

Agenda 2030

Basic law of sustainability



Sustainable development – What is that, actually?

Today, only what is sustainable is good. The concept of sustainability is now used almost everywhere as a quality feature: sustainable tourism, sustainable agriculture, sustainable development. But what is that, actually: 'sustainability'?

In global terms, 'sustainability' describes the way to keep our earth in balance: on the one hand, our children, grandchildren, and future generations, because they have the same right to a liveable world as we. And on the other hand, referring to the people who populate the earth today. Actually, no one has the right to live at the expense of others. But, unfortunately, that is exactly what is happening: The price of prosperity and the high quality of life of people in some regions of the world is being paid in other regions in the form of underdevelopment, poverty and even hunger. Sustainability is different!

That is why we are referring to sustainable development today when we speak about the best possible way to shape the future of our planet. Achieving this is a challenge to all of us. Whether state or city, society or family, business or association: Only if we all become involved we can preserve our planet as a viable home for generations to come. This is taken up by the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which determine the efforts required to achieve sustainable development. With the three dimensions of sustainable development – the environment, the economy and social affairs – and the necessary good governance, the SDGs are based on a holistic and global approach.

Incidentally: The concept of sustainability was used for the first time over 300 years ago by the German Hans Carl von Carlowitz, who was dealing with the management of forests. 'Only cut as many logs as the forest can handle. As much wood as can regrow' was his motto. Today, Germany is not only one of the world's leading nations when it comes to sustainability. In Germany, sustainability was even invented as a guideline!

Concept and implementation

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Sustainability turnaround

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals are at the heart of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. These 'Global Goals' cover almost the entire range of important development topics, from access to education, clean water and sustainable energy to infrastructure, industry and agriculture, to the protection of biodiversity and the fight against climate change. A total of 169 sub-goals are subordinate to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, some of which provide very detailed information about what exactly lies behind the generally formulated goals.

The goals apply to each signatory state regardless of its level of development. In this sense, Germany is now also a 'developing country' that can and should learn from other states when it comes to achieving its goals. This new understanding is intended to help overcome the old paradigms of dividing the world into 'industrialized' and 'developing' countries, into a hierarchy of 'donor' and 'recipient' countries. The joint effort to achieve the sustainability goals will make partnerships between the 'global north' and the 'global south' possible.

Because human development influences all processes on earth, the place of the human being in its biosphere has to be defined and the entire ecosystem has to be taken into consideration. Accordingly, the SDGs place the human being at their very core and hence organically consider human behavior in its respective environment. This is the meaning of the term 'anthropocene', the period in which we live today.

The 17 goals show how profound the restructuring of our societies must be to find true sustainability. Due to the many cross-connections between goals, they can only be reached comprehensively. Therefore, Sustainable Development Goals delineate a challenging and integrated development project. It applies not only to individual states, but to the whole world. Indeed, nothing less than a 'global sustainability turnaround'.



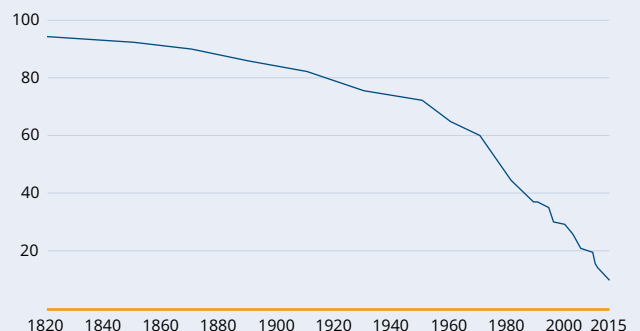
End poverty in all its forms everywhere

The fight against poverty was already pivotal within the Millennial Development Goals. Significant progress has been achieved towards realizing the MDGs in the last 25 years, especially since 2000. For example, between 1990 and 2015, the number of people living in absolute poverty was reduced from 1.9 billion to some 850 million, despite of a rapidly burgeoning world population. Absolute poverty deprives women and men of dignity as well as opportunities for development and the possibility of realizing their sincerest hopes.

The return to an intensified fight against poverty is therefore a superordinate goal of international cooperation. Since 2013, it has again become a central pillar of German development engagement in the poorest countries of the world.

Sound strategies, strong political will and sufficient financial resources can be the cornerstones of significant development in the poorest countries. Therefore, these countries need to establish comprehensive individual strategies for fighting poverty. Furthermore, they need to independently establish and implement steps with the aim of working towards developing their social system and economic order. These strategies must arise in participatory processes, in cooperation between the government and all areas of a committed civil society. Poverty cannot be reduced by solely relying on aid from external actors alone, poverty reduction is known to have the most sustainable result when there is national and local ownership.

Share of world population living in extreme poverty
1820–2015, in %



Source: Our World In Data

In 1960, the proportion of the world's population living in extreme poverty was over 60%; today, it is less than 10%.



End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

Hunger and poverty always go hand-in-hand. Therefore, the first step in overcoming absolute poverty is providing a secure nutritional basis. Great efforts have reduced the number of undernourished people worldwide by more than half since 1990, however over 850 million people still suffer from hunger. Globally, 160 million children under the age of 5 face developmental challenges because of hunger and malnutrition, 16,000 of whom die every day, mostly from preventable causes. This might constitute the biggest scandal in human history.

The Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development of Germany has launched the special initiative 'A World without Hunger', making the elimination of hunger and malnutrition a major priority. The main cause of hunger and malnutrition is less the lack of food in terms of volume, but rather poverty itself which acts as a barrier to accessing nourishment and leads to a vicious cycle of food insecurity.

Frequently, the already fragile food supply in many regions deteriorates due to natural disasters, epidemics and political crises and conflicts. More than 40 countries worldwide are considered fragile, more than half of these countries are in Africa. Considering the world's growing population, it is even more necessary to strengthen people's ability to withstand crises, primarily through the modernization and professionalization of agriculture.

