Resumen
La Agenda 2030 para el Desarrollo Sostenible es más que un grupo de objetivos y metas. Junto con los medios de implementación y los mecanismos de seguimiento y revisión de la agenda, estos propósitos reflejan enfoques distintivos de la formulación de políticas de desarrollo que son esenciales para realizar su ambiciosa visión de largo plazo. Comprender los componentes de este marco para la formulación de políticas no sólo es relevante para los gobiernos nacionales comprometidos a alcanzar los 17 ODS sino también para los gobiernos subnacionales, ya que estos son actores importantes en un nuevo marco que busca “no dejar a nadie atrás”. Sobre la base de una revisión de la literatura internacional reciente, este artículo propone conceptos clave e implicancias de la adopción de la Agenda 2030 como marco para la formulación de políticas a nivel subnacional, incluyendo las exigencias esperadas sobre la creación de capacidades. A continuación analiza de manera sucinta el caso de los gobiernos regionales peruanos que enfrentaron algunas demandas similares en el contexto de la descentralización del Estado desde 2002, para ilustrar desafíos concretos que pueden estar por delante.

Palabras clave
Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible – gobierno subnacional – políticas públicas – Agenda 2030 – Descentralización – Perú

Abstract
The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is more than a set of goals and targets. Together with the agenda’s means of implementation and follow-up and review mechanisms, these objectives reflect distinctive approaches to development policymaking that are integral to accomplishing its ambitious long-term vision. Understanding the components of such a policymaking framework is not only relevant to national governments committed to attaining the 17 SDGs, but also to subnational governments, as these are important actors in a new agenda that seeks to “leave no one behind.” Through a review of recent international literature, this paper proposes key concepts and implications of adopting the 2030 Agenda as a policymaking framework at the subnational level, including expected demands on capacity building. It then succinctly analyzes the case of Peruvian regional governments facing some similar demands in the context of state decentralization since 2002, to illustrate concrete challenges that may lie ahead.

Keywords

1 La investigación realizada para elaborar este documento ha sido posible gracias a una beca post-doctoral del programa TRANDES (Universidad Libre de Berlín y PUCP), 2017-2018, sobre el tema de “La Agenda 2030 y los gobiernos subnacionales en el Perú: Desafíos y oportunidades para cerrar brechas de desarrollo”. Contacto: galcalde@pucp.pe
I. Introduction

Whereas the Millennium Development Goals (2000-2015) framework largely focused on improving national averages (Vandemoortele, 2011), the current 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs, 2016-2030) have at their core the mandate to “leave no one behind,” addressing development gaps within each country. This implies not only a greater need for high-quality, disaggregated data but also, among other aspects, a new, crucial role for subnational actors in achieving the agenda’s 17 goals and 169 targets at the regional and local level. A significant role for subnational governments is expressed in SDG 11 (Inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities and human settlements), and in several other goals and targets (especially SDG 16: Peace, justice and strong institutions), as well as in the agenda’s provisions for implementation, monitoring and review.

The main international associations of subnational governments themselves advocated for—and are now assuming—this sort of important role. The Global Network of Cities, Local and Regional Governments (UCLG), for example, actively lobbied for a local SDG and for local orientation throughout the new framework since the beginning of the United Nations Post-2015 global consultation process (2012-2015). According to the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments:

Local and regional governments played an important role in influencing the definition of the SDGs, successfully campaigning for a stand-alone goal on Sustainable Cities and Human Settlements (SDG 11), and for international recognition of the pivotal role of local and regional government in sustainable development (Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments, 2016).

For its part, the 2015 Gaborone Declaration, an outcome document of the General Meeting of the Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF) in Botswana, has stated that “local governments who know their communities are best placed to ensure that achieving the SDGs leaves no-one behind” (CLGF, 2015).

Moreover, these international actors call for deepening decentralization reforms as an important aspect of SDG implementation:

Progressive and effective decentralization should be at the core of the creation of an ‘enabling environment’ for sub-national governments, and for the localization of the SDGs (UCLG 2017, p. 9).

