

# On Naturally Unsustainable and Artificially Sustainable Development

## O rozwoju naturalnie niezrównoważonym i równoważonym sztucznie

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### Abstract

The author presents the hypothesis that in the absence of human interference, i.e. in natural conditions, development takes place spontaneously and is basically unsustainable, and it becomes sustainable only due to anthropogenic factors, i.e. artificially. Sustainable development takes place primarily in the sociosphere. People began to balance development only when they realized that rapid economic development was reaching a critical moment because of the rapid exhaustion of fossil and non-fossil raw material resources and unlimited overconsumption. This was initially ignored. It took several decades before it was taken seriously. Then the idea of controlled, or sustainable, development appeared. Since then, actions have been taken to reduce various categories of imbalances in an increasing number of areas of activity. Since then, the idea of sustainable development has become fashionable, important and lucrative, although utopian, because sustainable development is seen as a panacea for crises, inequalities and social contradictions. The publications of Donella Meadows (*Limits to growth. A Report for the Club of Rome's Project on the Predicament of Mankind*), of Ernst U. v. Weizäcker (*Wir sind dran. Was wir ändern müssen, wenn wir bleiben wollen*), and of Gaya Herrington, (*Five Insights for Avoiding Global Collapse*) contributed significantly to the implementation of this idea. They indicate that appropriate actions taken by 2040 will determine the future fate of humanity. To prove the validity of his hypothesis, the author used some publications on 17 general goals and 169 tasks.

**Key words:** balance, imbalance, unsustainable development, sustainable development, Sustainable development goals, 2030 Agenda

### Streszczenie

Autor prezentuje hipotezę, że przy braku ingerencji ze strony człowieka, czyli w warunkach naturalnych, rozwój dokonuje się żywiołowo i jest w zasadzie niezrównoważony, a zrównoważonym staje się dopiero za sprawą czynników antropogennych, a więc sztucznie. Rozwój zrównoważony dokonuje się przede wszystkim w socjosferze. Ludzie zaczęli równoważyć rozwój dopiero wtedy, gdy uświadomili sobie, że żywiołowy rozwój ekonomiczny zmierza do momentu krytycznego w wyniku szybkiego wyczerpania zasobów surowców kopalnych i niekopalnych oraz niegraniczonej nadkonsumpcji. Początkowo ignorowano to. Trzeba było kilkadziesiąt lat zanim potraktowano to poważnie. Wtedy pojawiła się idea rozwoju kontrolowanego, czyli zrównoważonego. Odtąd podejmuje się działania na rzecz redukcji różnych kategorii nierównowag w coraz większej liczbie obszarów działalności. Odtąd idea rozwoju zrównoważonego stała się modną, ważną i intratną, mimo że utopijną, dlatego że w rozwoju zrównoważonym upatruje się panaceum na kryzysy, nierówności i sprzeczności społeczne. Do implementacji tej idei przyczyniły się znacznie publikacje Donelli Meadows (*Limits to growth. A Report for the Club of Rome's Project on the Predicament of Mankind*), Ernsta U. v. Weizäckera (*Wir sind dran. Was wir ändern müssen, wenn wir bleiben wollen*) i Gayi Herrington (*Five Insights for Avoiding Global Collapse. What a 50-Year-Old Model of the World Taught Me About a Way Forward for Us Today*). Wskazuje się w nich, że odpowiednie działania podejmowane do 2040 r. zdecydują o dalszych losach ludzkości. W dowodzeniu słuszności swej hipotezy autor wykorzystał publikacje na temat 17 celów ogólnych i 169 zadań konkretnych sformułowanych w 2015 r. w *Agendzie 2030*, a w szczególności stopień realizacji ich na półmetku w 2023 r.

**Słowa kluczowe:** równowaga, nierównowaga, rozwój niezrównoważony, rozwój zrównoważony, Cele rozwoju zrównoważonego, Agenda 2030

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## 1. Imbalance in the world

The concept of balance is complex because it manifests itself in various forms, such as symmetry, uniformity, convergence, harmony, proportion, coherence, stabilization, lack of difference, etc. In physics, we speak of balance when, for example, the sum of force vectors acting on given object equals zero. In biology, it manifests itself in the form of homeostasis, thanks to which the parameters describing their internal states (body temperature, pressure, blood hemoglobin, etc.) do not change in living beings. In ecology, we talk about the balance of the ecosystem when various species and processes coexist in harmony and work harmoniously. In economics, market balance means equality of supply and demand, and budget balance means equality of income and expenditure. In psychology, balance means, among other things, stability of emotions, well-being, moods and interpersonal relationships. Imbalance is simply the negation of balance. Systems are in a state of disequilibrium when some elements or interactions between them dominate over others. It may result from natural or artificial causes. The first case concerns natural processes and phenomena occurring in the geobiosphere, and the second concerns anthropogenic phenomena and processes (created by humans) occurring in the geobiosphere and sociosphere. Natural causes include epidemics, natural and climatic disasters not caused by human activity, as well as those resulting from geological and biological evolution, etc., and the fight for survival. Artificial causes include environmental pollution, deforestation, excessive urbanization, uncontrolled exploitation of natural resources, introduction of invasive species into ecosystems, etc. Artificial, anthropogenic causes play an increasingly important role in creating imbalance in the world, because thanks to the progress of knowledge (especially scientific) and technology, people are increasingly intervening effectively in the processes taking place in the world so that, by developing civilization, they can live in greater comfort and prosperity. Delighted with the effects of this meddling, they do not pay attention to the fact that the good effects are usually temporary and generate threats to nature and people in the future. However, unfortunately, in Western civilization, dominated by shortsighted presentivist thinking, what is important is what is achieved here and now. Therefore, subsequent generations inherit from the past not only better living conditions, but also many increasingly difficult problems that they often do not know how to cope with.

Thus, irresponsible interference with nature, which does not take into account what will happen after, results in an ever-faster increase in various types of imbalances with all their negative consequences. One way or another, spontaneous phenomena and processes that take place in nature and society, as well as intentional human activity that does not take into account negative consequences, contribute not only to maintaining imbalances, but also to intensifying them. As a result, there is an increasing disproportion between natural unsustainable development and artificially implemented sustainable development: unsustainable development increasingly outweighs sustainable development. It is similar in the sociosphere. It cannot be otherwise, because it is a specific subdomain of nature, created because of the evolution of the cosmos and geobiosphere in appropriate physico-chemical conditions.

Disequilibrium in nature is an inevitable and natural state of affairs resulting from the second law of thermodynamics. It states that in a thermally isolated system, entropy constantly increases. It reflects the regularity from which all of asymmetric, unidirectional and irreversible phenomena and processes originate. This ignores the fact that in the sensory world there are no thermally insulated systems, but only to a certain extent. Therefore, at a given moment the system actually has entropy lower than the maximum possible. The difference between the possible and actual entropy values is called negentropy. While entropy is a measure of the increase in imbalance and disorganization of a system, negentropy is a measure of the increase in organization and balance in it. When the system is disorganized, negentropy decreases, while entropy increases, and – conversely – the increase in organization always correspond to an increase in negentropy. Therefore, in fact, there are two opposing tendencies: the tendency towards imbalance and the opposite tendency, with the former prevailing over the latter. In fact, no one knows why. In any case, this is empirically confirmed.

People are able to reduce states of imbalance that disturb or harm them, but at most, in local areas of nature and the sociosphere as a result of taking various actions and having appropriate technical means at their disposal. However, to completely eliminate imbalances is practically impossible. Perhaps it is a good that nature, guided by its own logic, which is still inscrutable by humans, which ensures dynamism for it, does not allow it to achieve balance in full extent. Because then there would be complete stagnation, there would be no temperature differences, for example, and the world would reach the end of its development, or what in thermodynamics is called *heat death*. One can assume that nature seems to think for man – it created him and protects him from the threats, which he creates for himself, as if to spite nature and himself. Therefore, one should not take actions against nature and not try to eliminate the imbalances occurring in it, because it may end badly for us.

## 2. Imbalance in the sociosphere

In social systems, imbalance occurs in various forms of disproportion or asymmetry, but primarily in the form of social inequalities in various areas, such as economics, health, education, social position, ethnicity, gender, culture,

religious denomination, race and politics. These inequalities relate to income, access to education, working conditions, social status, health care and participation in decision-making processes, etc. People from different social classes have different opportunities and living conditions. Some of them have privileges, while the others have responsibilities. Gender inequality occurs in the form of differences in position in the social hierarchy, salary, employment opportunities and social expectations. Ethnic, cultural, religious and racial inequalities cause xenophobia, mistreatment as well as fewer opportunities for professional or political careers and social advancement. Inequalities in the area of health concern access to health care, the provision of medical services and health status, and in the area of education – access to schools in general and to good schools in particular.

Social inequalities arise from natural individual and collective differences between people and from artificial differences. In the first case, it is about differences resulting from biological and racial characteristics, from the inheritance of manual and intellectual talents, from cultural and religious heritage, etc. In the second case, it is about differences created by people resulting from different ideas, concepts, theories, imaginations, worldviews, stereotypes, paradigms, opposites, contradictions, etc. For the above-mentioned reasons, real communities of people are always heterogeneous. Therefore, sociodiversity exists in social systems, just as there is biodiversity in natural systems. It makes social systems dynamic, varied and colorful.

