- Room 9 identified the need for a non-profit entity to serve as a custodian of global standards for digital societal platforms. This entity could take the lead in developing a shared blueprint that sets benchmarks for building and certifying scalable platforms as genuine public goods.

2) New initiatives

Several Rooms identified specific initiatives and coalitions that might not require the establishment of a new formal entity, but would benefit from concerted efforts at collaboration across diverse actors:

- Room 1 focused on launching a "Pact to Act" among large food companies, galvanizing efforts to make a commitment to end extreme poverty in their supply chains. They also committed to support dialogue with political leaders in northern Nigeria, the country with the world's largest concentration of extreme poverty, to identify opportunities for local action plans in tackling extreme poverty by 2030.

- Room 3 recommended the creation of a new "barometer of deaths," a published daily account of each country's newborn deaths and stillbirths, aiming to prompt accountability among heads of state and government for every newborn death and stillbirth to be treated as an emergency.

- Room 4 agreed to pursue the creation of a Prize for Leapfrogging in Education, to be awarded annually to a head of state or government. The prize aims to shift global mindsets around the need for educational systems to "leapfrog" on concurrent issues of access, quality, and relevance, by recognizing political leaders who support and generate leapfrogging efforts in their own country's systems.

- Room 5 committed to work to galvanize a gender-inclusive coalition of organizations and corporate marketing resources to "re-brand" SDG 5 in a more powerful way for broad audiences, particularly as 2020 marks the 25th anniversary of the seminal 1995 Beijing World Conference on Women. This includes the Generation Equality Forum hosted by France, Mexico, and UN Women, which has its final meeting in July in Paris.

- Room 8 described the need for a partnership between the World Bank, national governments, private firms, and civil society organizations to leverage digitalization for the growth of small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs). The partnership would help companies establish digital identities in a manner that attracts loans and investment, while removing policy barriers that might unduly link formalization to taxation. The partnership could also promote cashless transactions that help small companies connect more efficiently to global value chains.

- Room 11 convened a range of local government leaders and pledged to offer leadership, awareness, and support towards a goal of 100 cities around the world committing, by the end of 2020, to complete a Voluntary Local Review for the SDGs.

- Room 12 recommended the development of a public-private Convention on Sustainable Production and Consumption. This would be an international treaty, in similar spirit to the Convention on Biological Diversity, to keep global systems of production and consumption in line with a 1.5°C limit on global warming. The Convention would aim to balance the earth's growth and use of natural resources, encourage sustainable use and disposal of materials, and ensure equitable benefits from global production systems.

- Room 13 stressed that expansion of greenhouse gas emissions will be driven, in large part, by the nature of growth in cities, including the evolution of transportation systems, so expanded leadership is required by city networks (e.g., the C40 coalition and ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability) to promote decarbonization across various urban systems, such as transport, power, buildings, and waste management.

- Room 15 recommended the creation of a "Subsidies Forum" to address perverse financial incentives that have a negative impact on the conservation of nature and global management of carbon and hence impede the achievement of SDG 15. Such a forum could address distinct categories of subsidies, including those linked to food, fiber, energy, and water.

- Room 17 committed to launch and broadly expand the University Global Compact (UGC, initiative label subject to potential revision), as a global network of university leaders committed to advancing

and collaborating around global and local challenges of sustainable development. Participants set a goal of 500 universities joining the UGC in 2020. Member universities would be encouraged to collaborate on their own "Sustainable Future Day" of service, to collaborate with other organizations and networks in building a global library of open educational resources for sustainable development, to co-create repositories of best university practices on the SDGs, and to champion shared projects. Participants also committed to promote "17 Rooms-U" events in local communities that engage students, faculty, and other actors inside and outside universities.

3) Key events

Participants in Rooms 13, 14, and 15 shared an overarching focus on two potentially seminal upcoming policy events in 2020. One is the October Conference of Parties (COP) for the Convention on Biological Diversity, taking place in Kunming, China. This is poised to be the most important agenda-setting event for global biodiversity in a decade. The second is the November climate change COP taking place in Glasgow, UK. It will be the most important global climate meeting since the Paris Climate Agreement was established in 2015. Other Rooms also discussed major upcoming events that could either be leveraged or initiated to bolster key elements of SDG progress. These included:

- Room 2 discussed the prospective 2021 UN Food Systems Summit (subsequently announced by the UN Secretary-General in October 2019) and key ingredients to ensure the event makes decisive contributions to the SDGs. Participants agreed the Summit could consolidate a common understanding of food systems across sectors, leading to an outcome policy framework that helps high-level decision-makers identify and tackle priorities for food system transformation. This would include tools for encouraging state and city leadership for food systems, and also a potential opportunity to launch the proposed Intergovernmental Panel on Food Systems described earlier.