What common challenges do subnational governments face now in assuming this long-term, leading role in addressing development gaps? If the 2030 Agenda were only a set of goals and targets, without guidelines regarding their attainment, it would be difficult to outline any shared challenges for a heterogeneous universe of countries and governance systems. However, this paper argues that the agenda (more so than the MDGs) has been constructed as a distinctive framework for guiding policymaking (i.e., setting public courses of action to address public problems), and as such it presents specific demands on public capacities at all levels of government, everywhere.
Therefore, this paper approaches the 2030 Agenda as a distinct policymaking framework that is being assumed by national and subnational actors. Through a review of recent international literature, it identifies the main approaches within this framework and some possible challenges for subnational governments in the road ahead. In order to illustrate what some concrete challenges could look like in the field, it then succinctly analyzes the case of Peruvian regional governments, which have faced several similar demands in the context of state decentralization since their creation in 2002.

In light of public statements that place subnational governments at the forefront of 2030 Agenda efforts, a caveat is in order before beginning the discussion. This paper assumes the SDGs, like the MDGs before them, as international norms (as defined by Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998) that countries adopt voluntarily. They are not legally binding and, as Fukuda-Parr (2016) notes, for national governments the “SDGs are a politically negotiated consensus that has no enforcement mechanism built-in.” In this sense, the challenges of assuming the 2030 Agenda as a guide for subnational policymaking will only be relevant in countries where national governments decide to own, adapt and localize the agenda, or where there is already a high degree of subnational political, fiscal and administrative autonomy in place.

Assuming that this will be a frequent occurrence, however, is not far-fetched, as both processes (national ownership and localization of international norms) already happened around the world during the MDG period—even though national adaptation and the role of subnational government were not strong themes in that framework. According to UNDP (2016), over 110 countries incorporated at least a subset of the MDGs within their national development plans by 2015, and especially after 2010, the need for localizing MDGs was realized in many countries: “subnational MDG strategies, reports and plans were increasingly used to focus attention and resources on those being left behind, ultimately hoping to curb disparities and meet the needs of marginalized communities.” (UNDP, 2016, p. 31)

II. Conceptualizing Agenda 2030 as a Framework for Policymaking

The United Nations Development Programme (2016, p. 2) has stated, when comparing the SDGs to their predecessors, the MDGs, that “the SDGs differ in their insistence, not just on technical fixes and financing, but also on doing things differently.” Considered together, the 2030 Agenda’s goals and targets, means of implementation and follow-up and review guidelines, propose a distinctive approach to development policymaking that is integral to achieving an ambitious long-term vision. Understanding the components of such an approach to policymaking processes (in all of their stages, from agenda-setting to implementation and evaluation) is relevant to all levels of government.

The 2030 Agenda is much more than a set of goals and targets. While the UN’s *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* text recognizes that “there are different approaches, visions, models and tools available to each country, in accordance with its national circumstances and priorities, to achieve sustainable development”, this does not mean that it considers all approaches as equally pertinent. The document itself
sets some explicit guidelines for policymaking, and is insistent in its conviction that “this Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals and targets, including the means of implementation, are universal, indivisible and interlinked”. In different forms, this mandatory indivisibility is repeated five times in the document. Maintaining such integration across policy sectors and levels of government evidently requires a certain approach to policymaking, one that is not universally shared in practice, and the elements of which are either explicit or implicit in the 2030 Agenda document.

Several elements that should guide SDG policymaking, like a rights-based approach, are explicit in the 2030 Agenda. Others, like results-based management, are implicit, and they may be difficult to notice as distinctive elements, insofar as they are part of the current mainstream of development theory and practice. However, it is important to analyze their implications for attaining SDGs because, in the field, they are not yet fully incorporated in policymaking processes everywhere, and in many places they may be incipient or even nonexistent.

### a. Explicit elements

The first explicit element is the rights-based approach to development policymaking. After stating that the “new Agenda is guided by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, including full respect for international law” and that it is “grounded in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, international human rights treaties, the Millennium Declaration and the 2005 World Summit Outcome”, the document adds that “the Agenda is to be implemented in a manner that is consistent with the rights and obligations of States under international law” (United Nations General Assembly, 2015, p. 6). A second element that is very explicitly set forth is the gender equity approach: “The systematic mainstreaming of a gender perspective in the implementation of the Agenda is crucial” (p. 6). Thus, while there is a goal for gender equality (SDG 5), the gender approach should be considered in all SDGs.

As mentioned, a key assumption in the agenda is that the SDGs are “are integrated and indivisible and balance the three dimensions of sustainable development: the economic, social and environmental.” (p. 1) Stemming from the general statements on the indivisibility of SDGs, there is a call for integrating the multidimensional, sustainable development approach into all relevant ongoing policies, since the “interlinkages and integrated nature of the Sustainable Development Goals are of crucial importance in ensuring that the purpose of the new Agenda is realized” (p. 2). Furthermore:

> Each Government will also decide how these aspirational and global targets should be incorporated into national planning processes, policies and strategies. It is important to recognize the link between sustainable development and other relevant ongoing processes in the economic, social and environmental fields. (p. 13)

A fourth element is a participatory and decentralized approach to policymaking, beyond state actors that negotiated the SDGs, as the agenda expressly assigns a significant role for nongovernment and subnational actors, including citizen participation, in the different
stages of policymaking. This is not necessarily present in all, or even a majority of, countries: “Governments and public institutions will also work closely on implementation with regional and local authorities, subregional institutions, international institutions, academia, philanthropic organizations, volunteer groups and others.” (p. 11) This is especially clear regarding follow-up and review: “A robust, voluntary, effective, participatory, transparent and integrated follow-up and review framework will make a vital contribution to implementation.”

Finally, closely tied to this element of a distinctive approach to policymaking is the emphasis on vertical accountability mechanisms, as the agenda “will promote accountability to our citizens...” (p. 30). Moreover, follow-up and review mechanisms “will be open, inclusive, participatory and transparent for all people and will support reporting by all relevant stakeholders.”

b. Implicit elements

There are at least four policymaking approaches that have been highly influential in the UN and other international development actors in recent decades, and are reflected in the 2030 Agenda. However, they are not explicitly mentioned.

Universal, time-bound and goal-based international objectives like the SDGs aim to keep action focused on results, and should be seen (at least partially) as an application of lessons learned from implementing Result-Based Management. RBM is a management strategy by which all actors, contributing directly or indirectly to achieving a set of development results, ensure that their processes, products and services contribute to the achievement of desired results (outputs, outcomes and goals). RBM rests on clearly defined accountability for results, and it requires monitoring and self-assessment of progress towards results, including reporting on performance (UNDP 2010)

This has become a predominant approach for public management in development in recent decades, for international organizations, like the United Nations itself, and many countries’ public sectors. While RBM has been officially adopted by the UN, the UN Development System is still in the process of fully implementing RBM, including its country teams (Bester, 2016).

The intimate relation between universal development goals (based on human development and sustainable development paradigms) and RBM was already widely perceived in the MDG era, and as Hulme (2007) has pointed out:

RBM was applied to the MDGs in a very direct fashion. At times goals, targets and indicators were screened for how ‘SMART’ they were and judgments made on RBM principles impacted directly on MDG form and content (Hulme, 2007, p. 17).

This close relationship is also true in the SDG era, even as the breadth, complexity and multidimensionality of the agenda has grown.
A second implicit element is the **territorial approach**, which has been adopted in recent years by UN agencies like FAO. In the context of the 2030 Agenda it is widely understood as necessary in light of the call for multidimensional perspectives that go beyond sectoral views, and the need to localize the agenda. From this perspective, sectoral approaches to policymaking, still relevant to MDGs, must give way to a multi-sectoral, multi-dimensional perspective on policymaking for any particular geographical area, as has been highlighted by such actors as the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments. “Territories”, from this perspective, are not just physical contexts but social, economic and political entities, among other dimensions of development. Thus, a **territorial approach** to development policymaking is also considered most pertinent to SDG implementation as it:

> Considers diversity within a country, heterogeneity of regions, social, economic and other processes of integration beyond formal borders, urban-rural linkages, and coordination between national, regional and local stakeholders (ISOCARP 2016)

A third element that is implicit is **evidence-based policymaking (EBPM)**. The emphasis on follow-up and review processes that are “rigorous and based on evidence” is one aspect that points to this, as do several mentions of “lessons learned,” “best practices,” or “mutual learning” regarding implementation and follow-up and review. EBPM gained relevance in the 1990s and aims to base decision making on rigorous reviews of quantitative or qualitative, evidence of what works and what does not; by linking decision makers with the work of academics and experts, it seeks to enhance government effectiveness and efficiency, foster innovation, and strengthen accountability, all elements addressed in the 2030 Agenda. The UN, World Bank and OECD are among the organizations that have promoted EBPM in developing countries in recent decades, through different programs and projects (Milani 2009).

Finally, a fourth implicit element is **long-term, strategic planning**, which is also part of the RBM approach. For decades, the use of strategic planning has been prevalent throughout the United Nations system. It can be defined most broadly as “the process by which an organization’s medium- to long-term goals, as well as the resources to achieve them, are defined” and it should also “be considered as a dynamic tool enabling the organizations to evolve as they adapt to the changing world environment in which they have to deliver their mandated services.” (Inomata 2012, p. 2 and 4) The 2030 Agenda explicitly mentions the need for strategic planning on the part of the UN System:

> We also stress the importance of system-wide strategic planning, implementation and reporting in order to ensure coherent and integrated support to the implementation of the new Agenda by the United Nations development system (p. 34).

The 2030 Agenda itself is “a plan of action” (p. 1), and the need for strategic planning as part of policies that aim to achieve long term goals and targets like SDGs may seem evident for UN member countries, yet it has been only recently that planning was again embraced as good practice by many governments. In the case of many Latin American countries, this has occurred after a post-structural adjustment era characterized by short-term crisis management and by a minimalistic role of the state, at the end of the last century (Medina
et al, 2014). The 2030 Agenda does not specifically prescribe strategic planning for all countries, but does have numerous occurrences of plans and planning when discussing SDG implementation.

The explicit and implicit elements of this approach to policymaking are not necessarily embedded in all, or even most, national and subnational governments that will be involved in pursuing the SDGs. Thus, there are challenges ahead for institutions and individuals involved, if the goals and targets are to be achieved in accordance with the principles established in the agenda.

III. The role of subnational governments in Agenda 2030

MDGs did not establish a role for subnational governments in their achievement (Satterthwaite 2014), although official and nongovernment actors gradually incorporated subnational actors into the center of the MDG agenda. During the global process of post-2015 consultation and formulation, many actors actively argued and lobbied for an important role of subnational governments and decentralization in the new framework. The High Level Panel on the Post-2015 Agenda (2013), for example, called for a key role of local government in the new framework.

The 2030 Agenda stresses the need to respect each country’s “policy space,” and also that the SDGs are meant to be adapted and localized by each country, including subnationally. Localization is a concept that was widely discussed during the post-2015 consultation process and remains relevant in international discussions. It is defined by Lucci (2015) as the local implementation of SDGs and the monitoring of progress at the sub-national level. Thus, it has two distinct aspects (UCLG 2014):

• The role of subnational governments as implementers of SDGs, since they share responsibilities in policy areas with central government; they should also propose disaggregated goals and targets for subnational level

• The need to monitor progress at subnational level, irrespective of responsibility of local government. This means disaggregated data is crucial for the 2030 Agenda.

