



[sent via email]

Deputy Steven Matthews TD
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

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

10th November 2022

Re: The role of the Committee on Housing, Local Government and Heritage in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Dear Deputy Matthews,

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 Housing, Local Government and Heritage 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 Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

Included in Annex 1 is a breakdown of all of the **actions** for which the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage 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. Note that one of the **actions** was due for completion in Q3 2022, and two are due for completion this quarter.

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 Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage 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,

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 nations²’, 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 Housing, Local Government and Heritage 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 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 your line department listed in the 2022 Policy Map

The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage is the lead for achieving the following targets:

1. Target 1.5: By 2030, build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate- related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters
2. Target 6.1: By 2030, achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all
3. Target 6.3: By 2030, improve water quality by reducing pollution, eliminating dumping and minimizing release of hazardous chemicals and materials, halving the proportion of untreated wastewater and substantially increasing recycling and safe reuse globally
4. Target 6.4: By 2030, substantially increase water-use efficiency across all sectors and ensure sustainable withdrawals and supply of freshwater to address water scarcity and substantially reduce the number of people suffering from water scarcity
5. Target 6.5: By 2030, implement integrated water resources management at all levels, including through transboundary cooperation as appropriate
6. Target 6.6: By 2020, protect and restore water-related ecosystems, including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and lakes
7. Target 11.1: By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums
8. Target 11.3: By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries
9. Target 11.7: By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities
10. Target 11.a: Support positive economic, social and environmental links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas by strengthening national and regional development planning
11. Target 11.b: By 2020, substantially increase the number of cities and human settlements adopting and implementing integrated policies and plans towards inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters, and develop and implement, in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, holistic disaster risk management at all levels
12. Target 14.1: By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution
13. Target 14.2: By 2020, sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts, including by strengthening their resilience, and take action for their restoration in order to achieve healthy and productive oceans
14. Target 14.3: Minimize and address the impacts of ocean acidification, including through enhanced scientific cooperation at all levels
15. Target 14.4: By 2020, conserve at least 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, consistent with national and international law and based on the best available scientific information
16. Target 15.3: By 2030, combat desertification, restore degraded land and soil, including land affected by desertification, drought and floods, and strive to achieve a land degradation-neutral world
17. Target 15.4: By 2030, ensure the conservation of mountain ecosystems, including their biodiversity, in order to enhance their capacity to provide benefits that are essential for sustainable development
18. Target 15.5: Take urgent and significant action to reduce the degradation of natural habitats, halt the loss of biodiversity and, by 2020, protect and prevent the extinction of threatened species

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

19. Target 15.6: Promote fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources and promote appropriate access to such resources, as internationally agreed
20. Target 15.7: Take urgent action to end poaching and trafficking of protected species of flora and fauna and address both demand and supply of illegal wildlife products
21. Target 15.8: By 2020, introduce measures to prevent the introduction and significantly reduce the impact of invasive alien species on land and water ecosystems and control or eradicate the priority species
22. Target 15.9: By 2020, integrate ecosystem and biodiversity values into national and local planning, development processes, poverty reduction strategies and accounts
23. Target 15.a: Mobilize and significantly increase financial resources from all sources to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity and ecosystems
24. Target 15.c: Enhance global support for efforts to combat poaching and trafficking of protected species, including by increasing the capacity of local communities to pursue sustainable livelihood opportunities
25. Target 17.17: Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships⁴

Specific actions for your line department listed in the the National Implementation Plan for the SDGs 2022 - 2024:

Specifically, your line department must:

1. Action 28a: Liaise with the LGMA to review existing Local Authority Networks to determine if SDGs can be incorporated or whether an SDG specific Network is required to assist with the sharing of ideas, knowledge and showcase best practice - **was due Q3 2022**
2. Action 28b: Based on the outcome of the assessment at 27a, liaise with the LGMA to implement Local Authority mechanism for SDG knowledge sharing - **due Q4 2022**
3. Action 29a: Liaise with the LGMA to consider where the role of SDG point of contact would best sit and at what level, and to identify the profiles and responsibilities attached to the Role - **due Q4 2022**
4. Action 31a: Liaise with the LGMA to review existing annual Local Authority reporting mechanisms across each Local Authority to assess solutions for the inclusion of the SDGs into the process - **due Q2 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—

(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

⁴ All departments are the lead for this target.

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.