



Globale Nachhaltigkeitsziele

Empfehlung an die Bundesregierung

Berlin, 29. Januar 2014

Deutschland sollte sich stärker als bisher für eine post-2015 Agenda einsetzen, die universelle Ziele beschreibt und quantifiziert. Sie müssen sinnvoll auf nationaler Ebene konkretisiert und umgesetzt werden können. Die Auswahl der Handlungsfelder soll sowohl fundamentale Teilhaberechte (wie Einkommen, Bildung und soziale Sicherung; politische Partizipation und Rechtssicherheit) wie auch materielle Grundbedürfnisse (Ernährung, Wasser, Gesundheit) und die Sicherung der Grundfunktionen des Erdökosystems berücksichtigen. Der Nachhaltigkeitsrat regt eine Offensive der Bundesregierung zu den Sustainable Development Goals an, die über den Beschluss des Bundeskabinetts vom August 2013 hinausgeht.

Wir regen mit einem für Deutschland hoch geeigneten Beispiel für ein Nachhaltigkeitsziel an, die SDG-Debatte voranzubringen. Es sollte dem Thema

Resources Efficiency: A Proposal from Germany for a UN Sustainable Development Goal on Resource Efficient Production and Consumption

gewidmet sein. Der englisch formulierte Teil dieser Empfehlung soll zeigen wie ein Ziel sowohl die Herausforderungen in Deutschland als auch jene in den Entwicklungsländern formulieren kann. Im Rahmen der weiteren deutschen Positionierung zur SDG-Debatte regen an, dass die Bundesregierung die Stakeholder über die guten Ansätze des BMU und BMZ hinausgehend auf eine breite Weise beteiligt und weitere konkrete Ziele erarbeitet.

Mit der Ressourceneffizienz greifen wir ein beispielhaftes Thema auf. Auf klare und einsichtige Weise zeigt es die Verantwortung und Chance für die Erhaltung der Umwelt und die Schaffung von fairen und guten Arbeitsplätzen auf, die in Industrie- und Schwellenländern sowie in Entwicklungsländern bestehen. Es steht auch beispielhaft für die Verknüpfung von globaler Agenda und nationaler Verantwortung, ist operationalisierbar und passt sich an nationale Besonderheiten an. Zudem kommt Deutschland auf Grund seines spezifisch großen Ressourcenkonsums eine besondere Handlungsverpflichtung zu.

Deutschland verfügt über ein vom Kabinett beschlossenes Ressourceneffizienzprogramm. Die Nachhaltigkeitsstrategie benennt ein ambitioniertes Ziel. Als komplexes Querschnittsthema sind verschiedene Ressorts, Branchen und Disziplinen betroffen. Die technische Kompetenz Deutschlands zu diesem Thema ist unbestritten. Zugleich besteht in Deutschland aber auch erheblicher Bedarf zur Fortentwicklung. Weltweit ist der Bedarf an jeweils eigenständigen, systematischen Lösungen ebenso unbestritten wie die Notwendigkeit, diese an globalen Stoffströmen auszurichten. Die nationale Implementation eines universellen Nachhaltigkeitszieles zur Ressourceneffizienz bietet gute Chancen zur Bekämpfung von Armut und ungesunden Arbeitsbedingungen.



Resources Efficiency: A Proposal from Germany for a UN Sustainable Development Goal on Resource Efficient Production and Consumption

Recommendation to the German Government

Berlin, January 29, 2014

The German Council for Sustainable Development welcomes the ambition of the German Government to actively support the UN in its mission to adopt Sustainable Development Goals, SDGs, as integral part of the universal Post 2015 Agenda. Combining the global agenda with leadership on the national scale, and partnering progress initiative on the intergovernmental level, is the important and new point to this agenda.

Post-2015

The post2015-agenda for a sustainable development notion challenges multi-stakeholder leadership. For global and universe Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)ⁱ to be implemented nationally Governments shall take reasonable care to check the integration of policies on the national scale. With a meaningful national strategy for sustainable development, NSDS, Germany is well prepared to do so, and invite other countries to share benefits of national experiences. The German government instituted an independent peer review and had foreign eminent experts twice assess German domestic policies on sustainable developmentⁱⁱ. This very idea underscores the ambition of the German national sustainability goals. It also highlights the need to further advance multi-stakeholder responsibility and involvement.

