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**Views from MTU UNESCO Chair on the Final Consultation on the draft of the Second SDG National Implementation Plan 2022-2024**

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**Please note in reading the below; suggestions and text sections are for consideration in the NIP document.**

**Please see our input as an opportunity for collaboration and partnership. Please feel free to reach out for clarification on any unclear items.**

1. Chapter 1 assumes deep knowledge of the SDGs. This is not the case across all stakeholder groups. Revisiting the vision and intention of Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is necessary. Agenda 2030 has a 'supremely ambitious and transformational vision'. It comprises goals and targets, a declaration, vision, shared principles and commitments, outlines challenges, sets a new agenda, provides implementation guidelines and partnerships suggestions, and follow-up and review mechanisms. Full implementation requires considering all components commonly summarised as 'the Goals'. We must deliver Agenda 2030 in its full context to achieve its globally agreed vision.

Without this, the implementation phase referred to in the draft may result in further mapping of existing practice to indicators, erroneously affirming existing practice as meeting the transformative vision. This falls short of the intention and bold and transformative change needed to leave no one behind. It will perpetuate the problems that have resulted in some being left behind. While mapping indicators is undoubtedly an important exercise, its main purpose is to establish a benchmark, identify gaps, build and resource policy solutions, and transform practice. It should support organisational and system change, and results based management. It may be helpful to commend interest and activity to date but to emphasise the need to redouble and reorient efforts across all sectors of society, public sector and business. More reference to the Declaration of the 2030 Agenda is needed.

1. Consider reframing the vision statement to embrace the full intention of the Agenda, including the often omitted declaration, e.g..

**Current Vision:** Our vision is for Ireland to fully implement the Sustainable Development Goals at home, and to contribute to their achievement internationally through our role as a responsible global citizen, so that no one is left behind.

***Proposed Vision:***Our vision is for Ireland to urgently fully and effectively implement the 2030 Agenda at home and to actively contribute to achieving the Goals internationally through our role as a responsible global citizen so that no one is left behind.

1. Strategic Objective 1: Position the SDGs as an overarching framework or north star for policy coherence to open cross-sectoral dialogue, create efficiencies, remove duplication of effort, manage resources better and deliver a better return on investment. In line with this, ensure that actions taken to advance are mindful of and leverage global progress across all sectors. This includes sectors not explicitly pointed to in the goals and targets, e.g. Sport. We do not have time to either start from scratch or reinvent wheels. We should learn lessons fast and well in the spirit of collaboration intended.

**Current Strategic Objective 1**. To embed the SDG framework into the work of Government Departments to achieve greater Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development

**Proposal for Strategic Objective 1**. To position the SDG Framework as a unifying mechanism for policy coherence across all Government Departments, Statutory Agencies and the Programme for Government.

1. **Current Strategic Objective 2:** To integrate the SDGs into Local Authority work to better support the localisation of the SDGs

**Proposal for Strategic Objective 2.** To integrate the SDGs into the legal frameworks that guide Local Authority work to better support the localisation of the SDGs.

County development and local area plans are in the process of being finalised with many running to 2028. Many development plans reference the need for sustainable development. From the awareness consultation, reading and reporting on current draft plans, it appears that the interpretation is particularly narrow. Given the impact of the work of local authorities and the alignment of work with legal frameworks, we must ensure that the 2030 Agenda is comprehensively addressed. If we fail to do this at this point, it will be 2028 in the case of many County Development Plans before full and effective implementation can begin. We must ensure that this addresses social, economic and environmental development and that any necessary amendments can be made to ensure the coming 6-year period is not negligent in its commitments to sustainable development. In its current format, the draft NIP actions risk being very tokenistic.

1. **Current Strategic Objective 3.** Greater partnerships for the Goals

**Proposed amendment to Strategic Objective 3.** Multi-stakeholder Partnership for Enhancing Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development.

Strategic Objective 3: This Strategic Objective may sit better as objective 2, following the SDGs as an overarching framework for policy coherence. The SDGs bring a new common language that can open dialogue between partnerships not previously envisioned. This aligns with [Partnerships for Coherence promoted by the OECD](https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/development/policy-coherence-for-sustainable-development-2019_31dcefc4-en). The current Objective 2 would follow nicely from that positioning. The MTU UNESCO Chair's work with national and international partners on advancing the SDG agenda is evidence of a transformed landscape in global sport for development and peace built with the SDGs as a common language. These partnerships must include the voice of all stakeholders, including those from civil society, user experience, and marginalised groups.

**6. Current** **Strategic Objective 4:** To further incorporate the principle of Leave No One Behind into Ireland's Agenda 2030 implementation and reporting mechanisms

**Proposed Strategic Objective 4:** To underpin Ireland's Agenda 2030 implementation and reporting mechanisms with their human rights underpinnings and the principle of Leave No One Behind.

