

Spring 5-18-2019

# Corporate Social Responsibility and the UN Sustainable Development Goals: How Business Drives Progress in the Scope SDGs #2 (Zero Hunger) and #8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth)

Olivia Rose LaBarge

Follow this and additional works at: [https://fordham.bepress.com/international\\_senior](https://fordham.bepress.com/international_senior)

Part of the [Other International and Area Studies Commons](#)

## Recommended Citation

LaBarge, Olivia Rose, "Corporate Social Responsibility and the UN Sustainable Development Goals: How Business Drives Progress in the Scope SDGs #2 (Zero Hunger) and #8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth)" (2019). *Senior Theses*. 31.  
[https://fordham.bepress.com/international\\_senior/31](https://fordham.bepress.com/international_senior/31)

This is brought to you for free and open access by the International Studies at DigitalResearch@Fordham. It has been accepted for inclusion in Senior Theses by an authorized administrator of DigitalResearch@Fordham. For more information, please contact [considine@fordham.edu](mailto:considine@fordham.edu).

# Corporate Social Responsibility and the UN Sustainable Development Goals:

*How Business Drives Progress  
in the Scope of SDGs #2 (Zero Hunger) and  
#8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth)*



Olivia LaBarge  
International Studies Major | Global Affairs Track  
olabarge@fordham.edu

Adviser: Carey Weiss  
Director, Sustainability Initiatives, Social Innovation Collaboratory | Gabelli School of Business  
cweiss5@fordham.edu

## Table of Contents

<b>Abstract</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Acronym List</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Contextual Overview/Background</b>	<b>6</b>
The Sustainable Development Goals	6
Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture	7
Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all	7
Corporations as Agents of Sustainable Impact	9
The Multinational Corporation	10
The Historical and Literary Background of Corporate Social Responsibility	12
Theoretical/Philosophical Context of Corporate Social Responsibility	14
<b>Methodology</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Case Studies</b>	<b>19</b>
SDG 2 Zero Hunger: A Comparison of The Barilla Group and Italy	19
SDG 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth:	26
A Comparison of Petróleo Brasileiro S.A. (Petrobras) and Brazil	26
<b>Analysis and Conclusion</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Appendix</b>	<b>47</b>

### **Abstract**

This paper, “Corporate Social Responsibility and the Sustainable Development Goals: How Business Drives Progress in the Scope of SDGs 2 (Zero Hunger) and 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth),” addresses the question of the effectiveness of Corporate Social Responsibility as it pertains to accomplishing the UN Sustainable Development Goals. It highlights the importance of partnerships for the goals, and achieving them as a collaborative global movement. This paper sets out to show that corporate actions can contribute to and be extremely effective in supporting the Global Goals. The paper does so through case studies of SDG 2, looking at The Barilla Group and Italy, and SDG 8, looking to Petrobras and Brazil, to compare respective corporate and governmental action. The project cumulates in an understanding of the effect of these corporations in contributing toward each Sustainable Development Goal, and calls upon the global community to continue to cooperate and further collaborate in taking steps to achieve the SDGs for the 2030 deadline.

### Acronym List

BCFN	Barilla Centre for Food and Nutrition
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
ESG	Environmental, Social and Corporate Governance
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
HLPF	High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
ILO	International Labour Organization
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MNC	Multinational Corporation
MOOC	Massive Open Online Course
NSG	National Strategic Goal
OGCI	Oil and Gas Climate Initiative
SASB	Sustainability Accounting Standards Board
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEH	Safety, Environment, and Health
UN	United Nations
VNR	Voluntary National Review

## Introduction

On January 20th, 2019, *The Daily Show with Trevor Noah* ran a story on Microsoft's \$500 million pledge to support affordable housing and eradicating homelessness in Seattle. "Yes, it turns out that the mega-corporation that brought us Windows, has now decided to add doors and roofs as well," Noah joked. "But, seriously. Kudos to Microsoft for stepping up to help people struggling with housing. At the same time, you also know that the system is broken when corporations have to step in and do the government's job."<sup>1</sup>

The satirist's comment has a reach beyond the jab at the American government. Indeed, today there are plenty of gaps in what governments around the world are providing to their citizens and contributing on behalf of their country back to the global society. On the other hand, there are cases upon cases of corporate philanthropy, like the Microsoft donation, that might provide a solution to fill those gaps.

We do not think enough about the influence of non-governmental actors on global affairs. Especially in an academic context, the influence on global policy that arises from sources other than governments and large international organizations are largely ignored.

When large corporations are brought up in discussion of politics, it is usually in the context of lobbying and or donations to a candidate or party that will ultimately benefit the financial

---

<sup>1</sup>The Daily Show with Trevor Noah. "So Much News, So Little Time – Rudy Giuliani's Collusion Comments & Michael Cohen | The Daily Show." YouTube. January 20, 2019.

interests of the business. As these governmental gaps in action become identified, there has arisen the opportunities for these businesses to drive socially conscious progress, while at the same time acting in their own economic interest. These examples of capitalism and social responsibility are able to exist simultaneously when we consider who has a seat at the table. That is to say, though an academic international studies viewpoint looks to nation-states to legislate policy to influence their citizens and in turn, how their citizens affect the world, this paper aims to provide an answer of what happens when the viewpoint is switched from international studies to business. That is, when we cut out the governments acting as middlemen and impose the responsibility directly on the private citizens to act in ways that are socially conscious and responsible on a global scale. We have started to see evidence of businesses stepping up to the plate, taking on those responsibilities in the forms of initiatives like the United Nations Global Compact and the B Corporation certification.

This paper investigates the role of non-State actors as pertaining to how business has impacted, and will continue to impact, the campaign of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), released by the United Nations (UN) in 2015. This project is built off of two case studies, each centered around a particular SDG, which will evidence the efficacy and the inefficacy of both private and governmental action towards these goals. This research will serve to showcase the ability of private corporations to enact progress on these goals, serving to benefit global society, simultaneously as their own bottom line.

## **Contextual Overview/Background**

The following is a historical, literary, and theoretical/philosophical overview and background for this project.

### **The Sustainable Development Goals**

The Sustainable Development Goals were created as a replacement for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), put out by the United Nations in 2000<sup>2</sup>. The MDGs were created on a 15 year timeline, and so the SDGs were instituted to continue further progress in 2015. These goals were created with the intention of reducing extreme poverty in the new millennium. The MDGs consisted of eight goals. (See appendix for a list of MDGs).

The Millennium Summit went through the United Nations to create connection and collaboration from member states in the hope that they would be able to institute progress in their own countries which would lead to global change. These goals came with a 15 year deadline. Thus, when that deadline began to approach, the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development was hosted in Rio de Janeiro in 2012. From the work that began in that conference, and from the need to replace the MDGs in 2015, the Sustainable Development Goals were created<sup>3</sup>. The MDGs had made significant accomplishments, but there was recognition in the international community that the SDGs would not only need to meet and complete the goals set out by the MDGs but also to address new challenges that had arisen. The Sustainable

---

<sup>2</sup> General Assembly resolution 70/1, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, A/RES/70/1(21 October 2015), available from undocs.org/A/RES/70/1.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

Development Goals that were shared in September 2015 are built from seventeen goals, with a total of 169 targets outlining the details of those goals<sup>4</sup>. This paper uses two case studies, each focused around a specific goal. The following subsections further explain the targets and other components of those goals. The complete list of the chosen case studies goals' targets and indicators are included in the appendix.

There are eight targets of Goal 2. They are outlined in summary as such:

**Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture<sup>5</sup>**

- 2.1 End hunger and guarantee year-round access to sufficient and nutritious food for all people.
- 2.2 End malnutrition, lessen nutrition-based developmental delays, and specifically address nutritional needs of vulnerable groups: adolescent girls, pregnant women, and the elderly.
- 2.3 Double the productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, with a focus on underserved populations, through equal access to resources, services, and knowledge.
- 2.4 Implement sustainable food production systems as to increase resiliency and maintain ecosystems.
- 2.5 Maintain the genetic diversity of plants and animals raised for food and ensure access to knowledge of beneficial practices, including preserving traditional practices.
- 2.a Increase investment in rural infrastructure as to increase agricultural productivity.
- 2.b Correct and protect trade restrictions and distortions in the international agricultural market.
- 2.c Adopt and implement measures to limit extreme volatility in food prices.

