



## STRATEGIC PLAN 2016 - 2030

From Millennium Development Goals  
to Sustainable Development Goals



3	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
4	OUR HISTORY & PROMISE
5	OUR NEW DIRECTION: FROM MDGs TO SDGs
6	OUR COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE
6	OUR GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT
7	STRATEGIC THEMATIC PROGRAM AREAS
14	OPERATIONALIZING THE STRATEGY
15	DEVELOPMENT, PARTNERSHIPS AND COMMUNICATIONS
15	OUR REGIONAL FOCUS
16	IMPACT PATHWAYS

# CONTENTS





## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Millennium Promise's vision is to achieve sustainable development, including the end of poverty in all its forms by 2030. Our mission is to advance sustainable development at sub-national level across rural Africa and beyond using innovative solutions and scalable systems aimed at achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Millennium Promise seeks to achieve its mission by re-aligning its human and material resources to support the operationalization of the SDGs at the sub-national level. We use tools, systems, and protocols created, tested, and refined during our implementation of the Millennium Villages Project (MVP) over the last ten years to inform the operationalization of the SDGs at the sub-national level in Africa and beyond. As the SDGs provide exciting and new opportunities, this strategic plan sets out Millennium Promise's new strategic direction and maps out key approaches to achieve its mission. At its core, the new strategy encapsulates the approaches towards consolidating our strengths and comparative advantages in the design and implementation of programs and technical assistance to partner countries in support of sustainable development. The strategy will guide Millennium Promise's future engagement with its key partners as it continues to commit its technical and operational expertise in support of its vision.



## OUR HISTORY & PROMISE

Sequel to the Millennium Declaration and the subsequent adoption of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Millennium Promise was established in 2005 and became the first International non-governmental organization solely committed to supporting the achievement of the MDGs in sub-Saharan Africa. From 2005- 2015, Millennium Promise provided the operational platform and mobilized resources for the Millennium Villages Project (MVP)- which deployed a holistic, science-based approach to accelerate progress on the MDGs for more than 500,000 people across sub-Saharan Africa. The MVP was implemented in 10 sub-Saharan African countries: Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania and Uganda. While Millennium Promise provided the needed operational leadership and resources, the Earth Institute (EI) at Columbia University provided the scientific and policy leadership for the MVP. Millennium Promise partnered with host governments at different levels, UN Country Teams, scientific community and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to implement the MVP and other special initiatives.

However, despite these combined efforts and achievements, challenges to sustainable development in Africa are evident. Globally, approximately 925 million people around the world go to bed hungry daily and this is severe in Africa where food shortages affect 260 million people – representing 30% of the population. African farmers are slow in adopting improved crop varieties suited to their soil and climate,

and the available agricultural land has been stripped of nutrients due to poor management and inadequate fertilizer. Similarly, many people are under unprecedented stress over the lack of water due to climate change, pollution and inadequate farm practices. An estimated one billion people worldwide lack easy access to clean and safe drinking water. The threats of climate change, environmental degradation and desertification are most severe in the dry land regions of Africa. For decades, governments and the international community have neglected pastoralist communities, and as a result, these regions are more susceptible to conflict.

Economic growth in developing countries must go hand in hand with environmental sustainability. Addressing climate change, land erosion, soil degradation and water management is essential to the future well-being of people and the planet. The burden of poverty is heaviest on the lives of women in rural Africa. More than 80% of farmers are women, more than 40% do not have access to education, and AIDS spreads twice as fast among uneducated girls. Presently, child and maternal mortality rates in sub-Saharan Africa are the highest in the world. These sustainability challenges are too complex to address and hence the call for action. Through its decade long interventions in Africa, Millennium Promise has demonstrated commitment to addressing these challenges through its innovative flagship programs and special initiatives. We will continue to demonstrate this promise towards accelerating sustainable development in Africa and beyond.

