Open **SDG**club.Berlin

OPEN SDGclub.BERLIN MEETING

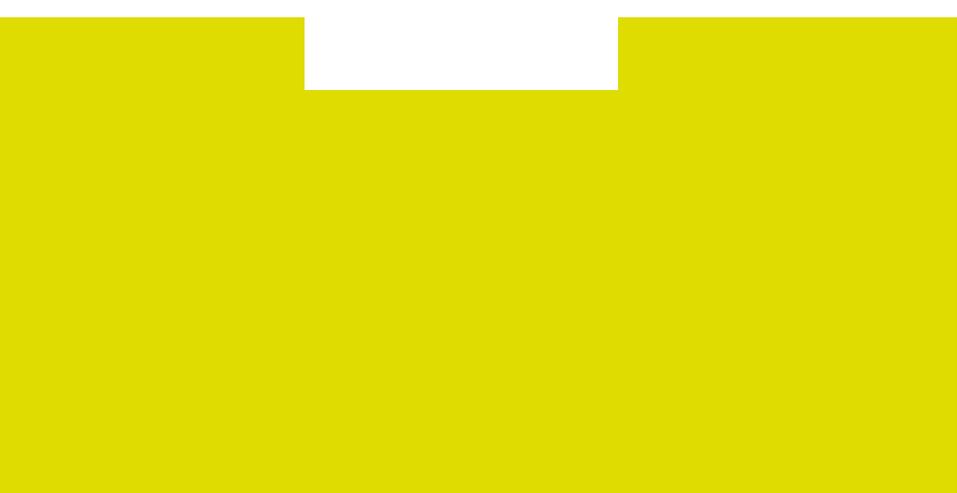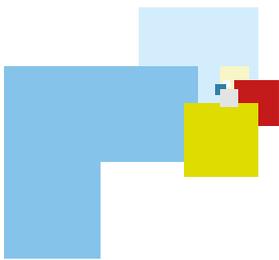21 – 23 NOVEMBER 2016, RNE DOCUMENTATION

Non-state actors promoting change towards implementing the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

What is sustainability?

"Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. [...] In essence, sustainable development is a process of change in which the

exploitation of resources, the direction of investments, the orientation of techno-

logical development, and institutional change are all in harmony and enhance both current and future potential to meet human needs and aspirations."

Brundtland-Commission 1987

Content

Foreword

by Imme Scholz, Member of the German Council for Sustainable Development (RNE)

The adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by the United Nations in 2015 was a surprise in many ways: the Agenda is ambitious – it not only re-emphasizes the objective of freeing the world from the "tyranny of poverty", but it links this with the reduction of inequality, within and among countries, and with the protection of the earth's ecosystems. It highlights women's empowerment as much as the fight against discrimination. The Agenda was adopted by the General Assembly of the UN with an extraordinarily high participation of heads of state and government, from rich and poor, small and large countries, who expressed their support and commitment to this universal, indivisible, integrated agenda.

Sixteen months after its adoption, the 2030 Agenda is still a source of surprise due to the unexpected positive reactions and support it has generated among different social sectors over time.

Many civil society organizations committed to environmental and development objectives had criticized the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their targets because they often mirrored political compromise rather than clear objectives that could be followed up on and measured. How can clear results be produced in the course of 15 years under these conditions? Still, many activists have realized the innovative potential of the Agenda and decided to accompany its implementation. As implementation is a national and local responsibility and process, the SDGs need to be connected to domestic narratives of change – and domestic objectives can go beyond the level of ambition negotiated at the UN, plus, they can be clearer and sharper as well.

From a scientific point of view, the 2030 Agenda has left much to be desired as well, in terms of its clarity, coherence and ambition. Still, many researchers have begun to see the Agenda as an opportunity – for reinvigorating interdisciplinary research on interlinkages between specific goals and targets; for revitalizing and updating the science-policy interface; and re-defining how science (research, teaching, science-based policy advice) can contribute answers to the grand societal challenges of today.

The positive reaction that has come from private enterprises is also encouraging to see. The Swedish company Scania's engagement in the promotion of sustainable transport has been reinforced by the SDGs. Small and medium-sized enterprises in Germany welcome the approach of the Agenda that sees them as part of the solution to sustainable development and not just as part of the problem. Alexander Holst, head of the Sustainability Strategy team at Accenture, who regularly interviews a large number of CEOs on sustainability issues, has registered an increasing understanding of what sustainability means and a rising willingness to contribute to it as part of their business model. Sustainability engagement enters the core of the firm and leaves a neat little CSR box to which it has often been confined.

Governments and policymakers are starting to develop national strategies and implementation plans for the 2030 Agenda. The SDGs are integrated into national development plans, or countries adopt national sustainable development strategies, as Germany did in January 2017. China has considerably increased its funding for South-South cooperation with the aim of supporting developing countries in achieving the SDGs and implementing their voluntary contributions to mitigating climate change. The G20 – under the Chinese presidency – adopted an Action Plan on the 2030 Agenda in September 2016, whilst the German presidency of the G20 has given the 2030 Agenda high visibility and importance. Cooperation with engagement groups – business, civil society, labor, women, think tanks – has become an important feature of the German G20 presidency: Business 20 and Labor 20 are thinking of issuing a joint statement calling for a strengthening of the contribution that a globalized economy can make towards social development. The T20 is working on recommendations to strengthen policy coherence for sustainable development across G20 work streams.

All these encouraging and sometimes surprising processes would be impossible without the strong commitment and participation of societal actors at national and local levels. Sustainability councils and other similar spaces are important and indispensable platforms for such engagement and for dialogue with policymakers.

The first meeting of the Open SDGclub.Berlin in November 2016 illustrated the vast and strong human, intellectual and practical potential that societal engagement can contribute towards sustainable development. Sustainability councils and societal actors are needed in order to maintain momentum over time, translate the 2030 Agenda into local narratives, and for the practice of change. The Open SDGclub.Berlin is a space to share experiences on what works and what does not and why, to gain inspiration for new approaches, to learn from others, and to gather courage for entering new coalitions. Without question, the Open SDGclub.Berlin has shown the value of international exchange and cooperation – as an alternative to nationalist and protectionist approaches aimed at improving or securing domestic welfare. This is what we need in the difficult times we are approaching.

The 2030 Agenda is an agenda that gives orientation in difficult times – the world we want will be better than what we have today. It will not be easy to achieve, and therefore we need partners for this journey. The Open SDGclub.Berlin is a space that will generate such joint engagement and partnerships.

Read this report to learn about the Open SDGclub.Berlin – its debates, insights, suggestions, and what has been set in motion since the first meeting!

A big 'thank you' to all participants! I am looking forward to meeting you and new members in 2018!

Imme Scholz, Member of the German Council for Sustainable Development and Deputy Director of the German Development Institute / Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE)

Open SDGclub.Berlin

Open SDGclub.Berlin meeting 2016: The Summary

The setting

In following up on its own words that actions for and considerations about sustainable development in Germany need to take on an international dimension, the German Council for Sustainable Development (RNE) – one year after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda – organized an international gathering of change agents and, in particular, of non-state actors for sustainable development. The RNE hosts were current and former Council members Imme Scholz, Ulla Burchardt and Walter Hirche. The purpose of the meeting was to provide for a mutually encouraging learning and exchange platform. Participants came from sustainability councils, economic and social councils or similar bodies, from civil society networks, international organizations, academia, business and consultancies – 32 countries in total, most of them first reporters at HLPF 2016.

 The format of the meeting alternated between plenary meetings and smaller group work and plenary club-learning formats to ensure that ideas could be shared by everybody. With this in mind, upon their arrival and warm-up, participants were invited to engage in setting-the-scene exercises that discussed where the implementation of the Agenda 2030 stands right now, to share their experiences, and to seek inspiration from exploring the unfinished business of their collaboration. The meeting ended with participants brainstorming ideas for action (by themselves, together, with others). Interactivity, open exchange, mutual trust and respect, a sizzling energy, encouragement and creativity were among the main features of the meeting.

The content

Participants shared their views and experiences about their first steps implementing the 2030 Agenda; the emerging or existing SD governance structures in their countries; the politics of data; multi-stakeholder engagement and communication; the roles played by civil society in the implementation; as well ass emerging tools and platforms supporting implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Specific examples of action undertaken by some sparked ideas for action by others.

SDG challenges pinned to a world map pointed to shrinking spaces for civil society participation, a lack of a) political will, b) dialogue, c) trust, d) budget, e) public awareness, f) ownership.

Discussions repeatedly centered on the need for more dialogue and cooperation – between different "silos" or communities; with the not-immediately-like-minded people, and across borders.

In summary, one way of responding to the challenge posed by the universality and indivisibility of the SDGs is to "connect the dots". The scarcity of the resources time and money was repeatedly mentioned as a hindrance to one's own civil society action, making it crucial to use cooperation smartly. A recurrent theme was the need to address the root causes of unsustainable development and to re-politicize "the system" – through a political and societal, therefore not just administrative, approach to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Main take aways

There was a general feeling that the Open SDGclub.Berlin meeting had helped to build trust, hope and a willingness amongst the participants to work together, with self-commitment being key to the universal implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The main take-aways were a sense of belonging together to a common cause, an awareness of the value base of SD action that starts with ourselves, as well as an awareness that the scope for transformation is not the same everywhere and that a transnational exchange of experiences can boost innovation where debates and policies on sustainability issues are floundering nationally.

