



[sent via email]

Deputy Charles Flanagan TD
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

Coalition 2030
Macro Centre,
1 Green Street,
Dublin 7.

8th November 2022

Re: The role of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Dear Deputy Flanagan,

We write to you on behalf of the 70 civil society organisations and networks that constitute Coalition 2030. This alliance is comprised of organisations across the international development, environment, social inclusion/anti-poverty, trade union, and academic sectors. We exist to ensure that Ireland upholds its commitment made in 2015 to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Ireland by 2030, as well as to drive their achievement abroad.¹

The Government recently published Ireland's second National Implementation Plan for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for the 2022-2024 period. We are writing to you in your capacity as Chair of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence in order to outline the implications of this plan for your Committee and, in particular, its role in scrutinising the work of the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Department of Defence.

Included in Annex 1 is a breakdown of all of the **actions** for which either the Department of Foreign Affairs or the Department of Defence is lead as contained within the [second National Implementation Plan for the Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#), as well as all of the **SDG targets** in the [2022 Policy Map](#) for which they are each responsible for achieving. We note the significant number of targets in the latter for which the Department of Foreign Affairs is lead.

Your Committee's Role:

We consider that a fundamental part of these SDG-related processes must be effective monitoring and oversight of SDG implementation and policy coherence by Oireachtas Committees. We therefore ask your Committee to

1. Integrate the targets for which either the Department of Foreign Affairs or the Department of Defence are the leads and the corresponding activities into your Committee's Work Plan/Programme.
2. Integrate this new area of work into your Committee's Terms of Reference.
3. Ensure Ministers, Departments, and public bodies provide information on progress on relevant SDG targets as well as their plans to meet said targets when presenting to your Committee.
4. Provide information on SDG implementation in the Committee's annual reports and letters to Departments.
5. Report at least annually to your Committee's line Departments outlining the strengths and weaknesses in SDG implementation that your Committee has identified during the preceding months/year in order to facilitate progress on the part of the department.
6. Examine whether existing indicators are adequate to monitor SDG progress and whether official data collected on Ireland's SDG performance sufficiently tracks major cross-cutting challenges, such as actions to eradicate poverty and curb inequalities.
7. Make use of relevant evidence and resources on SDG implementation and Ireland's progress e.g. the national [SDG GeoHive](#), [UN reports and analysis](#), the [Global SDG Index](#), [OECD country profiles](#), as well as reports and analysis by [the European Sustainable Development Network](#), [Social Justice Ireland](#), [Coalition 2030](#) and the [European Environmental Bureau](#).

We wish to take this opportunity to remind you of the [motion](#) approved in the Dáil on the 30th of July 2020 which sets out that each select Committee must address 'progress on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals set out in the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development' as part of its work programme [see Annex 2].

We are almost halfway through the period of time we have to achieve the SDGs. However in Ireland and abroad, we're facing a complex set of crises that are undoing gains on SDG progress; cost of living, conflict, an acute global hunger crisis, and climate change,

¹ See Annex 3 for an overview of the SDGs.

not to mention the impacts of Covid-19. In a 2021 Nature study, ‘The social shortfall and ecological overshoot of nations’², it was found that no country currently meets the basic needs of its residents at a level of resource use that could be sustainably extended to all people globally. Progressing the SDGs has never been more important and **the focus must now firmly be on implementation and delivery.**

The Oireachtas Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence sits in a prime position to help drive progress on Ireland’s fulfilment of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, in particular by ensuring effective governance and accountability related to SDG targets and indicators. These Goals must also be met in an inclusive way, leaving no behind and ensuring the most vulnerable and marginalised are reached first, and by prioritising early and transparent consultation *before* decisions are made.

Coalition 2030 members are eager to support and advise Committee members with this process and these developments, and we would be grateful if you could bring this letter to the attention of Committee members. We are available to brief you and Committee members either informally or formally if that would be helpful.

We look forward to working with you to drive the SDGs during this Decade of Action.

Is sinne le mórmheas,

Coalition 2030 Steering Committee

Louise Finan	Dóchas (Chair)
Oisín Coghlan	Friends of the Earth
Johnny Sheehan	The Wheel
Laura O’Connor	Concern Worldwide
Karen Ciesielski	The Environmental Pillar
Joan McCrohan	ICTU Global Solidarity Committee
Catherine Carty	UNESCO Chair at Munster Technological University
Aidan Kenny	ICTU Global Solidarity Committee

² Fanning, Andrew L., et al. “The Social Shortfall and Ecological Overshoot of Nations.” *Nature Sustainability*, vol. 5, no. 1, 2021, pp. 26–36., <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41893-021-00799-z>.