## OUR NEW DIRECTION: FROM MDGS TO SDGs

Following the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in September 2015, Millennium Promise is re-aligning its human and material resources and is positioning itself as the lead organization in galvanizing the implementation of the SDGs at sub-national level. Millennium Promise intends to utilize the tools, systems, and protocols created, tested, and refined during the ten years of the implementation of the MVP to support the operationalization of the SDGs and to accelerate sustainable development at the sub-national level in sub-Saharan rural Africa and beyond. Millennium Promise will reinforce its technical strengths by mobilizing cutting-edge science and technology and forging effective partnerships with the Center for Sustainable Development (CSD), Sustainable Engineering Lab (SEL), National Agricultural Research System (NARS), Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) centers and other Columbia University centers and institutions and the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN). Millennium Promise will continue to work in African countries and beyond to demonstrate how SDGs can be operationalized at the sub-national level through co-planning and co-implementation processes in an integrated approach as well as on sectoral basis. The new strategic priorities will focus on:

- 1. Strengthening the capacities of sub-national governments in target areas to extend service delivery related to sustainable agricultural practices, quality health services, education systems, while taking into consideration aspects related to ecosystem management and climate change, gender issues, institutions and governance.*
- 2. Catalyzing economic growth, employment, and using ICT to catalyze the achievement of SDGs at the local level, as well as planning and management tools and information systems, with the aim to promote targeted districts as investment destinations. These areas can serve as a model for policymakers and development practitioners to scale up and strengthen systems to achieve sustainable development in the communities.*
- 3. Supporting evidence-based advocacy for sustainable development solutions in policy formulation and planning systems at the sub-national level.*



## **OUR COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE**

Millennium Promise maintains a strong regional and country presence in Africa. We are currently registered with legal presence in 10 African countries, working at the local, regional, and national levels. The implementation of the MVP has enabled Millennium Promise to develop strong partnerships and deepened engagement with political and civil society leaders, host governments and other development partners. Our strong alliance with the Earth Institute, CSD, SDSN and the scientific community ensures that we are well positioned to offer science-based solutions to sustainable development challenges in African countries. More strategically, Millennium Promise is well positioned to draw support from its large database of existing and potential donors and supporters. Our leadership and management are reputed for their capacity to deliver results and are closely linked to global policymaking. Millennium Promise retains highly qualified experts at the regional and country levels across technical disciplines, including agricultural scientists, public health specialists, educationists, infrastructure specialists, economists and project management (M&E and ICT) specialists.

## **OUR GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT**

Millennium Promise is governed by a Board of Directors with membership comprising of philanthropists and professionals with expertise in a variety of fields, including global governance, international development, business and the academia. The Board is supported by a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), comprising of the SDSN, Columbia University entities, international research centers and sub-regional agricultural research

institutions (CORAF, IITA, etc.). TAC provides science-based technologies and innovations on technical, implementation and broad policy issues as well as scientific and technical guidance to MP. TAC contributes by reviewing plans, strategies, publications, research proposals, work plans as well as budgetary issues from a scientific and technical standpoint. Additionally, there will be a National Steering Committee (NSC) in each target country, which will include Universities and Research Institutions, representatives of key Ministries relevant to the attainment of SDGs, civil society and the private sector.

Millennium Promise is managed by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) based in New York and Dakar. The CEO is supported by specialists in the Departments of Programs, Finance and Administration, Communication as well as Development and Partnership. Details about strategic staffing are contained in the Operational plan. MP will maintain regional offices in Dakar and Kampala and staffed with sector specialists who will provide technical assistance throughout their respective regions. The country and regional-based specialists will work directly with government officials, sub-regional officials, and partners to support the implementation of SDGs.

Furthermore, and depending on funding opportunities, each existing and future site will be run by experts in close collaboration with existing district staff to support ongoing localized Technical Assistance and implementation efforts. These organizational resources will be used not only to support ongoing activities but to demonstrate MP's capacity to implement new programs and strategies.



## STRATEGIC THEMATIC PROGRAM AREAS

In line with its comparative advantages, Millennium Promise will run six thematic program areas in a bid to achieve its mission and vision. These programs are interconnected and carefully structured along the SDGs as follows:

1. *Sustainable Livelihoods (SL)*
2. *Health and Nutrition Systems (HNS)*
3. *Education Systems (ES)*
4. *Renewable Energy and Water and Sanitation (REWS)*
5. *Gender, Governance and Institutions (GGI)*
6. *ICT for SDGs (ICT-SDGS)*

These strategic thematic programs are essential and interlocking pieces of our overall strategy and reflect our technical assistance to partner

countries. Operationally, the programs are organized into a matrix-type structure, where the vertical axis represents sites and countries where interventions take place, and the horizontal axis represents the thematic program areas. Program experts operating from our regional offices in Dakar (West and central Africa) and Kampala (East and Central Africa) will provide technical assistance to the site teams, the flagship, and the special initiatives. Experts will be recruited according to needs and funding opportunities. Through the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), these experts will work very closely with CSD, SDSN, and other universities and research centers, as well as private partners to ensure that the most recent and relevant innovations, knowledge, and technologies are used in Millennium Promise initiatives. Below are the thematic programs:

## SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS



**Program Goal:** The overall goal is to promote sustainable development and employment through agricultural and economic development, taking into consideration issues related to climate change and ecosystem management.

