

## **Sustainable Development 2015: We Now Need to Maintain the Substance and Head for Implementation**

SDSN<sup>1</sup> Germany has been following the current negotiations at the United Nations on global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with great interest. It particularly welcomes the high level of ambition spelled out clearly in the goals proposed by the Open Working Group (OWG) as of 19 July 2014. It is only natural that not everybody is completely satisfied with every detail. However, the substance of the proposals now on the table definitely must be maintained. The positive outcome to date also mirrors main points of the Action Agenda for Sustainable Development presented by the global SDSN in June 2013. In addition to ensuring that the substance of the OWG result is maintained, it is now increasingly important to address the issues of operationalisation and communication, as well as implementation and monitoring. The indicators proposed by the global SDSN can serve as an important foundation here.

Against this background, SDSN Germany expects that the synthesis report of the UN Secretary-General, which is due to be released in the coming weeks, will draw on, maintain and further elaborate the proposals agreed by the most important groups of states in a balancing act that took months. This is the clear wish of many chief negotiators and participants such as from the USA, India and the G77 as well as from Germany, France and Switzerland. Anybody who now questions the hard-fought compromises on this matter runs the risk of provoking a downward spiral that could cast doubt on the so far participatory procedures, and endanger the credibility of the process at large.

In a complex world, universal goals for sustainable development are all interconnected and must not be viewed as a 'shopping list' from which one can pick and choose. This is a huge challenge for good global communication and the translation and knowledge-based implementation of these goals at local level in every country. This is why we in Germany should start to formulate SDGs for Germany at a very early stage, regardless of how the targets proposed by the OWG will be further negotiated. In so doing, we must be guided by the current ambitious proposals for SDGs. Firstly, the focus must be on those goals that will allow us, by changing our development path in Germany, to make the largest possible contribution to the global goals and thus to secure our own future. Secondly, we must set transformative targets for Germany that underline Germany's role as a forerunner, for example, a successful energy transition ("Energiewende"), reduced land consumption, and progress in terms of resource efficiency and a circular economy. In a democratic society, we need to rapidly find ways of discarding unsustainable consumption and production patterns.

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<sup>1</sup> Sustainable Development Solutions Network Germany; Leadership Council decision of 5 November 2014