

## **UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development - Public Consultation on revising the European Consensus on Development**

Fields marked with \* are mandatory.

### **(1) Introduction**

---

The year 2015 was a strategic milestone for global governance, poverty eradication and sustainable development. It marked the target date of the UN Millennium Development Goals and a point to reflect on the progress made to date and the challenges ahead in addressing their unfinished business. 2015 also saw a series of landmark international summits and conferences over the course of the year (the [Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030](#), the [Addis Ababa Action Agenda](#), the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) and the COP 21 [Paris Agreement](#) under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change) which have collectively re-cast the way the international community, including the EU, will work to achieve sustainable development and poverty eradication for many years.

Importantly, and in contrast to the Millennium Development Goals, the 2030 Agenda, including its seventeen Sustainable Development Goals, is a universal Agenda which applies to all countries. It reflects many core European values and interests and provides an international framework for tackling global challenges such as climate change. The EU response to the 2030 Agenda is moving ahead in a range of ways:

- Firstly, as part of EU efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda, the [Commission Work Programme for 2016](#) announces an initiative on the next steps for a sustainable European future which will explain how the EU contributes to reaching the Sustainable Development Goals and map out the internal and external aspects of EU policies contributing to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.
- Secondly, the High Representative will present the [EU Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy](#) that is expected to steer the different EU external policies contributing to the global vision of a more stable, prosperous and secure world. It should set out the strategic direction for the full range of EU external action, and as such will help guide EU implementation of the 2030 Agenda in external action.
- Thirdly, the EU will review its development cooperation policy. Existing leading policy documents (including the [2005 European Consensus on Development](#) and the [2011 Agenda for Change](#)) are currently framed around the Millennium Development Goals and need to adapt to incorporate the 2030 Agenda. Given its direct relevance to the EU's overall relations with developing countries, this review will be carried out in full consistency with the ongoing work on the future of the partnership between the EU and the members of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States, under a post-[Cotonou](#) framework.

Views from this consultation will be used to inform the way forward on the initiatives above and in particular the revision of the European Consensus on Development and other external aspects of 2030 Agenda implementation. The consultation seeks your views on **how development policy, in the context of EU external action as foreseen by the Lisbon Treaty**, should respond to the range of landmark 2015 summits and conferences, and also to the rapid changes happening in the world.

Replies can include views which could apply only to the EU institutions and also to both the EU and its Member States – it would be helpful to clarify this in your response. This open public consultation will run for 12 weeks from 30 May 2016 to 21 August 2016. A brief summary and analysis of all consultation contributions will be published by November 2016 and all individual contributions will also be made available on the consultation website (unless respondents ask for their contributions not to be published).

## (2) Information on respondents

---

- \* 2.1 Received contributions may be published on the Commission's website, with the identity of the contributor. Please state your preference with regard to the publication of your contribution.

Please note that regardless of the option chosen, your contribution may be subject to a request for access to documents under [Regulation 1049/2001](#) on public access to European Parliament, Council and Commission documents. In such cases, the request will be assessed against the conditions set out in the Regulation and in accordance with applicable [data protection rules](#).

- I do not agree that my contribution will be published at all
- My contribution may be published but should be kept anonymous; I declare that none of it is subject to copyright restrictions that prevent publication
- My contribution may be published under the name indicated; I declare that none of it is subject to copyright restrictions that prevent publication

- \* 2.2 Are you registered in the EU's Transparency Register?

Please note: Organisations, networks, platforms or self-employed individuals engaged in activities aimed at influencing the EU decision making process are expected to register in the transparency Register. During the analysis of replies to a consultation, contributions from respondents who choose not to register will be treated as individual contributions (unless the contributors are recognised as representative stakeholders through Treaty provisions, European Social Dialogue, Art. 154-155 TFEU).

- Yes
- No

- \* 2.2.1 If yes, what is your registration number?

83357751766-93

- \* 2.3 Name (entity or individual in their personal capacity)

Plan International - EU Liaison Office

2.5 What type of stakeholder are you?

- Government institution / Public administration
- University / Academic organisation
- Civil society (including Non-Governmental Organisation, specialised policy organisation, think tank)
- International organisation
- Private sector or private company
- Citizen/private individual
- Other

2.6 Please specify

NGO

\* 2.7 What is your place of residence (if you are answering as a private individual) or where are the headquarters of your organisation situated (if you are answering on behalf of an organisation)?

- In one of the 28 EU Member States
- Other

2.8 Please specify

UK

### (3) Context: why a change is needed

---

The EU and its Member States are determined to implement the 2030 Agenda through internal and external actions as well as contribute to the successful implementation of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, given the strong interlinkages. In this context, our policies, should take into account changing global conditions and trends, to ensure that they remain fit-for-purpose across the time-horizon to 2030.

The global landscape has changed significantly compared to the time of adoption of the Millennium Development Goals. While much has been achieved, with more than one billion people having been lifted out of extreme poverty since 1990, great challenges remain and new ones are emerging. At global level, more than 800 million people still live on less than USD 1.25 a day. The world is witnessing multiple conflicts and security tensions, complex humanitarian and global health crises, deteriorations of human rights, environmental degradation, resource scarcity, urbanisation and migration. Migration flows across the world will continue to have important impacts, and present both a risk and an opportunity. The EU needs to address global security challenges, including tackling the root causes of conflict and instability and countering violent extremism. Climate change can continue to amplify problems and can severely undermine progress. Important changes include demographic trends, a new distribution of wealth and power between and within countries, the continuing globalisation of economies and value chains, an evolving geography of poverty and a proliferation of actors working on development. Projections also suggest important challenges are ahead (for example, continuing unprecedented urbanisation, and other demographic challenges including ageing societies for some and the potential for a demographic dividend for others). Continued attention will be given to a democratic, stable and prosperous neighbourhood. A revision to EU development policy should take into account these trends (including anticipating those that will remain central in future) whilst retaining a core focus on eradicating poverty and finishing the job started by the Millennium Development Goals.

Finally, the EU Consensus needs also to adapt to the Lisbon Treaty, which provides for all external action policies to work within the frameworks and pursue the principles of objectives of Article 21 of the Treaty on European Union. In particular, coherence between the different parts of EU external action and between external and internal policies is crucial.

The EU will need to address these new global challenges, many of which require coordinated policy action at the national, regional and global levels. The 2030 Agenda provides a framework which can guide us in doing so.

3.1 There is a range of key global trends (e.g. changing geography and depth of poverty; challenges related to climate change, political, economic, social, demographic, security, environmental or technological) which will influence the future of development and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Which of these do you think is the most important?

There are a large number of global trends - including those listed in the question - which are interlinked and all important, so each will need to be addressed in order to fulfil the commitments States, and the EU, made in signing up to the 2030 Agenda. Indeed, development is influenced and driven by such a large range of intersecting issues that to focus on just one as being the most important could be highly detrimental to progress. Global interdependencies - between issues and actors - must be borne in mind for progress in all three dimensions of sustainable development. An integrated approach is therefore crucial, while the focus must be on realising everyone's human rights within planetary boundaries.