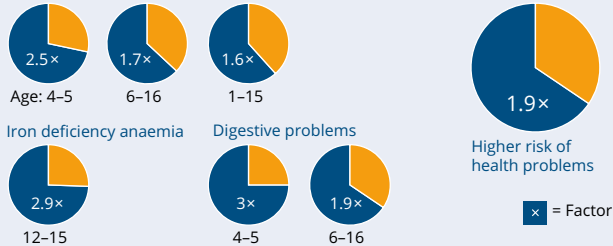
Nutritional insecurity in children

Health problems that are compounded by food insecurity

1 in 6 children suffer from food insecurity = 23.3%



Headache Upper respiratory tract infection



Source: World Food Programme

Children who suffer from food insecurity have a much higher risk of becoming ill. For example, four to five-year-old children suffer from upper respiratory tract infections three times more often than children not affected by food insecurity.



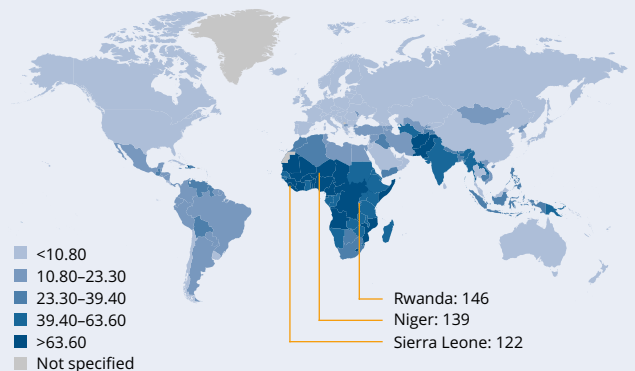
Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

Sustainable development aims for a good and healthy life for all. Without appropriate health care, sustainable development for the benefit of all is not possible. Health is not simply the absence of disease, nor is it an economic or security policy entity; rather, it allows a self-determined life and is thus an important expression of human dignity. It must be remembered that different age groups, social classes and genders have different needs for health care which is becoming increasingly complex and expensive.

Everyone benefits from better health care. The life expectancy of men and women is increasing. Death rates from measles, malaria, tuberculosis or HIV have been declining on a global scale for years. These are not least concrete results of development cooperation. These achievements are examples of what is possible when states, international organizations and private industry work together. For example, infant mortality has also fallen sharply. However, there is still much work to be done to meet this development goal; including ensuring access to adequate health care for the 6 million children under 5 who die every year from lack of access to medications and vaccines. The occurrence of infectious diseases and mortality rates are still determined by the wealth of a society, but also by the individual level of poverty of those affected. Health is everyone's business.

Decrease in infant mortality

in children under the age of five per 1,000 live births since 2000 (as of 2017)



Source: World Bank

In Rwanda, compared with the year 2000, 146 fewer children are now dying before the age of five per 1,000 live births. In 2000, child mortality was still 184/1,000 live births, so child mortality was reduced in this case from 18.4% to 3.8% in 17 years.



Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

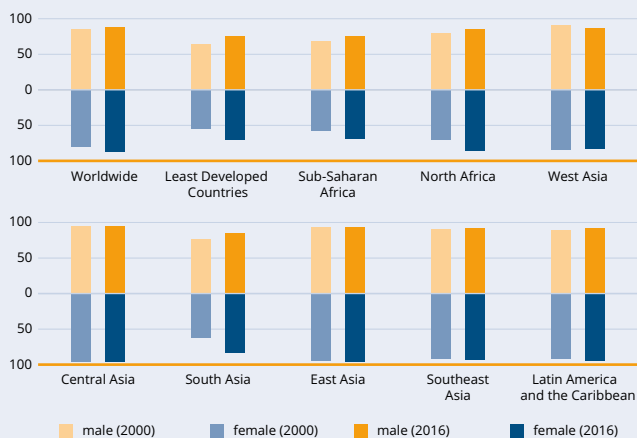
Education is the key to developing a country. Education gives children and young people the opportunity to develop themselves and their talents – and thus find their place in the societies in which they live. Quality education also gives community members the tools to advance positive change in their societies. This works best when the education system is open to all without discrimination based on gender, ethnicity, social class, disability and religious or sexual orientation.

Adults must also be able to continue lifelong education. In the face of rapid technological progress and fast-developing societies, knowledge is anything but static. It must be constantly updated: re-learned. Adult education is therefore particularly important not only in the aging societies of the West, but also the young societies of the global South. In these instances investments into education yield particularly high returns. Sustainability as well as the labour market require a wide range of knowledge and technical skills.

It is important that at least elementary and secondary education are free and of high quality, imparting relevant knowledge and delivering genuine learning success. Thus empowering people to confidently take their lives in their own hands. In short: education must create opportunities for life, unleash potential and enable participation. Therefore, education 'from cradle to grave' is also a human right.

Literacy rate of young people

Women and men between 15 and 24 years, in %



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics

In South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa the literacy rate especially of young females has significantly increased in the last 16 years.



Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

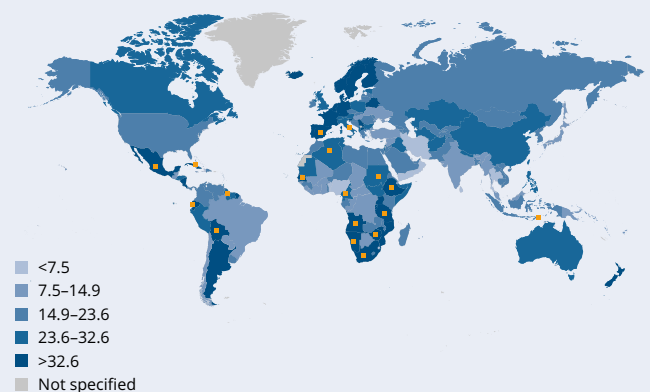
We are still a long way from complete equal treatment of men and women; considering for example the minimal share of women in leadership positions and the continued wage differences between women and men doing the same job in some sectors. Germany and many other countries have made great progress when compared to some other nations where many women and girls live in complete dependence on their husbands and fathers.

Education is a key factor in attaining gender equality. Despite some positive developments that have been made, particularly in primary education over the past 15 years we must note that gender inequality persists worldwide. Women represent a smaller proportion of students at higher levels of education. This can be linked to a lower proportion of women holding higher level occupational positions. Worldwide, women earn 24 percent less than men. Only half of all women in the world are gainfully employed, compared with three-quarters of all men. Public and private decision-making processes are still dominated by men worldwide.