**Priorities:** In collaboration with its technical partners, MP's work in this program area will focus on optimizing synergies between sustainable agriculture, ecosystem management, income generation and employment to achieving the program's related SDGs and targets at the sub-national level in target countries. The focus will be on providing sustainable solutions that enhance economic growth, employment, particularly for women and youth, while protecting the environment and addressing related socio-economic and climate change and variability issues. Specifically, activities will focus on achieving higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological innovation, high value-added and labor-intensive cash crops and value chains. Program support to target countries will be delivered through the mix of direct implementation of the Sustainable Districts Program (SDP), special initiatives, such as the Lead Farmer Program and stand-alone technical assistance as appropriate.

**Potential Impact:** SDGs are operationalized and the technical capacities of sub-national governments and communities in target countries are strengthened to achieve SDG-related goals and targets. Other potential impacts include: applicable agriculture technologies are transferred and adapted; capacities of farming communities are strengthened; crop and livestock related value chains and cash crops for higher economic productivity are developed; Farmer-based organizations (FBOs) and cooperatives are strengthened and serve as catalysts to optimize sustainable livelihoods and opportunities for economic growth and employment.



# HEALTH AND NUTRITION SYSTEMS



**Program Goal:** The goal of our health program is to ensure healthy lives and well-being for all regardless of age. To do so, we hope to achieve universal health coverage- defined as quality, essential health service and financial coverage extended to the entire population.

**Priorities:** Our priorities are in line with health and nutrition related SDGs and focus on building and strengthening the primary health care system by creating a continuum of service delivery from households, to clinic and to referral facility. We will strengthen community and household-based health care delivery (with special focus on maternal, newborn and reproductive health) through the deployment of Community Health Workers (CHWs) – community members who are empowered, trained and equipped to deliver basic, yet essential health care services at the household level. We add value through the innovative use of mobile technologies and real-time information systems to collect, manage and analyze health data including vital events such as births and deaths. Our program will continue to strengthen sub-national governments to deliver people-centered, integrated and responsive primary health care services through:

1. Support to local health planning process through the integration and contextualization of the health-related SDGs
2. Improvement of health service delivery at the district and sub-district levels
3. Support scale up and strengthening of the Community Health Worker Program adapting the model to health SDGs and suiting to local needs
4. Scale up and strengthening the use of real time health information systems; and
5. Implementation of special initiatives and flagship programs such as the Two Million CHW Campaign, 90-90-90 Campaign, Telemedicine.

**Potential Impact:** Sub-national governments are strengthened to deliver people-centered, integrated and responsive primary health care services to ensure good health and well-being for all.

# EDUCATION SYSTEMS



**Program Goal:** The main goal of our education program is to work with sub-national, national, and international partners to increase access to quality and inclusive primary education for all children. This is embedded in SDG 4 – achieving quality education.

**Priorities:** Millennium Promise’s work will focus on both formal and non-formal education to help achieve quality and inclusive education at the sub-national level in our target countries. Working in partnership with host governments, innovative ‘best-fit’ approaches will be employed to integrate both formal and non-formal systems, taking into consideration the contextual realities of the targeted communities. Core activities will draw on lessons learned from the MDGs and concentrate on how children are learning and the opportunities they have beyond primary school. Interventions will be tailored to the needs of specific groups of children — particularly girls, and including children living with disabilities. Other priorities include:

1. Improving pre-school, primary school and local language literacy
2. Improving gender parity in secondary schools and opportunities upon graduation through life and vocational skills programs
3. Raising the quality of teaching and learning through integration of digitally-enabled learning resources and teacher professional development
4. Engaging parents in the learning process of their children and improving access to alternative educational opportunities for out-of-school youths.

Special attention will be given to the implementation of the ‘Connect To Learn’ program which is a collaborative educational initiative launched in 2010 by the Earth Institute of Columbia University, Millennium Promise and Ericsson, in addition to special initiatives, such as the Village Education Workers (VEWs) program and Girl-child scholarships. We will identify and promote specific strategies to improve the quality of education at both primary and secondary school levels, including capacity development for school teachers and School Based Management Committees (SBMCs).

