

Courageously shaping the future together

2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development mid-term review – Picking up more speed

Federal Government decision paper

I. Where we stand

This year marks the **halfway point of the UN resolution “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”**, with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals, that was adopted by the heads of state and government of the 193 UN member states in New York in 2015. Despite some positive developments in specific instances over the past few years, **the international community as a whole still has a long way to go to fulfil the pledges made in 2015 to improve prospects for present and future generations and to leave no one behind.**

The **challenges** involved in implementing the 2030 Agenda are multifaceted. At **global level**, the climate crisis, species loss and environmental pollution, the massive use of resources, Russia’s illegal war of aggression against Ukraine and its repercussions, and the impact of the coronavirus pandemic are **interconnected**. What we need are fundamental changes if we are to enhance crisis prevention and strengthen crisis resilience and adaptability. For this, a systemic and comprehensive assessment is needed, just like the one that forms the foundation of the 2030 Agenda. Crisis resilience and sustainable development are inextricably linked. Social inequalities jeopardise social cohesion. To promote prosperity and progress, economic development must be sustainable, just and inclusive. Challenges do not stop at borders, either national borders or the boundaries between the remits of individual ministries.

The aim is to set the **political and social course** for sustainable development, i.e. economically, ecologically and socially viable development, for all generations and all genders. The challenges facing us in this context are not only technical and economic; we are also faced by a tremendous social, cultural and societal task. Only if we make use of the creative energies of all sections of society will we succeed in transforming our world towards sustainability. We all need to work together to achieve this. This applies to the Federal Government, the *Länder* and the municipalities, as well as the European and international levels. Germany is in a good position to manage this key transformation task and to use it as an opportunity to enhance prosperity, progress and innovative capacity.

The **German Sustainable Development Strategy** constitutes the central political framework for implementing the 2030 Agenda. **Sustainable development is the guiding principle for the Federal Government.** During the current legislative term, therefore, the Federal Government has already taken important decisions to ensure progress towards sustainable development. In future, the SDGs and the goals and principles of the German Sustainable Development Strategy

will feed into the planning and drafting of laws and regulations from the outset. The Federal Government will continue to evolve the German Sustainable Development Strategy up until the end of 2024 with a view to making it more effective and more binding, as envisaged in the coalition agreement.

In September 2022, with the aim of shaping the transformation in Germany together, the State Secretaries' Committee for Sustainable Development established **seven interministerial Transformation Teams** to find solutions. In addition, the Federal Government has founded the **“Alliance for Transformation”**. In this dialogue format, the Federal Government joins with leading representatives of the business community, trade unions, associations, academia and civil society to discuss key areas of transition and joint measures to ensure a **successful transformation**.

Only if we make this decade the **Decade of Transformation**, the **Decade of Action** for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, will we achieve the goals set forth in the 2030 Agenda.

II. What we are doing – Sustainability is working

The German Sustainable Development Strategy makes demands of all policy fields.

Work in connection with the Strategy currently focuses on **six areas of transformation** (numbered 1–6 below) where there is a particular need for further progress towards sustainable development and an integrated approach, as well as overarching **levers** (numbers 7 ff.) building an important framework for sustainable development. What follows is an overview, with examples, of what the Federal Government wants to achieve in these nine areas, what it has already done in concrete terms, and what is planned for the future.¹

1. Human wellbeing and capabilities, social justice

We want to strengthen social inclusion and enable people to help shape the transformation towards sustainability. For everyone to be in a position to do this, we want, among other things, to expand sustainable possibilities for formal and informal education in all phases of life as well as for basic, further and continuing training. In addition, we want to strengthen basic, higher and vocational education, gender-transformative education and education in conflict and crisis contexts worldwide. In this context, our actions are guided at all times by the “leave no one behind” (LNOB) principle enshrined in the 2030 Agenda – the principle of active, self-determined participation in society for everyone. We want to integrate the social dimension of sustainability more strongly in general into all areas of transformation of the German Sustainable Development Strategy and to ensure that the planned measures are designed in a socially acceptable and gender-equitable way. We want to highlight the connection between health and wellbeing, ecology and social justice better at interministerial level. We want to orient the

¹ Any additional financial or personnel requirements deriving from this decision are to be covered under existing budget lines when drawing up the relevant Federal budget, to the extent that they are measures that fall under the Federation's remit.