The Council for Sustainable Development recommends for the German Government increasing its efforts. A well thought through and focussed approach to SDG could lead the debate. With an ambitious, reliable and responsible SDG proposal, the German Government can make a difference. A new set of national efforts and initiatives are well needed to revive the multilateralism and to move the UN community towards a commonly shared agenda for the years to come. National leadership should be based on domestic strengths and should combine those with the notion to support global implementation by helping to provide soft competences and empowerments kits. Germany should develop its proposal based on a multi stakeholder approach to actively involve all interested groups, and its proposal should cover all aspects of SDG comprehensively.

A core example for SDGs

The issue of resource efficiency exemplifies this broad scope. The topic of resource efficiency is particularly suited to reflect how domestic challenges industrial countries like Germany have to cope with are connected with the development agenda elsewhere. Resource efficiency is unfinished business, worldwide and domestically.

The endeavour to strive for greater levels of resource efficiency

- can prove an important contribution to poverty eradication
- is a key area for establishing new jobs and decent work in developing countries
- provides both options for developing the internal markets and access to international markets
- asks for regulatory, industrial and social innovation in country specific approach to a comprehensive sustainable development.

Resource efficiency is crucial for a new approach to benefit sharing in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication. Common benefit sharing in sustainable development could be a key element to further cooperation features.

Resource efficiency can prove the case of SDG. Although the scope of resource efficiency is complex in nature, it is feasible to find operational approaches in all countries.

Proposal

Sustaining consumption and production by doubling yearly rates of domestic resource efficiency (referring to production and consumption as of 2012)

with the sub-targets on land, food, and products:

- Reducing the amount of **not recycled waste** by 50% by 2025, to be established for country specific top waste materials,
- Reducing the annual rate of **land degradation** by 50% by 2030; and achieving zero net land degradation by 2050,
- Reducing the amount of **wasted food** by 50% by 2030,
- Strengthening the sustainable **product stewardship for commodities** along the production chain with ecologic and social criteria for sourcing, corporate responsibility and downstream access for primary producers with reliable systems for monitoring, reporting and verification.

Such a target and its sub-targets express the commitment to greening of supply and demand of goods and services within ecological carrying capacities of the world. They are instrumental to ending poverty and providing legitimate and reliable access to resources by, in particular, establishing procedures and instruments for measurement, reporting and verification on resource productivity at national level.

Reasoning

Resource efficiency should be given prime relevance in production and consumption. Other highly relevant priority areas of the Agenda should be poverty eradication, tackling environmental depletion – the oceans in particular – and sharing the benefits of greening the economy. An ambitious SDG on resource efficiency combines the ecological, economic and social aspects. In particular, it may serve the post-2015 agenda by raising awareness on food quality, fair market access in supply chains across developing and developed countries. It may also help ensuring decent working conditions in recycling plants. It empowers domestic resilience, improves people's access to competences and domestic markets, and the access of local economies to international markets as well. Its contribution to eradicate poverty is striking and, thus, must not be underestimated or even wasted.

According to the very idea of SDG our proposal combines the global challenges and the domestic agenda. It should build on the notion of “sustainability – made in Germany” by emphasizing the particular strength in bringing together industrial and social innovation and the needs of the people elsewhere in the world where the environment is put at risk and people are doomed to work under unhealthy and devastating conditions. Germany imports extracted commodities and half-products such as leather, palm oil or industrial metals and “produces” the waste that e.g. ten years later will be flooding African scrapyards, with both aspects contributing to the legacy of environmental disasters with paramount importance for people’s living conditions.

The Council recommends for the Federal Government to advocate a Goal in support of recycling and resource efficiency in the context of national sustainable development strategies, NSDS, all over the world.

NSDS shall contribute to

- implement the respect for human rights and the environment,
- shift gears in the implementation of CBDR (common but differentiated responsibility) by taking reference to the emerging paradigm of CBSD, collective benefit sharing in sustainable development and greening the economy,
- combine domestic performance (walk the talk) and international access to solutions (talk the walk),
- build on strengths and empower new fields of societal and business action.