- Room 10 recommended that the UN Secretary-General host a Leaders' Summit on Reducing Inequalities in September 2020. This would help generate attention at the highest levels on options for tackling inequality. To guide the agenda, 15 pathfinder countries could showcase their own actions to tackle inequalities. A productive outcome would entail the articulation of a practical, evidence-based set of policy options that governments can pursue to tackle inequality and exclusion.

- Room 16 prioritized the UN's 75 anniversary summit, slated to take place in September 2020, as a major opportunity for ensuring violence reduction takes a prominent role on the agenda. Room participants also discussed the need, in 2020, for an "evidence summit" on the science for SDG 16, consolidating knowledge around what works.

4) Policy shifts

A number of Rooms discussed the need for policy shifts, recognizing that these are the explicit domain of governments. In that context, a number of practical opportunities for progress were identified:

- Rooms 14 and 15 were both guided by the deadline of the October 2020 Conference of Parties for the Convention on Biological Diversity in Kunming, China. In particular, Room 14 seeks international agreement on "30 percent of the ocean in well-managed, highly protected areas by 2030," as an apex target and successor to SDG 14.5, which sets a 10 percent protection target for 2020. More broadly, Room 15 focused on the need for a successful global dialogue leading up to the Kunming meeting, including consensus on biodiversity apex targets, and area-based targets such as 30 percent protected

and conserved by 2030. Room 15 also prioritized the need to incorporate land uses into targets, including for key biodiversity areas, and to establish outcome-based targets that directly protect biodiversity and ecosystem services, backed by clearly definable national targets and action plans.

- On a parallel track, Room 13 discussed the importance of each country's augmented nationally determined contributions to tackling climate change in the lead up to the November Conference of Parties for the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in Glasgow, Scotland. In that context, China's upcoming 14th Five Year Plan can set a particularly decisive path for global progress. The Room participants also discussed the imperative of the U.S. Government helping to lead on a global climate policy agenda in 2020.

- Room 7 discussed the need for an African Renewable Energy Power Pool, whereby countries make a policy commitment to pool their energy systems. This idea is being pursued by the Global Commission to End Energy Poverty. A likely goal for 2020 will be to get at least one regional power pool, whether existing or new, to develop an ambitious approach to coordination, especially for renewable energy.

- Room 8 discussed the need for piloting the expansion of access to healthcare and other social protections by mainstreaming portable benefits tied to work, rather than employers, especially in the U.S., but also as an expanding reference point for developing countries. France is paving the way with "individual activity accounts" which store social benefits as "points" to be used for public benefits, including training.

- Room 10 discussed the importance of OECD countries reaching agreement on taxing digital flows as well as the OECD and G20 taking concrete steps to advance the "BEPS 2.0" agenda (focused on base erosion and profit-shifting among corporate entities).

- Room 11 meanwhile focused on the need for policy changes to expand cities' access to financing for their SDG strategies, especially borrowing, since many municipalities do not have access to "sub-sovereign" capital markets.

- Room 3 discussed the opportunity for a major increase in excise taxes on cigarettes. In many low- and middle-income countries, a tripling of the excise tax would double the price of cigarettes. One estimate suggests that doing so would reduce consumption by a third while actually increasing public revenues from tobacco.

5) New standards

Many rooms emphasized the need for new practical and conceptual standards as key steps for advancing the SDGs. As mentioned earlier, Room 8 identified a strategy for defining the "S" (social) standard in ESG (environmental, social, and governance) reporting, while Room 9 prioritized the need for common standards to guide digital societal platforms. Other key priorities for standards included:

- Room 1 identified cash benchmarking as a strategic tool for promoting effectiveness in resource allocation and accountability. Participants committed to contribute analytical studies that raise awareness of benchmarking options and to assist donor entities in identifying how the cost-benefit assessment of a project compares to that of direct cash transfers.

- Room 3 identified the need for the international health community to define minimum standards for every woman to deliver her baby in a facility that provides high quality care – with reference to the right health worker, with the right training, providing the right type of care at the care time.