Therefore, to achieve the goals detailed in SDG 5, a holistic global strategy will be necessary, incorporating: education, health care, and poverty alleviation goals. Only by addressing these challenges comprehensively can centuries of practiced discrimination against women and girls be overcome.

Percentage of national parliamentary seats held by women

■ Increase since 2000: 15% and more



Source: World Bank

It is striking that in southern Africa and Central America in particular, a large increase in women's national parliamentary seats has been recorded since 2000. By contrast, Asia and North America continue to stagnate at a low to medium level.



Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

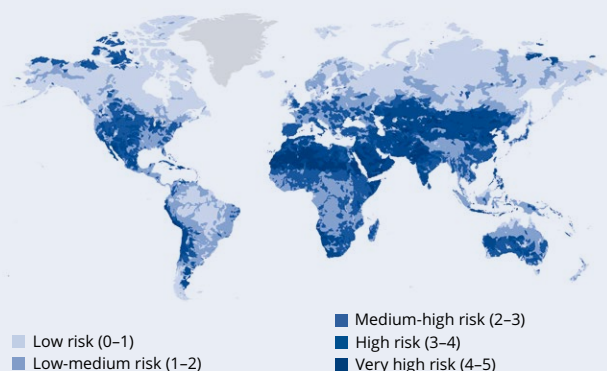
Some ten percent of the world's population live without clean drinking water. One-third lack a basic sewage system. The health consequences and effects on groundwater quality are serious. In addition, many of those affected are forced to relieve themselves in public. Women and girls are disproportionately affected by lack of access to clean water and sanitary facilities. Of course, the lack of clean water also affects agriculture and the food supply.

The problem is not just technical, but also cultural. The subject of sanitary facilities is still taboo in many parts of the world. Education on hygiene measures is therefore one of the most important instruments in preventing disease.

The private sector can also contribute towards protecting water sources. Good water management in the production process can save much valuable water; filters as well as wastewater treatment plants keep water clean. Overall, the protection of water and its associated ecosystems, such as mountains or forests, is essential to the quality and availability of clean water.

This goal is closely linked to other SDGs such as climate change, infrastructure development and the fight against poverty. Due to the deep interconnections and many cross-cutting elements among the SDGs, they will only be achieved through holistic and comprehensive approaches.

Water risk



Source: World Resources Institute

The water risk identifies areas that are exposed to water-related risks. Water risk can vary significantly within regions. For example, while southern Chile has a particularly low water risk, northern Chile suffers from a very high water risk.



Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

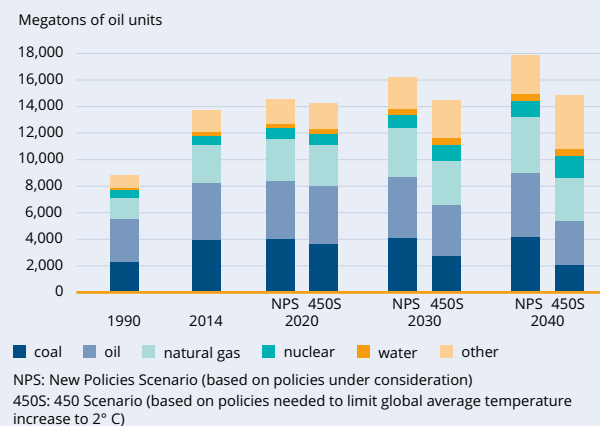
Electricity from the socket for the fridge, stove, washing machine, computer, etc.; illuminated buildings and streets; a heated home; travelling by train, bus, car or e-bike, we take these everyday circumstances for granted. Almost everything we use and buy requires energy. Our prosperity depends on a modern, reliable and affordable energy supply.

Twenty percent of the world's population lives without electricity. Forty percent of the world's population cook and heat with wood, charcoal and plant scraps. This is extremely inefficient, and the smoke is very harmful to health. A dignified life requires access to an affordable, reliable and modern energy supply. The UN SDG aims to achieve this by 2030.

To protect our health and climate, we need cleaner energy. The share of sustainable energy in global energy consumption today is about 13 percent – and has virtually not increased since 1990. The SDG raise ambitions to double energy efficiency by 2030 compared to today. That applies to every country in the world. There is still a great deal of work to be done in achieving a sustainable energy supply even in Germany and Europe. This requires significantly more investment, especially in research and development. By working together with other countries, we can help to make clean, efficient energy supply possible anywhere in the world.

Primary energy supply

Forecasting the shares of different energy sources under currently planned reforms and reforms necessary to reach the two-degree target



Source: International Energy Agency

The two-degree target describes the goal of international climate policy to limit global warming to less than two degrees Celsius compared to the level before the start of industrialization. However, achieving this goal will require huge political reform efforts.



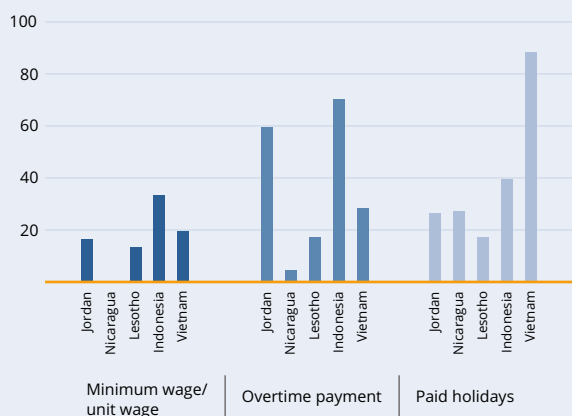
Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

Economic growth remains the main engine of development. For as many people as possible to benefit from this, full employment is the goal. Thus, all members of a society can contribute to the prosperity of their country without larger population groups remaining dependent upon unproductive social welfare. After all, work is not just a way of earning a living, but also a source of human dignity.

Of course, the opportunities offered by technological progress should continue to be taken advantage of, for example for innovations in automation, digitization and 'smart industry'. But this progress must be socially compatible: because, to be meaningful, work must always be humane. In order to ensure inclusivity of the economic order, the adherence of social standards is crucial.

