

Resolution of the 14th German Bundestag, adopted at its 236th Session on 16 May 2002

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Sustainable development - A new approach to globalisation

I. The German Bundestag notes:

The model of sustainable development is the central aim of reform for social progress in the 21st century and a new political approach in response to the challenges of globalisation.

Sustainable development is an interdisciplinary political task that needs to be incorporated in all major areas of politics. Government policy has made significant progress in this direction in recent years. The groundwork has been laid in many central political fields since the parliamentary term began:

- The new energy policy focuses on increased efficiency, renewable energy sources and energy conservation, instead of atomic energy.
- In agricultural policy, reforms have been set in motion that cater to the interests of preventive consumer protection.
- The reorientation of education and research policy on the basis of the sustainability model has been steadily promoted by new research fields, new key topics and structural reforms.
- The social dimension of sustainable development has been strengthened by modern equal opportunity policy, interministerial youth policy and the improvement of framework conditions for a family-friendly society.
- Development policy has been expanded into a global structural policy and is a central contribution of a new foreign and security policy, which primarily focuses on preventing conflicts and combating causes.
- A stable financial policy as a key element of budgetary policy safeguards material resources in the interests of younger generations.
- The pension system has been made viable in the long term, thus permanently strengthening solidarity between the generations.

The modernisation programme for sustainable development cannot be implemented by government action alone. It requires comprehensive modernisation of the state, the economy and society. Technical, social and institutional innovations are the key to resolving the core ecological, economic and social issues of the present and the future. They promote new products and production methods, new technologies, new forms of work, new consumption patterns, new lifestyles and, above all, new management techniques and decision-making procedures.

For parliament and the government, this means that, in addition to incorporating aspects of sustainability into the individual political sectors, the various fields of specific policy must cooperate, coordinate and network more closely, and jointly gear their activities to binding and long-term targets.

By presenting a national sustainability strategy, the German Federal Government is responding to these challenges and simultaneously living up to a central obligation of the Agenda 21 plan of action, which was signed at the UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio in 1992. Around the world, conflicts over increasingly scarce ecological and material energy resources are increasing, as the participants in Rio feared. Time is pressing. Sustainable

development is a central model for the design of a new world domestic policy, to which there is no alternative in the age of globalisation. The national sustainability strategy translates the global model of sustainable development into a concrete plan of action. With regard to the prevention of potential conflicts over resources (water, arable land, mineral resources and energy raw materials), the sustainability strategy also shows how global development can be influenced by national initiatives in such a way that it also satisfies the social and ecological needs of current and future generations.

The German Bundestag welcomes the fact that the Federal Government has adhered closely to the preparatory work of the Study Commission on Protection of Mankind and the Environment and the recommendations of the Bundestag Resolution on the National Sustainability Strategy (Printed Paper 14/4606):

- Key proposals for the institutional implementation of the strategy development process were taken up by establishing a Council on Sustainable Development, which is made up of independent members, and a Green Cabinet, in which the state secretaries of all relevant specialist ministries are represented. The Bundestag made an important contribution to implementing Agenda 21 on the local level by promoting a nationwide service office for local Agenda activities. Over the next few years, this liaison office is to channel results and experience obtained from these local Agenda 21 activities into the dialogue process for the national sustainability strategy.
- The four key terms "quality of life", "social cohesion", "generational equality" and "international responsibility" make it clear that sustainability focuses on the integrated resolution of future ecological, economic, social, financial and cultural problems. The selected indicators implicitly show that Nature provides the vital foundations for economic development and social welfare. The definition of ecological "guard rails", within which economic and social development must remain, is an essential prerequisite for sustainable development.
- One core element of the sustainability strategy is a system of concrete targets and indicators that act as guides for politics, the economy and society, making it possible to evaluate successes and failures on the way to sustainable development. This is a courageous and ambitious approach that caters to the demands imposed by the German Bundestag on an effective, goal-oriented sustainability policy.
- The strategy defines focal areas in fields of policy that are of decisive importance for sustainable development: climate protection and energy policy, environmentally compatible mobility and environment/nutrition/health. It also outlines other important fields of action - as demanded by the German Bundestag - in which significant progress has already been made and which need to be defined in more concrete terms during the further development of the strategy. The Bundestag expressly welcomes the fact that considerable weight is given in the sustainability strategy to the aspect of Germany's international responsibility. It supports the decision of the European Council to increase funding for public development cooperation to 0.39% of the gross domestic product EU-wide by 2006. The Bundestag will support the Federal Government in its efforts to appropriate the necessary funds in the federal budget by 2006, with due consideration for the consolidation goals, so that Germany can reach the targeted value of 0.33% of the GDP for public development assistance. In accordance with the European Council resolutions of Göteborg and Laeken, the Bundestag reaffirms the aim of reaching the UN target value for public development cooperation of 0.7% of the GDP as quickly as possible via interim targets.
- One key element of the sustainability strategy is its underlying management concept, which is intended to ensure participation in, as well as routine reviews and discursive development of the strategy. This takes account of the realisation that sustainability is an

open system that needs to be filled out by a continuous process of searching and learning.