There are twelve targets of Goal 8. They are outlined in summary as such:

---

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

**Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all<sup>6</sup>**

- 8.1 Sustain per capita economic growth at at least 7% GDP growth per year in the least developed countries.
- 8.2 Increase levels of economic productivity through diversification and technological innovation.
- 8.3 Support policies that lead to productivity, job-creation, entrepreneurship, and growth of small- and medium- sized businesses.
- 8.4 Improve global resource consumption and production efficiency, separating economic growth from environmental degradation.
- 8.5 Reach full employment, with decent work for all persons, at equal pay for equal work.
- 8.6 Reduce the youth unemployment level.
- 8.7 End forced labor practices, slavery, and human trafficking; emphasizing eliminating the use of child soldiers.
- 8.8 Protect labor rights and promote safe working environments, in particular vulnerable worker populations.
- 8.9 Promote sustainable tourism, creating jobs and promoting local culture and product.
- 8.10 Strengthen financial institutions as to be able to provide access to financial services to all.
- 8.a Increase Aid for Trade<sup>7</sup> support for developing countries.
- 8.b Develop and operationalize a global strategy for youth employment and implement the Global Jobs Pact.<sup>8</sup>

**The Sustainable Development Goals (continued)**

For the purposes of this paper, to understand the role of the corporation in this sphere, it is important to recognize that one of the common threads connecting the Millenium Development Goals and the Sustainable Development Goals is the idea of partnerships for the goals.<sup>9</sup> In regards to the MDGs, this idea of partnerships was for the most part intended to spark cross-national cooperation and encourage countries to work together implementing policy. Even

---

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> Aid for Trade is a World Trade Organization Initiative

<sup>8</sup> The Global Jobs Pact is a global policy from the International Labour Organization

<sup>9</sup> *The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.*

before the SDGs were being put forward in 2015, it was understood by the United Nations that to be effective, they would need to harness the power of non-State actors. The UN Resolution 67/290, *Format and organizational aspects of the high-level political forum on sustainable development*, specifically decides that “representatives of the major groups and other relevant stakeholders,” are allowed and invited to participate in the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF).<sup>10</sup> Clearly, the need to have a multi-stakeholder collaborative platform was identified from the onset. Furthermore, SDG 17 emphasizes that the intention and reasoning of the goal is to bring “together national governments, the international community, civil society, the private sector and other actors. Despite advances in certain areas, more needs to be done to accelerate progress. All stakeholders will have to refocus and intensify their efforts on areas where progress has been slow.”<sup>11</sup> Jumping off from this, we can look deeper into what “civil society” and “the private sector” can mean in this context.

### **Corporations as Agents of Sustainable Impact**

A corporation can play a role in international affairs as a non-State actor. For the purposes of this project we should consider an entity as a non-State actor when it is not a government, or acting as a representative of a government, but participates on the global stage, intentionally pursuing specific interests, while carrying legitimate influence. We can consider the media, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, and religious institutions as examples of non-State actors in international affairs. This definition does not attempt to equate non-State

---

<sup>10</sup> General Assembly resolution 67/290, *Format and organizational aspects of the high-level political forum on sustainable development*, A/RES/67/290 (12 July 2013), available from [undocs.org/A/RES/67/290](https://undocs.org/A/RES/67/290).

<sup>11</sup>"Goal 17 ∴ Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform." United Nations.

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg17>.

actors to each other, save for the acknowledgement of their potential impact on international affairs.

Power and influence in international affairs has been redistributed from a concentration in established governing roles to a more expansive, network-based approach that encompasses non-State actors from the business world. Niall Ferguson's *The Square and the Tower: Networks and Power, from Freemasons to Facebook* documents the shift in power dynamics from the few to the many<sup>12</sup>. Taking his title from the Torre del Mangia in the Piazza del Campo of Siena, Italy, Ferguson points out the juxtaposition of power embodied by the architecture of the town square, describing, "Around you, a public space purpose-built for all kinds of more or less informal human interaction; above you, an imposing tower intended to symbolize and project secular power."<sup>13</sup> To consider the square and the tower, is to consider networks composed of the people and formally built power structures. As Ferguson points out, this phenomenon has been seen throughout history, from the Illuminati, to the Mafia, to Twitter. *New Power: How Power Works in Our Hyperconnected World* by Jeremy Heimans and Henry Timms brings this idea into a modern context, investigating the change in power dynamics in our modern society. Heimans and Timms write that "[n]ew power' is made by many. It is open, participatory, and peer-driven...The battle between old and new power is determining who who governs us [and] how we work."<sup>14</sup> These two texts point out that the dynamics of power today is no longer

---

<sup>12</sup> Ferguson, Niall. *The Square and the Tower: Networks and Power, from the Freemasons to Facebook*. London: Penguin Books, 2018.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> Heimans, Jeremy, and Henry Timms. *New Power: How Power Works in Our Hyperconnected World--and How to Make It Work for You*. New York: Doubleday, 2018.

relegated to elected officials: power is in the hands of those who know how to network and mobilize, a group inclusive of global businesses.

### **The Multinational Corporation**

Considering the labels “civil society” and “private sector” referenced in SDG 17 leads us to examine how multinational corporations (MNCs) affect international affairs. A multinational corporation is a company with facilities (from sourcing to production to distribution) based in two or more countries. These large businesses use monetary backing to straddle cross-nationally to their financial benefit, strategically using geographical location, whether that is to increase profit margins or to advance other agendas, the rationale behind international distribution of a company is to their benefit. In the scope of international affairs, MNCs have a significant effect on international politics and policies via economics, specifically Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). One of the prominent socio-economic theories to consider in regards to FDI is the “Race to the Bottom” theory. This is the idea the deregulation of business practices (wages, worker safety, tax rates, etc.) as to attract and/or retain investment in the area, despite potential harm to the local economy and individuals.<sup>15</sup> In Nathan Jensen’s *Nation-States and the Multinational Corporation: A Political Economy of Foreign Direct Investment*, Jensen emphasizes the importance of FDI while explaining economic and political theories behind foreign investment<sup>16</sup>. Jensen explains that the “Race to the Bottom” suggests that MNCs are easily able to station their facilities in the country that would offer the highest profit margin. Jensen argues that ability does

---

<sup>15</sup> "Lexicon." Libor Definition from Financial Times Lexicon. Accessed October 29, 2018. <http://lexicon.ft.com/Term?term=race-to-the-bottom>.

<sup>16</sup> Jensen, Nathan M. *Nation-states and the Multinational Corporation: A Political Economy of Foreign Direct Investment*. Princeton University Press, 2008.

not exist, and that indeed it is difficult for companies to move from country to country. Therefore, when considering facilities, the company heavily considers a “security in the future policy”<sup>17</sup>. He suggests that the real reasons that countries are attractive to FDI has more to do with the stability and support of a state’s political institutions. Political risk is much more significant in terms of attracting foreign investment than deregulation: MNCs will not invest in countries where their contracts are at risk of being broken or their assets are likely to be seized. Jensen emphasizes that war and political violence, expropriation, breach of contract and transfers risk<sup>18</sup> as factors that will dissuade a company from investing in a certain country. The desire to attract foreign investment will motivate FDI recipient nations to make their countries an attractive, low risk, high reward investment. Therefore, countries who wish to attract foreign investment will make an effort to institute internal policies to damper violence, expropriation, corruption and further dangers. In this way, countries who are appealing for FDI will have benefited firstly from internal efforts and legislation, and then economically from foreign capital.

### **The Historical and Literary Background of Corporate Social Responsibility**

The concept of Corporate Social Responsibility is widely acknowledged, but as such, entities involved have a wide range of definitions for the concept. In the context of this paper, the definition utilized is from the International Labour Organization (ILO): “a way in which enterprises give consideration to the impact of their operations on society and affirm their principles and values both in their own internal methods and processes and in their interaction with other actors. CSR is a voluntary, enterprise-driven initiative and refers to activities that are

---

<sup>17</sup> Jensen, *Nation-states and the Multinational Corporation*.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

considered to exceed compliance with the law.”<sup>19</sup> It is, essentially, going around the middleman of the nation state in order to enact these principles to contribute to global well-being for the sake of the principles, even if it is not required by law.

In *The Oxford Handbook of Corporate Social Responsibility*, Archie Carroll writes about how CSR truly started to manifest as a business practice<sup>20</sup> in the 1950’s, but states that evidence of socially responsible acts from business can be rooted back to the 19th century and the Industrial Revolution. Acknowledging the philanthropy of the late 1800’s, Carroll continues in saying that CSR as we know it today did not really begin to formalize itself until the second half of the 20th century. Carroll’s article walks the reader through a decade by decade approach to CSR practices from the 1950’s until the beginning of the 21st century, illustrating the popular themes and issues and how they have shifted and built upon themselves throughout the years, often depending on the political climate of the day. The 70’s, for example, proved to be engaging firms with minority hiring and ecological concern, as the top 2 CSR focuses, with minority training and contributions to education tied for third place. “A History of Corporate Social Responsibility: Concepts and Practices” was published in 2008, and therefore is missing the last decade of CSR happenings in scope. Events after the publication date include the 2015 launch of the SDGs, obviously key to this project. Considering this, Carroll’s article creates a historical overview, albeit focused on the United States and Western Europe, creating a basic understanding of the

---

<sup>19</sup> "The ILO and CSR." ILO Helpdesk. October 29, 2009. Accessed December 25, 2018. [https://www.ilo.org/empent/Publications/WCMS\\_116336/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/empent/Publications/WCMS_116336/lang--en/index.htm).

