PRESS RELEASE, 21/07/2016,

First SDG Index delivered to Ban Ki-moon: countries need to act urgently to achieve the Global Goals

One year after the largest UN Summit in history adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the new SDG Index and Dashboard show that all countries face major challenges in achieving these ambitious goals by 2030. No country has achieved the SDGs and even top Sweden scores "red" on several goals.

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Dr. Christian Kroll

Gütersloh/New York, July 21, 2016. One year after the adoption of the UN Global Goals the first Sustainable Development Goals Index and Dashboard report shows how far the global community is from realizing the goals and what challenges remain for individual countries to achieve the global targets by 2030. The SDG Index was launched yesterday evening in New York and officially presented to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. The report shows how leaders can deliver on their promise and it urges countries not to lose the momentum for important reforms. In order to achieve the ambitious goals, immediate and comprehensive action is needed in the crucial first years of implementation of the new global agenda. After receiving the report, Ban Ki-
moon appealed to the global community: "There are no short cuts. It will be important to assist countries to build national information systems and architectures, so that they can plan effectively at both the local and national levels. I am confident that the report launched by SDSN and Bertelsmann Stiftung will add value to this important and inclusive process as we work together to put the world on a more peaceful, just and sustainable path."

One year ago, world leaders from 193 UN member countries met in New York for the largest summit in history and committed themselves to 17 Sustainable Development Goals, a set of ambitious objectives across the three dimensions of sustainable development – economic development, social inclusion, and environmental sustainability, underpinned by good governance.

The SDG Index and Dashboard collect available data for 149 countries to assess where each country stands in 2016 with regard to achieving the SDGs. The SDG Index ranks countries based on their performance across 17 goals. The SDG Dashboard uses a traffic-light chart to assess where a country stands on each of the 17 SDGs. It helps countries identify priorities for early actions and shows that every country faces major challenges in achieving the SDGs.

The countries which are closest to fulfilling the goals are not the biggest economies but comparably small, developed countries: Sweden, Norway and Denmark are the top three performing countries. Germany and the United Kingdom are the only G7 countries to be found among the top ten performers. The United States ranks 28th on the Index, while the Russian Federation and China rank 50th and 79th, respectively. Poor and developing countries understandably score lowest on the SDG Index as they often have comparably little resources at their disposal: The Central African Republic, Chad and Niger are at the bottom of the Index and still have the longest way to go in achieving the SDGs. For specific country details see the complete SDG report.

The report highlights major challenges per region: OECD countries struggle to meet the goals on inequality, sustainable consumption, climate change and ecosystems, while many developing countries face major difficulties in providing basic social services and infrastructure access to their populations. East and South Asia outperform many other developing regions but unmet challenges persist in health and education. For Latin America and the Caribbean, high levels of inequality among the most pressing issues. In spite of significant progress in recent years in Sub-Saharan Africa, the world’s poorest region faces major challenges across almost all SDGs, with extreme poverty, hunger and health as major areas where substantial improvement is needed.
"World leaders have talked the talk at the historic summit last year. Now we must ensure they also walk the walk. Our SDG Index and Dashboard are tools to make this happen. The first years of implementation will be crucial for fulfilling the Sustainable Development Goals until 2030. Our findings show that politicians, businesses and society altogether must urgently intensify their efforts and commit themselves to this agenda", says Aart De Geus, CEO and Chairman of the Bertelsmann Stiftung.

"The Sustainable Development Goals are stretch goals, but they are within reach if countries work towards them with clarity and determination. The SDG Index and Dashboard can help each country to chart out a practical path for achieving the Goals", says Jeffrey D. Sachs, Director of the SDSN.

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**About the study**

On July 20, 2016 (23:30 GMT), the SDG Index was presented to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon by Aart De Geus, Chairman and CEO of the Bertelsmann Stiftung Executive Board, and Jeffrey Sachs, UN Special Adviser and Director of the Sustainable Development Solutions Networks (SDSN) at the official launch event in New York.

The SDG Index and Dashboard is the first worldwide study to assess for 149 countries where each country stands in 2016 with regard to achieving the SDGs. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), unlike its predecessor the Millennium Development Goals, set standards not only for emerging and developing countries, but also for the industrialized nations. SDSN is an association of research institutes formed to support the new UN objectives. The SDSN is committed to supporting the implementation of the SDGs at local, national, and global scales.

The Bertelsmann Stiftung is one of the largest foundations in Germany. It works to promote social inclusion for everyone. It is committed to advancing this goal through programs that improve education, shape democracy, advance society, promote health, vitalize culture and strengthen economies.

**Links**

To the SDG Index-Website with country rankings and details for all 149 examined countries

Summary with key findings of the study
Projects
Sustainable Governance Indicators (SGI)