At current levels resource consumption, in absolute terms, threatens the integrity of the environment while, in relative terms, the current inequality of access to resources threatens the stability of future human development. In the long run exceeding ecological carrying capacities undermines any economic and social development. Already now, current trajectories of consumer demand, resource use and waste – especially those prevalent in industrialised countries and increasingly those in emerging economies – are exerting substantial stress on the world’s biosphere. This becomes evident in the over-exploitation and degradation of ecosystems, the anthropogenic warming of the atmosphere and the fragile resilience of human settlements and living conditions.

The prevalent patterns of production and consumption build on resource overexploitation - be it willingly or unwillingly. Sustainable development requires economic diversification and value-adding production patterns. Trajectories for demand and supply of goods based on natural resources and ecosystem services must be re-aligned through improved, open and participatory international interaction and governance.

For many people all over the world production and consumption is still tied to waste-bound patterns. Most precious resources are being discarded and hence wasted. They are not made available for any further use. The world’s waste problems are striking:

- In a world that still sees people in extreme poverty and hunger, food is wasted to enormous volume. At the same time overconsumption and obesity are increasing and, regionally, becoming widespread. In a way, food is wasted to this unhealthy way of life. Roughly one third of food produced worldwide rots or gets thrown away, either in post-harvest procedures or during pre-consumption storage.

- Urbanisation, sub-urbanisation and the ever growing intensification of the use of arable soils are causing a waste of land. Lost soil substance and soil functions can only, if ever, be restored in the long run and by providing considerable funds.
- The wasting of clean fresh water through its extensive use and its pollution is undermining prospects for development in many regions of the world already today.
- Waste itself is being wasted when not managed as a resource. Waste is a key resource for the economy because, in a world with nine billion people, carbon restrictions and resource constraints, economic growth is likely to be in conflict with ecological carrying capacities. Economic growth will require the introduction of ambitious circular economy features.

Meaningful resource efficiency requires a global transfer of engineering competences and capacities, clean technologies, social innovation and regulatory best practise.

Ecological carrying capacities

The concept of so called planetary boundaries draws attention to the carrying capacity of the planet and to interdependencies of Earth system processes. We recommend using this concept as a narrative for communication purposes and ambition. It is, however, not a tool that would necessarily result in quantifying restrictions to countries, people's prosperity or markets. Conceptual frameworks – the “planetary boundaries”, the “safe operating space”, ‘footprinting’ methods and the related “Earth Overshoot Day” as well as Ernst Ulrich von Weizsäcker's concept for resource productivity “Factor Four”, “Factor Ten” – challenge the state of scientific knowledge. They are a base for developing holistic approaches to sustainable development policies and for further research into issues and solutions. They can be seen as landmark terms reflecting the need for new institutional arrangements for decision making and implementation for a sustainable development.

As a credible leader towards the post-2015 Agenda, Germany needs to show how to launch innovation processes in society, economy and international cooperation using poverty eradication and ecological carrying capacities as benchmark.

Sustainable product stewardship

In an increasingly globalised economy, sustainability has to be organised along entire value chains that are often cross-border and complex. Increasing awareness on the part of businesses, manufacturers and retailers, civil society, consumer groups and the academic community has contributed to the development of some labelling schemes for “green products”. Stewardship approaches are well known for implementing sustainability strategies for forestry, fisheries and other commodities. They differ in conceptual framing, transparency, traceability or the level of ambition. But over the last decade, they have successfully established new ways of resource use and governance features that in a certain way have restructured global marketing procedures. If managed properly, they can help to combat poverty and provide inclusive economy solutions to people in rural areas. The challenges ahead include extending the outreach of these labels beyond niche markets and mainstream them in relevant economic sectors and to go beyond rural areas and cover urban communities where most of the world population lives.

The SDG on resource efficiency should be instrumental to provide further momentum and to engage stakeholders along the production chains to further seek opportunities in sharing the benefits of a green economy. Stewardship approaches, if implemented through stakeholders,

also have an interesting and progressive governance angle. Here, the missing link between national and the transnational levels can be (re-)established.

