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European Union

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From: General Secretariat of the Council

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To: Delegations

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Subject: Supporting the Sustainable Development Goals across the world: The 2019 Joint Synthesis Report of the European Union and its Member States - Council conclusions (8 July 2019)

Delegations will find in the annex the Council conclusions on supporting the Sustainable Development Goals across the world: The 2019 Joint Synthesis Report of the European Union and its Member States, as adopted by the Council at its 3706th meeting held on 8 July 2019.

**Supporting the Sustainable Development Goals across the world:
The 2019 Joint Synthesis Report of the European Union and its Member States**

Council conclusions

1. The Council reaffirms that sustainable development lies at the core of the European Union and that the 2030 Agenda reflects the principles and values upon which the Union is founded. It is in the EU and its Member States' interest to play a leading role in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and to promote effective multilateralism with the United Nations at its core, as laid down in the new European Consensus on Development (hereinafter: the Consensus) and in the Global Strategy for the EU's foreign and security policy.
2. The Council reiterates the importance of the UN High Level Political Forum (HLPF) and of the SDG Summit in September 2019 and calls for strong engagement by the EU and its Member States. In this context the Council recalls its conclusions on "Towards an ever more sustainable Union" in response to the Commission's Reflection Paper: Towards a Sustainable Europe by 2030. The Council stresses the need for a concise, comprehensive, forward-looking and compelling political declaration that strengthens the momentum for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.
3. The Council welcomes the publication of the first Joint Synthesis Report of the EU and its Member States on "Supporting the Sustainable Development Goals across the world" as an important contribution to EU reporting at the HLPF in 2019. The Council stresses that the process underpinning the elaboration of future joint synthesis reports should continue to be collaborative and transparent, ensure the ownership of all Member States and reflect the policy commitments of the Consensus. At the same time, the Council recalls the need to fully respect the distinct institutional or national roles and competences of the EU institutions and Member States.

4. The Council welcomes the collective contribution of the EU and its Member States to the implementation of all SDGs across the world, leveraging all means of implementation, in support of the 2030 Agenda. The Council also acknowledges the efforts made in addressing the interlinkages between different SDGs in a more integrated way. The Council underlines the need to strengthen the synergies between the 2030 Agenda, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.
5. The Council notes that the EU and its Member States have consistently and strongly supported EU values and principles and welcomes in particular the enhanced efforts to reach those in extreme poverty and to tackle all forms of inequality, in line with the principle of leaving no one behind and seeking to reach the furthest behind first.
6. The Council highlights that the EU and its Member States have promoted peace, security and stability, and have been amongst the strongest supporters of democracy, human rights, good governance, and the rule of law. The Council reiterates that Policy Coherence for Development (PCD) should remain a key element in the overall EU effort to implement the Agenda 2030 and welcomes the progress made in minimising negative spill-over effects of EU internal and external policies on developing countries and in promoting synergies between different policies and actions in support of the SDGs.
7. The Council underlines that the EU and its Member States have strongly supported social and human development, including by giving priority to social protection, decent work, universal health coverage and access to education in their development cooperation. In particular, the Council stresses the achievements made with regard to gender equality, the empowerment of women and girls and addressing violence against girls and women.
8. The Council also underlines the progress made by the EU and its Member States in supporting climate change mitigation and adaptation, environmental protection and the sustainable management and use of natural resources. The Council recalls its commitment to implementing the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Climate Change Agreement through coordinated and coherent action, and to support partner countries' efforts to phase-out environmentally harmful fossil fuel subsidies.

9. The Council also appreciates that the EU and its Member States have tailored development cooperation to different countries' circumstances, have worked better together, have taken innovative approaches and have developed stronger and inclusive partnerships with other development actors, including multilateral organisations, civil society, youth, local authorities and the private sector.
10. The Council takes note that progress needs to be accelerated in a number of key areas. In particular, the Council:
 - a. Recognises the efforts made by the EU and its Member States to align their development cooperation strategies and programmes more closely with the implementation of the SDGs, taking into account existing frameworks. It strongly encourages the use of increasingly integrated approaches that create co-benefits, ensuring that resources deliver on multiple SDGs.
 - b. Calls on the EU and its Member States to further tailor their support strategies to the needs of partner countries. It encourages them to engage with partner countries through policy dialogues based on the SDG, taking into account shared interests and priorities and building on national development plans and Voluntary National Reviews.
 - c. Calls on the EU and its Member States to make a stronger concerted effort to support partner countries to integrate the SDGs, together with climate targets, in their national strategies, policies, budgets, financial frameworks and reporting.
 - d. Encourages the EU and its Member States to pursue efforts to work better together, particularly at partner country level, including through joint programming, joint implementation and joint results frameworks. This will help increase the leverage of the EU's development cooperation.
 - e. Encourages the EU and its Member States to continue developing robust result-reporting systems that demonstrate the impact of the EU and its Member States in supporting SDG implementation, including where actions address multiple objectives. It also calls on the EU and its Member States to step up efforts to build the statistical capacities of developing countries to inform policy and decision-making in support of the SDGs.

11. Overall the Council acknowledges the progress made by the EU and its Member States in implementing the Consensus and in supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda as the international blueprint for poverty eradication and sustainable development across the world. The Council reiterates its commitment to target resources where the need is greatest, especially to Least Developed Countries and countries in situations of fragility or affected by conflict.

 12. The Council reiterates its commitment to supporting sustainable development, in partnership with the United Nations, as the bedrock of the rules-based global order. The Council welcomes the Global Sustainable Development Report and the Secretary General's Progress Report on the SDGs. It is particularly important that the EU and its Member States engage with all actors concerned, including at the HLPFs in July and September 2019, to coordinate and accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.
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