Social inequalities constitute a serious obstacle to building a just society – the ideal proclaimed by populists – by undertaking various reforms, political actions, promoting the ideas of equal opportunities, fraternity, and love of neighbor and the elimination of unjustified prejudices. The idea of a just, i.e. fully sustainable, society cannot be realized for obvious reasons. The idea of a just society, i.e. a fully sustainable one, cannot be materialized for obvious reasons. Therefore, although this is an attractive idea, it is empty, worthless and illusory (Sztumski, 2004). Political systems can reduce the sociodiversity to some extent at best, but they cannot abolish it. This applies to both artificial and natural sociodiversity. That is comforting.

### 3. What is next for sustainable development?

The original understanding of sustainable development comes from the definition formulated in the Brundtland Report *Our Common Future*. It was defined there, as *development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs* (Brundtland, 1987). This simple and widely accepted definition emphasizes the interconnectedness of social, economic and environmental goals and calls for a holistic approach to development. However, when it turned out that it was becoming more and more difficult to implement sustainable development according to this definition, and in addition, the implementation of sustainable development had become fashionable, popular and profitable for many reasons, it began to be manipulated. This caused it to blur and fragment. Now, one views the sustainable development through the prism of a set of seventeen interconnected goals included in the 2030 Agenda, adopted by all United Nations member states in 2015. They are:

1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere.
2. End hunger, achieve food security and better nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.
3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all people of all ages.
4. Ensure quality education for all and promote lifelong learning.
5. Achieve gender equality and empower women and girls.
6. Ensure access to water and sanitation for all people through sustainable water management.
7. Provide everyone with access to sources of stable, sustainable and modern energy at an affordable price.
8. Promote stable, sustainable and inclusive economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all people.
9. Build stable infrastructure, promote sustainable industrialization and support innovation.
10. Reduce inequalities within and between countries.
11. Make cities and human settlements safe, stable, sustainable and inclusive.
12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.
13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its effects.
14. Protect and use oceans, seas and marine resources sustainably.
15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainable management of forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation and stop the loss of biodiversity.
16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies, ensure access to justice for all people, and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.
17. Strengthen implementation measures and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development (UN, 2015).

In 2019, from several to a dozen detailed tasks were formulated for each of them. Therefore, now sustainable development is understood selectively, as one of the mentioned 17 goals or tasks in the aspects of environmental management, equality and social justice, economic growth, cultural diversity, socio-diversity, intergenerational equality, participation in decision-making processes and global cooperation. After four years of implementation

of the 2030 Agenda, a report was published containing an assessment of the implementation of the goals based on empirically confirmed facts.

Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere. Since 2000, global poverty rates have more than halved. Despite this, one in ten people living in a developing region and their families live below the international poverty line of USD 1.90 a day, and millions more live on little more. Much progress has been made in many countries in East and Southeast Asia, but up to 42% of the population in sub-Saharan Africa still lives below the poverty line. Poverty is more than a lack of income and resources needed to live. Poverty is hunger, malnutrition, limited access to education and basic services, social discrimination, exclusion and lack of participation in the decision-making process. Economic growth must be inclusive, provide work opportunities and promote equality. Social protection systems must be implemented to mitigate the effects of natural disasters and help vulnerable countries. These systems can help the economy in countries prone to natural disasters and end extreme poverty in the poorest regions.

Goal 2: End hunger, achieve food security and better nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture. If done right, agriculture, forestry and fishing can provide a source of nutritious food for all and generate a decent income. At the same time, they can contribute to the development of rural areas and environmental protection. It is time to look at how food is produced, consumed and distributed. Today, soil, drinking water, oceans, forests and biodiversity are rapidly degrading. Climate change is having an even greater impact on the environment on which our lives depend. They increase the risk of natural disasters such as droughts and floods. Many men and women living in rural areas are no longer able to make a living from agricultural work and are forced to migrate to cities in search of a better life. Low food security and the resulting severe malnutrition result in poor development and low growth in millions of children. We must fundamentally change the world's food and farming system to feed 810 million hungry people. It is estimated that in 2050 the number of undernourished people will increase by another 2 billion people. Investments in agriculture are crucial to increasing production capacity, while the introduction of sustainable food production systems will reduce the risk of hunger.

Tasks :

2.1 By 2030, end hunger and ensure that all people, especially the poor and vulnerable, including infants, have access to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round.

2.2 By 2030, eliminate all forms of malnutrition. By 2025, implement internationally agreed tasks regarding physical development disorders among children less than five years of age. Provide nutritious food for adolescent girls, pregnant and breastfeeding women and the elderly.

2.3. By 2030 double agricultural productivity and the incomes of small-scale food producers, in particular women, indigenous peoples, agricultural families, pastoralists and anglers. Ensure safe and equal access to land and other resources and production factors, access to knowledge, financial services and markets, and increase employment opportunities outside the agricultural sector.

2.4 By 2030, establish sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agriculture practices to increase productivity and production, sustain ecosystems, strengthen adaptation to climate change, extreme weather events, droughts, floods and other disasters, and progressively improve soil quality and land.

2.5 By 2020, ensure the genetic diversity of seeds, crops, farmed and domesticated animals and associated wild species. Seed and plant banks and their diversity should be managed effectively at national, regional and international levels, and access to and fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the exploitation of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge should be promoted, as agreed at international level.

2.6. Increase investment, inter alia, through enhanced international cooperation, in rural infrastructure, agricultural and services research, technology development and plant and livestock genetic resource banks, to increase the productive capacity of farms in developing countries, especially in least developed.

2.7. Reduce and prevent trade restrictions and irregularities in global agricultural markets, including by the simultaneous elimination of all forms of agricultural export subsidies and all other export measures having an analogous effect, as recommended by the Doha Development Council.

2.8 Introduce mechanisms to ensure the proper functioning of markets for food products and their derivatives and facilitate access to up-to-date market information, including information on food reserves, in order to limit extreme food price volatility.

Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all people of all ages. Significant progress has been made in increasing life expectancy and reducing the most common causes of child and maternal mortality. However, reducing maternal mortality to below 70 cases per 100,000 live births by 2030 requires improved medical care. Reducing the number of premature deaths caused by non-communicable diseases by 1/3 by 2030 also requires the use of clean fuel for cooking and better education about the harmful effects of tobacco smoking. We must continue to work hard to overcome the prevalence of many diseases and emerging health threats. By ensuring more efficient financing of health systems, improving sanitation and hygiene, access to doctors and reducing environmental pollution, we can make significant progress in saving the lives of millions of people.

Tasks:

3.1. By 2030, reduce the global maternal mortality rate to less than 70 cases per 100,000 live births.

3.2. By 2030, eliminate preventable deaths among newborns and children fewer than five years of age. All countries will strive to reduce infant mortality to a maximum of 12 per thousand live births and under-five mortality to a maximum of 25 per thousand live births.

3.3 By 2030, eliminate the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected tropical diseases, and combat viral hepatitis, waterborne diseases and other infectious diseases.

3.4. By 2030, reduce premature mortality from non-communicable diseases by 1/3 through prevention and treatment, and promoting mental health and well-being.

3.5. Strengthen the prevention and treatment of addiction to narcotic substances, including drugs and harmful alcohol consumption.

3.6. By 2020, halve all road injuries and deaths worldwide.

3.7. By 2030, ensure universal access to sexual reproductive health services, including family planning, information and education, and include reproductive health in national strategies and programs.

3.8. Ensure universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to high-quality primary health care and safe, effective, high-quality, affordable medicines and vaccines.

3.9. By 2030, significantly reduce deaths and diseases caused by hazardous chemicals and air, water and soil pollution.

3.10. Strengthen the implementation of the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.

3.11. Support research into and the development of new vaccines and medicines against communicable and non-communicable diseases that primarily affect developing countries. Ensure affordable access to essential medicines and vaccines, in line with the Doha Declaration on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights and Public Health, which affirms the law of developing countries to fully benefit from the provisions of the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS Agreement) regarding the freedom to protect public health and, in particular, ensuring access to medicines for all.

3.12. Significantly increase health financing as well as the recruitment, development, training and retention of health workers in developing countries, particularly in least developed countries and small island developing States.

3.13. Strengthen the capacity of all countries, especially developing countries, in early warning, risk reduction and management of national and global health risks.

Goal 4: Ensure high-quality education for all and promote lifelong learning. High-quality education is the basis for improving people's lives and sustainable development. Universal access to education improves the quality of life and enables finding innovative solutions to the biggest problems of the modern world. Currently, over 265 million children are out of school, with 22% not attending primary school. Moreover, even schoolchildren cannot read and count. Significant progress has been made in increasing access to education at all levels and the number of people in education, especially women and girls. The number of people with basic literacy skills has increased dramatically, but further efforts are needed to achieve the goal of universal education. For example, although equality between boys and girls in access to primary education has been achieved globally, only a few countries have achieved this goal at all levels. The causes of low quality education include the lack of properly trained teachers, poor conditions in schools and unequal access to schools for children from rural areas. Providing high-quality education involves creating educational scholarship programs, workshops for teachers, building schools and improving access to water and electricity in schools.

Tasks:

4.1. By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable, good quality primary and secondary education leading to effective learning outcomes, in line with Goal Four.

