



We need ambitious Sustainable Development Goals to end poverty, give all the same rights and save the planet.

The European Green Party Council in Zagreb sees that

1. Never before in the history of politics has the often-misused metaphor “we are standing at a crossroads” been more relevant than today, when we take into consideration the new UN Sustainable Development Goals. We, the European Greens, fully agree with the UN Secretary General when he underlines the fact that the task before us is one not only of changing path, but also of creating a thorough transformation in the way we humans act and make use of our only planet. No generation before us has faced the same challenge. And at the same time, never have the opportunities been better for a true transformation. Or in the words of the Secretary General: “We are the first generation that can eradicate poverty, and the last generation that can save the planet”.
2. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have succeeded to varying degrees. Even though not all of the eight goals have been met, they have shown that it is possible to make a global change by jointly setting ambitious and universal goals. Furthermore, the unfinished business with MDGs needs to be concluded. We need, for example, to provide safe drinking water, sanitation and health, while also ending hunger, offering sexual and reproductive rights*, and providing quality education to all. And even though global poverty was halved in relative terms during the last 15 years, the actual numbers are unacceptably high. We strive for ending poverty altogether.
3. We believe that the seventeen goals proposed by the Open Working Group, as new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), are an essential continuation of the MDG's towards global change. However, the broadened assignment and the time restrictions (some researchers believe that the threshold for keeping climate change within the 2 degree limit has already been exceeded, for example) make the task so much more challenging. We therefore need to radically transform our patterns of life, production, and consumption – and not only make mere adjustments.
4. In order to become a tool for the transformation that is needed, the SDG agenda must be based on the following insight: It is our planet, and the boundaries of its ecosystems, that set the limits for human activities. Overall, economic growth must be de-coupled from the overuse of natural resources. Although noting that the concept of development is highly debated, we acknowledge the need for elaborating a more precise and less dichotomised concept that better supports global justice. Although noting that the concept of development is highly debated, we acknowledge the need for elaborating a more precise and less dichotomised concept that better supports global justice.
5. Universal human rights must constitute a further basic pillar within the SDG agenda. Here, we see a need for a broader scope. For instance, women’s rights should be taken into consideration, where the aim must not only be to empower women, but to also, among others, ensure that sexual and reproductive rights of girls and women are respected*.
6. In order for the SDGs to be successful, it is essential that all governments seriously address the rampant and accelerating inequalities. This is as important between countries, as it is within countries. For as long as the 85 most affluent individuals in the world own more than the poorest half of the global population, no socially sustainable development can be possible.
7. Violence and fragility have become the largest obstacles to the MDGs. The post-2015 framework should aim for peace and security by addressing, for example discrimination, intolerance and dis-functioning state institutions.



8. The success of the SDGs, and hence real transformative change, will depend on coherence between other fields of policy, poverty eradication, and sustainable development. It also depends on the ability of the SDGs to enhance democratic and effective governance worldwide. All fields of policy must support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. For the private sector, legally binding rules on corporate social responsibility should be put in place, especially towards human rights and environmental issues. Trade, agriculture, energy, and migration policy have to be conducted in a way that alleviates poverty, protects the environment and mitigates the effects of climate change. Agricultural subsidies within high-income countries must be decreased, and the dumping of excess food production in low-income countries must stop.
9. As important as they might be, ambitious development goals will not deliver the desired effect unless sufficient financing is put in place for their successful implementation. The outcome of the UN financing summit, to be held in Addis Ababa in July, will be crucial for the SDGs to become a tool for real transformation. Several financial instruments that have been proposed will also be vital tools for achieving further equality and less unsustainable production and consumption. The resources needed to fulfil all of the SDGs do exist, but they are unequally distributed throughout the world. Heavy responsibility rests upon political leaders, to put in place instruments that distribute wealth more equally.
10. Once and for all, rich countries must live up to their commitments to give 0.7% of their GDP to development aid. The EU, as one of the major players in international development, should take the lead and make sure that the 0.7% target is met. Official Development Aid (ODA) should be directed mostly towards the least developed countries.
11. ODA should not only be targeted at alleviating poverty, but also at reducing inequality. Resources should also be mobilised to combat climate change. These funds should be in addition to ODA.
12. International Trade needs to be restructured in order to eradicate poverty. Contributions made towards sustainable development need to be the foundation for international trade agreements.
13. All governments should take an active role in sustainable development. Developed countries should take up their responsibility in being frontrunners in this. Developing countries need support in mobilising their domestic resources, e.g. in developing effective taxation and basic social protection practices, an end must be brought to illicit financial flows. Tools to achieve this include country by country reporting, an automatic exchange of information, and open information on beneficial owners. Tax havens must be abolished.
14. Research has found that well-functioning public institutions and authorities are very important entities for poverty eradication. Therefore, all governments must commit themselves to curbing corruption, and guaranteeing transparency, democracy, good governance and rule of law.
15. New financial mechanisms need to be put in place in order to raise funds for the SDG agenda, and to reduce unsustainable practices. Some examples of these include a financial transaction tax, levy on air tickets, efficient carbon trade systems, and lower costs for remittances.
16. Fossil fuel subsidies and fossil fuel favouring tax mechanisms must end, directing them towards renewable energy instead.
17. Illegitimate debt has to be cancelled. Governments, international financial institutions, and the private sector should all endorse and implement the UNCTAD principles on responsible lending and borrowing. Debt sustainability, restructuring and relief should be ensured where necessary.



18. We, the Greens of Europe, believe that the year 2015 is a crucial one. Two comprehensive agendas that can spur the real transformation of human societies are possible, with a UN summit in September that will hopefully decide upon ambitious SDGs, and the COP 21 summit in December that will hopefully agree to curb global warming. These decisions are very urgently needed, if we in this generation are to hand over a prosperous future to our children. This is an opportunity that must be seized, and we commit ourselves to working together, with all progressive forces, to make the coming fifteen years the beginning of a new era.

* The Council notes the objection and vote against of Alternattiva Demokratika – The Green Party, Malta