Federal Government's strategies and funding guidelines more towards promoting the social dimension of sustainability.

We have completely redesigned basic cover for jobseekers with the introduction of citizen's benefit, increased the focus on further education and training and sustainable employment, and improved equal opportunities and social inclusion at national level. In order to pass on knowledge and skills, we have introduced numerous measures in the field of basic, further and continuing training. For example, education support under the Federal Training Assistance Act (BAföG) makes it possible to provide individual financial support for students and school pupils undergoing education eligible for funding. With the Continuing Education Act, we have introduced a training guarantee and once again substantially strengthened the labour-market-policy funding instruments for further training for employees. The National Action Plan on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is being implemented within the framework of the National ESD Platform. We have provided intensive support for the actual implementation of equal rights for women and men. For example, with the "*Plan FüPo 2025*" (leadership positions 2025 plan), we have launched an interministerial process that has already brought about a marked increase in the number of women in leadership positions.

We will strengthen the participation of all generations by, among other things, drawing up a strategy against loneliness. By dint of the National Action Plan for Child and Youth Participation and the National Action Plan – New Opportunities for Children in Germany, we will enable children and young people to play a stronger part in the transformation of society. We will continue to actively support the *Länder* as they prepare for the legal entitlement to all-day education and care for primary school children, which will be introduced grade by grade as of 2026. We will use existing structures to build up future-oriented skills and key skills via education for sustainable development and to promote social innovations. Social innovations are to be harnessed for the proactive, innovation-driven shaping of processes of change towards sustainable development. With the "*Lebenschancen-BAföG*" (Life Chances BAföG), a new funding instrument is to be created that will support self-determined continuing education. In addition, employees are to be offered financial support for labour-market-related further training within the framework of paid leave for training or a period of part-time work combined with training. The intention here is to strengthen workers' employability in times of accelerated structural change. In order to realise a "culture of sustainability" with broad support within society, we will communicate the goals of the German Sustainable Development Strategy in a comprehensive and target-group-oriented manner. To drive the transformation in the field of culture as well, we are setting up a "Green Culture contact point". We will look at the question of equality in the environmental transformation and integrate gender equality more as a cross-cutting issue in all relevant policy fields. At federal level, we will further intensify interministerial cooperation. Given our experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic, one focus in this context will be on Health in All Policies (HiAP). In the medium to long term, we will develop a roadmap for the HiAP approach, which looks at the health effects of political measures across sectors. Similarly, we will advance the One Health approach in order to improve the management of health risks at the human-animal-environment interface and especially at global level. We will also advocate for

the successful conclusion of negotiations on an international pandemic treaty and, building on existing structures, including the Pandemic Fund, will support sustainably funded pandemic prevention, preparedness and response.

2. Advancing the energy transition and climate action

We want Germany and the EU to make a fair contribution to the global task that is climate change mitigation. We want to shape the energy transition and the transformation to a greenhouse-gas-neutral economy in a sustainable, i.e. economically, socially and environmentally compatible way. The accelerated, efficient and cross-sectoral transformation of our energy system towards climate neutrality, in particular renewable energies and greater energy efficiency, and the increased involvement of consumers in the energy transition are key building blocks for renewing our prosperity. At international level, we want to contribute proactively to meeting the targets of the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda, not least by financing and strengthening climate change mitigation, biodiversity conservation and energy transition targets in our partner countries.