4.2. By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to high-quality early childhood development, care and pre-school education in preparation for primary education.

4.3. By 2030, ensure that all women and men have equal, affordable access to high-quality technical, vocational and higher education, including universities.

4.4. By 2030, significantly increase the number of young people and adults who have the appropriate skills, including technical and vocational skills, needed to obtain employment, find decent work and develop entrepreneurship.

4.5. By 2030, eliminate gender inequality in education and ensure equal access to education at all levels and to vocational training for the most vulnerable groups, including people with disabilities, indigenous peoples and vulnerable children.

4.6. By 2030, ensure that young people and a significant proportion of adults, both women and men, are literate and numerate.

4.7. By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promoting a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and the contribution of culture to sustainable development

4.8. Create new and improve existing educational facilities that take into account the needs of children, people with disabilities, both boys and girls, and provide a safe, non-violent, inclusive and productive learning environment for all.

4.9. By 2020, significantly increase the number of scholarships for citizens of developing countries, in particular for those from least developed countries, small island states and African countries. The scholarships should facilitate enrollment in higher education, including access to vocational training, information and communication technology, technical, engineering and science programs in developed and developing countries.

4.10. By 2030, significantly increase the number of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation on teacher training in developing countries, particularly in least developed countries and small island states.

Facts: The primary school enrollment rate in developing countries has reached 91%, yet 57 million children are still out of school. More than half of out-of-school children live in sub-Saharan Africa. One estimates that 50% of children who do not attend primary school live in areas affected by armed conflict. 617 million young people around the world lack basic reading, writing and numeracy skills

Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower women and girls. The achievement of the Millennium Development Goals has contributed to making progress on gender equality and the empowerment of women around the world. Among other things, equal access for girls and boys to primary education was achieved. However, in every part of the world, women and girls continue to face discrimination and suffer from violence. Gender equality is not only a universal human right; it is also the foundation of a sustainable world, in which people will live in peace and prosperity. Unfortunately, every fifth woman aged 15-49 admits that she has experienced physical or sexual violence from a partner within 12 months. 49 countries currently have no laws protecting women from domestic violence. There has been progress in combating harmful practices such as child marriage and female genital mutilation. These practices have decreased by 30% in the last decade, but much remains to be done to eliminate such phenomena. Ensuring that women and girls have equal access to education, health care and decent work, and to participate in political and economic decision-making, will strengthen sustainable economies and benefit societies and humanity as a whole. Implementing a new legal framework for gender equality in the workplace and combating harmful practices against women are essential to ending gender discrimination in many countries.

Tasks :

5.1. End discrimination in all forms against women and girls everywhere.

5.2. Eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls in public and private spheres, including human trafficking, sexual exploitation and other forms of exploitation.

5.3. Eliminate all harmful practices such as early and forced marriage, child marriage and female genital mutilation.

5.4. Value unpaid care and homework by providing public services, infrastructure, and social protection and by promoting shared responsibility within the household and family, in line with national circumstances.

5.5. Ensure women's full and effective participation in decision-making processes at all levels in political, economic and public life, as well as equal opportunities to perform leadership functions.

5.6. Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health care and the enjoyment of reproductive rights, in line with the Program of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences.

5.7. Carry out reforms to ensure women have equal rights in access to economic resources, property rights, control over land and other property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national law.

5.8. Spread the use of technology, in particular information and communication technologies, to contribute to the empowerment of women

5.9. Adopt and strengthen policies and effective legislation that promote gender equality and empower women and girls at all levels.

Facts: Globally, 750 million women and girls were married before the age of 18. At least 200 million women and girls in 30 countries have undergone genital mutilation. The number of girls aged 15–19 undergoing genital mutilation in the 30 countries where the practice is most common fell from 1 in 2 girls in 2000 to 1 in 3 girls by 2017. In 18 countries, husbands can legally prevent their wives from working, in 39 countries, daughters and sons do not have the same inheritance rights, and 49 countries have no laws protecting women from domestic violence. One in five women and girls, including 19% aged 15 to 49, have experienced physical or sexual violence from a partner in the last 12 months. Yet 49 countries have no laws to protect women from violence. Although there has been a significant increase in women's participation in political life, their percentage in national parliaments is only 27%, well below parity. In 46 countries, women hold more than 30% of the seats in national parliaments, in at least one of the chambers. Only 52% of married or partnered women make decisions about sexual relations, the use of contraceptives and health care. Globally, women constitute only 13% of agricultural landowners. Women in North Africa hold less than a fifth of paid jobs in non-agricultural sectors. The proportion of women with paid work outside the agricultural sector increased from 35% in 1990 to 41% in 2015. More than 100 countries monitor the process of allocating budget funds for gender equality purposes. In South Asia, girls' risk of marriage has fallen by more than 40% since 2000. Goal 6: Ensure access to water and sanitation for all people through sustainable

water management. Every person in the world should have access to clean water. We have enough water on our planet to make this happen. However, due to a weak economy or poor infrastructure, millions of people, especially children, die each year from diseases related to inadequate water supplies, poor sanitation and poor hygiene. Water scarcity, poor quality and inadequate sanitation have a negative impact on food security and livelihoods. They also limit the opportunity for poor families to pursue education. Currently, over 2 billion people live in areas where they are at risk of having limited access to drinking water. It is estimated that by 2050 at least one in four people in the world will live in a country affected by chronic or periodic drinking water shortages. Drought is affecting some of the poorest regions in the world, which only increases the incidence of hunger and malnutrition. The last decade has seen significant increases in access to drinking water and sanitation, with over 90% of the world's population having access to improved sources of drinking water. To improve sanitation and access to drinking water in developing countries in sub-Saharan Africa, Central Asia, South Asia, East Asia and Southeast Asia, increased investment in the management of freshwater ecosystems and sanitation at the local level is needed.

Tasks :

- 6.1. By 2030, ensure universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water.
- 6.2. By 2030, ensure access to adequate and decent sanitation and hygiene for all and eliminate open defecation practices, paying particular attention to the needs of women, girls and people living in vulnerable situations.
- 6.3. By 2030, improve water quality by reducing pollution, eliminating landfills, and limiting the use of harmful chemicals and other harmful materials. Reduce untreated wastewater by half and significantly increase recycling and safe reuse of materials globally.
- 6.4. By 2030, significantly improve water use efficiency in all sectors and ensure sustainable water abstraction and drinking water supplies to address water scarcity and significantly reduce the number of people suffering from it.
- 6.5. By 2030, implement integrated water resources management at all levels, including through cross-border co-operation.
- 6.6. By 2020, protect and restore water-dependent ecosystems, including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, lakes and groundwater.
- 6.7. By 2030, expand international cooperation and support building the capacity of developing countries that will enable them to take actions and develop programs related to water and sanitation, including: in areas such as water collection, desalination, water efficiency, wastewater treatment, recycling and water reuse technologies.
- 6.8. Support and strengthen the participation of local communities in improving water resources management and sanitation infrastructure.

Facts: Every fourth health care facility does not have basic water services. 3 in 10 people do not have access to safe drinking water and 6 in 10 people do not have access to safe sanitation facilities. At least 892 million people still practice open defecation. Between 1990 and 2015, the number of people using improved drinking water sources increased from 76% to 91%. More than 40% of the world's population still suffers from water scarcity and this percentage is expected to continue to increase. More than 1.7 billion people live in river basins, where more water is being used than is being supplied. 2.4 billion people do not have access to basic sanitation facilities such as toilets or latrines. More than 80% of untreated sewage resulting from human activities discharges into rivers or the sea. In 80% of households without access to water, women and girls are responsible for fetching water from the area. Every day, an average of 1,000 children die from diarrhea and its complications, which are preventable diseases that are transmitted through water or related to poor sanitation. About 70% of the water used for irrigation comes from rivers, lakes and underground water sources. Floods and other water-related disasters account for 70% of all deaths resulting from natural disasters.

Goal 7: Provide everyone with access to sources of stable, sustainable and modern energy at an affordable price. Overcoming the challenges and taking advantage of the numerous opportunities in today's world involves access to energy. It is necessary to perform work, ensure safety, fight climate change, and produce food and efforts to increase national incomes. New economic opportunities and jobs can provide universal energy access, improved energy efficiency and the spread of renewable energy. They will also contribute to creating more sustainable and inclusive communities and increasing resilience to the effects of climate change. Currently, approximately 3 billion people do not have access to clean fuel for cooking and are exposed to dangerous levels of air pollution. Additionally, less than 1 billion people have no access to electricity. As many as 50% of them live in Sub-Saharan Africa. Progress has been made in the last decade in the use of renewable electricity sources from hydro, solar and wind, and the ratio of energy used per unit of GDP is also falling. However, this problem is far from solved. Access to clean fuels and technologies must be increased, as well as the use of renewable energy sources in buildings, transport and industry. There is also a need to increase public and private energy investment and place greater emphasis on regulatory frameworks and innovative business models in transforming the world's energy systems.

Tasks:

- 7.1. By 2030, ensure universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services.
- 7.2. By 2030, significantly increase the share of renewable energy sources in the global energy mix.
- 7.3. By 2030, double the growth rate of global energy efficiency.

7.4. By 2030, increase international cooperation to facilitate access to clean energy research and technology in the areas of renewable energy, energy efficiency and advanced and cleaner fossil fuel technologies, and promote investment in energy infrastructure and clean energy technologies.

7.5. By 2030, expand infrastructure and modernize technologies enabling access to modern and sustainable energy services for all inhabitants of developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States and landlocked countries, in line with their development programs.

Facts: 13% of the world's population still does not have access to modern electricity. 3 billion people depend on coal, wood, charcoal and animal waste for cooking and heating. Energy is the main cause of climate change, accounting for approximately 60% of global greenhouse gas emissions. In 2012, pollution emitted during the combustion of fuel caused 4.3 million deaths, 60% of which occurred among women and girls. In 2015, the share of renewable energy in total energy consumption reached 17.5%.

Goal 8: Promote stable, sustainable and inclusive economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all people. About half of the world's population still lives on the equivalent of two US dollars, while the global unemployment rate is 5.7%. In too many places, having a job does not protect you from poverty. Slow and uneven progress in employment requires rethinking and changing economic and social policies to eliminate poverty. The lack of prospects for decent work, too little investment and low consumption have led to the violation of the social contract, which is the basis of democratic societies. According to it, everyone is to benefit from the progress made. Even though the world's average annual growth rate of real GDP per capita is increasing, there are still many developing countries whose growth rate is declining. These countries are moving further and further away from the 7% GDP growth target set for 2030. Declining labor productivity and rising unemployment rates are reducing living standards due to lower wages. Sustainable economic growth requires societies to create conditions that enable people to engage in high-quality work that drives the economy without harming the environment. New work opportunities should be created and decent working conditions should be ensured for the entire working-age population. Access to financial services should be increased, which will enable proper income management, accumulation of wealth and making effective investments. Increasing funds for the development of trade, banking and agricultural infrastructure will also contribute to increasing economic efficiency and reducing the level of unemployment in the world's poorest regions.

Tasks:

8.1. Maintain per capita economic growth, taking into account national circumstances. Achieve and sustain at least 7 percent annual gross domestic product growth in least developed countries.

8.2. Achieve higher levels of economic performance through diversification, technological modernization and innovation, and by focusing on high value added and labor intensive sectors.

8.3. Promote development policies that support productive activities, the creation of decent jobs, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation. Encourage the formalization and development of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services.

8.4. By 2030, gradually increase the efficiency of the use of natural resources in global consumption and production and strive to break the link between economic growth and environmental degradation, in line with the Ten-Year Framework Programs for Sustainable Consumption and Production, with a leading role for developed countries.

8.5. By 2030, ensure full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including young people and people with disabilities; ensure equal remuneration for work of equal value.

8.6. By 2020, significantly reduce the percentage of young people who are unemployed or not participating in education and training.

8.7. Take immediate and effective measures to eliminate forced labor, modern forms of slavery and human trafficking; prohibit and eliminate the worst forms of child labor, including the recruitment and use of child soldiers. By 2025, eliminate child labor in all its forms.

8.8. Protect workers' rights and promote a safe working environment for all, including workers, including migrant workers, in particular migrant women and people in precarious employment.

8.9. By 2030, develop and implement policies that promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products.

8.10. Enhance the capacity of national financial institutions to facilitate and expand access to banking, insurance and financial services for all.

8.11. Increase Aid for Trade support to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, including through the Enhanced Integrated Framework for Trade – Related Technical Assistance to Least Developed Countries).

8.12. By 2020, develop and implement a global strategy for the employment of young people and the Global Jobs Pact of the International Labor Organization. Facts: The global unemployment rate in 2017 was 5.6%, a significant decline since 2000 when it was 6.4%. In 2016, 61% of all workers worldwide were employed informally, of which 51% were in non-agricultural sectors. Men earn 12.5% more than women in 40 of the 45 countries with data on this topic. The global pay gap between women and men is 23%. Without decisive action, it will take another 68



years to equalize wages. The participation of women in the labor market is 63% and men's 94%. Despite women's increasing presence in public life, they still perform 2.6 times more unpaid care and domestic work than men. Between 2016 and 2030, 470 million jobs will be needed for people entering the labor market.

Goal 9: Build stable infrastructure, promote sustainable industrialization and support innovation. In many countries, investing in infrastructure – transport, irrigation, energy and information and communication technologies - is crucial to achieving sustainable development and strengthening entire societies. We have long known that increasing productivity and incomes, improving health care and better education depend on investing in infrastructure. Factory production is an important driving force for economic development and employment. Currently, however, the added value of generation per capita is only USD 100 in the least developed countries compared to over USD 4,500 in Europe and North America. Although carbon dioxide emissions from manufacturing processes have declined in many countries over the past decade, the rate of decline is uneven around the world. At the heart of efforts to achieve environmental goals is technological progress, including increasing material and energy efficiency. Without technology and innovation there will be no industrialization, and without industrialization there will be no development. Greater investment in highly advanced technologies is necessary to increase the efficiency of factory production. Attention should be paid to the development of mobile phone services that increase inter-personal contacts.

Tasks :

9.1 Develop reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure of good quality, including regional and cross-border infrastructure, supporting economic development and people's well-being. Provide all people with equal access to infrastructure at an affordable price.

9.2 Promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization; by 2030, significantly increase the share of industry in employment and GDP generation, taking into account national conditions; double this share in the least developed countries.

9.3 Increase access of small and other enterprises, including industrial ones, in particular in developing countries, to financial services and affordable credit, and integrate them into value chains and ensure market participation.

9.4 By 2030, improve the quality of infrastructure and implement sustainable industrial development by increasing the efficiency of resource use and the use of clean and environmentally friendly technologies and production processes, with the participation of all countries, according to their capabilities.

9.5 By 2030, strengthen scientific research and raise the technological level of the industrial sector in all countries, especially in developing countries, including through innovation, significantly increasing the number of R&D workers per million people, and by increasing public and private financing for development.

9.6. Facilitate the development of sustainable and resilient infrastructure in developing countries by strengthening financial, technological and technical support to African, least developed countries, including landlocked and small island countries. 9.7. Support national technological development, research and innovation in developing countries, including by pursuing favorable policies, including: for industrial diversification and increasing the added value of goods.

9.8. By 2020, significantly increase access to information and communication technologies and strive to ensure affordable and universal access to the Internet in least developed countries.

Facts: Many developing countries lack basic infrastructure: roads, sanitation and water, electricity and information and communication technology. In many African countries, especially those with lower incomes, insufficient infrastructure reduces business productivity by approximately 40%. The job multiplication effect of industrialization has a positive impact on society. Each job in manufacturing plants creates 2.2 jobs in other sectors. The most important for the early phase of industrialization are small and medium-sized enterprises conducting production and processing activities, which usually create the most jobs. They create 90% of the world's business and employ 50-60% of the workforce. The least developed countries have enormous economic potential in the production of food and beverages (agricultural industry), textiles and clothing. The future also bodes well for generations that will experience the benefits of sustainable employment and greater productivity. Middle-income countries can benefit from metals industries and processing, which offer a range of products sought in international markets. In developing countries, only less than 30% of agricultural production is industrialized. In high-income countries, however, this figure is 98%. This illustrates how great opportunities the agricultural business creates for developing countries. 16% of the world's population does not have access to mobile broadband networks. The global share of manufacturing value added in GDP increased from 15.2% in 2005 to 16.3% in 2017, which is the result of the rapid growth of factory production in Asia.

Goal 10: Reduce inequalities within and between countries. The international community has made significant progress in lifting people out of poverty. However, the most vulnerable nations – least developed countries, landlocked countries and small island states – remain at risk of poverty and strive to reduce it. Inequalities persist in the world and not everyone has equal access to health care, education and other goods. It is becoming increasingly clear that economic growth alone will not be enough to reduce poverty. It is necessary for every person to benefit from inclusive economic progress, based on the three pillars of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental. Income inequality has been reduced both within and between countries. Per capita income in 60 of

the 94 countries providing data increased faster than the national average. There has also been progress in creating favorable conditions for exports from least developed countries. Taking into account the needs of disadvantaged people and marginalized groups should become a common principle in policies seeking to reduce inequalities.

It is necessary to extend duty-free treatment and support exports from developing countries, as well as to increase the voting pool of developing countries in the International Monetary Fund. Additionally, technological innovations can help reduce the costs of transferring money for migrant workers.

Tasks:

10.1. By 2030, progressively achieve and sustain income growth for the poorest 40% of the population above the national average.

10.2. By 2030, promote and strengthen the social, economic and political inclusion of all people, regardless of age, gender, disability, race, ethnicity, nationality, religion or economic or other status.

10.3. Ensure equal opportunities and reduce existing inequalities by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and actions in this area.

10.4. Adopt policies, in particular fiscal, social protection and wage policies, and progressively achieve greater equality.

10.5. Improve the regulation and monitoring of global financial markets and institutions, and strengthen the implementation of these regulations.

10.6. Strengthen the representation and voice of developing countries in the decision-making process in international economic and financial institutions to build more effective, credible, accountable and law-abiding institutions.

10.7. Facilitate informed, safe, regular and responsible migration and movement of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies. 10.8. Implement the principle of special and differential treatment for developing countries, in particular the least developed ones, in line with the guidelines of the World Trade Organization. 10.9. Ensure Official Development Assistance and financial flows, including foreign direct investment, to countries most in need, in particular least developed countries, African countries, small island states and landlocked countries, in accordance with national plans and programs these countries.

