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# Switzerland implements the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Baseline assessment of Switzerland serving as basis for the country report 2018

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## Table of contents

<b>1 Summary.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2 Introduction .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3 Switzerland and sustainable development.....</b>	<b>4</b>
3.1 Switzerland implements the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development .....	4
3.2 The 2030 Agenda as a framework for sustainable development policy .....	5
<b>4 Methodology for the baseline assessment of Switzerland's implementation of the 2030 Agenda .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>5 Status of implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in Switzerland.....</b>	<b>6</b>
5.1 SDG 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere.....	6
5.2 SDG 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture .....	8
5.3 SDG 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages .....	11
5.4 SDG 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all .....	14
5.5 SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls .....	16
5.6 SDG 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all	19
5.7 SDG 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all	21
5.8 SDG 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.....	24
5.9 SDG 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation.....	26
5.10 SDG 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries .....	29

5.11	SDG 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable	33
5.12	SDG 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns .....	35
5.13	SDG 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts .....	40
5.14	SDG 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.....	42
5.15	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 .....	44
5.16	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 .....	47
5.17	SDG 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development .....	51
<b>6</b>	<b>Integrating the three dimensions and policy coherence for sustainable development.....</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Embedding the 2030 Agenda institutionally at federal level .....</b>	<b>55</b>
7.1	Organisation at federal level.....	55
7.2	System for monitoring sustainable development .....	55
7.3	Financing implementation of the 2030 Agenda.....	56
<b>8</b>	<b>Cooperation with cantons, cities and municipalities.....</b>	<b>57</b>
8.1	Including cantons, cities and municipalities in federal processes.....	57
8.2	Implementation progress in the cantons, cities and municipalities.....	57
8.2.1	Ongoing processes and activities.....	57
8.2.2	Opportunities, success factors and challenges.....	58
<b>9</b>	<b>Cooperation with stakeholders from civil society .....</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>Switzerland's priority challenges as seen by the business world, civil society and academia .....</b>	<b>59</b>
10.1	Framework for implementing the 2030 Agenda .....	59
10.2	Switzerland's priority challenges in eight action areas .....	60
<b>11</b>	<b>Next steps .....</b>	<b>63</b>
	<b>Appendix 1: Monitoring the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda targets in Switzerland .....</b>	<b>65</b>
	<b>Appendix 2: Implementation of the 2030 Agenda by non-governmental actors .....</b>	<b>68</b>
	<b>Appendix 3: Responses to the baseline assessment .....</b>	<b>71</b>

# 1 Summary

Switzerland was actively involved in developing and shaping the 2030 Agenda and its 17 goals. The goals can be achieved only through a concerted effort by the international community and the participation of all important stakeholders. Switzerland is ready to do its bit, both at a global level and through concrete measures domestically. The present report is the first comprehensive review of the current status of implementation of the 2030 Agenda (baseline assessment) from the perspective of the Federal Administration. It documents achievements and successes and identifies challenges.

## **Background to sustainable development in Switzerland**

Sustainable development has a long tradition in Switzerland and has been constitutionally mandated since 1999. Switzerland has played a pioneering role in many areas, for instance recycling, universal and high-quality education, health, and also in its global commitment to human rights, peace and humanitarian principles. Since 1997, the Federal Council has been articulating its political objectives relating to the implementation of sustainable development in a strategy, and since 2003 Switzerland has put in place a comprehensive system for monitoring sustainable development (MONET). The strategy will be reviewed and updated every four years. It provides the basis for coordinating the Federal Government's activities and synchronising these with the cantons, municipalities, business sector, civil society and the scientific community.

## **Baseline assessment and 2018 country report as a status report by the Swiss Confederation**

Following the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, the Federal Council commissioned a comprehensive review of the status of implementation in Switzerland covering all policy sectors of the Federal Government. The baseline assessment covered all 169 SDG targets and included both Switzerland's domestic and foreign policy contributions. The results indicate that the 2030 Agenda action areas are well embedded in federal policies. At the same time, the survey also identified challenges for aggressively pursuing the goals. Thus, while Switzerland is a leader in technical solutions for environmental issues, it also displays rising resource consumption, which far exceeds our planetary carrying capacity and offshores environmental pollution to countries in the supply chain. This report forms the basis for Switzerland's 2018 country report. Both documents serve as a status report by the Swiss Confederation and provide a baseline so as to enable a targeted response to the challenges facing the country.

## **Mainstreaming at all levels of government and partnership with non-state actors**

Cantons and municipalities have an important role in Switzerland. Numerous cantons and municipalities have defined their own strategies for sustainable development. The business sector, the scientific community and civil society have also been engaging with the implementation of sustainable development for a long time. In addition, innovative multi-stakeholder initiatives, such as sustainability labels, play an important role in Switzerland. Non-state actors, who form part of a support group for the baseline assessment, have identified priority challenges for Switzerland from their perspective.

## **Next steps**

Switzerland is planning a four-year reporting cycle from 2018 onwards, with each report being issued at the midpoint of a legislative period. The Federal Council's Sustainable Development Strategy (SDS) will pick up on the challenges relating to all 17 SDGs that were highlighted in the baseline assessment and country report, link these with the instruments of sectoral policy and set priorities for implementation. The Federal Council also revises the SDS every four years. The strategy is published at the start of the legislative cycle together with the Dispatch on Legislative Planning, with the next occasion coming in early 2020.

## 2 Introduction

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda) that was adopted by the member states of the United Nations on 25 September 2015 constitutes an important policy framework for Switzerland. The Federal Council has accordingly set out political priorities in its Sustainable Development Strategy for the 2015-2019 legislative period. Switzerland's international cooperation activities are specified in the Dispatch on Switzerland's International Cooperation 2017-2020, and are similarly aligned to the 2030 Agenda.

Considerable progress has already been made. Switzerland leads global rankings in important areas such as protection against natural hazards, social cohesion, quality of life and a sustainable economy. Yet, some significant challenges remain. For example, Switzerland's resource consumption – when extrapolated to the world's population – significantly exceeds the planet's carrying capacity, and environmentally harmful and socially detrimental processes are increasingly being shifted to countries in the supply chain.

The concrete objectives of the 2030 Agenda (SDGs and targets) along with the associated IAEG indicators form an important tool for Switzerland to identify progress made and specific areas for action. In December 2015, therefore, the Federal Council commissioned a comprehensive baseline assessment from the perspective of the Federal Government. As part of this process, national indicators for monitoring the targets were also defined.

Interested non-state actors were able to contribute their inputs about the results in an open consultation process to give the report a broad-based underpinning. In addition, the '2030 Dialogue for Sustainable Development' discussion and information exchange platform was launched and the 2030 Agenda Advisory Group comprising non-state actors was set up. This participative process was characterised at all levels by the very active involvement of non-state actors. Many businesses have already integrated the SDGs in their corporate reporting and strategies. Researchers are contributing through innovation and knowledge generation, and numerous civil society organisations are engaging in the public debate through projects and other important contributions. Cantons and municipalities have a central role in Switzerland. Their contributions are crucial for implementing the 2030 Agenda at the sectoral level and also partly within the scope of overarching sustainability strategies.

The present baseline assessment represents the perspective of the Federal Administration, which has been supplemented with inputs and perspectives of the cantons, cities, municipalities and non-state actors. It should be noted that the report also contains an independent perspective on the key challenges for Switzerland prepared by the 2030 Agenda Advisory Group. Important contributions by non-state actors are illustrated through examples given in the report. Switzerland will also make every effort to ensure that its future reports are as broad-based as possible, as specified in the UN Guidelines to Support Country Reporting, and that all sectors and levels of governance and non-state actors are represented.

The present baseline assessment forms the basis for Switzerland's 2018 country report. Both documents provide a baseline so as to enable a targeted response to the challenges facing the country.

## 3 Switzerland and sustainable development

### 3.1 Switzerland implements the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

In Switzerland, sustainable development is an overarching state objective and is enshrined as such in the Federal Constitution. It encompasses promoting prosperity for all, social cohesion and cultural diversity as well as the long-term conservation of natural resources and a peaceful and just international order. Government bodies at all levels have the binding obligation to strive for a durable and balanced relationship between nature and its capacity to regenerate and the demands placed on it by the human race.

Switzerland also bears a global responsibility for sustainable development. Important elements of this have been enshrined in the foreign policy objectives of the constitution. The Swiss Confederation contributes to the alleviation of need and poverty in the world, and promotes respect for human rights and democracy, the peaceful coexistence of peoples as well as the conservation of natural resources.

The Federal Council is committed to ensuring the mainstreaming of the principles of sustainable development at all levels of government. At the federal level, it defines the priorities for this policy area by means of the Sustainable Development Strategy (SDS). The strategy is updated every four years during one legislative cycle and was last revised in January 2016. Foreign policy priorities for sustainable development are also set out under the foreign policy strategy and the Dispatch on Switzerland's International Cooperation.

The cantons, cities, municipalities and non-state actors play a key role in the effective implementation of sustainable development within the country. Switzerland has a federal structure and follows the principle of subsidiarity. The cantons, consequently, have extensive competencies and opportunities to influence many action areas relevant for sustainability. Cities and municipalities too, have a relatively large degree of autonomy in several areas. It is therefore imperative to have good coordination between all three levels of the state for the implementation of sustainable development. The Federal Government therefore supports regional and local sustainability processes and projects by providing logistical and technical assistance and also by way of wide-ranging activities to network the participating actors. Cantons have their own sustainability strategies and coordination mechanisms. While they work independently of the Federal Administration, they frequently apply the Federal Council's Sustainable Development Strategy as a frame of reference. Sustainability is also firmly embedded in the business sector, the scientific community and civil society. Several multi-stakeholder approaches have been established in Switzerland, which bring together various state and non-state actors.

### **3.2 The 2030 Agenda as a framework for sustainable development policy**

The 2030 Agenda created a global framework for sustainable development. It is a 'plan of action for people, the planet and prosperity'. It seeks to secure universal peace and freedom and represents a responsibility for the future based on equity between generations (inter-generational solidarity) and between the various regions of the world (intra-generational solidarity). Switzerland advocates these principles. In this context it is of critical importance to safeguard the livelihoods of all people under fair and equitable conditions and to ensure human rights for all.

The 2030 Agenda is universal and its goals for sustainable development, the SDGs, are an integral and indivisible part. By adopting the Agenda, the member states have declared their willingness to come together to achieve the SDGs by 2030. In doing so, every country will make an appropriate contribution at the national and international level. For Switzerland, too, the 2030 Agenda has been the relevant frame of reference for its sustainable development policy since 2016. Switzerland continues to be committed to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and will align its activities with other international processes that shall help bring about the transformation into a sustainable and resilient society.

## **4 Methodology for the baseline assessment of Switzerland's implementation of the 2030 Agenda**

Following the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, the Federal Council commissioned a comprehensive baseline assessment of the status of implementation in Switzerland. The assessment was carried out by the Federal Office for Spatial Development (ARE) and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) with support from the Federal Statistical Office (FSO). The process was also supported by an interim interdepartmental

working group on the 2030 Agenda, in which five other departments of the Federal Administration (Federal Office of Public Health, Federal Office for Agriculture, Federal Office for the Environment, Federal Chancellery, Federal Statistical Office) were represented. The surveys for the baseline assessment were carried out in collaboration with the concerned federal offices.

Broad participation by organisations from the business sector, civil society and the scientific community was facilitated through an open consultation process and dialogue sessions, in which the organisations could make submissions on their assessment of the status of implementation in Switzerland and put forward their own contributions towards achieving the 2030 Agenda. The outcomes of this dialogue served as a broad framework for the synthesis of the 17 SDGs in this baseline assessment. The relevant departments of the Federal Administration also set up the 2030 Agenda Advisory Group comprising representatives from business confederations, civil society and the scientific community to facilitate better coordination between non-state actors. Based on the consultations, the support group defined what it perceived to be the overarching challenges for Switzerland, which also form part of this report.

The cantons participated primarily through cantonal offices for sustainability. Information was collected on the role of sustainable development and the implementation status of the 2030 Agenda at the cantonal level. The report on SDG 4 (high-quality education) was coordinated with the Swiss Conference of Cantonal Directors of Education (EDK). The Swiss Union of Cities provided inputs for the city level.

A baseline assessment was carried out for each of the 169 targets and encompassed the current status of implementation in Switzerland as well as future challenges. The review included both the national and international level. In addition, the role of the cantons and municipalities was described and some illustrative examples of contributions by non-state actors were included. As part of this process, the Federal Office for Statistics collaborated with the line departments, wherever possible, to establish indicators for monitoring the targets. These indicators were taken from the measurement system used to track sustainable development (MONET) or were recently integrated to supplement the system.

## **5 Status of implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in Switzerland**

### **5.1 SDG 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere**

Switzerland promotes prosperity for all and seeks to ensure equal opportunities to the greatest extent possible for its citizens. The state attempts to minimise social risks so as to enable a fair standard of living for all members of society.

In Switzerland, social security is guaranteed through a complex, multi-tiered system. Basic public services, such as education and healthcare, form the first pillar of this system. The second pillar comprises social insurances, which fall within the responsibility of the Federal Government. One part of these social insurances is universal, such as health insurance. Another part is closely linked to employment and is to a large extent funded through contributions from earned income. A third pillar comprises need-based welfare services, e.g. family allowances or housing benefits. The final safety net is social assistance through the cantons and municipalities, which is also need-based and guarantees a minimum subsistence level that allows a life of dignity. This multi-tiered system covers all social risks. The cantons use common, non-binding standards as a guideline for delivering social assistance. Moreover, private, not-for-profit organisations also participate in the social security system, and the private sector is involved in integration activities.

## **Ensuring the long-term viability of the social security system**

The social security system needs to be adapted due to increases in average lifespan and ongoing changes in the labour market, society and lifestyles. Various developments, such as the outsourcing of production to low-wage countries, technological progress and the associated automation and digitisation have altered and are raising the level of job qualifications in Switzerland. There is a growing demand for more highly qualified manpower, which has made it more difficult for the long-term unemployed, older employees, temporarily admitted foreign nationals and refugees, less qualified persons as well as people with disabilities, health issues and psychological disorders to be integrated in the job market.

The main challenges are to keep the financial burden on the population and economy imposed by the social security system at an acceptable level, guarantee adequate standards for services and benefits, ensure the professional and social integration of all Swiss residents and ensure long-term funding for the social security system.

## **Preventing and reducing poverty**

While the standard of living in Switzerland is among the highest in Europe and extreme poverty as defined by the UN does not exist, there are nevertheless people who live below the national poverty line. In 2016, 7.5 per cent of Switzerland's permanent resident population was affected by income poverty. Although a majority of persons living in poverty are able to raise their income above the poverty line after a year, about 1 per cent of the population is considered permanently poor. Measured against the relative at-risk-of-poverty threshold (60 per cent of median equivalised disposable income), 14.7 per cent of the population can be categorised as at risk of slipping into poverty. Income poverty most affects persons in households with no earning member, persons living alone, single parents with minor children, families with three or more children and persons who have completed only compulsory school education.

Holding a job is regarded as a means to reduce the risk of poverty, however in 2016 the poverty rate for employed persons amounted to 3.8 per cent. The working poor consequently pose a challenge. In Switzerland, wages for individual industry sectors are partly fixed by the social partners (industry associations and trade unions). There is no blanket minimum wage at the national level.

Further challenges to preventing poverty lie in providing equal opportunities to access early support programmes up until entering employment and financial assistance for adult education. With regard to social and professional integration, the challenge lies in strengthening and coordinating the activities of social welfare institutions and also in addressing the lack of jobs in the economy. The challenge in improving the living conditions of families and the poor relates to adequate provision of targeted assistance for families at risk of poverty (for instance counselling or home visits) as well as financial aid, counselling and placement services for decent housing by the cantons and municipalities.

While the responsibility for preventing and reducing poverty is shared by several state and non-state actors at all levels, the primary responsibility lies with the cantons. Since 2014, the Federal Government, cantons, cities, municipalities, social partners and non-governmental organisations have been coordinating their activities in a five-year national programme for preventing and combating poverty. The objective of the programme is to pool together empirical knowledge on poverty prevention and reduction, provide inputs for developing and implementing measures and strategies, test innovative approaches and encourage cooperation between different actors.

## **Switzerland's international contribution**

Solidarity with the poor and vulnerable is a key aspect of Swiss foreign policy. The Federal Government is constitutionally mandated to help alleviate suffering and poverty across the globe. At the centre of these efforts are approximately one billion people living in extreme

poverty. The overall goal of Swiss international cooperation is to reduce poverty and global risks, alleviate need and promote peace and respect for human rights. Switzerland's international cooperation is aligned with a concept of poverty that encompasses basic human needs as well as economic, social, environmental, political and socio-cultural aspects along with aspects relating to safety and protection. It lays special emphasis on women, children and the most vulnerable sections of society and works towards their protection and strengthening their resilience. Since poverty is increasingly concentrated in fragile contexts, i.e. countries whose governments are either not willing or not able to ensure the basic functions of the state in the areas of security, rule of law and basic social services, Switzerland is becoming more active in such situations. It seeks long-term engagement, which allows for better outcomes. Switzerland's efforts concentrate on:

- **Contributing towards reducing absolute poverty** within the framework of bilateral and multilateral development cooperation and humanitarian aid. SDG 1 focuses on poverty reduction, vulnerability reduction and protection. In recent years, Switzerland has increased its activities in Sub-Saharan Africa and in fragile contexts.
- **Promoting equitable and sustainable access of the poorest to resources and basic services, and promoting the sustainable use of resources** in the areas of health, energy, right of use and ownership rights of land and other natural resources, water and sanitation, food, primary and vocational education, financial services and communications technologies. Switzerland fundamentally supports a stable legal and regulatory framework that protects personal freedoms and property, the environment, human rights and democracy.

*An example of how Switzerland is implementing SDG 1*

#### **Donations help people in need**

The relief organisation Swiss Solidarity mobilises aid for emergencies within the country and abroad. Be it floods in Switzerland or a disaster abroad – using appeals on radio and television, Swiss Solidarity allows people in Switzerland to provide quick and uncomplicated assistance to help people in need. 25 Swiss relief organisations are partners in the Swiss Solidarity foundation. They utilise donations directly at the affected locations. The collection after the earthquake in Nepal in 2015 amounted to CHF 32 million. Swiss relief organisations have trained workers in building earthquake-resistant structures, for example, and financed the construction of schools and hospitals.

## **5.2 SDG 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture**

The Swiss Federal Constitution tasks the agricultural sector with sustainable and market-oriented production that makes a significant contribution to the reliable provision of food for the population, conserves natural resources, maintains the countryside and plays a role in the decentralised settlement of the country. The constitution also requires the Federal Government to provide and ensure basic conditions for agricultural production and resource-efficient food production that is adapted to local conditions and reduces resource wastage. Further, it requires the Federal Government to create an enabling environment for trade relations resulting in the sustainable development of the food and agriculture industry. The Swiss agricultural sector produced about 51 per cent of the country's food requirements in 2015, employing approx. 150,000 persons and utilising about 25 per cent of total land area. The remaining food requirement is met through imports. Hardly anyone suffers from hunger in Switzerland. Calorie production and income are largely stable. Participation in environmental and animal welfare programmes and the percentage of organic farming companies (12 per cent in 2016) are growing.



The Swiss food and agriculture industry is integrated with global markets. Consequently, it has an indirect responsibility even outside Switzerland as regards hunger, climate (CO<sub>2</sub> and energy), the environment (natural resources especially biodiversity, soil, air and water) and social justice.

### **Promote sustainable, healthy and balanced nutrition and guarantee safe food**

Safe food is available in Switzerland in sufficient quantity and variety nowadays. A national control plan is in place for inspecting food safety along the entire food chain. Malnutrition (e.g. intake of too much sugar, salt or fat) is a problem and may lead to non-communicable diseases such as diabetes, obesity or cardiovascular disorders. Such diseases constitute about 80 per cent of Swiss healthcare costs. The Federal Government is tackling this through its 2017-2024 nutrition strategy. It has involved all relevant stakeholders and provides information to the population to facilitate opting for a healthy, balanced and varied diet. In addition, the government sensitises producers about improvements in food product composition so as to comply with the latest food and nutrition research findings regarding fat, sugar and salt content. It also promotes responsible marketing to children and healthy meal options in public canteens.

### **Promote sustainable agriculture and nutrition systems**

The Federal Government tracks the long-term conservation of sustainable ecosystems and their performance. Under its agricultural policy, the government makes direct transfer payments to the agricultural sector for services and outputs that the market does not fully compensate, such as promoting and conserving biodiversity, maintaining semi-natural habitats and reducing adverse impacts on soil, water and the climate. In cases where efficient technologies do not suffice to maintain the sustainability of the ecosystem, the Federal Government stipulates that an evaluation must be carried out and adjustments made to the intensity of cultivation, if required. Despite positive developments, the long-term conservation of sustainable ecosystems and ecosystem services continue to be under threat by agriculture. Nitrogen pollution, loss of biodiversity and the use of pesticides and antibiotics are not yet in line with the environmental objectives of the agricultural sector. Action is also needed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and maintain soil fertility.

The pressure on agricultural land and on soil in general will continue to rise in the future. In the Swiss plateau, the main cause for pressure on cultivable land is the rapid growth of human settlements; in the mountain regions it is the spread of scrub and woodland. The growing demand for regional and high-quality products and the resulting intensification of cultivation in Switzerland coupled with a changing climate (more dry periods or flooding, depending on the type of cultivation), negatively influence soil quality. It is a big challenge for Switzerland to balance all resource uses and at the same time conserve agricultural land, soil quality and natural resources.

The agricultural sector must be flexible and aligned with the market in order to produce and sell high-quality products that do not have adverse impacts on the environment, animals and biodiversity. The system of geographical indications, for instance, is helpful in this respect. Alignment with the market has been continuously improved through policy measures, such as delinking direct transfer payments from production. However, this in itself will not suffice to keep pace with developments abroad. In the EU, for example, agricultural subsidies have declined to a greater extent than in Switzerland. As a result, the agricultural sector in neighbouring countries has become comparatively more competitive. Greater integration in foreign markets will in future also increase competition on domestic markets.

The Federal Government encourages sustainable land use by promoting family enterprises and strengthening the position of self-employed persons and leaseholders in acquiring farm businesses and land. This is intended to combat inflated prices for farmland and speculation. Simplifying access to land for direct owners would also enhance equal opportunities for all, especially for women. It would also facilitate diverse business models to make agricultural

occupations more attractive for young people and result in making the agri-food system more sustainable from a business perspective.

### **Sustainable use, conservation and promotion of genetic resources**

Intact biodiversity, especially agrobiodiversity, is essential for varied and balanced nutrition. The conservation of genetic resources, through gene banks, for instance, is of key importance for national and global food security. In Switzerland there are private collections and also a national gene bank. The national gene bank for plant genetic resources for food and agriculture contains about 5400 Swiss cultivated plant species. The Federal Government also supports projects for the sustainable use of plant genetic resources in the agri-food sector. Financial assistance is also extended to projects for conserving and promoting animal genetic resources and for a national gene bank for Swiss breeds of cattle, horses, sheep and goats. An animal breeding strategy for the conservation and sustainable use of animal genetic resources is under preparation, while such a plant breeding strategy already exists. Implementation measures for the plant breeding strategy are being prepared in the next phase.