**Potential Impact:** Through this program, the capacity of sub-national actors to deliver quality and inclusive education is strengthened, and evidence-based policy is advanced through our flagship programs and special initiatives.





**Program Goal:** Our aim is to promote universal access to reliable, affordable and clean energy services and the sustainable management of water as well as sanitation for all particularly in poor, rural and isolated communities in targeted sub-Saharan African countries.

**Priorities:** Focus on strengthening sub-national capacities to ensure affordable, large scale and equitable access to renewable energy and safe drinking water as well as adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene- that underpins local economic development and human well-being. Millennium Promise will build on achievements, draw lessons from the MVP and use its technical expertise and existing network of partners. We will catalyze investments in renewable energy, water, sanitation and hygiene through evidenced based advocacy among public and private sectors in support of rural livelihoods and sustainable development.

**Potential Impact:** Increased access to reliable and affordable water, sanitation and hygiene, and clean energy services at the community level. Our potential impact in this area is embedded with SDG - 6 (Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all) and SDGs- 7 (Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all).



**Program Goal:** Our goal is to operationalize the gender, governance and institutional goals embedded in SDG 5 (Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls) and SDG 16 (Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels) in target countries.

**Priorities:** Priorities will include strengthening institutional capacities to promote good governance, gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. This involves strengthening sub-national capacities for gender mainstreaming across all sectors and levels of governance. Our work will promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable, democratic, transparent and inclusive institutions at the sub-national level. We will target the decentralized units in each country in order to complement the technical capacities of local governments to strengthen institutional capacities for integrated planning that supports sustainable development. Our flagship initiatives such as the Connect-To-Learn (CTL) and the Girl-child scholarships will support disadvantaged girls in communities and districts with a view to address incidences of early and forced marriage.

**Potential Impact:** Our aim is to reinforce the capacities of communities and sub-national governments in the areas of integrated planning processes and the mainstreaming of gender across all sectoral interventions and programs. We hope to provide evidence-based support for sound policies that promote gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels.





**Program Goal:** Our goal is to improve livelihoods and achieve sustainable development through the design and deployment of high quality and reliable ICT systems, while building local capacities to develop and implement ICT based Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) information system.

**Priorities:** Millennium Promise in collaboration with CSD and Ericson, will utilize their collective expertise to deploy ICT in combination with reliable and sustainable models of technological innovations and solutions in health, education, agriculture and agribusiness, water management and infrastructure including energy to accelerate the achievement of the SDGs at the local level and to fast-track sustainable development across the target sites. MP will strengthen local systems to use ICT to improve local tax collection systems and for effective service delivery of innovative, integrated, cross-sectoral SDG-related interventions, that rely on real-time information systems to facilitate adaptive implementation and management and initiate a rapid and profound transformation of the local communities towards sustainable development. Specifically, priority will be on the continuous use of mobile phones and internet to seek or share information on health services, education and agricultural extension services that target women and children. Within this program area, ICT-based, multi-sectoral and integrated M&E systems will be developed, while building the M&E capacities of government departments at the sub-national level. Drawing from our immediate experience, we will promote the use of ICT-based planning and monitoring tools, baseline assessment methodologies and technologies to strengthen the planning and implementation of SDG-based local development plans across Africa. Special focus will be on the use of ICT to localize, characterize and document disappearing cultural and natural local heritage for their preservation and socio-economic valorization, through the promotion of eco-tourism that creates jobs and generates incomes for the local communities.

**Potential Impact:** Our work on ICT systems will contribute to the preservation of local heritage and traditions and the effective delivery of pro-poor services in health, education and agricultural extension and inform the adoption and scaling up of ICT-based information systems at the sub-national level. Work on M&E systems will strengthen the capacities of

government departments at all levels in order to implement evidence-based policy planning and management, and evidence-based decision-making, guided by high quality plans and strong results-based M&E systems, taking into consideration the limited resources available. Within this program, our internal ICT practice aims to support efficient, reliable and cost-effective ICT business processes. The Millennium Promise Enterprise Technology & Knowledge Management (MP-ETKMD) will provide remote, flexible and mobile working tools in support of our limited workforce to meet organizational commitments. We will ensure that information risks continue to be identified and managed effectively in support of our legal obligations. MP-ETKMD will increase collaboration across departments and other development partners through the innovative use of shared services to drive cost savings, including sharing applications with critical partners. Thus, Millennium Promise will develop and refine automated planning and reporting tools to provide staff, government partners and donors with timely information on progress and resources used for effective program management. We seek to reinforce this at the level of communities and local governments or districts in target countries and will continue to monitor developments in the provision and availability of faster and more reliable links in our project countries.

