



## Sharing responsibility – shaping the future together

*State Secretaries' Committee for Sustainable Development  
Declaration of 24 April 2017*

By adopting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015, world leaders clearly affirmed the shared responsibility of all countries to improve prospects for present and future generations around the globe.

The agreement on the 2030 Agenda showed that global solidarity on the key challenges of our time is possible. Shaping our world in a sustainable way is currently the most ambitious project that involves all countries and enables them to build on a unique formal consensus. The 2030 Agenda thus creates invaluable opportunities for cooperation and prospects for the future.

### I.

In April 1987, the Brundtland Commission published its groundbreaking final report, in which it defined sustainable development as “*development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*”. Today, 30 years later, more and more countries are adopting sustainable development measures based on the 2030 Agenda. The international community is thus responding to the greatest challenge of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, that is, to enable everyone to live in dignity without destroying our planet.

In many areas, this requires a fundamental change in our behaviour. This change demands a great deal from us. However, it also creates tremendous opportunities if we tackle it together with courage, intelligence and imagination. Good sustainability policy unleashes significant national and international economic potential by fostering sustainable innovations and investment in promising technologies and companies, thus creating and safeguarding jobs for the long term. Such policy strengthens social cohesion if economic change processes go hand in hand with social improvements that are based on the principle of justice, include people at all stages of life, ensure gender equality and leave no one behind. Good sustainability policy safeguards the natural basis of our lives by respecting our planet’s ecological limits.

### II.

Along with opportunities and progress in the field of sustainability, the world is faced with a large number of crises. In part, a desire for simple and purely national answers is growing in response to the imminent changes and the complexity of global interdependence.

However, famines, pandemics, financial crises, climate change, terrorism, wars and refugee flows show clearly that the great challenges of our time are complex and do not stop at our national borders. In the final analysis, many current crises and problems are also caused by non-adherence to the principle of sustainable development. Shifting our tasks to future generations or other regions in the world is unfair and cannot lead to success in the long term. It will only be possible to create lasting prosperity, achieve peace and ulti-

mately safeguard humankind's survival on this planet if ways of living and doing business are based on sustainable development.

Sustainability is both a visionary and a rational answer to how we can make globalisation fair. Far more unites people around the world than separates them. We all share responsibility for the future of humankind. We will only be able to solve the problems of this world by working together – for the benefit of present and future generations. The United Nations has a key role to play here. The European Union and other cooperation forums such as the G7 and the G20 can and must make important contributions to this, too.

Now in particular, sustainable development policy thus requires not less, but rather more cooperation at local, regional, national and international level. This policy does not conceal or ignore the complexity of the world and its scientific facts. Instead, it explains this complexity honestly and takes it into account by providing ambitious and transparent solutions. The 2030 Agenda gives stakeholders the opportunity to join forces in a new way on the basis of a jointly agreed foundation and to build trust in and among one another through their achievements. In this way, it can help to resolve conflicts. It makes concrete progress its benchmark, thus generating trust among the public in the credibility and problem-solving ability of the state.

### III.

Successfully implementing the 2030 Agenda is a necessity, rather than a luxury, particularly at a time when the global political situation is difficult. Along with a willingness to cooperate at international level, successful implementation primarily requires developing and carrying out strong operative concepts. Sustainable development must be upheld as the guiding principle of policies at local, regional, national, European and international level in measures in all policy fields. The 2030 Agenda provides us with a compass for this worldwide that includes all stakeholders and gives them a shared route.

The new version of the German Sustainable Development Strategy adopted by the Federal Government in early 2017 is a first major step on the path to putting the 2030 Agenda into practice in, by and with Germany. The strategy is part of the Federal Government's contributions to global endeavours to achieve sustainable development and an expression of its willingness to take on responsibility for the impact of our actions within and outside Germany's national borders.

We are working both nationally and internationally towards a policy defined by responsibility. We are firmly committed to shaping our world in a sustainable way with our national and international partners so that everyone can lead a good life in an intact environment – now and in the future.