*An example of how Switzerland is implementing SDG 2*

#### **Farmers produce certified food**

Consumers increasingly seek food produced through sustainable farming, with different labels serving as a guideline. Environmental concerns are consequently very relevant today for agricultural education and training. Over 20,000 producers all over Switzerland have been certified by IP-Suisse, a private initiative for the integrated production of environmentally sound and animal-friendly products. About 13 per cent of the entire area under cultivation is farmed according to the guidelines of Bio Suisse, the federation of Swiss organic farmers. Food products that display these labels stand for resource-efficient production, sparing use of auxiliary agents and humane treatment of animals.

<https://www.ipsuisse.ch/>, <https://bio-suisse.ch/>

### **Switzerland's international contribution**

In 2016, the number of people worldwide suffering from hunger was 815 million, comprising mainly children and women as well as persons in conflict zones and crisis regions. A further 1.9 billion suffered from nutritional deficiencies. Switzerland is among the donor countries that spend the largest amount of their international development budgets in percentage terms on food security and agriculture. This includes bilateral programmes that are supplemented by Switzerland's strong commitment to UN organisations that combat hunger and work for better food security. These organisations include the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), which focuses on improving the underlying conditions for smallholder farmers in developing countries, and the World Food Programme (WFP), which supports countries during acute or long-term emergencies. Given Switzerland's importance as a location for the global food and agri-industry, commodities markets and international research institutions, the country can contribute much by way of knowledge and expertise, but also bears a special responsibility. Switzerland is therefore committed to realising the human right to food, and is active both in Europe and worldwide for a sustainable food and agricultural industry as well as healthy and balanced nutrition. It is also actively working for the better integration of all stakeholders in the governance of a sustainable global food system, where it has focused on recognising conflicts of interest, especially when trade policies or national subsidies have an adverse impact on developing countries or global sustainability. Switzerland has the following priorities:

- **Combat hunger and secure better nutrition for all** by leveraging the entire spectrum from humanitarian emergency assistance to long-term programmes and multi-stakeholder partnerships. Switzerland supports a paradigm shift from short-term food aid to long-term food security and improvement in the resilience of stakeholders, such as small farmers, and food systems. Switzerland is actively engaged in combating malnutrition, which is to a growing extent responsible for non-communicable diseases, such as diabetes, cardiovascular disorders, stunting and malformations.
- **Improve smallholder farmer incomes and productivity** through innovation, particularly by securing land rights, developing innovative approaches for insurance against crop failure and drought risks in cooperation with non-governmental organisations and the private sector, extending the system of geographical indicators, providing support for marketing agricultural produce as well as for education and training to enhance knowledge of agricultural production and markets. Switzerland supports developmental research in plant breeding and improved cultivation methods.
- **Foster sustainable and resource-efficient food systems** by jointly developing resource-efficient, agri-environmental approaches with many participants, for instance in the areas of organic agriculture, public-private partnerships for more efficient irrigation systems, and sustainable and resource-efficient animal husbandry. Switzerland is strongly committed to the protection of mountain regions and better living conditions for the local communities, protection of healthy and productive soils and sustainable land management. It is co-chairing a programme on sustainable food systems of the United Nations 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns.
- **Conserve and sustainably use plant and animal genetic resources** by supporting the rebuilding of national seed lots after humanitarian crises and by supporting programmes for integrated seed systems for the conservation and improvement of local, adapted varieties. Switzerland supports the global conservation of plant and animal genetic resources for food and agricultural purposes in gene banks and private collections. It supports the implementation of the FAO's International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (International Seed Treaty). Switzerland has already ratified and is in the process of implementing the Nagoya Protocol to the Convention on Biological Diversity. The objective of the Nagoya Protocol is the equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilisation of genetic resources in all sectors, including the agricultural sector.

### 5.3 SDG 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

Health protection is enshrined in the constitution as well as in numerous laws and national strategies. In its Health 2020 strategy, the Federal Council set out comprehensive goals for the Swiss healthcare system: maintain quality of life, increase equal opportunities, raise the quality of healthcare and improve transparency. The cantons are responsible for the provision of healthcare, promotion of health, implementation of various federal laws and for granting licences to medical practitioners and chemists. Statutory health insurance guarantees all Swiss residents an assured access to medical services and products, with the exception of dental treatment. The health sector is one of the most important job providers in the country.

Life expectancy in Switzerland is the second highest for OECD countries (2017). In 2016 the life expectancy at birth for males was 81.5 years and 85.3 years for females. However, according to Eurostat, in terms of the healthy life expectancy (HLE), Switzerland was below the EU average in 2015.

#### Combating communicable diseases

Communicable or infectious diseases are a threat to public health. In Switzerland, such diseases are monitored for early detection, prevention and control; regular reports are published on the epidemiological situation; prevention and control strategies are drawn up; directives are issued; ordinances and laws are prepared along with recommendations for

doctors, specific target groups and the population in general. The Federal Government implements strategies and programmes based on the Federal Act on Combating Communicable Human Diseases. It does so in close coordination with the cantons and other actors in areas such as antibiotics resistance; monitoring, prevention and control of healthcare-associated infections; the national immunisation strategy and national programme on HIV and other sexually transmitted infections. An integrated approach that includes veterinary medicine, agriculture and the environment in addition to human medicine is applied to ensure the long-term efficacy of antibiotics for human and animal health. A spread of the HIV epidemic among the general population could be averted thanks to preventive approaches. Challenges are posed by the rise in sexually transmitted infections other than HIV; the immunisation coverage of vaccine-preventable diseases, which must be maintained at the present level or improved; as well as prevention of the transmission of potentially dangerous pathogens to enhance public safety.

The implementation of the WHO's International Health Regulations are of critical importance for combating global health risks. The relevant capacities in Switzerland were evaluated in 2017.

### **Preventing and treating non-communicable diseases and fostering mental health**

In Switzerland, non-communicable diseases such as cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular and chronic respiratory diseases are responsible for premature mortality (before the age of 70) in over 50 per cent of men and over 60 per cent of women. They are now the most frequent cause of death in our society. One fourth of the population suffers from at least one chronic disease, and demographic developments are likely to increase this trend. The Federal Government's strategy for the prevention of non-communicable diseases is aimed at keeping more people in Switzerland healthy or allowing them to enjoy a good quality of life despite chronic ailments. This is to be achieved through healthcare promotion, prevention, improvement in public health literacy and by creating conditions conducive to healthier behaviour. A higher consumption of foods rich in calories, fat, sugar or salt and with a low nutrient value, for instance, is likely to lead to non-communicable diseases. The Federal Government therefore issues recommendations to consumers on nutrient requirements and provides information about specific foods and their labelling and packaging. Other national strategies contributing to the above-mentioned goals are the national strategy for cancer and the national strategy for cardiovascular diseases, stroke and diabetes. Prevention has a role with regard to mental illnesses, e.g. to prevent suicide. The action plan for suicide prevention was prepared for this purpose.

### **Strengthening the prevention and treatment of addictive disorders**

Addiction has a significant impact on affected persons and their immediate environment as well as on society as a whole. Studies have shown that one in seven deaths in Switzerland is related to tobacco consumption and that an alcohol problem is the underlying factor for one in six psychiatric diagnoses. It also revealed that alcohol plays a role in 50 per cent of all crimes. The social costs of addiction are several billion Swiss francs every year. The national strategy for addiction is aimed at preventing addictive disorders as well as minimising the health-related and social damage as well as adverse impacts on society. Addicted persons should receive the necessary help and treatment. This is achieved through measures for prevention, early detection and intervention in the case of risky behaviour; therapy and counselling; risk minimisation and harm reduction as well as regulation, e.g. of alcohol, tobacco and illicit substances.

### **Putting a cap on health costs**

The quality of the Swiss healthcare system is high by international benchmarks, however it is also very expensive. Healthcare expenditure amounted to 11.9 per cent of GDP in 2015. In recent years, demographic developments, advancements in medical technology and growing

capacities have led to a steady increase in healthcare costs. Rising medical expenses in turn are resulting in a continuous escalation in health insurance premiums. This increases the pressure on low income individuals. With a lower disposable income, there is a tendency to avoid dental and other medical treatments due to financial reasons. Ensuring high-quality healthcare for the entire Swiss population in the long term is a challenge. Efforts to lower costs in the healthcare sector need to be intensified, for instance by increasing efficiency and improving quality. The Federal Government is currently working on new measures.

### **Minimise harmful environmental impacts on health**

Cases of death due to air, water or soil pollution are relatively low in Switzerland by international standards. Nonetheless, harmful environmental impacts do exist, for instance due to chemicals (e.g. pesticides, contaminated sites) and particulate emissions. The latter must be reduced by 50 per cent as compared to 2005 levels in order to comply with the applicable limits for particulate matter. According to the action plan for pesticides, the risks caused by pesticides need to come down by 50 per cent and alternatives to chemical pesticides must be promoted. Noise pollution is also a challenge. Despite remediation measures, one in five persons (approx. 1.6 million) in Switzerland continues to be exposed to excessive noise at their place of residence. At night this figure is one in six (approx. 1.4 million). Noise control is consequently an ongoing task and needs to be implemented more rigorously when designing residential settlements. In future, heat stress caused by global warming will increasingly become a major threat to health, particularly for old and vulnerable persons.

#### *An example of how Switzerland is implementing SDG 3*

##### **Collective commitment to prevention and healthcare services**

One in four persons in Switzerland suffers from at least one chronic disease, such as cancer, rheumatism, diabetes, respiratory or cardiovascular diseases. The Swiss National Conference of Health Leagues represents the interests of patients suffering from chronic illnesses at the health and social policy level. The 15 member organisations provide preventive and other services for fostering the health of the Swiss population, for instance by providing a smartphone app for persons with a weak heart or by acting to protect children and adolescents from tobacco advertising.

<http://www.geliko.ch>

### **Switzerland's international contribution**

The most important pillars of international activities in this area are Switzerland's health foreign policy, specific thematic strategies and international cooperation. Geneva has a special role in international health policy since it is the seat of international organisations, representations of foreign states and non-governmental organisations as well as many global initiatives. Moreover, Switzerland is also important as a centre for innovation and research in health. The pharmaceutical, biotechnology and medtech industries are among the most significant Swiss export sectors. Switzerland has established the following priorities in multilateral bodies and in its bilateral partnerships with developing countries:

- **Combat communicable diseases**, such as HIV/AIDS, malaria and other poverty-related and neglected diseases by supporting international organisations as well as research and development of medical products, for example through public-private product development partnerships.
- This is related to the objective of bringing about a **sustainable improvement in access** to medical products for people in low or middle-income economies without undermining the system of intellectual property rights, which serves as an incentive for

future research and development. An important area of concern is the strengthening of medicine regulatory authorities in developing countries to accelerate the registration of new medical products.

- **Combat non-communicable diseases and promote a drug and addiction policy that is rooted in health and human rights** by engaging with multilateral forums and global initiatives, e.g. to reduce the impact of harmful environmental factors and of malnutrition on health, as well as bilateral programmes. Switzerland promotes a health-based and human rights-based drug policy. It is committed to ensuring that multilateral forums take no regressive steps in this area and that linkages are established with other thematic areas, e.g. HIV/AIDS.
- **Strengthen healthcare systems** in all aspects, including social protection, to ensure comprehensive healthcare coverage, healthcare personnel, availability of medical products and technologies as well as clear information and financing mechanisms. This is the basis for a functioning healthcare system, good-quality health services and rapid response capabilities during emergencies. With regard to the latter, implementation/adherence to international health regulations of the WHO is inadequate in many countries. Switzerland is committed to enhancing implementation.
- **Strengthen maternal, infant and child health as well as sexual and reproductive health and rights**, especially through contributions to international organisations and through bilateral programmes that support access to healthcare services, family planning and information and education in this area.

#### **5.4 SDG 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all**

Switzerland offers many and varied high-quality learning opportunities at all levels and in all areas. The cantons and municipalities are responsible for compulsory schooling (primary and lower secondary level; also kindergarten in the majority of cantons). In the area of post-compulsory education, the Federal Government, cantons and businesses work together closely. The Federal Government and cantons have a constitutional obligation to ensure the equal recognition of general and vocational courses, and the quality and accessibility of the education system. Together they agree on targets and topics to further develop the education system. The Swiss Education Report, which is published every four years, reports on the degree to which targets have been achieved.

##### **Bolstering equality of opportunity and inclusion**

Primary and secondary education (lower secondary) are compulsory and free for all children in Switzerland. Ninety-five per cent of children attend state schools. Some 90 per cent of young people and adults aged under 25 hold at least an upper secondary qualification (VET programme or general preparation for tertiary education). Although the high quality of Switzerland's education system is confirmed by the OECD, gender disparities and inequalities due to social, health and cultural reasons are still in evidence. Switzerland's education policy aims to identify these early and address them through cross-cutting actions. Migration brings additional challenges, for example integrating traumatised children, or youth and young adults who arrive late with no basic education and no knowledge of Switzerland's national languages. The cantonal integration programmes specifically target and support these groups in the areas of early intervention, language, education and employability. Inclusion and equality of opportunity are supported by cultural participation that includes all sections of the population.

##### **Promoting and providing access to early childhood education for all children**

Childcare costs for parents in Switzerland are high by international comparison. The state's contribution to early childhood education (0.2 per cent of GDP) is well below the OECD average of 0.6 per cent of GDP. However, Switzerland has significantly expanded its early intervention family support services in recent decades. Tailoring the services to the specific

needs of parents (e.g. in the case of irregular working hours or during the holidays) is a challenge. At cantonal level, a range of other challenges have yet to be tackled, such as positioning early childhood education in the Swiss education system, training enough teachers, improving the financial sustainability of childcare and setting up a national monitoring and reporting system. Early language support is an additional challenge, in particular for children from families with a migration background. This is being addressed through specific integration measures within the framework of cantonal integration programmes. These include early language teaching at daycare facilities, childminders and playgroups, as well as support from the parents' advice service.

### **Safeguarding the future of vocational education and training**

Vocational education and training takes place at upper secondary and tertiary level. In Switzerland, some two thirds of young people complete dual-track vocational training courses at upper secondary level. The proportion of young people with the necessary skills and knowledge to exercise a trade or profession is therefore very high.

Switzerland's education system is characterised by a high level of permeability. Those who hold a vocational qualification can obtain a vocational baccalaureate, and if they pass a university aptitude test, can be admitted to university. Conversely, students who obtain a federally recognised academic baccalaureate and who have a year of work experience can enrol at a university of applied sciences. Dual-track vocational education and training is a successful model. However, it currently faces significant challenges driven by the megatrends of digitisation, globalisation, the move away from a manufacturing-based society to a service-based society and increasing professional mobility. For example, recognition of foreign qualifications is often a burdensome and lengthy process, which can hinder labour market integration for migrants. It is important to take a proactive approach to these developments and to view them as an opportunity. To this end, the 'VPET 2030' concept was drawn up as a basis to ensure collective and targeted action by the Federal Government, cantons and industry.

### **Promoting education for sustainable development (ESD) at all levels**

ESD is one of the common education policy topics defined by the Federal Government and cantons for the Swiss Education Area that is to be jointly addressed. In particular, the aim is to promote the personal responsibility and initiative of individuals and their ability to act as multipliers for sustainable thinking and action. The cantons and Federal Government support the integration of ESD at all levels and in all areas of education. There are plans to better establish ESD in secondary schools, as well as in compulsory education and vocational training. The Federal Government and cantons jointly support the national ESD competence centre, [éducation21](#).

The main challenges lie in delivering ESD in a way that is appropriate for the target groups in secondary schools, in vocational training and in non-formal education contexts. Furthermore, the status of the *Global Citizenship Education concept*, which is a focus of the Swiss Commission for UNESCO, needs to be definitively clarified in relation to ESD. In addition to formal and non-formal education, ESD can also be strengthened through awareness-raising activities in libraries.

*An example of how Switzerland is implementing SDG 4*

### **Sustainable education for children and young people**

Children and young people are the ones who will have to deal with the medium and long-term consequences of poor sustainability in the future. How does society empower them to do so, and how does it educate them and teach them about sustainable behaviour? These questions are addressed by *éducation21*, a platform supported by the Federal Government, cantons and civil society. It is the Swiss competence centre for ESD, trains teachers and provides teaching materials and financial support.

<http://www.education21.ch>

### **Switzerland's international contribution**

Education is an essential prerequisite for development. In the world's least developed countries, however, only 57 per cent of pupils complete primary school and only around 33 per cent complete lower secondary level. Globally, 263 million children and young people do not attend school. In light of this, Switzerland has set itself the goal of making the right to education a priority of its international cooperation work. The aim is to promote the establishment and development of education systems in developing countries based on the criteria of effectiveness, efficiency and equality of opportunity. Switzerland works to ensure that ESD topics are included in basic and vocational education curricula. Switzerland's efforts concentrate on:

- **Improving governance of national education systems** by helping developing countries develop education policies, build structures and institutional capacities, decentralise the sector and involve the private sector in the governance of vocational education and training.
- **Strengthening basic education and vocational training and facilitating the transition to working life** with a focus on teaching basic skills for survival, political participation, economic integration, peaceful coexistence and responsible use of resources in basic education. Vocational education and training programmes should teach practical skills which offer good earning potential. Careers guidance and advice is also supported to facilitate the transition from basic education to vocational training and working life.
- **Improving the quality of lessons and increasing labour market relevance** so that education systems in developing countries achieve better learning outcomes. This may involve interventions that improve the performance of teachers and trainers in the classroom, workshop or business, such as on-site basic and further training for teachers; introducing innovative learning methods; developing new teaching plans and teaching materials; and offering lessons in students' native language.
- **Fostering inclusion and equality of opportunity** with a particular focus on disadvantaged and marginalised groups, such as girls, children in rural areas, children from poor families, as well as children and young people who as a result of crises, fragile contexts, forced displacement or migration have dropped out of the school system or labour market. These groups are offered support through flexible courses, such as catch-up and crash courses in basic education.

## **5.5 SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls**

Gender equality, particularly in the family, in education and in the workplace, and the right to equal pay for work of equal value are enshrined in the Swiss Federal Constitution. The implementation of these principles in the workplace is governed by the Gender Equality Act. Gender equality is one of the Federal Council's priorities. Switzerland ratified the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women and regularly reports on its implementation in Switzerland.



### **Protecting girls and women from discrimination and implementing equal pay**

In Switzerland women's median pay is 15 per cent lower than men's. Some 40 per cent of this difference cannot be explained by objective factors. In order to respect the constitutional principle of equal pay, relevant measures are to be incorporated in the Gender Equality Act. In public procurement, the Federal Government requires suppliers to comply with equal pay requirements and conducts checks. The Federal Administration as a major employer regularly reviews compliance with equal pay requirements. Switzerland has made progress in implementing gender equality in education, as shown by the high proportion of female students at Swiss universities and universities of applied sciences. This percentage decreases, however, the higher up the academic hierarchy you go. Establishing equal pay for men and women still remains a challenge.

### **Recognising unpaid work and improving compatibility of family and career**

The Federal Government is committed to ensuring better compatibility of family and career and improving the status of unpaid work. Those who can only work part time or not at all due to family commitments are partly protected by the social security system. In addition, there are specific measures in place to support people who mainly care for their families. In the event of a divorce or dissolution of a registered partnership, the income of the two partners is added together and halved so that neither party is disadvantaged when it comes to calculating old age and disability benefits. In the case of divorce, any occupational pension assets are split 50/50 between the parties.

The Federal Government provides financial support to help cover childcare costs. As part of the Skilled Workers Initiative, relatives who act as carers for sick family members receive support so they can retain their jobs despite the additional workload. One challenge is the significant differences between men and women in occupational benefits schemes as the high proportion of women who work part time is disproportionately reflected in pensions. The major issues in this area include a social insurance system that is based on traditional family roles; people who work as nurses or carers receiving very low second pillar pensions in retirement; and a lack of childcare places in certain regions despite systematic start-up funding, which means high costs for families.

### **Protecting women and girls from gender-based violence**

Violence against women and domestic abuse are problems in Swiss society, too. Three out of four victims are women. Switzerland has implemented various measures, for example domestic violence is comprehensively covered as a punishable offence in the Swiss Criminal Code. The Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence entered into force in Switzerland on 1 April 2018. The Swiss Civil Code and Swiss Criminal Code have been amended to better protect victims of domestic violence. Every year, the Federal Government organises a national conference on domestic violence involving the public and experts. It supports a national centre of competence against forced marriages and has a national action plan to tackle human trafficking. Female genital mutilation and forced marriage are expressly prohibited in the Swiss Criminal Code. As part of its migration and health policy, the Federal Government provides for prevention and awareness-raising measures on female genital mutilation and aims to better inform women on protection options for victims of domestic violence and forced marriage. Reproductive health is a topic on the curriculum at primary and lower secondary level schools.

### **Promoting the participation of women at all levels of decision-making in economic, political and public life**

The Federal Government fosters the participation of women at all levels of decision-making in social, economic, political and public life. As a major employer, it is important that the Federal

Administration sets an example in this respect. In its personnel strategy, the Federal Government has set itself targets for the representation of women in middle and senior management. It also offers its employees flexible working conditions, including part-time working for executive positions. Women should make up 30 per cent of the boards of federal-government associated businesses by 2020. For extra-parliamentary commissions there is an ordinance-regulated quota in place which stipulates that at least 30 per cent of members must be women; in the longer term there should be equal representation.

The Federal Government supports the participation of well-qualified women in the labour market through financial support, tax-deductible childcare costs and by funding projects that promote family-friendly working conditions. As part of the revision of company law, the Federal Government intends to introduce targets for the representation of both sexes on boards of directors and executive boards in large listed corporations. Women are still significantly under-represented in relevant political and economic decision-making bodies and in executive positions. They make up less than a third of the members of the Federal Assembly, cantonal governments and parliaments and municipal governments. This starts with adequate representation on the electoral lists. There is still work to do in the private sector, where the proportion of women on executive boards is stuck at around a quarter.

*An example of how Switzerland is implementing SDG 5*

**Companies voluntarily review their gender pay gap**

Most countries still have a long way to go before they achieve gender equality. A key aspect is wage discrimination against women. This should no longer exist in Switzerland as men and women are equal before the law. Thanks to the *Commitment to equal pay* initiative, which is supported by the social partners, companies have four years in which to voluntarily review and rectify their pay practices. Fair pay is also an important element of employer branding to attract and retain staff.