We have noted main take aways from the preparatory process in red, take aways content-wise in green, main take aways from the conference conclusions in dark red and lessons learnt in blue notes.

Introduction: Objectives and spirit of Open SDGclub.Berlin

By Günther Bachmann, RNE Secretary General

Encouraged by feedback from stakeholders and experts from around the world, we, at RNE, decided to go forward and set up the inaugural Open SDGclub.

Profound and most valuable international expertise has helped us shape the scope of our meeting. In this regard, I am most grateful to Hirbod Aminlari, Alan AtKisson, Gábor Bartus, Michiel de Vries, François Fortier, André-Jean Guérin, Minu Hemmati, Brenda King, Martha Talamondjila Naanda, Arnau Queralt Bassa, Cletus I. Springer, Jan-Gustav Strandenaes for their contributions.

I would also like to thank the German Government professionals from the Federal Chancellery as well as the Federal Ministries for the Environment and for Economic Cooperation and Development. They have accompanied our project from its very inception and provided us with important guidance.

Germany is strongly committed to promoting sustainable development with a sense of ambition, and on all levels. The German Government seeks to promote the implementation of the 2030 Agenda worldwide; the report submitted by the Government to the HLPF has underlined this. Parliament is active. Research and development programs are underway. With respect to civil society, academia and the private sector, the German Council for Sustainable Development is organizing campaigns and structured dialogue processes.

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SCOPING MEETING
- One year before the conference
- International expertise to sound ideas
- Who do we want to target? / What do people expect?
- Encouraging and trustbuilding as main objectives

The German Government decided on Germany's new Sustainable Development Strategy in January 2017, which is aligned to the 17 SDGs and provides a key framework for implementing the 2030 Agenda.

But, still, we have blind spots. We have deficits and shortcomings, some of them quite serious. We are, in some respects, a long way away from achieving sustainability in the way we live, the way we do business, and the way we manage natural resources.

From my point of view, our domestic to-do list is essential and urgent. We need to transform core elements of our conventional production and consumption patterns. We are over-consuming land and arable soil; our life styles do not promote sustainability or energy efficiency, and carbon mitigation targets are not being met; growth patterns lack sustainability dimensions. How can we make the financial system fit for purpose? How do we fight silo thinking? How can we encourage comprehensive and pro-democracy political thinking that leads to sustainability?

These are major issues. The question therefore is: How will the Open SDGclub help to address these issues? The first Open SDGclub is taking place in Berlin at the invitation of the German Council for Sustainable Development. I expect the Open SDGclub.Berlin to be instrumental in several ways:

1. It would be great if the Club idea could strengthen the sense of sharing a common cause among those present.

2. The Open SDGclub.Berlin is filling a gap. It emphasizes those politics of sustainability that primarily concern our societies. We know of the importance of state administrations and ministries, global and national politics. We hold them in high regard. But we also know that you can virtually forget about laws and regulations when they do not resonate with society.

3. The Club will serve as a platform. You may take away lessons. You may make use of what you hear in your framework. You may also contribute ideas or initiatives for further consideration with and by others.

The Open SDGclub.Berlin aims to make a difference.
Many conferences and gatherings address the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. This is a good thing, and there is a necessity for the 2030 Agenda to be rolled out across all administrations at all levels and spanning all special interests. There is still a lot to be done.

The Open SDGclub.Berlin adds a specific focus.
- We look into non-state action.
- We look into how the 2030 Agenda can be webbed into the DNA of a society.
- We look into tools, procedures and role models that advocate sustainable development, again in specific regard to leadership engagement, codes of conduct, best practice operations, setting standards and walk-the-talk options.

We look into how to grow sustainable development skills that build on knowledge and social competences, on the art of facilitation, and on culture and aesthetics.

Participants of the Open SDGclub.Berlin meeting in November 2016 all embrace the transformative character of the 2030 Agenda in some way or the other. They are, within their national or regional context, taking up the challenge of reflecting universal Sustainable Development Goals in politics and societies. They represent national councils or similar multi-stakeholder and advisory bodies addressing economic, social and environmental issues. We are happy and grateful that they have accepted our invitation. We are glad that they have agreed to share their specific competences in dealing with civil society movements in an effort to promote sustainable development. We are glad that they will contribute innovative solutions, courageous engagement action and new partnerships.

Sustainability matters more than ever. In the past, the call for transformative action used to reach a minority of experts only. Although highly-recognized leaders and outspoken characters, they remained in peripheral positions. Today, the call for sustainability must reach a much wider audience. This increases our responsibility.

While national governments all over the world are pondering how best to implement SDGs, we have already noticed signs within societies of increasing frustration and severe pushbacks from the lack of meaningful progress. Unsustainability is becoming more entrenched in nearly every critical aspect.

Civil society (the organized civil society) played a unique role during the informal SDG negotiation process, and participation efforts delivered good results. This process must continue. This is why I would like to emphasize and highlight the debate triggered by the ITA group (Juan Somavia and Klaus Töpfer). Quite rightly, they combine the claim "The Future we want" with a reflection on "the UN we need", and they urge major institutional reforms.

The implementation of the SDG mechanism has reached a critical juncture. We know about planetary boundaries, the climate crisis, water scarcity, land degradation, income inequality, extreme poverty and disease, and how they are interrelated. We know that they must command our urgent attention. Sustainability, unfortunately, is in

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**OPEN SDGCLUB.BERLIN –
WHAT'S THE PURPOSE?**
- Common cause
- Focus on non-state action
- Platform for ideas
- Action-oriented

danger of becoming just another mother of buzzwords. It has, in some ways, become "over-conferenced": too many big words with only little real change.

In the overall picture of sustainable development, the path we are on is not the path we urgently need. But, more importantly, if we reassess our work, neither is it the path we could be on. If we just keep doing what we are doing now, we will ruin the planet and run down societies. And yet, the sustainability community is still mainly working within the ambit of the things that succeeded in the last century.

Cooperative politics are built from many different elements. Without question, one of those is the people who are willing to stir up a ruckus.

Let us see how far we get. We will probably add new possibilities and new challenges. We will intrigue and challenge ourselves. I am curious to see where this all will lead us to.

OPEN SDGCLUB.BERLIN IN THE MAKING:

The story behind the story

May 2015: RNE adopts an opinion on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Germany and underlines the importance of stressing the sub-national and international dimension of Germany's sustainability policy. Summer 2015: True to this statement, RNE decides to organize an international conference one year after adoption of the 2030 Agenda.

November 2015: RNE invites a dozen international experts to a scoping meeting in order to brainstorm what kind of international gathering would make sense in November 2016 in order for it to truly constitute added value for the participants. Participants at this scoping meeting are present today, our advisory group, and have since been involved in the different steps that have gone towards designing this meeting. Our common approach was that this should be a mutually encouraging meeting where people would learn from each others' experiences, become inspired by good ideas for new and perhaps common action. The aim of the meeting was to focus on societies' initial experiences with the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.
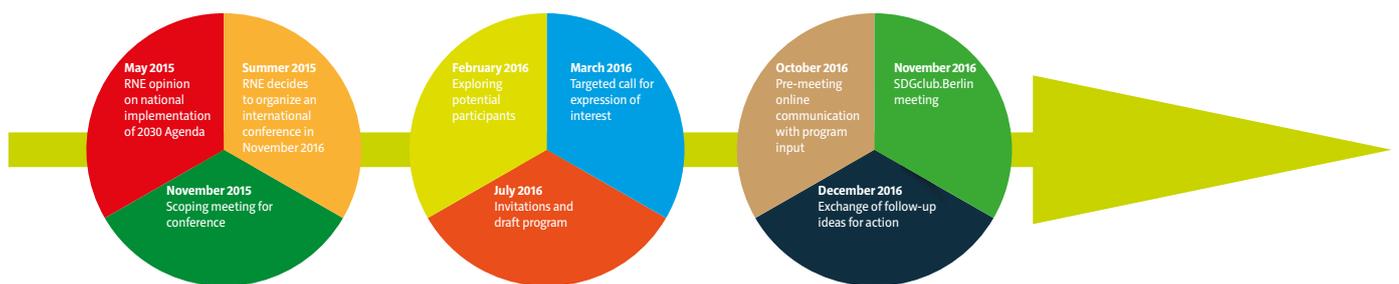
As of February 2016, we vested our advisors with the task of putting forward the names of people to approach with this conference proposal. We were looking for "change agents coming from diverse countries from different parts of the world, candidates who have outreach to civil society, either because they belong to a national Sustainable Development Council or similar body or because they have acquired a specific competence in dealing with civil society movements. They might also be from special interest groups or from the local level. The most important aspect is that they are in charge of 2030 Agenda implementation at their respective level". That was our request
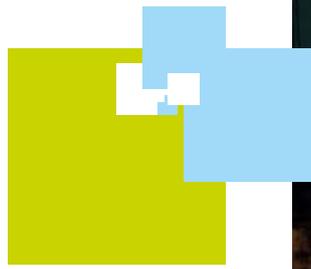
Branding courtesy of the National Council for Sustainable Development Hungary

With regard to geographical outreach, we combined two approaches: countries with already established relations to RNE and countries which seemed particularly engaged, either because they belonged to the so-called "Group of Nine" or to the first reporters to HLPF.