However, what can be highlighted is the differential impact of each of these trends on specific groups in society. Plan International would like to highlight the situation of girls and women who are, almost without exception, disproportionately affected by the negative impacts of global trends and benefit least from progress. These impacts may be both visible (such as a house being destroyed in a natural disaster, being killed during or fleeing conflict) and invisible (such as rising inequality and poverty hitting women hardest). However, all such impacts are caused and compounded by girls' and women's lack of power and agency to influence or determine outcomes which shape their lives. They are simply not valued in the same way as boys and men. Girls and women make up half of the world's population but have thus far been left 'the furthest behind' on almost every count, as a result of discrimination against them owing to their gender. If the 2030 Agenda is to be achieved and no one is to be left behind, it is crucial to acknowledge and to address the full ramifications of such discrimination. There will be no sustainable development while gender inequality persists.

### 3.2 How should EU policies, and development policy in particular, better harness the opportunities and minimise the negative aspects of the trend you identified in the previous question?

In order to address gender inequality and ensure substantive equality between girls and boys, which means real equality of opportunity and outcome and thereby goes beyond positive discrimination, for girls and women, EU policies must all, without exception, be reviewed by gender equality experts who are able to provide a gender transformative focus. It is not enough to simply fund a small number of gender-sensitive development projects and programmes, or to raise awareness of the importance of gender equality, if the impacts of other policies such as trade and investment, agriculture, or energy undermine or even roll back any progress made on the social front through development cooperation. Gender transformative criteria should be applied to all policies, agreements, financial instruments and all other processes, tools and mechanisms at the EU's disposal. These should be applied in addition to - or as an integral part of - Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development (PCSD). Civil society organisations such as Plan International would be glad to work with the EC to assist in drawing up such criteria.

Secondly, the EU must do far more to address the systemic factors underpinning discrimination by working with other governments, international institutions, the private sector and civil society to rectify the current power structures in society which favour boys and men over girls and women. This would contribute to positive progress for all people in the social, economic and environmental domains. In this way the EU would address the power others have 'over' girls and women, in being able to make decisions on their behalf (and not necessarily in their interest).

Thirdly, the EU must focus on how to boost the power girls and women have both together - for example through forming social movements or associations - as well as through working with men and boys in order to create an enabling environment for girls and women and change social norms and attitudes which affect them negatively. Working with men and boys is critical not just as vehicles to empower girls and women but also to improve their own lives, for example by reframing masculinity and unpacking how rigid gender norms are harmful to men as well. Engaging men and boys throughout the life cycle is crucial, as well as identifying champions, and providing support within men's own spaces.

Lastly, the EU should focus on the power 'within' girls and women, by enhancing their life skills, their capacities and the opportunities available to them in order to empower them to take on significant roles in business and society.

## (4) Priorities for our future action: what we need to do

---

Implementation of the 2030 Agenda will require sustained EU efforts to promote a more just world, including a strong focus on the need to address gender equality and women's empowerment. Peace, inclusiveness, equality and good governance including democracy, accountability, rule of law, human rights and non-discrimination will need particular emphasis. The 2030 Agenda also requires recognition of the close interconnectedness between poverty, social issues, economic transformation, climate change and environmental issues.

To achieve poverty eradication, EU development policy will need to take into account key demographic and environmental trends, including challenges related to climate change, and concentrate effort on least developed countries and fragile states. The EU will also need to strengthen our approach to fragility and conflict, fostering resilience and security (as an increasing proportion of the world's poor are expected to live in fragile and conflict affected states) and to protect global public goods and to maintain our resource base as the prerequisite for sustainable growth. Peace and security, including security sector reform, will have to be addressed also through our development policy, as will the risks and opportunities related to migration flows. Tackling social and economic inequalities (both within and between countries) is a crucial element of the 2030 Agenda as is addressing environmental degradation and climate change. Job creation will be an important challenge in which the private sector has to play an active role. Finishing the job of the Millennium Development Goals requires identifying and reaching those people throughout the world who are still not benefitting from progress to ensure that no one is left behind.

To achieve lasting results, EU development policy will need to foster transformation and promote inclusive and sustainable growth. Drivers of inclusive sustainable growth, such as human development, renewable energy, sustainable agriculture and fisheries, and healthy and resilient oceans should be an important part of our efforts to implement the new Agenda as will efforts aimed at tackling hunger and under-nutrition. Implementation of the 2030 Agenda will require a multi-dimensional, integrated approach to human development. Implementation will also require us to address vectors of change, such as sustainable urban development and relevant use of information and communication technology. Our development policy will have to engage and identify new ways of partnering with the business in order to achieve sustainable and inclusive growth, industrialisation and innovation. Implementation of the 2030 Agenda will also require cooperation with partner countries and regions on science, technology and innovation. In all aspects of our external action, the EU will need to ensure that our approaches, including development cooperation, are conducive to achieving the 2030 Agenda's Sustainable Development Goals and that the EU intensifies efforts to promote pursue coherence between our policies and our internal and external action.

#### 4.1 How can the EU better address the links between achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Agreement on climate change and addressing other global sustainable development challenges?

The linkages and interdependencies between all three dimensions of sustainable development are well-known: there will be no sustainable development if progress falters in any one of them. Just as there will be no sustainable development if we leave huge proportions of the world's population behind. That is why it is crucial to address any issue from a

truly integrated and human rights-based perspective. For example, investing in girls' and women's economic empowerment needs to be backed up by efforts to achieve a low carbon emissions world economy so that their livelihood is not wiped out by a climate-related natural disaster. Investing in food and nutrition security needs to be backed up by integrated water resource management if there is to be water to irrigate their crops, rather than it having been used (up) by European (or other) companies for producing goods for western markets, or for crops for European fuel or cattlefeed.

Similarly, the EU should strengthen the links between humanitarian aid and development cooperation if it is to better respond to the links between the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement. Development actors must be expected to work on risk reduction just as humanitarian actors are expected to work with early recovery. Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development is ever more crucial if the goals of these important frameworks are to be achieved.

There are, however, a number of tensions between the Goal areas in the 2030 Agenda and potentially between certain of the 2030 Agenda's targets and the Paris Agreement. For example, between Goals 8 (economic growth) and 9 (industrialization) of the 2030 Agenda on the one hand and Goal 13 (climate change) on the other. Current growth models - and, one might argue, the very focus on growth as the main measure of a country's progress - are highly detrimental both to the environment and to our climate since they are based to a large extent on production and consumption patterns which make intensive use of natural resources and create huge amounts of both waste and pollution: many agricultural and industrial activities contribute directly to climate change. Thus it will be necessary to ensure that progress in one area of the framework does not undermine progress in another area.

One key means to enable an overview of such interlinkages and interdependencies is to draw up an overarching strategy which will set out the EU's path to achieving the 2030 Agenda and its contribution to helping other countries achieve it in their context. An ongoing mapping exercise may be necessary to ensure that the linkages between new policies from any Directorate-General (DG) are clear and are respected, so that all who are potentially implicated are involved in decision-making. Action plans will be needed to guide the work of linked DGs in any given area.

Furthermore, a critical tool to ensure that the impacts of any EU policy or action do not undermine the realization of people's human rights or any country's ability to achieve sustainable development is Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development. Clearly, this policy must be applied far more consistently than has been the case to date and all dimensions of sustainable development must be equally examined in the impact assessments. The potential impacts of any policy on girls and women must be a foremost concern.