<https://www.elep.ch>

**Switzerland's international contribution**

Gender equality is one of Switzerland's strategic goals and the country takes an integrated approach to equality where possible. Within the framework of the competent UN commissions and multilateral development agencies, Switzerland is actively committed to the development of international policies and standards designed to achieve gender equality and tackle discrimination against women. It conducts policy dialogue on gender equality with its partner countries. In its projects women are actors and partners; men are aware of the issue of equality and are actively involved in all activities. Switzerland systematically considers gender equality in context analysis, planning, implementation and monitoring. In the promotion of peace and human security, a gender perspective is adopted where appropriate. Switzerland's efforts concentrate on:

- **Tackling gender-based violence and harmful practices** by developing international standards concerning violence against women and girls and actively supporting the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. Switzerland supports projects in developing countries that tackle gender-based violence, protect victims of violence and raise awareness and educate about the negative consequences of child and early marriage, forced marriage and female genital mutilation. It supports humanitarian agencies and projects that combat gender-based violence in crisis settings.
- **Promoting the participation of women at all levels of decision-making in economic, political and public life** by increasing the participation of women in local authorities, parliaments and committees, and the involvement of women in the

management of natural resources, such as land and water, basic services and public finances. Switzerland also supports the participation of women in peace processes, conflict prevention, mediation, post-conflict reconstruction, dealing with the past and the prevention of atrocities.

- **Increasing the economic independence of women** by securing women's land and property rights, supporting their participation in value chains and their access to markets and employment, by involving employees in designing working conditions and gender-sensitive vocational training courses and promoting women's access to financial services. Switzerland also supports normative processes to recognise, reduce and redistribute unpaid domestic and care work, and to improve inheritance and ownership rights for women.

## **5.6 SDG 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all**

Switzerland has extensive water resources: some 1,500 lakes, numerous rivers, including the sources of Europe's two largest (the Rhine and the Rhone), as well as groundwater, glaciers and snow. The entire population has access to drinking water. There are also efficient wastewater treatment plants that are operated according to the polluter pays principle.

Under its constitutional mandate, the Federal Government ensures the economic use and protection of water resources, and provides protection against the harmful effects of water. Water resource management is the responsibility of the cantons. The municipalities are responsible for drinking water supply and wastewater treatment. Public actors work with industry and agriculture to ensure drinking water supply and the protection of water ecosystems. Lakes, rivers and groundwater are publicly owned. In order to use the water, a concession from the cantons is required.

### **Implementing efficient and integrated water resources management**

The Federal Government promotes integrated watershed management in order to ensure high-quality water supply and the production of food and energy. A number of cantons have incorporated watershed management in their legislation and carry out regional projects with the support of the Federal Government. The cantons determine the appropriate minimum residual flows for each watercourse and withdrawal site. Switzerland has reduced its water withdrawal over the last ten years. With a view to adapting to climate change, the Federal Government is also planning to collect more in-depth hydrological data. The measurement data are used as part of targeted studies to help understand hydrological phenomena and ultimately to provide information to all users, i.e. public bodies, the general public and the private sector.

Switzerland's water resources face certain challenges, however. Climate change has resulted in local water shortages in recent years. Current scientific studies conclude that this problem is likely to be exacerbated in the summer months in future. Glacial melting is also set to accelerate, which in the longer term will lead to a decrease in runoff. An increase in winter precipitation coupled with a rising snow limit and snow melting could lead to increased flooding in winter and spring.

### **Improving water quality, especially with regard to micropollutants**

Water is the most important foodstuff. Switzerland sets limits for drinking water contamination, and carries out inspections to check they are being complied with. It implements the WHO Protocol on Water and Health. A total of 97.3 per cent of the Swiss population is connected to a wastewater treatment plant, of which 70 per cent carry out tertiary treatment to remove nutrients. The rest are isolated settlements for which local solutions exist. Thanks to the construction of wastewater treatment plants, nitrogen and phosphorous levels in large and medium-sized rivers have been significantly reduced. In light of an increase in micropollutants, Switzerland has taken appropriate measures. Wastewater treatment plants are being

retrofitted in a technologically appropriate manner. Priority is given to water bodies that could pose a risk to neighbouring countries, those with a small capacity and those that are used for abstraction of drinking water. Fifty per cent of urban wastewater is to be treated for micropollutants in Switzerland by 2040. In addition the Federal Council has adopted an 'Action plan on risk reduction and the sustainable use of pesticides', which has three objectives: protecting humans, protecting the environment and protecting crops. The action plan is mainly geared towards agriculture, but also applies to parks, sports fields and private gardens. The legislation on chemical substances has introduced measures on SVHCs (substances of very high concern), in particular through an authorisation procedure which encourages the use of alternatives. SVHCs are products that are highly toxic to human health or that are persistent in the environment.

A growing challenge is ensuring wastewater treatment plants effectively remove micropollutants, which come from medicines, detergents, personal care products, pesticides, heavy metals and biocides, as well as diffuse agricultural pollution into the smallest watercourses. This also has an impact on groundwater quality. Switzerland also faces other challenges that are becoming increasingly important: more intensive land use (urbanisation); traffic pollution; industry; commerce and leisure activities that jeopardise groundwater basins; and the use of hydroelectric power.

### **River renaturation**

The morphology of Switzerland's watercourses has altered along 40 per cent of their length in the past, whether due to flood control structures, the production of hydropower (dams) and the reclamation of land for agriculture and settlement. This has caused many problems for the functioning of ecosystems and the protection of flora and fauna. More than 24 per cent of watercourses are in a poor ecomorphological state, while 85 per cent of wetlands and river bank areas are under threat.

Switzerland's water protection legislation calls for renaturation of rivers and lakes to restore their natural functions and reinforce their benefits to society. Over the next 80 years, 4,000 kilometres of watercourses are set to be restored. Implementation will primarily be the responsibility of the cantons and owners of hydropower plants. In line with the Agriculture Act, the Water Protection Act provides for the financing of areas to promote biodiversity in the aquatic environment. By 2030, more than 1,000 barriers to fish migration, 100 hydropower plants that cause artificial runoff fluctuations, as well as 500 hydropower plants and other facilities that lead to bedload deficit in watercourses, are to be rehabilitated.

### **Switzerland's international contribution**

Eighty-two per cent of Switzerland's water requirement ('water footprint') is consumed outside of Switzerland, mainly to produce imported goods and often in regions where water resources are already scarce. Water is therefore one of the priorities of Switzerland's international cooperation. Switzerland contributes its experience and expertise in various contexts. As a country bordering numerous transboundary watercourses, it is involved in a number of joint water commissions in Europe. At global level it also supports initiatives that aim to provide access to drinking water and sanitation and ensure sustainable management of water resources regionally and globally. In addition, Switzerland is committed to integrated monitoring of surface water and groundwater. Monitoring and reporting comprise the progress made in achieving the targets, as well as international financial flows and framework conditions. Switzerland campaigns for enhanced UN coordination in the water sector as part of the UN reforms. It supports the human right to clean drinking water and sanitation. Switzerland's priorities are:

- **Ensuring access to drinking water and sanitation for all** by supporting innovative ways of supplying drinking water to poor populations, efficient management of public utilities, and research and development of facilities to treat household water and store drinking water safely. Switzerland advocates better water infrastructure financing modalities through international financial institutions and public-private partnerships,

ensures drinking water quality in crisis situations through its humanitarian aid and delivers technologies to increase water efficiency.

- **Improving water quality and preventing pollution** by supporting the treatment and reprocessing of wastewater, fostering legal and institutional framework conditions for safe wastewater management and developing economically sustainable business models for sewage management and for water treatment and reuse. Switzerland supports good agricultural practices (e.g. reduced or adapted use of pesticides) to prevent pollution and protect ecosystems. It also promotes the development of water quality monitoring systems. In crisis situations Switzerland provides emergency sanitation facilities and faeces disposal systems and helps reconstruct and rehabilitate water and wastewater infrastructure.
- **Promoting integrated water resources management and transboundary water cooperation** by ratifying the relevant European and global conventions (e.g. the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes; the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands) and actively participating in transboundary water protection commissions and their implementation programmes. Switzerland also works to provide protection against water-borne diseases. Global water scarcity has caused the number of water-related conflicts to increase. Through its *Blue Peace* initiative in the Middle East and Central Asia, Switzerland therefore fosters approaches that use water as a basis for peace and cooperation. Switzerland is committed to implementing the recommendations of the Global High-Level Panel on Water and Peace.
- **Using water efficiently and sustainably – protecting water ecosystems** through its commitment to the development of the ISO water footprint standard. Together with the private sector, Switzerland supports increased water efficiency and productivity in agriculture, integrated water management in the light of climate change, and the protection and restoration of water ecosystems, wetlands, forests and mountain ecosystems.

*An example of how Switzerland is implementing SDG 6*

#### **Sharing water knowledge**

Four out of every five litres of water consumed in Switzerland is virtual water embedded in imported goods. At the same time, Switzerland has a well-developed water supply system. It therefore seems logical for the country to share water knowledge with other countries, seek new solutions and contribute its expertise in developing and emerging countries. The public sector and civil society work hand in hand at *solidarit'eau suisse*, while the *Swiss Water Partnership* also involves the scientific community and businesses. Many local waterworks in Switzerland also donate one centime per cubic metre of water to aid projects.

<https://www.swisswaterpartnership.ch/>, <http://www.solidariteausuisse.ch>

## **5.7 SDG 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all**

Switzerland currently has a secure energy supply. However, its energy system still predominantly relies on non-renewable resources, with corresponding implications for the climate and the environment.

Current economic and technological developments as well as political decisions in Switzerland and abroad are resulting in fundamental changes to energy markets. The new energy legislation and the additional measures under the 2050 Energy Strategy aim to ensure a sufficient, broad-based, reliable, economical and clean energy supply. This will involve increasing energy efficiency and expanding the use of renewables, such as hydropower, solar, wind, geothermal and biomass. At the same time, the use of fossil fuels, and thus carbon

emissions, are to be reduced. No more framework permits for the construction of new nuclear plants will be granted. In this way Switzerland intends to reduce dependence on imported energy and increase domestic production of renewable energy, which will also contribute to the reduction of imported energy.

### **Ensuring a sufficient, broad-based, reliable, economical and clean energy supply**

Switzerland is entirely reliant on imports for natural gas and crude oil, but currently has a high level of energy security. This is achieved through a functioning wholesale market, broadly diversified means of transport and import portfolios. In addition, Switzerland holds petroleum reserves to safeguard supply, which cover at least 90 days of net imports. Thanks to dual-fuel furnaces, it is also possible to substitute a certain proportion of gas consumption with domestic heating oil. Switzerland also enjoys a high level of security of electricity supply. Domestic production in 2016 generated 59 per cent of electricity from renewable hydropower and an additional 33 per cent of electricity from nuclear power plants with a high degree of autonomy and reliability. Switzerland's security of supply depends in particular on the interplay between domestic power plant capacities and its strong integration in the European electricity grid thanks to cross-border capacities; it is reliant on electricity imports primarily during the winter months.

The independent Federal Electricity Commission regularly monitors security of electricity supply and proposes measures to the Federal Council if significant medium- or long-term risks are identified. To further enhance security of supply, Switzerland improved the legal framework conditions to ensure the timely development of electricity grids in line with demand.

A particular challenge lies in guaranteeing the stability and resilience of the system if an increasing amount of electricity is fed in from decentralised, renewable, partly weather-dependent energy sources. This calls for new and innovative solutions, such as smart grids.

### **Increasing energy efficiency and reducing consumption**

The energy and CO<sub>2</sub> legislation comprises financial incentives, subsidies and technical requirements to reduce the power consumption of buildings, transport and electrical appliances, and to increase energy efficiency. Under the new Energy Act, the target values for the average reduction in consumption per person per year compared with the year 2000 are 16 per cent by 2020 and 43 per cent by 2035 for energy and 3 per cent by 2020 and 13 per cent by 2035 for electricity. The measures are geared towards these target values. In the building sector, the measures focus on CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from fuel and the building programme, which encourage homeowners to use more waste heat and renewable energies, and to renovate their homes to be more energy efficient. Technical regulations to reduce energy consumption are used for electrical appliances. There are financial incentives for companies to replace inefficient appliances, lights or other equipment. By 2020 the 'Confederation: exemplary in energy' initiative aims to increase energy efficiency across the Federal Administration and federal-government associated businesses by 25 per cent compared with 2006. In the area of mobility, the focus is on CO<sub>2</sub> emissions targets for cars and the introduction of a CO<sub>2</sub> target for light commercial and articulated vehicles. By agreeing targets with energy-intensive industrial and service companies, the Federal Government promotes more efficient use of fuel and electricity. Private and public sector research play a key role in the development and implementation of effective solutions for the sustainable transformation of the energy system. The Federal Government supports pilot and demonstration projects and fosters energy research through various activities including the Swiss Coordinated Energy Research action plan. In addition, through the 'EnergieSchweiz' programme it provides information, advice and training to help cantons, cities and municipalities, as well as the general public and companies, implement measures to reduce energy consumption and use renewable energies.

A particular challenge involves reducing energy consumption sustainably despite increasing mobility, new lifestyles and developments that are based on energy consumption or the rebound effect.

## Increasing the share of renewable energies in total energy consumption

Under the Energy Act, the share of renewable energies in total energy consumption is to be continuously increased. These include hydropower, solar, biomass, wind and geothermal. The following target values apply for electricity production: by 2035 the average domestic electricity production from hydropower should amount to at least 37,400 GWh/year (compared with 35,724 GWh/year in 2016), while electricity production from other renewable energies should total at least 4,400 GWh/year by 2020 and at least 11,400 GWh/year by 2035 (compared with 3,164 GWh/year in 2016). Since 2009, electricity production from renewable energies has mainly been encouraged through feed-in remuneration. Instead of feed-in remuneration, investment subsidies were introduced in 2018 for certain hydroelectric power plants (with production capacity of more than 10 MW, and expansion or renewal of existing plants with capacity between 300 kW and 10 MW); biomass plants (incinerators, sewage gas plants and wood-fired power plants) and photovoltaic installations. Between 2018 and 2022, large existing hydroelectric power plants (with production capacity of more than 10 MW) can claim a market premium for electricity which has to be sold for less than the cost of production.

The cantons need to provide for rapid approval procedures for renewable energy plants. However, there may be conflicts of interests between hydroelectric, solar and wind plants and nature and heritage protection groups. The authorities have to weigh up all public interests when deciding whether to approve a project.

Strengthening renewable energy offers numerous opportunities for investment and for a modern and clean energy supply. At the same time, the expansion of renewable energy represents a major challenge for the energy system as renewables have to be integrated into the system, which must be adapted to accommodate them. Even with the planned expansion of renewable energies, dependence on fossil fuels remains high.

### *An example of how Switzerland is implementing SDG 7*

#### **More than 400 municipalities are redesigning their energy policies**

In federalist Switzerland, every municipality has its own energy, transport and environment policy. Local authorities are increasingly incorporating sustainability considerations in such policies, for example by adapting building regulations. More than 400 municipalities support the *Energiestadt* association, which offers advice, evaluates performance and awards local authorities with a label. The *Energiestadt* label is awarded to municipalities that promote renewable energies and sustainable mobility and focus on efficient use of resources.

The *European Energy Award* was established in 2003 inspired by *Energiestadt* and similar initiatives. This alliance involves 1,500 municipalities and reaches over 50 million people in eight countries.

[www.energiestadt.ch](http://www.energiestadt.ch), <http://www.european-energy-award.org/>

## Switzerland's international contribution

According to the UN, some 1.1 billion people worldwide do not have access to electricity and 3 billion people rely on traditional biomass as an energy source for cooking. Ensuring a reliable and affordable energy supply is therefore essential to improving living conditions and promoting economic development. This should primarily be achieved through renewable energies and an improvement in global energy efficiency so that global warming does not increase despite increasing global energy consumption. Switzerland encourages the proliferation of environmental goods and renewable energy in economic and free trade agreements, e.g. by improving market access and fostering private investment in environmental goods and renewables. In addition, such agreements include provisions on trade and sustainable development. Switzerland provides technical assistance and investment

to help developing countries produce electricity, heating and cooling in a cleaner, more efficient, more accessible and more affordable manner while bearing in mind economic sustainability. The country has specific expertise in hydropower, which it can contribute at international level. Switzerland is also committed to energy efficiency at local level. Due to cross-border grids and energy flows, there is a mutual dependence in international energy supply and Switzerland participates in the relevant international bodies that regulate it. Switzerland's efforts concentrate on:

- **Encouraging reliable, accessible and affordable energy supply** by facilitating access to public funding sources and private investors, as well as through the creation of favourable framework conditions such as energy efficiency regulations in the building sector; regulations and tariff setting for clean energies; improving the investment climate for energy infrastructure and clean energy technology; and fossil fuel subsidy reform.
- **Promoting renewable energies and energy efficiency** by financing projects in the areas of energy infrastructure, biomass, small hydropower, photovoltaics and energy and resource efficiency, e.g. in the building sector; and advising governments, public institutions and utilities on using new technologies, maintaining facilities and setting appropriate tariffs. In addition, support in energy planning and energy management is offered to local authorities based on the European Energy Award, which was co-developed by Switzerland. Authorities, experts and the private sector engage in multilateral dialogue to promote the development of climate-friendly and sustainable energy solutions, the diffusion of environmentally-friendly technologies and the phasing-out of fossil fuel subsidies.

## **5.8 SDG 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all**

Switzerland has a high level of prosperity. It has high productivity, low unemployment, high quality of work and a high level of labour market participation. As an economy based on the division of labour, Switzerland is strongly integrated in the global economy. Its export economy benefits from a developed network of free trade agreements and contractually-secured access to the EU. Swiss economic policy aims to achieve long-term economic growth through further increases in productivity and a higher level of labour market participation. To safeguard prosperity in all of Switzerland's regions, the Federal Government supports rural areas, mountain areas and border regions in its regional economic development.

### **Increasing productivity to secure long-term prosperity**

By international comparison Switzerland has high productivity and one of the highest GDPs per capita in the world, although productivity growth has slipped since 2010. If Switzerland wants to create better jobs in the long term and further increase prosperity, it will have to increase productivity. The Federal Government therefore pursues a competition-friendly, sectorally-neutral economic policy, which aims to further open up the economy, facilitate imports, eliminate trade barriers, maintain and develop the bilateral path with the EU and reduce red tape. At the same time it is important to preserve Switzerland's strengths, such as its solid state budget, high level of education and high degree of legal certainty. This also includes an efficient and functioning social partnership agreement, which, with the support of the Federal Government and flexible solutions at sector and company level, means the labour market can rapidly adapt to changes.

Switzerland's economic policy faces various challenges. For example, economic structural change is likely to continue in the direction of domestically-focused areas, where productivity growth is lower than in the export sector. Switzerland also has high price levels, which weaken consumer spending power and make company outlays more expensive. The digital revolution presents an opportunity for the Swiss economy, however. To harness this opportunity, it is important to optimise the framework conditions so that the digital economy can develop and Switzerland can maximise the benefits of digitisation.



## **Maintaining and enhancing high labour force participation and good working conditions**

Switzerland has a flexible labour market, an efficient social partnership, active labour market policy and an integrated social insurance network. Unemployment is low; labour market participation is high and female participation is rising. To maintain high labour market participation and good working conditions, the potential of the domestic workforce needs to be better utilised and the participation rate of women further increased. To this end, improving work-family reconciliation measures is a priority. The Federal Government and cantons also promote the professional integration of young people and apprenticeship marketing. Unemployment insurance supports catch-up courses, which aim to get people back into work. The Federal Government also encourages the labour market participation of older people and vulnerable groups, such as those with mental or intellectual disabilities. One challenge is the reintegration into the labour market of unemployed people aged over 50.

Digitisation poses a challenge for the labour market as repetitive jobs disappear and the demand for more highly qualified workers increases. That said, the Swiss labour market is in a very good position due to the low unemployment rate, the high proportion of qualified workers and the innovative capacity of science, industry and business. To maximise the benefits of digitisation for the labour market, some changes to the general framework should be reviewed, such as adapting apprenticeships to lifelong learning and aligning social insurance with new forms of work.

## **Making Switzerland an attractive and sustainable tourist destination**

Tourism is an important sector of the Swiss economy, particularly in the Alpine region. Switzerland offers a wealth of scenic and cultural attractions in a small area, outstanding infrastructure and quality-oriented tourism companies. It intends to preserve the qualities of the tourism sector and the country's outstanding scenic and architectural assets and resources; further enhance the appeal of Switzerland as a tourist destination; sustainably exploit existing potential and generate resource-friendly growth. The Federal Government's tourism policy therefore aims to improve the overall conditions, promote entrepreneurship, harness the opportunities of digitisation and improve Switzerland's attractiveness and market presence. It works with the industry associations and cantonal tourism offices to implement the policy.

A key challenge for Switzerland remains the coordination of its tourism policy with its environmental policy (protection of habitats, congestion, noise, etc.), spatial planning (curbing urban sprawl) and management of protected areas (preservation of tangible cultural and natural heritage). Soft or sustainable tourism still only accounts for a small portion of total tourism, but it is fast becoming more important. Climate change is another challenge, and one which particularly affects the Alpine regions. It will lead to less guaranteed snow in ski resorts, changing landscapes, more natural hazards such as slope instability and rock falls, and a further decline in biodiversity in mountain regions.

*An example of how Switzerland is implementing SDG 8*

### **Maximising the potential of skilled workers in the labour market**

Every economy has a great deal of untapped potential as not everyone who can and wants to work is economically productive. In Switzerland, the *Skilled workers initiative plus* addresses this challenge by encouraging women, older workers, provisionally admitted persons and recognised refugees to participate in the labour market. It also funds retraining and further training. The programme is supported by the Federal Government, the cantons, social partners, associations and companies.

## Switzerland's international contribution

Switzerland's economic and trade policy measures within the framework of its international cooperation help reduce poverty and global threats, and promote peace and human rights. The primary goal is to contribute to sustainable and inclusive growth in developing countries and to increase their resilience in the globalised world economy. Switzerland focuses its efforts on middle income countries where worldwide the majority of the population live in extreme poverty and where economic and social development can influence whole regions. The priorities are:

- **Improving the economic conditions in developing countries** by promoting a clear legal framework, good governance and functioning public infrastructure so that small and medium-sized enterprises can develop and grow. Switzerland also helps developing countries become more competitive and fosters their integration in sustainable value chains, e.g. by promoting sustainability standards (labour and environmental standards and quality management) throughout the production cycle, and responsible use of natural resources. Switzerland also promotes frameworks for appropriate and economically sound intellectual property protection.
- **Expanding and developing the global trading system with the active participation of developing countries.** Within the framework of WTO negotiations, Switzerland works towards improving market access for developing countries, supporting their integration in the global economy, improving existing regulations and developing new ones where necessary, and promoting coherence between the multilateral trading system and other policies (environment, development, etc.). It systematically implements all WTO rulings in favour of developing countries and the least developed countries, supports the WTO's Aid for Trade initiative and helps developing countries implement WTO rules. Meanwhile, Switzerland is very active in concluding new free trade agreements and extending existing ones to guarantee the Swiss economy access to the most important foreign markets. Such free trade agreements contain trade-related provisions on environmental and labour standards and recognise the positive correlation between trade and sustainable development. They require the parties to comply with and effectively implement the applicable Multilateral Environment Agreements, the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and the core conventions of the International Labour Organization (ILO) that have been ratified by the parties. They also refer to the protection of human rights and the principles of responsible corporate management.
- **Improving working conditions at global level (*decent work agenda*),** in particular by enhancing the expertise of companies, so as to create more and better jobs. Switzerland is also involved in the ILO's Decent Work programmes to promote decent working conditions, equal pay for men and women and compliance with ILO standards. In addition, it supports the development of guidelines for companies operating internationally, and initiatives on the respect of employment and human rights, including in the value chain.