10/10. By 2030, reduce the transaction costs of foreign remittances to less than 3% and eliminate remittances with costs of more than 5%.

Facts: In 2016, over 64.4% of products exported by least developed countries to global markets were subject to zero tariffs, an increase of 20% since 2010. Research on developing countries confirms that the under-five mortality rate in regions with the poorest 20% of the world's population is three times higher than the rate in richer regions. Globally, the level of social protection has increased significantly, yet people with disabilities are five times more likely to incur higher health costs than people without disabilities. Despite an overall decline in perinatal mortality in most developing countries, women living in rural areas are still at three times the risk of dying from perinatal complications than women living in urban areas. Almost 30% of income inequality results from inequalities within households, including the lack of equal status of women and men. Women are more likely than men to live below 50% of the median income.

Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements safe, stable, sustainable and inclusive. Cities are centers of culture and science, industry and productivity, as well as social development, and this is also where new ideas are born. When a city flourishes, people benefit from social and economic development. With the number of people living in urban areas expected to increase to 5 billion by 2030, effective urban planning and management practices must be implemented to meet the challenges of urbanization. However, cities face challenges related to their governance. The question arises – how to strive for the successful development of cities and the creation of jobs without excessive exploitation of land and without straining resources? Other challenges include overcrowding, lack of funding for basic services, lack of adequate housing and deteriorating infrastructure. The challenges of rapid urbanization need to be addressed (e.g. safe disposal and management of waste in cities). Cities should develop, but at the same time we must improve the efficiency of resource use, strive to reduce pollution and combat poverty. One such example is improving municipal waste management. In the future, cities should ensure equal opportunities for all people and access to basic services, energy, housing, transport and more.

Tasks:

11.1. By 2030, ensure that all people have access to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services, and improve living conditions in slums.

11.2. By 2030, ensure that all people have access to safe, affordable and sustainable transport systems and improve road safety, especially by expanding public transport. Particular attention should be paid to the needs of vulnerable groups, women, children, disabled people and older people.

11.3. By 2030, increase inclusiveness, ensure sustainable urbanization and participate in integrated and sustainable planning and management of human settlements in all countries.

11.4. Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage.

11.5. By 2030, significantly reduce the number of deaths resulting from natural disasters, including floods, and reduce the number of people affected by them; significantly reduce the direct economic losses relative to global GDP incurred as a result of disasters, focusing on the protection of the poor and vulnerable groups.

11.6. By 2030, reduce the city's unfavorable per capita environmental impact rate, paying particular attention to air quality and municipal waste management and other pollutants.

11.7. By 2030, ensure easy and universal access to safe and inclusive green areas and public spaces, especially for women, children, older people and people with disabilities.

11.8. Support economically, socially and environmentally beneficial connections between urban, peri-urban and rural areas by strengthening national and regional development planning.

11.9. By 2020, significantly increase the number of cities and human settlements using studies and implementing integrated policies and plans aimed at increasing inclusion and efficiency of resource use, mitigating the effects of and adapting to climate change, and resilience to the effects of disasters. Comprehensive disaster risk management should be developed and implemented at all levels, in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030.

11.10. Support least developed countries, including through financial and technical assistance, to build sustainable and resilient buildings using local materials. Facts: Currently, 3.5 billion people – half of the human population – live in cities, and by 2030, 5 billion people will live in cities. In the coming decades, developing countries will account for 95% of urban expansion. Today, 883 million people live in slums, mainly in East and Southeast Asia. Cities in the world cover only about 3% of the Earth's area, but at the same time, they consume 60-80% of energy and produce 75% of carbon dioxide emissions. Rapid urbanization is impacting freshwater resources, wastewater, the environment and public health. In 2016, 90% of city residents breathed polluted air. 4.2 million people died as a result of air pollution. More than half of the world's urban population was exposed to air pollution levels at least 2.5 times higher than acceptable levels.

Goal 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns. Sustainable consumption and production is related to promoting efficient use of energy and other resources, sustainable infrastructure, access to basic services, decent jobs, including in the environmental sector, and a better quality of life. The use of such patterns helps in the implementation of development plans, reduces economic, environmental and social costs, strengthens economic competitiveness and reduces the scale of poverty. Currently, the consumption of natural resources is increasing, especially in East Asia. Many countries continue to face increasing challenges related to air, water and soil pollution. Sustainable consumption and production seeks to *do more and better with less*. It leads to increased net benefits from economic activity by reducing the consumption of resources and reducing the scale of degradation and pollution, while improving the quality of life. Sustainable consumption and production require a systematic approach and cooperation of entities participating in the entire supply chain, from producers to consumers. This process involves conducting educational and other activities for consumers, aimed at raising their awareness of sustainable consumption and the lifestyle related to it through, among others: conducting information campaigns on product standards and labeling, or engaging consumers in public procurement issues.

Tasks:

12.1. Implement ten-year programs on sustainable consumption and production for all countries, with developed countries taking the lead, taking into account the level of development and capabilities of developing countries.

12.2. By 2030, ensure sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources.<sup>1</sup>

12.3. By 2030, halve the global amount of food wasted per capita in retail sales and consumption, reduce food losses in the production and distribution process, including losses during harvest.

12.4. By 2020, ensure stable and ecological management of chemicals and all waste throughout their entire life cycle, in line with international agreements. Significantly reduce the level of these substances in the air, water and soil, thereby minimizing their negative impact on human health and the environment.

12.5. By 2030, significantly reduce the level of waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse.

12.6. Encourage companies, especially large and international ones, to implement sustainable development practices and include information on this subject in their regular reports.

12.7. Promote sustainable public procurement practices, consistent with national policies and priorities.

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<sup>1</sup> Resources of fossil and non-fossil raw materials are running out. According to estimates, there will be enough oil for 41 years, natural gas for 156 years and hard coal for 405 years. These data are not certain. According to Anja Røyne, the claim of *depletion* of resources comes from the identification of *resources* with *reserves*. Resources are discovered, available and undiscovered and inaccessible deposits, and reserves are discovered deposits. *No one is able to estimate the real resources of all minerals because the Earth's crust is penetrated as far as current technology allows, i.e. up to several kilometers.* (Røyne, 2020) There is also a shortage of non-fossil raw materials – sand, water and wood. Contrary to the idea of sustainable development, the demand for these raw materials is less and less balanced with their supply. In the years 2000-2012, 2.3 million km<sup>2</sup> of forests were cut down in the world, which amounts to 2,105 km<sup>2</sup> per year. If this rate of deforestation continues, all forests will disappear in approximately 100-200 years. Sand resources are rapidly decreasing due to the huge demand for cement and concrete (Swanson, 2015; Pytko, 2015); Beiser, 2021; Polsat News, 2021).

12.8. By 2030, provide access to relevant information and raise awareness of all people around the world regarding sustainable development and a lifestyle in harmony with nature.

12.9. Support developing countries in strengthening their scientific and technological capacity towards more sustainable consumption and production patterns.

12.10. Develop and implement tools to monitor the impact of sustainable development on sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products.

12.11. Rationalize inefficient fossil fuel subsidies that encourage unnecessary consumption by removing market failures, in line with national circumstances, including through tax restructuring and phasing out harmful subsidies where they exist, taking note of their environmental impact, taking fully into account specific needs and conditions of developing countries and minimize possible adverse impacts on their development, in a way that protects poor and vulnerable communities.

Facts:

If, as estimated, the world's population will increase to 9.6 billion by 2050, then to maintain our current lifestyle we will need natural resources in amounts corresponding to three times the resources of our planet. As the use of non-metallic minerals in infrastructure and construction has increased, living standards have improved significantly. The per capita material footprint in developing countries increased from 5 metric tons in 2000 to 9 metric tons in 2017. 93% of the world's 250 largest companies report on their sustainability activities.

Water: Less than 3% of the world's water is suitable for drinking, of which 2.5% is frozen water in Antarctica, the Arctic and glaciers. Only 0.5% of drinking water is used for human and ecosystem needs. Man pollutes water faster than nature can clean it through recycling in rivers and lakes. More than 1 billion people around the world still have no access to drinking water. Excessive water consumption contributes to global water scarcity tensions. Naturally occurring water costs nothing, but the infrastructure needed to deliver it is expensive.

Energy: If people around the world used energy-saving light bulbs, \$120 billion would be saved annually. Despite the development of technologies promoting the efficient use of energy, its consumption in OECD countries will increase by 35% by 2020. Energy used for commercial and residential purposes is the second largest area of global energy consumption, after transport. In 2002, the automotive market in OECD countries consisted of 550 million vehicles, 75% of which were private cars. The number of private cars is expected to increase by 32% by 2020. At the same time, the number of kilometers traveled will increase by 40% and the number of flights will triple. Households consume 29% of global energy and contribute to 21% of carbon dioxide emissions. In 2015, the share of renewable energy in total energy consumption was 17.5%. Food Not only food production has a large impact on the environment (agriculture, food processing). Households also, through the choice of food products, diet and habits, influence their surroundings, the amount of energy consumed and food wasted. Each year, about 1/3 of all food produced – 1.3 billion tons of food worth about \$1 trillion – is wasted in homes or stores or spoils due to poor transportation and harvesting practices. 2 billion people around the world are overweight or obese. Land degradation and declining soil fertility, unsustainable water use, overfishing and degradation of the marine environment – all of these reduce the ability of the natural environment to provide us with food. Globally, the food sector consumes 30% of energy consumed and is responsible for 22% of total greenhouse gas emissions.

Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts. Current climate change is felt in every country on all continents. They disrupt the development of national economies and threaten human life and entire societies. Fighting climate change is already expensive, and we will spend even more in the future. People are experiencing serious impacts from climate change, including changes in weather patterns, sea level rise, and extreme weather events. Greenhouse gas emissions caused by human activities continue to grow and drive climate change. Greenhouse gas emissions have never been so high. If we do not take action, the average global temperature in this century is expected to increase to over 3° Celsius, with even higher temperatures in some regions of the world. It is the poorest countries and vulnerable groups that suffer most from climate change. Effective and low-cost solutions are now available to help countries transition to a resilient, cleaner-based economy. Change is accelerating as more people turn to renewable energy sources and other measures that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and enhance adaptation efforts. Counteracting climate change is a global challenge that does not recognize national borders. Greenhouse gas emissions anywhere on earth affect people all over the world. This issue requires coordinated cooperation and solutions developed at the international level. This is the only way we can help developing countries transition to a low-carbon economy. During the United Nations Conference on Climate Change – COP24 in Paris – the Paris Agreement was adopted, which entered into force in November 2016. It is intended to strengthen global efforts to stop climate change. All countries that concluded the agreement committed to work to limit the global temperature increase to below 2 degrees Celsius. By April 2018, 175 countries had ratified the Paris Agreement and 10 developing countries had presented their national adaptation plans to respond to climate change.

Tasks :

13.1 Strengthen adaptive capacity and resilience to climate threats and natural disasters in all countries.

13.2 Integrate actions to combat climate change into national policies, strategies and plans.

13.3 Increase the level of education and human and institutional capacity, raise awareness of climate change mitigation, adaptation and effects of climate change and early warning systems against threats.

13.4. Fulfill the commitment of developed countries that are parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to mobilize USD 100 billion annually by 2020 from various sources to the needs of developing countries for significant mitigation actions effects of climate change, a transparent process of implementing actions and fully launch the Green Climate Fund through its capitalization as soon as possible.

13.5. Promote mechanisms that increase the capacity for effective climate change planning and management in least developed countries and small island states, including by focusing on the needs of women and youth and local and marginalized social groups.

Facts: By April 2018, 175 countries had ratified the Paris Agreement, and 168 had provided the Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change with information on the funds transferred. By April 2018, 10 developing countries had submitted their first adaptation plans to respond to climate change. Every year, developed countries mobilize financial resources amounting to USD 100 billion for actions to mitigate the effects of climate change. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change reports: Between 1880 and 2012, the average global temperature increased by 0.85° Celsius. To illustrate, an increase in temperature by 1° Celsius results in a five percent reduction in the level of cereal harvest. In the years 1981-2002, due to global warming, there was a significant reduction in the harvest of corn, wheat and other significant crops, amounting to 40 megatons per year. Ocean temperatures have risen, snowfall has decreased, ice cover has decreased, and sea levels have risen. Between 1901 and 2010, global average sea levels rose by 19 cm as the oceans expanded due to global warming and melting glaciers. Since 1979, the amount of ice in the Arctic Sea has been steadily decreasing (Maycock et al., 2021).

Goal 14: Protect and use oceans, seas and marine resources sustainably. Oceans - their temperature, chemical composition, currents and life in them drive the world's ecosystems, without which human life on Earth would be impossible. Rainwater, drinking water, weather and climate, coastlines, much of our food and even the oxygen we breathe depend on the seas to act as a regulator. Important trade and transport routes have been running across the seas and oceans for centuries. Careful management of these irreplaceable resources is the key to a sustainable future. However, the condition of coastal waters is deteriorating due to pollution, and ocean acidification is threatening the functioning of ecosystems and biodiversity. These phenomena also have a negative impact on local fisheries. Marine protected areas must be properly managed and financed. Regulations must also be introduced to reduce overfishing, marine pollution and ocean acidification.

Tasks:

14.1. By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce all types of marine pollution, in particular from land-based activities, including garbage and food waste dumped into the sea.

14.2. By 2020, manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems sustainably to avoid significant adverse impacts, including by strengthening their resilience and restoration efforts, and ensuring the health and productivity of the oceans.

14.3. Minimize the impacts of ocean acidification, including through enhanced scientific cooperation at all levels.

14.4. By 2020, effectively regulate seafood harvesting and eliminate overfishing, illegal, unregistered and unregulated fishing and destructive fishing practices, and implement science-based management plans to recover fish populations as quickly as possible, at least to levels that allow maximum, a renewable level of sustainable fishing, according to the characteristics of each species.

14.5. By 2020, protect at least 10% of coastlines and marine areas, in accordance with national and international law and using the best sources of scientific information.

14.6. By 2020, eliminate certain forms of fisheries subsidies that contribute to overcapacity and overfishing; eliminate subsidies that contribute to illegal, unregistered and unregulated fishing; not introduce new subsidies of this type, recognizing that effective, specific and differentiated treatment for developing and least developed countries should be an integral part of the negotiations on fisheries subsidies within the World Trade Organization.

14.7. By 2030, increase the economic benefits for small island developing States and least developed countries from the use of marine resources, including through the sustainable management of fisheries, aquaculture and tourism.

14.8. Expand scientific knowledge, develop research capacity and transfer marine technologies, taking into account the Intergovernmental Commission Criteria and Guidelines on the Transfer of Technology, to improve the health of the oceans and increase the impact of marine biodiversity on the development of developing countries development, in particular small island developing countries and least developed countries.

14.9. Provide local small-scale fishermen with access to markets and marine resources. 14/10. Increase the protection and sustainable use of the oceans and their resources through the implementation of international law, consistent with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which provides a legal framework for the protection and sustainable use of the oceans and their resources, and in line with paragraph 158 of the final document of the Rio+20 summit *The future we want to have*. Facts: Oceans cover three-quarters of the Earth's surface, contain 97% of the world's water, and provide 99% of the Earth's living space. More than three billion people rely on marine and coastal biodiversity to stay alive. Globally, the annual market value of marine and

coastal resources and industrial production is estimated at USD 3 trillion or approximately 5% of global GDP. There are almost 200,000 identified species in the oceans, but the actual number may be in the millions. Oceans absorb about 30% of carbon dioxide produced by human activities and thus mitigate the effects of global warming. The oceans are the world's largest source of protein; for over 3 billion people they are the main source of protein. Fishing directly and indirectly provides employment for over 200 million people. Fishing subsidies are rapidly depleting many fish species and hampering efforts to preserve and restore the world's fisheries and the jobs associated with them. Due to subsidies, ocean fisheries generate an annual profit of USD 50 billion less than is potentially possible. Ocean acidity levels have increased by 26% since the beginning of the industrial revolution. Coastal waters are becoming polluted and eutrophicated. If no action is taken, eutrophication is estimated to increase in 20% of large marine ecosystems by 2050.

Goal 14: Protect and use oceans, seas and marine resources sustainably. Oceans - their temperature, chemical composition, currents and life in them drive the world's ecosystems, without which human life on Earth would be impossible. Rainwater, drinking water, weather and climate, coastlines, much of our food and even the oxygen we breathe depend on the seas to act as a regulator. Important trade and transport routes have been running across the seas and oceans for centuries. Careful management of these irreplaceable resources is the key to a sustainable future. However, the condition of coastal waters is deteriorating due to pollution, and ocean acidification is threatening the functioning of ecosystems and biodiversity. These phenomena also have a negative impact on local fisheries. Marine protected areas must be properly managed and financed. Regulations must also be introduced to reduce overfishing, marine pollution and ocean acidification.

Tasks:

14.1. By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce all types of marine pollution, in particular from land-based activities, including garbage and food waste dumped into the sea.

14.2. By 2020, manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems sustainably to avoid significant adverse impacts, including by strengthening their resilience and restoration efforts, and ensuring the health and productivity of the oceans.

14.3. Minimize the impacts of ocean acidification, including through enhanced scientific cooperation at all levels.

14.4. By 2020, effectively regulate seafood harvesting and eliminate overfishing, illegal, unregistered and unregulated fishing and destructive fishing practices, and implement science-based management plans to recover fish populations as quickly as possible, at least to levels that allow maximum, a renewable level of sustainable fishing, according to the characteristics of each species.

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Goal 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss. Forests cover 30.7% of the Earth's surface. Not only do they provide food security and shelter for various forms of life, but they also play a key role in combating climate change, protecting biodiversity, and are home to indigenous peoples. Protecting forests will make it possible to improve natural resource management processes and increase land productivity. We are losing 13 million hectares of forest every year, and ongoing dryland degradation has resulted in 3.6 billion hectares of desertification. Although almost 15% of areas are currently protected, biodiversity is still at risk. Deforestation and desertification due to human activities and climate change are the most important challenges for sustainable development. These phenomena affect the lives and livelihoods of millions of people experiencing poverty. Currently, efforts are being made to better manage forests and combat desertification.

