

Germany's 2016 Report to the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development

Comments by the German Institute for Human Rights

The German Institute for Human Rights WELCOMES

– **Explicit references to Germany's human rights obligations and related processes**

Germany's HLPF report reinforces the commitment of the 2030 Agenda to implement the SDGs in line with international law, including human rights, by highlighting several human rights standards that Germany has already committed to in relation to a number of goals, e.g. the right to food (SDG 2), to health (SDG 3), the rights of women and girls (SDG 5), the rights to water and sanitation (SDG 6), the right to work and core ILO labour standards (SDG 8), and civil and political rights (SDG 16). In addition, the report identifies three levels of action which coincide with Germany's human rights obligations: The first level (implementation and impact in Germany) corresponds with Germany's human rights treaty obligations to realize human rights domestically. The second level (impacts in other countries and on global public goods) corresponds with Germany's extraterritorial human rights obligations to respect and protect human rights, i.e. including through monitoring and regulation of third parties such as the private sector¹. The report mentions Germany's forthcoming National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights which specifically addresses this level of action. The third level (international cooperation) corresponds with Germany's obligation to realize human rights through international cooperation².

– **Commitment to accountability and to disaggregation of data at national level**

During the negotiations on the 2030 Agenda, Germany led an effort by several countries to ensure a strong accountability system for the Agenda. The government's HLPF report reiterates this objective and acts on it by committing the government to a second HLPF report in 2021. Germany also argued strongly for broad disaggregation of data to allow for the monitoring of progress for different population groups. The HLPF report turns this global commitment into a national one by stressing that data disaggregation will be critical for Germany to achieve the goals. The government will now need to fulfill this commitment, including by deciding on the level of disaggregation in consultation with civil society.

¹ As laid down in Principle 8a of the [Maastricht Principles](#)

² As laid down in in Principle 8b of the [Maastricht Principles](#)

The German Institute for Human Rights IS CONCERNED that

- **National measures and indicators do not systematically build on national challenges**

While the report mentions national challenges in relation to each goal, it does not describe systematically how these challenges have been identified. In particular, the report does not mention existing analyses and recommendations that Germany has received from human rights bodies (see the German Institute for Human Rights' [comparison of SDGs and human rights treaty bodies' Concluding Observations for Germany](#)), even though the 2030 Agenda strongly encourages to draw on these existing review mechanisms. As a result, the report shows clear gaps. For example, while human rights bodies have repeatedly highlighted violence against women as an issue to tackle in Germany, no national indicator on this issue has been established.

- **The draft National Sustainability Strategy does not include details on civil society participation**

During the negotiations on the 2030 Agenda, the German government stressed the importance of civil society participation in decision-making processes to implement the 2030 Agenda at the national level. The HLPF report mentions a number of welcome activities to engage German civil society, including the Chancellery's process to consult on the draft National Sustainability Strategy. However, in the view of the German Institute for Human Rights, not every dialogue or awareness raising event qualifies as effective participation in decision-making. The latter requires, for instance, the provision of information well in advance of requesting input, transparency on how results are being used, reliability and institutionalization of participation mechanisms, the involvement of parliament etc. Against this background, the German Institute for Human Rights is concerned about the fact that the current draft National Sustainability Strategy does not contain any details or standards for civil society engagement in its management rules. It urges the government to formulate such standards in consultation with civil society.

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