We have, since the beginning of the legislative term, very rapidly reduced obstacles to the expansion of renewables and the grid infrastructure, introduced measures to increase energy efficiency and adapt to the impact of climate change, and developed and implemented forward-looking instruments for the decarbonisation of industry. This has enabled us to establish key preconditions for the further decoupling of economic growth and greenhouse gas emissions. The volume of onshore wind turbine capacity that actually came on stream was approx. 1.5 GW in the first half of 2023, just over 50 percent higher than in the same period in the preceding year. In the case of photovoltaics, the increase, at over 75 percent, is even greater. Within the scope of the Federal Climate Change Act, we regularly review progress on the transformation in all sectors and make adjustments in keeping with a multiannual, cross-sectoral overall account. With the Federal Climate Adaptation Act, we are for the first time creating a strategic framework for preventive adaptation to climate change at all administrative levels. We successfully advocated for the introduction of the European Emissions Trading System 2 (ETS 2), a milestone in European climate policy, to tie further EU greenhouse gas emissions beyond the existing ETS 1 to ever smaller emissions allowances from 2027. In bilateral and multilateral climate and energy partnerships with countries around the world, we continue to support the development of needs-oriented renewable energy systems and the expansion of production capacities and international value chains for green hydrogen, among other things.

We will, in order to achieve our ambitious energy transition and climate action targets, also strengthen German industry's capacity to innovate, promote climate-friendly industrial plants, expand renewable energies and the necessary infrastructure even more, put in place efficient incentives to reduce greenhouse gases, and improve consumers' energy efficiency. For example, we will create the preconditions for green lead markets in order, for instance, to create demand for green products at an early stage through public procurement and minimum standards for climate-friendly products and to incentivise relevant innovation and investment. We will develop an instrument mix for the successful ramp-up of green hydrogen in order to attain the

new target of at least 10 GW of domestic electrolysis capacity by 2030 for the production of green hydrogen while simultaneously ensuring competitive prices. Furthermore, we are drawing up a Carbon Management Strategy that will provide the framework for the capture, utilisation and storage of carbon dioxide (CCU and CCS) in Germany. We will also look at the social impacts of the energy transition and, in particular, protect vulnerable households. We will continue to work on heightening global ambitions in terms of climate action and biodiversity conservation and on adaptation to climate change, in line with the targets of the Paris Agreement. Our goal of making at least six billion euro available from budget funds for reduction and adaptation measures in emerging economies and developing countries by 2025 at the latest was met early – in 2022, when we provided 6.3 billion euro. We will further implement the programme of natural climate action, thereby combining climate action and nature conservation. The programme ensures that ecosystems such as forests and seas are strengthened, rehabilitated and preserved. They thus help to mitigate climate change and remain as habitats for plants and animals. By 2026, we will have a total of four billion euro available for the various measures, and we will launch funding programmes in this area. In addition, as set forth in the programme of natural climate action, we will make necessary adjustments to the regulatory framework, step up our research activities, improve monitoring and implement further collateral measures.

3. Achieving a circular economy

We want to set the course for a circular economy, working together with the business community and civil society. Resource-efficient circular economic management is also to become a driver of climate action and biodiversity conservation – at both the national and the international level. At the same time, it helps to resolve the problems of scarcity and dependence by ensuring resource security. We want to make use of the huge value creation potential for new technologies, innovations and enhancing competitiveness, not least in the SME sector.

We have taken steps to gradually decouple economic growth from resource consumption. We have launched numerous initiatives at national, European and international level to strengthen the circular economy. They are programmatic and regulatory in nature and relate to specific source streams, sectors and product groups. We have enhanced Germany's pioneering role in waste recycling: Germany continues to have the highest recycling rates in the world. During the German G7 Presidency in 2022, the G7 members adopted the Berlin Roadmap, which is intended to strengthen cooperation within the G7 on the circular economy in the coming years and which for the first time links these issues with climate action.

We will adopt a National Circular Economy Strategy in 2024 with binding, ambitious targets and appropriate measures up to 2045 as the foundation for the transformation to a circular economy. The National Circular Economy Strategy aims to reduce consumption of primary raw materials absolutely, to enable largely closed material cycles and, going beyond this, to make clear the circular economy's contribution to climate change mitigation, competitiveness and new business models. We will improve the market conditions for secondary raw materials in order to substantially increase their share in raw materials utilisation, improve resource efficiency and advance product design oriented to lastability, reparability and circularity. We will create the

necessary environment for the transformation to be effected in an unbureaucratic, fair and socially equitable way, so that sustainable consumption is and remains affordable for all consumers. The business and scientific communities, academia and civil society, as well as the *Länder* and municipalities, will be involved in implementing the Strategy.

