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# **CHALLENGES IN MAINSTREAMING THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT INTO THE NATIONAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PLANNING AND THE ROLE OF WHO**

## **Introduction**

**I**n 2015, world leaders agreed on the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the 169 targets contained in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as well as the means for their implementation, follow-up and review.

The 2030 Agenda is a plan of action for people, the planet, prosperity, peace and partnership, which all 193 Member States of the United Nations agreed to implement. Five features make the 2030 Agenda transformative and render the SDGs different from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The 2030 Agenda is:

- of “unprecedented scope”, tackling all sectors of government and development, including addressing the economic, environmental and social determinants of health;
- “integrated and indivisible”, meaning that goals and targets are interlinked and interdependent, requiring strong policy coherence both vertically and horizontally and a commitment to multisectoral whole-of-government and whole-of-society ways of working;

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- “global in nature and universally applicable” and therefore relevant to all countries (developed and developing), while “taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development”;
- focused on equity and on reaching those populations that are hardest to access; in the resolution this is expressed as “no one will be left behind”: the important role of gender, equity and human rights is acknowledged throughout the SDGs, providing a strong framework that connects multiple societal objectives in an integrated way, while explicitly recognizing the importance of peace and security as necessary conditions for sustainable development; and
- “inclusive”, signifying that only in partnership will it be possible to achieve the targets and goals;

The 2030 Agenda and its SDGs are Member State-owned, with “each Government setting its own national targets guided by the global level of ambition but taking into account national circumstances”, thereby ensuring accountability for delivering results as part of the global effort.<sup>1</sup>

Mainstreaming of SDGs into national policies, plans and strategies and integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development

For the successful implementation of the SDGs, their inclusion and mainstreaming into national policies, plans and strategies will be crucial. Without a doubt, the fulfilment of the pledge to “leave no one behind” will also depend on how well the ones furthest behind will be taken into account when drafting the required policies and plans. The concepts of mainstreaming sustainable development into national plans and mainstreaming global policy frameworks into national strategies are not new, as has been demonstrated by the experiences of national sustainable development plans and the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and many lessons can be learnt from these.

As noted in the 2030 Agenda, each country needs to take into account their national realities and circumstances, and hence no one size fits all countries in regard to the mainstreaming process. It is important to remember that prior to the adoption of the SDGs governments have had existing policy objectives and commitments that are articulated in a variety of national and sectoral strategies and plans, as well as in commitments to international agreements. However, three typical steps that can apply for many types of

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1 Towards a roadmap to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the WHO European Region, Regional Committee for Europe 66th Session, Copenhagen, Denmark, 12–15 September 2016

countries in initial SDG mainstreaming include:

1. Review of existing strategies and plans and identification of areas for change: to scan and detail the landscape of existing strategies and plans at the national, sub-national and local levels and then compare against the global SDGs and targets to identify gaps and provide the basis for areas for change;
2. Setting of nationally-relevant targets: for nationally-adapted and inclusive SDGs that are achievable, yet ambitious; and
3. Formulation of strategy and plans using integrated systems thinking: to incorporate the recommendations and the insights from the above steps into strategies and plans and matching ambition and commitments with resources and capacities.

### **Process of mainstreaming the 2030 agenda in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**

In order to kick-off the process in the country and set the foundation for implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the Government of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia has undertaken a joint initiative with support from the UN agencies to integrate the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into the national planning process. Activities are envisaged to be implemented in several stages, starting with the prioritization of the SDGs and localization of the targets and selection of local indicators as a basis for development of the SDGs Action Plan 2016-2020 to upgrade the existing National Sustainable Development Strategy 2012-2020 and the SDGs Implementation Plan 2016-2030. By preparing the National SDGs implementation plan for the whole 15-year period and Action plan for the first five years of implementation to upgrade the existing National Sustainable Development Strategy 2012-2020 and action plan 2016-2018, the Government will:

- Mainstream the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at national level;
- Recommend integration of the agenda into national, sub-national and local plans for development and subsequently into budget allocations; and
- Integrate the SDGs into the four-year Government programme 2016-2020 and the relevant sectoral strategies, plans and programmes.
- The process is envisaged to include elements presented in Table 1<sup>2</sup>.

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2 Joint paper of the Government and the UN Concept Note Mainstreaming the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development into the National Sustainable Development Planning

**Table 1. National Sustainable Development Planning Process elements**

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| Selection and prioritization of the most relevant and localization of the global goals and targets  |
| Selection of relevant local indicators and development of a monitoring framework  |
| Development of a budgetary framework  |
| Review of the relevant national sectoral strategies and plans and the level of adjustment needed for each strategy and plan to align it with the SDG agenda |
| Development of a reporting framework and design of a reporting system   |

### Box 1: Major Areas of SDG work

#### 1. Employment and social inclusion

- SDG 1:* End poverty in all its forms everywhere  
*SDG 3:* Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages  
*SDG 4:* Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all  
*SDG 5:* Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls  
*SDG 8:* Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all  
*SDG 10:* Reduce inequality within and among countries

#### 2. Sustainable energy

- SDG 7:* Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all  
*SDG 9:* Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation  
*SDG 12:* Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

#### 3. Climate change

- SDG 13:* Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

#### 4. Sustainable use and management of natural resources

- SDG 2:* End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture  
*SDG 6:* Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all  
*SDG 11:* Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable  
*SDG 14:* Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development  
*SDG 15:* Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss;

#### 5. Good governance expert

- SDG 16:* Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels  
*SDG 17:* Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

*Source: Joint paper of the Government and the UN Concept Note Mainstreaming the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development into the National Sustainable Development Planning*

Design of multi-stakeholder policy development and implementation modalities to encourage and facilitate partnerships between government and nationally and sub-nationally active stakeholder networks of civil society, universities, think tanks, the private sector, other development actors, and national human rights institutions is considered to be crucial to ensure legitimacy and quality of a whole-of-society agenda. Hence, the exercise embraced the multi-stakeholder approach.

