

Main Messages from Ireland's Voluntary National Review 2018

Ireland is proud to have played a significant role in the development and adoption of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development, as co-facilitator, together with Kenya, of the intergovernmental negotiations. Ireland will continue to show leadership as the Sustainable Development Goals [SDGs] are implemented, both at home and across the world.

While Ireland adopted its first national sustainable development strategy more than two decades ago, the SDGs require a step change in the integration of national social, economic and environmental policy. To this end, Ireland has recently prepared a SDG National Implementation Plan 2018-2020. This Plan provides a framework for how Ireland will achieve the SDGs domestically by 2030, and support their global implementation. It reflects Ireland's 'whole-of-government' approach to the SDGs, which will see the mainstreaming of the SDGs across national policies and through its engagement abroad. The SDG National Implementation Plan is also based on the fundamental commitment of the 2030 Agenda to leave no-one behind and to reach the farthest behind first.

The SDGs underline the linkages between national sustainable development and Ireland's global engagement, particularly through the work of *Irish Aid* (Ireland's official overseas development assistance programme). The Government will publish a new White Paper on International Development in the second half of 2018, which will further strengthen the alignment of Ireland's aid programme with the SDGs. Expanding Ireland's global reach and impact is a priority for the Government and our engagement with the 2030 Agenda will take place within this context.

While several existing national policies take account of our SDG commitments, the linked processes of developing the SDG National Implementation Plan 2018-2020 and preparing Ireland's first Voluntary National Review [VNR] have provided an opportunity for enhancing cross-Government awareness of, and engagement with, the SDGs. This has been particularly salient in relation to assessing the level of alignment with existing national policies. As part of the National Implementation Plan, Ireland has mapped existing policies and programmes against each of the 169 SDG sub-targets and, while policy alignment will be an ongoing process, this mapping exercise indicates significant potential in national policies to achieve the Goals.

The National Implementation Plan and VNR processes have also provided a focus for stakeholder engagement, and Ireland will increase its efforts to promote national

stakeholders' meaningful engagement with, and participation in, SDG implementation. A national stakeholder forum will have its inaugural meeting in June 2018.

In order to provide a comprehensive assessment of national progress towards achieving SDGs, Ireland considered it important that its first VNR address all 17 of the Goals, in each case providing information on progress to date and outlining Ireland's policy response to the Goals and targets. In order to highlight the interlinkages between the national and global levels, Ireland's VNR also addresses how Ireland is supporting each of the SDGs globally, including through our official development assistance programme.

The timing of this first VNR, coming shortly after the adoption of the SDG National Implementation Plan, is particularly useful in providing a baseline against which Ireland's future SDG progress can be measured. The VNR is also timely in that many of the measures through which Ireland will achieve the SDGs will take place within the context of **Project Ireland 2040**, which was launched in February 2018 and is the Government's overarching policy initiative to make Ireland a better country for all our people, a country that reflects the best of who we are and what we aspire to be. Project Ireland 2040 is made up of the **National Planning Framework to 2040** and the **National Development Plan 2018-2027**.

Ireland is committed to delivering its second VNR to the 2022 session of the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.