## **OPERATIONALIZING THE STRATEGY**

### **Flagship Projects and Special Initiatives**

Millennium Promise will continue to initiate and implement flagship projects and special initiatives in collaboration with SDSN, The Quadracci Sustainable Engineering Lab, CSD at Columbia University and the private sector partners,

such as Erickson, with the support of donors, development partners and host governments. Ongoing projects and special initiatives include: The Sustainable District Program (SDP), Connect-To-Learn (CTL), Lead Farmer Program (LFP), One Million Community Health Workers (CHWs), renewable energy and water, sanitation and hygiene innovations and ICT for SDGs achievement at local level, Telemedicine, the Kaduna state Scale-up, SADA Scale up, IsDB Sustainable Villages Project (SVP) and the Ghanaian government's nationwide Community Health Workers program. These initiatives will be scaled up to cover as many countries as possible in sub-Saharan Africa.

### **From Millennium Villages Project (MVP) to Sustainable District Program (SDP)**

Launched in 2016, the SDP builds on the MVP model and is designed to provide governments and partners with practical tools, cutting-edge technologies, and proven community-based strategies to help accelerate the achievement of the SDGs in rural districts in sub-Saharan Africa. The implementation of the SDP is shaped by the innovations and systems developed by MVP as well as the lessons learnt. The overall goal of the SDP is to contribute to the achievement of the SDGs by strengthening the capacities of local and district administration, while simultaneously improving the livelihoods of the communities. The SDP will be aligned with government decentralization and de-concentration systems, taking into consideration the specificity of both Francophone and Anglophone countries. It will support local or district governments to integrate the SDGs into local planning – SDG based local plans, baseline, needs assessment, and costing- and to implement and monitor development plans. Additionally, the SDP partnership will support the strengthening of governance, judicious use of scarce financial resources and the professionalization of local development institutions. Millennium



Promise will use the SDP to deliver its strategic programs in an integrated approach in the project countries. The key features of SDP include:

- o Using decentralized units in each country as the entry point
- o Reinforcing and complementing technical capacity of local or district governments
- o Complementing local or district administration's resources
- o Encouraging transparent governance and stimulating competition and rewarding village level leadership and sound initiatives
- o Using integrated planning – combining the top- down-and bottom-up approaches – to localize SDGs
- o Establishing co-managed district level conditional grant scheme
- o Developing performance-based monitoring systems for districts and villages.

## **DEVELOPMENT, PARTNERSHIPS AND COMMUNICATIONS**

The aim of our development and partnerships practice is to support and reinforce our new strategic direction. Millennium Promise will continue to mobilize human, technical and financial resources for its activities through a comprehensive development and fundraising strategy. Our aim is to maintain existing relationships with donors to ensure continued financial support and to catalyze new relationships with prospective donors. Our fundraising strategy will build and strengthen public-private partnerships, collaboration/partnership with INGOs, local NGOs, and government agencies in order to scale up flagship programs and special initiatives, while guaranteeing local ownership, sustainability and accountability. The traditional funding sources (major donors, philanthropists, public and private sector, public) will be strengthened, while the evolving direct technical assistance will be

utilized to provide sustainable funding source. Specifically, development and resources mobilization will be intensified to support our expanding core activities, flagship programs and special initiatives. Strategic dialogue with development partners is intended to recognize the emerging standpoints within the global development community in order to enable us to maximize our efforts. We will continue to help impact investors to find out where and how our services and products can best meet their goals.

