



Why UNSDGs matter?

Charlotte Christensen, Vice President of Oregon China Council | March 2021

By way of further explanation of the poignancy of the SDGs for us in Oregon, climate extremes, such as those we've experienced very recently and during the past decade, have resulted primarily from the increased warming of the planet. 2020 was one of the three warmest years *ever*.

Wildfires have obliterated entire towns, destroying more than 5,000 homes and commercial structures, displacing thousands of Oregonians, such as we saw this fall in southern Oregon with the Almeda Fire that substantially destroyed the towns of Phoenix and Talent, and further north, the towns of Detroit, Blue River and Vida in Lane County. Floods and droughts wreak havoc, also taking lives and destroying livelihoods.

According to the Governor's Wildfire Economic Recovery Council January 4, 2021 report, the state estimates a total cost of \$1.15 billion in wildfire/wind damage, response costs and debris removal. We could go on with examples, but, combined with coronavirus pandemic recovery, this reality adds urgency to the need for OCC to support efforts to reverse the course of these destructive ecological events.

To be clear, the SDGs represent, and require, a transformative approach. All 17 Goals are dependent on each other being made a reality for sustainable economic recovery and development to be truly realized.

Also, the SDGs closely relate to, but are not synonymous with, the fight to stop global warming. For example, a focus to stop global warming alone could still result in workers remaining in impoverished living and working conditions with only the affluent able to afford green power sources, leaving the poor without any utilities or with the least ecological energy sources at the highest costs. There is an inseparable connection of sustainable

recovery and development, with the eradication of poverty and hunger and the provision of medical care and education for all, to reverse global warming and environmental degradation. The UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres stated in a December 6, 2020 speech at Columbia University, that "the world needs to decrease fossil fuel production by 6% every year between now and 2030" to avoid climate catastrophe. Implementing the SDGs, includes a transition to 100% renewable energy which will create jobs and which scientists have proven is completely doable in Oregon and our nation. It will stop global warming, eradicate poverty and establish sustainable communities. The SDGs require international cooperation and mutually beneficial patterns of growth and development.

China is a stalwart supporter of the SDGs. China provides a formal and very impressive report to the United Nations each year on their progress toward carrying out the SDGs. Hence, OCC's endorsement of the SDGs – including a strong statement on our website – will help cement our ties with friends and colleagues among government officials, business and academic communities of Fujian Province, especially during and through the process of organizing, conducting and following up on the upcoming Climate Change and Sustainability Summit.