

## 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. Therefore, Finland is in a good position to start implementing the global 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Agenda2030). However, the comprehensive and integrative nature of the new Agenda2030 calls for better coherence and coordination of various policies also in Finland.

For Finland, the universal and transformative Agenda2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals and targets mean the need for a careful review of country's development cooperation policies and practices, but as importantly, also domestic policies and measures in various sectors. When it comes to domestic action, Finland needs to work on goals and targets of, for example, biological diversity, citizens' wellbeing and equality, sustainable consumption and production, efficient energy use, renewable energy, and climate change mitigation and adaptation policies. On the other hand, eradicating poverty, ensuring global food security or promoting peaceful and inclusive societies are goals which Finland implements best by intensifying its development and foreign policies. The division between domestic and foreign action is not, however, always so rigid: for instance Finland's consumption and production patterns have impact also outside the national borders by materials and supply chains.

### Preparation of the National Agenda2030 Implementation Plan

The Finnish Government has the primary responsibility for the national implementation of the Agenda2030, 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 Agenda2030 Implementation Plan** will be drawn up by the end of 2016. **Finland's development policy** – an important part of Finland's national response to the new agenda – has been outlined in the Government Report on Development Policy, published in February 2016.

Finland gets ready for the implementation of the Agenda2030 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.

To guide the preparation of the National Agenda2030 Implementation Plan, **an external gap-analysis** will be conducted to look into Finland's readiness to implement the global Agenda2030. The objective of the report is to draw a baseline for Finland's implementation measures, and in particular, to point out those goals and targets where Finland has most to catch up. The report also enables an appropriate scheduling and allocation of activities and resources to issues that have most relevance for Finland. The gap-analysis is conducted by Finnish Environment Institute and Demos Helsinki, and should be finalized by July.

The National Agenda2030 Implementation Plan will outline, among other things, how Finland in various policy sectors and in international cooperation will carry out the principles, goals and targets of the Agenda2030, and how the progress in the implementation will be monitored and reviewed. It identifies Finland's strengths as well as major gaps and challenges and offers solutions and tools to improve the performance. The key measures to put the Agenda2030 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. One important voluntary means of implementation in Finland is Society's Commitment to Sustainable Development, the national sustainable development strategy adopted in 2013. One important policy instrument for implementation is Government's Report on Development Policy.

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

It is on the responsibility of the state officials to design the plan and enable the realization of the Agenda2030 implementation in Finland. However, there are two major multi-stakeholder committees in Finland 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 23 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, yet the Secretary General of the Commission will continue to operate from the Environment Ministry. In order to improve the policy coherence, the collaboration of the two committees will be intensified, for example through joint meetings, workshops and discussion papers.

**Society's Commitment to Sustainable Development "The Finland We Want 2050"** was established in 2013 and will feature as one of the key multi-stakeholder implementation tools for Agenda2030 in Finland. It is Finland's strategic sustainable development framework with a vision, principles and objectives in a transition to sustainable development. Compared to conventional national sustainability strategies, the Society's Commitment can be considered as a social innovation enabling the translation of sustainable development into everyday practices and engagement of a large variety of societal actors in joint effort. The Society's Commitment also contains the implementation mechanism. By the end of 2015, over 200 organizations from companies to ministries, schools, municipalities and CSOs, as well as individual citizens have already 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. The Commitment is fairly well in line with the Agenda2030, a minor revision is under preparation.

### **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 Agenda2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals and targets at all levels. Monitoring the progress and reviewing the achievements on a regular basis is essential for ensuring accountability to citizens and the global community.

The state and trends of sustainable development in Finland is being monitored and reviewed by 39 **national sustainable development indicators**. They were identified in 2014 to measure the progress of the eight strategic objectives of the Society's Commitment. These indicators will be revised and updated to lend themselves to the follow-up of the Agenda2030 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 Agenda2030.

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 Agenda2030 and in the preparation of the National Implementation Plan. We are committed to intensifying the existing means and finding new innovative ways to increase participation and ownership. As regards the Parliament, one effective means might be a Government Report to the Parliament on the national implementation of the Agenda2030. As regards the citizens, a regional Agenda2030 road-show would be a way to reach all corners of Finland. The new modes for participation will be considered as part of the process to design the National Agenda2030 Implementations Plan in the course of 2016.

### **Further information:**

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