

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.63332/joph.v5i2.503>

Sustainable Development Goals in International Law: A review of challenges in Implementation and Integration

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Abstract

The challenges of integration and implementation of sustainable development goals in international law are complex and multifaceted, arising from both the broad scope of sustainable development goals (SDGs) and the inherent limitations of legal frameworks. Theoretically, economic growth, social equity, and the protection of the environment are the main elements of sustainable development. However, achieving the balance between these goals is challenging on a global level. This paper aims to explore the main challenges that may face the incorporation of SDGs in international law and to study the main reasons and factors that affect the implementation of sustainable development goals in international law. The research finds that there are some factors that hinder the implementation and enforcement of the sustainable development goals internationally. One of the main issues is the nature of sustainable development as an "obligation of means" rather than an "obligation of result". International law does not require states to guarantee the achievement of SDGs but to make efforts towards it. The fragmented nature of sustainable development goals, the lack of binding agreements, competing national interests and the issue of Cherry-Picking in Implementation result in creating room for variability in commitment and enforcement.

Keywords: Sustainable development, goals, implementation, integration, balance, international law.

Introduction

The incorporation and implementation of SDGs in international law is a challenging and complex process. The concept of sustainable development as defined by the report of Brundtland (1987) is "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (Brundtland Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development. 1987: 34).

The environmental protection, economic development, and social equity are the main elements of the sustainable development. The international law attempt to harmonize these elements in order to meets present needs without compromising future generations' ability to meet theirs. However, implementing and achieving this balance is challenging due to competing national interests, diverse governance structures, and the inherent complexities of global policymaking. The intricacies of the nature of sustainable development goals, differing priorities among nations, lack of binding agreements, and the issue of Cherry-Picking in implementation often complicate efforts to create cohesive legal frameworks that effectively promote and implement sustainable development across borders (Khan et al., 2014).

The current paper is an attempt to answer the following research question: what are the main challenges that may face the incorporation of sustainable development in international law, and what are the main reasons and factors that affect the implementation of sustainable development

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goals in international law? For the research hypothesis, the research is based on the assumption that the implementation of sustainable development goals and their integration into international law often complicate efforts to create cohesive legal frameworks that effectively promote and implement sustainable development across borders.

The researcher will use the doctrinal research method to discuss this topic. The researcher has used this method for many reasons. Firstly, one can get a deeper insight into the research question when reading and analyzing the related- sources topic. Secondly, through reading and analyzing the documents, the researcher will be able to provide some suggestions to develop the laws in the future. Moreover, the researcher will be better able to discover the inbuilt loopholes and gaps in the current situation. So, this work will draw the attention of the international community to the importance of the SDGs globally speaking as well as the necessity of adopting new rules, and new areas of cooperation.

To answer the above-mentioned question, the researcher will use primary legal research methods such as law texts. Moreover, to provide an in-depth insight and analytical discussion, the researcher will use secondary research sources such as academic papers, periodicals, and international, governmental, and non-governmental reports.

Fragmented Nature of Sustainable Development Goals

One of the main challenging issues in implementing sustainable development lies in its nature as an "obligation of means" rather than an "obligation of result." This means that in international law state is not required to guarantee the actual achievement of sustainable development, but instead is compelled to make efforts toward it. As a result, the level of commitment and enforcement can vary significantly between countries. This relative obligation emphasizes the need for states to exercise due diligence in promoting sustainability but does not hold them legally responsible for delivering specific, measurable outcomes (Virginie B, 2012).

In theory, sustainable development encompasses the pillars of economic, environmental, and social equally. However, in international governance, environmental goals such as SDG 14² (life below water, and ocean) and SDG 15 (on biodiversity³) often receive less attention compared to economic goals like SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth) (Bogers et al, 2023). This imbalance disrupts the integrated approach that sustainable development needs and can compromise long-term objectives by placing short-term economic benefits ahead of environmental sustainability. Therefore, the neglect and underestimation and of environmental issues undermines the comprehensive approach needed for achieving true sustainability. As a result, some Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) receive less attention and are under-prioritized. These goals are often overlooked and insufficiently integrated with others.