Annex 1: Actions and Targets for your line department

Actions for all Departments

As per the plan, from now on:

1. All Departments must include a commitment to Agenda 2030 in all new Statements of Strategy (Action 11a).
2. On an ongoing basis, all Departments must make reference to the SDGs and targets for which it is the lead (Action 11a). *Each Department has specific SDG targets for which it is responsible for achieving and these are outlined in the [Policy Map](#).*
3. Each Department should ensure an SDG point of contact is made publicly available (Section 3.1.4).
4. All Departments must from now on include updates on SDG activities and progress *including at the target level* in Departmental Annual Reports (Action 12a)³.

Specific targets for your line department listed in the 2022 Policy Map

The Department of Foreign Affairs is the lead for achieving the following targets:

1. Target 1.1: By 2030, eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere, currently measured as people living on less than \$1.25 a day
2. Target 1.4: By 2030, ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services, including microfinance
3. Target 1.a: Ensure significant mobilization of resources from a variety of sources, including through enhanced development cooperation, in order to provide adequate and predictable means for developing countries, in particular least developed countries, to implement programmes and policies to end poverty in all its dimensions
4. Target 1.b: Create sound policy frameworks at the national, regional and international levels, based on pro-poor and gender-sensitive development strategies, to support accelerated investment in poverty eradication actions
5. Target 2.1: By 2030, end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round
6. Target 2.a: Increase investment, including through enhanced international cooperation, in rural infrastructure, agricultural research and extension services, technology development and plant and livestock gene banks in order to enhance agricultural productive capacity in developing countries, in particular least developed countries
7. Target 3.1: By 2030, reduce the global maternal mortality ratio to less than 70 per 100,000 live births
8. Target 3.b: Support the research and development of vaccines and medicines for the communicable and non-communicable diseases that primarily affect developing countries, provide access to affordable essential medicines and vaccines, in accordance with the Doha Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health, which affirms the right of developing countries to use to the full the provisions in the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights regarding flexibilities to protect public health, and, in particular, provide access to medicines for all
9. Target 3.c: Substantially increase health financing and the recruitment, development, training and retention of the health workforce in developing countries, especially in least developed countries and small island developing States
10. Target 3.d: Strengthen the capacity of all countries, in particular developing countries, for early warning, risk reduction and management of national and global health risks
11. Target 4.5: By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations
12. Target 4.b: By 2020, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States and African countries, for enrolment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programmes, in developed countries and other developing countries
13. Target 4.c: By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing States

³ This will be supported by a new SDG-target reporting mechanism, due for release in Q4 2022.

14. Target 5.3: Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation
15. Target 5.6: Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences
16. Target 5.a: Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national law
17. Target 5.b: Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women
18. Target 6.2: By 2030, achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations
19. Target 6.a: By 2030, expand international cooperation and capacity-building support to developing countries in water- and sanitation-related activities and programmes, including water harvesting, desalination, water efficiency, wastewater treatment, recycling and reuse technologies
20. Target 6.b: Support and strengthen the participation of local communities in improving water and sanitation management
21. Target 7.a: By 2030, enhance international cooperation to facilitate access to clean energy research and technology, including renewable energy, energy efficiency and advanced and cleaner fossil-fuel technology, and promote investment in energy infrastructure and clean energy technology
22. Target 7.b: By 2030, expand infrastructure and upgrade technology for supplying modern and sustainable energy services for all in developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States, and land-locked developing countries, in accordance with their respective programmes of support
23. Target 8.a: Increase Aid for Trade support for developing countries, in particular least developed countries, including through the Enhanced Integrated Framework for Trade-Related Technical Assistance to Least Developed Countries
24. Target 9.a: Facilitate sustainable and resilient infrastructure development in developing countries through enhanced financial, technological and technical support to African countries, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States
25. Target 9.b: Support domestic technology development, research and innovation in developing countries, including by ensuring a conducive policy environment for, inter alia, industrial diversification and value addition to commodities
26. Target 9.c: Significantly increase access to information and communications technology and strive to provide universal and affordable access to the Internet in least developed countries by 2020
27. Target 10.b: Encourage official development assistance and financial flows, including foreign direct investment, to States where the need is greatest, in particular least developed countries, African countries, small island developing States and landlocked developing countries, in accordance with their national plans and programmes
28. Target 11.5: By 2030, significantly reduce the number of deaths and the number of people affected and substantially decrease the direct economic losses relative to global gross domestic product caused by disasters, including water-related disasters, with a focus on protecting the poor and people in vulnerable situations
29. Target 11.c: Support least developed countries, including through financial and technical assistance, in building sustainable and resilient buildings utilizing local materials
30. Target 12.a: Support developing countries to strengthen their scientific and technological capacity to move towards more sustainable patterns of consumption and production
31. Target 13.b: Promote mechanisms for raising capacity for effective climate change-related planning and management in least developed countries and small island developing States, including focusing on women, youth and local and marginalized communities
32. Target 14.7: By 2030, increase the economic benefits to Small Island developing States and least developed countries from the sustainable use of marine resources, including through sustainable management of fisheries, aquaculture and tourism
33. Target 14.c: Enhance the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources by implementing international law as reflected in UNCLOS, which provides the legal framework for the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources, as recalled in paragraph 158 of The Future We Want
34. Target 16.8: Broaden and strengthen the participation of developing countries in the institutions of global governance
35. Target 16.9: By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration
36. Target 16.a: Strengthen relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation, for building capacity at all levels, in particular in developing countries, to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime

