

Final Executive Summary: NORWAY

INITIAL STEPS TOWARDS THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2030 AGENDA.

VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEW PRESENTED AT THE HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (HLPF),

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The 2030 Agenda: A roadmap for national action and global partnership

Norway regards the 2030 Agenda with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a transformative global roadmap for our national and international efforts aimed at eradicating extreme poverty while protecting planetary boundaries and promoting prosperity, peace and justice. It is a universal agenda, to which all countries and all relevant stakeholders can and must contribute. With the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development and the Paris Agreement on climate change in place, the SDGs will be a powerful driver for national policy action, international cooperation, and collaborative partnerships.

Norway will follow up the 2030 Agenda, nationally and internationally, and in cooperation with other member states. The process of preparing Norway's initial Voluntary National Review (VNR) to the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) has in itself contributed to greater political and public awareness about the SDGs in Norway. The Government has already taken important steps to identify challenges and integrate SDG reporting into the annual budget documents. The Prime Minister is also engaged internationally, as Co-Chair, with the president of Ghana, of the UN Secretary-General's SDG Advocacy Group. This review starts with a summary of key features of Norway's initial national follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda. Details of national and international follow-up are covered in the Policy section, under 'Goals and targets'. This Summary highlights policies, partnerships and practices that Norway believes could be of particular interest to the wider UN membership and stakeholders.

Challenges at the national level

UN reports and various international indexes show that Norway ranks high in terms of global implementation of the SDGs. At the same time, it is evident that implementing the 2030 Agenda will be demanding for Norway, too. The Government has identified a number of targets that pose particular challenges for domestic follow-up in Norway. These challenges relate to several of the SDGs and all three dimensions of sustainable development – social, economic, and environmental. Among the targets that are likely to remain the focus of political attention and policy development are those relating to sustainable consumption and production, health and education, equality, employment, and migration. The Government is giving priority to ensuring quality education and employment, especially for young people and those at risk of marginalisation. This is an important contribution to realising the 2030 Agenda vision of leaving no one behind. Challenges that have been identified at the national level include:

- Reducing non-communicable diseases and promoting mental health
- Increasing high-school completion rates
- Eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls
- Reducing the proportion of young people not in employment, education or training
- Ensuring sustainable infrastructure
- Sustaining income growth of the bottom 40% of the population at a rate higher than the national average
- Improving urban air quality
- Halving food waste and reducing waste generation

- Reducing the impact of invasive alien species
- Reducing all forms of violence and related death rates and combating organised crime.

As for the crucial area of climate change, national follow-up of the Paris Agreement will constitute the main basis for action to fulfil SDG 13. Norway is committed to reducing emissions by at least 40 % by 2030, compared with the 1990 level. Norway is engaged in a dialogue on joint fulfilment of its 2030 commitment together with the EU.

National participation and ownership

Norway regards participatory, inclusive and representative decision-making as fundamental for a well-functioning society. Participation is vital for ensuring the national ownership necessary for effective and transparent follow-up of the SDGs.

At present, 40 % of the members of the Storting (Norwegian parliament) are women. The Storting has debated the post-2015 development agenda and the SDGs several times, most recently in November 2015. The Storting's approval of the annual state and national budget, which are key political documents in the Norwegian democratic system, is required to give the Government the mandate it needs to carry out its policies. Following the adoption of the SDGs in September 2015, the Government developed a plan for national follow-up of the SDGs in Norway, which is linked to the budget process. Responsibility for each of the 17 SDGs is given to a coordinating ministry, which is to consult with other ministries involved in the follow-up of various targets under the goal concerned. Each ministry is to report on the status of follow-up for its respective goal(s) in its budget proposal. The Ministry of Finance will then sum up the main points in the national budget white paper, which is presented to the Storting annually, along with the state budget. This ensures annual reporting on the follow-up of the SDGs to the Storting, in a well-established process.

The indigenous peoples' assembly, the Sámediggi (Sami Parliament), will be involved through dialogue with the line ministries and formal consultation mechanisms. The Government will also make use of existing mechanisms for cooperation with local and regional authorities. Dialogue and partnerships with stakeholders including civil society, the business sector and academia is an enduring feature of the Norwegian political and democratic system in all relevant policy areas. The Government will continue to benefit from consultations with stakeholders in the SDG follow-up process. Engagement with the private sector and business will be important, including in achieving scaled-up implementation and financing with a view to realising the SDGs at global level. As far as spreading knowledge about the SDGs is concerned, the recommendation by the Ministry of Education to include the SDGs as part of the curriculum in schools is valuable.