As of March 2016, we started mailing out targeted calls for an expression of interest, which resulted partly in immediate positive replies, partly in a snowball-effect creating further circles for our outreach. In addition, the legacy of the Beyond2015 Campaign proved to be a rich source of potential candidates.

On the basis of these many replies, we started setting up an initial list of invitees, who received their invitations late June/early July 2016. As not everybody was available then, further rounds of invitations followed.

What we achieved was a very positive, at times, even enthusiastic reaction.

Restricting factors included time, the language issue and, in the last weeks, also visa procedures. A brief note on English as the meeting language: It is unquestionably the common international language, and we wanted to hold a meeting where direct interaction would be possible without the need for interpreters. The time factor was mostly an issue for people from the local communities and those having to travel farthest.

Our invitation procedure was a learning curve for several reasons: RNE had not organized a large-scale international conference before. The 2030 Agenda brings together new actors and we wanted to take an unconventional approach in terms of the design of the meeting.

Not every somewhat unorthodox idea for this meeting survived the planning stage, but what remains is our initial idea: the interactive approach – not as an end in itself, but as a means for real conversation.

Programme

November, 21st

1 pm	**Incoming, light lunch buffet at the foyer of room Enzian**

SETTING THE SCENE

2.10 pm   **Opening of the Open SDGclub.Berlin meeting**
How come that we all gathered together here and what are we expected to do?
Moderator **Alan AtKisson** interviews **Günther Bachmann**
GB or RNE Chair

2.30 – 4 pm   **Place for ideas:**
Where do we stand one year after Agenda 2030 adoption?
Sharing political assessment of first steps of implementation

Moderated by: **Alan AtKisson**

Input by
Nizar Baraka, Economic, Social and Environmental Council of Morocco
Martha Talamondjila Naanda, Sustainable Development Advisory Council of Namibia
Yi Wang, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Institute of Science and Development
Jan-Gustav Strandenaes, Stakeholder Forum

Interventions from the floor

Wrap up: **Leida Rijnhout,** Friends of the Earth Europe / SDGWatch Europe

4 - 4.45 pm   **Coffee and joining of labs**

EXPLORING THE CASE

4.45 – 6.30 pm   **Parallel labs**

Siemenssaal
Lab 1 on Roles of Advisory bodies: The role and remits of multi stakeholder Councils for SD, Economic and Social Councils and similar bodies
Input by
Brenda King, European Economic and Social Committee
Apostolos Xirafis, Economic and Social Council of Greece
Imme Scholz, RNE
Facilitated by **Hanaa El Hilaly,** SDG Expert of ECOSOC

Room Limmat
Lab 2 on Tools: Learning platforms and tools for transformation
Input by
Francois Fortier, UNDESA
Américo Sampaio, Rede Nossa São Paulo
Facilitated by **Ingeborg Niestroy,** IISD

Room Glacier
Lab 3 on Cooperative politics: Transformation and alliances; transnational social cooperation for change
Input by
Andrew Griffiths, Together 2030
Leida Rijnhout, Friends of the Earth Europe / SDGWatch Europe
Facilitated by **Jan-Gustav Strandenaes,** Stakeholder Forum

Room Bernina
Lab 4 on Engagement: Multi-stakeholder engagement and communications
Input by
Cletus Springer, Organisation of American States
Minu Hemmati, CatalySD
Facilitated by **Johan Hassel,** Swedish Delegation for Agenda 2030 implementation

Room Enzian
Lab 5 on the role of civil society: International cooperation of CSOs in the context of the High Level Group on the 2030 Agenda

7 pm   **Address**
Tanja Gönner, GIZ Chair of Management Board

7.20 pm   **Dinner at Restaurant Mövenpick** (casual)

November, 22nd

9 am   **Club Learning**
Reporting back from the labs to the Plenary
Moderator: **Martha Talamondjila Naanda,**
Sustainable Development Advisory Council of Namibia

9.30 – 9.45 am   **Joining of labs**

INSPIRATION

9.45 – 11.15 am   **Parallel labs**

Room Limmat
Lab 6 on Agenda setting: Inserting SDGs into top national policies
Input by
Gábor Bartus, National Council for Sustainable Development Hungary
Philipp Schönrock, CEPEI
Facilitated by Michiel de Vries, EEAC network coordinator

Room Glacier
Lab 7 on Agenda setting: What can networks do?
Input by
Darren Swanson, Novel Futures Corporation
Hamong Santano, International NGO Forum on Indonesian Development
Facilitated by Arnau Queralt, Advisory Council for the Sustainable Development of Catalonia

Room Bernina
Lab 8 on Data generation: Where do we get needed data from?
Input by
Claudia Schwegmann, Open Knowledge Foundation Germany
Javier Surasky, La Plata University
Facilitated by N.N.

Room Enzian
Lab 9 on Countries' Agenda 2030 implementation status
Input by
Hanaa El Hilaly, SDG Expert of ECOSOC
Johann Hassel, Swedish Delegation for Agenda 2030 implementation
Silvia Lara, Asociación empresarial para el desarrollo
Facilitated by N.N.

11.15 – 11.30 am   **Joining the plenary in room Enzian**

11.30 am   **Club Learning: Reporting back from the labs to the Plenary**
Moderator: Namhla Mniki-Mangaliso, African Monitor

12.30 pm   **Snack**

1.15 pm   **Departure (by bus) to the 2nd venue**
On the way sightseeing spots on history and future of Berlin

ACTION

2.15 pm   **Arrival at Fabrik 23 + Photo session 1**

2.45 pm   **Place for ideas**
Advocacy, Advisory and Agent for change: Building constituencies, raising awareness, challenging the private and public sector, communicating the story
Input by Günther Bachmann, RNE
Contributions from the floor
Moderator: Alan AtKisson

4.15 pm   **Coffee break + Photo session 2**

4.45 pm   **Walk your talk: Advancing the greening of meetings**
Input by Kerstin Pettenkofer, lab concepts
Contributions from the floor
Moderator: Verónica Tomei, RNE

6 pm   **Afterwork-Reception**
Conversation with State Secretary Rita Schwarzelühr-Sutter, Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety
and State Secretary Thomas Silberhorn, Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development,
moderated by Brenda King, European Economic and Social Committee

7 pm   **Seated dinner**

9.30 pm   **Bus transfer to Hotel Mövenpick**

November, 23rd

9 am   **Place for ideas: Pitching future**
What messages and ideas for action will we take from here?

Input by
Arnau Queralt, Advisory Council for the Sustainable Development of Catalonia
Gábor Bartus, National Council for Sustainable Development Hungary
Namhla Mniki, African Monitor
Contributions from the floor
Moderator: Alan AtKisson

11 am   **Coffee**

11.30 am   **Pitch continued**
Option foreseen to split up and use separate rooms

1 pm   **Speech**
State Secretary Stephan Steinlein, Federal Foreign Office

1.15 pm   **Lunch**

2 pm   **Place for results: Looking back and moving forward**
Convening results and further commitments / Closing remarks by participants in open space

Facilitators:
Cletus Springer, Organisation of African States
Günther Bachmann, RNE

3 pm   **End of Open SDGclub.Berlin meeting**

Open SDGclub.Berlin meeting 21 to 23 November 2016 – Report of the meeting

Who and where

Around 90 participants from over 30 countries gathered in Berlin from 21 to 23 November 2016, at the invitation of the German Council for Sustainable Development, RNE. The bulk of the meeting took place at the Mövenpick hotel and was held on a round, welcoming stage in the colours of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Participants were greeted by a world map on which they were invited to mark their places of origin.

Finally underway!

The meeting started with a few very brief welcoming remarks by Günther Bachmann, Secretary General of RNE, since the formal introductory welcome speech had been posted on the meeting's website and sent to participants in advance. Günther Bachmann introduced the meeting's chief moderator, Alan AtKisson, who proceeded by interviewing Günther Bachmann about RNE's hopes and intentions for the meeting. The general set-up was explained, in particular the sequence of setting the scene / exploring the case / inspiration / action along with the forming of smaller lab formats and club learning sessions in plenary format.

Setting the scene

Participants shared their political assessment of the first steps undertaken in implementing the 2030 Agenda on the basis of input as to where we stand one year after adoption of the Agenda.

Jan-Gustav Strandenaes from Stakeholder Forum and Pure Consultancy shared his perception of the 2016 HLPF meeting: lots of hope; impressive participation (193 countries present); reporting countries showcasing first implementation steps; general impression that work had already started around this common and ambitious agenda. He reminded participants of some of the particularities surrounding the SDGs: their interconnection, their value base, their dependence on partnerships for their implementation. The latter is crucial, in his view, so as to avoid the F in HLPF, which stands for "Forum", not standing for "failure"; hence, the importance of civil society focusing on follow-up, a watchdog function and also active participation in partnerships, always bearing in mind the interlinkages between different SDGs.