This objective refers to dialogue informing future implementation and reporting. Is this referring to beyond 2024? Consideration should be given to the text of this objective to be broadened to embrace human rights, public sector duty concerning human rights, guiding principles on business and human rights and ILO standards.

The goals are very clear in their human rights underpinnings and aspiration to realise the human rights of all people regardless of circumstance. No country, including Ireland, is immune to poverty or can claim to have fully and effectively addressed the barriers facing marginalised populations. Unequal access to resources, unequal participation and denial of opportunities prevails for many. This overarching objective must be at the forefront of all implementation and reporting or we risk perpetuating discrimination.

While an ambition of the goals Agenda 2030 acknowledges that States have defined responsibilities to conform with the Charter of the United Nations, to respect, protect and promote human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction of any kind. The private sector needs to shape solutions while respecting the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the labour standards of the International Labour Organisation and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Agenda 2030 acknowledges the importance of universal human rights, human dignity, the rule of law, justice, equality and non-discrimination in fully realising human potential and contributing to shared prosperity.

Agenda 2030 is very explicit regarding the need to level the playing field before moving forward. Eradicating poverty is cited as 'the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development.' Furthermore, the goals and targets seek to 'realise the human rights of all and to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.'

Transforming our world requires that 'all human beings can fulfil their potential in dignity and equality.' Endeavouring to reach the furthest behind first, was clarified by his Excellence David Donoghue in Expo 2020 Dubai during Global Goals Week 2020, as encouraging targeting these groups within the first four years. It is fair to say we have fallen behind.

The collaborative dialogue referenced in the draft NIP, would be very welcome and outcomes need to be coherent with other principles, goals and policy areas. Urgent acceleration is required.

7. **Current Strategic Objective 5:** Strong reporting mechanisms

**Proposed Strategic Objective 5**: A broad multi-layered\* range of robust reporting mechanisms capturing social return on investment to inform results-based management and required reporting. (at individual, societal, organisational, national and international levels).

The 2030 Agenda wants data to support decision-making. As such, it is an input. Such data is not always available, and capacities need to be strengthened. GDP alone is not broad enough to capture the SDGs' social, economic and environmental pillars. Data is unavailable in many target areas, and states are called upon to address data gaps to establish the baseline better and measure progress. The follow-up and review framework is voluntary and designed to track progress to ensure no one is left behind. The Voluntary National Reviews are country-led and respect national policy priorities. Data should come from national sources covering the three dimensions of sustainable development and should be high-quality, accessible, timely, reliable and disaggregated by income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, migration status, disability and geographic location and other relevant characteristics.

Developing a data capture system could be an output. The review should guide policy, partnerships, solutions, and best practices for achieving desired outcomes and the ambition of the SDGs. It should be people-centred, gender-sensitive, respect human rights and focus on the poorest and those furthest behind as a priority. Efficiencies, new methods and adapting to emerging issues are encouraged. Many currently conflate data as an outcome in itself. Data needs to report on outcomes.

8 **Chapter on Education (Focus specifically on HE and FE)**

SDG 4 Target 4.7 states: "By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and nonviolence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development".

The mainstreaming of Education for Sustainable Development (EDS) throughout higher and further education and training has great potential to galvanise all of society action towards progress on sustainable development. This mainstreaming can be achieved through a broader campaign to raise awareness across all higher education institutions and further training bodies on their public sector duty related to human rights and sustainable development. Due to the rights-based nature of the SDGs, an integrated approach to human rights education and ESD should be taken. Such an integrated approach could clarify the mutually reinforcing nature of rights and sustainable development, as well as harness public sector duty to move human rights education and ESD away from being viewed as an optional add-on toward being regarded as a duty of education providers.

Contrary to SDG intention, sustainability education has primarily tended to focus on the green or climate agenda. Effective ESD encompassing all aspects of sustainable development needs to be embedded across all disciplines at higher and further education levels, not just those courses specifically dedicated to sustainability and development. The SDGs have relevance to all sectors of life and the economy; therefore, higher education and further training should equip all graduates to carry out their future work in line with, and in promoting, sustainable development and aligned human rights.

The integration of ESD and human rights education as a core component of all higher education and training could result in a cohort of graduates who are knowledgeable about human rights and the SGDs. They will bring this knowledge into their careers, ultimately creating a sea-change across policy, service providers, educators, etc., on the importance of mainstreaming SDGs and rights.

A twofold approach to making such an action possible is required. Firstly, all teaching and training staff would need to understand ESD and public sector duty to provide a firm foundation and encourage reflection on the linkages with their sector. Secondly, course design and modules across all disciplines need to integrate ESD and this content delivered to students.

Action in this regard will advance policy/policy coherence, transform learning environments, build capacity among educators and trainers, empower and mobilise youth and accelerate sustainable solutions.

**Notes:**

Glossary, please add MTU Munster Technological University (to reflect Case Study)

Case study on sport below:



