



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Report of the Swiss Confederation

Switzerland's initial steps towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda

to be presented at the

High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
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Executive Summary

17 May 2016

Summary

The Swiss Confederation considers the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development a unique opportunity to strengthen and to boost sustainable development at all levels: global, regional, national, and subnational. It therefore took an active role in the international process from 2013 to 2015 to draw up the universal Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the means of implementation and financing framework (Addis Ababa Action Agenda), as well as an effective follow-up and review system. Other Swiss key concerns in the negotiation process were, and will remain for the future, that the new goals integrate the social, economic and environmental dimensions in a balanced manner and take account of the interlinkages between them.

High commitment at all levels

The Swiss Federal Council decided in December 2015 to keep this high level of engagement and contribute in a meaningful way to implementing the 2030 Agenda – both in domestic and foreign policy. In January 2016 the Federal Council adopted the Sustainable Development Strategy (SDS) 2016–19 that underlines the need for sustainable development to be a coherent feature of all policy areas. Consequently and wherever possible, Switzerland’s international engagement, in particular its future international cooperation as well as sectoral foreign policies, will also be oriented towards the SDGs.

Immediate action to kick-start implementation

Within a “transition phase” from 2016 to 2017, a comprehensive programme of work is being put into practice. This work is managed by a temporary inter-ministerial working group with the aim to:

- clarify institutional arrangements, processes and responsibilities in the Federal Administration for the effective implementation and follow-up of the 2030 Agenda;
- conduct a baseline study as well as a gap analysis covering all SDGs and targets to identify and define future areas of action to implement the 2030 Agenda;
- ensure adequate monitoring and reporting by expanding the Swiss system of sustainable development indicators as appropriate.

By early 2018, a report summarising these and other efforts as well as formulating respective recommendations for Swiss implementation of the 2030 Agenda will be presented to the Federal Council. Based on the findings from the transition phase and decisions taken by the Federal Council, Switzerland will present a first comprehensive country review at the HLPF 2018.

Creating ownership and increasing policy coherence

In a decentralised country such as Switzerland, subnational authorities, i.e. the cantons and communes, fulfill an important role. It is, therefore, a key concern for the Swiss Confederation to factor sustainable development principles into all levels of government in order to create and increase ownership. Sustainable development should not be regarded as an additional government task, but rather be integrated as far as possible into regular planning and control processes. In the context of the 2030 Agenda implementation, great importance is attached to vertical cooperation between the Confederation, cantons and communes, as well as to strengthening policy coherence for sustainable development at all levels.

Switzerland has a long tradition of conducting political processes based on stakeholder participation for the coordination of both national and international policies. Previous participatory processes in the context of sustainable development have been consolidated since autumn 2015. A new and comprehensive consultation procedure (the “2030 Dialogue on Sustainable Development”) has resulted that will ensure that the outcomes of the stakeholder dialogue continue to provide input, and that all relevant stakeholder

groups are involved in ongoing processes linked to the Confederation's sustainable development policy cycle of planning, implementing, monitoring, evaluating and reporting.

Sustainable Development Strategy 2016–19

The following guidelines, as part of the Sustainable Development Strategy 2016–19, explain how the Swiss Confederation intends to integrate sustainability policy into all of its sectoral policies:

- *Take responsibility for the future*
- *Balanced consideration of the three dimensions of sustainable development*
- *Incorporate sustainable development into all policy areas*
- *Improve coherence and coordination between policy areas*
- *Forge sustainable development partnerships*

The 2030 Agenda provides a framework for addressing key challenges all countries must overcome in a way appropriate to their particular circumstances. In this spirit, the Sustainable Development Strategy 2016–19 consists of a concrete action plan, structured into the following nine thematic areas of action in the priority fields for sustainable development, including its global dimensions and the interplay of Switzerland and other countries. These priorities are based on the general focus areas of overall federal government policy, on the objectives determined by the 2030 Agenda, as well as on the outcomes of the stakeholder dialogue:

- 1 Consumption and production (SDG 12)
- 2 Urban development, mobility and infrastructure (SDGs 9 and 11)
- 3 Energy and climate (SDGs 7 and 13)
- 4 Natural resources (SDGs 2, 6, 14, and 15)
- 5 Economic and financial system (SDGs 8, 10, 16, and 17)
- 6 Education, research and innovation (SDG 4)
- 7 Social security (SDGs 1 and 16)
- 8 Social cohesion and gender equality (SDGs 5, 10, and 16)
- 9 Health (SDG 3)