Various institutions and treaties focus on specific domains such as trade, environment, human rights- without necessarily addressing how these sectors intersect. This siloed approach can lead to conflicting priorities (Omerović et al, 2024). For example, trade agreements may prioritize economic growth over environmental protection, while environmental agreements focus on conservation without fully considering social or economic implications.

² SDG 14 is on Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

³ SDG 15 is on Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.

International trade agreements often emphasize market liberalization, at the expense of environmental sustainability and labor rights, which potentially undermine long-term development goals. Although many agreements theoretically include provisions on environmental issues, these rules are typically weak or inadequately enforced. For instance, the environment chapter of the US-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) includes commitments to sustainable forest management and combating illegal logging. However, these commitments are vaguely drafted and lack strong enforcement mechanisms, making it challenging to hold countries responsible for failing to meet their environmental goals (Treat, 2021). This weak accountability undermines efforts to integrate sustainability into global trade. While the USMCA has successfully increased boosted investment and trade, it has also criticized for contributing to environmental degradation. In Mexico, the high concentration of maquiladora factories, and industrial activities particularly in border regions have led to increased levels of pollution and depletion of natural resources (Maquiladoras, 2023).

Even when there are strict rules on sustainable development in a specific geographical area, the universal application of sustainable development standards may be elusive. For instance, the EU has adopted a more assertive approach to including sustainability into its trade agreements. One of the most notable initiatives is the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), which aims to mitigate the environmental impacts of trade by imposing taxes on carbon-intensive imports. However, such a mechanism raises concerns about its fairness, particularly for developing countries that may - without adequate support- lack the financial resources and technological infrastructure to meet these new environmental standards (Treat, 2021). This may potentially be exacerbating inequalities in the global trading system.

Moreover, in terms of environmental protection that is one of the main SDGs, the international law embeds lots of obligations that cover different environmental aspects. However, we may find fragmentation within international environmental law as well.

Currently, there are over 500 international and regional Environmental Agreements in force, reflecting a substantial global effort to address environmental degradation (Tadanori, 2008). While the large number of treaties signifies progress in tackling environmental challenges, it has also led to concerns about "treaty congestion" and fragmentation within international environmental law (Weiss, 1993). Though fragmentation is not necessarily negative, it has been linked to inefficiencies, lack of coordination, and conflicting or inconsistent standards (Roch and Franz, 2005). These issues can potentially weaken the credibility of international law, as overlapping agreements may hinder effective environmental governance globally speaking (Albakjaji & El Baroudy, 2024, Albakjaji, 2024).

The fragmentation of international environmental law, driven by the proliferation of multiple regimes and institutions with overlapping or conflicting mandates, remains a persistent challenge. This overlap has significantly heightened the risk of redundancy, inconsistencies, and even potential conflicts between different environmental standards and obligations. Such divergence complicates the coherence and efficiency of global environmental governance, often resulting in contradictory approaches and diminished overall effectiveness in addressing sustainable development goals (Khan et al., 2020).

A well-known example of conflicting obligations in international environmental law is the impact of the 1987 Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer. While the

Protocol successfully restricted the production of ozone-depleting substances like chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), it led to the widespread use of hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs) as substitutes. Unfortunately, HCFCs are extremely potent greenhouse gases—up to 10,000 times more impactful than carbon dioxide. This shift in production under the Montreal Protocol inadvertently undermined the goals of the Protocol of Kyoto which primarily focuses on reducing greenhouse gas emissions and addressing climate change⁴.

Moreover, the potential for conflict between treaty obligations increases when provisions and terms are subject to broad interpretation. For example, the Kyoto Protocol encourages the enhancement of carbon sinks, such as forests, to mitigate climate change⁵. However, this can sometimes conflict with other environmental objectives, like biodiversity conservation⁶, as the expansion of forests for carbon sequestration might prioritize monoculture plantations that do not support biodiversity, thus creating competing priorities in international environmental governance. Even in cases where no direct conflict between treaty obligations exists, the creation of divergent

standards or the adoption of different management approaches to address environmental issues can undermine the effectiveness of the regimes involved. A recent illustration of this is the differing responses of the parties to the 1996 London Protocol⁷ and the 1992 Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) concerning ocean fertilization activities. The CBD parties have agreed that, apart from small-scale coastal experimentation, ocean fertilization should not proceed until a global regulatory framework is established⁸. Meanwhile, the parties to the London Protocol are still exploring both regulatory and non-regulatory approaches to managing ocean fertilization research.