Lastly, a huge number of current policies will need to be reviewed in order to ensure that they support the objectives of the 2030 Agenda, instead of undermining them. For example, the EC should look into how to absolutely decouple economic activity from natural resource use; the focus on growth should be brought under greater scrutiny, especially in the European context

and alternative parameters should be used to measure progress (in complement to GDP); urgent and more ambitious measures are needed to improve energy efficiency and to increase the proportion of renewable energy in the energy mix; harmful subsidies, such as those which distort efficient market functioning and harm biodiversity, must be ended; legislation will be needed to ensure that externality costs of production, consumption and waste disposal are incorporated in pricing; financial speculation on essential goods (such as food commodities) and services should be eliminated. The list could go on.

#### 4.2 How should the EU strengthen the balanced integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development in its internal and external policies, and in particular in its development policy?

Despite the EU having pushed hard for governance to be included in the 2030 Agenda, it remains the one dimension of sustainable development which is seriously overlooked by all actors, including the EU when it comes to considering sustainable development. Just governance is critical if human rights, the rule of law and democracy are to prevail. And there are governance angles to any sector or policy.

If the EU is to strengthen its approach to sustainable development and implement the 2030 Agenda, it must draw up an overarching strategy covering internal and external policies and all parts of the 2030 Agenda from the application of its principles – such as leave no one behind – through the means of implementation, to the monitoring of progress. Without a clear roadmap to guide all the DGs in how they are expected to implement the Agenda, the EU will not be successful in achieving it. The EU should ensure that it engages with all stakeholders by launching a public, transparent consultation process on such a strategy, with civil society (and other actors) able to feed in at all stages.

All policies and tools – whether dialogues with partner countries (policy, political, human rights, sectoral etc), funding instruments, agreements etc – must be adapted to ensure that they take into consideration both their potential impact on sustainable development and in what way they may support the objectives of the 2030 Agenda, particularly as regards their social and environmental impacts. Sustainable development criteria will need to be applied and guidance provided to all relevant staff.

In this regard, Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development will be a key means to safeguard against any harm being done to people's or developing countries' prospects for sustainable development as well as to ensure that where benefits may be accrued, they do so significantly more for girls, women and other marginalized groups. This will contribute to closing the inequality gaps between people in any given country and between countries. Currently there are far too few impact assessments carried out and there is a decided imbalance in the attention paid to the different dimensions of sustainable development in those impact assessments which are conducted. Moreover, the economic angle, while favoured, is rarely addressed from the perspective of achieving people's economic and social rights.

#### 4.3 What are the main changes you would like to see in the EU's development policy framework?

Plan International would like to see a far greater emphasis on and commitment to creating transformative change for girls and women, through a systemic

approach to policy, funding and other action. This must go beyond citing all the right terminology in the preamble, as in the case of the Agenda for Change, for example, when in practice the action part of the document does not implement the fine words. Girls and women should be seen less as beneficiaries and rather as agents of change. The EU should therefore focus on ensuring that girls are able to learn, lead, decide and thrive by crafting a development policy which creates an enabling environment for girls and women - socially, economically, environmentally and governance-wise. Lastly, the EU should pay far greater attention to monitoring and evaluating the impact that its policies may have had. For example, has any assessment been made of the Agenda for Change in terms of its impact on girls and women and on gender equality?

More broadly, we would like human rights and respect for the environment to guide all policy decisions, such that EU economic or financial interests do not win the day if this may imply that people's rights - including children's rights - could be undermined or environmental degradation increased.

We would prefer the EU to give support to countries based on more valid criteria than their GDP (EU differentiation policy, put simply). The number of poor people in any given context should be a key guiding factor in terms of how and where the EU implements its development policy, not least because women and children make up the majority of all poor people in any context. The EU should therefore re-consider its support to some middle income countries, including the way it provides that support.

We are concerned by the increasing focus on security and its invasion of development policy. If the root causes of the main global challenges were adequately addressed - such as the lack of economic opportunities, degradation and over-exploitation of natural resources, climate change, lack of voice and agency for people etc. - there would be far fewer security concerns. The root causes of human rights violations therefore should remain the focus of development policy. Development money must not be given to primarily security interventions. Similarly, the current wave of migration to Europe is being viewed through a security lens and considerable development funds are being diverted to (and within) EU Member States to deal with the influx of migrants. We would urge the EU not to see this as a security threat and to find other sources of money to deal with migration in order to focus development cooperation money on poverty reduction and improving the lives of people in developing countries.

Lastly, we do not support the increasing involvement of the private sector in many aspects of development - be that provision of services, PPPs, or leveraging private finance - without a commensurate increase in their accountability for results and impact. The private sector can certainly be a force for good, but the key actors which are more likely to produce positive outcomes for sustainable development and for girls and women on a large scale are not the transnational and multinational corporations with which the EU cooperates most, but the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs). Regrettably, they are very often subjected to the conditions set by the largest companies at the top of the supply chain. The EU therefore needs to

marry policies to promote MSMEs with greater regulation over MNCs/TNCs and a binding corporate accountability framework.

4.4 In which areas highlighted above would you expect to see greater consistency between development policy and other areas of the EU external action in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda?

Trade, investment and finance dominate EU interests to the detriment of realizing people's human rights and respecting the environment and planetary boundaries. Trade policy must become a tool for empowerment and an engine for development. That means it must become more transparent and less dominated by a narrow set of interests working in favour of the biggest companies, and rather promote sustainable and equitable trading relationships with a focus on small-scale, female producers and businesses which can contribute to spreading employment and wealth more evenly in society. Developing countries must be able to protect their nascent private sector or agricultural products.

The current model of export-led growth in many developing countries reflects the fact that they are encouraged to exploit their static comparative advantage based on cheap labour or natural resources. In reality, this means a focus on a narrow range of low value-added manufacturing sectors, in which women's and girls' "comparative disadvantage" is exploited by developed countries and corporates. Such a model fuels a systematic violation of girls' and women's human rights, notably through the downward harmonisation of pay and conditions, and may also be hampering countries' ability to diversify their economies.

From an economic perspective, the focus on growth, as measured by GDP, is leading to unsustainable patterns of consumption and production which are putting untenable pressure on the natural environment and the capacity of our planet to sustain us and on the ability of the most vulnerable to live in dignity and even fulfil their basic rights. GDP-measured economic growth does not, however, take into consideration the exploitation of natural resources. Nor does it reflect living standards, or well-being, or equality of outcomes. Indeed, the benefits of economic growth accrue largely to a privileged few, so that growth does not lead to reduced poverty for the majority, but actually causes inequality to rise. If the EU is serious about wishing to attain sustainable development at home and abroad, then it must review its focus on growth, in the European context. Rather, the EU should look to define what progress means for Europe and adopt the appropriate measures. The EU should also be willing to consider the need to reduce consumption and production in and by Europe, in order to leave room for other countries to increase theirs.

Lastly, while we are aware that the EU has recently launched its new global foreign and security policy, as indicated above, we believe that the increasing focus on security is at odds with the objectives of poverty reduction and the realisation of all people's human rights. Neither should development policy be reoriented to take on a security slant, nor should development cooperation be revisited to include security objectives. It must focus on addressing the root causes of insecurity, not on the symptoms such as migration.