## 5.9 SDG 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation

The infrastructure in Switzerland is of high quality. However, economic and population growth demand increased efficiency of use and further upgrades. Additional substantial investment is therefore being planned to maintain the high level of technical infrastructure and guarantee its security. Financing for renewal work on electricity and water infrastructure is for the most part secure for the long term. Financing the upgrading and operation of road and rail infrastructure is secured for the time being through new funding at a national level. However, user contributions must be increased over the medium term. Private sector financing seems to be secure for airport infrastructure over the next few years, although Geneva and Zurich airports already operate at full capacity during peak times. All the reserve capacity of both airports will be used up within the next ten to twenty years.

The Swiss industry sector is one of the most competitive worldwide. Its contribution to total economic added value has remained constant at about 26 per cent since the end of the '90s. The share of people working in industry, however, is declining slightly and is currently about 20 per cent. This is due to changing consumer habits, technological progress and rising productivity in industry. Digitisation and automation are important drivers in this process. As an innovative economy, Switzerland uses these drivers to power its continued development and renewal. Rapid technical progress in information and communication technologies (ICT), new business models and the growing importance of data are potential catalysts in that regard.

### **Ensuring a needs-based and solidly financed transport and communication infrastructure**

Switzerland has a dense and high-quality integrated transport system. However, the rail and road network is under a lot of strain in many places from the rapid growth in the transport of people and goods. This leads to rising maintenance costs and the need for upgrades. Incremental upgrades to the rail and road network are therefore scheduled at four to eight year-intervals.

However, that is not sufficient in itself to manage the anticipated increase in traffic. Upgrades are time-consuming, expensive, of limited scope in heavily populated areas and unwanted in remaining green belt areas. The Federal Government, cantons and cities therefore aim to increase the efficiency of use of current infrastructure before upgrading it or building new roads, railways etc. A number of measures are either undergoing implementation, envisaged or under consideration, including innovative transport management, easing peak traffic times through intermodal and use-based mobility pricing, the increased transfer of externalities to road users, the expansion of public transport especially in heavily populated areas and an increase in the proportion of slow traffic (by bicycle, on foot etc.).

The digital networking and steering of the total transport system plus automated and networked vehicles can move the traffic quicker and thus ensure greater efficiency of use. However, this also gives rise to other and also new kinds of challenges. For example, the quantitative impact on transport infrastructure and how it is used are still largely unknown. Other open questions concern data protection, managing transport data and new transport management methods. Digitisation and networking also contain new risks for transport systems (cyber attack for example), which demand measures to strengthen resilience and security.

Internationally competitive and inexpensive telecommunications networks that function reliably all over the country for everyone and are affordable, are essential to the economy, people and the state. They are also a requirement for developing new ways of living and working as well as products and services. Switzerland enjoys a high quality of broadband connectivity by international standards. New frequency resources to develop the mobile signal are needed to meet future user requirements, as is further significant investment in infrastructure. Network expansion is primarily market driven. The strong dependency of telecommunications on electricity poses major risks of disruption and outages affecting important services (internet, emergency numbers etc.) and vulnerability to cyber attacks.

Part of Switzerland's infrastructure is in locations at risk from flooding, landslides, gravitational processes and avalanche. Climate change will increase these risks. It is thus imperative to improve the resilience of critical infrastructures.

### **Improve corporate resource efficiency**

Switzerland does not use many of its own resources to generate its high gross domestic product. Its domestic greenhouse gas emissions per capita are among the lowest in Europe. The connection between growth in raw material consumption and GDP has also weakened in recent years: in 2015, Switzerland consumed 7.9 per cent more raw materials than in 2000, while GDP increased by 30 per cent over the same period. The Federal Government supports the network 'Ressourceneffizienz Schweiz Reffnet.ch' to increase corporate resource

efficiency and makes loans to companies to develop new products and processes through a technology fund.

In spite of domestic progress in improving resource efficiency, the positive development of resource productivity is mainly due to outsourcing resource-intensive production steps outside the country. However, Switzerland's natural resources are not always put to optimal use. The growth policy therefore focuses mainly on quality of growth through increasing the efficiency of all the production factors. The Federal Government promotes innovation in energy and the environment. This is conducive to the advancement of environmental technology, although – unlike the EU – there is no environmental technology verification. There are still challenges in terms of the internalisation of external costs. This would make polluting processes and resources more expensive and thereby add to the appeal of investments in new, environmentally friendly technologies and processes.

### **Strengthen innovation and exploit the opportunities in digitisation**

The quality of education and research in Switzerland is extremely high. Switzerland is a leading country worldwide in terms of the innovativeness of its business sector. The Federal Government promotes cooperation between science and industry and thereby guarantees a high level of autonomy to those parties involved in the advancement of research and innovation. The state also supports the introduction of new technologies to the market and new start-ups through applied research and knowledge transfer from universities to industry.

Switzerland has a major need for professionals in mathematics, IT, natural sciences and technology, to exploit the added value potential of digitisation. The Federal Government and cantons want to support the universities in developing their IT capacity so Switzerland can maintain its position as a leading centre of innovation and research and develop this capability in a targeted way. The Federal Government's main areas of interest are data analytics, data driven innovation, artificial intelligence, resource efficiency, Industry 4.0, robotics and the Internet of Things. At the same time, it is important to manage the challenges posed by digitisation, which stem from the management of research data in the context of big data, and the dangers of data misuse.

*An example of how Switzerland is implementing SDG 9*

#### **Building bridges between universities and the corporate sector**

Transferring research results into practice – the Switzerland Innovation foundation facilitates this transfer at its five locations, which jointly make up the Swiss Innovation Park, where science and business work together to make products and services ready for market. The foundation provides support through infrastructure, know-how and financing for promising areas of the economy.

<https://www.switzerland-innovation.com>

### **Switzerland's international contribution**

Switzerland works towards sustainable industrialisation in developing countries through international cooperation. It promotes a stable economic and financial environment, strengthens the private sector and financial services providers and improves the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Switzerland helps producers and companies to position themselves in value chains and promotes the integration of developing countries into the global economy. It also advocates appropriate and economically expedient protection of intellectual property through the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). Switzerland also supports developing countries in preparing basic infrastructure and mobilises capital for infrastructure investments. This is primarily done in the following ways:

- **Promote resource efficiency and clean technologies.** Developing countries receive support in becoming more innovative, structuring their production in a more inclusive and eco-efficient way and applying a market-economy model. This is done, for example, through providing technical advice on clean, sustainable technologies and production methods, clarifying the legal operating conditions for increasing resource efficiency and facilitating access to the financing of clean technologies. Switzerland is committed at a national and multilateral level to strengthening the green economy and it participates in the WTO negotiations to liberalise trade in environmental goods, particularly as regards increasing resource efficiency and promoting clean technologies.
- **Improve access to financial services for companies and producers.** Switzerland provides technical assistance via bilateral and multilateral channels to develop institutional capacity to strengthen local financial market infrastructure and regulation, thus lowering financial intermediation costs over the medium to long term and encouraging financing in the local currency. Subsidiary to the market, Switzerland also promotes the provision of long-term corporate financing, especially for local SMEs and the development of financial services, e.g. microcredit tailored to companies' specific requirements. The improvement in the legal operating conditions and increased transparency will ensure market access and participation for poor people. There is a particular emphasis on women in this regard as they are particularly disadvantaged in business due to, for example, missing guarantees or legal and cultural barriers to land ownership.
- **Promote access to information and communication technology and the internet,** especially by strengthening a suitable institutional and regulatory framework and developing corresponding capacities and competencies through the international organisations and processes based in Geneva. Switzerland is committed to reducing the digital divide between industrialised, transitional and developing countries and distributes innovative ICT applications, for mobile phones for example. It promotes the use of ICT and mobile technologies in education systems, for example to disseminate knowledge to groups that are hard to reach or provide qualifications for living and working in a digital world. This is all contingent on improved access to (broadband) internet in developing countries.

## 5.10 SDG 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries

Switzerland commits in its constitution to work towards common welfare, inner cohesion, cultural diversity and as much equality of opportunity as possible for its people. The constitution prohibits discrimination on grounds of origin, race, sex, age, language, social status, way of life, religious, ideological or political beliefs or on grounds of physical, mental or psychological disability.

The education system, social partnership, high labour market participation, the social security system and progressive taxation contribute to reducing economic inequalities. Moreover, Switzerland organises social transfers to low-income groups. It promotes the integration of population groups, such as people with disabilities or foreigners through special programmes. A large proportion of taxes is levied by the cantons and municipalities on the basis of their own legal principles, so that they can fulfil their duties. There are regional differences in fiscal capacity. Switzerland balances this by equalising the financial resources and burdens between the Federal Government, cantons and municipalities.

### **Promote equality of opportunity and combat discrimination**

Switzerland aims to promote equality of opportunity among its people by providing basic access to education, healthcare, legal and public security plus broad cultural participation. Switzerland facilitates access for people with disabilities to education and further training, public infrastructure, transport and services through its Disability Discrimination Act. It promotes participation in public and political life through open access to information and

discussion platforms. There are still challenges in terms of protection from discrimination in private-sector employment.

Gender equality is based on the Gender Equality Act (see SDG 5). Switzerland has taken some initial measures to ensure equality for lesbian, homosexual, bisexual, transsexual and intersexual people. These measures include access to a state-approved form of partnership, which is nevertheless not equivalent to marriage, and the review of a simplified procedure to change gender and first name in the civil status register. The extent to which people are discriminated against on a daily basis is largely unknown, as no discrimination-relevant information has been collated to date.

The Swiss Criminal Code contains a provision against racial discrimination. About a quarter of Switzerland's inhabitants have been subjected to discrimination in the past five years, related to their nationality in most cases. The UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination therefore recommends that Switzerland undertake a non-discriminatory review of its naturalisation legislation, measures against racial profiling and the lifting of disproportionate restrictions on freedom of movement for people admitted on a temporary basis.

There are challenges in terms of the practical implementation of anti-discrimination legislation for those affected: high procedural costs in civil proceedings often serve as a barrier to claims against discrimination. A right of collective redress only applies to gender discrimination in the workplace and access to buildings and facilities offering transport services to the disabled. An expansion of the scope of collective legal action is currently under review. Increased protection against discrimination in individual areas of life is currently under review (e.g. working life, foreigner national status, tenancy law, general contract law etc.).

### **Reduce income and wealth inequality**

Switzerland advocates the common welfare of its people through its growth policy, public education system and social security system. Moreover, various policies including rental and housing policy at cantonal and municipal level and economic measures help the poorest sections of the population by lowering consumer prices, for example through reduced import regulations. As cantons and municipalities are mainly responsible for taxation and housing policy, there are inter-cantonal differences in these areas.

The general standard of living in Switzerland is one of the highest in Europe. Equivalised disposable income has increased by 15 per cent since 2000 (median value). Disposable income inequality in Switzerland is in line with the European average. The development of income inequality measured by quintile since 2000, taking account of the, on occasion, wide confidence intervals, shows little change overall. Wealth redistribution through progressive taxation and social transfer contributes to that.

In 2015, the richest 20 per cent had 4.8 times more income than the poorest 20 per cent. In terms of assets, the wealth tax statistics reveal that 62 per cent of taxable assets belonged to the wealthiest 5 per cent in 2010, whereas 25.5 per cent of taxpayers had no taxable assets. Taxation in Switzerland is mainly on income instead of assets, which significantly reduces the impact of progressive taxation on wealth inequality. By international comparison, Switzerland mirrors the OECD average with wealth tax income accounting for 1.8 per cent of GDP.

### **Regulate the financial markets**

Switzerland contributes to shaping the global regulatory agenda as a major international financial centre. It advocates a fair financial architecture whereby the same operating conditions are created and upheld for everyone. Switzerland aims for consolidation and increased emphasis on the effectiveness of the international regulatory agenda. Specifically, this includes monitoring the implementation of international standards relating to financial market stability, taxes, combating money laundering and the financing of terrorism, and implementing these standards independently. Moreover, it has adjusted capital and liquidity requirements for banks to reinforce their financial stability and strengthen their credibility. It

has also comprehensively revised its legislation on financial market infrastructures, derivatives trading and combating money laundering. In addition, the state has established solvency requirements for Swiss insurers, which are recognised as equivalent to EU regulation.

In 2017, Switzerland enacted the legal basis for the international automatic exchange of information in tax matters. This ensures transactions in the Swiss financial centre with foreign clients are regulated according to operating conditions equivalent to the international standard. Other countries which have yet to meet the required standards will be included incrementally at a later stage. Switzerland is considering supporting emerging and developing countries in achieving the required capacity to apply these standards.

### **Promote secure, orderly and regular migration and integration**

Switzerland is committed to immigration insofar as it is in the country's overall economic interest. In December 2017, 68.5 per cent of the entire foreign population comprised people from the EU-28/EFTA states. Third-country nationals accounted for 31.5 per cent. Workers from EU/EFTA countries receive ready access to the Swiss labour market thanks to the Agreement between the European Community and its Member States, of the one part, and the Swiss Confederation, of the other, on the free movement of persons. For all other countries, access is subject to certain conditions, restricted and limited to well-qualified professionals. Switzerland grants asylum to persons who meet the conditions for refugee status. If a person is not granted asylum but returning to their country of origin is nevertheless unreasonable, forbidden or impossible, he or she may remain in Switzerland temporarily. People with no right of residency have to leave Switzerland promptly. They must be returned in security and dignity, and Switzerland offers assistance to specific target groups to ensure that is the case. Switzerland advocates secure migration paths and combats irregular migration. At a European level, it advocates spreading the burden fairly and supporting initial host countries.

Switzerland attaches great importance to the integration of foreign nationals. A quarter of Switzerland's permanent population are foreign nationals, many of whom either were born or grew up in Switzerland. The integration of migrants, people granted temporary residence and recognised refugees is usually organised through conventional public structures, especially in school, vocational education and the workplace. If there is a particular need for integration, specific integration programmes (implemented in the cantons, cities and municipalities) will help with that. The main emphasis is on encouraging and demanding participation in measures to improve language, education, employability, information transfer and social integration. OECD analyses show that integration works well for the most part in Switzerland. At the same time, there are intercultural tensions. As the proportion of people from a migration background is still growing, sustainable integration remains a challenge to economic and social cohesion. Naturalisation requirements are relatively high in Switzerland by European standards. The country has introduced a simplified naturalisation process with effect from January 2018, to make naturalisation more straightforward for third-generation immigrants. Naturalisation in Switzerland takes place at federal, cantonal and municipal level. Some municipalities are more demanding than others as regards, for example, duration of residence, fees or naturalisation tests.

Since the 1950s Switzerland has regularly taken in refugee groups recognised by the UNHCR. Switzerland has taken in a total of 3,580 refugees since 2013 in response to the Syrian conflict, mainly from Lebanon and Jordan. Moreover, in December 2017 Switzerland took in 80 particularly vulnerable people who were evacuated from Libya as part of an emergency humanitarian measure. The country's resettlement programmes include special integration measures, which complement the cantonal integration programmes in a targeted way, such as pre-departure orientation prior to entry or coaching and monitoring during the first two years.

### *An example of how Switzerland is implementing SDG 10*

#### **Promoting the integration of male and female migrants**

Integration means equality of opportunity for everyone in society to meet their basic needs and earn their living independently. A broad coalition of the public sector, social partners, civil society organisations and professional associations works to that end with Dialog Integration through initiatives in 'working', 'growing up' and 'living together'. Over 250 participants take part in the programme implementing improvements and providing support. For example, catering managers receive instruction during their basic training about the integration of foreign employees, and women with a migration background take part in panel discussions about child care and health in early childhood.

<http://www.dialog-integration.ch/>

#### **Switzerland's international contribution**

Swiss international cooperation aims to reduce poverty, discrimination, exclusion and vulnerability in the developing world. Switzerland works with international organisations towards a global framework for secure, orderly and regular migration and a global framework for refugees. It also aims to integrate its international cooperation with its migration policy, in areas and in regions where this makes sense, in order to achieve greater political coherence, have a systemic approach to the opportunities and challenges of migration and safeguard Switzerland's interests. In this context, Switzerland focuses in particular on the fight against poverty and promotes peace and good governance, as these issues are often the cause of migration. Switzerland has the following priorities:

- **Combat discrimination and strengthen vulnerable groups.** International cooperation for Switzerland centres on the protection of groups suffering from discrimination, the advancement of human rights and economic, social, cultural and political inclusion for ethnic and religious minorities. Moreover, Switzerland advocates the universal ratification of existing human rights conventions and is committed to orienting its legal framework to current and future requirements, closing gaps in international law and strengthening the implementation of human rights. It supports developing the capacity of civil rights organisations and human rights institutions working to advance the participation of local communities in decision-making processes, the access of marginalised groups to justice and the social integration of population groups suffering from discrimination.
- **Accounting for the interests of developing countries in global economic governance,** by committing to a rules-based multilateral trading system. Switzerland implements special and differential treatment to benefit developing countries in current WTO agreements. The WTO ministerial decision on export competition in agriculture and the full removal of export subsidies is undergoing implementation. Switzerland is represented in a mixed voting group in the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, which also includes developing and emerging countries.
- **Migration as an opportunity and managing the challenge of development.** Reducing the causes of forced migration through a comprehensive and long-term approach in the region of origin is a priority for Switzerland. In the wake of a disaster or armed conflict, persons who are persecuted, vulnerable or from minority groups should initially find protection in situ or in a secure third country. This is a principle to which Switzerland is committed to ensuring through its humanitarian aid. Migrants should be able to make a positive contribution to development in their country of origin, transit and destination and Switzerland is committed to cooperation between the origin, transit and destination states. This is achieved through political dialogue and bilateral migration partnerships, and by helping to combat irregular and illegal migration through multilateral processes. Switzerland supports first host and transit countries in improving



living conditions for migrants and refugees. This helps to dissuade them from embarking on an irregular and often dangerous onward journey to Europe.

### **5.11 SDG 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable**

Some three-quarters of the Swiss population currently live in cities and agglomerations, which is where over 80 per cent of jobs and 84 per cent of economic output are concentrated. There is normally adequate living space in urban areas, although it is growing scarce in quieter locations. The air quality has generally improved in recent years. However, pollutants and noise emissions still cause health problems in some areas. Households are connected to an advanced basic supply network (drinking water, sanitary wastewater system, electricity, heating, waste disposal, internet access, public services). There are no severely impoverished areas, green and open spaces are generally easily accessible and there is a high level of security. Conservation heritage sites, rich architectural heritage and a high standard of contemporary building culture provide the population with landscapes and settlements which contribute to the quality of life and encourage identification with the surrounding area.

The public and private transport system is well developed, although it is stretched to the limit on frequently travelled routes at peak times. Transport security is extremely high. Unrestricted access to public transport, on the other hand, is not yet ubiquitous. However, under the Disability Discrimination Act it will meet the requirements of travellers with disabilities and age-related limitations by the end of 2023.

The public are included in spatial planning. All state levels (Federal Government, cantons, cities, municipalities) contribute to that end, as does the private sector. The Federal Government defines the operating conditions and ensures country-wide coordination, while the cantons and municipalities are responsible for implementation. Responsibility for nature and heritage protection, agglomeration and regional transport is shared.

#### **Promoting coherent spatial development throughout Switzerland**

The continuous growth of residential areas and increase in mobility plus the distinction between economic and living space have contributed to urban sprawl. Coordinated planning is required to avoid urban sprawl and meet various demands on space. The spatial planning concept in Switzerland is a joint orientation framework of Federal Government, cantons, cities and municipalities. This approach is conducive to cooperation between residential and economic areas and to the review of new ways to balance cost and benefit. The Federal Government thereby makes a material contribution to the preservation and strengthening of Switzerland's internal cohesion. At the same time, coherent spatial planning is also key to regional economic development. Border regions implement cross-border projects and encourage exchanges with neighbouring cross-border regions.

Population development and growing demand for space for living, business, transport and leisure pose challenges on a national level. The resulting conflict over resources increases the pressure on the countryside, cultural heritage, land, agricultural areas and biodiversity and presents a major challenge to cities and municipalities. Political and administrative barriers and setting functional spaces are another big issue for coherent spatial development in Switzerland.

#### **Develop settlements inwards to preserve their architectural heritage, nature and free spaces**

The Federal Government's spatial planning act in conjunction with the Swiss Nature and Cultural Heritage Protection Act form the legal framework for compact settlement development to secure the cultivated land, natural space, countryside and the natural and architectural cultural heritage, while ensuring Switzerland's attractiveness as a place to live and work at the same time. Oversized building zones are being reduced and use of available building land reserves is being improved. The Federal Government provides incentives through its

agglomeration policy to optimally harmonise settlement and traffic. The cantons demonstrate in their structural plans how to proceed with inward quality development. They are mainly responsible for planning and implementation together with the municipalities.

Access to safe public places and to green and open spaces in Swiss cities is ensured for most of the population. It remains a challenge nonetheless to meet people's needs and demands regarding the design of space and settlement areas (freedom of movement, unimpeded access etc.), while having enough natural, green and open space and preserving the architectural heritage, at the same time maintaining architectural quality in urban development. The call to develop residential areas inwards offers the opportunity to improve the urban quality of agglomeration areas, design free spaces and thus positively influence quality of life, landscape, biodiversity and city atmosphere. This requires a comprehensive, culture-based approach to the shared responsibility of politics and society for the built environment.

### **Affordable and appropriate living space for all**

Almost 84 per cent of impoverished households and 57 per cent of households in precarious circumstances do not have appropriate accommodation. Pensioners, single parents and people with a migration background are particularly affected. Their apartments are often too small, poorly equipped and affected by traffic, noise or odorous emissions. Accommodation costs are particularly high in conurbations and it is hard for certain groups to access the housing market.

The Federal Constitution mandates the Federal Government to act against excessive rents and to support the building of accommodation for families, the elderly, those in need and people with disabilities. The Federal Government develops concepts designed to give a boost to the housing sector. It supports projects through pilots designed to improve quality of life and competitiveness as well as strengthening solidarity through innovative approaches. The housing research programme focuses on facilitated access to living space for low-income households. Cantonal structural plans define aims and measures, depending on need, to ensure the availability of adequately priced, family-friendly and age-appropriate housing. In spite of these provisions, it remains a challenge for the Federal Government and cantons to contribute to housing promotion measures resulting in affordable housing in well-located areas.

### **Preventing loss events**

The densification and expansion of residential zones in high-risk areas have increased exposure to natural and social hazards and accidents. Climate change is also likely to cause an increase in extreme natural events in coming years. In addition, there are new risks coming to the fore, such as communication system outages and the spread of infectious diseases.

Preventing and preparing for loss events are the domain of the Federal Government, cantons, municipalities, private sector and science. Responsibility for providing warning and managing these events is also shared between the same entities. Risk-reduction targets and measures are outlined in the climate adjustment strategy, the strategy for natural hazards, strategy for protection of critical infrastructure, cyber strategy, the overarching risk management systems of the Federal Government and cantons and in planning on how to deal with disasters and emergency situations as formulated in the structure and utilisation plans. Strategic implementation is always according to a multi-stakeholder approach and coordinated by the corresponding committees and platforms. The cantons are charged with the implementation in cooperation with the municipalities, with financial support from the Federal Government. Comprehensive claims databases can support this cooperation. However, there is as yet no detailed data.