This situation not only reflects a duplication of efforts but also raises the risk of regulatory divergence, which could create confusion, inefficiencies, and potential non-compliance. Diverging approaches in emerging regulatory frameworks may result in ambiguity over which standards to follow, thereby weakening the effectiveness of both international agreements. This

⁴ Conference of the Parties, United Nations Environment Programme, ‘Decision XIX/6: Adjustments to the Montreal Protocol with regard to Annex C, Group I, Substances (Hydrochlorofluorocarbons)’ in Report of the Nineteenth Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol on Substances That Deplete the Ozone Layer, Held in Montreal from 7 to 21 September 2007, UN Doc UNEP/OzL.Pro.19/7 (21 September 2007) 33, 4. Also available on: <https://enb.iisd.org/events/montreal-protocol-mop-19/summary-report-17-21-september-2007-09-05-2024>

⁵ Kyoto Protocol to the Framework Convention on Climate Change, opened for signature 11 December 1997, 2303 UNTS 148 (entered into force 16 February 2005). art 2(1)(a)(ii).

⁶ For instance the conflict with the obligations established under the Convention on Biological Diversity, opened for signature 5 June 1992, 1760 UNTS 79 (entered into force 29 December 1993).

⁷ Protocol to the Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter of 29 December 1972, entered into force 24 March 2006.

⁸ This convention provides that: Such studies should only be authorized if justified by the need to gather specific scientific data, and should also be subject to a thorough prior assessment of the potential impacts of the research studies on the marine environment, and be strictly controlled, and not be used for generating and selling carbon offsets or any other commercial purposes. See Biodiversity and Climate Change, UN Doc UNEP/CBD/COP/DEC/IX/16 (COP 9 Decision IX/16, Convention on Biological Diversity, 9 October 2008) Para C, 4. Also available on: https://rmi-data.sprep.org/libraries/pdf.js/web/viewer.html?file=https%3A%2F%2Frmi-data.sprep.org%2Fsystem%2Ffiles%2Fcop-09-dec-16-en_1.pdf accessed on 08-10-2024

underscores the importance of harmonizing efforts across international regimes to ensure coherent and effective global environmental governance. This will have significant impacts on implementing the goals of sustainability as the environment protection which is the main goal of it where the implementation the environmental protection agreements have faced conflict and divergence.

Competing National Interests

National sovereignty remains a major challenge to the integration and incorporation of sustainable development into international law, particularly due to the inherent tension between a state's control over its natural resources and the pursuit of global environmental objectives. Traditionally, the principle of sovereignty grants nations full authority over their natural resources, allowing them to prioritize national interests, often at the expense of broader environmental goals. This creates a conflict between upholding state autonomy and promoting internationally coordinated efforts for sustainability.

Governments are often hesitant to adopt international rules that might be perceived as restricting their economic development or political sovereignty. Although many nations have ratified treaties that include sustainable development principles, they frequently prioritize short-term economic benefits, particularly in resource-extraction sectors, over long-term sustainability goals. However, the growing urgency for environmental protection and the need for sustainable resource management have prompted a reconsideration of this stance, with an increasing focus on balancing economic development with environmental stewardship.

The key issue in international environmental agreements is the tension between state sovereignty and the need for global cooperation on challenges like climate change and biodiversity loss. Treaties such as the Paris Agreement require countries to commit to global climate goals, which may clash with their interest of economic growth through the exploitation of natural resources. This conflict is particularly evident when nations prioritize short-term economic development over environmental sustainability, potentially undermining international efforts to address pressing ecological concerns and promote long-term sustainability. This issue highlights the difficulty of ensuring equal emphasis on all SDGs, particularly when goals like environmental sustainability and inequality compete with more dominant economic and political agendas (Bogers et al, 2023). The principle of national sovereignty over natural resources is enshrined in various international agreements, including United Nations General Assembly Resolution (1962), which asserts a state's permanent authority over its own resources. This principle may create challenge to international environmental regulations, as states may view these measures as infringing upon their right to manage and utilize their resources according to their national interests and priorities. Accordingly, the 'right of peoples and nations to permanent sovereignty over their natural wealth and resources must be exercised in the interest of their national development and of the well-being of the people of the State concerned (Virginie, 2016). For example, some African countries have resisted international pressure to limit their resource exploitation, such as mining and oil extraction, arguing that these activities are crucial for their development. This sovereignty-focused approach often conflicts with global sustainable development goals.

