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Update 2030 Agenda



Federal Council for Sustainable Development (FRDO-CFDD)

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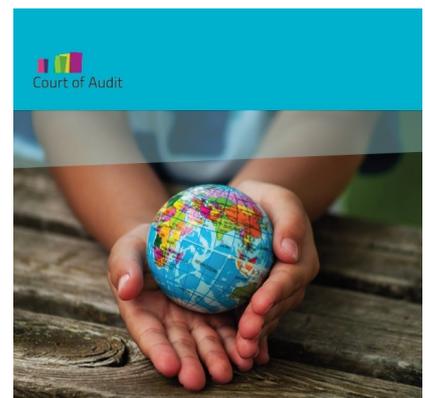
Audit of the Court of Audit on the implementation of SDGs in Belgium

The Court of Audit has published [an audit](#) that examines how the different policy levels in Belgium implement the SDGs. Do the federal level, the regions and the communities have the right instruments or agreements to implement sustainable development objectives in a coherent way? The Court of Audit sees many positive elements but at the same time notes that there is far too little coordination between the levels to arrive at a good policy.

The fact that things are not improving is not so much due to the structure of the state as to the lack of political will to cooperate. For example, the audit can only conclude that the Interministerial Conference on Sustainable Development - which is to coordinate policy for the whole of Belgium at national level - has not met since the end of 2017. Our country is committed to implementing the 2030 Agenda. In order to be able to do so, however, good cooperation is required. The Court of Audit recommends that the Interministerial Conference once again become active and play a coordinating role. Each policy level can develop initiatives within its own competencies, but the Court of Audit calls for cooperation. This should be done within the framework of the National Strategy for Sustainable Development, with concrete objectives and measures. Harmonised indicators should

make it possible to coordinate the results at the national level.

At the beginning of September, the FRDO-CFDD will organise a seminar in which the audit of the Court of Audit will be presented. More information on the website of the FRDO-CFDD.



Sustainable Development Goals

2030 UN Agenda: Implementation, Monitoring and Reporting by the Belgian Authorities (Preparedness Review)

Report adopted by the general assembly of the Belgian Court of Audit on 14th of June 2020
BRUSSELS, JUNE 2020

Poverty has not been reduced

In his latest [report](#) as special rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, Philip Alston is very critical of the proposition that global poverty has been reduced. International institutions, with reference to the SDGs, unsubstantiatedly proclaim that there would be great progress.

According to him, this is not the case at all, on the contrary. Extreme poverty eradication by 2030 will not succeed at all.

A key point of his criticism is that the World Bank's \$1.90 poverty benchmark is used to estimate the extent of poverty. This strongly underestimates

the real number of people living in poverty.

HLPF 2020: more action needed for SDGs

Every year in July there is a meeting of the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF). The HLPF coordinates the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, of which the SDGs are an important part. At the 2019 SDG Forum it was found that there is too little progress. Without additional action we will not reach the SDGs by 2030. The [HLPF 2020](#) had to become an important catalyst to accelerate international action during the so-called 'Decade of Action and Delivery for Sustainable Development'.

Due to the global Covid-19 crisis, international meetings such as the planned climate conference and the biodiversity conference were postponed to next year. It

was an important political signal that the HLPF was not cancelled. However, it was decided to make the HLPF largely virtual.



The focus of the HLPF was adjusted to take Covid-19 into account. It is likely that the global

pandemic will lead to a decline in SDGs, especially in the most vulnerable countries. Special attention is therefore needed to ensure that the economic recovery from the current crisis will be sustainable and equitable.

During the HLPF, 47 countries presented their 'Voluntary National Review' explaining how they themselves implement SDGs.

A report of the HLPF 2020 [can be found here](#).

“We therefore urge the UN’s High-level Political Forum to work out how and when to update the SDGs.”

(Robin Naidoo & Brendan Fisher)

Guterres: "We can't go back to the old normal."

At the opening of the HLPF 2020 ministerial segment, UN Secretary-General António Guterres gave a [strong speech](#) on the major challenges facing the world after Covid-19. Even before the pandemic, it was clear that the international community was not on track to meet the SDGs.

The pandemic made everything worse. Guterres pointed out some worrying findings. 13 million people are infected. In the first quarter of 2020, working hours corresponding to 400 million jobs

were lost. Between 70 and 100 million people could end up in extreme poverty. 265 million people could end up in famine before the end of the year, a doubling. The consequences of the pandemic are becoming increasingly severe for the most vulnerable.

