

Norwegian Presentation at Nassau SIDS Symposium on SDGs.

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NORWAY TOWARDS 2030:

A DIPLOMATIC, POLITICAL AND PRAGMATIC APPROACH TO SDG FOLLOW-UP.

Summary of main points:

1. The transition from MDGs to SDGs that took place from the time of the Rio+20 conference in 2012 to the adoption of the 2030 Agenda and SDGs at the UN Summit in September 2015 marks a major global policy shift. It brought together the poverty and sustainability agendas, in a set of goals which also include important new dimensions of peaceful societies and partnerships. This successful outcome was a product of well-managed negotiation processes and flexible negotiators from all nations willing to find solutions and compromises for a forward-looking agenda. The Financing for Development conference in Addis Ababa and the Paris Conference on Climate Change provided important impetus and complementarity to the 2030 Agenda, as did the Nairobi WTO ministerial meeting on trade at the end of 2015.
2. This new “2030 Agenda” has created a new context for UN member states’ efforts on sustainable development. The SDGs provide a road map, a plan of action, for both domestic and development policies, which shapes national priorities and politics and creates both opportunities and challenges for developed and developing countries alike. Also in Norway, the SDGs have become part of the domestic policy discourse, with civil society, business sector, parliament and public opinion involved in various ways, implementing and requesting actions in areas including but not limited to climate and environmental issues. In foreign and development policy, the SDGs now form part of the political framework for Norwegian assistance and partnerships on sustainability and security in a broad perspective, while maintaining a fundamental focus on poverty and fragility. There is a broad political consensus in Norway on the need to show solidarity with vulnerable people and nations, support programs for health and education, good governance and gender equality, and give special attention to climate change and other challenges affecting our oceans, including marine pollution, responsible resource management, healthy fisheries and other aspects of SDG 14.
3. Co-ordination of Norwegian positions, priorities and representation in the SDG negotiations in the United Nations was led by the MFA, in close co-operation with the Ministry of Climate and Environment and with the active participation of all relevant ministries in the inter-ministerial working group chaired by the MFA UN Department. The Prime Minister, Ms. Erna Solberg, and her office provided political leadership, both at home and abroad, through her co-chair, with the president of Rwanda, of the SG’s SDG Advocacy Group for the MDGs until the adoption of the SDGs by UNGA in 2015 and thereafter, with the president of Ghana, for the SDGs. Following the UN Summit adoption of Agenda 2030, co-ordination of the domestic SDG follow-up was handed over to the Ministry of Finance, in their capacity as coordinator of the annual state budget process, into which the SDG reporting to parliament was embedded. Each SDG was assigned to a relevant Ministry for follow-up and reporting in their annual budget submission, in co-ordination with other ministries responsible for targets under each goal as needed, while the MFA remains responsible for reporting to the UN HLPF. As indicated in Norway’s 2016 HLPF Voluntary National Review, we regard this as a pragmatic model for monitoring and reporting which may be of interest to other member states.