A clear example of the conflict between economic development and environmental conservation can be observed in deforestation policies. Nations with abundant natural resources frequently face pressure to exploit these resources for immediate economic benefits, even when this conflicts with international commitments to biodiversity protection or climate change

mitigation. Brazil's struggle with managing economic development in the Amazon rainforest while upholding its environmental obligations under the Convention on Biological Diversity highlights this issue. National policies often lean toward prioritizing economic exploitation, driven by short-term economic demands, rather than focusing on long-term environmental sustainability.

Brazil's sovereignty over the Amazon Rainforest has become a contentious issue, especially in the context of environmental conservation and international pressures. The Amazon, often dubbed the "lungs of the Earth" for its critical role in regulating the global climate, has seen escalating deforestation driven by economic and political pressures. If this continues, it could cause the Amazon's traditionally wet, tropical climate to dry out, a phenomenon known as "dieback." It's estimated that between 17 and 20 percent of the Amazon has been destroyed over the past fifty years, and some scientists believe that the tipping point for dieback is between 20 and 25 percent deforestation (Roy, 2022).

International demands for Brazil to strengthen its environmental protections have frequently been met with resistance, as the Brazilian government views these concerns as infringements on its national sovereignty. This tension was particularly pronounced during Jair Bolsonaro's presidency, where the government prioritized agricultural expansion and economic growth over conservation efforts, framing external environmental concerns as a challenge to Brazil's right to manage its own resources. The president Bolsonaro has rejected virtually all forms of cooperation and coercion, saying that "the Amazon is ours, not yours." Faced with mounting pressure from France, Germany, Norway, and others to act, he has retreated to chest-beating nationalism (Abdenur & Muggah, 2019). National policies often lean toward prioritizing economic exploitation, driven by short-term economic demands, rather than focusing on long-term environmental sustainability.

Deforestation which is largely driven by industries such as cattle ranching and soy production continues to accelerate, pushing the Amazon closer to a challenging ecological tipping point. This ongoing deforestation not only threatens biodiversity but also severely reduces the Amazon's ability to function as a carbon sink, thus amplifying global climate change. Despite growing international pressure, including warnings of potential trade restrictions and diplomatic interventions, Brazil continues to assert and defend its sovereign right to manage the Amazon according to its national interests. This stance fuels nationalist narratives that portray external environmental concerns as infringements on the country's autonomy (Abdenur & Muggah, 2019), further complicating global efforts to protect the rainforest, therefore completing the efforts to achieve the goals of sustainability.

This case shows the conflict between environmental conservation and a country's right to utilize its resources. While Brazil recognizes the Amazon's crucial role in mitigating climate change, it frequently prioritizes short-term economic benefits over long-term environmental sustainability, complicating global efforts to address deforestation and achieve sustainability goals.

In order to sort this issue out some legal Principles reconciling sovereignty and sustainability have been adopted. Emerging legal principles such as common heritage and common concern of humankind attempt to balance national sovereignty with international responsibility for environmental protection. These principles suggest that certain resources, such as biodiversity, oceans, and the atmosphere, belong to all of humanity, and their preservation is a global duty. UNCLOS Articles 192 and 193, for example, apply to the marine environment generally, irrespective of questions of jurisdictional delimitations. This means that the duty of States to

protect and preserve the marine environment, which qualifies their sovereign right to exploit their natural resources, binds them even within the boundaries of their territorial (Virginie, 2012). The evolving structure of international legal frameworks around sustainable development seeks to balance sovereign rights with environmental duties. However, achieving such a balance remains a complex and sensitive challenge, and is conceived as a delicate task as countries grapple with reconciling their national interests with their obligations to the global community (Hunter, 2021).