4. Strengthening sustainable building and the transformation of transportation

We want towns and cities that are climate-neutral and climate-resilient, that safeguard resources and conserve biodiversity, that serve the common good and thus promote social cohesion, and where sustainable mobility is assured. Only if we approach building, housing, transport and urban development, with all their different utilisation requirements, as an ensemble will we be able to make the necessary contribution towards achieving the SDGs and minimising land take.

We have promoted resource-efficient, sustainable building by simplifying and digitalising planning procedures, supporting construction using sustainable raw materials as well as serial and modular construction, and looking at the entire life cycle. To this end, we support resource-efficient, affordable new builds and attach greater value to the rehabilitation, reconstruction and conversion of existing buildings. To meet our climate targets, we are working to ensure that municipal heat planning takes place nationwide and that heating networks are expanded in Germany; when it comes to mobility, we are aiming for systems that are environmentally and climate-friendly, space-saving and at the same time accessible and affordable for all sections of the population. Since its introduction, eleven million people have subscribed to the “*Deutschlandticket*”. This has attracted over a million new customers to local public transport within a very short space of time. The Federation supports the *Länder*, which are responsible for local public transport, with regionalisation funding amounting to ten billion euro annually. The funding increases by three percent each year, meaning additional money for local public transport, so that it can keep making attractive offers in the long term. Under the Clean Air immediate action programme, the Federal Government supports the establishment of electric mobility in Germany’s towns and cities through, inter alia, the funding guideline for electric mobility and the funding guideline for charging infrastructure. Thus the Federal Government has been able to support almost 380 electrification projects under the immediate action programme, with total funding in excess of 250 million euro.

We will create quality public spaces through our urban planning programmes that strengthen social integration and take climate change adaptation and heat protection into consideration. To that end, we are working, for example, on a heat protection strategy in urban development. Not least as part of a preventive adaptation strategy with measurable targets, we are committed to quality blue-green infrastructure in city centres; we will implement sustainable landscape development outside municipal boundaries via sound regional planning. We support municipalities by means of innovative projects that advance the combined social and ecological transformation. We create digital solutions to organise mobility in a smart, interconnected, efficient and climate-friendly way. We will shape the transformation in drive technologies through progress and openness in electric mobility with battery, hydrogen and fuel cell technology, and renewable fuels like e-fuels. We are creating attractive, persuasive and affordable

mobility services. That is why local public transport is to be strengthened through an expansion and modernisation compact. We are rehabilitating the rail network and gradually introducing the “*Deutschlandtakt*“ (nationally integrated rail planning). We are promoting cycling and will make Germany into a country of bikes.

5. Shift to sustainable agricultural and food systems

We want to secure the lasting basis for healthy, adequate and sustainable food and access to it by transforming agricultural and food systems, by protecting the environment and the climate and by introducing collateral measures to enable farmers to operate in an economically viable way. Attention will be paid to protecting biodiversity and to the negative effects of deforestation.

We have therefore taken measures in the following areas, among others: climate action and climate change adaptation, biodiversity, animal husbandry, measures to strengthen organic farming as an agricultural policy principle for sustainable agriculture, healthy food, reduction of food waste, rural areas, protection of water resources, and fisheries. For example, the start of the new European Union Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) from 2023 marks a step towards transformation whose effectiveness must be evaluated and if necessary fine-tuned in the ongoing CAP. For the further development of the CAP from 2027 onwards, we will present a concept for how direct payments can be replaced by appropriate rewards for work for the climate and environment. By introducing mandatory animal welfare labelling for foodstuffs of animal origin, we have laid the foundations for improved transparency for customers. In addition, the labelling highlights the performance of farmers who keep their livestock in bigger spaces and let them out in the open air more often. We have successfully lobbied for a legally binding rule preventing the import of products and raw materials linked to deforestation.