Full and productive employment can be achieved more easily if the economy is diversified, creative and innovative, and has sectors with high added value and high work intensity. Resource-efficient and environmentally friendly production processes must be established which, firstly, generate as many jobs as possible (such as in agriculture or tourism), while secondly allowing as many people as possible to benefit from them (such as high-tech). Groups such as women, young people and migrants who are disadvantaged in the labour market must be given particular support. Small and medium-sized enterprises play an important role in all of this, as they are the backbone of their economies – and the most reliable guarantors of our future.

Violations of national laws on wages, overtime pay and paid holidays



Source: International Labour Organization, Better Work

In Vietnam, in nearly 88% of cases, the national legislation on paid holidays is not respected, while in Nicaragua this happens in fewer than 27% of cases.



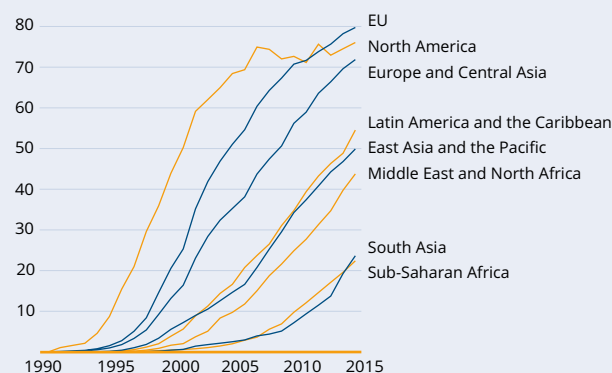
Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

Economic development is not possible without operational and resilient infrastructures for energy, transportation, water, finance and communication. These infrastructures allow people to live and work in dignity, to produce goods and trade them through distribution markets. Therefore, citizens should have access to vital infrastructure under affordable and safe conditions. To guarantee this access, state and market play a crucial role in providing the necessary capital.

Rural areas frequently suffer infrastructural deficiencies and often lag in their economic potential. However, they can nonetheless benefit from technological progress: it allows remote regions to leapfrog expensive infrastructural steps and to get direct access to a decentralized supply of sustainable energies without making a detour through centrally generated fossil energy. Thanks to mobile technologies, small business owners can gain easy access to financial services.

Reliable infrastructure is the prerequisite for integration into national and international value chains, allowing emerging economies to connect to the globalized economy. To make economies less vulnerable, states can seek to diversify their industrial base. Sustainability is achieved by making production processes more resource efficient and environmentally friendly. All of this requires the promotion of creativity in professional trainings and education as well as continued adaption to ensure a sustainable production process.

Internet users worldwide By region, in % of the total population



Source: International Labour Organization, Better Work

Today, with 80% of the total population 'on line', the EU has the most internet users; in sub-Saharan Africa, only 22% of the total population have such access.



Reduce inequality within and among countries

There is no such thing as a society without inequalities. However, if social inequalities become too great – for example, because members of lower socio-economic layers of society are no longer able to participate effectively in social, political and cultural life – it poses a problem for all of society. If the prospects for weak and vulnerable groups are restricted too much, not only will social cohesion suffer, but society's capacity for integration and innovation will be compromised as well. Social mobility is hence one of the most important driving forces for the prosperity of our societies.

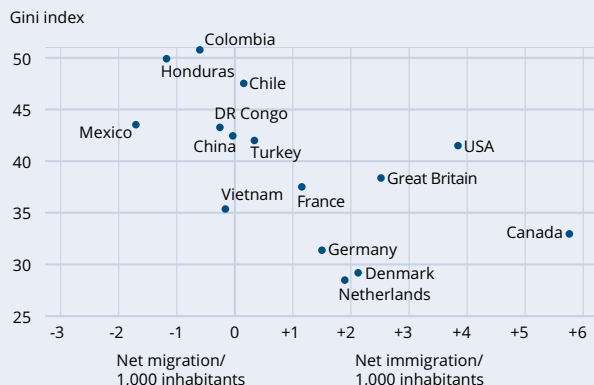
Significant inequality between states also has negative consequences. The further behind states lag economically in an international context, the earlier people will seek a higher standard of living elsewhere. Inequality between states is probably the greatest incentive for mixed migration. The least developed countries in the world therefore need special attention when it comes to development cooperation.

In any country, a well-governed and active state is needed to provide appropriate labour and social policies, anti-discrimination laws as well as to guarantee the protection of vulnerable groups (especially the poor and children) who cannot help themselves.

Reducing inequalities is not about levelling but about supporting each person according to their abilities, their personality and their preferences. This also means enabling developing countries to have more say in international fora.

Voluntary migration and inequality

Share of net immigration/migration in the total population and Gini value



Source: CIA Factbook, World Bank

The Gini value indicates inequality within a country: the higher the value, the greater the inequality. In addition to the US, a society characterized by moderate inequality and Canada, it is above all those European states which show relatively low inequality that are immigration countries. Unequal societies are much more affected by emigration.



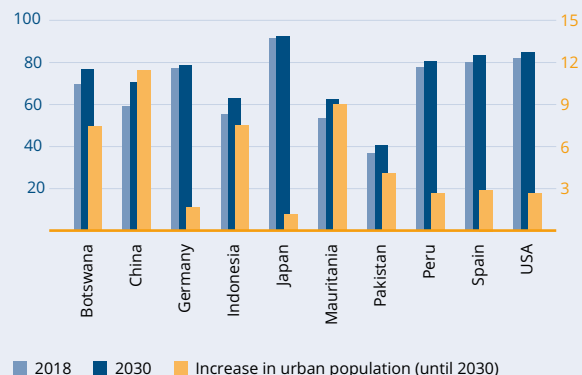
Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

More than half of the world's population now lives in cities. There are good reasons for the ongoing urbanization of the planet: cities offer a diverse set of services and opportunities for their local area, and some offer development opportunities for entire countries. In cities, access to work, health, technology, education, politics and culture is often easier than in rural areas. Finally, cities are also melting pots for immigrants and refugees, seeking a safe and dignified life. An increasing number of people worldwide decide to live in cities.