The sustainability strategy presents a future-oriented and pragmatic guideline for social/ecological modernisation. Playing a pioneering role in environmental protection and nature conservation offers opportunities for more innovation and employment, as well as the modernisation of the national economy and civil society.

II. The German Bundestag calls upon the Federal Government to

unwaveringly pursue the successfully established process of modernising the state, the economy and society. In particular, the new development task defined in the sustainability strategy must be implemented in concrete political measures. In this context, the approach of the strategy must focus on more than just efficiency criteria and additionally work towards creating a business style and a lifestyle that are characterised by solidarity. The focal points of the sustainability strategy should be addressed in a common effort in the new parliamentary term and realised with priority. In the process, the Federal Government should obligate the Länder, municipalities, citizens and, in particular, businesses and their associations, in order to give them an opportunity to fulfil their social responsibility.

In addition, the details of the sustainability strategy are to be formulated continuously by the State Secretary's Committee for Sustainable Development and further developed with the participation of the Council on Sustainable Development and regular consultations with the German Bundestag. In this context, the Bundestag is of the opinion that the following aspects should be given special attention until the first progress report is submitted in two years:

- In the interest of ensuring maximum transparency in sustainability policy, the German Bundestag believes it necessary to subject the indicator system to further qualitative development, even beyond the deadlines considered to date. The existing individual indicators should be examined to determine whether they can be combined into a small number of concise key indicators. Global indicators of this kind would provide a condensed overview of the progress made on the way to achieving sustainable development, and make sustainable development more comprehensible and interesting for the general public. The definition of these sustainability indicators is to be further developed on the basis of existing indicator systems (e.g. environmental-economic bookkeeping, GDP) and reflect the environmental consumption and environmental relief of economic activity.
- The focal areas of the strategy that have already been given a programme structure and in which individual steps have only been roughly outlined up to now, must be defined with more concrete objectives and measures. Measures that have already been introduced and planned measures must be integrated into these areas. This primarily concerns the areas of education, innovation, space utilisation, demographic change and international responsibility. Greater attention must also be paid to the areas of youth, family and equal opportunity policy as they relate to aspects of sustainability. Socioecological modernisation can only be successful in combination with innovative social policy.
- When updating the strategy, attention will have to be paid to incorporating plans for structural change in the medium and long term. This will open up more extensive objectives for the areas of climate protection, agriculture, energy, space utilisation and mobility, which will lead to qualitative structural changes.
- The Bundestag reaffirms the conviction already represented in the resolution to ratify the Kyoto Protocol that, with regard to climate protection, long-term targets to reduce CO₂ emissions are required. In this context, the Bundestag makes reference to the conclusions of the Study Commissions on Climate, which state that industrial nations must further

reduce greenhouse emissions quite significantly. The feasibility of reducing CO₂ emissions by 40% by 2020 compared to 1990 was recently confirmed again by the recommendations of the Federal Government's Sustainability Council and the Advisory Council for Environmental Concerns. This presupposes, however, that climate protection policy is further developed in the EU as announced.

- The focal areas must be further developed over the next two years. The review of the sustainability strategy should give consideration to ecological material flows, nature conservation and species protection, marine protection and the noise problem as focal areas.
- Efforts to establish a sustainable financial and budgetary policy must be continued. In addition to the goal of presenting a balanced budget, the financial system must be further developed on the basis of sustainability criteria. This also includes the gradual elimination of environmentally damaging subsidies, together with tax incentives for environmentally compatible activities.
- The contribution of art and culture to sustainability is to be demonstrated by the Federal Culture Foundation. In this context, it should work together with the Council on Sustainable Development.
- Obligations accepted at the UN Conference on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg are to be integrated into the concept of the sustainability strategy after the conclusion of the conference, in order to simultaneously underline the importance the Federal Government attaches to the sustainability model as a guideline for a new global domestic policy and international conflict prevention, as well as for intensifying the fight against poverty.
- The strategy can only mark the beginning of a broad social debate on sustainable development, which must be continued after the World Summit in Johannesburg. Sustainability still does not receive sufficient recognition among the general public as a fundamental task for jointly shaping the future. Therefore, the Federal Government will publicise the issue more intensively in future and foster broad social participation.

The German Bundestag feels duty-bound to intensify its own efforts for sustainable development, rather than merely making demands on others. In order to adequately perform this task and be in a position to make its contribution to the further development of the sustainability strategy, it recommends that the 15th German Bundestag establish a committee for sustainable development that is suitable for dealing with long-term and interdisciplinary issues.