We will continue to work with stakeholders to shape the transformation. In this context, we will strengthen sustainable perspectives for developing countries and emerging economies, promote sustainable and resilient agriculture and food systems in those countries, and cooperate with multilateral forums such as the G7, G20, United Nations, FAO, WTO and OECD. We must avoid unwanted cross-border repercussions such as negative spillover and leakage effects. Furthermore, we are committed to a rules-based, free trade system that takes effective account of sustainability goals, for example by supporting consumption of and trade in sustainable, and in particular deforestation-free, agricultural raw materials. On trade policy, with the aim of swiftly implementing trade agreements, we are guided by the Federal Government’s trade policy parameters, the European Commission’s trade policy and the new approach to strengthen and more effectively implement environmental, social and human rights protection, including through dialogue, mediation and reaction mechanisms. The EU should, together with the Member States, offer support and incentives to partner countries with a view to effectively implementing sustainability standards. We will make gender equity a special focus in national and international contexts and give young people a greater say in the political discourse. To this end, we will continue and expand existing formats for young people to participate in decision-making processes, for instance in workshops and conferences. We will further strengthen the

social protection and economic position of women in agriculture, as well as the position of women in global supply chains.

6. Commitment to a pollutant-free environment

We want to enhance protection of people and the environment against pollution in such a way as to preserve the boundaries of our planet's resilience and guarantee a high level of protection for people and the environment. With that in mind, we want to act in a precautionary manner and identify integrative, fair, cross-border solutions, e.g. to the problem of plastic pollution. In addition, along with the European Commission, we are pursuing the goals of the EU Green Deal for a pollutant-free environment, in particular the zero pollution action plan, the EU chemicals strategy for sustainability and the EU circular economy action plan for a non-toxic environment.

We have, in the Environmental Specimen Bank and the German Environmental Survey on health, effective instruments that enable us to regularly examine the occurrence of pollutants in the population and the environment, to check whether regulations are having the desired success and to identify any further need for regulation. As the current president of SAICM, we are moreover raising global awareness of the responsible handling of chemicals, including chemical waste, that still too often end up in the environment.

We will seek to realise the transformation to safe, sustainable chemicals, materials, production processes and products and, to this end, will step up research and strengthen Germany as a production centre. At international level, we support the formation of a World Chemicals Council, a scientific body that makes independent recommendations for action with a view to aligning ecological, economic and social aspects in the best possible way. Such advice from the Science-Policy Panel is a key to bringing about the necessary shift in mindset regarding the management of chemicals and waste.

7. Shoulder international responsibility, strengthen cooperation

We want to continue to assume global responsibility and are committed to ensuring that all people around the world are able to live in security and dignity in an intact environment. Multilateral alliances for the accelerated implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement, as well as the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, are crucial in this context. Germany remains committed to strengthening the free international order based on the Charter of the United Nations, universal human rights and international law. The UN Summit of the Future planned for September 2024 is a major opportunity for that, and we want to continue to take a leading role in this important process.

We have therefore already established a feminist foreign and development policy for just, peaceful, strong societies worldwide. We are thus tackling the causes of structural inequalities; reducing such inequalities will give a substantial boost to the 2030 Agenda as a whole. Equality is a human right and the basis for successful change.

