



Council of the
European Union

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NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Permanent Representatives Committee/Council

Subject: "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development"
and its environmental perspectives
- Exchange of views

1. The UN Sustainable Development Summit (New York, 25-27 September 2015) adopted the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development ("Transforming our world"), including a single set of global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that will replace the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The adoption of the Agenda 2030 represents the culmination of a long process of dialogue and negotiations, involving both government representatives and non-state actors, that was launched at the Rio+20 Summit in June 2012.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development responds comprehensively to global challenges by addressing poverty eradication and the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development in a holistic manner. The new 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. In this context, the Presidency considers that the Council (Environment) on 26 October 2015 offers a timely opportunity to start reflecting on how to implement effectively the Agenda 2030 at EU level, including from an environment perspective.

In order to guide and structure the exchange of views in Council, the Presidency has prepared a background paper and three questions, set out in the Annex to this Note.

3. The Committee of Permanent Representatives is invited to take note of the Presidency's background paper and questions (in Annex) and forward them to Council for the above-mentioned exchange of views on 26 October 2015.

**"Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development"
and its environmental perspectives**

- Exchange of views -

The UN Summit (New-York, 25-27 September 2015) adopted the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development ("Transforming our world"), including a single set of global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that will replace the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs): this represents the culmination of a long process that started at the Rio+20 Summit in June 2012.

We welcome the universal and transformative nature of this new Agenda 2030 for sustainable development, which offers a universal and integrative approach in all sectors, aiming to achieve a continuous improvement in citizens' quality of life and wellbeing within our planet's capacity and leaving no one behind.

Our ambitions and opportunities have been enhanced in particular regarding environmental and climate issues, thus preserving the balance between the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. There are SDGs dedicated inter alia to water and sanitation, sustainable energy, sustainable cities, sustainable consumption and production patterns, the climate, oceans and territorial ecosystems. Moreover, the 2030 Agenda takes into account interlinkages and interaction between the environment and climate with other sectors and political issues like fight against poverty, agriculture and food, health, education, growth or industrialisation and infrastructures. The 2030 Agenda therefore underlines that environmental sustainability is a fundamental element for a sustainable development for all within the planetary boundaries.

The adoption of the 2030 Agenda is an important step towards a successful outcome of the 21st Conference on Climate Change (COP 21) in Paris. Although the two processes have been running in parallel, their subjects are strongly intertwined. By agreeing that the adverse impacts of climate change undermine the ability of all countries to achieve sustainable development, strong foundations have been built ahead of the Paris Conference.

A global indicator framework to measure progress towards the SDGs and targets is an essential element of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development. The elaboration of indicators for monitoring, follow-up and review of the Agenda is fundamental. Adequate data and indicators enabling the measurement of progress regarding implementation of the agenda at regional, national and global level are required. The Agenda 2030 reconfirms the central role of the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) in overseeing a network of follow-up and review processes at the global level, working coherently with other relevant UN bodies.

Collective action will be key in the success of the Agenda 2030. Achieving the objectives and attaining the targets need to bring together all actors, from public sector, to companies and civil society, from organisation to citizens. The 2030 Agenda is not only about objectives and targets, but also about governance and inclusiveness.

Along with the rest of the international community, the European Union and its Member States face the challenge of implementing this ambitious plan and are committed to achieving the SDGs by 2030. In order to meet this challenge, we need to assess and review as appropriate our strategies, policies and instruments in order to make sure that they are fit for purpose.

Sustainable development has long been at the heart of the European project. It is anchored in the Treaties and in our policies, such as the 2006 EU Sustainable Development Strategy, the 7th EAP and the Europe 2020 Strategy. Sustainable growth has been mainstreamed in the Europe 2020 Strategy since 2010 and the SDGs will now help shaping the reflection on the future of the Strategy. The EU has sectoral policies and instruments in place in a large number of areas covered by the SDGs. Eurostat is producing a monitoring report every two years covering more than 100 indicators including 12 "sustainable development headline indicators".

In this regard, assessing whether the existing EU framework and governance structures are tailored and sufficient to enable the EU to achieve the 2030 Agenda goals and targets, and whether further strategic guidance and action is needed for an effective and comprehensive implementation, identifying appropriate European policies and instruments and eliminating possible impediments will be among the first important steps to take.

Questions:

1. *While the EU has developed a broad range of policies in the areas covered by the SDGs, we should consider whether and where further efforts may be needed. What do you see as the main EU priorities for implementing the 2030 Agenda from an environmental perspective, both in the dedicated environmental goals and in other goals where environmental dimension is paramount (e.g. health, transport, energy, agriculture, cities)?*

2. *Policy coherence will be essential for achieving sustainable development and the SDGs. How could the EU ensure better policy coherence for sustainable development (PCSD)? How should coherence between the national and EU level be ensured? What are the best practices within the Commission and in the Member States?*

3. *The ambition and commitment of the EU to the 2030 Agenda implies demonstrating continuing leadership at global level, in the follow-up and monitoring. How could the EU most effectively report on measures and progress, including in the HLPF, using where possible the existing EU reporting?*

