

**“Are the SDGs relevant for Germany?”
Comparing the SDGs with UN Human Rights treaty body recommendations
provides important clues**

October 2015

In September 2015, the Heads of State and Government of all UN Member States adopted the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) which includes the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs seek to address economic, social and environmental issues in a sustainable manner. Unlike the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the SDGs apply to all countries equally. This means that the SDGs need to be implemented in all countries, through foreign policies, including trade or development cooperation, and through policies with domestic effects, e.g. in areas such as education or employment.

In the political and public discourse **of some industrialized countries the domestic relevance of the SDGs is still being questioned**: “Is poverty, health and the rule of law really a problem here?” In addition, stakeholders across regions are now reflecting on **how to best adapt SDG targets and indicators to the national level**. Naturally, a variety of methodologies exist to answer these questions. Consultations with civil society and other affected actors represent an important means, for example. Another possibility is to compare the SDGs with the recommendations that every signatory state of human rights treaties receives regularly from the UN human rights treaty bodies. Those recommendations highlight gaps in the realization of human rights in the country in question. A comparison of the SDGs with a country’s human rights gaps is legitimate and, in fact, required since the 2030 Agenda explicitly commits States to implementing the SDGs in line with their obligations under international law, including human rights (para 18 and 19).

The German Institute for Human Rights has therefore carried out a preliminary comparison of the SDGs with the recommendations that Germany has received through the Concluding Observation of the UN human rights treaty bodies over the past few years. This comparison is meant to serve as a **tool to support the implementation of the SDGs in and by Germany**. An overview of this comparison is provided below and a more detailed comparison in German can be accessed [here](#). **The comparison reveals the clear need for action in Germany** and highlights specific issues around a number of SDGs. In addition, the review identifies cross-cutting issues such as the need to collect data on different social groups to establish which policies work for different groups in Germany and where gaps remain.

The Institute recommends that the German Government take the recommendations of the UN human rights treaty bodies into careful consideration when implementing the SDGs, including in its effort to formulate national targets and indicators and when reviewing Germany’s progress towards the Goals.

Practical Note: Many human rights recommendations can be linked to several SDG goals and targets. The comparison provided below does not represent a prioritization, a comprehensive review or a statement on the status of implementation of treaty body recommendations. It is meant to illustrate how recommendations from human rights bodies can help “localize” the SDGs. As such, the exercise can be easily replicated in other countries.

Overview: SDGs and related issues from Concluding Observations of various Treaty Bodies

SDG	Topics / Issues from Concluding Observations to Germany
1. Poverty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase of taxable portion of pensions • Information on extent and causes of homelessness • Child poverty • Criteria to determine level of social benefits • Discriminatory practices by housing agencies and other providers of accommodation
2. Food	
3. Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical restraint measures in residential care homes • Situation of older persons in nursing homes • Practice of anonymous abandonment of children • Equal access of women to health services
4. Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human rights education • Tuition fees in higher education • School dropouts • Gender role stereotypes, promoting education in non-traditional fields • Early childhood education • Inclusion of persons with disabilities in the education system • Qualified childcare for working parents • Obstacles for children of asylum-seekers in relation to school enrollment • Integration of children of non-citizens in the regular school system
5. Gender Equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data regarding female genital mutilation in Germany • Violence against women, exploitation of women • Data on domestic and sexual violence and on means of redress • Women in leadership positions in public and private sector, science etc. • Integration of minority women in the labour market • Equal sharing of domestic and family tasks between women and men • Economic consequences of divorce on both spouses • Quotas and timetables to achieve substantive equality between men and women
6. Water & Sanitation	
7. Energy	
8. Growth & Decent Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wage gap between men and women • Employment of persons with disabilities
9. Infrastructure, Industrialization	
10. Reduce Inequality within & between Countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access of asylum seekers to public social security, health care and labour market • Separation of children into different school tracks at an early stage (inclusion) • Differences between eastern and western provinces regarding unemployment and social protection
11. Cities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discriminatory practices by housing agencies and other providers of accommodation
12. Consumption & Production	
13. Climate Change	
14. Oceans & Seas	

15. Terrestrial Ecosystems	
16. Inclusive Societies, Access to Justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child rights, system to collect data on children • Residence permits of child victims of trafficking • Counter-terrorism: rendition, secret detention, remedies • Torture as a specific offence in general criminal law • Prevention of torture: training of law enforcement personnel and intelligence services • Preventive detention • Physical restraint in detention centres • Prosecution of human trafficking, access to justice for victims of trafficking • Identification of police officers when carrying out their function, independent complaint bodies, investigation and prosecution of allegations of misconduct and ill-treatment by police and prison officers • Danger of torture after deportation or extradition
17. Means of Implementation, Global Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0,7% of GDP on Overseas Development Aid (ODA) • Lack of data on the situation of children, homeless persons, persons with disabilities • International trade and agriculture policies: impact of subsidies on the enjoyment of human rights in importing countries