

CONCORD ADVOCACY MESSAGES TO EU & MEMBER STATES FOR THE INFORMAL NEGOTIATIONS ON AGENDA 2030 FOLLOW-UP & REVIEW AT GLOBAL LEVEL

APRIL 2016

CONCORD calls on the EU and its Member States to

1. Set up robust independent accountability mechanisms, report annually against their strategies and implementation plans and report at minimum every 5 years to the UN at global level (all Member States as well as the EU as a whole);
2. Monitor the whole 2030 Agenda, including its principles and means of implementation and refrain from confounding the latter with the Financing for Development (FfD) process; note that FfD goes beyond the Addis Ababa Action Agenda;
3. Include the indivisible and integrated nature of Agenda 2030 and Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development in the monitoring, accountability and review framework;
4. Strengthen existing and design new participatory processes to allow people to engage across Europe;
5. Ensure clarity over roles and responsibilities as well as total transparency when setting up multi-stakeholder partnerships;
6. Develop appropriate and ambitious indicators to guide reporting and against which to be held accountable.

1. ROBUST INDEPENDENT ACCOUNTABILITY MECHANISMS AND MORE REGULAR REPORTING

CONCORD **regrets the lack of ambition** of current proposals for the monitoring, review and accountability mechanisms of the High-level Political Forum (HLPF) – and particularly the lack of real accountability, given that the focus is on sharing good practices. Despite a laudable set of principles that countries should aspire to respect when developing “follow up and review” processes, the 2030 Agenda does not propose robust mechanisms which allow civil society and individuals to hold international institutions and their governments to account for implementation. There is an over-emphasis on voluntary actions and use of existing mechanisms, without recognising that these may need to be strengthened, especially at the national level. **Robust, independent accountability mechanisms from local to global level** are crucial.

It is worthwhile highlighting that the **Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA)**, which complements and supports the 2030 Agenda, **calls for improved accountability** in a number of areas, not least in the context of the role and responsibilities of the private sector, public-private partnerships, financial institutions, philanthropic organisations and through the transparent provision of information and data.

Frequency of reporting – CONCORD does not believe that reporting results to the global level only twice over the lifetime of the 2030 Agenda is adequate. Rather, this should be done every five years. A 'leave no one behind' approach must include clear mechanisms to measure and fast-track progress for the most marginalised, ensuring the needs of those furthest behind are met first. Reporting every five years would, moreover, allow states to check whether progress is being made for all groups and ensure that there is time to address concerns. **We propose that all countries should report annually against their strategies and implementation plans and at minimum every 5 years to the global (UN) level**, along the lines of country reporting to UN Human Rights mechanisms. CONCORD also strongly believes that the **European Union should report as an individual entity with the same frequency to the global level**. Given the aspiration of the EU to adopt an ambitious implementation strategy and recognising the division of competences between EU and its Member States, there is clear added value in and justification for EU reporting. Furthermore, there are important policy areas like trade, agriculture and fisheries that will not be sufficiently covered only by reporting at national level.

2. MONITOR THE WHOLE AGENDA, INCLUDING PRINCIPLES AND MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION

The monitoring, accountability and review processes must not focus exclusively on the achievement of the SDGs, important though this is. They must also include a focus on the key **principles** that underpin the 2030 Agenda such as 'leave no one behind', intergenerational equity and respect for planetary boundaries. Similarly, they must focus on the effort states have made to assist other countries achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in their context through the **Means of Implementation**.

States should be held accountable for whether they have set aside the **requisite financial resources** - "to the maximum extent possible" - for achievement of the 2030 Agenda in their own context (domestically). This should be set out in costed national action plans to guide states' implementation of the Agenda. In line with the principles mentioned above, these plans must focus on ensuring that the people furthest behind are prioritised.

There are two issues at stake here. Firstly, attempts by some Member States to confound the Means of Implementation and the Financing for Development agendas are extremely unhelpful and counter-productive. While there are clearly overlaps, the **Financing for Development agenda** goes further than that of the Means of Implementation in the 2030 Agenda. They **must therefore remain distinct processes**. The two must not be packaged together until the Financing for Development process becomes absorbed by the HLPF.