#### 4.5 In which areas does the EU have greatest value-added as a development partner (e.g. which aspects of its development policy, dialogue or implementation arrangements or in which category of countries)?

The EU has the greatest value-added in the areas outlined below. However, the question remains as to whether the EU capitalises on its potential value-added in each of these areas.

- Global reach and influence – we offer some examples below of the EU’s global reach and an explanation of where we feel the EU could better translate that into greater influence

- Geographic spread – the EU has a massive network of Delegations and Member State Embassies which collaborate and burden share in order to maximise the efficiency of their joint development cooperation. This should in turn translate into numerous opportunities to influence partner countries – while respecting country ownership – to reduce violations of human rights, to better redistribute income within society, to invest in the empowerment of girls and women and take measures to make gender equality a reality by reducing discrimination against them (such as recognising and valuing the care work that females provide), to reduce harm to the environment and so on.

- The EU is rightly proud of its reputation as being the world’s biggest donor. However, it is not clear whether the EU’s influence is commensurate with its generosity, because there is so little in the way of measurement of impact. And while it should be recognised that this is a difficult task, especially when funding is provided as budget support, the EU should be in a position to know to what extent it has contributed to sustainable development and/or the achievement of human rights and gender equality in its partner countries.

- The EU has a seat on G20 where many important decisions are taken, particularly regarding trade, investment and finance. It could use its position to ensure that the other 19 members make sustainable development – the realisation of people’s rights and improving their well-being, respect for the environment and the reduction of climate change – their number one goal. Most importantly, the EU could use this forum to persuade others to re-think the functioning of the global economy, such that it serves people and planet and not the other way around. Questioning the role of economic growth and our unsustainable consumption and production models would be a very good start in this regard. Similarly, addressing youth unemployment and rising inequality by reforming some of the global rules, including the international investment regime, and focusing on creating decent work for all would be extremely valuable uses of the EU’s seat in the G20.

- The EU played a very important role in the UN negotiations leading up to the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, especially in achieving the inclusion of Goal 16 and stronger language for accountability. When the EC and all EU Member States align behind an issue, the EU can be a force for good and a very important player in the UN. The EU should continue to push human rights in this context, including by focusing on the achievement of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. It should support partner countries in their reporting to the respective Committees and should assist

them to implement the Concluding Observations.

- The EU has made concerted efforts to Link Relief, Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD), not least through its work on resilience and more recently regarding the so-called 'migration crisis'. The EU acknowledges that this is an important area of work in which it needs to invest more. It should therefore go beyond discussions of resilience to align its development and humanitarian policies further (but not to combine or amalgamate them as they perform different functions which only in some contexts overlap).
- The EU and a number of its Member States are leaders in Policy Coherence for Sustainable development (PCSD). This is not only an important accountability tool, but is also a key enabler to achieve the 2030 Agenda. The EU must, however, adopt PCSD across the board and demonstrate the political will to apply it to all policies going forward, not just the five currently included in PCD. PCSD must be a key pillar of the new European Consensus on Development and must therefore be clearly defined as assessing the impact of EU policies on developing countries and particularly on poor and marginalised groups within those countries. All three dimensions of sustainable development must be equally prominent and valued in the impact assessments carried out going forward.
- The EU has a wide range of funding instruments and modalities, enabling it to support governments and civil society alike. Of particular note is the EIDHR since it does not require any partner government approval for its implementation. However, Heading 4 is coming increasingly under pressure and needs to be safeguarded for the EU's development cooperation in partner countries.

#### 4.6 How can the EU refine its development policy to better address inequalities – including gender inequality – in the context of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda?

The EU must identify the marginalised groups in any context and adapt its development policies accordingly in order to reach them. A power analysis that reflects on sex, age and other factors, would help to identify the different groups and the causes for their marginalisation. EU policy should subsequently address those root causes of inequality, not just the symptoms. In most instances, power relations are at the heart of inequality, so the EU must be willing to work with partners, such as civil society, to transform power relations and power structures at all levels and in all contexts, so that all people can benefit equally from EU and partner government policies.

The EU should work with partner governments to ensure that people's social and economic rights are realised, including decent work opportunities for all and adequate, equitable social protection policies. Exploitation of women and children must be eliminated in the work place. It will be crucial to ensure that all people have equal access to natural resources, including land, and

to other assets necessary for making a viable living and enjoying one's economic rights.

The EU should also support partner governments to reform and strengthen their tax systems so that they perform critical tasks such as redistributing income and wealth between people and so that the state can fulfil its responsibilities in terms of providing quality social services and adequate social security.

In order to effectively monitor and evaluate the impact of development policy and programmes on reducing inequality, including gender equality, and to ensure no one is being left behind, disaggregated data collection must be improved. Data should therefore be disaggregated by age, sex, location, (dis)ability and income decile at a minimum, with other criteria where relevant and possible. However, the EU should also support partner countries themselves in their data collection efforts.

#### Specific Measures to Address Gender Inequality

Plan International has, throughout many of the previous answers, already provided some insights into how the EU could - and should - better adopt a gender transformative approach in its work. We will not repeat those examples here since we assume that they will have been duly noted. By gender transformative, we mean that policies and actions go beyond improving the daily conditions of the girls and women and instead explicitly aim to transform unequal gender power relations and improve their social and economic standing. It may be worth providing one example to clarify further what we mean. The fact of monitoring maternal mortality, while crucial to know whether healthcare is improving for girls and women, is not a gender transformative indicator - it is a question of their right to life, but does nothing to change power relations. On the other hand, monitoring the increase in households in which women have a bank account, a job and contribute to the financial decisions of the household is indicative of gender transformative change.

Tackling gender inequality requires engagement at three levels. Firstly, at the community level, working with and in support of local women's groups and civil society, as well as working with boys and men to challenge discriminatory customs. Secondly, this must be accompanied by advocacy at the government level to change discriminatory laws and practice, to put in place measures to raise awareness of the inacceptability of gender discrimination and to ensure that UN Conventions are implemented and monitored. And lastly, working with the private sector, whether local or European, to ensure that no practices may result in entrenching or deepening existing inequalities in the social, economic or environmental spheres. Private sector partners with which the EU engages should have at least gender sensitive policies in place and preferably gender transformative. Some examples of favourable policies include hiring local labour, especially women, supporting skills development for young people and youth entrepreneurship and supporting small-holders, especially women, to increase their agricultural yields so as to tackle under-nutrition and raise income.

Lastly, the ultimate tool to put commitments into practice is to undertake

gender-sensitive budgeting. Gender-sensitive budgeting is a process but also has an end objective, namely creating greater equality of opportunity and outcome. It entails a gender-based assessment of budgets themselves, but also incorporating a gender perspective at all levels of the budgetary process. This would likely result in a restructuring of revenues and expenditures in order to promote gender equality. It helps to reveal direct and indirect discrimination against women and girls and would enable the EU to make financially effective decisions. The results of such analysis and reorienting of budget spending should be made public in order to enhance transparency and accountability.

