



3 June 2016

Executive Summary of the Report of the German Government to the High-Level Political Forum in July 2016

The adoption of “Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” was a milestone in the recent history of the United Nations. This comprehensive agenda is a reflection of the conviction that global challenges can only be tackled through concerted efforts; efforts that must be based on systematic application of the principle of sustainable development across all policy areas and in every country. The international community has made a clear statement that resolute action must be taken to achieve a transformation towards sustainable development. Global and universally applicable sustainable development goals (SDGs) point to how we can achieve poverty reduction, an improvement in living conditions worldwide, and the protection of our planet.

Sustainable development means assuming responsibility – both for the present and for future generations, nationally and internationally. To make this happen, the agenda calls for governments, the economy and society to change and take action at global, regional and national level to ensure sustainability. Germany committed to ambitious implementation of the agenda from the very outset and has already taken some first important steps towards putting it into practice at national level.

1. Our starting point

Whereas Germany has on the whole achieved a very high level of development, further efforts are needed to meet the SDGs at national level and in doing so also make appropriate contributions to meeting the goals globally.

The German government has decided to make its **National Sustainable Development Strategy** a key framework for achieving the SDGs in Germany. Work on revising it in the light of Agenda 2030’s ambition and goal structure is scheduled to be completed by autumn 2016.

1a) The National Sustainable Development Strategy

Promoting sustainable development is one of the German government’s fundamental goals in all its activities and the yardstick it uses to measure them. As early as 2002, the government presented its first National Sustainable Development Strategy. Since then, it has reported on its implementation status **every four years** in the form of progress reports that also update the strategy’s content. The preparation of the progress reports is always accompanied by a **broad-based process of dialogue and consultation with civil society groups**. The National Sustainable Development Strategy has included national sustainability goals and indicators since the very outset in 2002. They make it possible to regularly measure progress and identify any wrong turns in policy. Every two years, the Federal Statistical Office publishes an independent indicator report with information about progress towards meeting the goals.

The **State Secretaries Committee for Sustainable Development** steers implementation of the Sustainable Development Strategy and oversees the updating of its content. It comprises

representatives from all federal ministries and is chaired by the Head of the Federal Chancellery. The committee provides strategic input for the work of the German government and acts as a forum for the different government departments to share information on their sustainability activities at a high level.

The **Parliamentary Advisory Council on Sustainable Development** monitors the German government's National Sustainable Development Strategy and supports sustainability concerns in parliament. The Parliamentary Advisory Council has also been assigned to evaluate the obligatory sustainability impact assessment of the Federal Government.

The **Council for Sustainable Development**, an independent advisory council, has been supporting the German government since 2001 and promotes societal dialogue on sustainability. It consists of 15 public figures who, by virtue of their professional and personal background, represent the economic, environmental and social aspects of sustainable development in its national and international dimensions.

The key principles guiding the national sustainability policy are intergenerational equity, quality of life, social cohesion and international responsibility.

Due to the sustainability principle's high political significance and its cross-cutting approach, the Federal Chancellery is the lead agency for the National Sustainable Development Strategy. Concurrently, all ministries have the primary responsibility for their own contributions to implementing the sustainable development strategy and Agenda 2030 in their respective policy fields.

The implementation of Agenda 2030 is carried out within the framework of the budgetary and fiscal requirements of the Federal Government.

When seeking to implement proposed measures, especially before amendments to legislation, the German government engages in a **dialogue** with stakeholders and other relevant parties. This creates an opportunity to explain the proposed measures and enables stakeholders to articulate their ideas, criticisms and suggestions for improvements. This dialogue often improves the quality of government actions and increases public acceptance of government decisions.

Embracing the spirit of a new global partnership, the German government is putting the process of dialogue with these actors about the ongoing redrafting of the National Sustainable Development Strategy on an even broader footing. In **five public dialogue conferences** held in all regions of Germany, ministers from the federal states, state secretaries and other representatives of federal, state and communal-level government engaged with a broad range of actors from the private sector, academia and civil society to discuss the requirements for a new Sustainability Strategy. The results were taken into account in the writing of the first draft of the reissue of the Sustainable Development Strategy 2016 under the aegis of the Federal Chancellery. The new strategy was presented by the Federal Chancellor on 31 May 2016 and simultaneously published on the Internet. The public can comment on the draft over the course of several weeks, both orally at a public hearing in the Chancellery as well as in writing.

For many years, the German government has also held a **dialogue forum** three or four times a year, in which it exchanges ideas and information on the international sustainability agenda with representatives of NGOs, churches, local authorities, the scientific and academic community and the private sector. The "**Charter for the Future**" is a further attempt to involve civic society actors, especially in the dialogue to promote global sustainable development. Since 2014, discussions have been held with the involvement of over 100 organisations and initiatives and members of the public on how to create opportunities for the future for everyone worldwide, and what our responsibility in Germany is in this regard.