- Room 5 recognized an opportunity for a certification for businesses that achieve gender equality in pay, board representation, and employee representation. This would be equivalent to a LEED certification for environmental design. The Room committed to examine whether existing initiatives might already provide a basis for such an undertaking.

- Room 6 identified the need to assess whether any existing corporate reporting standards could form the basis of a "good water actor" label and also the need to develop standards and methods for defining "sustainably sourced water." These latter standards should include both data and transparency considerations at watershed, basin, and country scales.

- Room 10 identified multiple forms of new standards and metrics required. At the level of the G20, large economies could agree to adopt and implement "beyond GDP" measures" for tracking multidimensional economic and social progress, as recommended by the OECD's High-Level Expert Group on Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress. As an indicator for SDG 10.1 on inequality, Room 10 recommends that the UN General Assembly adopt the Palma ratio, which compares share of national income earned by the top 10 percent of the income distribution to the share earned by the bottom 40 percent. As an indicator for SDG 10.4, Room 10 recommended the adoption of the Commitment to Equity Institute's redistributive fiscal policy measure.

- Room 11 discussed the need for a new recognition standard to acknowledge the importance of municipal SDG processes, specifically that the UN grant official designation for Voluntary Local Reviews as a key element of SDG review processes and to act as a tool for transformation and co-creation of SDG implementation.

- Room 12 recommended the need for a Framework for Sustainable Production for a Thriving Planet and Sustainable Consumption. This would identify key material flows, their projected demand, and their corresponding environmental and societal impacts; it would identify standard measurements for designating "sustainable" production at the level of materials and products; it would develop business-level thresholds consistent with the global carbon budget required to stay within the 1.5°C global warming target; and it would promote voluntary commitments based on those thresholds.

- Room 13 encouraged countries to submit Midcentury Strategies for tackling climate change, with 2050 targets and decarbonization pathways, for the 2020 Glasgow Climate COP. These will be crucial complements to the 10-year nationally determined contributions that were affirmed in the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement.

6) Advocacy priorities

Several Rooms identified opportunities for advocacy in 2020, with some of the ideas being fairly evolved in their nature while others were early-stage sparks for further elaboration. Ideas included:

- In light of the slowing global pace of poverty reduction, Room 1 identified the need for a new narrative and campaign that appeals to governments of countries with severe poverty challenges in addition to

aid donors and civil society. The group asserted that such a narrative should have women's empowerment at its core, while also being multidimensional to ensure no one is left behind and also tackling future risks of climate change. In that context, Room 1 prioritized advocacy around legal identify for all, through a digital platform, including SDG 16.9.1, and to campaign around a "social floor" (nomenclature to be confirmed) of country-specific minimum spending at ensures public services are available to all.

- Recognizing the need for a technological accelerator to connect mothers to proper child delivery services, Room 3 identified the potential power of advocating for a phone to be available to every pregnant woman in the world, provided that it (i) links them to maternal health services, including family planning; (ii) links them to transportation services to access health facilities; and (iii) helps national and international health policymakers track data to improve accountability.

- Focusing on gender equality, Room 5 identified the opportunity of a year-long campaign of "2020 for 50/50." In particular, participants stressed the need for all 16 other SDGs to have an understanding of the gender gaps associated their goals in 2020, and emphasized upcoming conversations with UN Women and convenings hosted by The Rockefeller Foundation in Bellagio for carrying this workstream forward.

- In considering the issues of water and sanitation, Room 6 identified SDG 6.4 as a potential centerpiece for leveraging private sector engagement to mobilize overall political action on SDG 6. The group aimed to launch an aspirational year-long effort at the World Economic Forum's annual meeting in Davos, one that brings companies, investors, banks, rating agencies and other private sector players to work together over the course of 2020.

- Room 10 recommended the need for a new narrative on taxation, in the spirit of "Building a modern tax system in which everyone – people and corporations – pays their fair share."

- Room 11 argued for the need for a new multilateral municipal development bank to finance localized SDG efforts. Recognizing the longer-term challenge of creating such an institution, advocacy for a "Cities Multilateral Development Bank" is a step-wise priority in 2020.