Tasks :

15.1. By 2020, ensure the protection, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and other ecosystems, in particular forests, wetlands, drylands and mountains, in line with international obligations.

15.2. By 2020, promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests; stop the deforestation process and restore damaged forests; significantly increase global forestation and reforestation.

15.3. By 2030, combat desertification and restore degraded areas and soils, including areas affected by desertification, drought and floods; strive to build a world in which the process of land degradation does not occur.

15.4. By 2030, ensure the protection of mountain ecosystems, including their biodiversity, and enhance their benefits, which are essential for achieving sustainable development.

15.5. Take urgent and significant action to reduce the degradation of natural habitats; stop the loss of biodiversity; by 2020, protect endangered species and prevent their extinction.

15.6. Promote fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the use of genetic resources and promote appropriate access to them, in accordance with international agreements.

15.7. Take urgent action to end poaching and trade in protected species of animals and plants; take action to prevent the purchase and sale of illegal wildlife products.

15.8. By 2020, introduce measures to prevent the introduction of new alien species into a given area and significantly reduce their impact on aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems; control or eliminate selected species.

15.9. By 2020, include biodiversity and ecosystem issues in national and local plans and reports, poverty reduction strategies and development processes.

15.10. Mobilize and significantly increase financial resources from various sources for the protection and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystems.

15.11. Mobilize significant funding from various sources and levels for the sustainable management of forests and provide developing countries with appropriate incentives to do so, including forest protection and reforestation.

15.12. Strengthen global efforts to combat poaching and trade in protected species, including by increasing opportunities for local communities to enjoy sustainable livelihoods.

Facts: Forests are the main source of livelihood for approximately 1.6 billion people, including approximately 70 million indigenous people. Forests are inhabited by over 80% of all species of animals, plants and insects living on land. In the years 2010–2015, the area of forest areas in the world decreased by 3.3 million hectares. This has a particular impact on the lives of poor people living in the countryside, who earn their living primarily from forest resources, flora and fauna. Desertification 2.6 billion people depend on agriculture for their livelihoods, with 52% of arable land affected by land degradation to a greater or lesser extent. The level of loss of arable land is estimated to be 30-35 times greater than at any time in history. Due to drought and desertification, we lose 12 million hectares (23 hectares per minute) every year, which could be used to grow 20 million tons of grain. 74% of the world's poor are directly affected by land degradation. Biodiversity Of the approximately 8,300 known animal species, 8% are already extinct, while 22% are threatened with extinction. Of the over 80,000 species of trees, only less than 1% have been studied for their potential usefulness. Fish provide 20% of animal protein for 3 billion people. Only ten species of fish account for 30% of marine catches and only ten species of fish account for 50% of aquaculture production. The human diet is over 80% based on plants. Just three main types of grains – rice, corn and wheat – provide 60% of energy needs. At least 80% of people living in rural areas in developing countries rely on traditional herbal medicine as their primary form of health care. Microorganisms and invertebrates are crucial to ecosystems, but so far we have not fully understood their role in the functioning of ecosystems and we still underestimate them too little. Illegal poaching and wildlife trade are activities that conflict with environmental protection. Nearly 7,000 species of animals and plants are illegally sold in 120 countries.

Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies, ensure access to justice for all, and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. Homicide, violence against children, human trafficking and sexual violence pose serious threats to peace and inclusive societies. Access to justice for all people must be ensured and effective, accountable and friendly institutions should be created at all levels. Significant progress has been made in reducing homicides and human trafficking over the past decade, but thousands of people remain at risk of homicide in Latin

America, sub-Saharan Africa and Asia. In many countries around the world, aggression and violence against children occurs, which violates their rights. It is a plague whose scale is difficult to estimate due to lack of information and data. Addressing these challenges and building safe and inclusive societies requires implementing effective and more transparent laws and drawing up comprehensive and realistic state budgets. One of the first steps towards protecting individual rights is birth registration and the creation of more independent national human rights institutions.

Tasks:

- 16.1. Significantly reduce violence in all forms and related mortality rates worldwide.
- 16.2. Eliminate abuse, exploitation and trafficking in persons and all forms of violence and torture against children.
- 16.3. Promote the rule of law at national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all.
- 16.4. By 2030, significantly reduce illegal financial flows and arms trade; strengthen the recovery and return of stolen property and combat all forms of organized crime.
- 16.5. Significantly reduce corruption and bribery in all forms.
- 16.6. Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels.
- 16.7. Ensure flexible, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels.
- 16.8. Expand and strengthen the participation of developing countries in the global institutions of the international legal order.
- 16.9. By 2030, ensure legal identity for all, including birth registration.
- 16.10. Ensure universal access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements.
- 16.11. Strengthen relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation, and build capacity at all levels, in particular in developing countries, to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime.
- 16.12. Promote and enforce non-discrimination laws and policies for sustainable development.

Facts: The judiciary and the police are among the institutions most affected by corruption. The cost of corruption, bribery, theft and tax evasion in developing countries is USD 1.26 trillion per year. These funds could be used to improve the lot of those who live on less than \$1.25 for at least six years. Globally, 73% of births of children under 5 years of age are registered. However, in sub-Saharan Africa this affects only 46% of children. About 28.5 million out-of-school children live in conflict-affected areas. The rule of law and development are strongly linked and mutually reinforcing. This is why they are necessary to ensure sustainable development at national and international level. The percentage of prisoners held without trial is 31% and has not changed over the last 10 years. Violence against children More than one billion children in the world are affected by violence. Its effects cost society up to USD 7 trillion annually. 50% of children around the world experience violence every year. Every 5 minutes, a child dies due to violence somewhere in the world. One in ten children is sexually abused before the age of 18. 9 out of 10 children live in countries where corporal punishment is not completely banned. This means that 732 million children are deprived of legal protection. Every third internet user in the world is a child, and 800 million children use social media. Any child can become a victim of online violence. The number of reports submitted to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC, United States of America) regarding cases of online child sexual abuse increased from 1 million in 2014 to 45 million in 2018. Every year, 246 million children around the world suffer from violence in schools. Every third student is bullied by peers at school, and at least every tenth child experiences cyberbullying.

Goal 17: Strengthen implementation measures and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development. Effective implementation of the Sustainable Development Agenda requires partnerships between governments, the private sector and civil society. Such inclusive partnerships should be built on principles and values, a shared vision and shared goals that put people and our planet at the heart of action. We need such partnerships at global, regional, national and local levels. Urgent action is needed to mobilize, redirect and unlock trillions of dollars in the private sector and harness their transformative power to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Long-term investments, including foreign direct investments, are needed in key sectors, especially in developing countries. These include the sustainable energy sector, infrastructure, transport, as well as the information and communication technology sector. The development of the public sector must also take a clear direction. The system of monitoring, review and regulation, as well as the design of incentives for such investments, must be rebuilt to attract investment and strengthen sustainable development. National oversight mechanisms, such as supreme chambers and audit institutes, as well as the oversight functions of the legislature should be strengthened. Tasks:

- 17.1. Increase the mobilization of domestic resources, including through international support to developing countries, to improve national capacity to collect taxes and other revenues.
- 17.2. Fully implement the official development assistance (ODA) commitments of developed countries, including the commitment made by many developed countries to achieve an official development assistance level of 0.7% of gross national income (0.7% ODA/GNI) to countries developing countries and 0.15-0.20% ODA/GNI for least developed countries; ODA donor countries are encouraged to consider setting a target of at least 0.20% ODA/GNI for least developed countries.
- 17.3. Mobilize additional financial resources for developing countries from a variety of sources.



17.4. Help developing countries achieve long-term debt repayment capacity through coordinated policies aimed at supporting debt financing, debt reduction and debt restructuring, in line with national conditions; address the external debt of poor, highly indebted countries to reduce debt crises.

17.5. Adopt and implement investment promotion systems for least developed countries.

17.6. Strengthen North-South and South-South cooperation and trilateral, regional and international cooperation in access to science, technology and innovation; develop knowledge sharing on mutually agreed terms, including through enhanced coordination of existing mechanisms, in particular at United Nations level, and through a global technology facilitation mechanism.

17.7. Promote the development, transfer, dissemination and dissemination of environmentally friendly technologies in developing countries on favorable and preferential terms, based on common arrangements.

17.8. Fully operationalize a technology bank and scientific, technological and innovative capacity-building mechanisms for least developed countries by 2017; increase the use of key technologies for development, in particular information and communication technologies.

17.9. Increase international support for implementing effective and targeted capacity building to support national plans to implement all Sustainable Development Goals in developing countries, including through North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation.

17.10. Promote a universal, rules-based, open, non-discriminatory and fair multilateral trading system within the World Trade Organization, including through the outcomes of the Doha Development Agenda negotiations.

17.11. Significantly increase exports from developing countries, in particular with the aim of doubling the share of least developed countries in global exports by 2020.

17.12. Implement the timely and sustainable implementation of duty-free and quota-free market access for all least developed countries, in line with decisions of the World Trade Organization, including by ensuring that preferential rules of origin applicable to imports from least developed countries are transparent, simple and contribute to facilitating market access.

17.13. Enhance global macroeconomic stability, including through policy coordination and coherence.

17.14. Increase policy coherence for sustainable development.

17.15. Respect each country's policy space and the leading role of governments in developing and implementing policies for sustainable development and poverty eradication.