Social and environmental costs of resource depletion and pollution, resource scarcity and the prospective right to development pose needs to be included in sustainability strategies of both the public and the private sector. Improving the economics and efficiency of material use through product redesign and by manufacturing products that are less wasteful and more reusable, re-manufacturable and recyclable is of utmost importance. Inventing and investing in new business models that render leasing practices more flexible and broaden them across different sectors in order to close material loops through de-manufacturing operations and recycling would increase regional value creation. Government action is needed to incentivize, promote and reward business initiatives in this regard, thereby boosting the concept of producer responsibility and redefining the concepts of ownership and consumer responsibility.

Cooperation

Reusing and recycling makes it necessary for consumers and producers to cooperate and combine efforts e.g. in collecting waste and designing products, and internalising environmental and social costs. Thus, cooperation is key, where appropriate also by crossing borders and by using trade relations between industrialised countries and resource-rich developing countries. Regulators are required to come up with mechanisms that ensure market access, decent working conditions, and high environmental standards.

International cooperation needs to focus on the development of cooperative approaches to material flow innovations. Cooperation between business and government and between exporting and importing countries might establish “green” reverse logistics empowering high quality recycling, recapturing value or proper disposal. This will open up potentials for building up engineering capacities and for intensifying knowledge and technology transfer as well as joint knowledge creation and innovation processes.

Stewardship criteria along the life cycle of sustainably grown or extracted commodities provide ample room for stakeholder cooperation.

Urbanisation and land degradation

A particular challenge to sustainable development efforts is increasing urbanisation. By 2030, 60 per cent of the world’s population are expected to live in urban environments. Urbanisation is often requiring a more intensified use of arable land to feed people, and thus causing degradation through erosion or loss of quality. In turn, overused and degraded soils may cause further spiralling of the physical and biological degradation process¹. In this regard Germany should continue to support the “Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land” and its application also for land restoration.

Especially in emerging economies, cities are growing rapidly in terms of population, energy consumption and resource use. Causing problems urban development can also be made part of the solution and provide important opportunities for achieving SDGs: urban agglomerations – if made part of national sustainability strategies and if transformed into green, resilient cities -

¹ Soils and Land in the SDGs and the post-2015 Development Agenda. <http://globalsoilweek.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Soils-and-Land-in-the-SDGs-and-the-Post-2015-Development-Agenda-A-proposal-for-a-Land-Degradation-Neutral-World-goal-and-targets.pdf>

have the ability to support large numbers of people within a limited space. In cities, innovations must lead to a high degree of technical and economic efficiency, efficient use of resources, a resolute circular economy with maximum recycling and minimal disposal rates, as well as a low-carbon energy and transport infrastructure.

There are multiple keys to a sustainable urban environment, be it in the sector of housing, mobility, energy supply or culture. However, there is one aspect that is inclusive and integrates several sectors by nature: As the spread of urban settlements and urban consumption is causing intensified soil use or simply directly consuming soil resources and turning green into brown fields, it can also strategically be made an important part of the solution by featuring a land degradation neutral world.

Domestically, Germany is addressing the land consumption within Germany by a particular goal that sets out to drastically reduce the daily rate of natural soil being devoted to purposes of settlement and transport. Germany, as of today, is far from achieving this particular objective of its national sustainability agenda. Recent years, however, have seen increasing awareness, emerging new scientific tools to assess land consumption, and impressively good practise examples on the local level.

Globally, the goal to reducing land degradation is key to advancing the quality of both urban and rural environments. It can help to ensure that the rural and urban poor benefit from actions towards achieving the SDGs. Increasing resilience and increasing land use within ecological capacities provides ample opportunities for ending poverty and resolving land related conflicts. In particular, land restoration activities may target people living below their country's national poverty line and, thus, help them overcome poor quality of life.

Domestic agenda on resource efficiency and waste management

Germany has made impressive progress towards achieving a circular economy. To a large part the household and commercial waste is being recycled, especially the easy accessible and collected parts of waste. Landfilling is being outphased. The dual system implemented common responsibility. With those accomplishments, still, we are now facing growing issues of not yet recycled waste Germany, of products not being designed for the purpose of recycling or reuse. The volume of licensing money is too limited to allow for system innovation. Waste incinerators are providing over-capacities and, thus, are burning waste that could and should otherwise be recycled. The issues of how to deal with mixed plastic waste is not settled. The amount of electric and electronic waste is unprecedented and it will be hitting the waste management system soon. Still, without be accompanied by meaningful technology transfer and education efforts, significant amounts of waste are being shipped to overseas destinations in order to be treated beyond sound social and ecological requirements. In Germany and in the developed economies in general, products are usually designed to be marketed. There is no systemic link to a design-to-reuse/recycle.