#### 4.7 How can the EU development policy make a stronger contribution to the security of people? How can EU development policy contribute to addressing the root causes of conflict and fragility and contribute to security and resilience in all the countries where we work?

As we have said in response to previous questions, Plan International proposes that the EU support a focus on the root causes of insecurity and conflict – such as lack of economic opportunities, environmental degradation and climate change, lack of voice and agency – rather than on the symptoms, especially where use of development cooperation funding is concerned. We have already put forward a large number of means by which the EU can address the social, economic and environmental angles of these root causes.

Specific issues to be borne in mind when addressing situations of fragility include:

- Prioritisation of resilience as a central objective of development and humanitarian assistance.
- Importance of integrating humanitarian and development assistance. This involves incentivising humanitarian, development and other actors to work more closely together in different ways on common or collective outcomes (in the language of the WHS). Practically, this involves developing common analysis and assessments, strategies and plans. There is a clear opportunity for EU to take the lead in this area as the broader humanitarian and development communities look at ways to better align in the context of Agenda 2030 and post-WHS.
- Building the resilience of communities and developing the capacities of all individuals and communities to absorb, adapt and transform in the face of shocks and stresses requires a multi-dimensional approach. Integrating resilience considerations and risk management across all development and humanitarian programmes and policies is one way to achieve this.
- Flexible, multi-year funding is critical to support resilience-building, since it is a long-term endeavour and requires iteration and learning to be built into programme design.
- Financial and technical support for the implementation of the Sendai Framework for DRR as a complement to the 2030 Agenda and Paris Agreement. While this does concentrate on DRR in the context of ‘natural disasters’, the measures set out in the Sendai Framework – if achieved – will make an important contribution to the resilience of individuals and communities.

#### 4.8 How can a revised Consensus on Development better harness the opportunities presented by migration, minimise the negative aspects of irregular migration on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and better address the root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement?

A revised Consensus on Development needs to recognise the positive aspects of migration for the development of countries, both of origin and destination. These include the impact of remittances on household economies in countries of origin and the transfer of skills and knowledge and norms and values between countries. It is important that the narrative around migration is reframed away from migration as a security issue and towards recognising the skills and potential contributions of migrants.

Any development policy which aims to address the root causes of migration needs to focus on the genuine reasons why people are compelled to migrate and not be used as border management. The new Partnership Framework uses development aid as leverage with partner countries for cooperation on border control and acceptance of returned migrants. Such an approach compromises the principles of human rights, neutrality, independence and impartiality which should accompany development cooperation. The revised Consensus must resist linking development to security, and border management to aid conditionality. It must protect development as a tool for fighting poverty and inequality, not managing migration. But in so doing, it will have an impact on reducing irregular migration in the longer term, since people generally migrate because they have to, not for the pleasure of changing country.

By working towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, development policy will inevitably alleviate some irregular migration, not least if other EU policies are better aligned to the objectives of sustainable development in partner countries and address the intersection of a wide variety of global challenges, as we have mentioned before.

Links between development cooperation and humanitarian aid should be strengthened in order to address the root causes of forced displacement. Given that globally more than 80% of refugee crises last for ten years or more and 40% last 20 years or more it is important for the EU to build on its LRRD approach and ensure joint humanitarian-development strategic planning.

### (5) Means of implementation: how do we get there?

---

The principle of universality underpinning the 2030 Agenda will require a differentiated approach to engagement with countries at all levels of development. Official Development Assistance will continue to play an important role in the overall financing mix for those countries most in need (particularly the Least Developed Countries). The EU and its Member States should continue to progress towards achieving their commitments. However, in all countries our development cooperation will need to take account of other sources of finance, including by leveraging other (non-Official Development Assistance) sources of finance for poverty eradication and sustainable development. The delivery of the 2030 Agenda means that our work helping countries raise their own resources (domestic resource mobilisation), the provision of aid for trade, blending\* and partnering with the private sector should be priority areas of focus. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda, an integral part of the 2030 Agenda, provides a framework for our efforts, including for our work supporting the right enabling policy environment for sustainable development in our partner countries. The implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement on climate change under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change should be closely coordinated given the strong interlinkages. Engagement with middle income countries, notably the emerging economies, will be important to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, considering the role they can play in promoting global public goods, what they can achieve within their respective countries on poverty eradication and sustainable development, and the example they can set within their regions as well as their role in regional processes. Here differentiated partnerships can play an important role (examples include different forms of political, economic, and financial investment as well as cooperation in science, technology and innovation). Specific attention and focus should also be given to Least Developed Countries, as acknowledged by the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

The EU's implementation of the 2030 Agenda provides an opportunity for enhancing consistency between the different areas of the EU's external action and between these and other EU policies (as outlined in the Lisbon Treaty and in [EU's Comprehensive Approach to external conflict and crises](#)). The EU will continue to pursue [Policy Coherence for Development](#) as a key contribution to the collective effort towards broader policy coherence for sustainable development. In our external action, the EU needs to consider how we can use all policies, tools, instruments at our disposal coherently in line with the integrated nature of the 2030 Agenda.

\* Combining EU grants with loans or with equity from other public and private financiers with a view to leveraging additional resources.

## 5.1 How can EU policies, and EU development policy in particular, help to mobilise and maximise the impact of the increasing variety of sustainable development finance, including in particular from the private sector?

This is not Plan International's main area of expertise. However, we support civil society's concerns about initiatives such as public-private partnerships, leveraging private finance and in particular using instruments such as blending. Concerns centre on the financial and developmental additionality of such tools, the need for development outcomes to be a prime objective (which they are not in the case of the private sector), development effectiveness, the opportunity cost of using public ODA money and last, but perhaps most importantly, the total lack of transparency, accountability and regulatory frameworks to hold private sector actors to account.

While the private sector can provide a significant source of revenue, it is crucial that it complies with its obligations in all areas - fiscal, social, environmental, etc. For this reason, enhanced transparency about any dealings with the private sector and far greater accountability of all private sectors actors with which the EU engages will be necessary. The EU should choose its partners in the private sector based on their demonstrated compliance with human rights and environmental standards and an enhanced respect for planetary boundaries.

However, rather than solely focusing on how to raise money through the private sector, we would urge the EU to also look at how to tackle the financial innovations that have resulted in such complexity and opacity in the financial sector, that even regulators have found it challenging to address them. Such innovations are mainly aimed at increasing the profits of the financial industry, while yielding little benefit for society as a whole - and sometimes creating great risks, as well illustrated by recent financial crises.

5.2 Given the evolving availability of other sources of finance and bearing in mind the EU's commitments on Official Development Assistance (e.g. [Council Conclusions from 26 May 2015 on "A New Global Partnership for Poverty Eradication and Sustainable Development after 2015"](#), and inter alia, paragraphs 32 and 33), how and where should the EU use its Official Development Assistance strategically and to maximise its impact?

The EU wishes to apply development effectiveness principles in its assistance to other countries. One criterion which could guide funding decisions, in addition to the state of development and level of fragility of a country, could be to look at a country's demographics and focus on those countries with the highest proportion of children. Children make up nearly half of the population in the least developed countries and it is widely accepted that children are among the poorest segment of society in any LDC - and affected by multiple dimensions of poverty. However, children and young people also have great potential as agents of change. To achieve sustainable development and poverty reduction, it is therefore crucial to prioritize and fund efforts for and with children (i.e. investing in children).