A commitment to international solidarity to eradicate poverty and protect planetary boundaries

Norway has a long tradition of solidarity with developing and vulnerable countries, including through its provision of support for the UN and fulfilment of the target to allocate at least 0.7% of Gross National Income (GNI) to official development assistance (ODA). The commitment to work for poverty eradication and provide ODA, currently at around 1% of Norway's GNI, continues to enjoy broad political and popular support. Norway's international follow-up of the SDGs and the global partnership in SDG 17 are discussed in this review.

Effective implementation also requires financing in the form of domestic resource mobilisation and tax collection, as well as business and private sector investments. Norway will continue to promote

technology and knowledge transfer; open trade and market access; and capacity building to ensure effective and accountable governance institutions and respect for the rule of law and human rights.

Gender equality and rights for women and girls, access to education and health for all, and a human rights-based approach, are crucial factors for reducing extreme poverty and creating equal opportunities for all, including people with disabilities, indigenous peoples, and marginalised groups. These policies are essential if we are to “leave no one behind” in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Examples of Norwegian priorities and partnerships in these areas include:

- Increasing ODA for *education*, with a special focus on girls’ education, education in emergencies and education quality
- Maintaining a high level of investments in global *health*, in particular efforts to improve maternal health and reduce child mortality
- Working in *partnerships*, including with the private sector, Every Woman Every Child, the vaccine alliance GAVI, and the Global Partnership on Education (GPE)
- Engaging in partnerships under the UN, World Bank and other organisations to strengthen women’s rights and *gender equality* in economic, social and political life, which is crucial for economic development and growth.

Sustainable natural resource management and climate change mitigation and adaptation are priority areas for Norway. Integrating climate and environment concerns into all our SDG follow-up efforts is key to achieving lasting sustainable development results.

Addressing the responsible use and protection of oceans and marine environments is particularly pressing. This is important for Norway and other coastal states, whose livelihoods and welfare depend on the sea. Clean oceans and seas are a global common good, and crucially linked to the efforts to address climate change and reduce CO₂ emissions through the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement. Healthy oceans are key to the ‘blue economy’. Fisheries are a growing source of global nutrition and food security, while shipping trade routes are vital for global trade and hence for economic growth. Norway has established integrated ecosystem-based management plans for its sea areas. In May 2016, the Storting (Norwegian parliament) adopted a Norwegian Action Plan for Biodiversity, aimed at achieving the Aichi targets, and debated a new white paper on securing an efficient and climate-friendly energy supply. Norway will continue to share its experience and assist developing countries’ efforts to manage and protect marine and other natural resources, including fisheries, forests, and energy. The objective must be to promote national welfare as well as global common goods. The UN Convention on the Law of the Sea and other agreements to ensure well-regulated and responsible marine resource management are of fundamental importance in this regard. Examples of Norwegian priorities and partnerships in these areas include:

- Working with Latin American, African, and Asian partners in efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries (REDD+).
- Supporting *climate* financing for vulnerable nations, including LDCs and SIDS, via multilateral mechanisms such as the Green Climate Fund, where Norway is a major donor.
- Support for promoting renewable *energy* in African and Asian countries, and sharing experience in the management of *petroleum* resources, a sector in which Norway is a major exporter.
- Reducing illegal, unreported and unregulated *fishing* as part of sustainable management of fish stocks, including cooperation with Russia in the Barents Sea.
- Stepping up efforts to reduce marine plastic litter and micro-plastics, including through an initiative taken at UNEA, and working with the US and others to make the ‘*Our Ocean*’ process a success.

Integrating SDG 16, connecting peace and poverty

The governance targets embedded in SDG 16 on peace, justice, and strong institutions represent an important innovation and pillar of the 2030 Agenda and they were a key topic in the debate on the SDGs in the Starting in November 2015. Goal 16 is cross cutting and helps integrate the social, economic and environmental dimensions with stability and security issues through its focus on the root causes of poverty, hunger and migration. Peace, justice and freedoms are key elements. In 2015, a white paper on human rights, and another on global security challenges, provided important policy guidance in this regard. Norway will continue to support peace, conflict prevention, and reconciliation efforts – which we see as a crucial foreign policy supplement to humanitarian and development assistance – including in situations of fragility and vulnerability. Examples of Norway’s international engagement include:

- Chair of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee (AHLC) for assistance to the Palestinians. Facilitator, together with Cuba, in the Colombian peace process. Cooperation with the African Union in support of African peacekeeping and capacity building.
- Support to international governance and institution building to promote transparency and accountability, counteract corruption and capital flight, and consolidate the rule of law.
- Work with multilateral, regional and bilateral partners to promote democracy and relevant human rights norms and standards, including by supporting the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and engaging in the Council of Europe.