

4. The DFG and the Sustainable Development Goals

Date: Thursday, 17th July 2025

Location: Mission of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the UN + Hybrid

The Dialogue Session on “The DFG and the SDGs” was the fourth of a series of dialogues titled “The DFG Dialogue Series.” The series is a strategic initiative led by the **Permanent Missions of Kenya, Jamaica, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, and the School of International Futures (SOIF)**. The dialogues are designed to move from **words to action** on the principles enshrined in the Declaration on Future Generations (DFG), and to inspire and unlock global action through **showcasing real-life innovations from different countries**. By convening policymakers, civil society representatives, and experts, these dialogues will address multilateral opportunities for DFG implementation and the adoption of long-term governance strategies within key global policy discussions across geographic and thematic areas.


“A journey that is for one humanity, one planet”

Context:

The 2025 High-Level Political Forum and its theme *“Advancing sustainable, inclusive, science- and evidence-based solutions for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals for leaving no one behind”* provided a critical opportunity to explore how the Declaration on Future Generations (DFG) can serve as a powerful catalyst to turbocharge SDG progress out to 2030, especially amid evidence of regression and uneven implementation.

Drawing on insights from Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs), the session examined how embedding long-term thinking, intergenerational equity, and future-oriented policymaking into national strategies can help prioritise scarce resources, navigate trade-offs, and seize opportunities in the final stretch toward 2030.





In particular, the session highlighted how the DFG and its commitment to future generations can activate the transformative ambition of the 2030 Agenda through:

- Exploring resilient, effective, and transformative SDG National Plans, that respond to complexity and uncertainty
- Building future-oriented policies and capabilities, including through foresight and whole-of-society engagement
- Operationalising a whole-of-society, interdependent and indivisible approach, as promised in the SDG preamble
- Initiating dialogue on what comes after 2030, shaping a post-SDG framework that helps societies look ahead to 2050 and 2100, and prepare for a turbulent future of transitions, scarcity, and interconnected risks

The event convened policymakers, foresight experts, and civil society actors to share practical tools and pathways for aligning SDG implementation with long-term, inclusive, and just futures. It underscored the need for urgent and sustained action to both deliver the 2030 Agenda and ensure that future generations inherit a world capable of thriving beyond it.

Innovations:

Netherlands: Scrutinising, assessing and reviewing policies for intergenerational fairness and SDG implementation

- ‘Generation Test’ is a tool developed to assess the impact of new regulations on future generations. It serves as a scrutiny and accountability mechanism for SDG implementation, ensuring that long-term effects are taken into account during policymaking. In 2019, the Dutch Parliament formally adopted the Generation Test and called on the government to integrate it into the existing regulatory impact assessment framework. This additional test enables policymakers and civil servants to systematically evaluate how proposed regulations may affect future generations, promoting more sustainable and future-proof decision-making.
- The Dutch Statistical Bureau conducts an annual performance review to monitor progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and overall well-being. This review includes a dedicated section on the future, providing data and insights into long-term trends and potential challenges. By combining regular SDG tracking with forward-looking analysis, the Dutch approach strengthens accountability and fosters a more holistic understanding of sustainability that extends beyond short-term targets.

- **Malta: Embedding sustainability across governance, budgets, and generations**

- Malta has embedded sustainable development across its public administration through a robust governance mechanism established by the Sustainable Development Act. This legislative framework institutionalizes coordination by designating the Permanent Secretaries—the highest-ranking officials in each ministry—as Sustainable Development Coordinators. Additionally, it creates a network of sustainable development focal points, comprised of directors responsible for policy and program implementation within every ministry. The Act also introduced the role of a Guardian of Future Generations, further embedding the principle of long-term thinking and intergenerational equity into national governance.
- Malta shared the development of National Sustainable Development Indicators (SDIs) and targets. An Expert Group on SDIs, established in collaboration with the National Statistics Office, supports coordination among stakeholders and addresses critical data gaps to strengthen policy coherence for sustainable development. Since 2019, the Public Service has also conducted an annual exercise to align budget measures with the SDGs. This involves a thorough review by all ministries to assess how their proposed measures contribute to national sustainable development objectives.
- Malta's forward-looking approach through the publication of its Sustainable Development Strategy for 2050, which builds on the 2030 Agenda and the national Sustainable Development Vision for 2050. To promote awareness and engagement from an early age, the strategy has also been adapted into a child-friendly version. This version is being distributed to children across Malta, accompanied by learning delivered by the Directorate. This initiative fosters early understanding of sustainability and encourages a culture of future-conscious citizenship.