- Room 13 identified a revolution in finance as the most important and achievable game changer in the lead up to the Glasgow climate summit in November 2020. Stressing the need to "promote green and sunset brown," participants agreed to advocate for major advances in low-to-zero carbon commitments from financial institutions alongside commitments to shift out of high carbon infrastructure. Participants also discussed the need to connect the climate and conservation communities more effectively in 2020, given the sizable role of Nature-based Solutions in near-term greenhouse gas reduction opportunities.

- SDG 14.5 frames an imminent target of conserving at least 10 percent of coastal and marine areas by 2020, so Room 14 identified the urgent need to advocate for rapid action over the coming year. As of November 2019, only 4.8 of the world's oceans have any protection, so many countries around the world will need to take rapid action in order to achieve this pivotal early SDG target.

- Room 15 stressed the need for a new overarching SDG narrative that recognizes biodiversity as "foundational" for all other SDGs; that recognizes the achievement of SDG 15 is inhibited by lack of

funding and the persistence of perverse financial incentives; and that promotes research to quantify the relationship between SDG 15 and other goals.

- In a similar spirit, Room 16 discussed the need to reframe "SDG 16+" – the SDG targets for peace, justice and inclusion – around problems that matter most in people's lives. There was also discussion on the need to explain SDG 16 to broad constituencies as a driver for change across the other SDGs; to link it to a new global narrative for violence reduction and prevention; and to position cities as leaders for SDG 16. Some participants also considered the proposed U.S. Global Fragility Act legislation to be important for policy advocacy efforts in 2020.

7) Research priorities

A number of Rooms identified the need for targeted research efforts to inform practical progress. These included:

- Room 1's discussion of the "Pact to Act," described earlier above, hinges on an understanding of the physical overlay between good business supply chains and people living in extreme poverty, so the group committed to consolidate the analytical reference base. In a similar vein, to support the Room's Nigeria-focused initiative, they committed to develop more refined sub-national assessment of poverty and income growth trends across the country. To support a campaign for a minimum package of public services for all, the Room also committed to provide analytical assessment of SDGs needs and relevant gaps.

- Room 5 agreed on the need for a short desk study summary of evidence on quotas to advance women's leadership across public and private sectors. This will consider existing quota commitments, review what is working, and "cultural nudging" successes. The insights could then inform targeted efforts with existing leadership organizations to make progress in specific geographies and sectors.

- Room 6 identified the need to review existing frameworks on water risks and standards (e.g., Principles for Responsible Investing, Sustainability Accounting Standards Board, Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures) to assess whether any of these could form the basis of a "good water actor" label. A subsequent assessment on financial risk protocols could then be assessed for their merits as either an improved or complementary approach to a more consumer-oriented label, with results then presented to relevant private sector audiences and the Stockholm World Water Week in 2020.

- Room 7 discussed the need to develop a vision for unleashing E-Mobility across Africa, meaning electric-powered drivetrains and related technologies that help enable electric vehicles and fleets. These could use storage and distributed energy systems to convert today's gas stations into tomorrow's battery stations and create a linked supply chain and ecosystem of appliances that augment power use in homes across the continent.

- As a key complement to the BEPS-2 policy agenda, Room 10 identified the need for a Corporate Taxation Transparency Index that the G20 could adopt for regular reporting at the country level.

- Recognizing that municipalities' access to finance differs considerably across national contexts, but that cities nonetheless form the frontline for citizen interface on many SDG challenges, Room 11 identified the need to map resources available for local and municipal SDG financing.

- In navigating the distinctions between producer- and consumer focused approaches to sustainable production and consumption, Room 12 recommended research on leading practices for changing consumer behavior. This could include a collection of examples on "what works" to promote sustainable consumption, in addition to the evidence for potential competitions or performance-based funding instruments to drive consumer change.

- Room 13 identified the need for research to identify solutions that reduce (and ultimately eliminate) tropical deforestation and advance restoration, since nature-based solutions can generate up to 30 percent of the greenhouse gas mitigation efforts needed by 2030, yet they receive only an estimated 3 percent of the climate funding.

- Room 15 prioritized maps of the geographic distribution of biodiversity and carbon as an achievable game changer by 2020. This in addition to a rigorous assessment of the quantitative links from SDG 15 to all other SDGs, which is required to establish formal mechanisms assessing the impact of financing investment in biodiversity.

- Room 16 agreed to work on consolidating evidence and showcasing "what works" across the five major domains of violence: conflict/fragility, urban violence, interpersonal violence, human rights/mass atrocities, and violent extremism.