1b) Ongoing support for other countries

German **development policy** in recent years has been systematically geared to improving **global conditions** in the environmental, social, economic and political sense in order to eliminate the causes of poverty and promote global sustainable development. Following the adoption of Agenda 2030, the political priorities of our policy are based on its five core areas (People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace, and Partnership). German development policy focuses in particular on:

- (1) Combating the structural causes of **hunger** and malnutrition and eradicating extreme **poverty**;
- (2) Creating sustainable opportunities for the future, particularly for young people, and **tackling the causes of flight** (especially through education/training, employment and structural investments in the green economy, social infrastructure and good statehood);
- (3) **Making globalisation equitable**, in particular by promoting **fair trade** and income and job opportunities that ensure sustainable livelihoods (with particular emphasis on promoting responsible supply chains and minimum social and environmental standards);
- (4) Promoting sustainable **development in the private sector**, private investment and the ability of the partner countries to contribute financially to their own development.
- (5) **Climate change mitigation** and adaptation and **conservation of natural resources**.

Promoting **good governance** and **gender equality** are cross-cutting tasks that are also an important element in the bilateral and multilateral dialogue on development policy. In line with the new Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, the German government is aiming to cooperate with its partners on an equal footing and to continually improve efficiency and effectiveness.

These principles are being implemented through numerous bilateral and multilateral initiatives and programmes.

In addition to the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development and the Foreign Office, numerous other government departments are actively pursuing international cooperation.

The **International Climate Initiative** (IKI) of the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety has been funding climate and biodiversity projects in developing countries, emerging economies and countries in transition since 2008, along with projects to implement the SDGs.

The **Vision Zero Fund**, a global fund initiated by the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and supported by the G7, mobilises practical support for poorer producing countries in their attempts to improve health and safety in the workplace.

ODA percentage: Germany's Official Development Assistance (**ODA**) has increased steadily in recent years; the OECD's latest ODA estimate for 2015 shows continual increases to around 16.0 billion euros¹. That makes Germany the **third-largest donor** in absolute figures; Germany's ODA rose to 0.52 percent of its gross national income in 2015. Spending on development cooperation continues to be one of the German government's top priorities. It has continuously increased its spending in recent years and a further rise is planned for 2017. The German government has also mobilised finance and implementation funds by specifically promoting **involvement of the private sector**.

For many years, the German government has also proactively advocated for a strengthened sustainability policy in regional and international forums.

¹ This includes key contributions to the development cooperation work of the European Union, the United Nations, World Bank and regional development banks.

2. Details on how this report was produced: process, participation, methodology, structure

The aim of this report is to describe the steps the German government has already taken and those it plans to take in the future to implement Agenda 2030. The report includes details of the **efforts to prepare implementation**, the processes involved in adapting our policies and the way in which all stakeholders are included in the implementation process. In this sense, it describes the **path** Germany has taken for the implementation of the agenda, but it also makes initial statements about specific arrangements, actions, engagements, experiences and priorities. **It reports on all 17 goals set out in the Agenda.**

It was important for the German government to involve **civil society and private-sector stakeholders** in preparing this report. Therefore it was discussed in the dialogue forum on Agenda 2030 with representatives of NGOs, churches, local authorities, and the scientific and academic community, who had the opportunity to engage in a critical exchange of views. A representative of civil society in Germany is also scheduled to speak when the report is presented at the HLPF in New York. This gives a clear signal that Agenda 2030 and its implementation in Germany is a project that involves the whole of society.

3. What the SDGs will change in Germany: steps and contributions towards implementation

3a) Integrating the Agenda and its SDGs into national implementation

In preparing the new edition of its National Sustainable Development Strategy, the German government is engaging with each individual SDG and defining the need for action relevant for Germany in the particular associated field. In doing so, it will strive to factor in the international dimension of Germany's actions in an appropriate manner. **For the German government, the universal applicability of the Agenda means** that it will make appropriate contributions towards meeting all 17 sustainable development goals - both in its national policies and internationally.

It is therefore considering its involvement in terms of the **impacts** on three levels:

- * **First**, with regard to implementation and impacts in Germany,
- * **Secondly**, with regard to impacts in other countries and on global public goods, i.e. on global well-being (worldwide impacts – e.g. from trade or climate policy), and
- * **Thirdly**, with regard to supporting other countries (our international cooperation policy). The 17 goals, and also these three levels of impact, are closely interwoven and cannot be considered in isolation.

“Leave No One Behind”– this is a cross-cutting principle running through the whole of Agenda 2030. In the next 15 years, even greater efforts than have been made to date will be needed to reach disadvantaged and/or discriminated sections of the population in Germany and worldwide and to improve their situation in a sustainable way.

Germany delivers **relevant contributions for all the SDGs based on its capacities and circumstances**. The full-length report will describe Germany's approaches to implementation of each of the 17 SDGs. The SDGs are globally applicable and simultaneously defined so as to provide guidance to each country in its efforts to flesh out the details nationally.