<sup>20</sup> Carroll, Archie. (2008). *A History of Corporate Social Responsibility: Concepts and Practices*. 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199211593.003.0002.

roots of the practice. It leaves for further investigation to understand CSR on a global scale over the past decade.

In “The Origins of Corporate Social Responsibility,” Eric C. Chaffee outlines the obligation for participation in CSR per the prevalent theories of the firm<sup>21</sup>. Chaffee marks concession theory, real entity theory and aggregate theory but dismisses them each as they do not explain the reasons for why the corporation exists. In light of that, he presents his own collaboration theory, which puts forth that the corporation is an economic collaboration between the government of the company’s country and the individuals running the business. Under Chaffee’s theory, the company is obligated to continuously seek profit. That being said, both the state government and the corporation is expected to act in good will towards the other when possible. That means that the company should seek to act on socially responsible policies when doing so would either increase profits or be cost-neutral. In scenarios where it would cost the corporation to act upon CSR, Chaffee wrote, it is the duty of the state to make financial accommodations to the company so that they may act in a responsible way without causing financial losses.

To provide a contrasting, skeptical-perspective we can look to writers like Anand Giridharadas, author of *Winner Takes All*, who explains “The Win-Win Fallacy” as it pertains to CSR. He walks his readers through examples of companies who believe that they are doing good while increasing their bottom line, believing they embody this idea of the win-win, helping people with their tech companies or their start-ups. This fallacy reflects a deluded ineffectiveness, he claims.

---

<sup>21</sup> Eric C. Chaffee, "ARTICLE: The Origins of Corporate Social Responsibility," *University of Cincinnati Law Review*, 85, 353 (June, 2017).

Not malicious or evil, but these entrepreneurs are fooling themselves into thinking they are creating good. “Often, when people set out to do the thing they are already doing and love to do and know how to do, and they promise grand civilizational benefits as a spillover effect, the solution is oriented around the solver’s needs more than the world’s—the win-wins, purporting to be about others, are really about you.”<sup>22</sup> Giridharadas has a fair and valid point, there have been plenty of examples of ineffective CSR. But to that point, there have been plenty of examples of ineffective action from global governments and organizations like the UN. To dismiss the entirety of CSR as something to make the C-Suite feel warm and fuzzy is to chose to ignore even the effective cases for the sake of not over-acknowledging the ineffective cases.

### **Theoretical/Philosophical Context of Corporate Social Responsibility**

The verbiage of trend is to pigeon-hole the corporation as an evil entity, one focused solely on increasing profit margins, without regard to any consequences that their actions may have on affected communities. The intention of this paper is not to contest that there are examples of corporate action that has had negative consequences on society for the sake of increasing profits, but rather to show that there are indeed cases in which corporate action has contributed towards creating good in the world and that that action has filled gaps where governments have lacked.

We can use this perspective to demonstrate the human side of business.

It may be thought that due to a profit-based motivation, corporate social responsibility can be dismissed as an empty marketing tool or greenwashing campaign. Greenwashing is creating a

---

<sup>22</sup> Giridharadas, Anand. "The Win-Win Fallacy." *The Atlantic*. September 10, 2018. Accessed December 30, 2018.

financial gain as a result of misconstruing or over exaggerating the environmental friendliness of the company.<sup>23</sup>

However, we can look towards Adam Smith's theory of self-interest<sup>24</sup> in tandem with utilitarianism, to understand the validity of CSR as a market force for good. Because we are identifying ethical consumption as a driving consumer desire, corporations are motivated to provide ethically sourced/produced goods and services to cater to the consumer. Smith states, through the idea of economic self-interest motivating the market, that businesses will accommodate the desires of their consumer base as to keep up with the competition of the marketplace. There is clear evidence of a consumer demand for sustainability. The very existence of an entity like the Sustainability Accounting Standards Board (SASB), having had developed from the Financial Accounting Standard Board, clearly demonstrates the demand for sustainability in business. The SASB describes its utility through benefits to both businesses and investors. To businesses, SASB is helpful in that it, "identifies the handful of environmental, social and corporate governance (ESG) and sustainability topics that most directly impact their long-term value creation, implements principles-based reporting frameworks including Integrated Reporting and the recommendations of the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures, and communicate sustainability data more efficiently and effectively to investors."<sup>25</sup> For investors, SASB, "factors ESG and sustainability-related impacts into their decisions, aligns and engages with companies on the sustainability issues that impact value creation and

---

<sup>23</sup> Watson, Bruce. "The Troubling Evolution of Corporate Greenwashing." *The Guardian*. August 20, 2016.

<sup>24</sup> Smith, Adam, 1723-1790. *The Wealth of Nations* / Adam Smith ; Introduction by Robert Reich. New York :Modern Library, 2000.

<sup>25</sup> "Why SASB." Sustainability Accounting Standards Board.

performance, and fulfills Principles for Responsible Investments signatory commitments.”<sup>26</sup> That there is a demand for sustainability data to be provided to investors proves that this is something that the consumer wants, and thus based on simple supply-and-demand, something that the market will in turn rise to meet the need of.

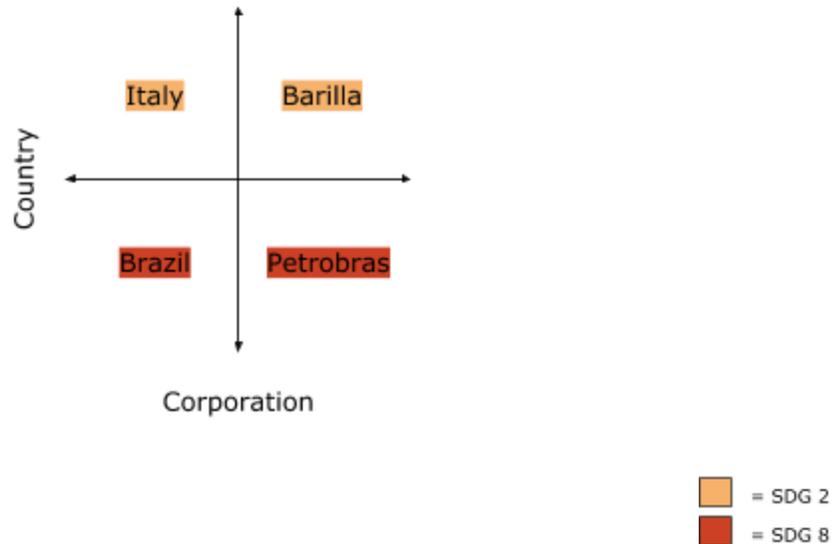
Taking this in stride with the utilitarian concept that an action is right or just if it benefits the majority of the community, we can dismiss the argument that the potential marketing benefits would invalidate CSR as an ethical action on the basis that a company is executing these actions only as a ploy to increase sales. Utilitarianism allows us to accept that, yes, these corporations might be launching sustainability campaigns because it allows them to remain competitive, not just for the sake of benefiting people and the planet. Regardless of the intention, it is the consequential result of the actions that matter in the end. Looking at these philosophical approaches to business theory, we can understand one motivation for applying CSR practices through Smith’s Self-Interest theory and justify those practices regardless of the intentions.

---

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

## Methodology

This paper uses two of the seventeen SDGs as lenses to understand how progress has been enacted on the SDGs from both governmental and corporate agents of impact. Jumping off from those two SDGs, we look at two multinational corporations and the two countries they are headquartered in as comparative case studies. The company and its home country are looked at under the lense of the same Goal. We look at how The Barilla Group and Italy each tackle SDG 2 and then how Petrobras and Brazil take their respective approaches towards SDG 8. We can think of these four actors as in quadrant as to visualize the comparison.



Using data and documents published by these corporations, especially focused on the Annual Sustainability Reports, we can begin to understand the actions they have taken in their sustainability efforts. These reports will inform the corporate basis of the study. From this point, we will delve into the targets and indicators of each goals to understand how such corporate action fits into the larger context of progress on such goals. Thus we use the Barilla “Good for

You, Good for the Planet” 2018 Report and the Petrobras “Sustainability 2017” report as these are the latest editions available to the public at this point.

On the governmental side, we will use the Voluntary National Reviews (VNR) published by each country in preparation for the 2017 UN High Level Political Forum (HLPF) for Sustainable Development.

Our study is limited as in the scope of reporting: good news does not always make the headline, and internal Public Relations and External Affairs teams are hired for the purpose of negating, spinning and burying scandal. So it is not as likely that we will find independent reporting of corporate action on these goals; it is more likely that the reporting on these corporate actions that we will encounter will be published and created by corporate communications teams and thus have been created with promoting and protecting the company as a priority.

The two corporations were chosen as they represent two different corporate nationalities and two different industries (which carry two different perceptions from the public). They will be able to demonstrate action spanning from distinct sources with different approaches.