- **Malaysia: Aligning Political Structures with Sustainable Futures**

- In Malaysia, sustainable development is mainstreamed in Malaysia's five-year national plans. An SDG Council, chaired by the Prime Minister, oversees this process, with the Ministry of Economy as its secretariat. Each strategy and action plan is explicitly linked to specific SDG targets, ensuring alignment between foresight, development, and global goals.
- Malaysia's Ministerial Function Act, gives a formal mandate to conduct foresight and future studies



- **South Sudan Building future-ready leadership through Innovation Labs**

- In South Sudan, the UNDP Accelerator Lab, in partnership with the Ministry of Public Service and Human Resource, has been actively building capability for future-oriented policy development. Recognising a critical gap in anticipatory governance, they co-designed experimental workshops targeting senior policymakers to support the Sustainable Development Goals. These workshops have laid the groundwork for South Sudan Vision 2040, a national framework linked to the SDGs.
- South Sudan is piloting a portfolio approach to policy and program coordination, particularly in high-priority areas like youth empowerment. Through mapping ongoing interventions and identifying synergies. By connecting diverse stakeholders and aligning fragmented initiatives, the portfolio approach is helping South Sudan move from reactive governance to a more strategic, coherent, and anticipatory development model.

Words to Action:

1. Embed Tools That Drive Real Change

Tangible instruments and approaches, like Malta's governance framework and Jamaica's SDG-aligned budgeting, must be systematically embedded into planning and decision-making processes. These tools are not just technical mechanisms but are levers for cultural transformation and sustained results. Frameworks or assessments must be directly linked to resource allocation, scrutiny and accountability, and day-to-day decision making to drive impact.

- You can find many examples of futures tools and their global application in the SOIF ['Implementation Handbook for the Declaration on Future Generations'](#).

2. Build capability across society, not just government

Capability development must go beyond public sector training, and also beyond the civil service. While efforts are needed to empower civil servants to make future-informed decisions, we must also press on the private sector to take on a role in shaping sustainable futures. Most importantly, young people need to be treated as co-developers and equipped with knowledge of future-oriented tools to lead at local levels to catalyse change from the bottom up, rather than just focussing on global advocacy.



3. Face the gap between vision and reality

The gap between stated ambitions and the current reality is wide. Many strategies exist globally without the much-needed backing of real capability, financing, or institutional commitment. A shared baseline analysis of what exists today is vital to acknowledge the work ahead and set ambitious but realistic goals.

4. Lead with principles, incentivise systems change

As we look beyond 2030, we must go beyond isolated actions. Interventions must align with long-term values like intergenerational fairness, coherence, and equity. Importantly, we need to design incentives that reward sustainable, future-conscious choices, both for governments and other actors. Key Question: How can incentivisation be utilised as tools for post-SDG frameworks and Declaration on Future Generations implementation?

5. Link local action to global commitments

Sustainable development must be lived and delivered at the local level, but it also relies on global frameworks and national policy alignment. Transformative Implementation only happens when there are connections across levels of governance towards a joint goal.

- SOIF's 'Declaration on Future Generations Implementation Hubs' brings together in-country networks to bridge the gaps between local, national and global actors towards the common goal of DFG implementation.

6. 2030 isn't the end point: Redesign the agenda

As we look beyond 2030, we must design the 'Future Development Goals' with bold vision, political ambition, and systemic foresight that looks beyond just the next generation but to the end of the century. This means building a regenerative agenda that serves people, places, and the planet. Building on existing frameworks, but refining and focusing on systemic and dynamic transitions, the FDGs must integrate dimensions like justice, planetary stewardship, and digital-ethical transformation from the outset.