Urbanization creates new problems, for example concerning safety, access to affordable housing, road traffic, general cleanliness and hygiene. Negative ecological consequences such as environmental degradation, exhaust pollution and farmland consumption must also be considered. However, urban density also offers numerous opportunities to introduce sustainability technologies, such as monitoring water consumption and quality, low-energy street lighting, or insulating living spaces to reduce waste heat and CO₂ emissions.

Careful urban and transportation planning, the protection of public green spaces and the permanent retrofitting of residential neighbourhoods can make cities more liveable, inclusive and sustainable. Global urban redevelopment in the name of sustainability is expensive, but sustainable cities are a valuable investment into the future.

Share of urban population and its increase in %



Source: UN Department of Economics and Social Affairs

Especially in China and Indonesia, but also in African countries like Botswana and Mauritania, the share of the urban population in the total population will increase sharply over the next 12 years; the same development is foreseeable in Europe, albeit in a weaker form.



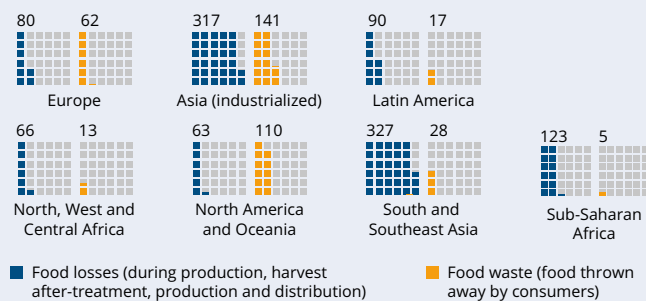
Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

Nowadays conscious communities all over the world have developed an astonishingly pronounced environmental awareness, not least because millions of people struggle with exposure to environmental pollution. Therefore, willingness to relinquish habits causing pollution and unsustainable consumption is much more pronounced in many developing regions than in industrialized countries. For example, Germany still operates with a model of food production that leads to yearly food waste of 135 kilograms per person (and that in a population of 82 million people!). Hence, there are certainly areas in which Germany and other pioneers in waste separation and recycling are lagging significantly behind compared to others.

But in addition to consumption habits, citizens of Western countries must also transform all production processes towards a sustainable process. This is where the idea of sustainable production and supply chains comes in. Every pair of cheap jeans has orbited the globe about five times, while being made of the cheapest rivets, zippers, pieces of fabric and sewing and is then offered to the consumer for € 5.99 in Germany, Ghana or Brazil. It goes without saying that workers from all over the world who are involved in the production of such jeans receive at most exploitative wages, and certainly no social benefits such as health care or retirement benefits – not to even mention the extremely negative environmental impact of such production systems. With new sustainability seals, consumers of the future will have more information and hence be able to make smart decisions to buy products whose manufacturing and supply chains meet international sustainability standards.

Food loss and food waste

Worldwide, in millions of tons



Source: UN Department of Economics and Social Affairs

In all regions of the world except North America and Oceania, food loss during production, harvesting and transport is more than the loss attributable to consumers themselves. In Africa consumers hardly throw away any food.



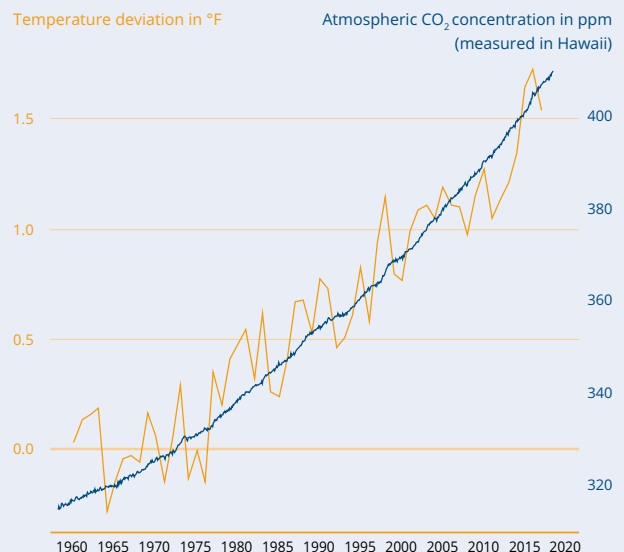
Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

With 2015 as a new record year, the ten hottest years since the beginning of regular weather recordings in 1880 have been in the 21st century. Everything indicates that climate change is picking up speed. If the international community continues on its current path, planet earth will heat to a degree which will make life increasingly difficult or even impossible in many regions of the world. This, will affect EVERYONE, directly and indirectly, through more frequent and intense weather extremes, disasters, conflicts and wars, as well as larger migratory flows.

But we don't have to let it go that far. Climate experts are recommending actionable and achievable changes by which the international community can implement responsible policies, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and limit global warming. The sooner the world acts, the better. In this regard it is not necessary for industrialized countries to entirely sacrifice the high standard of living of their citizens. On the contrary, if the international community acts jointly existing prosperity can be secured while granting it to others as well.

Climate change can no longer be completely prevented. But nations can respond in a coordinated manner through multilateral means, developing plans and strategies to protect our planet and its people from further destruction. Additionally, one can empower people around the world through education, awareness, and capacity building to increase their resilience. This costs money, but ultimately benefits all of us!

Correlation between CO₂ concentration and temperature





Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

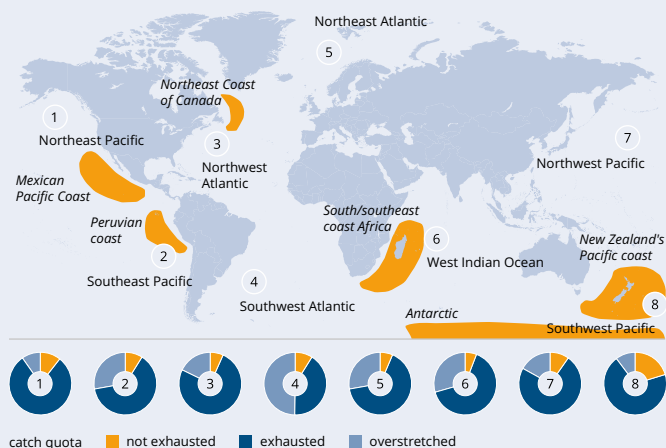
Oceans cover about 70 percent of the earth's surface and are the habitat for hundreds of thousands of animal and plant species. For humans, they are a source of food and energy. They produce 70 percent of the earth's oxygen and serve as the largest CO₂ storehouse. They produce rain and, through the various ocean currents are critical to our climate. Their coasts are residential and recreational areas for many people around the world.