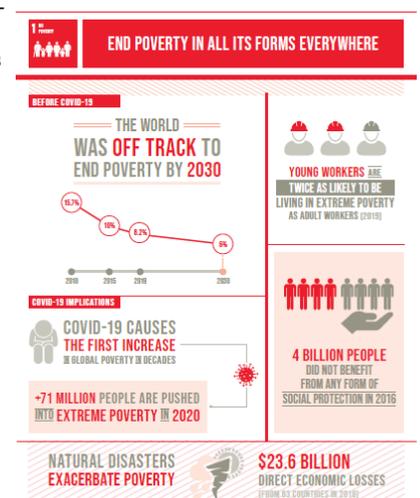
Guterres stated that we cannot go back to the old 'normal' and that more than ever - we should take the SDGs seriously.

The impact of Covid-19 on the SDGs

The new [UN Sustainable Development Goals Report 2020](#) paints a bleak picture. So far, the international community has done too little to achieve the goals set out in the SDGs by 2030. This was clear at the beginning of this year, even before the Covid-19 crisis broke out. For some SDGs, things were moving cautiously in the right direction. For others, the picture was really not positive. Environmental destruction continued and inequality increased.

Without a strong political commitment to the SDGs, Covid-19

threatens to aggravate the situation, especially for the most vulnerable. The report indicates for each SDG what the possible consequences of the pandemic could be. It is a precise illustration of the importance of the SDGs.



The SDGs at the heart of the economic recovery

Like every year, the new [Sustainable Development Report 2020](#) presents an SDG Index. This ranks all countries for their efforts to achieve the SDGs. The report states that since 2015 the Asian countries have made the strongest progress with the SDGs.

The report deals extensively with the Covid-19 crisis. For a number of SDGs the impact will already be high in the short term, including in the areas of poverty, health, decent work and inequality. For some SDGs there seems to be a possible beneficial effect in the short term, such as for climate. This is due to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. However, this effect will only be temporary and may be cancelled out

if the economic recovery policy does not opt for sustainable development.

The report therefore advocates putting '6 SDG transformations' at the heart of economic recovery policy. It is about: (1) Education, gender and inequality, (2) Health and welfare, (3) Clean energy and sustainable industry, (4) Food, soil, water and oceans, (5) Sustainable cities, (6) Digital revolution.

Six SDG Transformations



Affordable and sustainable energy for everyone?

How is the implementation of SDG7 progressing? Still far from good enough, according to a [recent report](#). 789 million people have no access to electricity and 2.8 billion people cannot cook in a healthy and safe way. Possibly Covid-19 will make the situation worse for many people.

There is a need for a stronger commitment to the energy transition, the report states. The economic recovery must be seized as an opportunity to fully opt for an energy system that is sustainable

and fair. Particularly in Africa, major efforts are still needed to expand electrification so that more people have access to electricity. Furthermore, energy efficiency needs to be increased faster and the potential of renewable energy needs to be better exploited.

“The consequences of this highly unrealistic picture of progress against poverty have been devastating.”

(Philip Alston)

WBCSD: "SDGs are now more urgent than ever".

On the occasion of HLPF 2020, the [World Business Council for Sustainable Development](#) (WBCSD) stated that the Covid-19 crisis has made SDGs even more important as a strategic framework for sustainable prosperity. SDGs should be at the heart of the economic recovery plans currently being developed everywhere, the WBCSD states.

The organization itself wants to do even more to stimulate companies to commit themselves to sustainable development. This is being done by means of special

[SDG sector roadmaps](#) and by working out a new version of the 'Vision 2050', which should be ready in 2021. Finally, according to the WBCSD, it is important that individual companies examine how they can better integrate SDGs in their work.

SDG Sector Roadmaps

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have the potential to unleash innovation, economic growth, and development globally at an unprecedented scale. They also represent significant market opportunities for business, estimated to be worth at least US\$12 trillion per year by 2030.

However, the ambitious agenda that the SDGs represent goes beyond business as usual. In particular, realizing the goals, and unlocking the business opportunities they represent, will require pioneering new forms of collaboration between a critical mass of companies at the sector level.





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*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.*

We are inviting everyone to submit suggestions for this newsletter.

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Little progress in the implementation of SDGs in the EU

At the end of June, Eurostat published a new edition of the [monitoring report](#) on the implementation of SDGs in the EU. The conclusion is that there has been progress over the last 5 years, but relatively limited. The EU uses a set of 100 indicators. The data processed all date from before Covid-19. It is to be expected that the next edition will present a potentially very different picture.

For each SDG it is indicated whether the EU is getting closer to the target or further away from it. In addition, one can also see the evolution per SDG per country, compared to the other countries.

In summary, there is progress for SDG 16 (peace, security and strong public services), SDG 1 (no poverty) and SDG 3 (good health and well-being). There is too little

progress for the various environmental objectives. For climate, energy, circular economy and biodiversity, the EU should really do better. And for SDG 5 (gender equality) there is a setback.

The environmental movement [criticises the report](#) because it is still too positive about reality. It does not take into account the impact of EU policies on other parts of the world.