Investing in children is sound economics, since return on investment is high with even greater returns being gained from investing in the most marginalized children

ODA needs to be preserved as a tool for fighting poverty and inequality, not diverted towards managing migration and responding to security concerns. For example, the new Partnerships Framework with third countries on managing migration uses development aid as leverage with partner countries for cooperation on border control and acceptance of returned migrants. This approach compromises the principles of human rights, neutrality, independence and impartiality which should accompany development cooperation. The revised Consensus must resist linking ODA to security, and border management to aid conditionality.

Similarly, any use of ODA to support private sector investment in development or to leverage private finance must adhere to and meet all development effectiveness principles and criteria (Rome, Paris, Accra, Busan Principles). Full transparency over use of ODA to leverage private finance or to encourage and support private sector investment in development must be guaranteed and accountability ensured, including the requirement to report back fully on all social and environmental impacts of the partnership or project and to provide redress for any negative impacts.

### 5.3 How can the EU better support partner countries in mobilising their own resources for poverty eradication and sustainable development?

The EU should support partner governments to reform and strengthen their tax systems so that they perform critical tasks such as redistributing income and wealth between people and so that the State can fulfil its responsibilities in terms of providing quality social services and adequate social security. Taxation has enormous potential to raise much of the development finance needed to implement the 2030 Agenda. Equally important in this regard will be EU action to eliminate illicit financial flows and tax avoidance and evasion by European companies, for example through country-by-country and project-by-project reporting. Companies should be required to disclose revenues, sales, profits and a total value for intragroup transactions at a country-by-country level.

In order to promote sustainable development, the tax system should also be used to re-price goods and services to reflect the actual impact of their production and consumption on society and the environment and as a form of corrective policy to reduce or phase out harmful behaviour based on the 'polluter pays' principle, such as carbon taxes. The redistributive potential of taxation can be reinforced particularly in the context of tax policies on the returns of natural resource exploitation. The money earned from all these forms of taxation should be channelled back to benefit the people and reduce income inequality, for example through supporting social protection policies and improving social services. This would contribute to ensuring that no one is left behind. A special focus should therefore be given to traditionally marginalised people such as women and girls, the disabled and minority groups.

5.4 Given the importance of middle income countries to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, what form could differentiated partnerships take?

The EU should focus on assisting middle income countries through non-financial means of implementation, such as reviewing its trade and investment policies to ensure equitability, brokering technology transfers, sharing findings of research etc. Each partnership should be based on the reality and priorities of the country concerned and there could therefore not be a 'one size fits all' approach. The EU should work together with partner governments to formulate the ideal package of non-financial assistance, tailored to their needs and without putting place a system of reciprocal benefits for the EU based on EU interests.

The EU should also support and promote fiscal reform and improved governance in MICs. One critical aspect to governance is ensuring that people can participate in decisions which concern them, that they have all the information available to do so and that decision-making processes are transparent and inclusive (ie. that a particular effort is made to reach out to the 'hardest to reach' such as girls and women in rural locations).

Lastly, as the EU is aiming to be a gender equality champion, it should work with partners, including CSOs and youth-led organisations, in MICs to empower girls and women to be able to take control of their own lives.

5.5 Given experience so far in taking into account the objectives of development cooperation in the implementation of EU policies which are likely to affect developing countries (e.g. [Policy Coherence for Development: 2015 EU Report](#)), how should the EU step up its efforts to achieve Policy Coherence for Development, as a key contribution to the collective effort towards policy coherence for sustainable development? How can we help ensure that policies in developing countries, and internationally contribute coherently to sustainable development priorities?

Since there will be no 'development' without sustainable development, PCSD is a critical tool to ensure that the impacts of any EU policy, process, mechanism, financial instrument or other tool do not undermine the realization of people's human rights or any country's ability to achieve sustainable development. PCSD must be a key pillar of the new European Consensus on Development and must therefore be clearly defined as assessing the impact of EU policies on developing countries and particularly on poor and marginalised groups within those countries. All three dimensions of sustainable development must be equally prominent and valued in all ex-ante and ex-post impact assessments carried out going forward. The EC should consider using external, independent consultants to undertake impact assessments on a regular basis.

The potential impacts of any policy on girls and women must be a foremost concern, but PCSD could also be used to ensure that where benefits may accrue, they do so significantly more for girls, women and other marginalized groups. In order to support substantive gender equality and ensure positive discrimination for girls and women, gender transformative criteria should be applied to all impact assessments for policies, agreements, financial instruments and all other processes, tools and mechanisms at the EU's disposal. These should be used in addition to - or as an integral part of - PCSD. Plan International would be very willing to assist the EU in this endeavour.

Going forward, PCSD must be applied far more consistently than has been the case to date for PCD. EU interests cannot be allowed to take precedence over negative impacts on poor and marginalised people. The huge lack of political will to implement PC(S)D must be rectified when implementing the revised Consensus on Development. While DG DevCo's role is largely to raise awareness and provide the tools and guidance for implementing PCSD, it is all the other DGs - and especially those which have considerable impacts on developing countries, such as Trade, Economic and Financial Affairs, Grow, Agriculture, Fisheries, Energy and Environment, which must implement it.

If PCSD is implemented correctly, it would serve to break down many of the silo's between sectors and between DGs.

PCSD is not only a key enabler to achieve the Goals of the 2030 Agenda, it is also a vital instrument for accountability. The EU must improve its monitoring and reporting on PCSD: current reports do not demonstrate changes in its policies resulting from PC(S)D, progress in reducing poverty and inequality, or how the EC has mitigated the negative results when incoherences have been unavoidable. The EC must put in place a redress mechanism to compensate countries for unavoidable negative impacts, if PCSD is to be of maximum value.

## (6) The actors: making it work together

---

An important feature of the new Agenda is that all governments, developed and developing, will need to work with a wide range of stakeholders (including the private sector, civil society and research institutions) to improve the transparency and inclusivity of decision-making, planning, service delivery, and monitoring and to ensure synergy and complementarity.

The EU must continue to work collaboratively with others and contribute to a coordinated approach. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda puts national plans for implementation (including associated financing and policy frameworks) at the centre. To maximise our impact, EU development policy should be based on a strategic and comprehensive strategy for each country, which also responds to the country-specific context.

Our partner countries' implementation of the 2030 Agenda will inform our overall engagement and our development cooperation dialogue with them and will help shape our support for their national efforts. The EU should also help partner countries put in place the necessary enabling policy frameworks to eradicate poverty, tackle sustainable development challenges and enhance their policy coherence.

There is a need for a renewed emphasis on the quality of development cooperation, including existing commitments on aid and development effectiveness made in Paris, Accra and Busan\* and through work with the [Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation](#).

An updated EU development policy should also provide a shared vision that guides the action of the EU and Member States in development cooperation, putting forward proposals on how to further enhance coordination, complementarity and coherence between EU and Member States. Strengthening [Joint Programming](#) will be an important part of this. Improving the division of labour between the EU and its Member States in order to reduce aid fragmentation will also contribute to increased development effectiveness.

