

PRESS RELEASE

Friday September 15th

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Weak commitments at the SDG Summit risk jeopardising Ireland's credibility - Coalition 2030

- **Ireland due to announce National Commitments to SDG Transformation at the SDG Summit, the “centrepiece” of the 78th UNGA 10am - 10:30am EDT**
- **Taoiseach Leo Varadkar to make statement between 9am and 9:25 am EDT**
- **Taoiseach, Tánaiste, Minister Ryan attending**
- **Civil society not included in development of SDG National Commitments**
- **Call for increased government ambition and a shift in political mindset for the final 7 years of the SDGs**

World leaders will announce their National Commitments to SDG Transformation on 18th September at the 78th United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in response to UN Secretary General António Guterres' call, aiming to advance SDG delivery and increase the likelihood of achieving them by 2030.

Ireland's top officials, including Taoiseach Leo Varadkar, Tánaiste Micheál Martin, and Minister Eamon Ryan, will attend. Ireland's significant role in preparing the Political Declaration, jointly facilitated with Qatar, has led to this high-level representation.

Speaking in advance of travelling to New York for the Summit, Dearbháil Lawless, CEO of AONTAS and Co-Chair of Coalition 2030, an alliance of over 70 civil society groups pushing for SDG achievement said,

“We are concerned that anything less than a strong National Commitment from Ireland, as one of the co-facilitators of the Political Declaration, could have the effect of undermining the integrity of the Declaration itself and the efforts of those working to finalise it. Ireland’s announcement must reflect an increased political commitment to the implementation of the SDGs in Ireland as well as to their implementation internationally. Anything less runs the risk of jeopardising Ireland’s credibility as a champion for the SDGs.”

Coalition 2030 previously assessed Ireland's SDG progress and called for increased political leadership, SDG budgeting, a Future Generations Commissioner, and improved data collection.

The coalition outlined five tests for the Government's commitments made on Monday:

1. Leadership: Do they represent a step change in Ireland’s commitment to the SDGs?
2. Civil society engagement: Are they planning to increase civil society engagement from now on?
3. Forward thinking: Do they convey an appreciation of foresight and long term thinking?
4. Courage: Do they display a sense of risk-taking and innovation?
5. Integrity: Do the government’s actions match their words on the SDGs?

Despite their support, Coalition 2030 was not included in the development of Ireland's SDG Commitments.

Meaghan Carmody, Coalition 2030 Coordinator, highlighted the importance of meaningful civil society involvement and expressed hope that Ireland's announcement would align with their calls for increased political will and ambition.

“We are proud that the Irish Mission in New York has played an important role in its co-facilitation of the Political Declaration. However, civil society has not been meaningfully included in the development of the National Commitments. This is concerning in a country which claims to champion the SDGs.”

Ms. Carmody continued,

“We believe that Ireland could be a leader in sustainable development, but that requires increased political will and ambition. If Ireland’s announcement on Monday reflects our suggestions, then we’ll know we have been listened to, and we can work together to see an Ireland that works for all by 2030. But words are not enough. If our leaders in New York treat the SDG Summit as just another meeting and photo opportunity, then credibility will be all but lost.”

The SDG Summit in September 2023, chaired by the President of the General Assembly, will be the second time for the HLPF to be convened under the auspices of the General Assembly at the level of Heads of State and Government. It will mark the beginning of a new phase of accelerated progress towards the SDGs, marking the half-way point to the deadline set for achieving the 2030 Agenda.

ENDS

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Coalition 2030 is an alliance of 70 civil society organisations from the international development, environmental, anti-poverty and trade union sectors working together to ensure Ireland keeps its promise to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) both in Ireland, and abroad.

Note the following will be in New York during the SDG Action Weekend of 16 and 17 September and the dates of the SDG Summit on 18 and 19 September. All will be available for comment.

1. Dearbháil Lawless, CEO of AONTAS, Ireland's National Adult Learning Organisation, and Co-Chair of Coalition 2030
2. Frank Geary, CEO of IDEA, the Irish Development Education Association
3. Jane-Ann McKenna, CEO of Dóchas, The Irish Network for International Development and Humanitarian Organisations
4. Meaghan Carmody, Coordinator of Coalition 2030

Available for comment from Dublin are:

1. Johnny Sheehan, Regional Engagement Manager at The Wheel and Co-Chair of Coalition 2030
2. Louise Finan, Head of Policy and Programmes at Dóchas and former Chair of Coalition 2030
3. Oisín Coghlan, Chief Executive of Friends of the Earth and former Chair of Coalition 2030

Media and Accreditation

- The information on press encounters can be found at the Media Accreditation and Liaison Unit (MALU) website, under Media Alert <http://www.un.org/en/media/accreditation/alert.shtml>
- For any other media inquiry other than accreditation, please contact the Office of the President of the General Assembly sim.mellouh@un.org
- Regarding accreditation, media accompanying Heads of State or Government or Heads of Delegation, including official photo and video, must request media passes in advance through the eRegistration system on the e-Delegate portal: <https://delegate.un.int/>
- All members of the media, with valid passes, will be escorted to designated media areas by MALU. Questions or concerns should be directed to MALU at malu@un.org or 212-963-6934. Information on media arrangements during the high-level week can be found at <http://www.un.org/en/media/accreditation/unga.shtml>

Webcast

The United Nations Webcast services will provide live streaming coverage of the SDG Summit in 6 languages as well as on-demand coverage (recorded video) in English and original language, through the UN Web TV website at: <http://webtv.un.org>. The coverage will include the opening segment, plenary segment, the six Leaders' Dialogues and the closing segments.

