Parliamentary Assembly
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Resolution 2272 (2019)[1]

Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals: synergy needed on the part of all stakeholders, from parliaments to local authorities

Parliamentary Assembly

1. On 25 September 2015, 193 countries adopted the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The 2030 Agenda sets out a vision for a future which is fairer, more equitable and more ecological, thus reconciling the three pillars – economic, social and environmental – of sustainable development. It seeks to achieve human rights for all, leaving no one behind.

2. The implementation of the SDGs is first and foremost the responsibility of governments. However, to be successful, it requires the mobilisation, involvement and support of all relevant stakeholders, including parliaments, local and regional authorities, citizens, civil society and, in particular, young people.

3. National parliaments, as holders of legislative power, representatives of the people and the bodies that scrutinise what governments do, have a key part to play in meeting the SDGs. While some countries have already put in place mechanisms to involve parliaments in the process of implementing and monitoring these goals, they are often limited to a passive consultation role. It is equally unfortunate that, in general, members of parliament are not familiar with the 2030 Agenda. In this context, the Assembly welcomes the major awareness-raising and capacity-building work for parliamentarians done by the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

4. Local and regional authorities play a decisive role in the success of the economic, social and environmental transformations needed to achieve the SDGs. Their closeness to the situation on the ground and to citizens, and their responsibility in terms of management of public investment, mean that they are in an ideal position to identify and address shortcomings in the area of sustainable development.

5. The Parliamentary Assembly notes with interest the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, which is held every year to monitor progress in meeting the SDGs. It nevertheless regrets the fact that the voluntary national reviews submitted on that occasion are not subject to any scrutiny and that the other key stakeholders (parliaments, local and regional authorities and civil society) are not systematically involved, which risks weakening the exercise as a whole.

6. The Parliamentary Assembly refers to Resolution 2271 (2019) on strengthening co-operation with the United Nations in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and in particular to paragraphs 11.2, 11.5 and 12 of that resolution.

7. In view of the above, the Assembly believes that there is an urgent need to strengthen the role of national parliaments in the implementation and monitoring of the SDGs and calls on parliaments to become actively involved in this field. In particular, it invites them to:

7.1. ask their governments to frame sustainable development strategies and, where appropriate, to align them with the SDGs, send them to parliament for examination and debate, and report regularly on the progress made in implementing them;

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1. *Assembly debate* on 9 April 2019 (12th Sitting) (see Doc. 14851, Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development, rapporteur: Ms Jennifer De Temmerman). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 9 April 2019 (12th Sitting).

7.2. gear legislative work towards the SDGs by:

7.2.1. proposing the introduction of new legislation, or changes to existing legislation, so as to enact laws suited to the requirements of the SDGs;

7.2.2. ensuring the coherence of the legislation proposed by governments and by opposing bills that would run counter to the SDGs; requiring that all bills be systematically accompanied by assessments of their impact on the implementation of the SDGs and subject to public debate;

7.2.3. identifying the international agreements essential to implementation of the SDGs and putting pressure on governments to ratify such agreements quickly;

7.3. set up a specific body or committee to monitor SDG implementation;

7.4. call for government budgetary proposals to be systematically justified with regard to the SDGs;

7.5. make use of all parliamentary oversight mechanisms, such as question time, written questions to government, hearings of parliamentary committees and consultations, so as to hold governments to account on SDG implementation, while involving civil society, the private sector and the media wherever possible;

7.6. raise public awareness of the SDGs through campaigns and educational activities and incorporate the issue of sustainable development in school curricula.

8. With a view to strengthening the implementation of SDGs, the Assembly calls on Council of Europe member States to:

8.1. involve members of parliament and local and regional authority representatives in the SDG implementation steering/co-ordinating bodies, so as to put forward the views of voters and offer institutional support;

8.2. involve members of parliament, local and regional authority representatives and civil society in the preparation of the voluntary national reviews and in the annual High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

9. The Assembly invites the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe and the European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity of the Council of Europe (North-South Centre) to incorporate the SDGs into their work programme.

10. In conclusion, the Assembly welcomes the work done by its various committees with a view to achieving the SDGs, in particular in the areas of combating poverty (Goal 1), good health and well-being (Goal 3), quality education (Goal 4), gender equality (Goal 5), reducing inequalities (Goal 10), combating climate change (Goal 13) and peace, justice and strong institutions (Goal 16). It calls on members of the Assembly to refer to the Sustainable Development Goals in their reports and put forward specific recommendations concerning them whenever relevant.