37. Target 17.1: Strengthen domestic resource mobilization, including through international support to developing countries, to improve domestic capacity for tax and other revenue collection
38. Target 17.2: Developed countries to implement fully their official development assistance commitments, including the commitment by many developed countries to achieve the target of 0.7 per cent of ODA/GNI to developing countries and 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of ODA/GNI to least developed countries ODA providers are encouraged to consider setting a target to provide at least 0.20 per cent of ODA/GNI to least developed countries
39. Target 17.3: Mobilize additional financial resources for developing countries from multiple sources
40. Target 17.5: Adopt and implement investment promotion regimes for least developed countries
41. Target 17.6: Enhance North-South, South-South and triangular regional and international cooperation on and access to science, technology and innovation and enhance knowledge sharing on mutually agreed terms, including through improved coordination among existing mechanisms, in particular at the United Nations level, and through a global technology facilitation mechanism
42. Target 17.7: Promote the development, transfer, dissemination and diffusion of environmentally sound technologies to developing countries on favourable terms, including on concessional and preferential terms, as mutually agreed
43. Target 17.8: Fully operationalize the technology bank and science, technology and innovation capacity-building mechanism for least developed countries by 2017 and enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology
44. Target 17.9: Enhance international support for implementing effective and targeted capacity-building in developing countries to support national plans to implement all the sustainable development goals, including through North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation
45. Target 17.11: Significantly increase the exports of developing countries, in particular with a view to doubling the least developed countries' share of global exports by 2020
46. Target 17.15: Respect each country's policy space and leadership to establish and implement policies for poverty eradication and sustainable development
47. Target 17.17: Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships⁴
48. Target 17.18: By 2020, enhance capacity-building support to developing countries, including for least developed countries and small island developing States, to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts
49. Target 17.19: By 2030, build on existing initiatives to develop measurements of progress on sustainable development that complement gross domestic product, and support statistical capacity-building in developing countries

Annex 2: Work Programmes of Select Committees: Motion

"It shall be an instruction to each Select Committee appointed pursuant to Standing Order 95 that the work programme provided for in Standing Order 100(4) shall include the consideration of such aspects of—

- (a) the State's response to the Covid-19 pandemic;
- (b) science, research and development and innovation; and
- (c) progress on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals set out in the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

as are within the scope of the Committee's orders of reference as set out in Standing Orders."

<https://www.kildarestreet.com/debate/?id=2020-07-30a.689>

Annex 3: Background to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Sustainable development was defined in the World Commission on Environment and Development's 1987 Brundtland report 'Our Common Future' as '*development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of*

⁴ All departments are the lead for this target.

future generations to meet their own needs'. It seeks to reconcile economic development with the protection of social and environmental balance. Increasingly, culture is being understood as the 'fourth pillar' of sustainable development.

In September 2015, all 193 UN member states agreed to work towards achieving 17 'Sustainable Development Goals' by 2030. Ireland, along with Kenya, co-led the negotiations that led to the agreement on these goals. They constitute the bedrock of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which represents a shared global vision, and they are also known as the 'SDGs' or the 'Global Goals'.

The SDGs interact with one another, and the success of one goal is dependent on and affects the success of the others. In other words, the goals are *interdependent* and have the ability to reinforce or hinder one another mutually. They are also *indivisible*, in that progress in one area cannot and should not be disentangled from progress (or lack thereof) in another. This framework seeks to acknowledge the intersections between policy areas in order to reduce siloed policy-making and to shine a light on the trade-offs that emerge in the act of policy-making so that they can be addressed. The SDGs are the only universally agreed framework for implementing a social floor informed by human rights, while also working to prevent ecological overshoot of planetary boundaries.