### *An example of how Switzerland is implementing SDG 11*

#### **How neighbourhoods learn from each other**

Well-functioning areas must encourage movement and contact and enable participation. Sixteen small and medium-sized towns improved the quality of life in their different neighbourhoods. The common denominator: the inhabitants played an active part in development and implementation. The projects relate to, for example, housing, infrastructure, security, traffic, social and integration policy. The 'Netzwerk Lebendige Quartiere' (lively neighbourhood network), supported by the Swiss Cities Association, documents good examples of neighbourhood development, networks and makes new discoveries to benefit a broad public throughout Switzerland.

<https://lebendige-quartiere.ch>

#### **Switzerland's international contribution**

More than half of the world's population lives in cities. Cities are growing disproportionately in the developing world, particularly Africa, as employment prospects are better there than in rural areas. Moreover, education and healthcare are better and more accessible in the cities. By 2040, more poor people are expected to live in cities than in rural areas and cities will play an important role in reducing poverty at a national level. National poverty depends to a large extent on how cities develop as centres of innovation and growth and whether the rural population can benefit from dynamic and inclusive cities through effective connections between city and countryside. International cooperation in Switzerland thus increasingly involves urban centres with their connection to rural regions and supports them in city planning and management, decentralisation processes and strengthening local democratic structures. There is particular emphasis on disaster risk reduction through integral risk management. Switzerland is particularly active in raising awareness of the close interdependencies between disaster risk reduction, climate change and development cooperation, and encouraging the stakeholders in these areas to work more closely together. As a result, the coherent implementation of the Sendai Framework, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris climate agreement is fundamental for Switzerland.

- **Promotion of sustainable and inclusive urbanisation**, by supporting city authorities in formulating and implementing strategies and investment plans for sustained, culture-based, climate-resilient and energy-efficient urban development including transport systems. Encouragement of civic participation, accountability, supervision, decentralisation and connectivity between rural, semi-urban and urban communities. Switzerland supports the development of urban security plans and the local police in ensuring public safety in cities with a high incidence of violence. Switzerland advocates participative city planning that includes the needs of marginalised groups when conducting reconstruction.
- **Disaster risk reduction**, through activities based on the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, such as the promotion of integral risk management and consideration of possible disaster risks in planning. Switzerland supports measures to prevent and mitigate disasters, such as early warning systems, and helps with reconstruction, e.g. the construction of natural disaster-resistant schools and hospitals, reforestation and protection structures, the development of crisis management structures and rescue chains or search and rescue teams for interventions following major earthquakes. The country is involved in international programmes to mitigate major disasters, particularly in terms of their financing and the implementation of market-based insurance and financing solutions.

#### **5.12 SDG 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns**

Consumption in Switzerland has expanded more quickly than the population over the past 30 years. Although certain consumption-related indicators, such as the volume of waste, continue

to rise, the environmental footprint showing the aggregate environmental impact per capita of Swiss consumption has shown a marked downtrend since 2000. This decline is the result in particular of domestic progress on water, air and ozone-depleting substances, but overall it is not sufficient to achieve a level of impact that is congruent with Swiss environmental policy targets. There has also been a sharp increase in the environmental impact abroad caused by consumption in Switzerland. In 2015, it accounted for more than 75 per cent of the total. The per-capita greenhouse gas footprint is stagnating, while the per-capita biodiversity footprint is rising. Extrapolated to the global population, these footprints are incompatible with the Earth's resource capacity. Estimates of future trends show significant room for improvement, in consumption patterns and supply chains, for example, but also make it clear that a greater effort is required where mobility (air travel), in particular, is concerned.

The Federal Government has thus declared its aim to transition to a resource-saving, sustainable economy which fulfils its responsibilities along the entire value chain. It is a challenge it intends to tackle in partnership with the private sector. The Federal Government draws up guidelines and sets frameworks, such as those activities set out in the Green Economy 2013 action plan and the corresponding programme of measures that was adopted in 2016, as well as the Federal Council's 2015 Position Paper and Action Plan on Corporate Social Responsibility, the 2016 National Action Plan for the implementation of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, and the 2013 Background Report on Commodities. The Federal Council reports on the implementation of the action plans on a regular basis, and reviews whether or not they should be amended.

### **Making efficient use of natural resources**

The use of natural resources is determined by patterns of production and consumption. On the production side food, chemicals, the energy sector and construction are particularly relevant to the environment. The extraction and use of natural resources is one of the factors which jeopardises ecosystems, and results in a loss of biodiversity and greater air, soil and water pollution. Around the world, this leads to high financial losses, health problems and the premature deaths of many people. The commitment of the business sector, the scientific community and civil society is vital to bring about a lasting shift towards efficient resource use. The Federal Government is supporting this commitment by providing fundamental knowledge and tools, and by facilitating dialogue between all of the parties concerned. Technical and social innovation, cleantech and green chemistry are also key to reducing resource use.

Internalising the externalities of resource use poses a particular problem. From the economic perspective, the balance between supply and demand is less than optimum if market prices do not fully reflect costs, which is largely still the case in Switzerland at present. These costs cannot always be internalised, but incentive taxes offer a possible approach. In Switzerland, these take the form of the levies on CO<sub>2</sub> and volatile organic compounds (VOCs), as well as the heavy vehicle fee. These allow external costs to be internalised to some degree, and increase the awareness of investors and businesses of the increasing scarcity of natural resources. They do not fully price in the climate change potential of the greenhouse gases they tax, however.

### **Reducing waste**

Switzerland generates around 80–90 million tonnes of waste per year, and volumes continue to grow. Construction waste accounts for the largest share of this. Switzerland's high standard of living means that it has one of the highest levels of municipal waste in the world, at 716 kg per capita, per year. The authorities actively encourage all forms of recycling. In 2016, 96 per cent of glass, 90 per cent of aluminium drinks cans, 82 per cent of PET drinks bottles and 68 per cent of batteries were recycled. The proportion of municipal waste that is recycled rose from a little over 30 per cent in 1992 to around 53 per cent in 2016. Waste that is not collected separately is disposed of in domestic waste incineration plants which meet strict environmental standards and are used to generate energy. Switzerland has a smoothly functioning system of waste management which includes both the public and private sectors. Where action is

concerned, the Federal Government's policy on waste focuses on improving separate collections, on monitoring hazardous waste and other types that are subject to mandatory supervision, and on implementing the producer pays principle. It pays particular attention to packaging materials, new construction materials and construction methods, and on optimising metals recycling.

Preventing waste in the first place is a particular challenge, however. The government is currently drawing up a strategy to this end. There is also room for improvement in how biogenic waste, plastics and batteries are recycled.

### **Promoting the circular economy**

In view of the growing pressure on natural resources and the impact of rising consumption on the environment and social conditions, classic environmental conservation alone is not sufficient to ensure the well-being of current and future generations. There must also be policies designed to preserve these resources and use them efficiently. Such policies must look at the entire resource life cycle and promote what is known as the circular economy. Materials cycles, such as that for phosphorus, should be closed, more metals recovered from the bottom ash of waste incineration plants (a process known as urban mining), and products designed in a way that makes them longer-lasting and easier to repair. Here, the Federal Government is primarily pursuing dialogue (such as the 'Resource Dialogue' of 2017) and encouraging direct responsibility in the various sectors concerned. It has also set quantitative targets in particularly relevant areas. The development and consistent use of secondary raw materials is also intended to help reduce Switzerland's dependence on natural resources, and promote their sparing use worldwide.

### **Preventing food waste**

A large proportion of the environmental impact caused by consumption by the Swiss population, both at home and abroad, is food-related. Food is wasted along the entire length of the value chain, from the field to the plate, by farmers, food companies, distributors, restaurants and consumers themselves.

The Federal Government commissioned a series of studies to create a basis of data that would allow the proportion of avoidable waste at all levels to be estimated. Consumer organisations, retailers, and federal and cantonal authorities are planning a joint campaign to raise awareness among the population about sustainable changes to behaviour. One of the challenges is to reduce food waste in private households, which are responsible for around 45 per cent of all food waste. According to a 2012 study on the composition of our waste, the volume of food waste alone which is processed along with municipal waste by waste incineration plants is some 250,000 tonnes per year. Most of this is attributable to private consumption.

### **Promoting transparent, sustainable value chains**

While many businesses and organisations in Switzerland have systematic environmental management structures and have been able to boost their resource-efficiency, not everyone along the value chain is sufficiently conscious of their responsibility in this regard. This concerns compliance with individual national labour laws and the International Labour Organization's fundamental conventions, respect for national environmental legislation, the implementation of the recommendations of the OECD and UN on supply chain due diligence, and compliance with international industry standards. Switzerland played a very active part in drawing up many of these non-legally-binding standards, and promotes their adoption. Businesses are not under any obligation to report on compliance with social and environmental standards along their value chains, although many large and multinational companies produce such reports voluntarily.

The Federal Government has joined forces with a variety of organisations to work towards more relevant and impactful reporting. Recommendations from high-level institutions from the financial sector, such as the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures, are

contributing to increasingly strategic and comprehensive environmental reporting. The Federal Government also provides scientific foundations and reliable environmental data, thus helping to ensure that information is correct and is interpreted appropriately.

Despite promising progress, transparency and traceability, as well as compliance with environmental and social standards along value chains, remain significant challenges.

### **Strengthening corporate responsibility both nationally and internationally**

Many multinational enterprises have their registered offices in Switzerland. Some of these operate in developing countries where the rule of law is less stable, and social and environmental requirements laxer. While these Swiss companies generate jobs and prosperity, they can also sometimes produce undesirable secondary effects, specifically where the efficiency of national tax systems is concerned, as well as at the environmental level and in connection with human rights. The Federal Council expects companies headquartered in Switzerland to fulfil their human rights and environmental responsibilities in all of their activities, even where no explicit legal norms exist. It does, however, recognise the business sector's voluntary commitment in these areas to date. The Position Paper and Action Plan on Corporate Social and Environmental Responsibility, as well as the strategy for the implementation of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, set out what Switzerland expects of companies in terms of their responsibility for working conditions, human rights and the environment, as well as the Federal Government's specific activities. The Federal Council advocates a smart mix of regulations that are not legally binding, backed up where necessary by provisions in law, as well as of national and international measures. Its current emphasis is on non-legally-binding measures and a coordinated international approach. It is monitoring international developments and considering introducing corporate sustainability reporting on a par with that of the EU. The Federal Government supports the drafting and implementation of international standards on responsible corporate governance, such as the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises. Switzerland's National Contact Point is available as an extra-judicial board of arbitration where it is alleged that a company has failed to comply with those guidelines.

### **Promoting and enabling sustainable patterns of consumption.**

Household consumption has outstripped demographic growth since the 1990s: the population expanded by 17 per cent between 1996 and 2015, while consumer spending rose by 35 per cent at current prices. Despite this, aggregate environmental impact per capita has fallen by 15 per cent since 2000, indicating an increase in demand for resource-saving goods and services. Consumers can make a significant contribution to sustainable development if they are sufficiently well informed about the environmental and social implications of their decisions, as well as about the quality, safety and health-related aspects of individual products. The Federal Government promotes consumer information and awareness by providing financial support to consumer associations. It also monitors and regulates markets in various sectors such as timber, chemicals and vehicles.

Population growth presents a difficulty in view of the need to reduce and adapt resource use. Systemic changes are required to transform how and what we consume. A further challenge is the need to improve transparency and traceability along value chains.

### **Sustainable public procurement**

The goods and services consumed by the Federal Government, cantons and municipalities, as well as the construction work that they contract out, amount to some CHF 41 billion per year, corresponding to seven per cent of the country's GDP. Around 80 per cent of public contracts are awarded by the cantons and municipalities. The Federal Government must set an example for consumer behaviour by focusing its procurement activities on products and construction projects that are economical, environmentally friendly, socially responsible, and

safe. Switzerland's Public Procurement Act is currently being revised. If the Swiss parliament passes the Federal Council's bill, the various aspects of sustainability will be enshrined in law. In its role model function, the Federal Government must create a strategic framework for sustainable procurement which balances a variety of objectives, instruments and bodies. Once adopted, a strategy might allow the issues of simplification, standardisation and optimisation for purchasers and bidders to be examined. The principles of corporate social responsibility must be an integral part of a modern system of procurement, which also requires regular monitoring and quantifiable objectives.

### **Strengthening sustainability and transparency in the commodities sector**

Switzerland's position at the heart of global commodities trading poses a variety of challenges. Specifically, these concern compliance with human rights, environmental and social standards, and transparency – including that of the financial flows attached to extraction. These challenges may also hold reputational risks for individual companies and also for Switzerland as a whole. In 2013, the Federal Council thus approved measures to ensure the country's appeal as a business location, more transparency about financial and production flows, and responsible corporate governance. Switzerland regularly evaluates the competitiveness, integrity, and environmental and other aspects of the Swiss commodities sector. To strengthen these, it uses a mix of instruments with differing levels of binding force. For example, a guide to human rights due diligence and reporting is being drafted for commodities trading companies in association with the parties concerned. As part of the revision of company law, Switzerland is looking in to the introduction of provisions that would strengthen corporate governance and transparency in the commodities sector.

At the international level, Switzerland advocates in organisations such as the OECD and the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), specifically the International Resource Panel, for the strengthening of governance and transparency, including the drafting and application of international guidelines for the commodities sector. For example, it supports the implementation of the OECD's Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Supply Chains of Minerals from Conflict-Affected and High-Risk Areas. Switzerland also promotes the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, and thus the disclosure of payments to governments. In 2018, Switzerland will once again evaluate the competitiveness, integrity, environmental and other aspects of the Swiss commodities sector.

The United Nations Environment Assembly of the UNEP has commissioned the International Resource Panel to produce a report on the status of, and trends and outlook for, the use of natural resources by 2019, and also to draw up options for improving the sustainable management of those resources. Such reporting is an important means of encouraging companies to adopt sustainable patterns of production, and to internalise external costs.

### **Switzerland's international contribution**

Consumption and production in Switzerland are closely interwoven with that in other countries. As mentioned above, in 2015 the environmental impact abroad of consumption in Switzerland accounted for more than 75 per cent of the country's total environmental impact. Switzerland is also the headquarters of many multinational companies which have production sites abroad. Respect for human rights and for international environmental standards is crucial to sustainable development that benefits everyone. While food waste presents a problem at the national level, in many developing countries large volumes of seed and grain are lost immediately after harvest, thereby jeopardising food security. The UN FAO estimates that 15 per cent of cereal crops are lost each year. Switzerland is therefore active internationally in promoting sustainable patterns of production and consumption, and in reducing food losses. Switzerland's efforts concentrate on:

- **Promoting the green economy at the international level** by helping to develop harmonised international rules to shrink the environmental footprint, and by supporting the UN's 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns, in particular by co-leading its Sustainable Food Systems

Programme. Switzerland also supports international knowledge-sharing platforms and takes part in initiatives to bring about a green economy at the European level. It is also active in terms of the international conventions on waste and on chemicals, which have their secretariats in Geneva.

- **Reducing food losses in developing countries**, especially post-harvest losses and those along the entire value chain from field to plate to palate. Switzerland works with the relevant specialist UN organisations in the areas of innovation, the development of technical resources in small cooperatives, improving the capacity of small farmers to invest in the latest technologies, and supporting governments in establishing legal and institutional frameworks.

#### *An example of how Switzerland is implementing SDG 12*

##### **Companies moving to sustainable value chains**

A group of 103 Swiss retail companies have joined the Business Social Compliance Initiative (amfori), an alliance aimed at ensuring social and environmental standards in their supply chains. The initiative promotes courses and further training at production sites, and also runs a value chain monitoring platform. It is thus helping to bring about ongoing improvement in corporate responsibility worldwide as it affects labour and child rights, as well as environmental conservation. Amfori unites more than 2,000 companies in 37 countries, engages in policy dialogue in producing countries, and also works with the ILO.

<http://www.amfori.org>

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

The rise in temperature in Switzerland since industrialisation began has been almost double that of the global mean. The country is therefore particularly affected by climate change. The increase in temperature has also changed precipitation patterns, and the snow line is rising.

Switzerland ratified the Paris Agreement in the autumn of 2017, and it came into force on 5 November 2017. The target announced for Switzerland, of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 50 per cent of their 1990 level by 2030, thus became binding. This is to be achieved primarily by cutting domestic emissions, the legal basis for which is the CO<sub>2</sub> Act. This principally covers fossil fuels, but also extends beyond CO<sub>2</sub> to all other greenhouse gases which are subject to international regulation. It also accords the Federal Government a coordinating role in adaptation to climate change.

#### **Halving the 1990 level of greenhouse gas emissions by 2030**

Greenhouse gases totalling 48.3 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent were emitted into the atmosphere in Switzerland in 2016. This figure does not include international air and water-borne transport. More than three quarters of these emissions were of CO<sub>2</sub> itself, with the rest accounted for by methane and nitrous oxide (mainly from agriculture), and synthetic gases (substitutes for ozone-depleting coolants). Emissions of CO<sub>2</sub>, methane and nitrous oxide fell between 1990 and 2015, while those of synthetic gases rose markedly. The 2016 figures correspond to per-capita emissions of 5.7 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent.

The current mix of instruments to reduce domestic emissions includes a CO<sub>2</sub> levy on fuels, emissions trading, measures to promote energy-efficiency, a technology fund, fuel importers being required to compensate domestically for the resulting emissions, industry agreements, and CO<sub>2</sub> regulations for new cars. Switzerland exceeded its interim targets for 2015 in the building sector (-26 per cent versus only -22 per cent) and industry (-17 per cent versus only -7 per cent), but did not achieve the target of stabilising emissions from transport compared with 1990 (+4 per cent versus 0 per cent). Since the interim target for CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from fossil fuels was also missed in 2016, the CO<sub>2</sub> levy was increased from CHF 84 to CHF 96 per tonne



of CO<sub>2</sub> as of 1 January 2018. Greenhouse gas emissions are to be reduced by 20 per cent compared with their 1990 level by 2020.

The CO<sub>2</sub> Act will undergo a full-scale reform for the post-2020 period in order to implement Switzerland's obligations under the Paris Agreement. It will set out targets and action up to 2030. One of the challenges is to make the implementation of action on climate policy acceptable to businesses and to society as a whole, and to institute measures which reflect the producer pays principle as closely as possible, thereby helping to internalise external costs.

### **Minimising the risks of climate change and stepping up adaptation**

Climate change increases the frequency of extraordinary events such as heatwaves, droughts, landslides and heavy precipitation. Switzerland must adapt to this new situation. Adaptation to climate change is laid down in the CO<sub>2</sub> Act. The Federal Government's strategy in this regard focuses on action on water management, dealing with natural hazards, agriculture, forestry, energy, tourism, biodiversity management, health and spatial planning. Cross-sectoral work is coordinated between the Federal Government and the cantons at an annual conference, while progress data is collected at two-year intervals. Systematic observation of the climate provides an important basis on which to improve capacity to adapt to climate-related risks. Here, the Federal Government functions as a coordinator within the Global Climate Observing System, as well as in a programme for monitoring the composition of the atmosphere as it is relevant to the climate (e.g. greenhouse gases). The National Centre for Climate Services (NCCS) is responsible for updating climate and hydrological scenarios and for analysing climate-related risks and opportunities in areas such as agriculture and forestry, human and animal health, and natural disasters management. The Federal Government operates a pilot programme to support model climate adaptation projects at cantonal, regional and municipal levels.

The challenges here are managing collaboration between the parties concerned, adjusting structures to the new conditions, and providing information to the affected population about the risks, how to protect themselves, and the support that they will receive in extraordinary circumstances. The Federal Government's early and coordinated warning and alarm system for natural hazards is also particularly important in this respect. A further challenge is to achieve the necessary resilience to rising temperatures in a sustainable way, and to avoid or to resolve conflicts of interest, such as the water conflict between agriculture and energy generation.

### **Improving information and awareness**

The applicable legislation on CO<sub>2</sub> requires the Federal Government to promote education and training for those with climate policy-related roles, to inform the public about mitigating and dealing with climate change, and to advise municipalities, businesses and consumers on taking action. At present, the Swiss population is still not sufficiently aware of the specific effects of climate change and extreme events, and there is a lack of climate-related expertise in many occupations in which the climate is relevant, such as farming, mobility and logistics. To fully understand the significance of climate change, tackle its causes effectively, mitigate the associated risks and increase the capacity of the population to adapt to its consequences, this knowledge must be taught in schools, in vocational training, at universities, in continuing professional education, and among the general public. Switzerland's cantons, cities and municipalities also need good information and advice.

### *An example of how Switzerland is implementing SDG 13*

#### **Offsetting emissions**

As a wealthy industrialised nation, Switzerland produces a large volume of greenhouse gases. Businesses and private individuals alike are seeking ways of reducing their carbon footprint. To do so, they can use the carbon offset services that are offered by a variety of providers to sectors, companies and individual consumers. For example, anyone wishing to offset their car-sharing emissions need only tick a box in their profile, thanks to the partnership between the Swiss Mobility car-sharing scheme and Myclimate.

[www.myclimate.org](http://www.myclimate.org)

#### **Switzerland's international contribution**

Global climate change jeopardises the progress that has been made in recent decades to combat poverty, and also presents an obstacle to strong economic growth in many developing countries. Least developed countries are affected particularly badly by the effects of climate change, as their economies are often agriculture-based, and they have few resources and opportunities to adapt. At the same time, many developing countries, and specifically emerging markets such as India and China, have enormous unused potential to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. In its international cooperation work, Switzerland therefore concentrates on the following areas:

- **Helping developing countries to conserve their climates and to adapt to climate change**, by providing expert support with drafting climate change strategies for climate conservation and adaptation, and by introducing local actors to mechanisms to adapt to climate change in the areas of water, food security and meteorology/climatology, as well as to mitigate the risks attached to natural disasters. Switzerland also plays an active part in implementing the Global Framework for Climate Services (GFCS), supports multilateral programmes to reduce short-lived climate pollutants, and encourages clean and efficient technologies, as well as climate-friendly urban and transport planning. Climate change is also an important transversal theme. Switzerland systematically evaluates its interventions to determine their impact on climate change, greenhouse gas emissions, environmental damage and the risk of natural disasters, and adjusts its programmes in line with the findings of these analyses.
- **Contributing a fair share to international climate funding**, by mobilising private-sector resources directly or indirectly using public-sector funds. The world's industrialised nations have made a joint undertaking under the Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement to mobilise a total of USD 100 billion annually from public and private sources to support developing countries from 2020 onwards. The Federal Council estimates that Switzerland's fair share of this funding target will be between USD 450 million and USD 600 million per year. In 2016, the country spent a total of USD 330.1 million from the public purse on climate conservation and adaptation programmes in developing countries. That same year, USD 8.5 million was identified as private funding that had been mobilised bilaterally, although the method used to count this funding is still in its early stages, and the amount actually mobilised is likely to be higher. In total, Switzerland's international climate funding for the period was just under USD 340 million. Mobilising funding and establishing a method for calculating it thus pose challenges.

