

Following the Sustainable Development Goals Summit this past September, the United Nations published a guidance paper entitled "Six Transitions," to identify critical "investment pathways" that will be key to achieving the SDGs by their target date of 2030. According to the U.N. paper, these critical pathways will have "catalytic and multiplier effects" across all the SDGs. Indeed, according to the OECD, while overall overseas development assistance grew in the five years between 2016 and 2020, bilateral assistance grew over four times faster than multilateral aid. In a new context of resurgent nationalism and renewed militarization, talk of alternate visions of global governance have fundamentally challenged globalization's liberal model, in what one recent study has termed a "contest for the future of the international order." This contest is also prompting competing development narratives to emerge, including China's recently unveiled Global Development Initiative framework. Western development budgets are shrinking as funds are diverted to military and humanitarian spending in a more fractured geopolitical environment. Aid is becoming less multilateral and more closely aligned with the national interests and domestic political priorities of donor governments. Donor countries will continue to offer development aid, and receiving countries will continue to take it, but not on the same political terms as before.