



Statement on the Global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

In 2015, the United Nations will adopt a global sustainability agenda that will shape international and German policymaking up until 2030. The sustainability agenda is to be centred around 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that have been negotiated within various interstate and expert bodies, and were presented in a synthesis report from the UN Secretary-General.

These Goals will also apply to the industrialised states, one of several ways they differ from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which only found application to developing countries. The following Goals have been set:

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*

The Parliamentary Advisory Council on Sustainable Development (PBnE) advocates the adoption of ambitious, coordinated goals. The proposed catalogue of goals is definitely to be retained. The Goals, the subgoals and, above all, the measures for their implementation and the review mechanisms must be well suited to meet the challenges ahead and pave the way to a worldwide social/ecological transformation.

Retain the substance of the proposal in its entirety

The complexity and breadth of the proposal drawn up by the Open Working Group and put forward for further discussion at the United Nations are necessary and appropriate. It lays down an agenda for the post-2015 period with a coherent system of goals that is internationally valid, globally oriented yet, nevertheless, applicable to all countries.

The breadth of the issues dealt with and the substance of the current proposal must not be narrowed down in the further negotiations conducted before the SDGs are finally adopted. In addition to this, it is now necessary to stipulate ambitious steps for the implementation and review of the catalogue of goals at the UN level. Otherwise, the results of the German Federal Government's dialogue with representatives of civil society, which took place under the auspices of the Dialogue Forum on the Post-2015 Agenda for Sustainable Development, would be called into question, just like those of the Charter for the Future dialogue process. The PBnE will therefore support the Federal Government in arguing for the substance of the proposal to be retained in its entirety as the negotiations continue.

Transformation to sustainable development

Generally, the PBnE is urging the German Federal Government to argue for the SDGs to be configured ambitiously in order to drive ahead the necessary transformation of our state, economy and society towards economic, ecological and social sustainability – at global, national and local level. Furthermore, the Federal Government should argue for the 17 Goals and the numerous subgoals defined by the Open Working Group, which the UN Secretary-General has declared to be the basis for the negotiations, to be enshrined in an international agreement.

'Business as usual' is not an option if global development is to be managed sustainably and action taken that ensures future generations enjoy opportunities to live fulfilled, dignified lives. The SDGs must not fall short of the poverty goals, sustainability goals and human rights standards on which international consensus has previously been reached. Care is to be taken to make sure the idea that no one should be left behind, a legacy of the 2012 Rio negotiations, is reflected in the Goals. This means relative goals, such as 'halving' poverty, are to be avoided. The goal must be for no human being to have to live in poverty any longer.

Yet the transformation to greater sustainability must take place in Germany too. The German position for the negotiations on the SDGs, *An Agenda for the Transformation to Sustainable Development Worldwide*, which was adopted by the Federal Cabinet on 3 December 2014, rep-



resents a first step in the right direction. The Federal Republic of Germany is of central significance as an internationally respected, economically successful, technologically advanced country. This is why we must assume a pioneering global role in and with Europe. It will only be possible for us to do this if our sustainability strategy is upheld and further developed, and the institutions concerned with sustainability are integrated more closely. The PBnE is urging the German Federal Government to regard the SDGs that are currently being discussed as the yardstick for its own governance and apply them as such with immediate effect. The German Council for Sustainable Development (RNE) has presented far-reaching recommendations in this respect.¹

This will require, among other things, measures to be taken urgently not only to combat the global climate crisis, the ongoing wastage of fossil resources and environmental pollution, but also to combat social inequality in German society. These measures should include the gradual phasing out of coal-fired power generation, which is extremely harmful to the climate, the dismantling of environmentally and climate-damaging subsidies, accelerated steps to stop the overfertilisation of soils and waters backed up with a phased plan, the transition to sustainable agriculture, and prices that factor in the social and ecological costs imposed by the consumption of natural resources. Germany's responsibility and pioneering role also make it incumbent upon us to take adequate account of the global dimension of our actions, which can be represented with, for example, the quantitative variables used to measure our national and international CO₂ footprints. This global dimension encompasses the international impacts of our actions and the contributions to sustainability around the world that Germany makes by means of, among other things, its development cooperation work.