Martha Naanda from the Sustainable Development Advisory Council of Namibia reported that sustainable development aspects had been considered in Namibian politics for a relatively long time, e.g. through their adoption in Namibia's National Development Plan (NDP), reflecting that society had been put in the middle of the independence process. In June 2016, Namibia started to domesticate and popularize the SDGs and is trying to align the SDGs with the fifth version of their NDP. Martha pointed to responsibility for implementing the SDGs at different levels. The individual level: Everybody needs to take ownership and responsibility in order to make a difference. The institutional level: In Namibia, the National Planning Commission as well as different ministries are fit to implement the SDGs. The systems' level: Still, 28% of Namibians live in extreme poverty (amounting to 2.1 million), showing that the progress made in the implementation process is still too slow; the willingness is there, but Martha sees a considerable lack of urgency.

Following Martha's input, an interesting linguistic/cultural debate unfolded where Spanish-speakers pointed to the fact that in their context "domestication" of the SDGs would not mean "localization" but "taming", which was certainly not intended.

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SETTING THE SCENE
- What is happening in our countries?
- Input paper on the 2016 HLPF and lessons learned
- Input paper on the 18th SDG

Yi Wang from the Chinese Academy of Science, who had come directly from COP 22 in Marrakesh, pointed out that China, having set up an SDG implementation plan, has put sustainable development on the G20 Agenda. However, China's strong growth of >10% annually is leading to an increase in emissions and pollution, still following the "pollute first, clean up later" logic. Therefore, institutional arrangements aimed at safeguarding the environment would need to move from focusing on end-of-pipe solutions towards holistic environmental management, e.g. through market-based instruments. The Chinese economy is still highly dependent on coal, and a transition strategy is needed. The challenges facing this transition are the number of institutions, costs, regional differences within China and the NIMBY-effect. Yi therefore sees the need for more science-based policies. In a global perspective for implementing the SDGs, South-South cooperation would need to be extended (along the lines of the CBDR principle).

Imme Scholz, RNE member, presented the German case, stating that implementation of the SDGs has to take place in and by Germany. In light of the principles of universality, indivisibility and accountability, sustainable development is not just a domestic task and responsibility. In drafting its new strategy, the German Government had organized public participation in this process, including a meeting with representatives from several sectors of society in the Chancellery. Imme underlined the positive action that had been undertaken at the sub-national level and in cities. However, she also upheld the view that the sustainability architecture needs to be strengthened in general. What is needed in particular is a renewal of the "we" identity in German institutions and more cooperation across departments and areas of responsibility where institutions join forces for the benefit of shared goals instead of defending specific interests. In closing, Imme stressed the need to translate the agenda into the narratives of our countries.

When debating the various input, participants stressed the importance of multi-stakeholder participation and of the private sector's accountability to reach the goals. Some participants pointed to the need to break down the silos to allow for cross-sectoral and integrated thinking. Some participants highlighted the fact that we seem to have perfect plans but an imperfect implementation. The need also to address points that are painful to discuss was equally underlined.

This very last idea was picked up by Leida Rijnhout from Friends of the Earth Europe / SDGWatch Europe. Wrapping up, Leida stated that little progress had been made in the past 20 years because the root causes of unsustainable development had not been addressed: financial systems, power relations, corporate take-over of governments, neo-liberalism or the shrinking space of CSOs. In her view, these are the points that need to be addressed once and for all. Moreover, she echoed calls for breaking down the silos.

After this first plenary session, participants split up to form five parallel labs. Exploring the case of implementing the 2030 Agenda from different angles was the task in hand.

In the evening, Tanja Gönner, Chair of the Management Board from the German cooperation agency GIZ presented some guiding thoughts on how the 2030 Agenda would lead to re-orient development routines.

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WHAT IS IMPORTANT?
- Partnerships
- Break down silos
- Science-based policies
- Translate SDGs into the national narrative
- Bring politics in!

Lab 1 – Roles of advisory bodies

Lab 1 was on the role and remits of multi-stakeholder Councils for Sustainable Development, Economic and Social Councils and similar bodies and was facilitated by Hanaa El Hilaly, SDG Expert at ECOSOC.

Following an initial round of presentations by participants and Hanaa's introductory remarks, Brenda King presented the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), one of the two advisory bodies in the EU institutional set-up, as well as its Sustainable Development Observatory, which she chairs. She then presented the EESC's proposal for a European Sustainable Development Forum as a means of involving civil society in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at EU level. Brenda stressed that civil society at EU level had been very active in preparing for the implementation throughout the whole of 2016 and was waiting impatiently for EU Commission proposals.
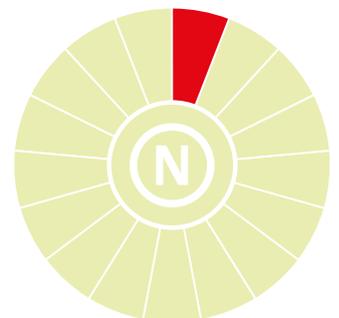
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Apostolos Xirafis, Secretary General of the Greek ESC, an advisory body based on the EESC model, presented the context of the Greek economic crisis, which makes it more difficult to talk about longer-term issues such as sustainable development, on the one hand, but, on the other hand, also presents an opportunity, since the crisis shows the very need for transformative reform of the system. The Greek ESC is involved in the preparations for the national adaptation of the 2030 Agenda.

Imme Scholz, RNE member, presented the Council's work on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, which had actually started even before the Agenda's adoption. The main recommendations put forth by the Council are that the SDGs require German action within, with and by Germany. The pleas for more policy coherence are accompanied by recommendations for stronger cooperation between the individual sectors and between different governance levels. The Council then commented on the strategy draft. The new German Sustainable Development strategy is scheduled to be announced late 2016/early 2017.

In the exchange that followed this, Marie Brousseau-Navarro from the Office of the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales highlighted the supporting and guiding role that the office plays for public bodies in their transformation efforts. This function was picked up on by various participants who underlined that formal advice has to be meaningful in order not to become a further step in a formal procedure. The legitimacy and independence of Council members was underscored as a further essential element, with the size and self-organization of advisory Councils being very much related to the degree of political leadership in the respective national context. Some governments are setting up new bodies for the localization of SDGs instead of tasking existing SD Councils. In general, the roles of SD Councils and similar bodies vary from independent civil society representation, mixed government-civil society representation, to more coordinating bodies with a predominantly administrative make-up, sometimes including civil society representatives.

Lab 2 – Tools

Lab 2 dealt with learning platforms and tools for transformation and was facilitated by Ingeborg Niestroy, International Institute for Sustainable Development.

Following a methodological introduction by Ingeborg on the function of tools and their level of application, François Fortier from UNDESA gave an insight into the UN-DESA approach that seeks to connect different tools. In his view, the challenge is to advance strategies from being sectoral to holistic, thereby delivering "common but differentiated governance". This needs system thinking and analysis that is geared towards the collaboration of institutions both inside and outside of governments. He described UNDESA's approach as a "step-by-step one-stop shop" involving state and non-state actors:

1. Identify and mobilize stakeholders; gather intelligence from the respective sectors.

2. Analysis of interlinkages; identifying trade-offs, conflicts, synergies; mapping out dynamics.

3. Scenario building: presenting several options, transparently describing the expected impacts.

4. Agreeing on policy options as the basis for decision-making.

Américo Sampaio from Rede Nossa São Paulo presented the Sustainable Cities Program in Brazil, which seeks to support mayors and municipalities in order to steer public policy-making towards sustainable development, i.e. to municipalize the SDGs. The program offers municipal administrators a full schedule of urban sustainability and includes a set of indicators associated with this agenda – enriched by national and international case examples as references to be pursued by the cities. The agenda for sustainability addresses the different areas of public management, structured into 12 thematic axes, and integratively incorporates the social, environmental, economic, political and cultural areas.

Américo highlighted the importance of focusing on cities in their work due to the role these play in the transformation of the country: 85% of Brazil's population already
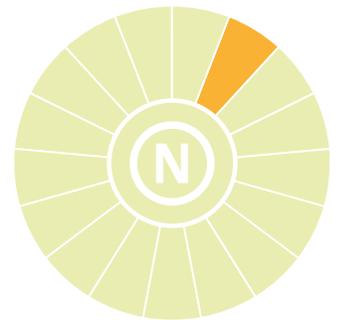
lives in urban areas and a high number of social policies are operated by cities (up to 300 policies are under the cities' responsibility).

While discussing tools for sustainable development, the lab participants voiced different opinions on the cases presented as well as their own further experiences and ideas:

- On participation: in LDCs, it is very difficult to reach out to stakeholders and to organize their engagement.

- On spatial planning: Germany is one of the few countries where spatial planning takes place top-down on all policy levels, thereby avoiding conflicts.

- Exchanging good as well as bad practices helps to link up different policy levels, which is relevant for implementing the SDGs.

- Indicators are seen as an important tool, albeit highly political.

- Finland and Colombia have introduced a peer-learning program.

- On networks: in Latin America, important networks for companies are the Global Compact Network as well as the World Business Council for SD (WBCSD). Here, innovations come from companies, not from governments. In the case of Costa Rica, innovations come from a civil society and company network.

- C40 is a North-South city network established to combat climate change by illustrating best practices around the world (http://www.c40.org/).

- Partners for Review: a new blended platform supporting the review mechanism of the 2030 Agenda (http://www.partners-for-review.de/).

!

MAIN TAKE-AWAYS:
- Partnerships & collaboration are the strongest tool
- Voluntary exchange crucial to reach the SDGs
- Learn both from best and worst cases!

Before you can use synergies you have to be clear about what you are talking about and what you want to achieve.