While the MDGs and Millennium Declaration were largely addressed at the national level of government, the 2030 Agenda explicitly engages subnational authorities and local development issues. The most noticeable element is Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. This stand-alone local goal was partly the result of much advocacy on the part of international civil society, NGOs and organizations of local governments. However, the role of subnational governments is also implicit in Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.
In addition, the agenda’s means of implementation as well as review and accountability mechanisms, also involve local government. For example:

34. We recognize that sustainable urban development and management are crucial to the quality of life of our people. **We will work with local authorities** and communities to renew and plan our cities and human settlements so as to foster community cohesion and personal security and to stimulate innovation and employment.

52. “We the peoples” are the celebrated opening words of the Charter of the United Nations. It is “we the peoples” who are embarking today on the road to 2030. Our journey will involve Governments as well as parliaments, the United Nations system and other international institutions, **local authorities**, indigenous peoples, civil society, business and the private sector, the scientific and academic community – and all people. Millions have already engaged with, and will own, this Agenda. It is an Agenda of the people, by the people and for the people – and this, we believe, will ensure its success.

77. We commit to fully engage in conducting regular and inclusive **reviews of progress at the subnational**, national, regional and global levels.

In addition to the **Transforming Our World** text, other prominent global agreements and reports in the SDG era also highlight the role of subnational governments in achieving the goals and targets, and numerous actors are currently involved in fostering the role of these governments in achieving the 2030 vision.

The second round of the UN’s post-2015 global consultations included a process on localizing the new agenda. Its outcome document, the Turin Communique on Localizing the Post-2015 Development Agenda (2014), says:

The implementation of the Post-2015 Agenda will greatly depend on local action and leadership, in coordination with all other levels of governance. Any new development agenda will only have an impact on people’s lives if it is successfully implemented at the local level.

Among the themes put forward by the communique are the importance of including a diversity of local stakeholders in local governance; adopting an integrated multi-level and multi-stakeholder approach to promote transformative agendas at the local level; and strong national commitment to provide adequate legal frameworks and institutional and financial capacity to local and regional governments is required.

For their part, the influential United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) global network (2016) has worked under the “All SDGs are local” slogan, calling for greater focus on cities and territories. From their perspective, the role of local administrations in SDG achievement goes far beyond Goal 11 and all SDGs have targets that are directly or indirectly related to the work of local and regional governments. Local governments should be seen not only as implementers, but as policymakers, catalysts of change and as the level of government best-
placed to link global goals and local communities, with particular emphasis on participation and accountability.

Beyond the general ideas presented in the *Transforming our World* document, the key roles that subnational governments are expected to play in achieving the 2030 Agenda are summed up in the *Roadmap for localizing the SDGs*, produced by the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments, UN-Habitat, and UNDP (2016):

- Raising awareness of local citizens and promoting ownership, in order to foster citizen participation
- Advocacy by subnational government networks in order to have enabling environments for SDG localization, including strengthened decentralization
- Preparation for local SDG implementation
- Local monitoring of SDG progress, including framework adaptation and data gathering

It is worth noting that many countries are already acting to promote the role of subnational governments in the 2030 Agenda. For example, in Colombia, where MDG localization was significant, the national SDG commission has identified 100 targets from five SDGs that involve joint work with subnational governments (High-Level Group on the 2030 Agenda, 2016). Furthermore, already in 2017, internationally organized subnational governments are actively part of global SDG monitoring and review: UCLG’s has begun complementing “the information submitted by Member States and UN agencies every year by compiling and analyzing information provided directly by local and regional governments and their associations.” (UCLG 2017, p. 13)

**IV. Expected demands for subnational institutions and capacities**

The roles that subnational actors are expected to play in the 2030 Agenda are not minor: for example, an estimated 65% of SDG targets will be at risk if local urban actors are not properly engaged, according to Misselwitz (2016). What changes need to take place for subnational governments to be ready to play such an important role in achieving the SDGs? The small, but growing, body of academic and technical literature on SDGs and subnational government mentions some key challenges ahead. In addition to the items proposed by a number of current authors, this paper argues that capacities for implementing the policy approaches implicit in the 2030 Agenda should also be considered as imminent challenges for success.