The generic guidelines for the process developed by UN headquarters are considered to be tailored to the local context. As a starting point for the exercise, the following two documents are used: the progress report on the implementation of the National Sustainable Development Strategy; and Partnership for Sustainable Development: UN Strategy 2016–2020 (for the first five-year plan). Under the above concept in the beginning of 2016, the Government has appointed a team of consultants commissioned for the process of localization of the SDG across the major areas of work (Box 1: Major Areas of SDG work), with the support of the UN agencies. Nine national consultants with extensive knowledge and experience on sustainable development issues in the country have been engaged to conduct gap analysis of specific SDGs within their areas of expertise and also contribute to other relevant areas, considering that the goals are mutually reinforcing and their achievement requires a multi-sectoral approach. The gap analysis focuses on a number of aspects including:

- Analysis of the current policy and legal framework/national priorities relating to the specific SDG.
- Analysis of the level of integration of the specific SDG targets in the current national strategies/action plans.
- Analysis as to whether a specific SDG (and its targets) is well (or not well) addressed in the national strategies/policies. This analysis also requires an assessment on the expected complexity, level of stretch and potential level of adjustment that would be needed for the existing strategies/action plans to be aligned with the SDG agenda.
- Analysis of any identified cross-sectoral linkages relevant for the planning and implementation of the SDGs.
- Prioritization of targets for the National SDGs implementation and action plan 2016-2030

Each of the goals requires strong multi-disciplinary approach, thus close cooperation among the experts has been requested and a policy dialogue process with all the stakeholders and civil society organizations has been involved in the phase of the gap analysis.

## Technical support for mainstreaming SDG 3 and other health related goals into the National Sustainable Development Planning - Recognizing the H2020 as a vehicle towards achieving SDGs

The process has recognized the importance of health in the sustainable development agenda, both as a goal and as a target. It has emphasized the linkages between the H2020 and SDGs at European level (Box 2), and at national level (Box 3). Namely, the Ministry of Health, with technical support of the WHO has developed the country National Health 2020 Strategy and mayor action plans that have previously not existed (public health, environment and health) for implementing it, jointly with reviewing and revising process started through inter-sectoral policy dialogs, for all of the existing action plans in specific vertical areas of health.

Box 2: Linking Health 2020 and SDGs at European level



The Minister of Health has endorsed a decision for formal establishing of Core technical working group (CTWG) on SDG 3+ in July 2016. During the first meeting held on 15 July 2016 experts met together with the representatives of the Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs Office, the responsible authority for localizing Agenda 2030 in the country.

Having regard to the Government ambitious agenda, the WHO Country Office (CO) has supported the fast process of establishing and initiating the work of the CTWG on SDG 3+ and other health related goals, scoping experts from and beyond health sector, to work in close coordination with

Box 3: Linking National Health 2020 Strategy and the SDGs



WHO, with an objective to technically support the whole process and deliverables and work coherently with the UNCT and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs as a national overall coordinator of the process. The CTWG 3+ will expand with other members, based on the needs of the process and its work. UNFPA has jointly with WHO supported the work of the above mentioned working group.



The first meeting of the CTWG on SDG 3+ at the WHO CO premises. Photo credit: WHO CO

CTWG on SDG 3+ has discussed and agreed consensually on: a) constitution of the CTWG, b) governance structure of the process, c) time table of its activities, d) the deliverables and e) the logo.

## Governance structure of the process

In its effort to obtain consistency and systematic approach to the technical support of the UNCT and especially the WHO as a coordinator of the technical support for localizing SDG 3+ to the overall process of mainstreaming of the Agenda 2030 into the national policy for sustainable development, CTWG on SDG 3+ has proposed to the Government the governance structure that is to provide a clear and simple flow of the support action, having regard to national structures already at place (Graph 1).

Graph 1: Structure of the process for mainstreaming of SDG 3 and other health related SDGs (SDG 3+)





## Abstract

The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia has embarked decisively in mainstreaming the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development into the National Sustainable Development Planning in December 2015, with an objective to develop a SDGs Action Plan 2016–2030, based on needs' and potentials' assessment and target setting relevant to the country's context. UN has been involved into the overall action, from the early stage and has been making strong efforts to support country's governance structures in developing contemporary government policy for sustainable development. WHO has been requested by the Ministry of Health to coordinate the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) technical support to the action related to SDG 3 and other health related SDGs. The Ministry of Health has endorsed a decision that has established a core technical working group SDG 3+ (CTWG SDG 3+) and has requested, by this decision, to coordinate its work closely with WHO (Country Office).

Mainstreaming the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development into the National Sustainable Development Planning of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia is a complex endeavor which the Government has developed a very ambitious schedule for, and the WHO has been given a prominent role of a coordinator, convener and a global technical expert to support the process and outcome documents development, as well as their implementation, once being endorsed.

This paper aims to present a snapshot of the process of mainstreaming the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development into the National Sustainable Development Planning of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the role of WHO in this process related to SDG 3 and other health related goals and the challenges that the country will face.

## References

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