Therefore, Germany must prepare to take next steps. The domestic goal for resource efficiency as postulated in the NSDS will otherwise not be reached. Plus, the scaling up of resource efficiency requires more intensifying advanced studies into resource efficiency. The Federal resource efficiency programme needs to be extended and continued.

The proposed goal is suited to show the fruitful interrelation between global responsibility and domestic innovation for a sustainable licence to operate.

-
- ⁱ UNCSO (2012): The Future We Want.
<http://www.uncsd2012.org/content/documents/727The%20Future%20We%20Want%2019%20June%201230pm.pdf>
 - High Level Panel (HLP): A New Global Partnership: Eradicate and Transform Economies through Sustainable Development.
<http://www.post2015hlp.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/UN-Report.pdf>
 - Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN): An Action Agenda for Sustainable Development
<http://unsdsn.org/files/2013/11/An-Action-Agenda-for-Sustainable-Development.pdf>
 - UN Global Compact. Corporate Sustainability and the UN-Post-2015 Development Agenda
http://www.stakeholderforum.org/fileadmin/files/UNGC_Post2015_Report.pdf
 - Centre for International Governance Innovation and the Korea Development Institute (CIGI): Post-2015 Development Agenda: Goals Targets and Indicators
http://www.cigionline.org/sites/default/files/MDG_Post_2015v3.pdf
 - UNSG: Secretary General's Initial Input to OWG on SDGs: A Life of Dignity for All
<http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/1494sgreportsdgs.pdf>
 - UN-System Task Team (UNTT): Realizing the Future We Want for All
http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/Post_2015_UNTTreport.pdf
 - Griggs et al.: Sustainable Development Goals for People and Planet
<http://www.nature.com/nature/journal/v495/n7441/full/495305a.html>
 - South Center: Concept Paper on Sustainable Development Goals
<http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/1691SC%20Concept%20Paper%20on%20SDGs%20%202010.3.13%20with%20SC%20head.pdf>
 - UNEP: Possibilities for UNEP and IRP to Contribute to the Post-2015/SDG Process (Draft)
 - Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE):
 - Global Public Goods: A concept for framing the Post-2015 Agenda
 - [http://www.die-gdi.de/CMS-Homepage/openwebcms3.nsf/\(ynDK_contentByKey\)/ANES-959D4N/\\$FILE/DP%202.2013.pdf](http://www.die-gdi.de/CMS-Homepage/openwebcms3.nsf/(ynDK_contentByKey)/ANES-959D4N/$FILE/DP%202.2013.pdf)Reconsidering Sustainable Development Goals
 - [http://www.die-gdi.de/CMS-Homepage/openwebcms3.nsf/\(ynDK_contentByKey\)/ANES-95JJK6/\\$FILE/BP%204.2013.pdf](http://www.die-gdi.de/CMS-Homepage/openwebcms3.nsf/(ynDK_contentByKey)/ANES-95JJK6/$FILE/BP%204.2013.pdf)
 - Stakeholder Forum: Sustainable Development Goals e-Inventory
<http://www.sdgseinventory.org/searchinventory.php>
 - IASS: Political Criteria for Sustainable Development Goal (SDG). Selection and the Role of the Urban Dimension
<http://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/5/12/5034>
 - Forum Umwelt & Entwicklung: Die ökologische Dimension in der Post-2015-Agenda für nachhaltige Entwicklung http://www.forumue.de/fileadmin/temp/Forum_Umwelt_und_Entwicklung_Post-2015-Ziele_Forderungspapier.pdf

ⁱⁱ Stigson, Björn et al (2013) Sustainability – Made in Germany. The Second Review by a Group of International Peers commissioned by the German Federal Chancellery. Berlin, September 2013;
http://www.nachhaltigkeitsrat.de/uploads/media/20130925_Peer_Review_Sustainability_Germany_2013_01.pdf