Other points of interest

A few Rooms identified other opportunities for major steps forward on the SDGs in the near term, including data collection priorities that are crucial for benchmarking progress out to 2030:

- A special SDG census, in many or most countries, to survey households on a select number of SDG-relevant indicators (Room 3).

- A consensus on global indicators for assessing gender equality, to enable cross-program, cross-country, year-over-year data analysis (Room 5).

- Firm-level reporting of contributions to worker reskilling and mobility (Room 9).

- Doubling the number of international companies who join the Business for Inclusive Growth (B4IG) coalition and invest in the B4IG incubator (Room 10).

- The June 2020 WTO Ministerial could agree on practical steps for fisheries subsidies and digital trade and advance a concrete work plan to build momentum on WTO reform (Room 10).

- Develop a municipal checklist for measuring capabilities for achieving the core of the SDGs (Room 11).

- Develop a materials database on key waste streams and domestic material consumption in all countries, in addition to strengthened data on food loss and waste globally (Room 12).

- High resolution carbon stock data to estimate carbon emissions released by sea-bottom trawling and potentially deep-sea mining (Room 14).

- Estimates for the percentages of natural habitat that need to be protected and managed to provide ecosystem services for long-term survival of humanity (Room 15).

- Measurements of current cross-country biodiversity protection expenditures and financial needs (Room 15).

- A global survey of university students around awareness and support of key global sustainable development issues (Room 17).

Looking to 2020

In recognition of the limited time period remaining until the 2030 deadline, the United Nations and many SDG supporters have called for the coming year to launch a "Decade of Delivery," with an emphasis on mobilizing action for results. For many people, the 2020 calendar will prompt attention on global summits and high-level events. For others it will prompt attention to highly localized challenges and priorities.

At the level of high policy, as referenced by some of the Rooms above, at least three major SDG-related intergovernmental events will take place in the fall of 2020, providing a natural timetable for international advocacy. One will be a special September event in New York City to celebrate the UN's 75th anniversary. The SDGs are likely to be a major part of the agenda.

A second major event is the October "conference of parties" (COP) meeting of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in Kunming, China. Many of the SDG environmental targets have a 2020 deadline, including SDG 14.5 to conserve at least 10 percent of coastal and marine areas. These expiring targets were originally set at the 2010 Nagoya meeting of the CBD, so the Kunming meeting is a pivotal opportunity to set new targets for 2030. Many global environmental scientists and advocates are aiming for an overarching apex target of "30 by 30" – protecting 30 percent of the land's ocean and land surface for conservation by 2030.

A third major event will be the November climate COP in Glasgow, UK. This is important because the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement set a 2020 timetable for countries to bring back their augmented national strategies for tackling climate change and the window to change course away from 1.5°C global warming is quickly disappearing. The Glasgow summit will also take place right after the 2020 U.S. presidential election, the outcome of which will be decisive in informing the climate strategies of all other 193 signatories to the Paris agreement.

While these three global events will be seminal, the range of actions put forward by all 17 Rooms highlights the wide range of constituencies that will be – or ought to be – confronting their own respective pieces of the SDG puzzle in the near term. This holds even if only a portion of relevant policy debates are conducted under an explicit SDG banner. At the global level, many debates will play out in the context of multilateral organizations' multi-year funding replenishment rounds, including entities like the World

Bank's International Development Association, which is crucial for SDG 1.1 to end extreme poverty, and for Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, which is crucial for SDG 3 and many other goals. Many other key debates will surely be conducted without direct reference to the SDGs, but still with decisive implications for the SDGs.

Next steps for 17 Rooms: More than a single meeting

Over the coming year, many of the most important SDG conversations will surely need to take place in town halls and conference rooms far away from the global policy elite. The goals are universal, so every country and community needs to achieve them on their own terms. In this respect, 2020 offers an opportunity to bring the SDGs to ground – to figure out next steps for delivering results in the communities where people live.

In that spirit, the Brookings Institution and The Rockefeller Foundation are keen to support other actors to convene their own "17 Rooms-X" events around the world in 2020, learning from the experiences of efforts like TEDx in fostering a common set of practices around which community leaders can self-organize, ideally feeding in to future flagship events in New York. In July of this year, Tecnológico de Monterrey in Mexico and Universidad Politécnica de Madrid in Spain already conducted the first campus-level "17 Rooms-U" experiments to foster action-oriented SDG conversations among faculty, staff, students, and community stakeholders. In September, Rutgers University hosted an international meeting of academic leaders to experiment with a cross-institutional version of 17 Rooms-U. In November the State University of New York (SUNY) is hosting an online "Virtual 17 Rooms-U" event that it hopes will attract several thousand participants from around the world.