However, the use of the oceans by humans includes destructive treatments. The delicate biological equilibrium is being disturbed, with fatal consequences. Due to overfishing, the fish population has already thinned out massively in many places. Plastic bags and other waste pollute the oceans. In addition, humans produce so much CO₂ that the oceans are slowly acidifying as natural CO₂ storehouses. All of this threatens many animal and plant species and takes away an important basis for survival for the global population.

Through climate change, sea levels are rising, threatening residential and agricultural land and thus the lives of millions of people. Climate change is also changing the temperature of the sea and thus also of the ocean currents, which are so crucial to our climate. A burst of extreme weather conditions is the result. It is therefore high time to better protect the planet's oceans, for example by reducing subsidies that promote overfishing, by reducing waste, by achieving internationally coordinated marine research as well as by protecting coastal areas.

Worldwide overfishing

■ 'Hot spots' of overfishing



Source: World Ocean Review, University of British Columbia

Most fish stocks in all fishing areas worldwide are exhausted or overstretched. The situation is particularly acute in the 'hot spots' of overfishing shown here.



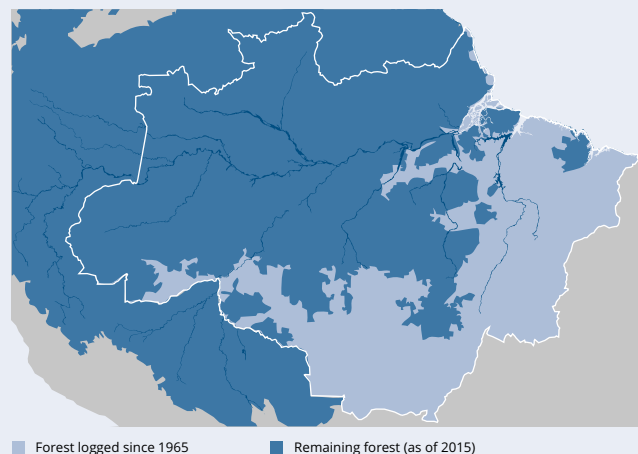
Protect and restore land ecosystems and promote their sustainable use

Human livelihoods are closely linked to the natural abundance of flora and fauna. Should this wealth be destroyed through short-sighted interventions in the various ecosystems, humans are robbing their very basis for survival. The world's population is rising rapidly. To be able to feed everyone in the future, ample agricultural land is of utmost importance. In many developing countries, agriculture is the main economic pillar. Currently, however, agricultural land is being lost worldwide due to unsustainable farming and desertification.

Just as important to our survival are the forests that cover 30 percent of the global land masses. They provide the habitat for 80 percent of all plant and animal species, provide important freshwater reserves, purify the air and play a key role in absorbing CO₂ in the fight against global warming. The medical benefits of a variety of plants that grow in rain forests are yet to be discovered.

Hence there is an urgent need to find ways to stop deforestation and implement reforestation initiatives that will allow a sustainable use. To preserve biodiversity, the international community must also step up efforts to protect swamps, steppes, mountains and other habitats.

Decline of forest in the Amazon region



Source: Council on Foreign Relations

In the last 50 years, the Brazilian Amazon has lost about one-fifth of its forests through logging.



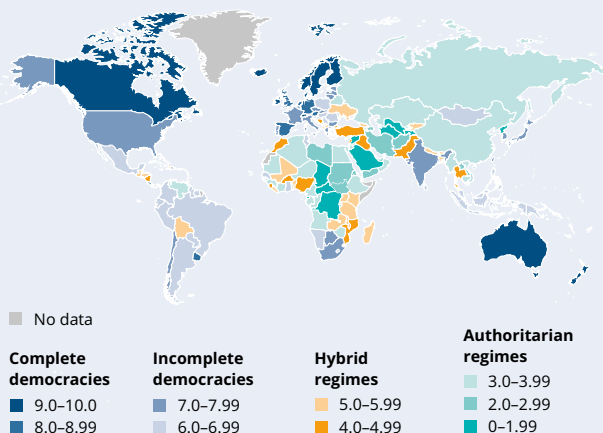
Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development

This goal defines the political preconditions and framework conditions that make sustainable development possible in the first place. Goal 16 is dedicated to democracy, good governance and a rules-based system for all citizens.

There are many examples of the development of stable, peaceful and free societies under the conditions of democracy and the rule of law. A consistent fight against corruption and organized crime are just as important as, for example, the introduction of fair national and international tax systems. Additionally, it is generally assumed that democratically-governed states do not wage wars against each other, and that they are significantly less likely to see civil wars and internal conflicts, as opposed to authoritarian states and oppressive regimes. According to UN estimates, some 65 million people are currently fleeing, either as internally displaced or persecuted persons, some of whom have made their way to gigantic refugee camps in neighbouring countries, or as international refugees who travel long and dangerous paths to protect themselves from arbitrariness and persecution.

They all bear witness to the importance of the rule of law, our constant commitment to democracy and good governance throughout the world – incidentally, a core task of the international work of German political foundations such as the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung.

Democracy Index 2017



Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit.



Strengthen implementation tools and revitalizing the global partnership for sustainable development

If the international community wants to achieve the SDGs and master this immense and ambitious global challenge, buy-in from all UN member states will be vital. All multilateral institutions (e.g. UN, EU) as well as all member states including all levels of government from national to regional to city, district and village, private enterprise from small businesses to large, international corporations, as well as the media, organized civil society (clubs, associations, trade unions, parties), the family and, in the end, each and every individual are part of this global partnership and must make sincere contributions that are consistent with their available capacities and resources. For more information on how this can be achieved, the middle section of this infoflip provides further details.