On the basis of lessons from MDGs and their shortcomings in effectively engaging local actors, Satterthwaite et al (2013) proposed three key areas of attention in order to have subnational governments playing an important role in the new, post-2015 agenda:

- Explicit recognition of local authorities as primary stakeholders;
- Local governments’ capacity to deliver on their mandated responsibilities;
- Capacity of local citizens and civil society to hold their local governments accountable

Analyzing recent relevant literature, some key challenges can be seen as points of consensus
in current literature, including the following:

• Translating goals, targets and indicators from global to the local level while remaining relevant for action
• Producing and utilizing disaggregated data that is useful for complying with the “leave no one behind” mandate
• Engaging and fostering local citizen participation and vertical accountability in SDG attainment
• Formulating localized SDG strategies that are relevant to existing levels of administrative decentralization (authority and resources transferred from central to local levels).
• Subnational financing arrangements that are evidence-based, considering fiscal decentralization
• Spaces and mechanisms for inter-government and inter-sector coordination (multi-level and multi-stakeholder approach) that include local governments

Many challenges pointed out in recent literature suggest a need for significant capacity building in subnational governments, through strategies that are relevant to decentralization arrangements in each context. For example, technical capacities for producing and properly utilizing disaggregated statistics on SDG progress may not be in place in subnational governments in rural, impoverished areas where needs are greatest. As Lucci (2015) points out:

... local authorities that have to deliver basic services in areas of high need require adequate capacity and resources to do so... Programs to strengthen the capacity of local authorities could be part of a new global partnership for implementing, monitoring and financing the goals.

One question arising from this discussion is: what capacities will need to be worked on most urgently at the subnational level so that these governments are ideally positioned to pursue SDGs and targets? While this set of capacities will vary substantially between countries, it should include not only those capacities needed to meet the challenges that are already outlined in the reviewed literature (such as statistical capacities), but also those necessary to apply the policymaking approaches that are explicit and implicit in the 2030 Agenda: rights-based, gender equity, results-based management, territorial, and strategic planning, among others. Another question arising from his discussion is: what challenges will subnational governments face when trying to embrace and apply these approaches? Recent decentralization reforms that were guided by similar principles could be a source of valuable insights in this regard.

V. Insights from Peruvian decentralization

Peru is one of the countries that has officially begun integrating the 2030 Agenda in its planning and policy processes, including the subnational level, as stated in its first Voluntary National Report (2017). Engaging all subnational governments in any endeavor in Peru is a complex task, as it is a decentralized, unitary state with four levels of elected government (national and regional government, and two municipal levels: province and district). These add up to over 2000 government units, with varying degrees of policy autonomy over a number of sectors.
In the context of democratic transition after the end of the Fujimori regime (1990-2000), Peru quickly relaunched state decentralization and created its newest level of subnational government in 2002. Elected regional governments were established in each of the country’s 24 departments and in the provinces of Callao and Lima (Metropolitan Lima area). Processes of administrative and fiscal decentralization began shortly thereafter in 2003.

As shown on Table 1, many of the policymaking approaches that have been identified here as explicit and implicit guidelines in the 2030 Agenda can also be found to be guiding principles in the legal framework that has oriented decentralization to the regional level during the past 15 years in Peru. For example, the Organic Law of Regional Governments (2002) established 14 principles for management of the new regional governments, among them: participation (including citizen participation in different aspects of planning, budgeting and policymaking); inclusion (from rights-based and gender equity approaches); modern management (with performance evaluated by citizens) and accountability (including vertical accountability mechanisms); efficacy (in terms of achieving the goals of consensus-based regional development plans); sustainability (considering intergenerational equity); and integration (aiming at subnational public interventions beyond existing borders and from a macro-regional perspective).