Looking forward, in a follow-up survey to the September 22 meeting more than 30 participants expressed interest in collaborating to organize a 17 Rooms-type meeting with their own community or constituency over the coming year. A number of cities, companies, and national groups are also exploring the possibility. In the same survey, we asked participants to rate their overall experience on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 representing a "terrible use of time" and 10 representing an "outstanding use of time." The average rating was 8, with many people even scoring the event at a 9 or 10. So we are likely to continue with the flagship meeting, while thinking about how to connect it with broader 17 Rooms efforts and boost the impact even more next time.

For any 17 Rooms event, the litmus test of success is of course is how much action comes out of each Room and how much of a difference it makes for the SDGs. This September's 17 Rooms flagship provided plenty of actionable ideas, in categories ranging from the creation of new institutions, setting new global standards and adopting new policies to targeting key global events and developing new advocacy campaigns. Hopefully, by the time we gather again in New York, many of these ideas will have moved from discussion to reality.

But alongside global specialist gatherings, we see a much broader possibility for communities to gather in their own rooms to confront their own challenges as they see them in every corner of the earth. We are excited by the possibilities for all sorts of people engaging in practical conversations about how they can cooperate to help deliver the SDGs. Watch this space.

Table 1: Overview of 2020 action priorities identified by all 17 Rooms

SDG	New entities	New initiatives	Key events	Policy shifts	New standards	Advocacy priorities	Research priorities
1		• Pact to Act • Northern Nigeria dialogue on poverty action plans			• Cash benchmarking as tool for promoting policy efficacy	• Legal ID for all (SDG 16.9.1) • Minimum floor of public services for all	• Map food supply chains against extreme poverty • Identify fiscal SDG needs gaps • Refine poverty assessments within Nigeria
2	• Intergovernmental Panel on Food Systems		• Shape the UN Secretary-General's 2021 Food Systems Summit				
3		• Barometer of newborn deaths		• Increased excise taxes on cigarettes	• Define minimum quality birth care package	• A phone available to every pregnant woman	
4		• Education Leapfrog Prize for Presidents & Prime Ministers					
5		• Coalition for a new public narrative for SDG 5			• Certification for gender-equal businesses	• "2020 for 50/50"	• Review quotas to advance women's public and private sector leadership
6					• Develop standards for defining "sustainably sourced water"	• SDG 6.4 as centerpiece for 2020 action • Business call to action at Davos 2020	• Assess candidate frameworks for "good water actor" label.
7	• Universal Electrification Fund			• African Renewable Energy Power Pool			• Develop a vision for E-Mobility across Africa

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Table 1 (cont.)

SDG	New entities	New initiatives	Key events	Policy shifts	New standards	Advocacy priorities	Research priorities
8	• Center for Advancement of Global Workers	• Partnership on digitalization for SME growth		• Expanded pilots of portable benefits	• Define the "S" in ESG metrics for industry		
9	• Non-profit custodian of standards for digital societal platforms				• Shared blueprint for "digital societal platforms"		
10			• Proposed UN Secretary-General's 2020 Summit on Reducing Inequalities	• OECD and G20 adopt new solution for taxing digital flows and BEPS 2	• G20 adopts "beyond GDP" measures • UN adopts Palma ratio as SDG 10.1 indicator • UN adopts CEQ redistributive fiscal policy measure as SDG 10.4 indicator	• A new narrative on taxation, in spirit of "Building a modern tax system in which everyone – people and corporations – pays their fair share"	• G20 develops Corporate Taxation Transparency Index for regular reporting
11		• Mobilize 100 city commitments to VLRs		• Expand cities' direct access to loans	• Attain official UN designation for VLRs	• A new multilateral municipal development bank	• Map resources available for local SDG financing
12		• Create a Public-Private Convention on Sustainable Production and Consumption			• Framework for Sustainable Production for a Thriving Planet and Sustainable Consumption		• Review leading practices for changing consumer behavior

(…over)

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Table 1 (cont.)