The above-mentioned principles have been reaffirmed globally. the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) governs the use of the world's oceans and emphasizes the need to manage marine resources sustainably. Although the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea in 2015 confirmed that UNCLOS imposed an obligation on States to ensure sustainable management of shared stocks while they occur in their exclusive economic zones (EEZs) (Virginie, 2012) it also recognizes the sovereignty of coastal states over their exclusive economic zones (EEZs), which can sometimes lead to conflicts between national interests and international conservation efforts (El BAROUDY et al, 2024).

Cherry-Picking in Implementation

Cherry-picking in the implementation of international law and sustainability refers to the selective adherence to specific provisions of international treaties and agreements, particularly those concerning environmental protection, sustainable development, and climate change. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are intended to be indivisible, with progress in one goal supporting progress in others. However, states or organizations may prioritize obligations that align with their economic or political interests, while neglecting more challenging commitments, such as those tied to environmental sustainability or labor rights. This selective approach weakens the comprehensive integration necessary for achieving sustainable development (Bogers et al, 2023). For example, some countries may prioritize and emphasize economic growth (SDG 8) without taking environmental constraints into account, while others might prioritize environmental protection without tackling underlying social inequalities (SDG 10). This fragmented approach hinders the effective integration of sustainable development goals into both international and national legal frameworks (Bogers et al, 2023).

Although the SDGs are theoretically equal and interconnected, governments and businesses practically prioritize certain goals, particularly social and economic ones, over environmental ones. Instead of advancing ecologically sound development practices, many governments continue to prioritize economic growth at the expense of environmental protection. Leaders emphasize education, jobs, and strong institutions, but turn a deaf ear to climate change and other environmental goals (Custer et al, 2018).

Studies like Biermann & Rakhyun (2020) and Hiron (2020) show that the lack of top-down mechanisms allows states the freedom to selectively pursue –such as the social and economic goals- or neglect specific goals such as the environmental targets which are often more difficult to track than social and economic goals, and require greater financial funds with uncertain returns. This prioritization undermines the holistic vision of the SDGs and hinders balanced progress across all goals (Craig, & Ruhl, 2019).

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development acknowledges that environmental threats exacerbate the existing challenges facing humanity, but this framing overlooks the fundamental role that environmental degradation plays, which is largely driven by an excessive focus on

economic growth. This narrow perspective undermines the broader goals of inclusive and equitable development, which can only be sustained within a healthy ecosystem (Adelman, 2018). In this regard, Adelman (2018: 31) stated that:

Because human history and the geohistory are now inextricably linked and human agency has epochal geological consequences, it follows that anthropocentrism that correctly identifies the interests of current and future generations must paradoxically be premised upon a radical ecocentrism because human wellbeing is contingent upon the health of the Earth system. In this perspective, ecocentrism becomes a form of anthropocentrism.

Unfortunately, the health of the planet is not often considered as a priority. This is due to the idea that states have jeopardized long-term goals by placing short-term economic benefits ahead of the long-term health of the planet. This imbalance usually perpetuates a cycle that further subordinates environmental concerns (Kotzé & French, 2018). These issues highlight the deeper concerns regarding the structure and ethical orientation of the SDGs. Critics argue that the goals are still largely driven by growth-oriented, anthropocentric perspectives, rooted in modernist, Western notions of development, which prioritize individualism, competition, and market-based solutions, rather than collective responsibility and ecological sustainability (Van & Dorine, 2020).

The imbalance in the Sustainable Development Goals implementation has raised serious doubts about whether these goals are the right mechanism for ensuring planetary integrity. Some argue that the SDGs are ill-suited for this purpose, pointing out that the goals fail to adequately recognize the foundational importance of healthy ecosystems to the effective functioning of most social and economic systems (Kotzé, 2018). In the same sense, Van Norren stated that ‘the SDGs are not biocentric aiming to respect nature for nature’s sake, enabling reciprocity with nature. They embody linear growth/results thinking which requires unlimited resource exploitation, and not cyclical thinking replacing growth with well-being (of all beings) (Van & Dorine, 2020).