\* See [Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action](#) and the [Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation](#)

## 6.1 How should the EU strengthen its partnerships with civil society, foundations, the business community, parliaments and local authorities and academia to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda (including the integral Addis Ababa Action Agenda) and the Paris Agreement on climate change?

It is first and foremost crucial to bear in mind that it is States which are the primary duty-bearers for achieving the 2030 Agenda and at no point in time should the fact of creating partnerships lead to an abdication of responsibility by States.

Any partnerships that the EU forms should be undertaken in a fully transparent manner, with a clear terms of reference outlining the roles and responsibilities of all parties, which is available to the public. Any actor which is called upon 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. It is worthwhile highlighting that the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, 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.

The roles of the different organisations cited in the question vary and therefore the nature of the partnership that could be created must also vary. For example, civil society is an ally in contributing to the implementation of the Agenda, in working with the EU for improved governance, highlighting areas of rights violations and running social, economic and environmental projects and programmes. Based on our experience and evidence from working with marginalised people, civil society is able to provide ideas for implementation, to speed up progress and to reach those left furthest behind. The EU should therefore focus on strengthening local civil society organisations to enhance implementation of the 2030 Agenda, as they are the ones closest to the affected population and can take into account the voices of children and women.

Civil society also works to hold States (and the EU) to account for their commitments. However, in order for civil society to be able to fulfil its role in holding States and international institutions to account, the EU should ensure an enabling environment for civil society by promoting civil and political rights with partner governments and working to improve democratic, just governance in countries. Most important in this regard are the freedom of and access to information, freedom of speech and freedom of association. The EU should reinforce, with its partners, the need to consult people on decisions that concern them. A key partner in this regard are the Local Authorities which are often responsible for a considerable degree of decision-making and will be so for implementing the 2030 Agenda at local level.

In its own context, the European Commission should ensure that it consults fully with civil society on the design, implementation and monitoring of its overarching strategy.

Plan International, to facilitate us in our role of holding duty-bearers to account, is developing an SDG Tracker to drive and monitor progress on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals for girls and women. Together with partners such as KPMG, the ONE Campaign and Women Deliver, we aim to contribute in a significant manner to the collection and analysis of disaggregated data on girls and women, in order to highlight groups which are being left behind or targets that are falling behind in their progress, or being overlooked. We will use existing and new quantitative and qualitative data to monitor specific gender-related SDG targets and complement this with advocacy towards governments and international institutions.

While the EU, and other actors, are indeed talking of the important role of the private sector in implementing the 2030 Agenda, the potential value of

business centres around two things: firstly, respecting all human rights and decent work conditions and secondly, respecting the environment, contributing to global efforts to remain within planetary boundaries and taking urgent measures to reduce their impact on climate change. These are unlikely to occur only through corporate social responsibility and for this reason it is necessary to put in place binding regulation in many areas and a robust corporate accountability framework. There is currently a considerable gap in effective mandatory accountability mechanisms in the area of corporate transparency and accountability.

However, it will also be necessary for the EU, working together with other governments, to facilitate the task of the private sector, for example by agreeing at an international level to reorient the function of the economy, to move away from GDP growth as the only measure of progress and from the 'profit motive' to enhance sustainability (eg. moving from shareholder value to sustainability value as the legal basis for a company's operations) and by creating a level playing field through legislation.

## 6.2 How can the EU promote private sector investment for sustainable development?

Plan International has touched on many elements related to this question throughout previous responses, so we will not repeat them here. Suffice to say, that the EU must take into consideration that the private sector's motives are currently focused on making money, not on ensuring sustainable development for all people within planetary boundaries. It will therefore be necessary to combine some incentivisation with a considerable degree of standard-setting, regulation and accountability, as highlighted earlier. The EU should also reflect carefully, on a case-by-case basis, on whether private sector investment is the right way forward in a given context. For example, as regards the provision of essential public services, such as healthcare and education, outsourcing to the private sector has resulted in increasing inequality gaps, with the poor often not being able to afford such services, or experiencing extreme financial hardship in an effort to do so, and with girls and women being the first to lose out.

### 6.3 How can the EU strengthen relations on sustainable development with other countries, international financing institutions, multilateral development banks, emerging donors and the UN system?

The Bretton Woods Institutions, the IMF and the World Bank have a significant impact on a country's ability to fulfil its human rights obligations. Reality has shown time and again that IMF and World Bank policy advice and assistance, which usually escapes any form of parliamentary scrutiny or public debate, come at a great price for the social well-being of economies, undermining the States' ability to fulfil their human rights obligations. In addition, their internal governance reforms have so far only grudgingly given a greater say to emerging economies in their boards, while poor countries still remain largely voiceless and under-represented.

As UN specialised agencies, the Bretton Woods Institutions must act consistently with the UN Charter. In an open letter in May 2012, the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights reminded States that they should fulfil their obligations to respect economic, social and cultural rights in their decision-making in their capacity as members of international financial institutions such as the World Bank and IMF and other regional bodies. To fulfil these obligations, reforms need to be stepped up to democratise these institutions with proportional representation and decision-making power for all countries, to enable greater parliamentary scrutiny of their policy impact at the national level and to make them more effectively accountable to human rights bodies and ensure their coherence with the rest of the UN system.

The EU and its 28 Member States should play a key role in these fora to encourage such reforms, especially given their support for Goal 16 in the 2030 Agenda (of note in this regard are targets 16.6, 16.7 and 16.8)

Our concerns regarding 'development finance institutions' (DFIs) centre on the questionable additionality of such finance, the need for development outcomes to be a prime objective (which they are not in the case of the DFIs), development effectiveness (the quest for leverage can lead to ignoring country ownership, for example), the opportunity cost of using public ODA money and last, but perhaps most importantly, the total lack of transparency, accountability and regulatory frameworks to hold DFIs to account.

#### 6.4 How can the EU best support partner countries to develop comprehensive and inclusive national plans for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda?

Perhaps the EU should first write its own comprehensive and inclusive strategy to implement the 2030 Agenda, if it has any hope of being seen as a credible partner for others. Some EU Member States have made considerable progress in this regard, but unfortunately there will come a point when delay at EU level creates a bottleneck for progress at national level. The need for an overarching strategy covering both internal and external policies is particularly acute in areas where the EU has shared competence with the Member States. The EU must put in place a transparent and participatory process in order to consult with all stakeholders on the overarching strategy, but especially with civil society given its links, through its work, with the poor and marginalised in the EU's partner countries.

One way in which the EU can support partner countries is to include in its own plan very clear 'means of implementation' through which the EU will contribute to their achieving the goals and targets in their own contexts. The EU should also put in place robust accountability mechanisms to verify whether any of its policies could undermine - or have undermined - the sustainable development prospects of its partner countries and the means by which to mitigate and compensate for any negative impacts.