**Representatives from the following
were in attendance at the event:**

Permanent Mission of France
Permanent Mission of Austria
Permanent Mission of Ireland
Permanent Mission of the EU
Permanent Mission of the Kyrgyz Republic
Permanent Mission of Jamaica
Permanent Mission of Mexico
Permanent Mission of the Netherlands
Permanent Mission of Kenya
Permanent Mission of the United Kingdom
of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
Permanent Mission of Morocco
Permanent Mission of Namibia
Permanent Mission of Zambia
Permanent Mission of Guatemala
Permanent Mission of Israel
Permanent Mission of Uruguay
Permanent Mission of Portugal
Permanent Mission of Hungary
Permanent Mission of Burkina Faso
Permanent Mission of New Zealand
Permanent Mission of Kazakhstan
Government of Malta

UN Executive Office of the Secretary
General
UNFPA
UNU
UNDP
UNESCO
Coalition for the UN We Need
IDLO
UN Foundation
International Organization of Youth
GIZ
Global Partnership for Education
Save the Children
Project Starling
Generation Squeeze
We Down South
Baha'i International Community
MIGHT
Kiplomacy

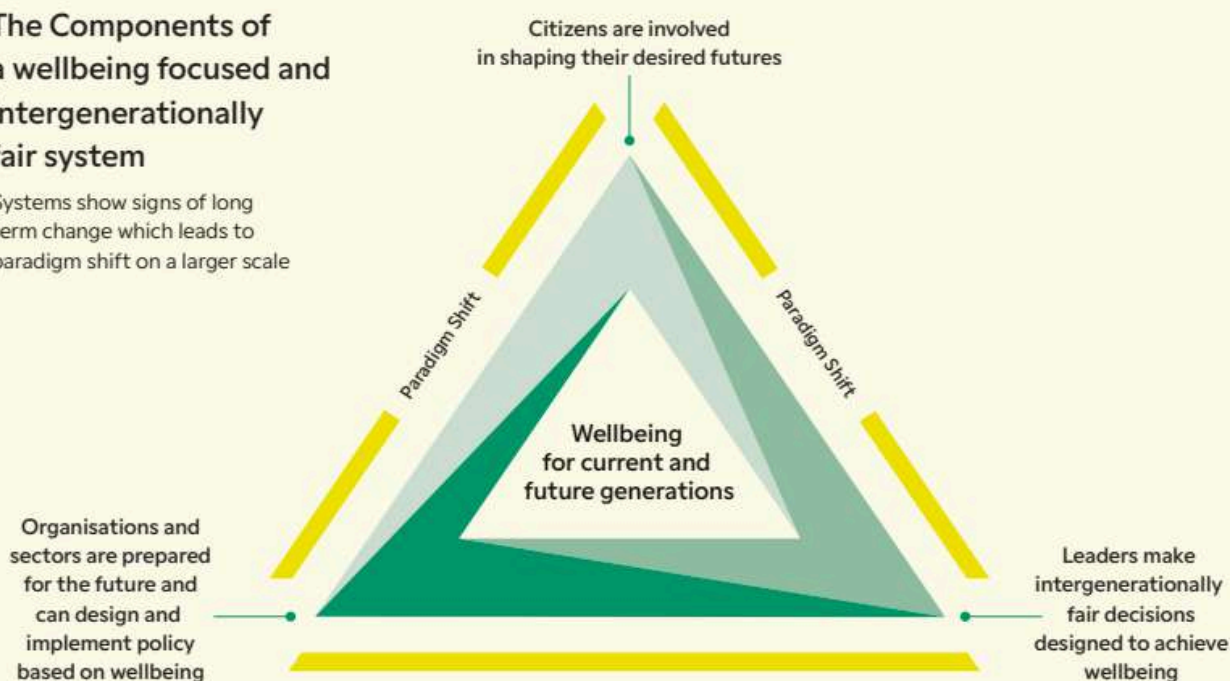


Annex 1. The Foresight Governance Prism, from the [Working for Current and Future Generations: Handbook on DFG Implementation](#) (SOIF, 2024).