When planning this project, I initially set out to investigate Chevron Corporation and the United States of America in a case study. Quickly upon outlining that, I found that the United States has not yet published a VNR for HLPF and so that choice was modified.

## Case Studies

### **SDG 2 Zero Hunger: A Comparison of The Barilla Group and Italy**

In consideration to Sustainable Development Goal #2, our focus will be on The Barilla Group (Barilla S.p.A.), and the country of Italy.

#### **BARILLA:**

Barilla is an Italian food company that sells dried pastas, ready-made sauces, and bakery products (biscuits, crisp breads, etc.) worldwide. Barilla is headquartered in Parma, Italy, and has 29 manufacturing facilities (14 in Italy and 15 in other countries) and exports its products to 100+ countries globally.<sup>27</sup>

The Barilla Group communicates their only way of doing business is following a, “Good for You, Good for the Planet,” model. Following that double-pronged approach into “Gastronomy, Nutrition and Wellbeing” and “Responsibility, Transparency and Traceability,” we are able to observe their efforts explicitly shaped by the Sustainable Development Goals. Their espoused practices around this campaign are publicized as such:

*“The global economic, social and environmental changes are impacting the sustainability of the food and agriculture industry.*

---

<sup>27</sup> "Barilla - Good for You. Good for the Planet." Barilla Group.

*There are many social and environmental challenges that a company like Barilla has to face. Barilla is committed to contributing to the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). All our products and brands must bring the world food that is good, healthy and sourced from responsible supply chains, inspired by the Italian lifestyle and Mediterranean Diet.*

*It is a mission we intend to pursue from Field to Fork and which has an immediate impact on people, in terms of the initial enjoyment of taste, the energy over the following hours and the many years of wellbeing.”*

From a quick browse of the Barilla Group website, we find that the company is not only aware of the SDGs, but aligns their values and practices with them to the extent that these goals are incorporated predominantly into their brand identity. A pictograph of the SDGs is featured on the Barilla website, and the sustainability report is easily located. As we follow links deeper into the site to learn more about the Good for You, Good for the Planet strategy, we are able to learn of the actions that Barilla has put in place towards achieving their sustainability goals, guided by the SDGs.

Reading the 2018 Good for You, Good for the Planet Report<sup>28</sup> with a lens filtering for Goal #2: “End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture,” we read about the practices that Barilla has put in place. Embodying their mission condensed into

---

<sup>28</sup> Barilla Communications and External Relations. *Good for You, Good for the Planet: 2018 Report*. Publication. Barilla G. E R. Fratelli. Parma, IT, 2018.

three succinct points “Good food,” “Healthy food,” and “Food sourced from responsible supply chains.”

One of the aspects of the Barilla Group that needs to be highlighted when discussing the SDGs is the Barilla Centre for Food and Nutrition Foundation. This think tank focuses on food sustainability from a multiplicity of approaches, focusing on promoting and implementing more sustainable food systems. The BCFN provides a platform for research to be done and distributed, both to the public-at-large/law- and decision-makers/international-stakeholders as well as back to the Barilla Group as to inform the decisions about business practices put in place by the pasta company.

The Foundation also serves to host several educational programs regarding food sustainability as to empower more people and future generations with knowledge to be capitalized upon. This is part of BCFN that I want to emphasize for the purposes of this investigation. The majority of these programs target school-age children, to teach the next generation healthy food practices for the body and the planet. However, one in particular, the Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) on Sustainable Food Systems, launched in partnership with the Sustainable Development Solutions Network, is relevant to this project as it directly enacts the second half of target 2.5, “ensure access to knowledge of beneficial practices, including preserving traditional practices.”<sup>29</sup> The MOOC instructs on the subject of, “environmental and climate-related challenges basing upon Mediterranean experience, how sustainable farming systems is being utilized as a roadmap

---

<sup>29</sup> *The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.*

for positive action and implementation of Sustainable Development Goals.”<sup>30</sup> This course, open to the public, is structured with a regional focus on the Mediterranean Basin and as such, honors the rich agricultural and culinary history that has shaped cultures since Mesopotamia. The MOOC instructs on subject matter focused on the forces and influences agriculture in the Mediterranean with an overarching tie-back to the SDGs. The material includes<sup>31</sup>:

- The history of Mediterranean agriculture
- The Mediterranean diet as part of a cultural heritage
- Addressing local challenges towards achieving the SDGs in this field
- Statistics and data on Mediterranean agriculture in the 21st century with a focus on rural development, the effect of other economic sectors and international trade
- The agriculture and development policies of the European Union
- The demand and professional opportunities to tackle sustainability challenges in the future

The promotional video for the course wraps up with, “Design is the common denominator to creating dynamic new systems while adapting old ones.” This in and of itself is an acknowledgement of the progress that is to be made, a better future to be built upon. This MOOC is a clear-cut, non-negotiably useful tool in laying the foundation for the SDGs to be achieved. This is the example of Barilla’s corporate action that epitomizes an understanding and awareness of the SDGs, and acknowledges the unspoken mandate to achieve them.

---

<sup>30</sup> “MOOC on Sustainable Food Systems: A Mediterranean Perspective”, BCFN Educative Projects.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

The 2018 report concludes with several goals to be implemented and concretely measured over the course of the next one to eleven years, with ultimate accomplishment by 2030, at most.

Keeping our focus on SDG 2, the applicable Barilla goals are:

- *Improved Nutritional Profiles*: Takes on a more health-centric than hunger-centric approach to targets 2.1 and 2.2 in instituting Nutritional Guidelines, limiting Kcals on bakery items, and implementing more nutritionally valuable ingredients.
- *Sustainable Agriculture*: Plans to the gap by 2020 and purchase 100% of their Raw Materials in accordance to their company Code of Sustainable Agriculture, thus working with target 2.4.
- *Sustainable Production*: Aims to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and water consumption, furthering target 2.4.
- *Animal and Social Welfare*: Intends to double the number of small farmers in the Barilla Sustainable Agriculture Program to 10,000 by 2020, hitting targets 2.3, 2.4, and 2.a.

The report and publishings of the Barilla Group do not claim the company to be perfectly sustainable. There are numbers shared that show the company has a long way to go to completely encapsulate their own goals and thus, the SDGs. What we have at hand, however demonstrates clearly the awareness of the goals and the intentions of being part of the partnerships that achieve them.

**ITALY:**

The Voluntary National Review published on the topic of “Italy: National Sustainable Development” in July 2017, covers the nation’s progress on the Sustainability Goals as broken down by People, Planet, Peace, Prosperity, and Partnership<sup>32</sup>. Within each of these sections, there are several Strategic Choices outlined. Each of these goals is connected to a series of related targets of these SDGs<sup>33</sup>.

PEOPLE: There are three Strategic Choices indicated. Relevant to this project is Choice III. “Promote health and welfare.” Within Choice III there are several National Strategic Goals. We are interested in Goal III.1 “Reduce population exposure to anthropogenic and environmental risks” which is connected to SDG target 2.4 (re: sustainable food systems).

PLANET: The Strategic Choice, out of the three listed, that we are interested in is: I. “Halt the loss of biodiversity” and the corresponding National Strategic Goal I.4 “Protect and restore genetic resources and national ecosystems linked to farming, forestry and aquaculture,” which correspond to SDG targets 2.3 and 2.4.

PEACE: In this section, we are interested in the second of three Strategic Choices listed: “End discrimination in all its forms,” jumping off from this goal into the National Strategic Goal II.1: “End all forms of labour exploitation and ensure the rights of workers.” This NSG connects to the SDG target 2.3: By 2030, double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale

---

<sup>32</sup> *Voluntary National Review ITALY National Sustainable Development Strategy*. Report. Directorate-General for Sustainable Development, Environmental Damage and International Affairs - Division I, Italian Ministry for the Environment Land and Sea. 2017.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

food producers, in particular women, indigenous peoples, family farmers, pastoralists and fishers, including through secure and equal access to land, other productive resources and inputs, knowledge, financial services, markets and opportunities for value addition and non-farm employment

PROSPERITY: Italy has outlined four Strategic Choices in the prosperity section of the VNR, of which one applies to SDG 2. That is Choice III, “Promote sustainable production and consumption patterns.” These choices and the underlying NSGs correspond to the SDG targets in the following connections:

- III.3 “Ensure fair access to financial resources,” to SDG target 2.3.
- III.7 “Substantially increase sustainable farming and forestry throughout the production and supply chain. Targets 2.3 and 2.4
- III.8 “Substantially increase sustainable fishing and aquaculture throughout the production and supply chain.” Target 2.3

PARTNERSHIPS: The partnerships section outlines how each of the 17 goals connects to a Strategic Choice and NSG that is part of the overall strategy implemented by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. These choices are enacted within the Triennial programme which is a proposal put forth in a collaboration between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation and the Ministry of Economy and Finance. The Strategic Choices are corresponding NSGs are separated into five sections; those are roughly broken down into

Rights/Inequalities, Migration/Development, Health, Education, and Food Security. For this study, we focus in on “Sustainable Agriculture and Food Security” with its sub-NSGs listed as:

- “Ensure governance and access to land, water, natural and productive resources by farmers’ families and small-scale producers
- Support and develop traditional adaptation techniques to biotic and abiotic factors
- Strengthen the capacity to cope with natural disasters by also promoting "green infrastructure"
- Promote agricultural, environmental and social policies supporting family farming and craft fishery
- Encouraging the adoption of measures to promote the competitiveness of products respecting sustainable diet principles
- Provide qualified technical assistance, training and institutional capacity building in order to strengthen the commitment to the development of key production chains recalling the peculiar Italian development model - SMEs and local districts -, increasing productivity and production, improving quality, enhancing product typicality, spreading good farming practices, preserving production areas, promoting fair trade, technology transfer, agroindustry development and export”

### **SDG 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth:**

#### **A Comparison of Petr leo Brasileiro S.A. (Petrobras) and Brazil**

Regarding SDG 8, the policy and practice comparison is based upon Petr leo Brasileiro S.A. - Petrobras and Brazil.

