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### SDGs are only part of the agreed UN agenda - as paragraphs 11 and 13 of world leaders' agreement of 2015 make clear.

Posted on 24-06-18 by Matt Berkley 

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I edit globalfactcheck.org, which provides dozens of UN resolutions and evidence that they are often misrepresented.

I strongly support the broad thrust of Labour's new approach.

Problem 1: Labour is focusing on SDGs, not the whole agenda agreed by the UK in UN resolutions.

That agenda includes reaffirmation of existing, more ambitious goals.

For example, Agenda 21 which nations agreed in Rio in 2012 to "fully implement" has goals of adequate water and sanitation for all by 2025 (paragraph 7.38).

The 2011-2020 Least Developed Countries programme is a "solemn commitment" by the UK and other states to "strive" for safe water and sanitation for all in those countries by 2020.

Even if these are thought too ambitious, there is clearly a duty to report the promises and progress on them.

Suggestion: Change focus from "Achieving the SDGs" to "Meeting the UK's promises".

Problem 2: Income ratios ignore changes in necessary expenditure.

Suggestion: Inequality of survival rate is objective and more transparent.

Problem 3: Labour continues to confuse the easier 1990-baseline "MDGs" (proposed by civil servants and not agreed by member states in 2001) with leaders' pledges of 2000. The latter say nothing about 1990 but do include a pledge on people being able to "afford" safe water. Jason Hickel, among others, has written about the baseline problem.

Suggestion: Labour come clean, even though it may be hard. As with problematic statements about the claimed new ambition of the SDGs, it is not fair on the many to be misled on government promises.

Problem 4: Labour is talking about 2030. But in addition to the wider agreed UN agenda, there are 21 SDG targets for 2020 and more for 2025.

Suggestion: A strategy, beginning while in opposition, of drawing attention to approaching deadlines. Here also, the many are being unfairly treated.

Problem 5: Comparing "SDGs" to "MDGs" misleads because it omits the existing SDGs from the SDG conferences and summit in 1992, 2002 and 2012. This is in addition to other conference and summit outcomes which the General Assembly constantly reaffirms.

Suggestion: Distinguish between administrative choice (MDGs/SDGs) and political commitment (the agreed UN agenda).

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