ANDREW GRIFFITHS, SIGHTSAVERS

Lab 3 – Cooperative politics

Lab 3 dealt with transnational social cooperation for change and was facilitated by Jan-Gustav Strandenaes from Stakeholder Forum and Pure Consultancy.

Andrew Griffiths from Sightsavers, speaking on behalf of Together 2030, presented this action-oriented initiative that brings together partners from across the globe around national implementation and tracking processes of the 2030 Agenda. Sharing his insights with experiences made so far, he highlighted the need for the following conditions: financing, honest debates and transparency, a balance between top-down decisions and bottom-up participation, capacity building and a window of opportunity. "Before you can use synergies you have to be clear about what you are talking about and what you want to achieve."

Leida Rijnhout from Friends of the Earth Europe is one of the co-founders of SDG-Watch Europe, a new EU-level, cross-sectoral CSO alliance of NGOs from development, environment, social, human rights and other sectors. Its goal is to hold governments to account for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs).

Participants highlighted the need to involve business in new transnational alliances in order to be truly transformative. The need for a new thinking also requires newly-composed alliances, perhaps even new ways of communicating. Participants advocated for transnational exchange favoring know-how transfer. Capacity building is not enough if political and economic structures do not change. Transnational alliances could develop a method for impact assessment in order gradually to increase their impact.
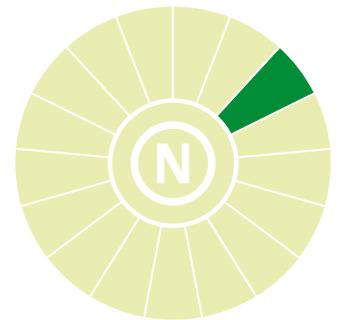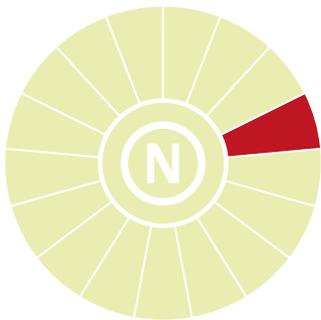
LAB RULES
- Share your ideas
- Be brief
- Discuss
- Look for the "aha"
- Have fun!
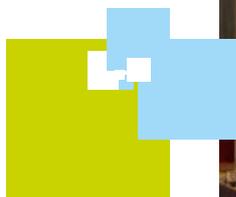
Lab 4 – Engagement:

Lab 4 dealt with multi-stakeholder engagement and communications and discussed the requirements for multi-stakeholder engagement as a tool to implement the 2030 Agenda, as well as initial experiences, lessons learned and the necessity for (good) communication, and was facilitated by Gomer Padong from the Philippine Social Enterprise Network.

In his input, Cletus Springer from the Organization of American States (OAS) presented the participatory process that led to the Inter-American strategy on Public Participation for Decision-Making on Sustainable Development, highlighting, in particular, the crucial importance of building up trust between stakeholders. The document identifies common principles, presents a set of objectives, and makes recommendations for achieving public participation: pro-activity (everyone who is affected should be included from the beginning), inclusiveness, shared responsibility, openness throughout the process (access to various levels of government), respect and transparency. In describing the situation, Cletus pointed to the diversity found in the capacities of individual civil society organizations, which makes it crucial that communication is used inclusively.

Minu Hemmati from CatalySD presented her empirical study of the 22 national voluntary reviews which were presented at HLPF in July 2016. In terms of communication and engagement, she found that only 2 – 3 countries included civil society in the process of writing their reports, while half of them, at least, gave civil society organizations the possibility of commenting on their reports. The question remains as to whether this kind of civil society engagement was a serious attempt to have an inclusive process or if it was just "ticking a box". In regards to raising awareness and mobilizing, the analyzed reviews show that governments do not seem to avail of professional communication strategies. Guidelines for building partnerships exist, but there are not many good examples. Building partnerships remains a difficult task. However, according to Minu, multi-stakeholder engagement cannot be initiated by governments alone but must also be done by civil society and business.

During the debate, participants addressed the issue of business participation in multi-actor partnerships. Business often needs a clear incentive for it to participate, whether it be showcasing particular leadership or a concern of being left behind if the company does not participate. Personal contact to the business leader is necessary

!

QUESTIONS TO ASK:
- Civil society engagement: true inclusive process or "ticking a box"?
- Is there a professional communication strategy?
- What is in it for business to engage in multi-stakeholder partnerships?

in order to build trust and ownership. The political will to support meaningful civil society engagement was called into question, in particular in countries with little experience in engaging different actors. Particular difficulties exist in countries with oppressive regimes where shrinking spaces hinder civil society engagement.

In closing, participants lamented that a real communication strategy was missing due to a lack of financial resources. However, since communication is crucial, civil society actors are called upon to communicate the SDGs within their respective constituencies.

Lab 5 – Transnational cooperation

Lab 5 dealt with transnational cooperation by civil society organizations in the context of the informal High-Level Group on the 2030 Agenda, and was facilitated by Marie-Luise Abshagen, Forum Umwelt & Entwicklung.

Participants discussed the challenges and opportunities facing transnational cooperation by civil society organizations. The speakers represented six of the nine countries (Sweden, Brazil, Colombia, Germany, Tanzania and Tunisia) which established the informal Civil Society Group of the High-Level Group on the 2030 Agenda and published the report "Champions to be? Making the 2030 Agenda a reality" earlier this year. Within the lab, participants shared their experiences with the implementation of the 2030 Agenda ("what happened and what has not happened yet") and later discussed common challenges and opportunities. Below are some of the key findings:

·   Actors need do more to overcome silos; this is true not only for governmental actors but also for civil society actors.

·   Civil society organizations have to organize themselves more effectively and build coalitions.

·   Civil society organizations have different roles which often compete with each other due to a lack of sufficient resources: Should the organizations concentrate
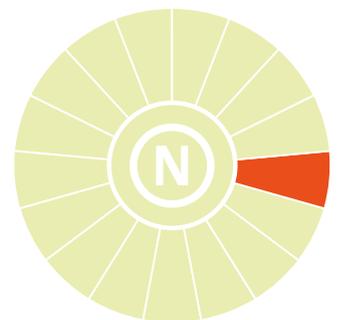
more on communicating the SDGs to people or should they focus more on lobbying political decision-makers?

- Different ways of making the SDGs a political issue: involving journalists, pointing to conflicts in implementing the goals, seizing on politically-disputed issues with broad media coverage (as was the case with the Panama Papers) and pointing out linkages with the 2030 Agenda.

The lab ended with several speakers recommending that political action be taken instead of becoming caught up in trapped strategic discussions, while others argued that working on indicators for monitoring progress should be the first things to move on with.

Club learning

The morning session of the second day started with a Club learning facilitated by Martha Talamondjila Naanda: Speed-talks by the facilitators of the first five labs who shared key ideas and "aha" moments generated in the lab discussions. "Talk more about politics." "We need a communication strategy." "We have to leave our own comfort zone first to be truly ready for change." "Linking tools is key." "Address the silos as communities first to learn their inner logics."

Participants then split up again for a second round of parallel lab sessions.

"Talk more about politics."

"We need a communication strategy."

"We have to leave our own comfort zone first to be truly ready for change."

"Linking tools is key."

*"Address the silos as communities first to learn their inner logics."*

Lab 6 – Agenda setting

Lab 6 discussed agenda setting and inserting the SDGs into top national policies, how this can be achieved and what role CSOs should play. The debate was facilitated by Michiel de Vries.

Gábor Bartus from the National Council for Sustainable Development in Hungary stressed the importance of government action for implementing the SDGs, but pointed to the inherent problems of the political system due to its limited time horizon. Civil society action is therefore crucial. Civil society organizations, according to Gábor, have different means of promoting sustainable development: institutional means, for instance, through the election of youth representatives or through the use of a particular pension system, but also on an individual basis supporting innovative business solutions that promote sustainable development.

Javier Surasky from La Plata University warned against the 2030 (transformative) Agenda becoming too technocratic and thus completely sidelining important power and politics debates. In development policy, according to Javier, promises are never broken but get recycled over and over again. "We now have to move from the conceptual agenda to a conflict agenda and discuss who benefits and who is against certain SDGs." Otherwise, we risk having the same discussions we are holding today in a year's time. An environment is needed in which governments must pay a high price if they do not succeed in implementing the SDGs.

In the following discussion, it was argued that more cooperation with and between different stakeholders (e.g. business, traditional media but also social media, transport, agriculture, grass-root movements) is needed. A holistic narrative is needed and "the enemy" has to be addressed. One way to alter the technocratic approach that had been criticized by Javier could be to create the position of an ombudsman. The review process could become another driving factor for raising the level of ambition for implementation. More ownership of the 2030 Agenda was deemed to be needed, as was more public awareness. The different challenges facing implementation in the industrialized and developing world have to be addressed. The redistribution of wealth has to be discussed as the trickle-down does not work. And finally, people have to become the center of all policies.
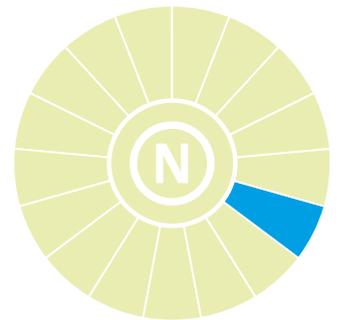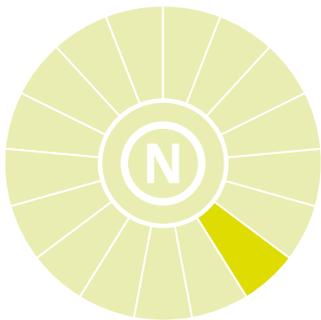
IDEAS FOR REACHING TOP POLICY LEVEL:
- Create the function of an ombudsman
- Use the review process
- Create more ownership

"Do not wait for governments, but learn from practitioners!"