## **PETROBRAS:**

Petróleo Brasileiro S.A. is a publicly-held Brazilian company in the oil, natural gas, and energy industries. Petrobras is headquartered in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and with presences in North and South America, Europe, Africa and Asia.

Petrobras' corporate action is outlined in their Strategic Plan and their Society and Environment section on the website and further in their Annual Sustainability Report.

The Strategic Plan<sup>34</sup> is made up of five values:

- Respect for life, people and the environment
- Ethics and transparency
- Market orientation
- Overcoming and trust
- Results

The Safety, Environment and Health (SEH) Policy includes the following as the grounding principles:

- “Reduce the risks to people’s security and health and strengthen process safety;
- Take care of one another in the workplace and, if in doubt, stop and seek help;
- Prevent and minimize environmental impacts of projects, processes, and products;

---

<sup>34</sup> "Strategy: Learn about Our Mission and Vision." Petrobras.

- Prevent, monitor, and control the impacts of our activities on the communities where we operate;
- Take SEH requirements and climate change into account in business decisions;
- Strengthen the SEH culture with a focus on education, training, and awareness;
- Transparently communicate information and performance in SEH...
- Demand that suppliers and partners comply with SEH requirements and recommendations;
- Continuously implement improvements in SEH.”<sup>35</sup>

The full published list of 15 SEH policies is listed in the appendix.

From these listed policies we identify an immediate link to several targets of SDG 8, notably targets 8.4 “Improve global resource consumption and production efficiency, separating economic growth from environmental degradation,” and 8.8 “Protect labor rights and promote safe working environments, in particular vulnerable worker populations.”

Delving further, we find this iterated over again on the website under headings like, “Society and Environment” and “Social Responsibility Policy.” There are eight subsections under “Society and Environment,” that could be linked to the Goal of Decent Work (out of eleven total sections.) Of those eight, two outline concrete actions that relate to the SDG 8.

One speaks to the corporate support and memberships of the organizations UN Global Compact, the Pro-Gender and Race Equality Program (*Pró-Equidade de Gênero e Raça*), and the Oil and Gas Climate Initiative (OGCI). The UN Global Compact is an initiative, signatories of which

---

<sup>35</sup> "Safety, Environment, and Health Policy: Get to Know." Petrobras.

voluntarily pledge to meet standards and report performance set in terms of “human rights, labor, environment and anti-corruption,”<sup>36</sup> The Pro-Gender and Race Equality Program is described as aiming, “to promote equality between men and women in the labor market, contributing to eliminating all forms of discrimination in access, remuneration, growth and permanence on the job, to combat discrimination and promote human rights.”<sup>37</sup> The OGCI is made up of companies in the oil and gas industries and serves as a platform to help these companies on an individual and collective basis reduce greenhouse gas emissions.<sup>38</sup> The OGCI connects Petrobras further to target 8.4. The UN Global Compact and the Pro-Gender and Race Equality Program support SDG target 8.8 by acting in support of good and fair working environments for all. The steps that Petrobras has enacted from the 2016-2018 Pro-Gender and and Race Equality Program Action Plan further illustrate the connection to target 8.8 and include:

- “Dissemination of content on gender and diversity issues, especially in work environments.
- Recognition of civil-rights to same-sex partners...
- Internal survey to know the evolution of careers in our company, considering the color/race and gender aspects.
- Implementations of 24 support rooms for breastfeeding in our units all over Brazil.
- Appropriate female uniforms.
- Expansion of the maternity leave for 180 days, additional period for pregnant employees who has premature delivery and extension of paternity leave for 20 days.

---

<sup>36</sup> Global Corporate Sustainability Report 2013 | UN Global Compact. Accessed January 3, 2019. <https://www.unglobalcompact.org/what-is-gc>.

<sup>37</sup> "Support for Principles and Initiatives: Get to Know." Petrobras.

<sup>38</sup> "Policy & Strategy Page." Oil and Gas Climate Initiative.

- Promotion of discussion between the “*Como Nossos Pais*” (“Just Like Our Parents”<sup>39</sup>) film cast and our workforce about positions held by women in today’s society after the movie was exhibited. The movie was partially sponsored by the Petrobras Cultural Program.”<sup>40</sup>

The second applicable subsection is the Operating Safety section, which speaks to Petrobras’ commitment to reduce risk to workers, prevent workplace accidents, minimize harm on the environment and reduce impact on the communities where the operations are based. This section outlines the Environmental Defense Centers and the Commitment to Life Program that Petrobras has put in place to defend the environment and their people, respectively. These programs are again a tie back to SDG targets 8.4 and 8.8.

Upon reading the Sustainability 2017 report, the latest published by Petrobras, we can access further information regarding their investment into their people, broken down into four sections: Commitment to Life, Human Capital Management, Respect for Human Rights and Ethics and Transparency.<sup>41</sup>

The Commitment to Life again emphasizes accident prevention. This section again emphasizes the correlation to target 8.8 by further collaborating upon safe working environments. The report admits that there were indeed 27 recorded accidents in 2017, and regrets that those included six

---

<sup>39</sup> A 2017 film directed by Laís Bodanzky on the subject of the expectation that women be capable of balancing personal and professional obligations that are placed upon them by society and themselves.

<sup>40</sup> *Petrobras: Sustainability 2017*. Report. Social Responsibility Executive Management, Petrobras. Rio De Janeiro. Page 43.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid*, p. 19.

casualties and one disappearance of employees.<sup>42</sup> This sobering fact serves as a reminder to the reader that despite the efforts proclaimed to the public, the work in the oil and gas industry remains a dangerous one. Petrobras used these as an opportunity to further promote and implement multiple safety training programs to prevent fatalities and accidents in the future.<sup>43</sup>

The Human Capital Management section outlines a pathway of investing in Petrobras' employees through Human Resources programs and initiatives. These programs are put in place to groom the employees already in the system as to grow their skills and abilities and thus make them more valuable employees. The pathway points out that the return on investment to the company exists in the form of employees who are better equipped to be able to contribute intellectually, productively, financially, and through relationships.<sup>44</sup> Off the bat, it is not obvious that these Human Capital Management practices relate back to the SDG, but taking a closer look we see two patterns of hiring behavior emerge. Firstly, Petrobras closed 2017 with a 9% reduction in employees due in part to a Voluntary Dismissal Incentive Plan.<sup>45</sup> This at first is disheartening in consideration to target 8.5 "Reach full employment..." but upon a breakdown of the numbers it becomes understood that the vast majority of those employees who left through this plan were over 51 years of age and had been with the company for over 30 years.<sup>46</sup> Having that on the table, the age bracket of employees who left in smallest numbers was the under 30 group. This could be taken as a contribution towards target 8.6 "Reduce the youth unemployment level." We can understand it in the sense that if those employees who participate in this plan

---

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid*, p. 21.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid*, p. 27.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid*, p. 28.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid*.

retire upon leaving Petrobras and thus exit the labor market, the plan does not create further unemployment, and the cuts coming from the population with the most years accumulated leaves space on company payroll for the youth to keep their jobs. Indeed of the 158 hires who joined the company in 2017, the majority of them were in the under 36 ago bracket.<sup>47</sup>

The Respect for Human Rights section outlines the Ethics Code and Social Responsibility Policy that Petrobras self imposes and demands of their suppliers, respectively. The policy asked of their supply chain<sup>48</sup> includes topics regarding:

- The forbidding of forced and child labor
- Health and safety
- Freedom of association, right to collective negotiation and an ombudsman channel
- Non-discrimination
- Working hours
- Wage standards

The Ethics Code for internal use includes those listed above as well as “respect for life and for all human beings...respect for differences...respect and promotion of diversity and fighting all forms of prejudice, equal opportunities for all employees, fair labor relation, promotion of education and training...respect for intellectual property, and contribution to environment preservation, biodiversity, and sustainable use of water.”<sup>49</sup> This section further connects the policies and actions of Petrobras to SDG targets 8.4 and 8.8 and also introduces a new connection to target 8.7, “End forced labor practices, slavery, and human trafficking.”