17.16. Strengthen the global partnership for sustainable development, complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, competences, technology and financial resources to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in all countries, especially developing ones.

17.17. Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, built on experience and the necessary partnership strategies

17.18. By 2020, increase support for capacity building in developing and small island countries to significantly increase access to timely, reliable and good quality data, disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migration status, disability, geographical location and other characteristics adapted to the national context.

17.19. Develop existing initiatives to develop an indicator for measuring progress in the field of sustainable development that will complement gross domestic product and support the building of statistical capacity in developing countries.

Facts: In 2017, official development assistance amounted to USD 146.6 billion. This means a decrease of 0.6 percent in real terms compared to 2016. 79% of goods imported from developing countries go to developed countries duty-free. Debt in developing countries remains stable at around 3% of annual export earnings. The number of internet users in Africa has almost doubled in the last four years. 30% of the world's youth have been actively using digital technologies for at least five years. However, almost 4 billion people do not use the Internet, 90% of which come from developing countries (UN, 2015).

### Implementation of the 2030 Agenda

Achieving the goals of the 2030 Agenda depends on international cooperation, the involvement of governments, the private sector, civil society and other stakeholders. Progress towards achieving these goals may vary by country, region and sector. The facts cited in the Report do not inspire optimism. The goals of the 2030 Agenda have been achieved to a minimum extent or not at all, mainly in underdeveloped countries.

- Poverty rates have been reduced by approximately half in highly developed countries. However, despite this, in a developing region, they in ten people and their families live below the international poverty line, i.e. on USD 1.90 a day, and 42% of the population of sub-Saharan Africa lives below this amount.
- It is estimated that in 2050 the number of undernourished people will increase by another 2 billion people. People in rural areas are no longer able to make a living from agricultural work and must migrate to cities in search of a better life. Therefore, the number of migrants from poor countries in Africa and Asia to Europe is increasing from 99,907 in 2020 to 273,640 in 2023. According to new data from Frontex, the number of illegal border crossings into the European Union in the first 11 months of 2023 reached over

355,300 (International Organization for Migration, 2024). This upward trend will continue due to the increasing number of armed conflicts and deepening economic inequality in the world (Frontex, 2023).

- Despite significant progress in medicine, proper health care is not provided, even in highly developed countries, mainly for economic reasons. Health systems need more effective financing to achieve universal health care and improve sanitation, hygiene and access to doctors, treatments and medicines (Sztumski, 2014).
- Educational goals were insufficiently achieved. Currently, over 265 million children are not in school. Moreover, even children studying at school cannot read and count. 617 million young people around the world lack basic reading, writing and numeracy skills.
- There has been a significant increase in women's political participation, but their percentage in national parliaments is only 27%. 49 countries have no laws protecting women from domestic violence. It seems impossible to achieve the goal of equal rights for women in Muslim countries and in those where conservative traditions dominate.
- The goal of universal access to drinking water was not achieved. Currently, over 2 billion people live in areas with limited access to drinking water. It is estimated that by 2050, at least one in four people in the world will live in a country affected by chronic or periodic drinking water shortages. Every fourth health care facility does not have basic water services. More than 40% of the world's population still suffers from water scarcity and this percentage is expected to continue to increase. 2.4 billion people have no access to basic sanitation. More than 80% of untreated sewage flows into rivers or seas<sup>2</sup>.
- Currently, approximately 3 billion people do not have access to clean fuel for cooking, and 13% of the world's population still has no access to electricity. 3 billion people depend on coal, wood, charcoal and waste for cooking and heating.
- Many developing countries lack basic road infrastructure, sanitation and water, electricity and information and communication technology. In many African countries, especially those with lower income, inadequate infrastructure reduces business productivity by approximately 40%.
- No prospects for decent work and pay.
- •Too little investment and low consumption have led to a breach of the social contract, which is the basis of democratic societies. According to it, everyone is to benefit from the progress made. Even though the world's average annual growth rate of real GDP per capita is increasing, there are still many developing countries whose growth rate is declining. These countries are increasingly moving away from the target GDP growth rate of 7% set for 2030. And
- Inequalities persist in the world and not everyone has equal access to health care, education and other goods. Economic growth alone will not be enough to reduce poverty. It is essential that every person can benefit from inclusive economic progress, based on the three pillars of sustainable development - economic, social and environmental.
- Currently, 3.5 billion people, i.e. half of the human population, live in cities, and according to forecasts, by 2030, 5 billion people will live in cities. In the coming decades, developing countries will account for 95% of urban expansion. Today, 883 million people live in slums, mainly in East and Southeast Asia, but also in the world's wealthy metropolises. Cities in the world cover only about 3% of the Earth's area, but at the same time they consume 60-80% of energy and produce 75% of carbon dioxide emissions. As a result of rapid urbanization, freshwater resources are decreasing, the amount of sewage is increasing, the degradation of the natural environment is progressing rapidly and public health is deteriorating (Sztumski, 2018).
- If the world's population increases to 9.6 billion, we will need three times the planet's natural resources to maintain our current lifestyle (Sztumski 2021).
- Greenhouse gas emissions have never been so high. If we do not take action, the average global temperature in this century is expected to increase to over 3° Celsius, with even higher temperatures in some regions of the world.
- The condition of coastal waters is deteriorating due to pollution, and ocean acidification threatens the functioning of ecosystems and biodiversity. Coastal waters are becoming increasingly polluted, affecting only 20% of large marine ecosystems.
- We are losing 13 million hectares of forests every year, and ongoing dryland degradation has led to 3.6 billion hectares of desertification. As a result of drought and desertification, we lose 12 million hectares every year, which could be used to grow 20 million tons of grain. 74% of the world's poor are directly affected by land degradation. And you need to know that the human diet is over 80% based on plants.

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<sup>2</sup> Less than 3% of the world's water resources are suitable for drinking, of which 2.5% is frozen water in Antarctica, the Arctic and glaciers. Only 0.5% of drinking water is used for human and ecosystem needs. More than 1 billion people around the world still have no access to drinking water. Excessive water consumption contributes to global water scarcity tensions (UN, 2012).

- Of the approximately 8,300 known animal species, 8% are already extinct, while 22% are threatened with extinction.
- The judiciary and the police are among the institutions most affected by corruption. The cost of corruption, bribery, theft and tax evasion in developing countries is USD 1.26 trillion per year. These funds could be used to improve the lot of those who live on less than \$1.25 for at least six years.<sup>8</sup>

## Conclusion

*Leave no one behind* – the slogan that accompanied the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) in 2015 and which carried many promises. The UN then adopted 17 goals as part of the 2030 Agenda, on which political activity, economy and social policy around the world should be based. In 2015, everything sounded very promising. By developing the 2030 Agenda, the global community has created a kind of recovery program for the world. Now it turns out that the implementation of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals is in doubt. The 2023 mid-term review was disappointing as targets are still a long way off. That is why German Development Minister Svenja Schulze warns: *It's time to act even more decisively*. Seventeen specific goals and 169 more detailed guidelines were to constitute an action plan for humanity, the planet and prosperity in accordance with the preamble of the 2030 Agenda. Unfortunately, this plan is in fact a hypothetical reality and it is unknown when it will become actual. This is confirmed by the statement of UN Secretary-General António Guterres about a serious threat to the implementation of the promises made in 2015. According to UN data, more than 30% of the milestones showed no progress or even regressed. Only less than half of them came close to being implemented. Only 15% of the world is on track to accomplish their tasks. If the pace of positive and expected changes does not increase, the assumed goals will not be achieved by 2030. Even a country as rich as Germany cannot cope with achieving these goals. Bärbel Kofler, Parliamentary Secretary of State at the German Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development, emphasizes the need to make up for certain shortcomings in areas such as sustainable consumption, sustainable production and climate protection. There are several reasons for such a bad result: global crises caused by the corona virus pandemic, local conflicts and the war in Ukraine, the financial crisis, questionable decisions of governments, lack of interest of some countries and the extreme selfishness of the group of oligarchs ruling the world. The common denominator for them is, perhaps with the exception of the pandemic, the capitalist system in its current form. Either way, the future does not look optimistic or promising, but it fills us with great concern for the fate of future generations (Sztumski, 2022). In fact, sustainable development makes sense in well-developed countries. The greatest progress over the last five years (2018-2023) has been recorded in the European Union in promoting economic growth, decent work, poverty reduction, gender equality and reducing inequalities (Eurostat, 2023). The report *Sustainable Development in the European Union* takes into account the impact of current crises on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, such as the energy crisis in the context of the war in Ukraine and the *aftershocks* of the Covid pandemic. It includes an assessment of the degree of implementation of 17 goals of the 2030 Agenda. A serious problem is still the excessive population growth on our planet, primarily due to the countries of Africa and the Far East. Currently, the Earth can support a population load of 10 billion. When the human population exceeds this value, the Earth will not be able to provide them with a chance of survival. This could lead to a catastrophic population decline or even the extinction of the human species. Currently, 7.88 billion people live on Earth. There is still 2.12 billion missing from the critical level. With the current average annual population growth (81 million), this critical value will be reached in approximately 26 years, and with a smaller one – in approximately 40 years, i.e. within this century. In poor countries; there is a lack of interest and impulse to implement sustainable development goals. Their leaders welcome any other development that helps the people of their countries survive.

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