The PBnE believes it is indispensable for the translation of the sustainability agenda into national policies to be discussed broadly. The Bundestag's Advisory Council on Sustainable Development, civil society actors and all the relevant government departments must be involved actively in the discussion at an early stage in order to ensure the agenda is implemented in all areas of policy. It will be nowhere near enough for the agenda to be pursued just by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, and the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety. Germany's sustainability strategy must be revised so it is consistent with the new universal sustainability goals. The capacities required for this purpose will have to be created and made permanently available. At the EU level, the case for the EU sustainability strategy to be revived and updated in the light of the future SDGs should be made more vigorously. Otherwise, European coordination of the SDGs' translation into national strategies will not be possible. The monitoring reports published by Eurostat reveal wide disparities between the EU Member States in the field of sustainable development – for instance when it comes to waste recycling and the use of renewable energies. States' national progress towards the Goals is to be reviewed and the statistical data stock improved in the interests of international comparability.

Furthermore, the PBnE is demanding that a new phased plan be drawn up with which the previously adopted target of spending 0.7 per cent of gross national income on official development assistance (ODA) will actually be achieved at the European and national levels by 2020. If this is to happen, Germany will have to allocate commensurate funds to finance sustainable, effective development projects and more money for climate protection. The financial transaction tax will be one element in the achievement of this spending target.

¹ RNE, *Deutsche Nachhaltigkeits-Architektur und SDGs*, May 2015.



In this connection, furthermore, the PBnE wishes to underline the significance of mobilising more domestic public resources and private financial funds, as well as overarching topics such as trade, technology transfers and financial market stability. For instance, the transparency of supply chains is elementary to trade that is informed by the principles of sustainable development.

It is important that the industrialised countries take on a pioneering role in sustainable development under the global agenda.

Take the planetary guard rails into consideration in the SDGs

The German Advisory Council on Global Change (WBGU) has specified a number of what it calls ‘planetary guard rails’, to which it feels particular attention needs to be paid in the debate about the SDGs in order to ensure the preservation of a world worth living in.²

The WBGU has specified the following guard rails:

- Limit anthropogenic climate change to 2 °C
- Limit ocean acidification to 0.2 pH units
- Halt the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services
- Halt land and soil degradation
- Limit the risks posed by long-lived and harmful anthropogenic substances
- Halt the loss of phosphorus

The PBnE shares the WBGU’s opinion that securing Earth system services should be assigned a central role in the SDG negotiations and, above all, the implementation of the SDGs in Germany as well. Intact soils, forests, rivers and seas, and a healthy atmosphere are the fundamental preconditions if hunger, diseases and poverty are to be combatted in disadvantaged regions of the Earth.

Communication of the Post-2015 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The PBnE believes it is crucial that a communication strategy is developed in order to directly support the SDGs, ensure the dimensions and complexity of the Agenda can be conveyed, and make them comprehensible to all target audiences.

In the opinion of the PBnE, it will only be possible to communicate the global sustainability agenda successfully if this task is tackled jointly with civil society, the *Länder* and local government. To this end, these actors must be involved broadly in the debate on the agenda’s implementation without delay, just as in the processes associated with the Agenda 21 initiatives that followed the 1992 Rio Conference.

The PBnE believes education for sustainable development should be accorded particular significance, both in Germany and all over the world, as one of the factors on which sustainable processes of change are predicated. Commensurate funds should be made available, through

² WBGU, *Human Progress within Planetary Guard Rails*, WBGU Policy Paper 8, April 2014.



appropriate channels, for this important area of education, and to promote and further develop concepts for the content and methodologies that are to be used. It must be ensured that there is coherence between the approaches followed by the German Federation and the *Länder* in this field.