Figure 1: The Foresight Governance Prism

The Components of a wellbeing focused and intergenerationally fair system

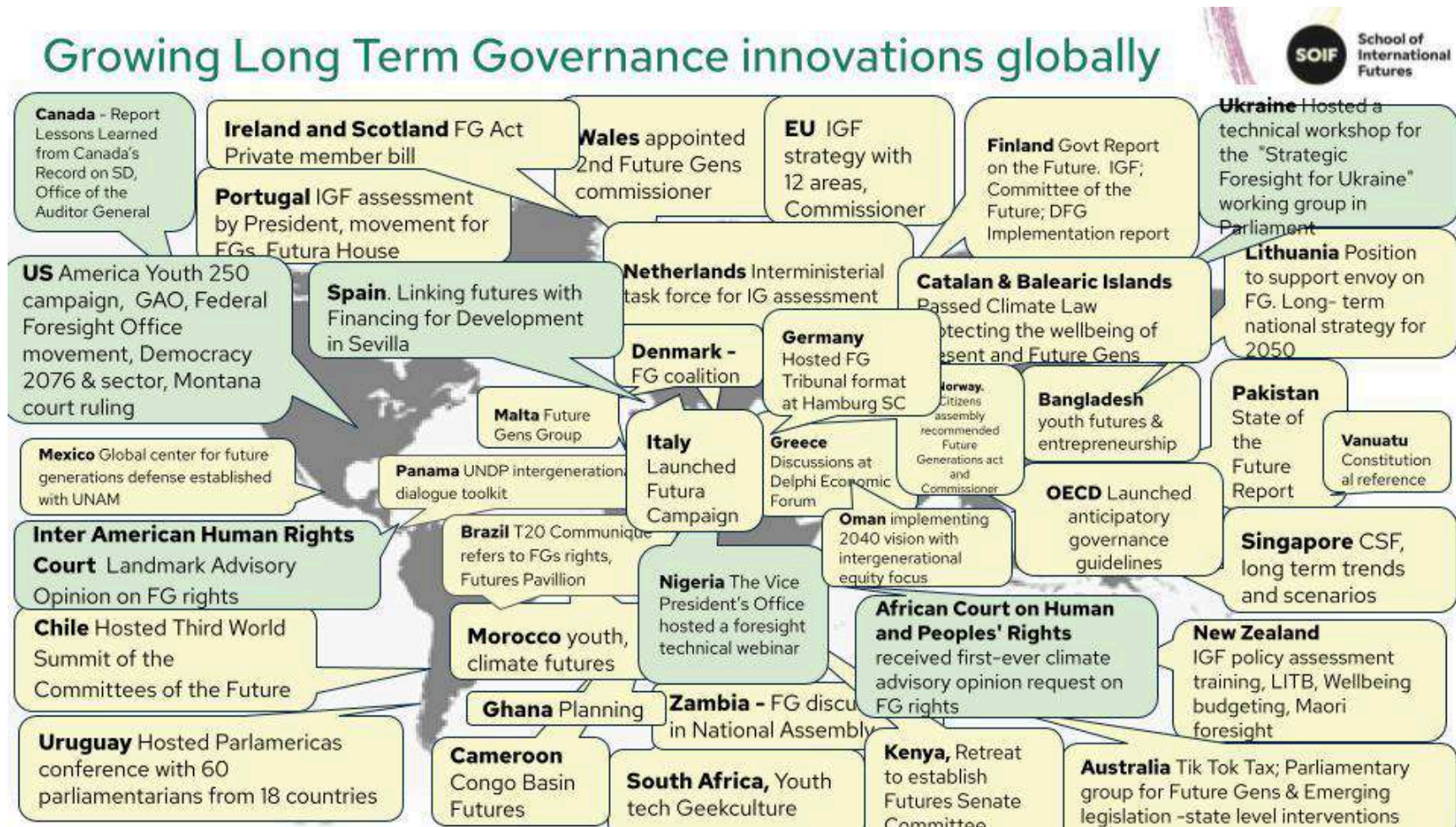
Systems show signs of long term change which leads to paradigm shift on a larger scale