Lack of Binding Legal Obligations

Sustainable development principles in international law are often normative rather than binding. Many international agreements particularly the ones on the environmental protection include provisions for sustainability goals, but they lack enforceability (Albakjaji, 2024).

The absence of binding agreements poses a significant challenge to enforcing international environmental law (Alsamara & Ghazi, 2024). Negotiations to adopt international environmental agreements often face difficulties and do not always lead to success. Typically, the agreements that emerge from these negotiations are neither universal nor binding. Additionally, the structure by which these agreements are formed may impede their effective implementation. Many international environmental agreements, and negotiations are typically framed as non-binding, non-punitive frameworks, designed to attract and encourage wider participation from nations. In most cases, international environmental law is characterized by its ineffectual nature (Alsamara et al, 2022). It is often unable to produce the goals it intends to achieve (Maljean-Dubois, 2003). However, this often becomes a serious limitation in achieving their objectives. Numerous instances in international relations highlight the challenges posed by the lack of binding agreements.

A case in point is the Paris Agreement (2015), where nations voluntarily commit to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. While the agreement is legally binding in some respects (e.g., procedural obligations), there are no penalties for failing to meet emission targets (Bialek, 2015).

This lack of a coercive mechanism makes it difficult for international law to drive meaningful, widespread change.

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) regulates trade in endangered species through trade restrictions specified in its appendices. However, enforcement and implementation depend on national legislation, as emphasized in Article XIV, which states that "the provisions of this Convention shall in no way affect the right of Parties to adopt stricter domestic measures regarding the conditions for trade." This dependence on national laws limits and undermines the consistency, uniformity, and effectiveness of efforts to combat illegal wildlife trade⁹.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Integrating sustainable development into, and implementing it in international law poses significant challenges due to conflicting national interests, fragmented strategies, and a lack of enforceable and binding agreements. Although the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aim to provide a comprehensive and interconnected framework for global progress, their implementation often remains selective and driven by political or economic interests rather than a focus on holistic sustainability. In essence, the implementation mechanisms of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) fail to fully grasp those concerns related to the planet, people, and prosperity are interconnected within a single earth system. Factors such as national sovereignty over natural resources, unequal prioritization and emphasis on certain SDGs, the non-binding nature of many international agreements, and unsustainable practices by states further weaken efforts to tackle global environmental and social issues. To overcome these obstacles, a more cohesive, enforceable, and equitable approach is essential—one that balances economic growth, environmental protection, and social justice.

To improve the practice in SDGs implementation, the authors have provided a list of recommendations as follows:

1. **Adopting enforceable and binding agreements:** International treaties on environmental protection and sustainable development should incorporate stronger binding provisions that hold states accountable for meeting their obligations. Also, fostering cooperation between nations will have an important role in addressing transboundary challenges like climate change, biodiversity loss, and inequality.
2. **Effective implementation of SDGs on global and domestic levels:** Environmental sustainability should be pursued not just to support human development, but as an intrinsic priority for the health of the earth and future generations. Moreover, States should integrate the global SDGs into their national legal frameworks and ensure that international obligations are incorporated domestically. Providing technical and financial support to developing countries will have a crucial role in achieving their sustainable development commitments without hindering their economic growth.
3. **Promoting Comprehensive Implementation:** States should be encouraged to adopt a holistic approach to implementing the SDGs, ensuring that progress in one field (e.g., economic growth) does not undermine other goals, such as environmental sustainability and social equity. Also, improving and enhancing the monitoring and reporting systems

⁹ For further information. See the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES): <https://cites.org/eng/disc/text.php>

will be certainly significant in tracking, reporting, and assessing SDGs progress to ensure transparency and accountability in integration and implementation.

4. Improving natural resource management: such a strategy will help establish a balance between Sovereignty and Sustainable Global Goals, and encourage states to consider both national interests and global sustainability goals. Moreover, introducing financial or trade incentives to reward countries that actively fulfill their international sustainable development commitments will be crucial to promoting wider and more meaningful participation.

Acknowledgments

The author is thankful to the Governance and Policy Design Research Lab (GPDR) and to Prince Sultan University for their academic support and for providing APC for this publication.

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