---

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid*, p. 29.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid*, pg. 39.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid*.

The final Ethics and Transparency section of the People focus in the report outlines the anti-corruption practices of the company<sup>50</sup>. It includes the Petrobras Corruption Prevention Program and instruction on anti-corruption policies to the workforce at large. There is no direct tie from anti-corruption to SDG 8.

### **BRAZIL:**

The Voluntary National Review published by the Brazilian Secretariat of Government of the Presidency of the Republic and the Ministry of Planning, Development and Management in 2017 takes a different approach in structuring the information presented. Firstly, Brazil summarizes their strategies and outlines the nation's initiatives taken across sectors. The second half of the Brazilian VNR covers the topic of "Eradicating Poverty and Promoting Prosperity in a Changing World," with subsections specifically indicating how seven of the 17 SDGs apply to this focus<sup>51</sup>.

Those seven Goals are<sup>52</sup>, as defined by the Brazilian VNR:

- SDG 1: "End poverty in all its forms everywhere"
- SDG 2: "End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture"
- SDG 3: "Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages"
- SDG 5: "Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls"

---

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid*, p. 47.

<sup>51</sup> The Secretariat of Government of the Presidency of the Republic, and The Ministry of Planning, Development and Management. *Voluntary National Review of the Sustainable Development Goals: BRAZIL 2017*. Report. The Secretariat of Social Communication and the Office of the Chief of Staff of the Presidency of the Republic, The Brazilian Republic.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid*.

- SDG 9: “Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization, and foster innovation”
- SDG 14: “Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development”
- SDG 17: “Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development”

At this point, we step back to our case study, a comparison of Brazilian corporate and governmental action on SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth. It seems counterintuitive to think of the VNR’s overarching theme of “Eradicating Poverty and Promoting Prosperity” without giving consideration to the eighth SDG. Indeed, it seems a mistake to have taken on the task of broaching this theme without including that goal, as they seem almost synonymous to each other. Considering that perspective, we could ask if it would be effective to consider the goals outlined in the VNR as steps to achieving SDG 8. Using that lens to look at the plans of action, we can inspect how the action taken to achieve those seven SDGs outlined may in the end help to achieve SDG 8. Following this approach we can understand the seven that are outlined in the Brazilian VNR in the following ways, as they relate to our case study.

#1: This section outlines the “social assistance benefits, services, benefits, and programs nationwide,” to help eradicate poverty. The indicated programs are “Social Protection Programs” for socially vulnerable populations, a basic income guarantee with the Continuous Cash Benefit

and the Family Grant Program, and improving housing conditions through subsidy programs like the Home Renovation Card Program.

None of the programs highlighted in relation to this goal are employment or job-training based. This lessens the connection to the “Decent Work” aspect, but considering that the intentionality of these programs are to eradicate poverty, they could contribute to “Economic Growth.” Based on the targets that were indicated in the Historical Overview/Background, however, the programs that are indicated in the Brazilian VNR are not relevant to the “Economic Growth” as indicated and targeted by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

#2: This section outlines the policies taking on hunger and food insecurity, heavily using “family farming” as a tool to accomplish these tasks. Brazil has implemented The Program for Food Acquisition from Family Agriculture Production, a program that purchases food from these small scale farmers to supply food to be distributed without charge amongst entities like, “food banks, subsidized restaurants, community kitchens, education, [and] health and justice units.” This program is doubly beneficial in that it benefits the family farmers and those who receive the food produced. The government purchasing food from these farmers provides regular income and supports these producers in “decent work.” This applies to target 8.3, “policies that lead to productivity, job-creation, entrepreneurship, and growth of small- and medium- sized businesses.”

#3: The policies referred to in the section titled “Ensure Healthy Lives and Promote Well-Being for All at All Ages” reviews healthcare centered policies implemented in Brazil, focusing mostly on systems put in place by the state. The section also speaks to the expansion of access to medical services through the expansion of personnel via the More Doctors Program, which aims for Brazil to be able to be self-sufficient in meeting the nation’s need for medical staff. Though not explicit in the VRN, this goal provides an opportunity to expand training programs for Brazilians (and the youth especially) to go into the medical field, potentially meeting targets 8.3 “provide opportunities for job-creation” and 8.6 “Reduce the youth unemployment rate.”

#5: In this section, the policies covered are policies regarding women’s equality. Here, the VNR states off the bat that women are “underrepresented in jobs and positions of power...[and] are still paid lower wages and face more obstacles to entering and remaining in the labor market.” The section goes on to list the positions and policies in place to boost that representation. The programs are: Policies for Women (concentrated halfly on “promoting equality, including economic autonomy, strengthening women’s participation in politics and in decision-making bodies and authorities”), Pro-Equity of Gender and Race (to “foster more equitable working relations in public and private enterprises”), and the Women and Science initiative (“to increase the participation by girls, young women and women in scientific, technological and innovation areas”). These policies help reach targets 8.2, 8.3, 8.5, and 8.8 in ensuring labor rights, safe working environments, equal pay for equal work, and technological innovation.

#9: This section goes over Brazil's investment in infrastructure through the Investment Partnership Program, which was created with the intended results of job creation, creating opportunities for business growth, thus increasing the GDP. Mentioned in this section is fostering the opportunities for the workforce to grow, through projects, programs, and increased qualifications. The government has created priorities around, "Build[ing] resilient infrastructures, promot[ing] inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation, integrates the Brazilian strategy to restore economic growth with social inclusion." This hits targets 8.2, 8.3, and 8.4.

#14: This section is titled, "Conserve and Sustainably Use the Oceans, Seas and Marine Resources for Sustainable Development" and hits on the topics of the Brazilian government's policies for sustainable use of marine resources, especially in the Antarctic, geological minerals and deposits in the water, coastal management plans and programs, climate change, conservation, and fishery and aquaculture regulation. The steps gone over here do not hold much relevance for SDG 8.

#17: The final section, going over partnerships with International Financial Institutions, International Trade, and International Cooperation for Development in pursuit of accomplishment of the goals, does not outline steps in support of directly taking action toward SDG 8.

## **Analysis and Conclusion**

Having had examined the background of CSR and the Sustainable Development Goals, the philosophical motivations behind the corporate practice, and the four actors in our quadrated case studies, we are left looking to the effectiveness of corporate action on the SDGs. Asking ourselves, “Is CSR an effective tool to accomplish these goals?” we look towards what is evidenced in the case studies.

Firstly, let us consider how the Italian pasta company and the Italian government compare on their actions towards SDG 2: Zero Hunger.

Looking at Barilla’s action on SDG 2, we see clear intent to run the business using the Sustainable Development Goals overall as a guideline. Holding themselves accountable to 2030 Agenda directly, and publicizing that they are doing so, incites us to understand that the company is aware of the goals and consciously evolving their businesses practices to be amenable to their achievement. Their commitment to the overall Goals is clear, through their Mission, messaging, and continued pursuit of growth in their business practices. To look at SDG 2 specifically in Barilla’s corporate action, we saw that Barilla’s action contributed to targets:

2.1 End hunger and guarantee year-round access to sufficient and nutritious food for all people.

2.2 End malnutrition, lessen nutrition-based developmental delays, and specifically address nutritional needs of vulnerable groups: adolescent girls, pregnant women, and the elderly.

2.3 Double the productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, with a focus on underserved populations, through equal access to resources, services, and knowledge.

2.4 Implement sustainable food production systems as to increase resiliency and maintain ecosystems.

2.5 Maintain the genetic diversity of plants and animals raised for food and ensure access to knowledge of beneficial practices, including preserving traditional practices.

2.a Increase investment in rural infrastructure as to increase agricultural productivity.

Barilla's actions hit every target of goal in some way, except "2.b *Correct and protect trade restrictions and distortions in the international agricultural market,*" and "2.c *Adopt and implement measures to limit extreme volatility in food prices,*" which arguably apply to trade and economic policy to be enacted on a state level rather than calling on the global population at large.

Comparing Barilla to the information in the Italian VNR, an official document built specifically in regards to the Sustainable Development Goals, we can draw certain similarities. Obviously, the VNR works directly under the context of the SDGs and has created this document for the HLPF as to evidence the progression thus far enacted. Looking into how the Italian VNR addresses SDG 2, we found connections to targets:

2.3 Double the productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, with a focus on underserved populations, through equal access to resources, services, and knowledge.

2.4 Implement sustainable food production systems as to increase resiliency and maintain ecosystems.

Here we see that although Italy's People/Planet/Peace/Prosperity/Partnerships structured VNR is constructed as to include all 17 Goals, regarding SDG 2, we see evidence of two of the eight targets hit. It could be argued that the VNR hits so few targets of SDG 2 because it is wider in scope and therefore shallower in content, or that the more pressing SDG concerns of the Italian nation do fall under SDG 2. Regardless, though the VNR rounds out the five platforms of progress, the information as pertains to reaching Zero Hunger is light.