"If you put energy into securing your seat, you are not serving others"

Lab 7 – Agenda setting

Lab 7 also discussed the agenda setting, focusing on what networks can do. The lab was facilitated by Arnau Queralt from the Advisory Council for the Sustainable Development of Catalonia.

After input by Darren Swanson from Novel Futures Corporation and IISD and by Hamong Santano from the International NGO Forum on Indonesian Development, participants in the debate first stated that a key change over the last five years had been the integration of national SD strategies into management plans – which was considered to be a good development. Participants then moved on to discussing the success factors for a network:

- Get practical: do not talk about the need for solutions, but implement solutions ("Do not wait for governments, but learn from practitioners!").

- Break out of the silos: SD goals bring stakeholders together, as everyone is a citizen of home planet earth. Let usdiscuss how to reach the aims (and respect various approaches in business, civil society, politics and administration).

- Creat a vision of the future, as pictures unify more than they divide on the right measures; Listen to the narrative! We have to bring the messages into the living rooms and school classes.

- Identify members and potential partners of the network; invite those who fill the gaps

- Participatory, co-governance, co-creative, inclusive and respectful approaches.

- Networks run if some energy is put into them: Create open space, provide service; ("If you put energy into securing your seat, you are not serving others"); do not encumber members with more work .

- Personal recognition, building trust and understanding one anothers' feelings and obstacles are a must.

!

SUCCESS FACTORS FOR A NETWORK
- Overcome silos
- Create a common vision
- Get practical
- Be inclusive and interactive
- Be respectful and build up trust

Lab 8 – Data generation

Lab 8 dealt with data generation as regards the question of where we procure the required data and was facilitated by Julia Scheerer from the Bertelsmann Stiftung.

Claudia Schwegmann from the Open Knowledge Foundation Germany presented the 2030 Watch project, which is a communication tool designed to make SDG indicators useable. The goal of the project is to provide an overview of indicators measuring the SDGs and thus to create transparency and demand with respect to the implementation of the SDGs. A country comparison by indicator is used to facilitate discussions as well as to raise questions and political pressure. The project works with official SDG indicators but also complementary indicators for issues not covered for industrialized countries, those indicators being chosen with the help of indicator data partners (methodology setup, e.g. tax justice network for 'financial secrecy index'). The main target groups of the project are journalists, multipliers and NGOs.

Philipp Schönrock, Director of CEPEI, an independent, non-profit, non-governmental think tank, works with field-based analyses and high-level advocacy to increase the effectiveness of development cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean. CEPEI is working on so-called "data ecosystems": first, by setting up a baseline about what needs to be measured and then by creating the indicators. CEPEI's 'Data Republica' project links over 30 institutions in Latin America and the Caribbean and has three main objectives: to map data, to create data capacities, and to publish data. Philipp concluded by stating that a general data baseline and global indicators are still missing, with the inappropriateness and scarcity of data being due to a lack of interest and capacities. The next step in the project will be to take it to the city level and work with three pilot cities.

During the debate, participants came to the conclusion that data is not automatically used just because it is being collected but that you would need to promote the use of data, e.g. through innovative presentations by "data poets". Comprehensive documentation of the various projects related to the data is crucial for a transfer of knowledge to be accomplished since major challenges exist as regards the methods through which data is collected and compared.

DATA NEEDS DETERMINED BY DATA USE
PROMOTE DATA USE THROUGH
- Innovative communication
- Knowledge transfer
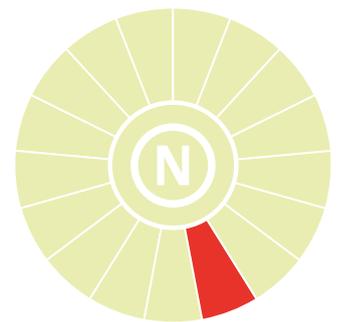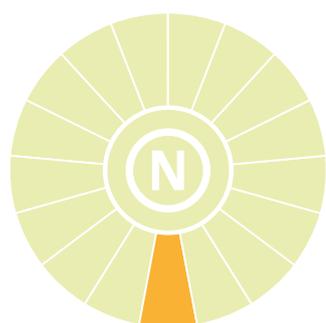
Lab 9 – Countries' 2030 Agenda implementation status

Lab 9 shared the experiences gained thus far in various countries with regard to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and was facilitated by Alessandra Nilo from Gestos Brazil.

Silvia Lara from Asociación empresarial para el desarrollo presented the situation as it stands in Costa Rica where there is a national pact for the SDGs, a strong government agency in charge of the SDG indicators, a strong onus on responsible production and consumption and finally also UNDP support for non-state actor activities. Whereas it is very positive to note that the 2030 Agenda provides a long-term planning perspective, innovative thinking is still needed. With this in mind, Silvia underscored the importance of gatherings such as Open SDGclub.Berlin and other forms of transnational cooperation for creating new ideas and finding ways out of perceived dead ends nationally.

Hanaa El Hilaly from Egypt, working as an SDG expert for ECOSOC, presented the 2030 Agenda implementation process in Egypt thus far, recalling that Egypt had adopted a national Sustainable Development Strategy in 2014 and that, in 2016, the Prime Minister had issued a decree to install a high-level ministerial committee in charge of implementing the 2030 Agenda. She also reported that funding for implementing the SDGs were being allocated in conjunction with the IMF.

Hanna Hansson from Concord Sweden gave an overview of the work being done by the Swedish Delegation for implementing the 2030 Agenda (on behalf of delegation member Johan Hassel who had fallen ill). This delegation consists of seven individuals from different backgrounds nominated for three years to fulfill the following tasks: propose a Swedish Action Plan for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, create engagement for and knowledge on the 2030 Agenda, and develop new tools for creating engagement. The delegation approached 90 government authorities about their respective SDG-related role and actions. It is organizing separate dialogues with different stakeholders with a view to cross-dialoguing afterwards.

In the debate that followed, participants underlined the importance of creating ownership of the 2030 Agenda, which is a people's agenda. Everybody can and should do something to ensure its implementation. With this awareness being in and of itself a paradigm shift, participants argued that transnational networks such as the Open

IDEAS TO FOSTER IMPLEMENTATION
- Make it a state agenda
- Re-politicize the debate
- Learn from each other

SDGclub.Berlin could help spread this empowering message. The SDGs were also seen also as a great opportunity to re-politicize societal debate, with examples being shared about how the SDGs could be used in electoral campaigns.

Club learning

The club learning session that followed was moderated by Namhla Mniki from African Monitor and, once again, featured speed-talks by facilitators of the second round of labs who shared key ideas and "aha" moments generated in their lab discussions: Since SDGs are not a top priority in most of our countries, pressure must be exerted by ordinary citizens so as to "bring the messages into the living room". "We need a cultural change in order to set up networks." "Bring the politics back." "Make the Agenda a state agenda." "We need to use our cooperation in the Open SDGclub to drive those forward who are reluctant to move."

"Bring the messages into the living room."

"We need a cultural change in order to set up networks."

"We need to use our cooperation in the Open SDGclub to drive those forward who are reluctant to move."

"Bring the politics back."

*"Make the Agenda a state agenda."*

!

HOW TO INTEGRATE SILOS
- Address silos as communities
- Listen & understand
- Open & inclusive dialogue
- Equity of perception
- Look for synergies
- Create a common ground

Club on Tour

On conclusion of this session, and after a brief snack, participants went on tour buses to move to the second venue. On the way, tour guides explained the historical sights of Berlin as they passed by. This was followed by a stop in front of the famous UNESCO World Heritage Museums' Island where the initiators of a planned project entered the bus: the "Flussbad Berlin" project, which aims to restore a part of the river Spree by cleaning it up and turning it into a public bathing area before returning this public urban space to the city's citizens.