#### **5.14 SDG 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development**

Ocean pollution and overuse are becoming increasingly problematic, owing to the acute danger to biodiversity, acidification, and the growing volume of plastic waste. Greenhouse gas emissions are a significant contributor to acidification. As a landlocked country, Switzerland

has no direct ocean or sea access. It is, however, linked to the Mediterranean, North Sea (Atlantic), Adriatic and the Black Sea via four major rivers. Furthermore, Switzerland affects how the world's seas and oceans are used via its consumption of fisheries products as food for humans and animals, the use of fish meal as a fertiliser, as well as the importation of fossil fuels and sand from ocean ecosystems. Overall, Switzerland has an interest in oceans, seas and their resources being protected. They are vital elements of the global climate and biodiversity systems upon which Switzerland depends.

### **Preventing the pollution of waters that flow into the sea**

Watercourses in Switzerland carry microcontaminants and nitrogen discharges along to the ocean. The most significant of these rivers is the Rhine, which takes two thirds of the water which flows out of Switzerland to the North Sea. To date, no comprehensive study has been conducted of how, and in what quantities, trace elements enter Switzerland's boundary waters. To protect the Rhine, Switzerland has joined forces with the other countries which border the river to press for reductions in pollution from nitrogen and microcontaminants. This work takes the form of measures to control air pollution, in agriculture, and to prevent water pollution. Action in the farming sector includes state subsidies to reduce pesticide use, or measures to reduce nitrogen emissions. However, at around 60 kg per hectare of agricultural land, Switzerland's nitrogen surplus is still relatively high by OECD standards, and thus poses a challenge. On the water pollution front, upgrading around 120 wastewater treatment plants should halve the level of micropollutants entering rivers and streams by 2040. The risk of micropollutants entering the sea (a responsibility of those upstream), rivers with limited dilution capacity, and waters which feed drinking water reservoirs was taken into account when selecting the plants that are to be modernised. There are now water treatment techniques available which can eliminate 70 per cent of nitrogen, compared with the current Swiss average of 44 per cent. The challenge is thus to continue optimising wastewater treatment systems. Meanwhile, a convention on waste has successfully reduced the pollution caused by shipping on the Rhine.

### **Combating overfishing and destructive fishing practices**

Illegal, undocumented and unregulated fishing is a particular problem where the overfishing of the world's oceans is concerned. It decimates fish stocks, destroys marine habitats, distorts competition, places honest fishermen and women at a disadvantage, and hits coastal communities, especially in developing countries. Switzerland does not have a high seas fishing fleet, but still bears responsibility owing to the large volume of fish and seafood that it imports. It takes the same measures as the EU to ensure that no illegal fisheries products enter the Swiss market. Still, this does not guarantee that those products which are available are sustainable. In many cases, the quotas for regulated fishing are too high, no heed is paid to the by-catch, and destructive fishing practices continue to be used. Switzerland is not a member of the principal regional fisheries management organisations that are working towards sustainable fishing, however.

Ocean resources are not overused by the direct consumption of fish alone, but also by their use as feedstuffs and fertilisers, as in fish farming and livestock breeding, for example. Since the fisheries' catch certificates do not provide any information on fish oil or fish meal, agriculture and aquaculture can be an indirect factor in overfishing. One of the major challenges here is to include actors associated with the human and animal food chains more closely in policy dialogue. The catching of ornamental fish for aquariums has not been subject to a certification system since 2008.

*An example of how Switzerland is implementing SDG 14*

**Labels make it easier to buy more ethical fish products**

Switzerland's major retailers now carry only sustainably caught fish. Consumers in shops and supermarkets can look out for sustainable fishing labels such as MSC (Marine Stewardship Council), FOS (Friend of the Sea) and fair-fish, or for fish farming labels such as ASC (Aquaculture Stewardship Council) and the *Bio Suisse* organic label.

<https://www.msc.org>, <http://www.friendofthesea.org/>, <http://www.fair-fish.ch/>,  
<https://www.asc-aqua.org/>, <https://www.bio-suisse.ch/>

**Switzerland's international contribution**

Switzerland promotes the conservation and sustainable use of oceans, seas and marine resources by supporting international conventions and UN organisations in their efforts to prevent marine pollution. It has also ratified a large number of international covenants protecting marine and coastal ecosystems, and plays an active part in these covenants' international organisations and bodies. The principal areas of focus are:

- **Protecting and sustainably managing coastal regions, marine areas and marine biodiversity**, specifically in connection with the Convention on Biodiversity, involvement in negotiations on a new and legally binding covenant to protect and ensure the sustainable use of high sea marine diversity, and World Trade Organization negotiations to reduce fishing subsidies, which result in illegal, undocumented and unregulated fishing, overcapacity in fishing fleets, and overfishing. Switzerland is also actively involved in the UN Environment Programme negotiations on marine pollution by (micro) plastics.
- **Switzerland participates at the international level in polar and climate research.** The aims pursued by the interdisciplinary Swiss Polar Institute include strengthening the scientific and diplomatic contribution that Switzerland makes to dealing with environmental problems such as climate change and the management of global resources. In 2017, Switzerland was granted observer status at meetings of the Arctic Council, an international organisation which promotes the environmental, economic and social aspects of sustainable development in the Arctic.
- **Monitoring international shipping under the Swiss flag** to ensure compliance with the international conventions on preventing and reducing marine pollution that Switzerland has ratified. This is conducted by the Swiss Maritime Navigation Office or recognised classification companies, in addition to the checks made by the state authorities at individual ports.

**5.15 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**

Switzerland's natural habitats are many and varied, but almost half are currently at risk, specifically those which are particularly wet, dry or nutrient-poor. The ecological quality of most of these environments continues to decline. More than 36 per cent of the species that have been studied are considered threatened. The main causes of this degradation are intensive land and water use, high deposits of atmospheric nitrogen in the soil (primarily of agricultural origin), and the spread of invasive alien species.

To preserve biodiversity, Switzerland primarily uses instruments designed to protect habitats. Implementing the associated measures is the responsibility of the cantons. A limited number of endangered species also benefit from federal and cantonal recovery programmes. In addition, Switzerland pursues measures to revitalise watercourses and promote soil conservation, especially in urban, forest and rural areas. The Federal Government links biodiversity policy with sectoral policies such as those for agriculture, forestry, spatial planning,

transport and economic development, and raises awareness among decision-makers and the population as a whole about the importance of biodiversity as the basis of life.

### **Making sustainable use of biodiversity**

Many sectors of the economy, as well as the general public, affect biodiversity while benefiting at the same time from ecosystem services. It is therefore important to coordinate usage, conservation and growth in biodiversity. A series of measures have been taken to combat its decline – and to promote the sustainable use of resources. In agriculture, producers are eligible for direct subsidies if they set aside specific areas to encourage biodiversity. Switzerland has also defined the principal strands of its policy on biodiversity in forestry. The Green Economy Action Plan demands resource-saving patterns of production and consumption. Energy generation and biodiversity conservation must be coordinated and aligned with the instruments used for spatial planning. The Federal Government has drawn up various strategies and recommendations for the use of renewable energies which should help to reduce conflicts of interest. Switzerland is currently reviewing how biodiversity criteria can be integrated into sustainability standards, to ensure long-term soil conservation, for example. Despite the many measures that are in place, biodiversity in Switzerland is still on the decline. Counteracting this trend is a major challenge.

### **Creating an ecological infrastructure**

Rich, resilient biodiversity requires natural habitats to be protected effectively, and to be connected both spatially and functionally. Despite being protected by law, the biological quality of many biotopes of national importance has fallen in recent years. Switzerland has defined measures and a timeline to create a functional ecological infrastructure in rural and urban areas alike, on its central plateau, and in the Jura and Alps. This is intended to close certain gaps in the system of protected areas, and to upgrade it overall. Through its two biosphere reserves, Switzerland is implementing solutions which aim to reconcile biodiversity conservation with its sustainable use. Within these reserves, conflicts are addressed, needs identified, synergies explored, and municipalities involved in the search for solutions to sustainability-related problems. The outcomes to date are impressive,

Switzerland nonetheless still faces challenges in further extending and perpetuating these protected areas, creating better networks between them, and upgrading their quality. A further challenge here is to secure funding for the relevant programmes, which is not yet guaranteed.

### **Conserving and encouraging different species**

A large number of species, and their habitats, are threatened in Switzerland. The Federal Government publishes a list of priority protected species which is updated regularly. It has also drawn up action plans covering five types of natural habitat: forests, land used for agriculture, water, built-up areas and those used for the transport infrastructure, and other, open, land. The Federal Government also supports the relevant cantonal authorities in implementing specific measures to protect biodiversity in forests and water. One of the key challenges is to improve the condition of at-risk habitats which are under pressure from tourism and sport, their use for hydropower, abandonment, intensive use in favoured locations, and urban sprawl.

Intensive international trade and travel, and the importation of ornamental plants, also encourages the introduction of invasive alien organisms. These threaten to crowd out native species, and impair ecosystem services. The measures that have been taken to date to combat this development have had only a localised effect, and have been unable to prevent a further increase in the number and spread of invasive alien species in Switzerland. A further key challenge in improving the situation lies in completing and harmonising the legal foundations for preventing and controlling invasive alien species. There is also a lack of coordination between the activities of the Federal Government, the cantons and third parties, and cross-border coordination in this area should also be improved.

## **Making sustainable use of soil and preventing soil degradation**

Soil is a non-renewable resource that is impaired by a variety of factors, which jeopardise its function over the long term. In particular, the large-scale sealing of fertile agricultural land has meant that, in Switzerland, only 0.14 hectares of arable land is available per capita. This is a low figure in an international comparison. No comprehensive information about other threats to the soil, such as erosion, compaction or contamination with pollutants is currently available. Although various measures, such as careful cultivation in agriculture, forestry and construction, have helped to halt the rise in certain soil impacts, and certain impacts have even declined, the economical and appropriate use of soil in Switzerland remains a considerable challenge. The country is thus in the process of drafting a national soil strategy.

## **Making sustainable use of forests and ensuring their services**

A third of Switzerland's land area is covered by forest. The country seeks to achieve a lasting balance between the capacity of the forest to renew itself, and the demands placed on it by human use. Switzerland's forests are doing relatively well, with their condition remaining stable over the past ten years.

The principal objectives of Swiss forests policy – and also its key challenges for the future – are to ensure sustainable, efficient and innovative forest management, an increase in the use of domestic timber, conserving forest area in its current geographical distribution, improving the financial position of the forestry sector, and consistently protecting the forests against the threats of harmful organisms and high nitrogen levels. A further challenge goes hand in hand with the first: to maintain forest services as revenues from timber harvests decline, as well as to meet the growing demands of society, such as forest conservation, but also the use of the forests for leisure purposes.

In the years ahead, the key challenge will nonetheless be to increase the resilience of Switzerland's forests, in particular in view of the consequences of climate change. Approaches to forest management should be amended in order to preserve endangered forest services, and rejuvenation measures should emphasise tree species that are appropriate to their location and will flourish and grow in tomorrow's climate as well as today's.

### *An example of how Switzerland is implementing SDG 15*

#### **Meticulously documenting biodiversity**

Anyone wishing to combat species loss must first know how commonly a species is found, and where. The *Info Species* association helps to document the diversity of flora and fauna in Switzerland. It trains laypeople and experts who observe and classify plants, fungi and animals. The occurrence and geographical location of these species are then recorded in an online atlas.

[www.infospecies.ch](http://www.infospecies.ch)

## **Switzerland's international contribution**

The decline in biodiversity can be observed around the world. Increasing numbers of plant and animal species, as well as micro-organisms, are becoming extinct, never to be seen again. They take with them an enormous amount of genetic information which is important, for example, in the development of new and resistant species. Their loss also upsets the biological balance in their various ecosystems. This decline in biodiversity is being caused primarily by the loss of natural habitats to urban development, as well as by the overuse of soil and marine environments, with the attendant environmental impact. The only way to protect species is to take a pan-regional approach which provides for a coordinated international conservation effort for species that are at risk, and the transition to sustainable use of the environment. This cooperation takes place under the aegis of a whole series of international conventions. Switzerland has ratified all seven of those conventions which are key to protecting biodiversity,

and also supports their secretariats. Switzerland also assists with the drafting and implementation of national biodiversity strategies in developing countries. The following are important points of emphasis:

- **Protecting and making sustainable use of genetic resources** by advocating the coherent implementation of international covenants on genetic resources, and easier access to and innovation in those resources, as well as the balanced and fair distribution of their benefits.
- **Mobilising resources to protect the environment** to help double international private and public-sector funding to protect biodiversity compared to the average annual inflows of funds between 2006 and 2010.
- **Containing soil loss and desertification** by supporting the Convention to Combat Desertification and by contributing to programmes to improve soil management around the world, so that they form a healthy and productive basis for global food security.
- **Conserving and making sustainable use of forests** by advocating the adoption of sustainability standards and clear rules for the timber trade, global and regional covenants to protect forests, and by supporting projects to protect and promote the sustainable use of forests in developing countries.
- **Preventing the illegal trade in plants and animals** by supporting the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, and combating illegal trade in protected species. Providing financial alternatives to illegal trading in countries of origin poses a particular challenge. More efforts to raise awareness among consumers and retailers are also required.

#### **5.16 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**

The political system in Switzerland is characterised by the authority held by the Swiss people and cantons, and especially by its federalist structure, with the cantons and municipalities having a high degree of political and financial independence, as well as by the principles of the rule of law, separation of powers, and democratic legitimation via elections, referendums and popular initiatives. As a rule, Swiss citizens have the right to vote and the right to stand for election from the age of 18. Foreign nationals also have political rights in certain cantons and municipalities. Also characteristic of the Swiss system is concordance, which refers to the proportionate sharing of political power in government, and the participation of all major parties in decision-making processes.

Basic rights are protected by the constitution. In Switzerland, federal laws are not subject to a constitutional review. The country does, however, have a system of appeal under public law, and a subsidiary constitutional appeal. Furthermore, the Federal Supreme Court also examines the compatibility of individual national decrees with the applicable international law. The right of action and right of appeal ensure access to justice at all federal levels. For example, under international conventions, individual human rights appeals can be lodged with the European Court of Human Rights and with the UN Committee Against Torture, Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, and Committee on the Rights of the Child.

#### **Promoting transparent institutions**

The Swiss authorities abide by the principle of public proceedings, and act in accordance with the principles of expediency and economy. They ensure that the public is informed at an early stage, and continuously, about their governmental activities. These texts are as clear and accessible as possible. Accountability is monitored by the Swiss Federal Audit Office and the parliamentary supervisory committees and delegations. Furthermore, the Freedom of Information Act permits access in principle to official documents and sets out exceptions in this regard. In cases which are unclear, the Federal Data Protection and Information Commissioner

takes on the role of mediator. Switzerland maintains an open government data portal to make official documents available and reusable.

### **Combating corruption**

Corruption is only a relatively minor problem in Switzerland. In the 2017 Corruption Perceptions Index it was placed at number three, out of 180 countries. Efforts to combat corruption therefore focus on maintaining a high standard of integrity. Five cantons have regulations on the transparency of political party funding, as well as the funding of referendum and election campaigns – an area in which the national evaluation conducted by the Council of Europe's Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) identified room for improvement.

The Federal Government implements the conventions against corruption originated by the UN, the OECD and the Council of Europe, and takes part in their national evaluations. In its latest national evaluation, the OECD praised the fact that, since 2012, Switzerland has taken action against both individuals and businesses that bribe foreign officials. It also praised the key role that the Money Laundering Reporting Offices plays in identifying bribery abroad in connection with money laundering. National anti-corruption standards are enshrined in law, and new and far-reaching criminal provisions against corruption in the private sector are in place to combat corruption in private business dealings more effectively overall. The Federal Government demands integrity from those in the private business sector and to that effect supports, among other things, the drafting and implementation of the OECD's frameworks for responsible business conduct and the UN Global Compact. The government also supports rules and standards for good corporate governance and transparency in public administration and business. It raises the awareness of Swiss businesses – including SMEs – of the risk of corruption when doing business abroad, and prosecutes violations. As an important commodity trading hub, Switzerland also supports initiatives to prevent corruption and to improve governance and transparency in the natural resource sector.

### **Encouraging inclusive decision-making processes**

When drafting bills and proposals, the Federal Government includes the cantons, municipalities, business and civil society in its consultation process. Delegations from the political sphere, business and society are able to contribute their specialist knowledge and their interests in extra-parliamentary commissions. Citizens themselves enjoy far-reaching direct democratic rights which are even more extensive at cantonal and commune level than they are at the federal level. There are regular referendums on issues at federal, cantonal and commune level, which tends to mean a vote every three months. The election turnout in 2015 was 48.5 per cent, and the average referendum turnout in 2016 49.6 per cent. The Federal Government and the cantons are aiming to introduce universal electronic voting. This is intended in particular to make it easier for voters with disabilities to exercise their political rights independently.

A little more than a third of Switzerland's resident population is not able to take part in political decision-making. This concerns foreign nationals, who have the right to vote and/or be elected only in certain cantons and municipalities, as well as children and young people under the age of 18. Switzerland nonetheless supports projects encouraging political participation among this latter group. Children and young people draft petitions for submission to their parliaments or governments during youth sessions of the federal parliament or in young people's and children's parliaments in a number of cities.

### **Protecting against violence and strengthening victim support**

Switzerland uses a mix of prevention, prosecution and victim support to protect its population against violence in public places, against domestic violence, and against human trafficking and smuggling. Since studies indicate that alcohol is a factor in around two thirds of all non-domestic incidents of physical aggression, the Federal Government aims to tackle violence through its strategy on addiction, as well as to provide support for the victims and their families.



The prosecution of sexual offences against children, and of illegal pornography, as well as measures to combat human trafficking and smuggling, are coordinated nationwide. The Federal Government is also currently taking active measures to combat violent extremism. These comprise a national action plan to prevent and combat radicalisation and violent extremism, a Federal Act on Police Counter-terrorism Measures, which is currently at the draft stage, and strengthening instruments under criminal law against recruitment, training and travel for criminal terrorist acts.

The Federal Government also plans to enforce the toughened-up European weapons directive, but will make certain exceptions to take into consideration Swiss shooting traditions. It also wants to improve the protection afforded to the victims of domestic violence and stalking. To this end, a bill is pending before parliament that would permit electronic surveillance and reduce procedural obstacles hindering protections from violence under civil law. It will also introduce new rules on the suspension and abandonment of criminal proceedings for certain violent domestic offences, in order to ease the stress on victims.

Almost all cantons have threat management systems in place in order to detect and prevent individuals becoming dangerous at an early stage. It also engages private-sector organisations to help combat high levels of interpersonal violence among 10 to 25-year-olds. The focus on protecting children and young people from violence within their families is on early detection. Although corporal punishment for children is not expressly forbidden in Switzerland, under Swiss law the right to punish children in this way is fundamentally incompatible with the well-being of the child. Under the Swiss constitution, children and young people have the right to an upbringing which is free of violence. Cantonal child and adult protection authorities ensure the well-being and protection of individuals who are either unable to do so themselves, or whose legal representatives do not do so of their own volition.

### **Ensuring the rule of law and human rights**

The Swiss justice system consists of boards of arbitration at commune level, district courts as courts of first instance, cantonal supreme courts as courts of second instance, cantonal administrative and social insurance courts, the Federal Criminal Court, the Federal Administrative Court, the Federal Patent Court and the highest court in the land, the Federal Supreme Court. Proceedings can generally be referred for appeal to the next higher court. The courts are independent and the procedural guarantees required under basic and human rights law are assured. Duty defence lawyers may be appointed in criminal proceedings. The Swiss judicial system is accusatorial in nature. Justice and legal protection are free of charge under certain circumstances if the person concerned does not have the necessary financial resources. The system emphasises protection for the rights of the individual by means of individual actions or appeals. Art. 29a of the Federal Constitution codifies a constitutional right to have a legal dispute determined by a judicial authority (the guarantee of access to the courts). Representative group or class actions are possible to only a limited extent. Efforts are currently under way to extend collective justice options, such as by introducing class settlement actions and extending the scope of group actions.

Switzerland produces regular reports on its domestic human rights situation, as well as on the implementation of the UN and Council of Europe conventions on protecting human rights. It has also been the subject of a number of individual human rights-related appeal proceedings. The country abides by the decisions of the European Court of Human Rights, as well as by the findings of the various UN treaty bodies established to protect human rights. The latter are not legally binding.

### **Combating unfair and unlawful flows of funds, and returning stolen assets**

Switzerland has a considerable interest in the integrity of its financial centre. It recognises unfair and unlawful flows of funds as a challenge that can be tackled successfully only in association with their countries of origin and destination. Switzerland applies international standards on combating money laundering and the financing of terrorism, on the exchange of information on tax matters, on tax avoidance and switching, and on fighting corruption. To stop

financial transactions originating from unfair or unlawful practices in developing countries being routed through Switzerland, we help these countries to better manage their revenue from commodities transactions, to institute a more effective taxation system, to prevent tax evasion, and in their fight against money laundering and corruption. The automatic exchange of information on tax matters and the automatic exchange with developing countries of country-specific reports produced by multinational companies nonetheless presents a challenge, as these countries often do not fulfil the necessary information and data protection standards.

Switzerland pursues a proactive policy to identify, freeze and return assets stolen by politically exposed persons from foreign countries. It supports the countries of origin in their efforts to recover those assets, returning some USD 2 billion in recent years. It is also committed to combating the illegal transfer of items of cultural significance – efforts which are to be expanded following the ratification of the UNESCO Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage.

Even better use could be made of the instruments provided for in law to combat money laundering and the financing of terrorism. A further challenge is that the issues surrounding unfair and unlawful flows of funds are developing all the time, with new aspects constantly coming to light and being discussed at the international level. Switzerland therefore regularly reviews whether or not amended instruments need to be created for further sectors, such as foundations, associations, NPOs or duty-free warehouses.

### **Switzerland's international contribution**

In its foreign policy, Switzerland is a committed advocate of respect for human rights, promotes democracy, and contributes to peaceful co-existence between nations. In this regard, it focuses on combating the underlying causes of fragility and violence by means of preventative development policy measures that are designed to have a long-term effect. Persistent mismanagement, lawlessness and discrimination are some of the primary causes of poverty, inequality, and violent conflict. Switzerland's efforts concentrate on:

- **Promoting good governance** by enabling public-sector institutions to fulfil their responsibility to the people, by fostering constructive partnerships with non-state actors, by providing high-quality public services for all, by ensuring that public resources are increased and are distributed fairly and effectively, and by developing local business communities, and by supporting efficient resource management, accountability, public participation, as well as action to reduce discrimination and promote equal opportunities, compliance with the principles of the rule of law, and local government.
- **Peace-building and protecting people from violence** by means of programmes addressing the structural causes of war and violence, such as state despotism, the suppression of peaceful protests, and the unfair distributions of commodity revenues. Switzerland encourages processes to help people come to terms with the past, reforms in the security sector and the prevention of violent extremism, and offers parties to conflict its good offices in the search for political solutions. In armed conflicts, it seeks to protect the civilian population, fights impunity, supports programmes to disarm, demobilise and re-integrate armed forces, as well as to enforce the ban on anti-personnel mines and cluster munitions, arms control and disarmament at the national level. It also monitors its exports of small arms. Exporting war materials is fundamentally banned if the destination country is involved in an armed conflict, if there are serious breaches of human rights, or if there is a considerable risk that those materials will be used against the civilian population or passed on to an undesirable final recipient. The enormous lack of transparency about international arms trading is a challenge, because Swiss weapons repeatedly reach the hands of parties to civil war, or terrorists, via very circuitous routes.
- **Promoting the rule of law, respect for human rights, and access to justice** by strengthening democratic participation and election processes, compliance with obligations under international law and especially international humanitarian law,

upholding functioning and accessible judicial systems and dispute resolution structures and mechanisms, and by supporting civil society engagement, human rights defenders and activists, and the media. Switzerland also supports efforts to help UN treaty bodies become more effective in protecting human rights, upholding legal protections within the system of UN sanctions, and supporting international criminal prosecution mechanisms.