To fill this global partnership with concrete content, the makers of Agenda 2030 have included various groups of themes in their goals. They are also addressing the important question of how to finance the measures so that the goals can be achieved at all. This includes equitably and functioning tax systems, all aspects of technology transfer, particularly clean environmental and sustainable energy technologies, the global provision of knowledge, educational opportunities for all and the fair and open design of the international trade system. This and further details on the importance of data collection, monitoring and evaluation of the entire Agenda process can be found in the sub goals of the SDG 17.





Agenda 2030 as a Treaty for the Future of the World

Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development reflects the ambitious development consensus of the international community. It was developed under the auspices of the United Nations in New York in an unprecedented participatory process by governments and civil societies under scientific guidance. Agenda 2030 can therefore be seen as the 'World Constitution for Sustainability', even as a 'Treaty for the Future of the World'.

Agenda 2030 builds on considerable preparatory work in the United Nations system, notably the 1992 'Agenda 21' development and environmental action program, in which the Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit agreed on principles for development, as well as the eight United Nations Millennium Development Goals of 2000, the immediate predecessors of the Sustainable Development Goals. With its ecological, economic and social dimensions, Agenda 2030 realizes all three areas of sustainability.

It also answers the need for the institutional management of the SDG framework, in other words, the governance of translating the goals into practice. For example, the 'High-Level Political Forum' created a structured process for the regular review of the achievement of the goals. Germany was one of the first states to present its progress report to the international community, including showcasing its own developmental deficits. Another key element of Agenda 2030 is development finance: Prior to the Adoption of Agenda 2030 the international community came together in Addis Ababa to raise funds for the ambitious global framework.

Agenda 2030 commits the 192 signatory states to a comprehensive and global transformation that must touch all areas of life if it is to succeed. States need to be mindful of prioritizing the SDGs as a comprehensive development approach. Everyone can do something. Only then, the sustainability turnaround, making the world a better place for everyone, can succeed. Sustainability does not come without a price. However, it is an investment in the future of our planet, our societies, our children.

Taking responsibility for yourself through consumer decisions:

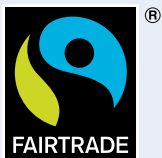
Each one of us is a consumer and can exercise his responsibility by making purchasing decisions conscientiously. This can be done in a sustainable manner by ensuring that products are produced locally or traded fairly. In addition, educated purchasing decisions can further improve humane working conditions at production sites or force companies to be more mindful of the CO₂ emissions of production and transport. In short: the consumer can perform a control function on the market. Consumer education can support this, but at least as important is that there is more transparency around the complex production processes in our highly globalized economy. Quality seals such as the German Federal Government's new textile seal are helpful to consumers and should therefore be demanded and controlled by the state and society.

Finding the big story in the detail:

Members of society should fulfil their responsibility for the planet by meeting their small obligations. The possibilities are numerous: everyday examples include waste separation, waste avoidance, house insulation, mindful adaptation of the energy supply, a healthy diet, travelling by train instead of plane, driving a car only when necessary. Thus, the abstract concept of sustainability is made tangible. We do not need to completely abandon our comfort and lifestyle, but sustainability demands a cultural change.

Calling for sustainability everywhere:

After all, everyone can call for sustainability in its various contexts and contribute to rethinking. Issues such as fair consumption, social interaction with temporary workers or environmental protection in general are also vital topics within our communities. Of course, one can also contribute politically, by reminding politicians in the federal, state, and local governments of their responsibility for the planet and future generations. Dedicated citizens can improve something everywhere – even without state intervention.



Environmental protection starts small:

Municipalities often have more creative freedom than we are aware of. So, everyone must help to create an understanding that the SDGs can only be achieved if they are implemented at the local level. Municipalities are at the forefront of the sustainability turnaround. Local politics must be aware of this responsibility. A good start would be to advocate against any efforts to weaken environmental and social standards in the community, even if other interests sometimes argue against this. Additionally, public contracts should always be awarded according to the principles of sustainability.

Sustainability education in municipalities:

Municipalities should champion and promote sustainability education, which is complementary to that of the state and the federal government. Communities can often reach citizens directly and on a more personal note as opposed to publicity campaigns and information events at higher and more distant levels of government. Existing capacities, like advisory councils on sustainability – such as Agenda 21, which strives to make communal action more lasting – or federally subsidized promoters of sustainability and sustainability education should be take advantage by municipalities to translate their goals into actionable political and social objectives. Education should be localized in communal spaces such as kindergartens and schools, in municipal utilities and local government.

Municipalities as idea laboratories:

In some instances, sustainability initiatives can be more easily conceived and implemented at the local level than at higher political levels. This is because local citizens are directly affected and therefore easier to involve politically. Citizens can also share their own ideas more easily, because, for example, the path to the mayor is shorter than that to the prime minister. When politics, business and civil society come together at eye level, communities can jointly identify which sustainability goals should be prioritized and which concrete contributions individual groups can make. Through experimental sustainability initiatives, such as transport concepts or the closed-loop economy, a municipality can test innovative ideas or learn best-practices from other municipalities.

Continuing to develop national sustainability strategy:

The federal government's sustainability strategy is the most important policy document for achieving the sustainability turnaround in domestic politics. It coordinates the governmental action of all federal ministries and commits to the common goal of sustainability. It is, so to say, the 'White Paper on Sustainability Policy'. In 2016/2017, the National Sustainable Development Strategy was last updated and brought into accordance with the goals of the Agenda 2030. Yet that alone is not enough: In order for sustainability to be anchored in all policy areas and at all levels of government, the strategy must involve an increasing number of actors at all levels and be adjusted accordingly – while its implementation is continuously monitored by independent supervisory bodies. It must grow, and it must be useful.

Involving the interested and informed public:

Sustainability is everyone's business. Hence society must put forward a joint effort to achieve its realization. For the sustainability turnaround not to become a project of the elite, civil society must be activated and integrated. These include non-governmental organizations as well as churches and religious communities, all of which can be valuable partners in achieving the sustainability goals. Because Agenda 2030 also focuses on the private sector at its core, the perspectives of its stakeholders also have an equal place in the marketplace of ideas. Science can also make an important contribution, through research, information and consultation. Aligning this diversity of informants and stakeholders in an open society towards a common goal is the quintessence of the so-called multi-stakeholder approach.