Secondly, whether on global tax governance reform, Official Development Assistance (ODA) commitments, debt or systemic issues, solely relying on the Addis Ababa Action Agenda as such, without any effort to advance the broader Financing for Development consensus will not be enough to fulfil the vision of sustainable development that 2030 Agenda puts forward. Financing for Development is not AAAA, so the **Financing for Development follow-up process must not be limited to AAAA, but should include previous conferences**, including the Financial Crisis one. There are many provisions in the Financing for Development conferences and AAAA that require further normative work and which the Financing for Development Follow-up Forum should focus on.

3. POLICY COHERENCE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

One of the main aims of the negotiations leading up to the adoption of the 2030 Agenda was to develop a **comprehensive, ambitious and integrated framework**, such that all 3 dimensions of sustainable development are represented, preferably within each goal area and are linked to each other across the framework. This has been, up to a point, achieved. It must therefore be retained, respected and reflected in the monitoring, review and accountability processes and mechanisms that are set up. **It will be critical to measure and ensure that progress in one area of the framework does not undermine progress elsewhere in the framework in ANY way.** This means that *how* a target is reached is as important as whether it is reached.

In this regard, Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development (PCSD) is a key element of accountability since it is one of the key enabling factors for realising the ambitious 2030 Agenda. PCSD essentially prescribes that states must take into account the impact their policies and actions on other people's prospects for sustainable development and other countries' ability to realise their people's human rights within planetary boundaries. It speaks to the need for states to mitigate any potentially negative impact they may have and to provide redress for those impacts that are proven to have been detrimental to groups of people or other countries.

Target 17.14 calls for enhanced Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development. Respecting the indivisible nature of the goals and targets, and in order to promote integrated policy approaches, monitoring and review of the 2030 Agenda should cover national, regional and global mechanisms to enhance PCSD, how these mechanisms are being used, how Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development is monitored and policy effects analysed. The EU has acted as a global frontrunner in developing tools for policy coherence and should continue to actively promote PCSD at a global level.

4. TRANSPARENT AND PARTICIPATORY PROCESSES

The EU and its Member States must show leadership in **strengthening existing and designing new participatory processes**, which will enable the public, community-based organisations and organised civil society alike to contribute to and influence the design and implementation of the 2030 Agenda at all stages and to engage in a systematic way in monitoring, review and accountability processes. The creation of *multiple* participatory review mechanisms at all levels from local to regional will be necessary in order to be inclusive of all people, especially those who are the hardest to reach. Examples of such mechanisms include social audits, scorecards, surveys and online polling. In this way, qualitative data will complement quantitative data. Clearly, freedom of the media and full transparency and availability of information to all actors is a sine qua non for people to engage in monitoring and review of the 2030 Agenda.

5. MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PARTNERSHIPS

It has frequently been mentioned that the 2030 Agenda will not be achieved without forming multi-stakeholder partnerships and most particularly not without the involvement of the private sector in such partnerships. Firstly, it is key that **States remain the primary duty-bearers** for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Secondly, any such partnerships should be undertaken in a fully **transparent** manner, with clear terms of reference for what is expected of all parties, which is available to the public. Any actor that is called upon by a state to contribute to implementing the 2030 Agenda must be held fully accountable for their part against international standards and guidelines on human rights, decent work and environmental sustainability, at the very minimum. There is currently a considerable gap in effective mandatory accountability mechanisms in the area of corporate transparency and accountability.

6. INDICATORS

Appropriate and ambitious indicators should be developed, which will guide the EU and its Member States in their reporting and for which they will be held accountable. The differentiation principle inherent in the 2030 Agenda expects different levels of achievement to be set by different countries and thus necessitates differentiated indicators, taking into account the different contexts and realities. It is important that the EU and its Member States commit to ensure the highest level of ambition when setting national indicators and EU level indicators based on the global ones. These indicators must ensure that a focus on the most marginalised is maintained and all countries must be expected to collect disaggregated data in order to monitor progress in closing the gaps in equality between people and countries.