The second conference venue was Fabrik 23, a former industrial/living site and very representative of Berlin's industrialization period. From the outside, and even while in the staircase, the place looks very run down. Once you enter the conference venue, you step into a spacious loft-type meeting room which used to be a carpenter's work-shop. It has still maintained much of its industrial detail, which makes it the perfect place for a more hands-on, action-oriented approach. Throughout the afternoon and evening, Fabrik 23 proved to be the ideal fabric for at least 23 ideas!
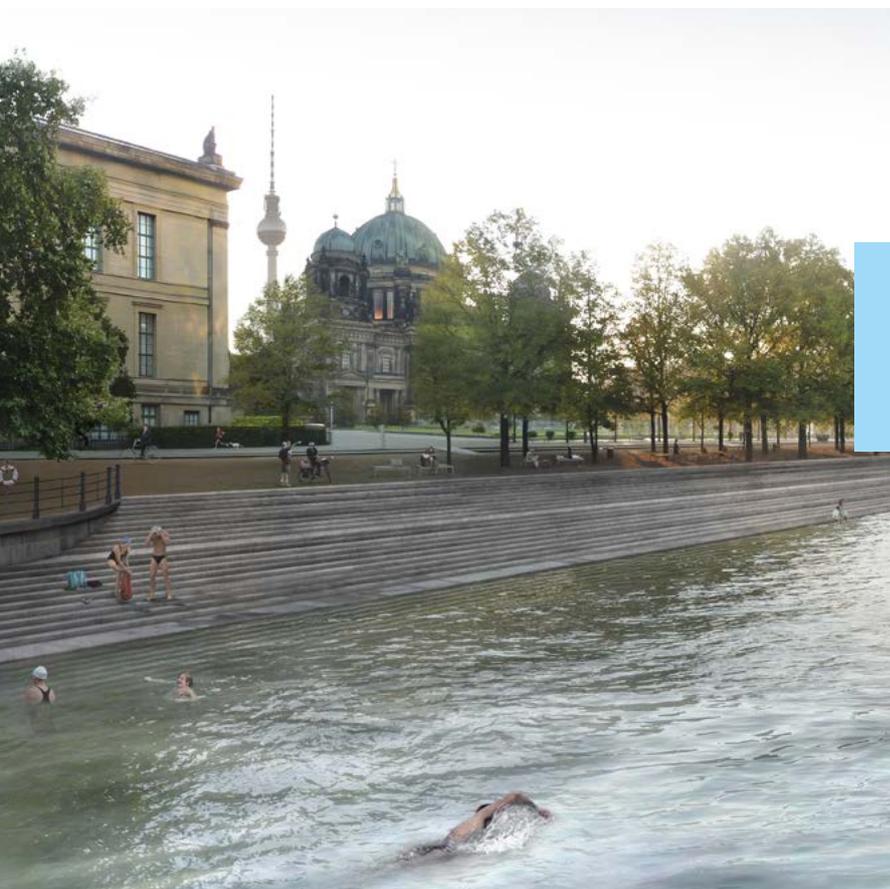
source: Flussbad e.V.

Place for ideas – Action for sustainability

The afternoon session of the meeting's second day started with a "Place for ideas", where RNE Secretary General Günther Bachmann presented what the German Council is doing in terms of building constituencies, raising awareness, challenging business as usual, as well as communicating the story.

This input spurned many ideas, comments and personal examples from participants: Efforts for participatory local democracy in Mexico aimed at vulnerable marginalized people; SDGclubs in high-education schools in Nigeria; the green economy award in Iran; and massive societal mobilization around SDGs in Brazil at the time of negotiating the SDGs were just some of the cited examples. Some participants thought that the Sustainability Code could work in their respective countries, while others were interested in replicating the multi-stakeholder Club approach, either in different countries or at regional level, in sector-specific configurations or as a youth leaders' club. Others called on the individual responsibility of each participant to take action on their own, be it to "translate" the SDGs into sector-specific languages or to raise one's voice in public debates, but, in each case, always referring to the SDGs.

Ideas for action by the Open SDGclub.Berlin itself were also raised and included organizing a simultaneous parliament day on the SDGs, organizing a SDGclub meeting week across the globe, creating a SDGclub award, etc....

Participants then had an opportunity to familiarize themselves with another practical aspect concerning how RNE is trying to live up to the ambition of "walking the talk": Kerstin Pettenkofer from the labconcepts agency presented the journey that the agency has undertaken together with RNE in the last years in order to organize meetings in an ever-more sustainable way. Interest in this presentation turned out to be so great that participants agreed to share the guidelines.

The evening reception was marked by a talk moderated by Rita Schwarzelühr-Sutter and Thomas Silberhorn, both State Secretaries from the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety and from the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development respectively, along with Brenda King from the European Economic and Social Committee. The talk centered on the actions Germany has undertaken to implement the 2030 Agenda in, with and by Germany.

Sustainable meetings

- Did you know that, in 2015, over 400 million people attended events in Germany?
- Did you know that, on average, each participant generates 5.5 kg of paper waste?
- You can make a great impact just by changing small things!
- RNE sustainable events efforts focus on: paper use, catering, energy, transport.

RNE projects

The Sustainability Code –re-set the framework conditions

- Is exemplary in its content and process (bottom-up approach, stakeholder integration)
- Provides a standardized framework for reporting non-financial performance and can be used by all organizations and enterprises regardless of their size or legal structure
- Users report on 20 criteria from 4 areas (strategy, process management, environment and society) by using a free database
- Sector-specific guidelines (e.g. universities, food industry, waste industry)
- The declaration of conformity with the Code is published online after it has been reviewed by the Code Office
- It can be used to fulfill the EU disclosure of non-financial and diversity information (EU 2014/95)
- The Code, aids and resources as well as processes can be adapted to country-specific reporting requirements; first national adaption: The Greek Sustainability Code

Projekt Nachhaltigkeit – the quality label for sustainable projects

- In 2010, the first few initiatives reaped awards in the initial "Werkstatt N" competition – by 2016, over 500 projects and ideas were recognized
- Main goal: to provide greater exposure to existing innovative sustainability approaches as well as an overview of these initiatives
- Jury composed of RNE members and SecGen selects the winners; the accolade is valid for one year
- No material price, but support by the Council via public attention and link to important networks
- New competition aims to highlight projects with transformation characteristics

The Sustainable Shopping Basket – A better way of shopping

- First edition 2004, updated regularly
- Main aim: to offer consumption alternatives and tips for sustainable living
- Considers various areas of life, e.g. food, clothes and sustainable money investment opportunities
- Sets easy rules for daily routines and points out important labels

Regional Hubs for Sustainability Strategies
(Regionale Netzstellen Nachhaltigkeitsstrategien - RENN)

- Aims for a better connection of civil society activities regarding the sustainability strategies of the government and the regions
- RENN headquarters housed at the RNE office and responsible for overall coordination
- RENN commenced its work in autumn 2016

Place for ideas: Pitching the future

What messages and ideas for action will we take from here?

The third day of the conference, which saw a return to the first conference venue, was future-oriented. The morning started off with three different inputs as to what messages and ideas for action we would be taking from here.

Arnau Queralt recommended keeping calm and being brave, ambitious, passionate, generous and innovative. He encouraged participants by performing the song "You'll never walk alone".

Gábor Bartus focused on three main messages: 1) Implementing the SDGs will need "smart harvesting", by which he understands aiming for several targets at reasonable cost to maximum benefit. 2) Being realistic: it is hard to break down silos – instead, he suggests putting doors and windows into existing silos in order to bring about more coherent politics and policy-making. 3) The sustainability community is in urgent need of good and strategic communication with those outside the community. It is important to talk to all people, not only with high-level politicians.

!

DON'TS!
- Don't bring in more seats than needed!
- Don't overload with elements in the margins!
- Don't let people out of the room before asking for take-aways!
- Don't forget the camera on the last day!
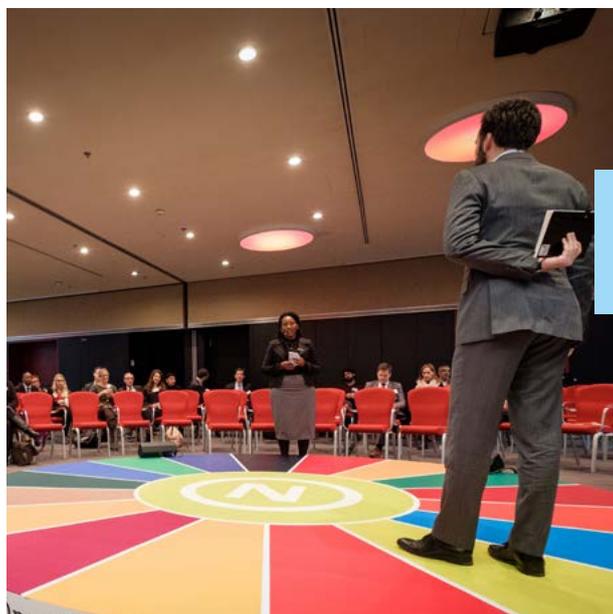
Namhla Mniki made the case for ushering in a new sustainable world by making propositions of what the Open SDGclub could become:

1. The Club is the very demonstration of what the 2030 Agenda is and of the kind of world we want to see.

2. We are walking the talk: through openness, inclusivity, dignity and respect, honour… The value system of the 2030 Agenda is the basis of the Open SDGclub.

3. We live those values where we are and work – and take personal responsibility to live out the 5 Ps: people, planet, prosperity, peace, and partnership.

4. Focusing on the political change process poses a challenge: what are the power systems that need to shift? And are we part of these?

5. The power lies not only in ourselves; we need the ability to see other places where power emerges to support the 5 Ps, thus recognizing other powers to leverage.

6. The Club is a place for innovation and future envisioning: we have a positive message to spread.

7. This is a place for hope. We believe that something positive can happen!

These messages were very much embraced by participants in the ensuing debate. Imme Scholz committed, on behalf of the RNE, to disseminate the experience and spirit of the Open SDGclub.Berlin meeting among all her contacts. Günther Bachmann announced a follow-up Open SDGclub.Berlin meeting for 2018, and asked all participants to actively engage in further developing both the idea and the network.

