Deputy Maurice Quinlivan TD   Coalition 2030
Leinster House,   Macro Centre,
Kildare Street,   1 Green Street,
Dublin 2.   Dublin 7.

9th November 2022

Re: The role of the Committee on Enterprise, Trade and Employment in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Dear Deputy Quinlivan,

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 Enterprise, Trade and Employment 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 Enterprise, Trade and Employment.

Included in Annex 1 is a breakdown of all of the **actions** for which the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment 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 it is responsible for achieving.

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 the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment is the lead 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 Department 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,

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[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 Enterprise, Trade and Employment 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

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[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 National Implementation 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 DETE listed in the 2022 Policy Map

The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment is the lead for achieving the following SDG targets:

1. Target 8.2: Achieve higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation, including through a focus on high-value added and labour-intensive sectors
2. Target 8.3: Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services
3. Target 8.5: By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value
4. Target 8.8: Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment
5. Target 8.b: By 2020, develop and operationalize a global strategy for youth employment and implement the Global Jobs Pact of the International Labour Organization
6. Target 9.2: Promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and, by 2030, significantly raise industry's share of employment and gross domestic product, in line with national circumstances, and double its share in least developed countries
7. Target 10.a: Implement the principle of special and differential treatment for developing countries, in particular least developed countries, in accordance with World Trade Organization agreements
8. Target 12.6: Encourage companies, especially large and transnational companies, to adopt sustainable practices and to integrate sustainability information into their reporting cycle
9. Target 17.10: Promote a universal, rules-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system under the World Trade Organization, including through the conclusion of negotiations under its Doha Development Agenda
10. Target 17.12: Realize timely implementation of duty-free and quota-free market access on a lasting basis for all least developed countries, consistent with World Trade Organization decisions, including by ensuring that preferential rules of origin applicable to imports from least developed countries are transparent and simple, and contribute to facilitating market access
11. Target 17.17: Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships[4]

Specific actions for DETE listed in the National Implementation Plan for the SDGs 2022 - 2024:

Specifically, your line department must:

1. Action 39(a): Assess existing relevant business sector fora and engagement mechanisms for most appropriate means of continuing SDG engagement with business - **Due Q4 2022**
2. Action 39(b): Based on the outcome of the assessment at [above], integrate SDGs as a fixed agenda item in an existing business forum or through an alternative engagement mechanism - **Due Q3 2023**

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—

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

[4] All departments are the lead for this target.

(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 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.