- **Supporting UN reforms** to configure global governance institutions democratically, and advocating a strong and smoothly functioning UN organisation, with a particular emphasis on peace and security, development and management. Switzerland also supports reform of the UN Security Council to strengthen its legitimacy, representative nature, and capacity to act. To enable developing countries to participate more fully in global processes, Switzerland also engages in capacity-building within public-sector institutions in developing countries, and advocates the participation of non-members in the G20, as well as broader dialogue between the G20 and the UN.

*An example of how Switzerland is implementing SDG 16*

**Making anti-corruption expertise available worldwide**

The mission of the Basel Institute on Governance is to combat corruption and other white-collar crimes. This centre of expertise, which is associated with the University of Basel, helps companies and governments around the world to fight these types of problem. It helps them to recover former dictators' assets, and to improve administrative and corporate governance. To this end, its experts train specialists in the countries concerned, and also develop digital support tools. In its work, the Institute collaborates with UN organisations, NGOs, and Interpol.

<https://www.baselgovernance.org>

## **5.17 SDG 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development**

The 2030 Agenda can only be realised if all the countries unite in a strong international partnership and all the key stakeholders from civil society are included in the process. This will require common rules on mutual accountability and transparency to be adopted. Accountability and monitoring are dealt with in detail in Chapter 8.

The Addis Ababa Action Agenda, an agreement reached in 2015, sets out the principles and main steps to be taken in financing sustainable development. The Action Agenda forms an integral part of the 2030 Agenda and provides a comprehensive framework for funding the implementation of the SDGs. Switzerland supports the broad-based financing concept, which calls for the mobilisation of national and international financial flows and recognises the importance of policy coherence. The issue of policy coherence for sustainable development is addressed in Chapter 7.1. While financing sustainable development requires the use of public funding, the private sector is also called upon to play a greater role. Switzerland therefore supports a variety of financing mechanisms.

Switzerland's cooperation with actors outside the Federal Administration at national level is discussed in greater detail in Chapters 9 and 10. Switzerland's engagement and thematic partnerships at global level are dealt with in the previous chapters on SDGs 1-16 and referred to again here in more detail where appropriate.

### **Making financial flows more sustainable**

The ecological dimension of sustainability has become an increasing focus of attention in the financial markets. Climate change and water scarcity not only entail financial risks, they also unleash the potential for innovation, thus creating opportunities for the financial world. Switzerland subscribes to measures that are not legally binding and advocates a further

change in thinking within the financial sector. It takes part in the G20 *Green Finance Study Group* and many other initiatives to improve financial market sustainability, such as the development of international standards for assessing the alignment of financial portfolios with climate goals. This is an area in which Switzerland's financial sector has considerable development potential. For example, the Swiss economy is lagging behind the global average when it comes to issues such as the greater use of renewable energy. An anonymous, voluntary climate alignment test that analysed the investment portfolios of Swiss pension funds and insurance companies showed that – on average – investments are currently on a target pathway of 4–6°C (and not the 2°C envisaged by the Paris Agreement on Climate Change). The main challenge here is in encouraging Swiss financial institutions and investors to play a major part in overcoming global environmental risks and in the transition to a resource-friendly, sustainable economy. For insurers and asset managers, this specifically means offering suitable products. The Federal Council's financial market strategy also addresses these issues.

### **Maintaining the level of public financing for development**

Switzerland increased its official development assistance, calculated in accordance with the OECD's DAC guidelines, to 0.5 per cent of its gross national income in the period that ended in 2015. This involved channelling more money into assistance for least developed countries and countries in fragile contexts. The current financial framework for international cooperation sets a target figure of 0.48 per cent that includes the costs of hosting refugees in Switzerland which are classifiable as ODA under the DAC rules. These tend to fluctuate widely: they accounted for 19 per cent of official development assistance in 2016 and were still as high as 9 per cent in 2017. Switzerland is committed to achieving a ratio of 0.7 per cent, but has not stipulated a specific point in time for reaching this long-term goal. Switzerland's recognition of this target reinforces both its political commitment and moral obligation in respect of this international goal. It intends to increase its bilateral support for Sub-Saharan Africa in particular. The challenge facing Switzerland is to maintain the 0.5 per cent target for official development assistance currently approved by the Swiss parliament.

### **Mobilising public resources in developing countries**

Switzerland's international cooperation activities help developing countries to mobilise domestic resources in both the public and private sectors. An efficient budgetary and spending policy, transparent public procurement transactions, sound government financial reporting and accountability, autonomy in local financial management and the responsible handling of debt and natural resources are just some of the factors involved. As a subscriber to the *Addis Tax Initiative*, Switzerland has pledged to significantly step up the technical assistance it provides towards establishing efficient tax systems in developing countries and building the capacity of financial and tax authorities at national and sub-national level. Thus, for example, Switzerland supports *public financial management* programmes and the use of international standards and internationally coordinated diagnostic instruments. It is also committed to developing tools that will support the mobilisation of domestic resources by helping developing countries get to grips with the transfer pricing practices of multinational corporations. In the commodities sector, Switzerland campaigns for increased transparency – as evidenced by its support for the *Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative*. Furthermore, the current revision of the country's legislation on companies limited by shares provides for the disclosure of payments between companies in the extractive industries and the governments of commodity-producing states.

### **Mobilising all sources of financing**

Switzerland supports the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, which aims to unlock additional sources of public and private funding capable of sufficiently financing sustainable development. It strengthens the mobilisation of private investments for long-term, sustainable growth in developing and emerging economies through SIFEM, the Swiss Investment Fund for Emerging

Markets. In addition, numerous partnerships with the private sector mobilise additional private funding dedicated to specific thematic areas.

Switzerland is an active member of international organisations that develop standards on corporate social responsibility, with the OECD being one particular example. The standards in question include the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises and further guidelines on conflict minerals, agriculture, financial services and textiles which seek to maximise the positive impact of investment for sustainable development. Switzerland also supports programmes that optimise the development impact of money transfers by migrants and make such transfers less expensive.

### **Making trade fair**

Switzerland is committed to establishing a rules-based, open and non-discriminatory multilateral trading system. It has put into practice the decision adopted by the 2005 WTO Ministerial Conference in Hong Kong to provide duty- and quota-free market access on a lasting basis for at least 97 per cent of products originating from least developed countries, defined at the tariff line level, to which it is also applying simple and transparent rules of origin.

Switzerland supports developing countries in creating more favourable conditions for trade and private enterprise and in strengthening responsible competition all along the export value chains with a view to making sustainable trade more widespread. It especially supports programmes for commodities that are certified sustainable, such as coffee, cocoa, cotton, timber, palm oil, tea and BioTrade products from Africa, Latin America and Asia. Its import promotion programme facilitates international market access for certain products from developing and emerging economies.

### **Supporting capacity building and the transfer of technology and knowledge**

Switzerland supports the sharing of expertise and technology through its involvement in partnership-based research programmes and international research networks. It plays a role in the concrete transfer of knowledge and technology through thematic partnerships in the fields of water, agricultural research, medical devices and green technologies, and is generally committed to establishing favourable conditions for technology transfer. Ensuring adequate protection of intellectual property that benefits the domestic economy in the recipient countries is another primary concern in this respect.

Switzerland helps developing countries to improve the sectoral data they collect on water or gender, for example, build up a system of national statistics, strengthen their evidence-based planning and policies and draw up national strategies for sustainable development. It supports capacity-building initiatives that serve to implement the 2030 Agenda.

### **Global partnerships for sustainable development**

The 2030 Agenda can only achieve its goals if all the nations are committed to strengthening their partnership and both state and non-state actors are effectively involved. Switzerland endorses the *Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation* as a means of strengthening partnerships. This multi-stakeholder platform, which brings together the main development partners, non-governmental organisations and actors from the private sector, works to ensure that international cooperation is focused on results and follows shared principles of effectiveness, especially in relation to transparency and mutual accountability. Switzerland is committed to the *UN Global Compact* and the resolution towards global partnerships adopted by the UN General Assembly, and also promotes thematic partnerships within multilateral systems devoted to topics such as Aids, private-sector climate finance, private infrastructure, food security, sustainable food systems, sustainable livestock farming, sustainable land management and mountain regions.

*An example of how Switzerland is implementing SDG 17*

### **Promoting sustainable investment**

As a leading financial centre, Switzerland manages 25 per cent of the world's cross-border wealth. Investments that have a positive effect in environmental, social and governance terms play a decisive role in the transformation towards a sustainable economy. *Swiss Sustainable Finance* is an organisation that brings together financial service providers and other interested parties in order to promote sustainable investment approaches. It conducts research, provides information and training, and helps institutional investors to understand the environmental and social impact of their investments, thus strengthening Switzerland's position in the global market for sustainable finance.

<http://www.sustainablefinance.ch>

## **6 Integrating the three dimensions and policy coherence for sustainable development**

Establishing policy coherence for sustainable development is a key concept of the 2030 Agenda and, as such, even has its own target assigned to it (SDG target 17.14). Improving coherence between policy areas is also seen as having an important role to play in the Federal Council's 2009 'Guidelines for sustainable development policy'. Policy coherence for sustainable development is an approach that seeks to integrate economic, social and environmental dimensions at every stage of domestic and foreign policymaking in a balanced manner. This requires governments to identify trade-offs and, in doing so, to achieve a fair balance between domestic policy objectives and internationally agreed objectives and the economic, social and environmental policy dimensions of sustainable development. They must also address the spillovers of domestic policies and deal with any resulting negative impacts. In Switzerland's view, the contribution to policy coherence for sustainable development made by its development-policy focus on relations between Switzerland and developing countries is just as important as that of integrating the three sustainability dimensions.

In the context of the work done by the government and Federal Administration, Switzerland promotes policy coherence through a number of different procedures that are intended to ensure legislation of a high quality, achieve a balance between conflicting interests, foster synergies between policies in various sectors and reconcile national and global perspectives. This entails a consultation procedure involving all the main stakeholder groups and a further 'technical' consultation involving all the relevant federal offices, with the members of the Federal Council formulating their views as part of the political-level joint reporting procedure. Prospective evaluation instruments, such as sustainability assessments, strategic environmental assessments, energy impact assessments and health impact assessments, are available for analysing the impact of the government's proposed policies and actions on the various aspects of sustainable development. They are not widely used at present – partly out of cost-benefit considerations.

In its 2015 foreign policy report, the Federal Council promised the Swiss parliament that it will include regular updates on coherence within Switzerland's international cooperation activities in future reports. The MONET monitoring system for sustainable development also provides an important frame of reference for keeping track of the temporal dimension of policy coherence to ensure that development is not taking place at the expense of future generations.

In the majority of cases, two or more federal offices and policy areas are responsible for implementing the SDG targets, a fact which reflects the strong mutual dependencies that exist within the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. As a result, not only is there a great need to address policy coherence problems, but also great potential for doing so as well as for capitalising on synergies.

Tensions within federal policies are known to exist with regard to sustainable development in the following areas:

- **Tensions between and mainstreaming the economic, social and environmental dimensions:** Innovations have a role to play in achieving the environmental goals, for example, while at the same time boosting the Swiss economy. On the other hand, tensions are evident in conflicts of use between environmental protection, human settlement, transport and energy. They can also be seen in topics such as gender equality in the labour market, work-family balance and the economic integration of disadvantaged population groups versus economic freedom, or in the design of tax policies and easing of regulation.
- **Trade-offs between national policies and international agreements:** As a country with strong international links, Switzerland is party to a large number of international agreements. At the same time, its system of direct democracy means that Parliament and the electorate have a considerable say in the political decision-making process. Therefore, finding the right balance between the country's own interests and its international commitments in areas such as climate, migration, economic, finance and development policy places great requirements on consensus-building.
- **Domestic policy spillovers:** Switzerland's policies have an effect on other countries, and especially on developing countries. While a relative decoupling of the consumption of resources in Switzerland from the growth of gross domestic product has occurred (economic output is experiencing stronger growth than material use), resource consumption has now shifted to imported goods. As an important commodity trading hub, Switzerland's policy on commodities has direct consequences for and in developing countries. Impacts can also be seen in relation to the competitiveness of the financial centre and illicit financial flows, arms exports and peace policy, and the competitiveness of Swiss companies as opposed to compliance with human rights and environmental standards abroad.

In the interests of contextually aware, informed policymaking, the available tools, such as the sustainability assessment, should be adapted to allow early detection of coherence problems and potential synergies on the basis of the 2030 Agenda and used as needed in the future.

## 7 Embedding the 2030 Agenda institutionally at federal level

### 7.1 Organisation at federal level

In general, implementation of the 2030 Agenda should not be seen as an additional task. Instead, it should be made part of the ordinary planning and policy steering processes at office, department and Federal Council level. The 2030 Agenda provides a frame of reference for implementing sustainable development in the context of sectoral policies. Each of the federal offices is responsible for implementing the 2030 Agenda within its own area of remit. Integrating the 2030 Agenda into the Federal Administration's normal processes is to be achieved by keeping the organisational structure as simple as possible and fit for purpose.

Dialogue with actors outside the Federal Administration is vital to implementation. To this end, the 2030 Agenda Advisory Group maintains a dialogue with the relevant stakeholders from business, academia and civil society, while regular talks take place at cantonal level with the various Conferences of Cantonal Directors and the cantonal sustainability offices and officers.

### 7.2 System for monitoring sustainable development

Progress in achieving the 2030 Agenda goals and targets is tracked regularly with the aid of indicators. At global level, a list of international indicators defined by the UN applies. Data for these indicators is gathered by the member states on a regular basis and delivered to the UN, which publishes an annual report on international progress towards the SDGs. In Switzerland, the MONET indicator system is used to monitor the 2030 Agenda Sustainable Development

Goals at national level. Originally created to keep track of sustainable development in general, this system was subsequently upgraded to ensure Switzerland's progress towards realising the 2030 Agenda could be monitored. The indicators published online form the basis for national and international reports on the country's implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

The MONET system has been in use for 15 years and is run by the FSO. The indicator set, developed and financed jointly by the ARE, FOEN, SDC and FSO, measures sustainable development as defined in the Brundtland report by adopting an integrated approach that analyses the target dimensions of social solidarity, economic efficiency and environmental responsibility across time ("here and now" and "later") and place ("here" and "elsewhere"). This coherent methodology complies fully with the relevant international recommendations. The introduction of the MONET system, its revision in 2009 and 2016 and upgrading in 2017 were the result of a participatory process based on rules that clearly define the roles and responsibilities of the many institutional partners involved.

The *Cercle Indicateurs*, a network created in 2003 that currently brings together 18 cantons and 24 cities, serves as the monitoring instrument at cantonal and city level. It runs an indicator system that divides Agenda 21 into some 30 measurable target areas and is currently undergoing modification to enable it to better integrate the 2030 Agenda frame of reference.

### **7.3 Financing implementation of the 2030 Agenda**

Implementation of the 2030 Agenda at federal level is mainly achieved through the specific focuses set in and between sectoral policies, and funds for implementation are applied for as part of the normal budget process. The federal offices in question are responsible for making the necessary financial resources available as part of their financial planning. Switzerland recognises that the financing needs of the 2030 Agenda are considerable and that these can only be met by mobilising additional funds from both public and private sources. That is why it supports the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, an agreement reached in 2015 that provides a strong framework for financing global implementation of the SDGs. The broad-based financing concept provides for the mobilisation of national and international financial flows from public and private sources.

Switzerland mobilises financial resources for implementation of the 2030 Agenda at global level through a number of different channels. Private financial resources flow to sustainable development via private investments, remittances by migrants and funds provided by foundations and charitable donors, for example. This calls for a favourable regulatory environment and corresponding incentives. Official development assistance will remain an important means of financing in future, increasingly benefiting the poorest countries and being guided by effectiveness criteria. In addition, it will also be used as leverage to help mobilise domestic resources and additional private sector resources. To achieve this, Switzerland is building on its public-private partnerships. In developing countries, Switzerland particularly supports the mobilisation of domestic resources as a key source of finance for sustainable development by strengthening national tax systems and intensifying international cooperation to combat tax evasion and illicit financial flows. These resources help build functioning institutions to drive sustainable development, they improve government accountability to communities and they reduce dependence on foreign support.

In addition to financial means of implementation, Switzerland is also committed to establishing policy coherence for sustainable development and an enabling environment at both national and international level. A rules-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system and the transfer of environmentally friendly, socially fair and resource-efficient technologies are further key conditions for the promotion of sustainable development.



## 8 Cooperation with cantons, cities and municipalities

In a federal state like Switzerland, cooperation between the federal authorities, cantons, cities and municipalities is essential. The Federal Council therefore considers it supremely important that the principles of sustainable development are embedded at each and every one of these levels. Rather than seeing sustainable development as an additional task falling to the state, it should be made part of ordinary planning and control processes. In the context of implementing the 2030 Agenda, properly coordinating cooperation and strengthening policy coherence at every level take on great importance.

### 8.1 Including cantons, cities and municipalities in federal processes

The *Forum Nachhaltige Entwicklung* ('Sustainable Development Forum') ensures that the different levels of state authority remain in contact and exchange information. The platform is run as a partnership between the Conference of Directors of Public Works, Planning and Environmental Protection (DPPE), the Association of Swiss Communes (ASC) and the Swiss Union of Cities (SVC). The Federal Government also continues to support regional and local sustainability processes and projects by providing logistical and subject-matter expertise and organising wide-ranging activities to encourage networking between the actors in question.

In addition, its programme promoting sustainable development also provides targeted support to initiatives that help strengthen sustainable development. It maintains a database of existing sustainability processes in Switzerland and organises the sharing of best practices regarding processes, instruments and projects. Moreover, it advocates refining the methodology and making greater use of sustainability assessments and sustainability monitoring, the latter of which is implemented through the *Cercle Indicateurs* network of cantons and cities. Strengthening sustainability processes and projects at local neighbourhood level is another specific aim.

A special focus is placed on strengthening cooperation with the cantonal sustainability offices and officers as the most important coordination and contact partners for the federal authorities. They also serve as the first point of contact for the municipalities. In future, the cantonal sustainability offices and officers should play a greater role in process design and become more heavily involved in the discussions regarding the content of the federal government's sustainability policy, all of which should be defined more precisely in a joint programme of work.

### 8.2 Implementation progress in the cantons, cities and municipalities

A large number of highly promising steps and initiatives have already been launched by cantons and municipalities on their way to implementing the 2030 Agenda. However, practically no overarching coordination structures have been established to date. One exception is the Coord21 association, in which the French- and Italian-speaking cantons and some municipalities have come together to better coordinate their activities.

The federal government actively supports initiatives that strengthen intercantonal coordination in implementing the 2030 Agenda, thus bringing the cantons more into line with one another. For example, it encourages the cantons to exchange views and experiences, coordinate actions and develop projects together. In addition, it engages in a dialogue with the umbrella organisations for Switzerland's cities and municipalities.

#### 8.2.1 Ongoing processes and activities

Thus far, 16 of the 26 cantons – in which 85 per cent of the Swiss population resides – have committed to sustainable development as part of their official processes, with 233 of 2,222 cities and municipalities having taken the same step. Numerous other public bodies have developed measures or adapted their policies to take account of the challenges of sustainable development. In doing so, they have adopted very different approaches that do not always refer to *Agenda 21* or the *2030 Agenda* by name. However, the goal remains the same:

participatory engagement on the path to sustainable development that is based on a spirit of partnership, economically viable, socially just and compatible with ecological requirements. Especially at municipal level, this involves urban planning activities, neighbourhood work, issues of social cohesion and integration, and *smart city* concepts.

Many cantons, cities and municipalities refer to the Federal Council's Sustainable Development Strategy, specifically drawing on the guidelines and action areas as a framework for their own approach. This often leads to them compiling their own guidelines, strategies, sectoral policies and plans for the legislative period, not to mention developing their own monitoring, control and evaluation instruments. The challenge now lies in adapting these programmes, projects and instruments to the new frame of reference provided by the 2030 Agenda. For example, the cantons of Geneva and Basel-Stadt have developed or are in the process of developing strategies based directly on the 2030 Agenda, thus leading the way in Switzerland.

It is already possible to cite a number of cantonal and municipal examples of how the SDGs can be achieved by 2030. These 'best practice' examples can be transferred easily to other regions. Some of these projects received financial support from the federal government's official programme promoting sustainable development, through which it contributes to implementation of the 2030 Agenda at cantonal and municipal level and encourages the sharing of experiences and the creation of synergies. In the past few years, support has focused on food, community participation, the quality of life in local neighbourhoods, sustainable public procurement and strategic processes. Lastly, as a national-level networking and dialogue platform, the *Forum Nachhaltige Entwicklung* ('Sustainable Development Forum') promotes the dissemination and adoption of best practices, which it collates and publishes.

### **8.2.2 Opportunities, success factors and challenges**

The 2030 Agenda provides a recognised frame of reference for adopting a comprehensive approach to sustainable development. In addition, the Agenda gives the topic fresh momentum and facilitates its integration into public policy at every institutional level. The cantons and municipalities take the 2030 Agenda seriously and endeavour to make a contribution in those areas for which they are responsible. Effective coordination among the individual cantons and between the federal authorities and the cantons, cities and municipalities is therefore indispensable to success. At present, concerted efforts are being made to strengthen cooperation between the various levels of state governance.

On the whole, the cantons, cities and municipalities view the federal government's support for implementation of the 2030 Agenda at cantonal and municipal level as both relevant and useful. However, the cantons regret not having had the opportunity to get involved in the country's efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda at an earlier stage, such as during preparation of the baseline assessment. In addition to being consulted more in future, the cantons, cities and municipalities would like to play a greater role in drawing up the next national report and Federal Council strategy on sustainable development. The same applies to the online consultation on the 2030 Agenda.

Ultimately, the 2030 Agenda can be seen as a major opportunity for strengthening and creating partnerships, specifically between public law corporations and with private-sector actors. There is still a considerable need for communication measures that employ suitable tools tailored specifically to the various target groups.

## **9 Cooperation with stakeholders from civil society**

Switzerland has a long tradition of cooperation between state and non-state actors. The federal authorities have worked closely with interested associations and non-governmental organisations for some years now, especially in relation to the environment, development cooperation, the economy and social affairs. This coordinated approach among various areas and actors should be strengthened further to enable broad-based partnerships and multi-

stakeholder initiatives to add to Switzerland's contribution to the global transition to sustainable development by 2030.