We will continue to work in European and international forums and with our partner countries to drive forward the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in the second half. At the UN Summit of the Future, for which Germany is leading the negotiations along with Namibia, we will advocate for strengthening multilateralism, accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and reforming the international financial architecture. In addition, the pact for the future to be adopted at the Summit is to address pressing international issues which are as yet not regulated, or not regulated adequately (e.g. digital cooperation, involvement of young people/future generations, New Agenda for Peace). In order to advance reform of the international financial architecture, we also support the convening of a Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development in 2025. Sustainable financing for development is an important lever for implementing the 2030 Agenda. The SDG funding shortfall, put at around 500 billion US dollars up to 2023 by the UN Secretary-General, covers many issues, from climate change mitigation and biodiversity conservation to food security and protection of public health. Within the scope of existing budget funds, the Federal Government wants to help ensure that this shortfall is made up if at all possible. Both public and private financial flows should be oriented coherently to the SDGs in order to promote socio-ecological transformation and climate-resilient development internationally. In this connection, our key reference framework is the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. In order to achieve the SDGs, we need new global partnerships built on trust. With the Hamburg Sustainability Conference, we want to bring together government representatives from the Global South and the Global North, along with leading minds from the private sector, academia, civil society and international organisations, to develop joint solutions for the necessary social and ecological transformation. The conference will take place for the first time in Hamburg in June 2024. Together with other shareholders, we are pushing reform of the World Bank Group and working on a blueprint for the entire system of multilateral development banks. The World Bank should orient its work more towards protecting and providing global public goods, in particular climate, biodiversity, pandemic prevention, preparedness and response, and the promotion of peace and security. We are also committed to attaining the ODA quota (ODA as a proportion of gross national income) of 0.7 percent again in upcoming years. In line with the 2030 Agenda, we will increasingly look for synergies between sectorally-oriented international processes. This applies to our engagement in implementing the results of the UN Food Systems Summit, the Global Disability Summit in 2025 or, for example, the three Rio Conventions (Framework Convention on Climate Change, Convention on Biological Diversity, Convention to Combat Desertification). Shouldering global responsibility also means paying more attention to the international impact of German policies in order to harness positive effects and avoid negative ones. We will tackle the global challenges relating to water and drive the shift from a global water crisis to a world in which water is a sustainable resource and the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation is guaranteed for all. To this end, we will support vulnerable states in particular in finding tailored solutions, but we will also engage at global level. We will use the momentum from the 2023 UN Water Conference to hasten the international implementation of SDG 6 and the water-related goals of the 2030 Agenda. The regular international process mandated as a result of the Conference, with its initial conference in 2026, will play an important role here.

8. Orient finances coherently and comprehensively to sustainability

We want to ensure the viability of public finances through stability-oriented financial policy and at the same time to support the transformation to a future-proof economy and society, strengthen the target- and impact-oriented approach in relation to the sustainability goals in the federal budget, and make Germany an international leader in establishing sustainable finance.

We have oriented financial policy more towards the goal of resilient, viable public finances by adhering to the regular credit ceiling of the debt rule in the 2023 federal budget and the draft 2024 budget, with the financial plan up to 2027, and by reducing deficits and the national debt ratio. In this way, we are making possible sustainable financial policy, strengthening the scope for action in financial policy, promoting citizens' and companies' confidence in the state and mobilising the private investment needed for self-sustaining economic growth that is crucial for our prosperity tomorrow. Sustainable public finances are a key prerequisite for "sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth" (SDG 8). Furthermore, we have markedly increased future-oriented investment in the federal budget in recent years. Thus the nominal level of investment in the draft 2024 federal budget is around 40 percent above the pre-crisis level. Investment has increased in real terms, too. With the help of two budget analyses (10th and 11th Spending Reviews), we have begun to strengthen the target- and impact-oriented approach in relation to the sustainability goals in the federal budget, even beyond consistent adherence to the debt rule and a high level of public investment. In addition, we have laid important foundations in the area of sustainable finance, e.g. with the successful establishment and expansion of the issue of green federal securities, the further development of the investment of the federal civil-service pension fund in keeping with the goal of the Paris Agreement, or the establishment of the International Sustainability Standards Board (ISSB) in Frankfurt as the key standard-setter for global sustainability reporting. Sustainable finance is to strengthen sustainability and stability in the financial system by correctly assessing the financial opportunities and risks of the transformation and mobilising investment to make production processes, supply chains and business models, as well as financial systems, future-proof and more resilient.

We will consistently continue along the path we have embarked upon – a path of stability-oriented financial policy. At the same time, despite the challenging fiscal framework, we will continue to set consistent priorities in the financial plan years up to 2027 in order to strengthen public investment and commit to a targeted supply-side policy. Furthermore, we will conclude the ongoing Spending Review to improve the impact orientation of the federal budget with a focus on sustainability, carry out a stocktake on the implementation of the German Sustainable Finance Strategy in the second half of 2023, and, building on the recommendations of the Sustainable Finance Advisory Committee (www.sustainable-finance-beirat.de), implement a Sustainable Finance Strategy with international reach before the end of this legislative term, advocate for the enhanced practicality and coherence of the sustainable finance regulation at EU level, and help shape work in international working groups such as the G20 Sustainable Finance Working Group.

