

Update 2030 Agenda



Federal Council for Sustainable Development (FRDO-CFDD)

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HLPF and SDG Summit 2019

It was a busy summer in New York for the SDGs. With the adoption of the [2030 Agenda](#) in 2015, the international community has committed itself to implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. With the meetings of the [HLPF](#) (9-18 July) and the special [SDG Summit](#) (24-25 September) a first implementation cycle was completed. The most important finding was that there is a lot of enthusiasm for the SDGs all over the world, but their implementation **is not going well**.

During the annual meetings of the [HLPF](#), in recent years there have been on the one hand representations by individual countries in which they explain how they implement the SDGs (the [Voluntary National Reviews](#), VNRs) and on the other hand there were thematic discussions about individual SDGs. In the first cycle, all SDGs have now been discussed and many countries ([Belgium](#) in 2017) have submitted their VNRs. There was a feeling among those present that the HLPF has done important work in recent years, but that **changes** to the way of working are possible.

The SDG Summit was organized in the context of the UN General Assembly (just after the special [Climate Action Summit](#)). The Heads of State and Government approved a [political](#)

[declaration](#) calling for a [renewed commitment](#) to speed up the implementation of the SDGs. The [Global Sustainable Development Report 2019](#) was also presented during the SDG Summit.

The [HLPF 2020](#) takes place from 7 to 16 July 2020 and has as its [theme](#) the accelerated implementation of the SDGs in a "decade of action".



Our young people in New York

During the HLPF meeting in July, [Flore De Pauw and Launy Dondo](#) were present on behalf of the Belgian youth councils.

Together with young people from other countries, they represented the youth in the discussions about the implementation of the SDGs.

Young people should have a bigger voice in that debate, since it is about their future.

The Belgian youth also organized a special session on ethical and sustainable fashion in New York.

The EU and the SDGs

In the coming years, will the EU opt for a stronger integration of the SDGs in its policies? Some elements already seem to point in that direction. For example, Commission President Ursula Von der Leyen stated in her [political guidelines](#) for the new Commission that she wants the European Semester to be reoriented in function of the SDGs.

With the presentation of the [European Green Deal](#), the Commission has opted for a stronger ambition in the field of climate and sustainability. Sustainability must be integrated in all policy areas. The document states that the Green Deal can be seen as part of the strategy to

implement the SDGs.

The Council recently adopted [new conclusions](#) on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Member

States confirm that the implementation of the SDGs is not proceeding fast enough. The Council calls for more accurate monitoring of progress and proposes that the EU submit a Voluntary National Review to the HLPF in 2021. Furthermore, the Council still demands a detailed implementation strategy for the SDGs, a new mandate for the [Multi-stakeholder platform](#) and an adjusted European Semester.



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“Our name for the transformation needed now is ecological reconstruction.

”

(Paavo Järvensivu)

Flash

Solidar is [satisfied](#) with the Council conclusions of 10 December on the SDGs. | For the [EESC President](#), the Green Deal can become an important lever for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. | IDDRI on the [financing](#) of the 2030 Agenda. | What place does the [cultural dimension](#) have in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda? | How can we achieve greater [policy coherence](#) in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda? | EAPN has proposals for the successor of the EU 2020 strategy, aimed at [combating](#)

[poverty](#). | During the recent HLPF meeting, the [EEAC](#) organized a special side event on national councils for sustainable development. | The IEEP made a [first analysis](#) of the Green Deal. | [Ten new insights](#) from climate science that are also important for the SDGs. | According to the [UNEP Emissions Gap Report 2019](#), the gap between what is needed and what we are effectively doing about climate change is growing.

The WBCSD supports the SDGs

The World Business Council for Sustainable Development ([WBCSD](#)) fully supports a new coalition of large companies - the "[Business Avengers](#)" - who want to work for the SDGs. The WBCSD has developed a lot of [material](#) to help companies implement the SDGs.

In the meantime, the WBCSD is [disappointed](#) with the outcome of the COP 25 climate conference in Madrid and wants to contribute to a better result at COP 26 in 2020 in Glasgow through [a new initiative](#). In addition, the

WBCSD is working on a new version of its own vision for the future, [Vision 2050](#).