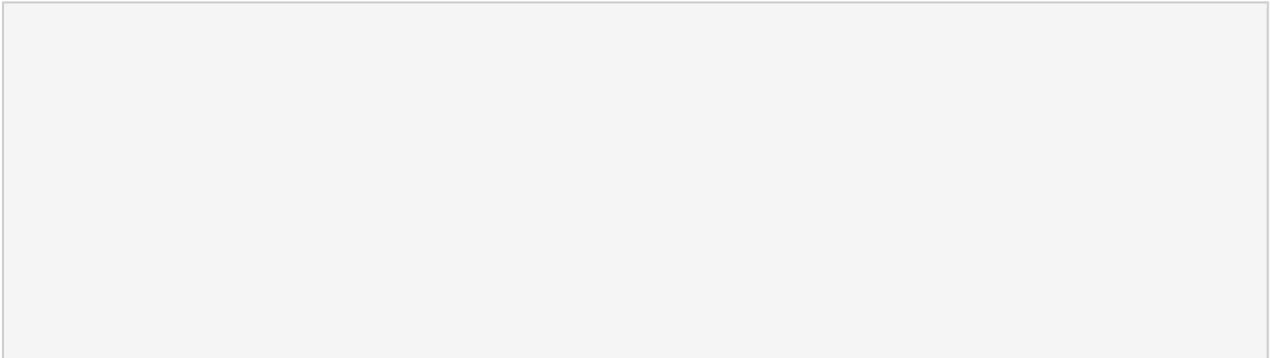
Lastly, the EU will be able to help partner countries in the collection, storage and use of reliable, disaggregated data. Such data should be disaggregated by age, sex, location, (dis)ability and income decile, at a minimum.

#### 6.5 What are the best ways to strengthen and improve coherence, complementarity and coordination between the EU and the Member States in their support to help partner countries achieve poverty eradication and sustainable development?

## 6.6 How can EU development cooperation be as effective as possible, and how can we work with all partners to achieve this?

Change must happen at a local level and much of it will result from local action. Local voices calling for transformative change are therefore crucial. Despite notable achievements in CSOs' ability to engage in global processes, the reality on the ground reflects the difficulty for CSOs to participate in national and local decision-making processes, or to highlight irregularities in such processes or decisions. The 'shrinking space' for critical voices - whether civil society actors, the general public or even well-known public figures - in many countries has meant that it is increasingly risky to speak out on human rights and environmental issues. That has considerably constrained the work of CSOs and will inevitably limit the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. The EU should much more vigorously support an enabling environment for civil society, including for children's, youth and women's groups, if it wishes to be able to work with a wide range of partners to achieve effective development outcomes.

## 6.7 What further progress could be made in EU Joint Programming, and how could this experience be linked with other EU joined-up actions in supporting countries' delivery of the 2030 Agenda?



## (7) Keeping track of progress

---

The EU will need to contribute to the global follow-up and review process for the 2030 Agenda. Keeping track of progress in a systematic and transparent way is essential for delivering the 2030 Agenda. The EU is actively contributing to the setting up of a Sustainable Development Goal monitoring system at global, regional and national level. Demonstrating results and impact from our efforts and the promotion of transparency will be important priorities for EU development policy, as part of a wider move to strengthen accountability, follow-up and review at all levels.

## 7.1 How can the EU strengthen its own use of evidence and analysis, including in the development field, to feed into its regular review on the Sustainable Development Goals to the UN?

A key accountability tool, as mentioned before will be the ex-post impact assessments (of PCSD) to verify that no EU policy is undermining people's human rights and sustainable development pathway, or poorer countries' abilities to realise their people's human rights within planetary boundaries. The EU should continue to report every two years on PCSD, but in order to strengthen these reports they must relate to the whole 2030 Agenda, and also examine whether the linkages, or interdependencies, between sectors have been respected. Specific attention must be paid to how a target is reached, not just whether it is reached, since it should not simultaneously set progress back in another area.

The EU should also use the results of monitoring other action plans and policies, such as the Action Plan for Human Rights and Democracy and the Gender Action Plan to feed in to its regular review. Specific gender transformative criteria must be applied to ensure that the gaps are being closed between girls and women and boys and men.

Clearly, if the evidence demonstrates that some areas are being overlooked, or certain groups of people are being left behind, the EU should use the review to examine the main obstacles to greater progress and to suggest how it will improve its policy and action going forward.

## 7.2 How can the EU help to ensure the accountability of all actors involved in implementation of the 2030 Agenda, including the private sector? How can the EU encourage a strong and robust approach to the Follow Up and Review of the 2030 Agenda from all actors?

It is greatly appreciated that the EU supports real accountability for the commitments made in the 2030 Agenda. The EU should therefore act swiftly to put in place a comprehensive, robust and appropriate set of accountability mechanisms at all levels which allow for stakeholder participation.

Recognising that sustainable development challenges and solutions require coordinated efforts, the EU must develop a means to differentiate between the parts of the 2030 Agenda for which Member States are primarily responsible versus those for which an EU lead is necessary. Different processes and mechanisms will need to be put in place for each of these cases. Accountability must also incorporate the concept of Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development.

The EU should build upon existing human rights mechanisms, including the Universal Periodic Review process of the UN Human Rights Council and Treaty Bodies. All EU Member States should use existing human rights monitoring mechanisms in synergy and systematically integrate reviewing progress on realising the 2030 Agenda in periodic reports, while encouraging partners to do the same.

It is key that States (or the EU depending on the degree of competence) remain the primary duty-bearers for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, but that each and every actor, including the private sector or civil society, which is officially involved in any partnership to achieve the 2030 Agenda be held accountable - through appropriate, binding mechanisms - for their role.

The EU therefore needs to ensure full transparency about any dealings with the private sector and must hold them accountable for their part in realizing the Agenda against international standards and guidelines on human rights, decent work and environmental sustainability, at the very minimum.

Accountability cannot be assured through corporate social responsibility and for this reason it is necessary to put in place binding regulation in many areas and a robust corporate accountability framework. There is currently a considerable gap in effective mandatory accountability mechanisms in the area of corporate transparency and accountability.

True accountability suggests, of course, that redress would be available if an actor can be proven to have undermined human rights and/or sustainable development.

### 7.3 How should EU development cooperation respond to the regular reviews on progress of the partner countries towards the 2030 Agenda goals?

There are two aspects to responding to progress reviews. Firstly, the EU can respond upstream to countries' requirements to do such reviews by supporting them in their efforts. For example, the EU can provide technical advice and capacity-building to the national statistical bureau regarding the collection, storage and use of disaggregated data. While this falls more to Eurostat to undertake, DG DevCo, together with the Member States, could be important in identifying the countries most in need of assistance. The EU should also promote a rights-based approach to reporting, covering the three dimensions of sustainable development plus governance. In this regard, the EU should highlight to partner countries the correlation with reporting to Human Rights Treaty Bodies and should assist them in doing so, as well as in following up on Concluding Observations made by the Treaty Bodies.

Secondly, the EU can respond to the findings of such reviews – especially in the case where results may be patchy (some goals are not making progress, some groups of people are getting left behind etc.) – to work with the international (donor) community to review the means of implementation provided to a country and alter the mix or simply increase them as need be in order to close the gaps. It will be very important to address the interlinkages between goals and between countries in pursuing goals, given that many of the challenges, and the responses to them, have a clear regional, or even global, angle. If a country's review throws up evidence of incoherent EU policies and actions, the EU must be willing to modify them.

## Contact

EuropeAid-CONSENSUS-CONSULTATION@ec.europa.eu

---