Table 1: Matches between Agenda 2030 policymaking approaches and guidelines for Peruvian regional governments (2002-)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements of 2030 Agenda as framework for policymaking</th>
<th>Also guidelines for regional decentralization in Peru?</th>
<th>Oldest relevant norms / reforms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participatory and decentralized</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Organic Law of Regional Governments (2002)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Results-based Management</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>General Law of the National Budget System (2005) Instructions for Participatory Results-Based Budgeting (2010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence-based Policymaking</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic planning</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Organic Law of Regional Governments (2002)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Recent analyses of progress in Peruvian decentralization (Alcalde, 2016; ANGR, 2015; Contraloria Nacional de la Republica, 2014; Molina, 2016; Programa ProDescentralizacion, 2016) provide relevant points of consensus regarding the obstacles faced by regional governments that have been expected to adopt such approaches. A brief review of general challenges found in this recent literature for five of these, which are discussed by various texts, is included below.

• **Participation**: Regarding participatory policymaking, numerous spaces and mechanisms were introduced at the subnational level at the beginning of decentralization, including processes initiated by national legislation—such as regional consultative councils and participatory budgeting—and particular regional and local innovations. However, all recent studies point to widespread disillusionment, and decay regarding the possibilities of participation, due to an absence of legally binding agreements (leaving functioning up to political will and discretion of authorities); legal obstacles to participation of grassroots organizations; homogeneous norms that are inadequate for a heterogeneous country; institutional weaknesses of civil society organizations; lack of coordination between different participatory processes; and lack of public resources to promote and sustain participation of the most vulnerable and excluded groups, among other important factors.

• **Vertical accountability**: Numerous spaces and mechanisms for vertical accountability (state to civil society) at the subnational level were also implemented at the onset of decentralization and the creation of regional governments. In addition to factors in common with participation, especially the lack of legally binding mechanisms and penalties for noncompliance, there is a tendency to either not use these spaces or to use them for reporting to political allies and clients. Regional governments are largely not accountable to citizens in terms of development outcomes and results established in plans.

• **Results-based management**: Results-based budgets rapidly grew from 2008, when the pilot programs were implemented, to 2012, when half of all public budgets (excluding social security and financial obligations) were results-based. Despite the fact that most public funds are now nominally allocated through results-based budgets and processes, studies such as ANGR (2015) point out that in practice there is still a predominant focus on controlling expenditures that was set in place after structural adjustment in the 1990s. A key challenge ahead is to actually move from complying with formal rules of results-based budgeting to overall results-based management in all levels of government, with decision making that is focused on the quality of spending and investment, and on achieving results. Greater integration of impact evaluation into program and budget cycles are also pending.

• **Territorial approach**: Elements of a territorial approach to subnational development were clearly part of major decentralization legislation at the onset of reforms, but by 2009 there was an explicit mandate to gradually move from a sector-based to a territorial approach at the regional level. Two key factors have limited advances in this direction.
One is the political failure of referendums (2005) to merge departments in order to create large, more autonomous, economically sustainable regions based on actual patterns of social, economic, cultural integration; in the absence of this, different mechanisms such as inter-regional boards and commonwealths became the main avenues for strengthening a more territorially based model of policymaking, but at least until recently were not actively promoted through significant incentives from the national level. The other key factor pointed out in recent studies has been the relationship with national ministries, which themselves suffer from excessively sectorialized perspectives on policymaking and budgeting, and which act as national sectoral policy authorities that often have greater power than do regional governments over regional level sectoral offices, which are formally under more territorially-oriented regional management units.

• **Strategic planning:** Although there are many current development plans at the subnational level, and they generally involve significant participation in their making, there is a persistent problem of disconnection between planning and programming/budgeting in the Peruvian public sector, and also a lack of coordination between a multitude of existing development plans in different sectors and territories.

This is partly the result of the virtual abandonment of strategic planning for development as an integral part of national policymaking between 1992 and 2008, the year when the current national planning agency began operating. Since its creation this has been a relatively weak agency, with few resources and political support from the highest levels of authority, and also characterized by vertical, centralized approaches to planning (Correa, 2015). Therefore, the national planning system that it heads has not strengthened significantly the strategic planning capacities of regional governments, and strategic development planning capacities and culture vary greatly between regions.