Swiss foreign policy

The Sustainable Development Strategy 2016–19 and its Action Plan also list selected foreign policy activities. Switzerland is strongly committed to sustainable development through its foreign policy, including its foreign economic policy, international cooperation, and sectoral foreign policies. With its engagement in international processes geared towards specific sectors (including multilateral conventions, bilateral agreements, as well as regional and global (UN) programmes), Switzerland contributes to the advancement of sustainable development in its three dimensions. The new Swiss Foreign Policy Strategy 2016–19 defines the broad outlines of Switzerland's international commitment for the legislative period until 2019. Sustainable development forms one of the four key priorities of the strategy.

The 2030 Agenda and the SDGs will form an integral part of Switzerland's international cooperation efforts in the future. Through its Dispatch on International Cooperation 2017–20, which is currently under deliberation in Parliament, the Federal Council applies for framework financing facilities and determines the instruments that will be used to implement the SDGs as part of Switzerland's international cooperation activities. In the period from 2017 to 2020, Switzerland will focus its efforts on the following seven objectives in order to strengthen its contribution to achieving the respective SDGs and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda:

- 1 Contribute to the development of an international framework for responding to global challenges

- 2 Prevent and manage the consequences of crisis and disaster, and of fragility; promote conflict transformation
- 3 Support sustainable access to resources and services for all
- 4 Promote sustainable economic growth
- 5 Strengthen the rule of law and democratic participation; support institutions serving society and the economy
- 6 Ensure respect for human rights and fundamental liberties, and support efforts to advance their cause
- 7 Strengthen gender equality and the rights of women and girls.

Institutional transition towards effective implementation and follow-up

During the 2016–17 transition phase, the alignment of Swiss sustainability policy with the 2030 Agenda will be further developed. Questions relating to institutional arrangements will be examined and modifications proposed where necessary. Particular attention will be paid to coordinating national, subnational and international processes as effectively as possible. Building on existing structures, the aim is to arrive at an efficient process within the Swiss Confederation to implement the 2030 Agenda in both domestic and foreign policy. Synergies should be created between national and international processes, while avoiding duplication and overlaps. Initial work will also be done on what exactly implementation of the SDGs will entail.

Federal offices are required to include sustainable development in their own periodic reports on items of business or areas covered by their sectoral policies. In order to measure and report on contributions to the SDGs, Switzerland uses its comprehensive sustainable development monitoring system (MONET) in place since 2003. With its approximately 75 regularly updated indicators it is observed whether, as well as in what context and areas, Switzerland is on the path to sustainable development. In May 2016, the system's reference framework was amended in order to be ready to take into account the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, thus laying the foundation for both national and international reporting.

The Confederation is also committed to actively engaging in the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) alongside all other countries and all relevant stakeholder representatives. Accordingly, it will participate in the planned periodic reporting and implementation monitoring for the SDGs, provide specific input on how the basis of data can be improved, and help developing countries to build their national capacities to draft strategies for sustainable development and to track their implementation.

Means of Implementation

The implementation of the Sustainable Development Strategy 2016–19 is funded via the budgets that have been approved by the individual federal offices, which are responsible for incorporating the necessary financial resources into their financial planning. The Swiss Confederation also supports the comprehensive financing and implementation framework adopted by all UN member states at the Third International Conference on Financing for Development: the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA). Moreover, Switzerland is highly engaged in support of international conventions and standards in order to strengthen the normative global framework favouring the achievement of the SDGs.

The Swiss Confederation strives to address the multiple challenges posed by the adaptation of the SDGs to Switzerland's national context. Accordingly, it will initiate and foster implementation partnerships in all areas and at all levels. Close cooperation between government, interested associations and non-governmental organisations – primarily from the environmental, development cooperation, business and social spheres – has been developed on a regular basis for many years. This coordinated approach between the various areas and actors will be further consolidated in order to engage broader-based partnerships and multi-stakeholder initiatives to complement Switzerland's significant share to the transformation of our world towards sustainable development by 2030.