2019 Europe Sustainable Development Report

This [special report](#) from the Sustainable Development Solutions Network and the Institute for European Environmental Policy was presented in November. It examines how the EU and the 28 member states are doing in implementing the SDGs.

The results of the study show that EU countries are not doing well enough for climate change, sustainable consumption and production, biodiversity protection, sustainable food systems and social inclusion, among others. Compared to the rest of the world, EU countries are doing relatively well, but at the same time they are still far from fully realizing the SDGs.

The report provides a general ranking, with Belgium in 11th place (score 70.3%). In addition, there is also an overview of how European countries generate large, negative spillovers that impede other countries' ability to achieve the SDGs. Belgium scores quite poorly (55.7%).

To improve the situation, the report sees three major priorities. First, the SDGs must be given an important place in internal policy, including by reorienting the European Semester. Secondly, the SDGs must be given a greater place in the EU's international policy, including in development cooperation. Thirdly, the international negative spillovers of EU policy must be strongly reduced.



Flash

What can companies learn from the [SDG Summit](#)? | According to the trade unions, a "[new social contract](#)" is needed to implement the SDGs. | During the SDG Summit, Minister Alexander De Croo and Queen Mathilde called for [more ambition](#) in the implementation of the SDGs. | Jason Hickel points to the internal [contradictions](#) within the SDGs. | SDG Watch made a [report](#) on the negative impact of EU policy on other parts of the world. | What can [higher education](#) do to implement the SDGs? | [CSR Europe](#) about

how companies can handle the SDGs. | Some major [fashion brands](#) are calling for a better climate policy. | The new [Human Development Report](#) talks about inequality. | There is still more development aid going to fossil energy than to renewable energy, and that must change according to the [OECD](#). | NGOs have many proposals for [reforming the HLPF](#).

“However, with a few exceptions, SDGs have very rarely been used to challenge practices, and have not triggered the transformative project they promised.”

(Elisabeth Hege)

SDG Forum 2019

The second [SDG Forum](#) took place on 24 September. The forum was well attended and had a very full [programme](#) with a few lectures, a panel discussion with representatives of stakeholder groups and a whole series of informative sessions. (The [presentations](#) can be found here.) The large turnout certainly shows that many citizens and organizations are very interested in the SDGs.

The [Perspective 2030](#) network is pleased with this success, but at the same time states that such a forum cannot replace a strong

sustainable development policy and a transparent dialogue with civil society.





FRDO CFDD

Federal Council for Sustainable Development

*This newsletter is produced under the responsibility of the administrative office of the **Federal Council for Sustainable Development (FRDO/CFDD)**. The FRDO/CFDD advises the Belgian government on the federal policy on sustainable development. The council moreover organises activities to enhance the base for sustainable development.*

Kruidtuinlaan 50, bus 70
1000 Brussel

Tel. 02 743 3150
E-mail: mail@frdo-cfdd.be

We are inviting everyone to submit suggestions for this newsletter.

Contact for this newsletter: Jan Mertens | jan.mertens@frdo.be | +32 (2) 743 3154

Web:

www.frdo-cfdd.be

Global Sustainable Development Report 2019

The idea to make this report came into being during the [Rio+20](#) conference in 2012. In 2016, the member states of the UN decided that a report would be published every four years. The 2019 edition was made by 15 scientists, including Jean-Pascal van Ypersele. The next edition will appear in 2023.

The [Global Sustainable Development Report 2019 \(GSDR 2019\)](#) wants to contribute to a stronger sustainable development policy, based on scientific insights. It also wants to indicate a direction for "sustainability science". The report cannot fail to establish that the global community is not sufficiently ambitious in implementing the SDGs. The 2030 Agenda calls for a more holistic policy, instead of continuing to work in "silos" and thus not paying sufficient attention to the interlinkages between, for example, econom-

ic and environmental policy.

There is a need for a more transformative policy, say the scientists. Recent trends indicate that we are going in the wrong direction. This concerns increasing inequality, climate change, loss of biodiversity and increasing amounts of waste. To achieve a more systemic change, the authors see four major levers: governance, economics and finance, individual and collective action, science and technology. With these levers one should not look so much at individual SDGs, but on the contrary at domains such as the food system. The report de-

scribes six starting points for achieving transformative change and proposes a series of concrete actions.