Notes to the Editor

1. In September 2015, all 193 UN Member States, including Ireland, adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to 'end poverty, protect the planet and ensure prosperity for all' as part of the new agenda — Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This framework is made up of 17 SDGs and 169 targets. Ireland had a significant role in its development and adoption, as co-facilitator, together with Kenya, of the intergovernmental negotiations in September 2015.
2. [SDG Summit List of Speakers, Concept Notes on the Leaders Dialogues and Logistics Note](#)
3. The SDG Summit Programme can be found [here](#).
4. The [Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023](#) found that only 12% of the SDG targets are on track to be achieved by 2030. Stark reversals in the gains made before Covid-19 and the triple cascade of climate change, Covid-19, and conflict have added increased urgency to the Summit.
5. The UN Secretary General has requested that, at the Summit, States outline a forward-looking National Commitment to SDG Transformation. This can be uploaded in advance of the Summit to the [SDG Summit Acceleration and Accountability Platform](#). It should include:
 - (i) priority transitions and areas for investment that will help maximise progress across the SDGs;
 - (ii) a national benchmark for reducing poverty and inequality by 2027; and
 - (iii) steps towards strengthened national planning and institutional frameworks
6. The full suite of Coalition 2030's suggestions for policy changes can be found here: [Coalition 2030 Asks](#)
7. Coalition 2030 argues via '[Furthest Behind First, or Falling Behind Further? The human stories that challenge Ireland's claims to be leaving no one behind](#)' that, although the State has been an influential advocate for the SDGs internationally, commitment and progress domestically is less apparent, and that this is most evident in how the State is failing to reach those who are in most need of the State's support; the furthest behind.
8. On April 3rd 2023 the UN Secretary General, Mr. António Guterres, wrote to all Heads of State and Governments of Member States regarding the SDG Summit. In [this letter](#), he wrote: *"I urge all countries to fully engage their domestic constituencies, **particularly civil society** and the private sector, in their Summit preparations."*

9. In July of this year, seven Coalition 2030 representatives were facilitated by the Department of Environment Climate and Communications to attend the High Level Political Forum on the SDGs as part of Ireland's official delegation. At this event, Minister Eamon Ryan presented Ireland's Voluntary National Review of progress. A meeting was facilitated with Minister Ryan, and a reception was held in the Irish mission with H.E Ambassador Fergal Mythen and his team.
10. H.E. Ambassador Fergal Mythen has written an op-ed on the Political Declaration, ['The World Has Only 7 Years Left to Thatch Its Roof and Save Itself'](#)
11. Coalition 2030 Members: 80:20 Educating and Acting for a Better World, Action Aid, Aidlink, Airfield, Akidwa, Alcohol Forum, All Together in Dignity, An Taisce, AONTAS, ASTI Association of, Secondary Teachers of Ireland, Baby Feeding Law Group Ireland, Carrig Conservation, Childfund Ireland, Children's Rights Alliance, Christian Aid, Christian Blind Mission (CBM), Comhlámh, Community Work Ireland, Concern, Cork Environmental Forum, Cultivate (Sustainable Ireland Cooperative), DCU Centre for Climate and Society, Development Perspectives, Disability Federation of Ireland, Dóchas (membership of 60 Members and Associate member organisations), ECO-UNESCO, Environmental Pillar (membership of 29 member organisations), European Anti-Poverty Network Ireland, FAIRTRADE Ireland, Forest Friends Ireland, Fórsa, Friends Of The Earth Ireland, Global Action Plan, Global Citizenship School, GOAL, Good Energies Alliance Ireland, Green Foundation Ireland, ICTU Irish Congress of Trade Unions (consisting of 44 unions affiliated to Congress and representing over 800,000 workers), IDEA - Irish Development Education Association, Independent Living Movement Ireland, International Presentation Association, Irish Family Planning Association, Irish Forum for Global Education, Irish Forum for Global Health, Irish Rural Link, Irish Wildlife Trust, Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice, Misean Cara, National Adult Literacy Agency, National Women's Council (membership of over 160 member organisations), National Youth Council of Ireland (membership of over 50 member organisations), Outhouse LGBT+ Centre, Pavee Point, Traveller & Roma Centre, Rediscovery Centre, Roscommon Environmental Network, Self Help Africa, Sightsavers Ireland, SIPTU Services Industrial Professional Technical Union, Social Justice Ireland, SpunOut, Suas (& its STAND programme), TASC (Think Tank for Action on Social Change), The Ladder, The Simon Communities, The Vincentian Partnership for Social Justice, The Wheel (membership of over 2,235 member organisations), Trócaire, UNESCO Chair in Inclusive Physical Education, Sport, Recreation and Fitness MTU - Munster, Technological University, UNICEF Ireland, University of Galway (formerly NUIG), VOICE Ireland, World Vision Ireland, Zero Waste Alliance Ireland.