The remaining morning session was dedicated to this further development, with participants splitting up into groups to discuss 1) Politics and power, 2) Communication, 3) Transformation and change, 4) Knowledge, data and learning space, 5) Integration and silos.

During lunch break Ambassador Cyrill Nunn, replacing State Secretary Stephan Steinlein, gave an overview on German foreign policy and 2030 Agenda.

!

CLUB LEARNING – PROPOSALS FOR ACTION
- Contact civil servants and specialists
- Use the Open SDGclub.Berlin initiative as a means of reaching out to politicians
- Include former politicians in the club
- Draft a voters' guide showing how the electoral manifestos link in with the SDGs
- Contextualize communication strategies and means
- Reach out to multipliers
- Develop a communication kit, including involving ways to communicate feelings

Club learning

A plenary Club learning session was rapidly organized to enable everybody to participate in the results of the break-out group discussions. On politics and power, several proposals were made, including approaching civil servants and specialists, using the Open SDGclub.Berlin initiative as a means of reaching out to politicians, including former politicians in the Club, and drafting a voters' guide showing how the electoral manifestos link in with the SDGs. On communication, participants pointed to the need to contextualize communication strategies and means, underlined the importance of reaching out to multipliers and suggested developing a communication kit, including involving ways to communicate feelings. On transformation and change, participants were reminded of the need to link goals to the public budget. The knowledge group suggested that the Club should become a reliable source of knowledge and innovation activities, a common repository of knowledge, a sharing space for best practices, that it could inspire research, should allow for exploring ideas for action and for asking for advice. The added value was seen in its crowdsourcing knowledge. The group that had discussed the topics of integration and silos underlined the importance of creating mutual understanding, respect and trust and proposed that RNE could serve as a facilitator to get things off the ground.

The second break-out session of the final morning was also tailored to participants' demands and concentrated on practical issues. One group discussed the issue of an eventual membership of the Club, a second analyzed how communication concerning/through the Club should be organized practically, while a third focused on whether there should be specific "Club products". The last two groups assembled participants who wanted information about the "Partners for Review" project initiated by the German Government as well as the tools the RNE is offering, in particular the Sustainability Code.

On the communication issue, participants were very interested in setting up a platform for partnership and engagement, connecting existing clubs, multi-stakeholder initiatives and so on. To this end, the platform would need to carry out a mapping exercise and identify the relevant stakeholders and possible focal points worldwide. RNE should assist in brokering partnerships. Pursuant to a request, Günther Bachmann confirmed that the name of the club is considered creative commons, in other words, that the term and branding could be used all around the world.

!

CLUB LEARNING – WHAT THE OPEN SDGCLUB.BERLIN COULD BE
- a reliable source of knowledge and innovation activities
- a common repository of knowledge
- a sharing space for best practices
- a sounding board for project ideas and for advice
- a facilitator for creating mutual understanding, respect and trust between silos

!

OPEN SDGCLUB IS CREATED COMMONS!
- You can use the term
- You can use the branding
- For replicating the inclusive interactive approach
- Wherever you want

On the membership issue, participants agreed that it would be difficult to talk about a membership in the classical sense. Günther Bachmann proposed leaving that question open and that participants in this meeting should consider themselves members of the Open SDGclub.Berlin meeting. He suggested that everybody should cut out a piece of the circular meeting branding and bring this piece with them the next time they meet as a sign of membership as it were, a suggestion which participants acted upon!

In the closing session, Cletus Springer highlighted the great commitment and enthusiasm which he had experienced from participants throughout the three-days meeting. He suggested establishing an implementation plan for all the ideas that had come up to facilitate tracking their follow-up. He expressed a wish that this Club develop as a catalyst for transformation and reminded participants of „What a wonderful world" we live in by singing the song with that very title.

In concluding, many participants confessed that they had been very skeptical at the beginning of yet another meeting but that they had been overcome by the very positive and energizing atmosphere of the meeting.

Günther Bachmann thanked everybody for their time, energy and commitment. Let us keep working on this together and meet again in 2018!

Follow-up action to Open SDGclub.Berlin meeting so far

- Some participants have contacted their national authorities to share ideas about multi-actor partnerships.

- Some participants are organizing multi-stakeholder meetings on the implementation of the SDGs at regional or national level or are exploring possibilities for subnational activities.

- RNE's guidelines for sustainable events have been shared.

- Some participants are cooperating on data issues.

- Information about the Open SDGclub.Berlin has been spread through different means, including the SDG Knowledge Hub.

- Some participants are planning capacity-building measures to include civil society in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

- Participants have expressed and created a growing demand for information and training on the Sustainability Code.

- Inter-participants networking is ongoing.

- A matrix to follow up on ideas for action is being set up.

- RNE has set up a working group to follow up on preparations for the next Open SDGclub.Berlin meeting.

- All participants are being invited to share ideas for follow-up action, either alone, or together with others, or for the Open SDGclub.Berlin as such!

Open **SDG**club.Berlin

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Name	Institution, Position	Country
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COUNCIL MEMBERS

Chair

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Olaf Tschimpke, Deputy Chair of the RNE, President of Naturschutzbund Deutschland e.V. (Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Union, NABU)

Council members

Prof. Alexander Bassen, professor of business administration at the University of Hamburg

Ulla Burchardt, former member of the German Bundestag

Kathrin Menges, Executive Vice President Human Resources, Henkel AG & Co. KGaA

Alexander Müller, former Assistant Director-General FAO, former State Secretary at the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Managing Director TMG, Think-Tank for Sustainability and Study Lead TEEBAgriFood

Katherina Reiche, former Parliamentary State Secretary, former member of the German Bundestag, Managing Director of the German Association of Local Utilities – VKU

Prof. Lucia A. Reisch, Copenhagen Business School, Chair of the Advisory Council on Consumer Affairs

Dr. Werner Schnappauf, former Bavarian State Minister of the Environment, Health and Consumer Protection, former Managing Director of the Federation of German Industries – BDI

Dr. Imme Scholz, Deputy Director of the German Development Institute – DIE

Prof. Ulrich Schraml, Forest Research Institute of Baden-Württemberg, Freiburg

Prof. Wolfgang Schuster, former Mayor of Stuttgart, Chair of Deutsche Telekom Stiftung

Achim Steiner, former Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme – UNEP, Director of the Oxford Martin School

Prof. Hubert Weiger, Chair of Friends of the Earth Germany – BUND

Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul, former Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development, former member of the German Bundestag

The Office headed by Secretary General **Prof. Günther Bachmann** supports the Council, maintains political relations to Government and stakeholders and manages the Council's projects and missions.

Further reading about Germany

The National Sustainable Development Strategy provides the guide posts for government policy. It serves to drive forward sustainable development in Germany. The Federal Government has revised its National Strategy in light of the 2030 Agenda. The new Strategy has been adopted in January 2017. More information about the strategy and the coordinating structures inside the government can be seen here:
https://www.bundesregierung.de/Webs/Breg/DE/Themen/Nachhaltigkeitsstrategie/_node.html

See here also the German version of the new strategy, including English version of the Executive Summary.

Germany has reported to HLPF in 2016, see the report here:
https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/2016/germany.

The German Bundestag has set up an Advisory Committee for Sustainable Development. Inside Parliament it scrutinizes governmental proposals ("watchdog function").
More: https://www.bundestag.de/nachhaltigkeit

The German Council on Sustainable Development

The Council consists of 15 public figures. Its tasks comprise developing contributions to implement the National Sustainability Strategy, specifying concrete areas for action and projects, as well as making sustainability an important public issue. Find more out about RNE projects such as the Sustainability Code, the sustainable shopping basket, the regional hubs for sustainable development:
http://www.nachhaltigkeitsrat.de/en/the-council/

The Council published the German Sustainability Almanac, which you will also find on this site.

The prestigious German Sustainability Award brings together people from the public and private sector, urban politics and housing, academia and science:
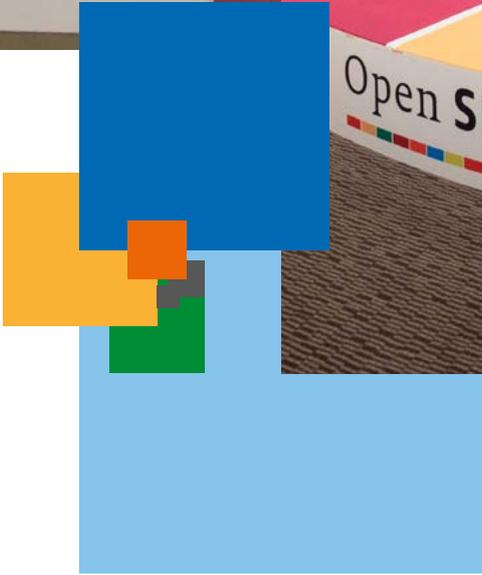https://www.nachhaltigkeitspreis.de/sonstige/english-summary/

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Lab 7 on Agenda settin
What can networks do?

The German Council for Sustainable Development (RNE)

The Council comprises 15 public figures appointed 2013 by Federal Chancellor Dr. Angela Merkel for a three-year term. The RNE was first established in April 2001 by then Chancellor Gerhard Schröder. The Council's tasks include generating contributions to the national sustainability strategy, specifying concrete fields of activity and projects and also providing contributions that make sustainability a public issue of vital importance.

For more information head for:
www.nachhaltigkeitsrat.de/en