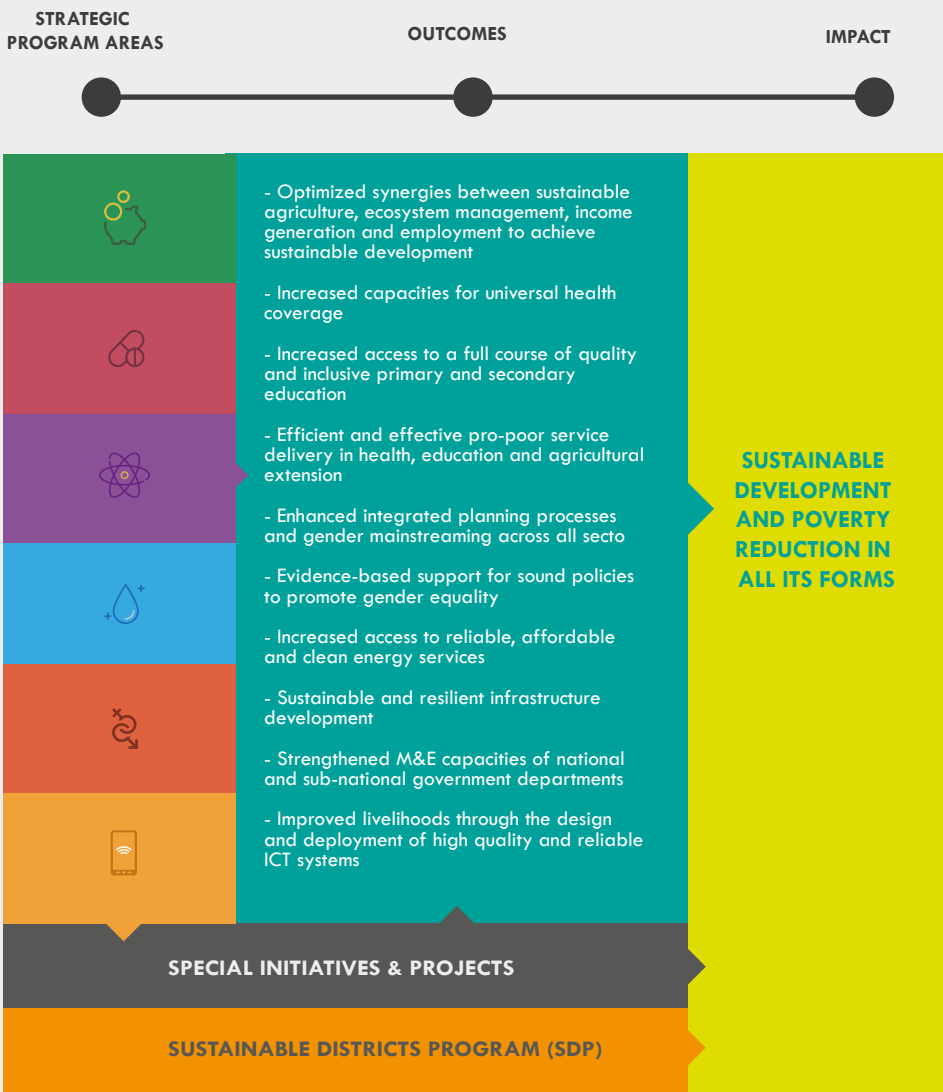
To increase MP's visibility and promote the brand, priority will be placed on transparent and regular dissemination of results and activities to shareholders, partners and clients. Strong internal communication will support and enhance external communications. Communications will also be an integral part of the sustainability of MP activities, through the identification, capitalization, documentation, and sharing of experiences, innovations and successes achieved by our programs will be strengthened and augmented.

## **OUR REGIONAL FOCUS**

Millennium Promise's current engagements are concentrated in sub-Saharan Africa, with potential for expansion beyond Africa. We are headquartered in Dakar, Senegal and New York, USA, and have legal presence in Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania and Uganda and provide technical assistance to SVP countries: Chad, Guinea, Kirgizstan, Mozambique and Sudan and the ENI site in Congo. The Dakar office serves as a regional office for West and Central Africa, while the Kampala office is responsible for East and Central Africa. Our engagement in sub-Saharan Africa spans over 10 years and will be maintained and amplified. We will also continue partnering with national and sub-national governments across the world to operationalize the SDGs in support of sustainable development.

# IMPACT PATHWAYS

FIGURE 1: OPERATIONALIZING THE STRATEGY: IMPACT PATHWAYS








## **NEWYORK - USA**

475 Riverside Drive, Suite 239  
New York, NY 10115  
+1 212-870-2490

## **DAKAR - SENEGAL**

19, route du Méridien, Almadies  
BP 14488 Dakar  
+221 33 859 31 80

*Follow us on*

 @Promise  
 @MillenniumPromise  
 MillenniumPromise



[www.millenniumpromise.com](http://www.millenniumpromise.com)



**MILLENNIUM  
PROMISE**

LET'S END POVERTY TOGETHER