

Written responses to the questions of the Argentinian Delegation and the UN Major Group for Children and Youth on the German Voluntary National Review 2021

Question by Argentina

Germany, in its VNR 2021, mentions the alignment of the SDGs with its Action Plan for Human Rights 2021-2022. In the sense of peer learning, the following question is proposed:

- *What has been the way in which this alignment was carried out? What impact did it have on prioritizing and adapting the goals to the national context? What impact did it have on the selection and development of indicators to monitor progress towards the SDG targets and how was it operationalized? What other consequences did it have on the concrete implementation of the Leave no one behind commitment?*

The German Government is pursuing 25 national and international human rights priorities, using the framework of its 2021-2022 Action Plan for Human Rights. The comprehensive nature of the Action Plan underscores Germany's commitment to universal and indivisible human rights, including the understanding that there is no hierarchy among human rights. The Action Plan's priorities correlate in large part with the 17 SDGs. The priorities include inter alia promoting the rights to water and sanitation, health, housing and nutrition, championing gender equality and climate action. You can find the entire Action Plan at <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/aussenpolitik/themen/menschenrechte/-/2422642>.

Additionally, Germany remains committed to the principle of leaving no one behind (LNOB) of the 2030 Agenda. Putting the LNOB principle into practice and reaching the poorest and most disadvantaged first is one of the primary tasks that governments and international cooperation must fulfil. The human rights principles of the dignity of the individual, non-discrimination and equality of opportunity are indivisibly linked with fostering inclusion according to the LNOB principle. We have addressed the LNOB principle throughout the German VNR – for instance in connection to gender equality, people with lower incomes on average, persons with disability and LGBTI people.

Human Rights are the cross-cutting, underlying fabric of the German Sustainable Development Strategy, which is the key framework for the national implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Many interlinkages are represented in the strategy's indicators, which are regularly monitored by the Federal Statistical Office. Two examples of the interlinkages are as follows: We are measuring the gender pay gap as an indicator for gender equality and against gender discrimination; we are also monitoring the number of people gaining first-time access to water and sanitation owing to German support which is closely linked to the human right to water and sanitation.

The German Sustainable Development Strategy is a living document which is updated regularly. We are already engaged in discussions regarding the adaptation of specific SDG indicators, including further strengthening the link between human rights and SDGs. The Human Rights Action Plan is updated every two years in a whole-of-government approach taking up feedback from the SDG implementation as well.

Question by the Major Group of Children and Youth

What are the German Governments plans to tackle inequalities in the six areas of transformation?

Worldwide, the top 1% of the population has benefited more than twice as much from economic development since 1980 than the poorest 50%. Many direct and indirect ramifications of the COVID-19 pandemic are affecting disadvantaged groups and individuals particularly badly, thus exacerbating existing inequalities within and between countries. In Germany, inequality remains a challenge, too.

Germany sees the reduction of inequality worldwide as a vital precondition for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda as a whole and remains committed to the principle of leaving no one behind. It therefore contributes to reducing inequality both nationally and around the world.

Under SDG 10, which addresses inequalities within and among countries, the German VNR outlines various strategies that the German Government implements to tackle inequalities domestically. These include inter alia safeguarding and maintaining social services, the minimum wage or the Federal Participation Act. It also details strategies to support partner countries in overcoming inequalities e.g. through the promotion of sustainable, socially responsible and inequality-reducing tax systems.

Putting the LNOB principle into practice and reaching the poorest and most disadvantaged first is one of the primary tasks that governments and international cooperation must fulfil. In our VNR, we have addressed the LNOB principle throughout – for instance in connection to gender equality, people with lower incomes on average, persons with disability and LGBTI people.

Corresponding to recommendations of the Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR), Germany has identified six priority areas of transition. These areas are pivotal to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in, by and in partnership with Germany. As an overarching objective, addressing inequalities and the LNOB principle will also be observed in the implementation of the six areas of transition identified in the German VNR:

- human well-being and social justice (corresponding to SDGs 1, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9 and 10);
- climate action and energy transition (SDGs 13 and 7);
- circular economy (SDGs 8, 9, 11, 12, 13 and 14);
- sustainable building and the transformation of transport (SDGs 7, 8, 9, 11, 12 and 13);
- sustainable agricultural and food systems (SDGs 2 and 3 with further links to SDGs 12 and 15);
- pollutant-free environment (SDGs 3, 6, 8, 11, 13, 14, 15).