From these markers, it appears that that Barilla's CSR actions provides a wider range of tangible progress. Off the bat, judging by the number of targets that each entity has met, the pasta company has contributed improvements from the beginning to end of their production and consumption. Encouraging sustainability education opportunities for everyone from the small-scale farmers providing the raw materials to the consumer at their home computer, consciously and continuously improving their production methods, and making efforts to improve the nutritional value of foods that the public will access support the majority of SDG 2's components. Barilla's reach spans the spectrum from beginning to end, even if it is limited to the people who are engaged/choose to become engaged with the company. This is not to say that Italy's actions on the SDGs are insignificant nor ineffective, but rather when focusing on SDG 2, Barilla's CSR covers more aspects and thus produces more results. Though it should be acknowledged that they were covered in different ways, both the Italian government and Barilla covered targets 2.3 and 2.4.

Shifting our focus to the Brazilian half of our quadrant, we look to Petrobras' actions on SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth, compared to that of the Brazilian government as published in their VNR.

Petrobras, unlike Barilla, has not directly aligned their CSR actions with the Sustainable Development Goals. That being said, the Petrobras Sustainability Report outlines their commitment to CSR overall. Reading the report with a focus on SDG 8, we saw that the energy company's actions aligned with the targets:

- 8.4 Improve global resource consumption and production efficiency, separating economic growth from environmental degradation.
- 8.6 Reduce the youth unemployment level.
- 8.7 End forced labor practices, slavery, and human trafficking; emphasizing eliminating the use of child soldiers.
- 8.8 Protect labor rights and promote safe working environments, in particular vulnerable worker populations.

Through our interpretation of the Sustainability Report, we see four of the twelve targets of SDG 8 reflected in Petrobras' CSR.

Comparing the company to the government through Brazilian VNR, we immediately see that the VNR works directly with the SDGs, there is a clear and direct tie to the 2030 Agenda and reaching the Goals. However, Brazil's VNR did not directly include an overview of SDG 8, and so we went through a similar process of identifying the information that the VNR provided and

aligning it to the appropriate target of SDG 8, where possible. Through this process we found connections to the targets:

- 8.2 Increase levels of economic productivity through diversification and technological innovation.
- 8.3 Support policies that lead to productivity, job-creation, entrepreneurship, and growth of small- and medium- sized businesses.
- 8.4 Improve global resource consumption and production efficiency, separating economic growth from environmental degradation.
- 8.5 Reach full employment, with decent work for all persons, at equal pay for equal work.
- 8.6 Reduce the youth unemployment level.
- 8.8 Protect labor rights and promote safe working environments, in particular vulnerable worker populations.

From the VNR we see connections of Brazil's policies and programs to six of the twelve targets of SDG 8, despite having built a VNR around seven goals which are not SDG 8.

In consideration to this comparison, we see that the Brazilian government was able to reach two more targets of the Goal than Petrobras. Using the system of targets reached, the government's actions are more effective to progressing on SDG 8 than the CSR policies of Petrobras. Brazil's "Eradicating Poverty and Promoting Prosperity in a Changing World," VNR theme highlighted the actions of the government contributing roundly to SDG 8. Again, this is not to say that the CSR policies of the company do not contribute toward SDG 2. Furthermore, there is overlap of

three of the targets that the government and the corporation contribute to (8.4, 8.6, 8.8) but there is also targets that each entity covers which the other does not (Petrobras meets 8.7, the government meets 8.2, 8.3, and 9.5).

With the findings at hand, what we are faced with is the reality that accomplishing these goals will only arise as a result of global partnerships across sectors. Is that a blatant circumvention of drawing a definitive conclusion on whether CSR or governmental action is more effective when reaching the Global Goals? No, because the question we need to be asking on this subject matter is not, “Which is more effective?” but rather “What is effective?” and “How can each entity be the most effective possible?” Drawing from that standpoint, we can conclude that in order to be the most effective in progressing on the Global Goals, both corporations and governments should be integrating the seventeen goals into their policies and practices. Awareness of the goals anchors the actions taken towards direct and concrete progress. This is done extremely well by The Barilla Group, and adequately Brazilian government and Italian governments, ranked in that order. Petrobras lacks the direct connection, but to their credit the CSR practices are able to easily support the SDG even without having labeled itself as doing so.

This project outlines that private business is able to contribute to public good, as shown through the introduction of the term “Corporations as Agents of Sustainable Impact” and the idea behind it. In identifying areas that should be built upon further, we would ideally be able to audit both companies and countries closely to identify any areas in which their practices contradict their publishing of their beneficial actions. That is a level of detail beyond the scope of this project, but in an ideal world I would recommend for a system of unbiased auditors to be deployed in

conjunction with further encouragement of self-reviewing in both sectors. The next question raised is that we are now just over a decade out from the 2030 end-goal of the SDGs, what will come next? How can we continue to build upon these established and developing partnerships in efforts to make our global society the best it can be?

Setting out on this project, I expected to find evidence of support for the SDGs that spanned across the public and private sector. In choosing the case studies that I did, that is precisely what I found. Over the course of researching and writing, the most surprising finding was that when I referenced about this topic I often learned that people in the business world were often unaware of the SDGs, people in the realm of International Studies were often unaware of CSR, and people outside either of these disciplines knew about neither. The following discussions further solidified my beliefs that the SDGs are a valuable and important campaign and that CSR is a beneficial and impactful tool.

The key to pushing progress further is to continuously connect the two; raising awareness of the SDGs will only raise support of them, increasing and strengthening the partnerships that work towards their achievement.

## Bibliography

- Barilla Communications and External Relations. *Good for You, Good for the Planet: 2018 Report*. Publication. Barilla G. E R. Fratelli. Parma, IT, 2018.
- Barilla - Good for You. Good for the Planet.  
Barilla Group. <https://www.barillagroup.com/en/faq>.
- Carroll, Archie. (2008). A History of Corporate Social Responsibility: Concepts and Practices. 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199211593.003.0002.
- Communications Materials - United Nations Sustainable Development. United Nations.  
<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/news/communications-material/>.
- Conference, Meeting, Event, Observance, Celebration, International Day, World Day, Session.  
United Nations. [http://www.un.org/en/events/pastevents/millennium\\_summit.shtml](http://www.un.org/en/events/pastevents/millennium_summit.shtml).
- Eric C. Chaffee, "ARTICLE: The Origins of Corporate Social Responsibility," *University of Cincinnati Law Review*, 85, 353 (June, 2017).
- General Assembly resolution 67/290, *Format and organizational aspects of the high-level political forum on sustainable development*, A/RES/67/290 (12 July 2013), available from [undocs.org/A/RES/67/290](https://undocs.org/A/RES/67/290).
- General Assembly resolution 70/1, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, A/RES/70/1(21 October 2015), available from [undocs.org/A/RES/70/1](https://undocs.org/A/RES/70/1).
- Giridharadas, Anand. "The Win-Win Fallacy." *The Atlantic*. September 10, 2018. Accessed December 30, 2018.  
<https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2018/09/the-win-win-fallacy/569434/>.
- Global Corporate Sustainability Report 2013 | UN Global Compact. Accessed January 3, 2019.  
<https://www.unglobalcompact.org/what-is-gc>.
- Goal 17 .:. Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform. United Nations.  
<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg17>.
- Heimans, Jeremy, and Henry Timms. *New Power: How Power Works in Our Hyperconnected World--and How to Make It Work for You*. New York: Doubleday, 2018.
- Jensen, Nathan M. *Nation-states and the Multinational Corporation: A Political Economy of*

*Foreign Direct Investment*. Princeton University Press, 2008.

Lexicon. Libor Definition from Financial Times Lexicon. Accessed October 29, 2018.  
<http://lexicon.ft.com/Term?term=race-to-the-bottom>.

MOOC on Sustainable Food Systems: A Mediterranean Perspective, BCFN Educative Projects.  
[https://www.barillacfn.com/en/educative\\_projects/mooc/](https://www.barillacfn.com/en/educative_projects/mooc/).

*Petrobras: Sustainability 2017*. Report. Social Responsibility Executive Management, Petrobras.  
Rio De Janeiro.

Policy & Strategy Page. OGCI.  
<https://oilandgasclimateinitiative.com/policy-and-strategy/#our-agenda>.

Safety, Environment, and Health Policy: Get to Know. Petrobras.  
<http://www.petrobras.com.br/en/society-and-environment/environment/safety-environment-and-health-policies/>.

Smith, Adam, 1723-1790. *The Wealth of Nations* / Adam Smith ; Introduction by Robert Reich.  
New York :Modern Library, 2000.

Strategy: Learn about Our Mission and Vision . Petrobras.  
<http://www.petrobras.com.br/en/about-us/strategic-plan/>.