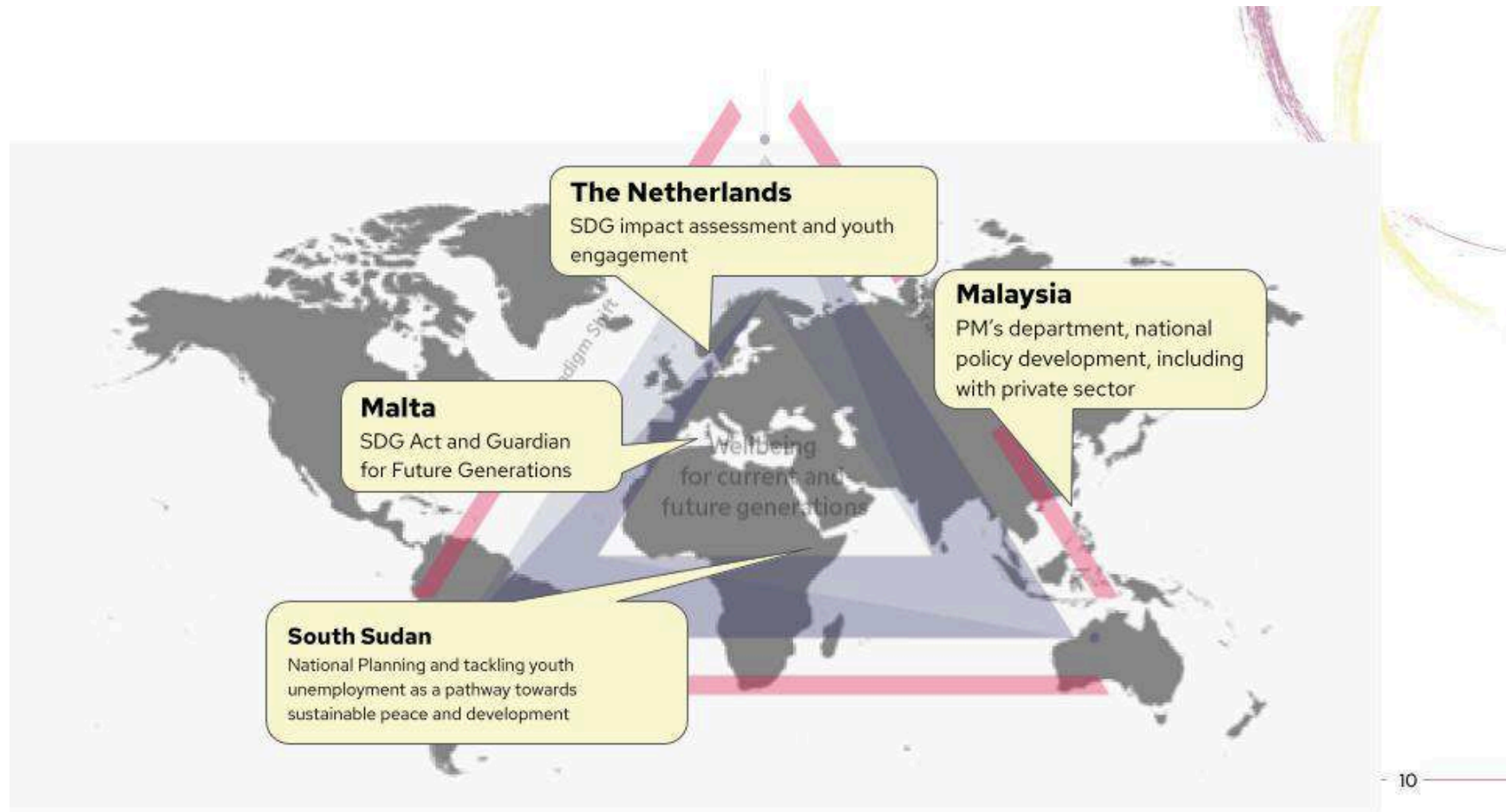
For further information on [in-country innovations](#), [technical advice on national level mapping and implementation](#) or [opportunities for engagement](#), please contact:

School of International Futures (SOIF) – Diyana West, diyana@soif.org.uk

Annex 2. Long-Term Governance Innovations Across the World



Annex 3. Long-term Governance Innovations reflected by speakers



Annex 4. Event agenda

Agenda

I. Opening Remarks

- ★ H.E Ambassador Lise Gregoire-van Haaren, Permanent Representative, Kingdom of the Netherlands
- ★ H.E. Ambassador Yabesh O. Monari, Deputy Permanent Representative, Kenya

II. Framing Remarks

- ★ Cat Zuzarte Tully, Managing Director, School of International Futures

III. Contributions

- ★ Tommy Blomvliet and Emma van Nieuwenhuizen, UN Youth Representatives

IV. Speakers

- ★ **The Netherlands:** Anna Pot, National Coordinator for the Sustainable Development Goals
- ★ **Malta:** Francine Pace Caruana, Director, Sustainable Development, Office of the Permanent Secretary
- ★ **Malaysia:** Rushdi Rahim, President & Chief Executive Officer of Malaysian Industry-Government Group for High Technology
- ★ **South Sudan:** Tong Atak, Head of Solutions Mapping, Acc Lab, UNDP South Sudan
- ★ **What comes after 2030?** Alexandre Caldas, former Director of the United Nations and Chief Early Warning and Data Analytics at UNEP

V. Open Discussion

VI. Summary & Closing Remarks

- ★ H.E.Ambassador Brian Wallace, Permanent Representative, Jamaica

