

## Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Finland

Finland has a long tradition in promoting sustainable development both in domestic policies and in international development cooperation. This tradition gives Finland a good starting point for the national implementation of the 2030 Agenda. However, the comprehensive and integrative nature of the new Agenda calls for better coherence and coordination of various policies also in Finland.

For Finland, the universal and transformative 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals and targets mean the need for a careful review of country's foreign and development cooperation policies and practices, but as importantly, also domestic policies and measures in various sectors. The division between domestic and foreign action is imprecise: for instance Finland's consumption and production patterns have impact also outside the national borders by materials and supply chains.

### National Implementation Plan for the 2030 Agenda

Finland gets ready for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in a comprehensive and inclusive manner. The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) is in charge of the coordination of the national implementation. The PMO acts as the **Coordination Secretariat** and includes representatives from the PMO, Ministry for Foreign Affairs and National Commission on Sustainable Development. The Secretariat works closely together with the **Coordination Network**, comprising all Government Ministries.

The Finnish Government has the primary responsibility for the national implementation of the 2030 Agenda, but in the spirit of the global agenda, the civil society, the private sector and other stakeholders have an integral role in this endeavor. According to the Government Program of Prime Minister Juha Sipilä, a National Implementation Plan for the 2030 Agenda will be drawn up by the end of 2016 and adopted by the Government in early 2017. An important part of Finland's national response to the new agenda, **Finland's development policy**, was updated already in February 2016, and is guided by the 2030 Agenda.

**The National Implementation Plan for the 2030 Agenda** is the Government's commitment to implementation. It establishes an implementation, follow-up, review and reporting framework for Finland. It selects few politically relevant and nationally critical thematic focus areas for urgent implementation, including concrete measures the Government is taking in order to meet the challenges. The plan also identifies cross-cutting policy measures for ensuring long-term perspective, policy coherence, ownership and participation in implementing sustainable development in Finland. The follow-up and review cycle will be defined on a yearly basis, including the role of the Parliament and the stakeholders in ensuring accountability and transparency.

To guide the preparation of the National Implementation Plan, **an external gap analysis** was conducted last spring to look into Finland's readiness to implement the global 2030 Agenda. The gap analysis confirmed the findings of various international comparisons indicating that Finland's particular strengths lie in good education and competence (Goal 4 in particular) and societal stability (Goal 16 in particular). On the other hand, combating climate change and the use of natural resources (Goals 12 and 13 in particular), as well as economic development and employment trends (Goal 8 in particular), were identified as Finland's current weaknesses. Compared to many other countries, Finland is performing well also in these theme areas, but development has been unsatisfactory in recent years.

Finland is committed to implement the whole 2030 Agenda and its SDGs by 2030. The key measures to put the 2030 Agenda into practice are the integrated policies and measures taken in various Government sectors as part of the implementation of national and EU legislation, national sectorial or thematic strategies and action plans, as well as international agreements and commitment.

### The mechanisms to strengthen multi-stakeholder engagement and partnerships

The Government officials are responsible for designing the plan and facilitating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Finland. However, there are two major multi-stakeholder committees to support and promote sustainable development policies. **The Development Policy Committee** is a parliamentary body whose mission is

to follow the implementation of the global sustainable development agenda in Finland from the development policy perspective and to monitor the implementation of the Government Program and the Government's development policy guidelines. **The National Commission on Sustainable Development** is a Prime Minister -led partnership forum that has operated in Finland for 24 years without interruption with the aim to integrate sustainable development into Finnish policies, measures and everyday practices. Both committees encompass a membership with a large variety of non-governmental stakeholders, the private sector actors, interest groups and civil society organizations. In addition, a **Sustainable Development Expert Panel**, comprising eminent professors from different disciplines, challenges and boosts the work of the National Commission on Sustainable Development and adds a critical voice in sustainability debate, when needed.

Both committees' mandates have been renewed in the beginning of the 2016 for the next four years. The secretariat of the Development Policy Committee is located in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The coordination of the work of the National Commission on Sustainable Development has been moved from the Ministry of the Environment to the Prime Minister's Office in January 2016. In order to improve the policy coherence, the collaboration of the two committees has been intensified, for example through joint meetings, workshops and discussion papers.

**Society's Commitment to Sustainable Development "The Finland We Want 2050"**, a social innovation established in 2013 and updated in 2016, features as one of the key multi-stakeholder implementation tools for the 2030 Agenda in Finland. It offers a strategic sustainable development framework for Finland with a vision, principles and objectives, but also entails an operational mechanism enabling the translation of sustainable development into everyday practices by engaging a large variety of societal actors in a joint effort. Currently over 340 organizations from companies to ministries, schools, municipalities and CSOs, as well as individual citizens have joined the Society's Commitment by launching their own operational commitments and thereby contributing for their part to the achievement of sustainable development in Finland.

### **Monitoring, accountability and review**

Finland is committed to provide a systematic, open, transparent, inclusive and participatory follow-up and review for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals and targets at all levels. Nationally, the aim is to monitor the progress and review the achievements on a yearly basis, including a multi-stakeholder event on the state and future of sustainable development in Finland.

The state and trends of sustainable development in Finland has been monitored and reviewed by 39 **national sustainable development indicators**. These indicators were identified in 2014 to measure the progress of the eight strategic objectives of the Society's Commitment. The indicators will be revised and updated by May 2017 to lend themselves to the follow-up of the 2030 Agenda and thereby complement the global sustainable development indicators. The indicator work will be part of the national monitoring and reviewing scheme of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

The Government of Finland recognizes the need to strengthen the accountability to and dialogue with the Parliament, various stakeholders and the citizens in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and in the preparation of the National Implementation Plan. Children and youth, immigrants, people with disabilities, and municipalities and regions have been identified as groups and areas where additional outreach is needed. Finland is committed to intensifying the existing means and finding new innovative ways to increase participation and ownership. The new modes for participation will be considered as part of the process to design the National Implementation Plan for the 2030 Agenda.

### **Further information:**

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