9. Consistently leveraging research, innovation and digitisation

We want to resolutely drive sustainability through research, innovation and digitisation, thereby using sustainable development as an opportunity for new innovation and value added. We want to intensify the use of data in administration so that government action is evidence-based in the spirit of sustainable development. Together with society and the business community, we also want to use the advantages of the digital transformation to promote sustainability in order to hasten the transition to a sustainable form of development, and in particular in order to manage the challenges in the fields of energy and environment policy. If used in a targeted manner, for instance through the use of immersive technologies, digitisation can enhance efficiency and reductions in energy consumption and carbon emissions. By promoting digital twins and immersive technologies, we are helping to reduce resource consumption. In this context, we want to ensure through targeted sustainable economic activity that the amount of energy and resources needed for the digital transformation itself is kept as low as possible, for example through the rapid changeover from copper to optical fibre networks and the accelerated expansion of 5G networks. We want to minimise the risk of discrimination and unfair disadvantages by scoring systems and artificial intelligence (AI) by laying down relevant rules in an AI regulation. At the same time, we want to recognise and leverage the full potential inherent in AI. What is needed is a balance between openness to innovation and a framework that defines standards for trustworthy AI.

We have greatly expanded research and innovation for sustainability since the launch of the 2030 Agenda and have developed measures that contribute directly to attaining the SDGs. With the publication of the Research for Sustainability (FONA) Strategy, the focus of research funding was shifted to research in the fields of climate, the environment, resources and energy and to the transformation of cities and regions. With the Future Research and Innovation Strategy, the Federal Government is reorienting its research and innovation policy, thereby also contributing to sustainable development. Through the Gigabit Strategy, we have made an important contribution to sustainability in telecommunications and to accelerating the digital transformation. Modern optical fibre and mobile networks can play a key role in combating climate change. On the one hand, their carbon footprint is smaller than that of alternative, older technologies and networks. On the other, they enable new applications that can reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Investment in gigabit networks is investment in sustainability, especially if it takes place within a network architecture that also takes account of future increases in demand and future quality requirements. We have committed to proactively shaping the digital transformation and to establishing standards for sustainable digitisation, i.e. digitisation that balances economic, social and environmental aspects, at the national, EU and international levels. We have strengthened civil-society participation in shaping the framework for digitisation by supporting the DIN Consumer Council, which represents consumer interests in standardisation processes of relevance to consumers, including in the area of digitisation.

We will address the SDGs even more as a cross-cutting issue in research and innovation policy activities. Specifically, this means we will use the SDGs as a framework for new systemic and mission-oriented approaches to innovation. We will use the Global Digital Compact, which will

be adopted at the Summit for the Future in 2024, to link the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with goals and measures to enhance the opportunities and minimise the risks associated with digitisation. Before the end of this year, we will present draft recommendations for action on the sustainable expansion and operation of gigabit networks. Our objective: policymakers, administrative authorities and businesses are to be provided with aids to decision-making that illustrate how sustainability aspects can be integrated into network expansion and operation in order to meet the future requirements of an application side that is in the midst of a process of transformation in climate policy.

III. Highlighting the sustainability principle even more as a guiding principle

The priority now must be to **pick up more speed** and **apply the sustainability principle consistently as a guiding principle in politics and society**. In order to be able to lead a good life in Germany in the long term, there needs to be a **comprehensive transformation**, both economic and societal.

Germany as a sustainable and therefore resilient community is the best answer to climate, energy and raw materials crises in the world. The aim is to maintain our prosperity for the long term and to ensure that our economic activity and our lives are not to the detriment of the natural world, future generations or people in other countries.

This requires that policymaking be **consistently oriented to sustainable development** not only as an overarching guiding principle but, in keeping with the whole-of-government approach, as an effective **cross-cutting principle** in all policy fields. The foundation for this is the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Federal Government is exercising this formative task with policies consistently oriented to sustainability – both for the here and now and for future generations.