SDG	New entities	New initiatives	Key events	Policy shifts	New standards	Advocacy priorities	Research priorities
13		• Expanding C40 leadership on transport solutions	• *Major focus on November 2020 Climate Change Conference of Parties (COP) in Glasgow, UK*	• China's 14th Five Year Plan sets decisive path • US Government helps lead global climate agenda	• Submission of 2050 Midcentury strategies at November Climate COP in Glasgow, UK	• More major financial institutions' commitments for low to zero carbon investments	• Identify solutions that reduce tropical deforestation and advance restoration
14			• *Major focus on October 2020 Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) COP in Kunming, China*	• Oct 2020 CBD COP in Kunming, China adopts "30% by 2030" target for ocean protection		• National actions to achieve 10% ocean protection target in 2020 (up from 4.8% in 2019)	
15		• A "Subsidies Forum" to address financial incentives that harm nature conservation	• *Major focus on October 2020 CBD COP in Kunming, China*	• Oct 2020 CBD COP in Kunming, China sets full complement of clearly defined biodiversity targets		• Need a new narrative to reflect nature's foundational subsidy for all other SDGs	• Map quantitative links from SDG15 to all other SDGs • Create maps of geographic distribution of biodiversity AND carbon
16			• An evidence summit on the science for SDG16 • Violence reduction prominent at UN 75th anniversary			• A new global public narrative for violence reduction and prevention • Cities as leaders for SDG 16	• Consolidate evidence on "what works" across the five major domains of violence
17		• 500 universities join the University Global Compact • 17 Rooms-U local events					

Appendix

17 Rooms 2019 Global Flagship Meeting
Co-organizers and Room Moderators

Co-organizers
- Matthew Bishop, Managing Director, The Rockefeller Foundation
- John McArthur, Senior Fellow, Brookings Institution

Moderators:

Room 1 – Poverty
- Homi Kharas, Senior Fellow and Acting Vice President, Brookings Institution

Room 2 – Food and hunger
- Jessica Fanzo, Bloomberg Distinguished Associate Professor of Ethics and Global Food and Agriculture, Johns Hopkins University
- Roy Steiner, Managing Director for the Food Initiative, The Rockefeller Foundation

Room 3 – Health and wellbeing
- Prabhat Jha, Director of the Centre for Global Health Research, University of Toronto
- Gavin Yamey, Director, Center for Policy Impact in Global Health, Duke University

Room 4 – Quality education
- Rebecca Winthrop, Co-Director, Center for Universal Education, Brookings Institution

Room 5 – Gender equality
- Michelle Nunn, President and CEO, CARE USA

Room 6 – Water and sanitation
- Betsy Otto, Director of Global Water Program, World Resources Institute

Room 7 – Affordable and clean energy
- Ashvin Dayal, Associate VP and Managing Director, Power Initiative, The Rockefeller Foundation
- Abhijeet Sathe, COO, Softbank Energy

Room 8 – Decent work and economic growth
- Marcela Escobari, Senior Fellow, Brookings Institution
- Anne-Marie Slaughter, President & CEO, New America

Room 9 – Industry, innovation and infrastructure
- Zia Khan, Vice President for Innovation, The Rockefeller Foundation
- James Mwangi, Executive Director, Dalberg Group

Room 10 – Reduced inequalities
- Margaret Biggs, Chair, International Development Research Centre; Former President of CIDA

Room 11 – Sustainable cities and communities
- Tony Pipa, Senior Fellow, Brookings Institution
- Emilia Saiz, Secretary General, United Cities and Local Governments

Room 12 – Responsible consumption and production
- Jessica Long, Managing Director, Strategy & Sustainability, Accenture

Room 13 – Climate action
- Manish Bapna, Executive Vice President & Managing Director, World Resources Institute
- Elizabeth Cousens, CEO-designate, United Nations Foundation

Room 14 – Oceans & life below water
- Kristin Rechberger, CEO, Dynamic Planet
- Enric Sala, Explorer-in-Residence, National Geographic

Room 15 – Life on land
- Tom Lovejoy, University Professor at George Mason University & Senior Fellow at UN Foundation
- John Robinson, Chief Conservation Officer, Wildlife Conservation Society

Room 16 – Peace, justice and strong institutions
- David Steven, Senior Fellow, Center on International Cooperation, New York University

Room 17 – Partnerships/universities
- Ángel Cabrera, President of Georgia Tech & Chair of University Global Compact