Thus, while Peruvian regional governments have been formally guided by policymaking principles that are similar to those of the 2030 Agenda, after fifteen years progress has been uneven in fully integrating them into development policy processes.

VI. **Conclusions**

This paper has argued that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development should be considered a policymaking framework that countries may voluntarily adopt and localize, rather than just a set of goals and targets. These goals and targets are only fully understood in light of a policymaking framework that has explicit and implicit elements ranging from rights-based and gender approaches, on the one hand, to strategic planning and results-based management, on the other hand. All of these are, to varying degrees, approaches that have been significantly embraced and adopted by the UN System and other key international development actors in recent decades.
Subnational governments, which are widely considered to be important actors in achieving the SDGs, face diverse challenges on the road to playing their expected roles in the 2030 Agenda. These include factors that are identified in recent literature, ranging from data production and statistical analysis, to producing SDG strategies that are relevant to their national administrative and fiscal decentralization arrangements. Additionally, this paper has argued that challenges will also include building capacities for adopting several elements of a distinctive approach to development policymaking that is part of the 2030 Agenda.

In addition to lessons being learned currently as the agenda is implemented in each country, evidence from some recent decentralization reforms, like the case of Peru that is briefly analyzed here, could be useful for understanding the challenges ahead in optimizing subnational policymaking for the pursuit of SDGs and targets. This task appears significantly more important for success now than in the previous MDG framework.
Bibliography


Boex, Jamie (2012), The Local Public Sector’s Role in Achieving the Millennium Development Goals: Research Agenda and Methodology, The Urban Institute Center on International Development and Governance


Correa, Humberto (2015), Planificación Estratégica para el Desarrollo Regional y Rural. Lima: CIES


Fukuda-Parr (2016), “From the Millennium Development Goals to the Sustainable Development Goals: shifts in purpose, concept, and politics of global goal setting for development.” Gender & Development Volume 24 Issue 1 The Sustainable Development Goals


Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments (201X), Financing Local and Regional Governments: The missing link in sustainable development finance.

Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments (20XX), Local and Regional Voices on the Global Stage: Our Post-2015 Journey. UCLG.

Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments, UN-HABITAT and UNDP (201X), Roadmap for Localizing the Sdgs: Implementation and Monitoring At Subnational Level. New York.


Inmate, Tadanori (2012), Strategic planning in the United Nations System. UN Joint Inspection Unit

Kanuri, Chaitanya, Aromar Revi, Jessica Espey & Holger Kuhle (2016), Getting Started with SDGs in
Cities: A Guide for Stakeholders. SDSN.

Local Authorities Major Group (LAMG), Position Paper: Advancing with Sustainable Development Goals at the local and subnational level. LAMG, March 2015

Local Governance Initiative and Network (LOGIN) (2016), Localisation of Sustainable Development Goals: A Literature Review. LOGIN Asia, New Delhi


Niestroy, Ingeborg (2014), Goals at the Subnational Level: Roles and good practices for subnational governments. SDplanNet Briefing Note, March 2014.


Satterthwaite, David (2014), Guiding the Goals: Empowering Local Actors, SAIS Review of International Affairs, Volume 34, Number 2, Summer-Fall 2014, pp. 51-61


SNV and UNDP (2009), Going Local to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals: Stories from Eight Countries. 2009.


UCLG (2014), How to Localize Targets and Indicators of the Post 2015 Agenda. Barcelona: UCLG

Barcelona: UCLG

UCLG (2017), Local and Regional Governments’ Report to the 2017 HLPF: National and Sub-National Governments on the Way Towards the Localization of the SDGs. Barcelona: UCLG.

UCLG-Asia Pacific (20XX), Roadmap for Local Government in Localising SDGs.


UNDESA (2016), World Economic and Social Survey 2014/2015, New York.


Vandemoortele, Jan (2011), If not the Millennium Development Goals, then what?, Third World Quarterly, 32:1, 9-25

World Vision International (2012), The Post-2015 Agenda: Policy Brief #5 - Global goals with national and sub-national targets to reach the most vulnerable. Uxbridge, United Kingdom.