Support for Principles and Initiatives: Get to Know. Petrobras.  
<http://www.petrobras.com.br/en/society-and-environment/society/support-for-principles-and-initiatives/>.

Sustainable Development Goals ∴. Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform. United Nations. <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/?menu=1300>.

The Daily Show with Trevor Noah. "So Much News, So Little Time – Rudy Giuliani's Collusion Comments & Michael Cohen | The Daily Show." YouTube. January 20, 2019.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c2bi0WLxPwU>.

The ILO and CSR. ILO Helpdesk. October 29, 2009. Accessed December 25, 2018.  
[https://www.ilo.org/empent/Publications/WCMS\\_116336/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/empent/Publications/WCMS_116336/lang--en/index.htm).

The Secretariat of Government of the Presidency of the Republic, and The Ministry of Planning,

Development and Management. *Voluntary National Review of the Sustainable Development Goals: BRAZIL 2017*. Report. The Secretariat of Social Communication and the Office of the Chief of Staff of the Presidency of the Republic, The Brazilian Republic.

*Voluntary National Review ITALY National Sustainable Development Strategy*. Report. Directorate-General for Sustainable Development, Environmental Damage and International Affairs - Division I, Italian Ministry for the Environment Land and Sea. 2017.

Watson, Bruce. "The Troubling Evolution of Corporate Greenwashing." *The Guardian*. August 20, 2016.  
<https://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/2016/aug/20/greenwashing-environmentalism-lies-companies>.

Why SASB. Sustainability Accounting Standards Board. <https://www.sasb.org/why-sasb/>.

## Appendix

### Millennium Development Goals

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality and empower women
4. Improve maternal health
5. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases
6. Ensure environmental sustainability
7. Global partnership for development

### Sustainable Development Goals

1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere
2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation
10. Reduce inequality within and among countries
11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

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
17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

### **Complete List of Targets and Disaggregated Indicators for Goals 2 and 8**

#### **Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture**

**2.1** By 2030, end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round

**2.1.1** Prevalence of undernourishment

**2.1.2** Prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity in the population, based on the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES)

**2.2** By 2030, end all forms of malnutrition, including achieving, by 2025, the internationally agreed targets on stunting and wasting in children under 5 years of age, and address the nutritional needs of adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women and older persons

**2.2.1** Prevalence of stunting (height for age  $<-2$  standard deviation from the median of the World Health Organization (WHO) Child Growth Standards) among children under 5 years of age

**2.2.2** Prevalence of malnutrition (weight for height  $>+2$  or  $<-2$  standard deviation from the median of the WHO Child Growth Standards) among children under 5 years of age, by type (wasting and overweight)

**2.3** By 2030, double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, in particular women, indigenous peoples, family farmers, pastoralists and fishers, including through secure and equal access to land, other productive resources and inputs, knowledge, financial services, markets and opportunities for value addition and non-farm employment

**2.3.1** Volume of production per labour unit by classes of farming/pastoral/forestry enterprise size

**2.3.2** Average income of small-scale food producers, by sex and indigenous status

**2.4** By 2030, ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and production, that help maintain ecosystems, that strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change, extreme weather, drought, flooding and other disasters and that progressively improve land and soil quality

**2.4.1** Proportion of agricultural area under productive and sustainable agriculture

**2.5** By 2020, maintain the genetic diversity of seeds, cultivated plants and farmed and domesticated animals and their related wild species, including through soundly managed and

diversified seed and plant banks at the national, regional and international levels, and promote access to and fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge, as internationally agreed

**2.5.1** Number of plant and animal genetic resources for food and agriculture secured in either medium or long-term conservation facilities

**2.5.2** Proportion of local breeds classified as being at risk, not-at-risk or at unknown level of risk of extinction

**2.a** Increase investment, including through enhanced international cooperation, in rural infrastructure, agricultural research and extension services, technology development and plant and livestock gene banks in order to enhance agricultural productive capacity in developing countries, in particular least developed countries

**2.b** Correct and prevent trade restrictions and distortions in world agricultural markets, including through the parallel elimination of all forms of agricultural export subsidies and all export measures with equivalent effect, in accordance with the mandate of the Doha Development Round

**2.b.1** Producer Support Estimate **2.b.2** Agricultural export subsidies

**2.c** Adopt measures to ensure the proper functioning of food commodity markets and their derivatives and facilitate timely access to market information, including on food reserves, in order to help limit extreme food price volatility

**2.c.1** Indicator of food price anomalies

**Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all**

**8.1** Sustain per capita economic growth in accordance with national circumstances and, in particular, at least

7 per cent gross domestic product growth per annum in the least developed countries

**8.1.1** Annual growth rate of real GDP per capita

**8.2** Achieve higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation, including through a focus on high-value added and labour-intensive sectors

**8.2.1** Annual growth rate of real GDP per employed person

**8.3** Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services

**8.3.1** Proportion of informal employment in non-agriculture employment, by sex

**8.4** Improve progressively, through 2030, global resource efficiency in consumption and production and endeavour to decouple economic growth from environmental degradation, in

accordance with the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production, with developed countries taking the lead

8.4.1 Material footprint, material footprint per capita, and material footprint per GDP

8.4.2 Domestic material consumption, domestic material consumption per capita, and domestic material consumption per GDP

8.5 By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value

8.5.1 Average hourly earnings of female and male employees, by occupation, age and persons with disabilities

8.5.2 Unemployment rate, by sex, age and persons with disabilities

8.6 By 2020, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training

8.6.1 Proportion of youth (aged 15-24 years) not in education, employment or training

8.7 Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms

8.7.1 Proportion and number of children aged 5-17 years engaged in child labour, by sex and age

8.8 Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment

8.8.1 Frequency rates of fatal and non-fatal occupational injuries, by sex and migrant status

8.8.2 Increase in national compliance of labour rights (freedom of association and collective bargaining) based on International Labour Organization (ILO) textual sources and national legislation, by sex and migrant status

8.9 By 2030, devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products

8.9.1 Tourism direct GDP as a proportion of total GDP and in growth rate

8.9.2 Number of jobs in tourism industries as a proportion of total jobs and growth rate of jobs, by sex

8.10 Strengthen the capacity of domestic financial institutions to encourage and expand access to banking, insurance and financial services for all

8.10.1 Number of commercial bank branches and automated teller machines (ATMs) per 100,000 adults

8.10.2 Proportion of adults (15 years and older) with an account at a bank or other financial institution or with a mobile-money-service provider

8.a Increase Aid for Trade support for developing countries, in particular least developed countries, including through the Enhanced Integrated Framework for Trade-related Technical Assistance to Least Developed Countries

8.a.1 Aid for Trade commitments and disbursements

8.b By 2020, develop and operationalize a global strategy for youth employment and implement the Global Jobs

8.b.1 Total government spending in social protection and employment programmes as a proportion of the national budgets and GDP

### **Petrobras' 15 Safety, Environment and Health Policies**

1. “Leadership and Responsibility By incorporating health, safety and environment to our corporate strategy, we reassert the commitment of all of our employees and contractors to the pursuit of excellence in these areas.
2. Legal Compliance Our activities must be in compliance with the current health, safety and environment legislation.
3. Risk Assessment and Management Risks inherent to our activities should be identified, assessed and managed to avoid accidents and/or ensure the minimization of their effects.
4. New Undertakings New projects must be in accordance with the legislation and incorporate the best health, safety and environment practices throughout their life cycle.
5. Operation and Maintenance Our operations must be carried out according to established procedures and using appropriate equipment and facilities, which have been inspected and are in proper conditions to ensure compliance with the health, safety and environment requirements.
6. Change Management Temporary or permanent changes must be assessed aiming to eliminate and/or minimize risks resulting from their deployment.
7. Good and Service Procurement Contractor, supplier and partner performance in health, safety and environment must be compatible with that used by Petrobras System.
8. Qualification, Education, and Awareness Training, education and awareness should be provided continuously in order to underpin the workforce's commitment to performance in health, safety and environment.

9. Information Management Information and knowledge related to health, safety and the environment should be accurate, up to date and documented in order to facilitate queries and use.
10. Communications Information on health, safety and the environment must be stated in a clear, objective and fast manner in order to produce the desired effects.
11. Contingency Emergency situations must be foreseen and handled quickly and efficiently to reduce their effects to the fullest possible extent.
12. Relationship with the Community We must ensure the safety of the communities where we have operations, and keep them informed about the impacts and/or risks that may derive from our activities.
13. Accident and Incident Analysis Accidents and incidents resulting from our operations should be examined, investigated and documented in order to avoid recurrence and/or to minimize their effects.
14. Product Management We must ensure the health, safety and environment aspects of our products, from the source to final destination, and undertake all efforts to continuously reduce the impacts we may cause.
15. Ongoing Improvement Process Ongoing improvements must be made to the performance in health, safety and environment at all levels to ensure its progress in these areas.”