Monitoring the procurement sector in federal and state governments:

The state is one of the most important market players. It purchases goods and hires services to fulfil its manifold tasks, paid for with tax payer money. Due to the public nature of its income and expenditure a natural obligation is manifested to use these resources in a sustainable manner. Because sustainability is oriented toward the common good and the state is an important market role model, it can provide targeted support for sustainable products. Therefore, in addition to profitability in government procurement, questions of sustainability need to be raised when public contracts are awarded.

**More coherence in external action:**

The sustainability turnaround is not just an issue for development policy. Many topics of the Agenda 2030 also touch on classic fields of foreign and security policy. This applies, for example, to the safe and stable supply of energy, water or food, which is conveyed in various sustainability goals, as well as for the global partnership in goal 17. Therefore, in parallel with stronger harmonization in domestic policy, the international community must find coherence in external action to set as few contradictory incentives as possible and thus not jeopardize the achievement of Agenda 2030. Since the agenda itself contains competing goals, it is anything but easy to achieve such a balance. However, in the promotion of foreign trade or agricultural subsidies, adjustments to the requirements of Agenda 2030 would make sense.

To assure Germany's strengths:

Germany is already one of the most important and renowned players in global development policy. The Federal Republic of Germany is not only one of the largest donors in bilateral development cooperation and one of the major contributors to the various United Nations funds and special programs. Germany is also strong in terms of technical and financial cooperation, thereby supporting the implementation of specific funding projects in partner states. In the energy turnaround and in environmental policy, in relevant sustainability research and in the promotion of good governance, human rights, democracy and the rule of law, Germany is making an important contribution to the achievement of the Agenda 2030.

Converting development organizations into sustainability agencies:

Germany has a whole series of governmental organizations entrusted with the concrete implementation of development policy. The most well-known development institution is the German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ), which conducts consultancy projects worldwide, trains personnel at home and abroad, and provides technical services in partner countries. Political foundations are not governmental organizations. Yet, being funded by public means they engage in Germany's global development efforts by for example supporting parliaments and political parties with regards to working methods or by providing advice and exchanging ideas in areas of policy relevant to development. Another relevant institute is the Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW), which operates abroad as a development bank. All of these organizations are increasingly perceived as 'sustainability agencies' because, in the less developed partner countries – and here in Germany as well – they are ultimately the midwives of Agenda 2030. The transformation of society needs both funding and expertise.

Don't give up the avant-garde role:

Germany must continue to raise ambitions internationally so that Agenda 2030 has a real chance to have an impact. In concrete terms, this means continuing to cooperate with the oversight body of Agenda 2030's, the 'High-Level Political Forum'. As described earlier, Germany was the first donor country to present its progress report, including the country's shortcomings and needs for urgent improvement. This set an international standard and convinced the international community of Germany's sincere commitment to the SDGs. German strengths and weaknesses should continue to be highlighted and used to engage other industrialized countries to make comparable efforts. Germany should also develop active partnerships with emerging economies such as Mexico or Morocco, establishing partnerships of mutual learning.

Starting an implementation initiative for Agenda 2030:

The compilation and adoption of Agenda 2030 was only the beginning of a long and complex process with the goal of the sustainable transformation of our societies. It is fundamentally important for the international community to base action on a reliable database, measuring successes and failures along the way. Germany should launch a global implementation initiative to help others better assess their respective framework conditions for implementation of the SDGs. In many countries, a lack of reliable data is a major hurdle in the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. Germany could thus become a 'facilitator', and assist others to implement the Agenda 2030.

Anchor sustainability in other multilateral forums:

To be fully effective, Agenda 2030 must constitute a set of guiding principles in as many global governance forums as possible. Otherwise there will be contradictions and incoherencies in the actions of member states which could damage the pursuit of the SDGs. By hosting and hence taking on a leading role in such prominent forums as the G7 in Elmau and the G20 in Hamburg, Germany has successfully advocated for the Agenda 2030 in recent years. Germany should boldly continue on this path and seek to convince other forums outside of the United Nations to implement the Agenda 2030. For example, the OECD could be used as an incubator for solutions in the field of sustainability. The benchmark could be the provision of global public goods such as health care or the freedom of the seas, which are conducive to the 'global common good'.

**Continue to take more responsibility:**

Taking over responsibility means more than only providing increasing funds until Germany achieves the goal of investing the internationally agreed 0.7% of its gross domestic product in development cooperation. Of utmost importance are also new ideas and continuous commitment throughout the United Nations – such as in the many special organizations and funds that are particularly important for achieving the SDGs. This should include increased participation in UN peacekeeping missions to lay the foundation for development in war-torn and conflict-ridden countries. The German voice in the United Nations is consulted and highly regarded.

Commitment to free trade as the most important engine of development:

Reducing trade barriers through international agreements will foster development and could lead to the emergence of prosperous and sustainable societies. Without growth, emerging economies have fewer resources at their disposal which can be invested in a sustainable transformation. Lack of growth also strengthens protectionist tendencies in some countries, often leading to barriers in international cooperation. Hence, ambitions in the World Trade Organization as well as bilaterally on behalf of fair and free trade should be increased. To set incentives developed countries can provide privileged market access to less developed countries. Additionally, global champions of the SDGs can make their implementation a pre-requisite for trade agreements.

Responsible partnerships with less developed countries:

Germany should increase efforts as a partner and advocate for developing countries. This form of solidarity requires partnership on an equal footing, in which all parties have obligations and make corresponding contributions. Above all, Germany should enable emerging economies to participate more in global economic management. This would strengthen the liberal Western model of good governance and rules-based systems, which have facilitated unprecedented prosperity worldwide. Such participation should go hand in hand with the acceptance of more responsibility: emerging economies themselves must hold themselves and their leaders accountable for achieving a transformation towards sustainability. Germany can support this commitment with strategic sustainability partnerships and with the reorientation of existing strategic partnerships towards sustainable development.



