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NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Special Committee on Agriculture / Council
Subject:	Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: Implications for the EU agricultural policy - <i>Exchange of views</i>

1. The UN Sustainable Development Summit (New York, 25-27 September 2015) adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development ('Transforming our world'),¹ including a single set of global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that replaced the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as from 1 January 2016. The 2030 Agenda responds comprehensively to global challenges by addressing poverty eradication and the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development in a holistic manner. Its 17 SDGs and the 169 associated targets cover key areas such as poverty, inequality, food security, health, sustainable consumption and production, growth, employment, infrastructure, sustainable management of natural resources, oceans, climate change and gender equality.
2. On 22 November 2016, the Commission adopted its Communication on 'Next steps for a sustainable European future: European action for sustainability'.²

¹ http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E.

² 14774/16 + ADD 1.

3. President Juncker confirmed that the Commission would move on the 'modernisation and simplification of the Common Agricultural Policy to maximise its contribution to the Commission's political priorities and the Sustainable Development Goals.'³
4. The Council (General Affairs) adopted conclusions regarding the 2030 Agenda implementation at EU level at its meeting on 20 June 2017.⁴
5. The Council (Agriculture) meeting on 17 July 2017 discussed the outcome of the second African Union - European Union (AU-EU) Agriculture Ministers Conference 'Making Sustainable Agriculture a future for youth in Africa', which took place on 2 July 2017 in Rome. The Conference set the scene for putting agriculture at the forefront of the AU-EU Partnership. Agriculture and agri-food sectors play a crucial role in ensuring food security, creating jobs and achieving the SDGs.⁵
6. In this context, the Presidency considers it timely for Agriculture Ministers to reflect on how to implement the 2030 Agenda effectively at EU level, and also to reflect on the impact of the 2030 Agenda on the EU policy framework from the agricultural perspective. In order to guide and structure the exchange of views on this subject at the Council (Agriculture) meeting on 9 October 2017, the Presidency has prepared a background paper and questions, as set out in the Annex to this Note.
7. The Special Committee on Agriculture is invited to take note of the Presidency's background paper and questions (in the Annex) and forward them to the Council for the abovementioned exchange of views on 9 October 2017.

³ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/commissioners/2014-2019/hogan/announcements/opening-address-commissioner-phil-hogan-cap-have-your-say-conference-brussels-7th-july-2017_en.

⁴ 10370/17.

⁵ 11230/17.

**Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development:
Implications for the EU agricultural policy****- Exchange of views -****The implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the EU**

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development represents a commitment to eradicate poverty and hunger and achieve sustainable development worldwide by 2030. This should be achieved by implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which call on all countries to evaluate domestic policies across a broad range of sectors and embark on a sustainable development path. The 17 SDGs and their 169 associated targets are global in nature, universally applicable and interlinked. All countries, developed and developing alike, have a shared responsibility to achieve the SDGs.

The EU was instrumental in shaping the 2030 Agenda and, in line with the principle of subsidiarity, the EU together with its Member States is committed to being a frontrunner in its implementation. This process will further catalyse a joined-up approach between the EU's external action and other policies and ensure coherence across EU financing instruments.

The Commission Communication on 'Next steps for a sustainable European future: European action for sustainability' explains how the Commission's 10 political priorities contribute to implementing the SDGs. The EU's answer to the 2030 Agenda includes two work streams. The first aims at integrating the SDGs into the European policy framework and current Commission priorities, assessing where we stand and identifying the most relevant sustainability concerns. A second track will launch reflection on implementation of the SDGs after 2020, with the focus on sectoral policies. The Commission is to provide regular reporting of the EU's progress towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda as of 2017.

The Council (General Affairs) conclusions from June 2017 indicate that, in order to ensure the effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda, a high level of ambition, increased consistency and policy coherence and breaking down silos between policy sectors should be required of the EU and the Member States.

Role of agriculture in the 2030 Agenda

The role of agriculture is substantial in the 2030 Agenda and in sustainable future as it is intrinsically linked to issues such as food, climate change, air, water, soil, biodiversity, jobs and rural livelihoods. Worldwide, agriculture has a potentially critical contribution to make in generating sustainable and inclusive growth, via job creation in the agri-food sector and the rural economy, and ensuring sustainable management of natural resources.

Agricultural policy is crucial in the implementation of the SDGs and several SDGs are especially relevant from the agricultural perspective. SDG 2 (end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture) includes targets for agricultural productivity, production and farmers' income, maintaining ecosystems, agricultural markets and trade rules. Given its multifaceted nature, agricultural policy also contributes to achieving the following SDGs: SDG 1 (end poverty); SDG 12 (ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns), whereas SDG 12.3 (by 2030, halve per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reduce food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses) could be specifically highlighted; SDG 14 (sustainable use of the oceans, seas and marine resources); SDG 17 (strengthening international partnership and cooperation), SDG 13 (climate action), SDG 7 (ensuring sustainable energy), SDG 6 (sustainable management of water) and SDG 15 (sustainable management of forests, combat land degradation). Agriculture is also highly relevant for SDG 5 (gender equality) and for SDG 8 (full employment and decent work).

The discussion on the 2030 Agenda is also important in the context of the future review of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). Food security remains a fundamental objective of the CAP, both within the EU and globally. The CAP faces the challenge of achieving the sustainability objectives in the context of increased demand and increased risks related to climate, diseases, resources and market volatility.

Framework and objectives of the exchange of views at the Council (Agriculture) meeting on 9 October 2017

With this background paper, the Presidency invites Ministers to express their views as regards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda from the agricultural perspective.

The Presidency considers it important to stress the relevance of agriculture in the 2030 Agenda.

With a view to the upcoming CAP reform process, the Presidency finds that it is pertinent to open a discussion on whether EU policies and instruments in the field of agriculture are fit for achieving the relevant SDGs and how to improve the policies.

The 2030 Agenda is a global project and better achieved through joint effort. The discussion could thus also identify areas where cooperation among Member States could be improved in order to better achieve certain SDGs outside the EU.

With this in mind, Ministers are invited to consider the following questions as a basis for structuring the debate:

- 1. In your view, to what extent do the current policy instruments contribute to achieving the agriculture-relevant SDGs and which would be the best ways to further integrate the 2030 Agenda goals into the EU policy framework from the agricultural perspective?*
- 2. What are the areas in which the Member States and the EU institutions could cooperate more efficiently, at EU level and in the international fora, in order to achieve the agriculture-relevant SDGs both within and outside the EU?*