Consulting actors from civil society on its official sustainable development policy at national and international level is an established practice. These consultations and the '2030 Dialogue for Sustainable Development' series of events give them the chance to contribute to and state their political positions on the country report and Sustainable Development Strategy. Non-state actors are also consulted on the drafting of the Dispatch on International Cooperation and other foreign policy instruments. The aim is to make achieving the SDGs a task for society as a whole, and one that enjoys broad-based support.

The 2030 Agenda Advisory Group set up in the context of the baseline assessment has proven its considerable worth as a participatory instrument. It is likely to continue in a similar form and play a role in designing processes and in discussions regarding the content of the federal government's sustainability policy. Its members will serve as the main point of contact for the respective groups of stakeholders.

## **10 Switzerland's priority challenges as seen by the business world, civil society and academia**

Some 170 economic, civil society and academic organisations took part in an online consultation regarding the government's baseline assessment, in which they expressed their opinions on the challenges Switzerland must tackle if it is to realise the 17 SDGs by 2030. These same organisations were also given the opportunity to name the SDGs and targets to which they felt Switzerland should give special priority. The challenges were then discussed in greater depth at a subsequent dialogue event ('2030 Dialogue for Sustainable Development'), where potential actions were also considered.

These outcomes and the findings of the Federal Administration's baseline assessment served as the basis for the 2030 Agenda Advisory Group's definition of eight thematic clusters – or 'action areas' – in which Switzerland faces particular challenges and in which it can make a major contribution to realising the 2030 Agenda at both national and global level. These action areas form a nexus around several closely connected SDGs, thus allowing concerted efforts to be made to pursue them jointly. The challenges listed for each area concern all the actors in Switzerland.

The action areas and challenges were chosen jointly by the members of the Advisory Group. These are (in alphabetical order): Prof. Mark Herkenrath (Alliance Sud), Marianne Hochuli (Caritas Switzerland), Prof. Peter Messerli (CDE, University of Bern), Sophie Neuhaus (National Youth Council of Switzerland/SAJV), Hervé Pichelin (equiterre), Thomas Pletscher (economiesuisse, ICC, also represents the GCNS), Prof. Renate Schubert (ETH Zurich), Seta Thakur (Swiss Business Council for Sustainable Development/öbu, also represents swisscleantech and the GCNS) and Friedrich Wulf (Umweltallianz, Pro Natura).

The priority challenges outlined below represent the viewpoint of actors outside the Federal Administration. Although they are important as input for the continuing efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda, they do not coincide with the official government stance.

### **10.1 Framework for implementing the 2030 Agenda**

The 2030 Agenda Advisory Group has identified a number of factors that must be put in place if Switzerland – the public sector, the business world, civil society, academia and the wider population – is to succeed in taking the steps necessary towards realising the 2030 Agenda. Above all, it attaches special importance to raising general awareness of the 2030 Agenda. This means making people aware that our planet has limited natural resources and that we all need to adopt a sustainable lifestyle and protect our natural resources, as well as taking political action to achieve this. But it also means recognising the huge social, ecological and

economic opportunities that the SDGs present. The challenges addressed in the 2030 Agenda offer a wide variety of opportunities for tapping into new areas of business, developing innovative products and technologies with ecological and social benefits, and adopting production methods that are resource-friendly and fair. For this reason it is important to raise awareness of the sustainable development goals and the significant contribution our country makes towards resolving global challenges by getting more people in the public eye and more media with a role in shaping public opinion talking about them. Communicating the 2030 Agenda should not be left to business, civil society and academic partners; the federal government, cantons and municipalities also have a role to play.

The right institutional and financial framework must be established if Switzerland is to succeed in implementing the 2030 Agenda and make a substantial contribution to achieving the goals and targets worldwide. The 2030 Agenda Advisory Group considers three challenges to be of central importance:

- **Embedding the 2030 Agenda in policies at every level and making this a strategic priority with high-level institutional backing.** The 2030 Agenda must be embedded in policies and practices at every federal level; this process must be given strategic priority and the support of a high-level institutional framework. The federal government is required to lead by example. Specifically, implementing the 2030 Agenda should become the Federal Council's foremost strategic objective during the next legislative period.
- **Providing the resources and financial means necessary, particularly at federal level.** Successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda in and by Switzerland requires public investments in awareness-raising among all the actors, in research and knowledge-sharing and, naturally, in the actual implementation efforts taking place at home and abroad. Ultimately, the ability to make an adequate contribution to reaching the goals and targets globally will require more federal funding to be made available for development cooperation, climate finance and protecting biodiversity.
- **Policy coherence for sustainable development.** The 2030 Agenda touches on every aspect of sustainability and thus affects every policy area, including those that fall between the national and international dimension. Successful implementation calls for all the legal bases and political measures to be reviewed in terms of their most substantial positive and negative impacts on our natural resource base, the well-being of people in disadvantaged countries and that of future generations. To enable informed political decisions to be taken in the interests of the 2030 Agenda, assessments of this kind should be conducted both *ex ante* and *ex post*.

## 10.2 Switzerland's priority challenges in eight action areas

The 2030 Agenda Advisory Group has defined priority challenges in eight action areas. These must be tackled by Switzerland if it is to achieve the goals set by the 2030 Agenda. The topics and challenges are not presented here in any particular hierarchical order; each area is accorded equal importance.

### Action area: Social solidarity (Leaving no one behind)

- **Reduce disadvantage and inequality.** People in Switzerland continue to be disadvantaged, for example, because of their origin, race, gender, age, language, social status, way of life, religious or philosophical beliefs or political opinions, or because of a physical, mental or psychological disability. This can leave them unable to take part in cultural life, restrict their access to education and employment, lead to economic discrimination or social exclusion and pose a threat to their physical and mental health.
- **Achieve gender equality and empower all women.** Switzerland has yet to achieve gender equality in all its many dimensions. Society as a whole is required to tackle gender-based physical violence and verbal abuse; it must also firmly commit to achieving political, social and economic equality. A more critical attitude needs to be

adopted towards traditional gender roles in both the private and public spheres. Furthermore, there needs to be greater awareness of cumulative disadvantage if this effect is to be eliminated.

- **Combat poverty.** Switzerland is considered a rich country. Nevertheless, according to the Federal Statistical Office, 615,000 (2016) people are living below the national poverty threshold while just as many find themselves in a highly precarious situation. Many of these people are unable to participate sufficiently in social life, lack access to the labour market or do not receive a wage that provides them with a decent living.
- **Create a better life in the countries of the South.** Switzerland has a shared responsibility and interest in alleviating the suffering of people in all parts of the world by making a stand against poverty, war, corruption and human rights abuses.

#### **Action area: Sustainable production and consumption**

- **Establish a sustainable way of life.** Consumption and production based on quality rather than quantity, on usage rather than ownership (*reduce, share, repair*) and on fair prices help reduce environmental degradation and contribute to greater social justice and a better quality of life. Changing the patterns of consumption and production that are common today not only calls for information: opinion leaders and public authorities must act as role models (leading the way by practising sustainable procurement, for example), opportunities (such as innovation and digitisation) must be seized and incentives put in place.
- **Make minimum standards more binding.** Improving the social and environmental conditions for global production entails a combination of voluntary initiatives and statutory rules. However, unless the minimum standards are implemented effectively worldwide, their impact will remain limited.
- **Improve true-cost accounting.** The social and environmental cost of products (arising from their manufacture, consumption and disposal) are often externalised. Effective incentives (in the form of incentive taxes or fees) can encourage market participants to adopt more sustainable behaviour.

#### **Action area: Conserve the natural resource base**

- **Make Switzerland's agricultural policy greener.** The country's policy of providing support and financial incentives for agriculture is not compatible with efforts to achieve a sustainable use of resources. Measures must be taken to counteract the reduction in soil fertility and loss of biodiversity, in particular by eliminating false incentives in this area.
- **Ensure the protection and preservation of biodiversity.** Switzerland is home to a larger number of endangered species than its neighbouring countries, but also has the lowest number of conservation areas. Preserving and improving biodiversity calls not only for sustainable use, but also for priority protection using (wildlife and area) conservation instruments and incentives for maintaining ecosystem services.
- **Support the sustainable use of land and resources abroad.** As part of a global network that imports goods and raw materials from abroad, Switzerland has a shared responsibility in the socially and ecologically acceptable use of land and resources. Agricultural production, the extraction of commodities and generation of energy are often associated with soil erosion, water contamination and the loss of huge swathes of primary forest, especially in the emerging markets and developing countries.

#### **Action area: Ensure healthcare for all**

- **Good health should remain affordable.** Healthcare costs continue to rise unabated, thus pushing up the costs of mandatory health insurance. Everyone must be able to afford health insurance and have access to high-quality health services. Particular

importance should be given to mental illnesses and the consequences for young people.

- **Take global responsibility.** The Swiss pharmaceutical and medical industry is a major global player in the healthcare sector. As it makes an important contribution to ensuring adequate healthcare for every section of the population and providing access to essential medicines and treatment for what are termed 'neglected diseases', its role should be strengthened further.

#### **Action area: Strengthen employment and the workplace**

- **Maintain competitiveness.** Switzerland's competitiveness should be maintained and strengthened by virtue of its own achievements (especially innovation and efficiency gains) and not at the expense of other countries (no regulatory arbitrage, no subsidies that distort competition).
- **Guarantee healthy and social working conditions.** Many people, especially those in developing countries, have to work in conditions that are damaging to their health, undermine their rights as workers or do not allow them to earn sufficient income to live on. *Decent work* is a topic of relevance in Switzerland too, although with a slightly different focus (such as work-related stress, workplace harassment, equality and quasi-exploitative employment relationships).

#### **Action area: Make urbanisation sustainable**

- **Develop human settlements worth living in.** The growth of human settlements should be confined primarily to urban areas in order to preserve scarce land reserves. This will mean using the reserves that already exist within cities and trying to build more densely. To ensure that high-density living environments nevertheless remain attractive the local population must be given an adequate say, there must be a good social mix, jobs, shopping and leisure facilities must be close to where people live, there must be sufficient high-quality green spaces, good mobility options and a functioning infrastructure. The task in rural regions is to maintain the structures that are essential to the functioning of local communities.
- **Reduce the demand for energy and cover it from renewable sources.** Buildings are responsible for around 40 per cent of energy consumption. Urban development programmes must be used to lower greenhouse gas emissions and reduce energy consumption. Mobility accounts for a further third of energy use. Here too, mobility services for people and goods must become climate-friendly. As a means of mass transportation, public transport systems have a special role to play in this respect; similarly, new technologies can make a contribution to sustainable mobility. Rebound effects (such as increased demand driven by new options) are not desirable and should be avoided wherever possible.

#### **Action area: Strengthen corporate sustainability**

- **Make value chains sustainable.** Globalised production based on the division of labour makes it more difficult for companies to measure and improve their environmental and social performance. If efforts to preserve environmental resources, establish fair working conditions and the adequate involvement of local communities in value creation are to succeed, suppliers and customers alike must become part of the process.
- **Mobilise private resources and stem illegal financial flows.** The involvement of the private sector, and especially the financial sector, is crucial to the financing of many aspects of the 2030 Agenda – particularly in developing and emerging economies. The right conditions have to be established for this to happen. Furthermore, Switzerland should use its cooperation activities and effective implementation of the international agreements it has entered into as vehicles for curbing illegal financial flows from these countries. Regulatory arbitrage should not be practised.

## Action area: Strengthen education

- **Promote and maintain a high level of education.** The high level of educational attainment in Switzerland is one of the country's main assets. It enables direct democracy to function and is essential to an inclusive society. The quality of the education system and the research and innovation that stem from it must be maintained, and equal access to basic technical, vocational and tertiary education ensured along with adapted continuing education and training. A broad range of continuing education and training opportunities – both formal and non-formal – should encourage lifelong learning.
- **Establish education for sustainable development at all levels as a whole-institution approach.** Raising awareness of the 2030 Agenda and enabling its implementation are two of the main requirements for achieving the targets that have been set. Education for sustainable development should be integrated into every form of education at every level. It particularly needs to be strengthened in vocational education and training and at upper secondary and higher education level, and should be promoted through partnerships with educational institutions in developing and emerging economies.

## 11 Next steps

This report looks at where Switzerland currently stands in terms of implementing the SDGs in its domestic and foreign policy and determines where the future challenges lie in realising the 2030 Agenda and its objectives. It forms the basis for Switzerland's 2018 country report. Switzerland will submit reports to the UN every four years from 2018 onwards, allowing it to highlight its progress and identify the remaining challenges at regular intervals. Switzerland will also make every effort to ensure that its future reports are as broad-based as possible, as specified in the UN Guidelines to Support Country Reporting, and that all sectors and levels of governance and non-state actors are represented.

Transposed to the Swiss context, monitoring of the SDGs is ensured by the MONET indicator system for sustainable development. This has been upgraded to include Switzerland's goals and targets in relation to the 2030 Agenda. The indicators, which are published online and updated regularly, provide an important basis for both national and international reports on Switzerland's implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

The federal government recognises the importance of policy coherence for sustainable development as a key approach in identifying trade-offs and synergies between policy areas, achieving a balance between domestic policy objectives and internationally agreed objectives and addressing the spillovers of domestic policies. Switzerland promotes policy coherence in the context of the work done by the government and Federal Administration to successfully implement the 2030 Agenda in sectoral policies. The federal government maintains a dialogue on policy coherence at both national and international level, and will increasingly use and develop instruments suitable for detecting coherence problems and potential synergies on the basis of the 2030 Agenda at an early stage.

Since 1997, the Federal Council has set out its policy in the Sustainable Development Strategy (SDS) – a key instrument for implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The focus of the Sustainable Development Strategy going forward should be placed on where the need for action lies in Switzerland's national and international policies on sustainable development beyond the current sectoral policy and where it can make a significant contribution to realising the 2030 Agenda at both national and global level. Building on the baseline assessment and the country report, quantifiable and measurable targets to be achieved in respect of the 2030 Agenda are thus to be formulated in the SDS. These targets are also to be utilised to mobilise external partners for implementation.






















































Sustainable development policy is a forward-looking requirement that must be adopted in every policy area. That is why the Federal Council decided in 2009 to link its legislative planning process and the SDS even more closely. These links will be strengthened even further in future and focuses, targets and measures will become even better aligned. In addition, important foreign policy instruments and reports, such as the Dispatch on Switzerland's International Cooperation and the Foreign Policy Report, will make direct reference to the 2030 Agenda.



## Appendix 1: Monitoring the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda targets in Switzerland

Switzerland has a system of 85 indicators to monitor the SDGs and targets of the 2030 Agenda. This system is based on internationally recognised instruments and methods developed by the Federal Statistical Office over the past 15 years.

Each indicator comes with three symbols. The first symbol shows targeted development (white arrow on blue background) measured against Switzerland's objectives. The second symbol illustrates the observed development (black arrow on white background) based on the calculated trend for the period in question, normally from 2000 or the date of the first survey if after 2000, until the last available value. The third symbol summarises the first two to allow an assessment of the observed development (✓ Positive, ✗ Negative, ≈ Unchanged, □ No verdict).

Goal of Switzerland	Indicator	Synthesis
<b>1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere</b>		
1.2	Poverty rate	  
1.3	Total social security expenditure	 
1.5	Fatalities caused by natural events	 
<b>2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture</b>		
2.1	Consumption of fruit and vegetables	 
2.2		
2.4	Nitrogen balance from agriculture	  
	Greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture	  
2.5	Plant genetic resources for food and agriculture	 
2.b	Export contributions	  
<b>3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages</b>		
3.3	Measles immunisation coverage	  
3.4	Potential years of life lost	  
	Suicide rate	  
3.5	Heavy alcohol consumption	 
3.6	Road traffic accidents	  
3.8	Healthcare needs unmet for financial reasons	  
3.9	Particulate matter concentrations	  
3.a	Smoking rate	  
<b>4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all</b>		
4.1	Reading skills of 15-year-olds	  
4.3	Teaching staff at higher education institutions (proportion of women)	  
4.4	First diploma rate at upper secondary level	 
4.5		
4.6	Participation in continuing education	 

5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls				
5.1	Wage gap between women and men	↙	↘	✓
5.2	Domestic violence	↙		■
5.4	Time spent on professional activity and on domestic work and childcare	↙	↘	✓
5.5	Professional position by sex	↙	↘	✓
	Proportion of women in the National Council and in cantonal parliaments	↗	↗	✓
6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all				
6.1	Nitrate in groundwater	↙	→	≈
6.4	Drinking water use	↙	↘	✓
6.6	Structure of watercourses	↙		■
7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all				
7.1	Final energy consumption by energy source	↙	↘	✓
	Energy dependency	↙	↘	✓
7.2	Renewable energies	↗	↗	✓
	Electricity production from new renewable energy	↗	↗	✓
7.3	Final energy consumption per capita	↙	↘	✓
8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all				
8.1	Gross domestic product per capita	↗	↗	✓
8.2	Labour productivity	↗	↗	✓
8.3	Jobs in innovative economic activities	↗	→	≈
8.4	Material footprint	↙	↗	✗
8.5	Women's employment rate	↗	↗	✓
	Wage gap between women and men	↙	↘	✓
8.6	NEET: Young people neither in employment nor in training	↙	→	≈
8.8	Accidents at work	↙	↘	✓
8.9	Tourism gross value added	↗	↗	✓
	Tourism employment	↗	↗	✓
8.b	Youth unemployment	↙	↗	✗
9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation				
9.1	Congestion on Swiss motorway network	↙	↗	✗
	Average distance to nearest public transport stop	↙		■
9.4	Material intensity	↙	↘	✓
9.5	Expenditure on research and development	↗	↗	✓
10. Reduce inequality within and among countries				
10.1	Distribution of equivalised primary income (S80/S20)	↙	↗	✗
10.2	Participation of disabled persons in the labour market	↗	→	≈
	Employment rate by migration status	↙	→	≈
10.4	Distribution of equivalised disposable income (S80/S20)	↙	→	≈

10.7	Risk of poverty by migration status			
10.a	Duty-free imports from developing countries			
10.b	Official development assistance for poor countries			
10.c	Remittances by migrants			
<b>11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable</b>				
11.1	Housing costs			
11.2	Independent use of public transport by people with disabilities			
	Average distance to nearest public transport stop			
11.3	Building zones (density)			
11.4	Urban sprawl			
11.5	Damaged caused by natural disasters			
11.6	Traffic noise pollution			
11.7	Recreation areas in urban space			
<b>12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns</b>				
12.2	Material footprint per person			
	Greenhouse gas footprint			
12.5	Total municipal waste generation			
	Rate of separately collected municipal waste			
12.8	Environmental behaviour in everyday life			
12.c	Petroleum tax relief			
<b>13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts</b>				
13.2	Greenhouse gas emissions			
13.3	Assessment of dangers associated with climate change			
<b>14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development</b>				
14.1	Nitrogen load exported			
<b>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</b>				
15.1	Protected areas			
15.2	Sustainable wood harvest			
15.3	Soil sealing			
15.4	Summer pastures			
15.5	Biocoenosis diversity in meadows and pastures			
	Red list			
15.6	Plant genetic resources for food and agriculture			
15.8	Invasive alien species			
15.a	Biodiversity spending			
<b>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</b>				
16.1	Violent offences			

16.5	Corruption Perceptions Index (ranking of Switzerland)			
16.6	Confidence in the Federal Council			
16.b	Victims of discrimination			
<b>17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development</b>				
17.2	Official Development Assistance			
17.3	Direct investment in developing countries			

## Appendix 2: Implementation of the 2030 Agenda by non-governmental actors

Two-and-a-half-years following the adoption of the Agenda, many Swiss companies, civil society organisations, education and research institutions have recognised the importance of the 2030 Agenda and its goals and are now working hard on its implementation. Large and especially internationally active companies have been quick and dynamic in their reaction. They are familiar with most of the SDGs, see the added value of a universal agenda and are incorporating the SDGs more into their reporting. Civil society stakeholders also know the SDGs from their thematic perspective and are contributing actively to their implementation. The 2030 Agenda has also attracted interest from academic institutions, which have, for example, addressed the SDGs in their subject areas, for example regarding the Future Earth initiative.

However, divergent interests keep coming to the fore when deciding which measures are to be applied to which issues in which order of priority. Not even a common will to achieve successful implementation can change that. Multi-stakeholder dialogue and partnership-based initiatives are therefore an important means of identifying the breadth of perception, balancing interests, aiming for compromise and creating trust. They complement the individual efforts that all stakeholders have to make on their own account to implement the 2030 Agenda successfully. Various dialogue platforms, such as the civil society 2030 Agenda Platform have formed for that purpose and they lobby actively on behalf of the 2030 Agenda. The international scientific network Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) has also established a foothold in Switzerland.

Participation and mutual coordination between non-government actors was also supported by their active involvement in the federal process. The following statements by the member organisations of the 2030 Agenda Advisory Group provide an excellent insight into the commitment of non-government actors in Switzerland and their expectations of the federal government.

### Alliance Sud

Alliance Sud is the joint development policy think-and-do tank of the six Swiss development organisations Swissaid, Fastenopfer, Bread for all, Caritas, Helvetas and Heks.

Alliance Sud sees the 2030 Agenda as showing the way to a future where all the peoples of the world can live with self-determination and dignity in harmony with nature. It considers social, ecological and economic sustainability to be intrinsically bound together, in the same way as national and international policy.

The developmental working group Alliance Sud advocates a Swiss policy of facilitating sustainable development in disadvantaged countries rather than hindering it. It makes a considerable contribution to political coherence for sustainable development in the spirit of the 2030 Agenda.

Alliance Sud expects the federal government to implement the 2030 Agenda consistently in all policy areas. Federal political affairs must consistently be reviewed to assess how they affect people in disadvantaged areas of the world, future generations and natural resources. That requires political engagement at the highest level plus additional resources.

### **Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences**

The Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences is an association of the four disciplinary scientific academies, with the centres of competence for technology assessment and dialogue between society and science plus other scientific networks.

Education, teaching and research at all levels are key to sustainable development for Switzerland and the global community. The scientific community sees a major opportunity in the 2030 Agenda's acknowledgement of knowledge-based decisions and accepts its societal responsibility to provide education, teaching and research to advance sustainable development.

Science in Switzerland enjoys a great diversity of high-level disciplinary, inter- and transdisciplinary knowledge. Given the narrow timeframe for implementing the 2030 Agenda at a national and international level, research priorities lie in synthesising current knowledge, generating transformational knowledge plus ongoing dialogue with civil society and the economic and political sectors.

The Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences expect the federal government to implement the 2030 Agenda on the basis of knowledge. In response, Swiss academic and research policy must place more emphasis on education, teaching and research for sustainable development and support other countries through joint international research ventures to implement sustainability targets.

### **Caritas Switzerland**

Caritas Switzerland is an organisation involved in projects within and outside Switzerland and it lobbies on a political level against poverty and exclusion.

The 2030 Agenda is highly significant to Caritas. By signing, Switzerland has undertaken to orient its political actions both domestically and in poorer countries to overcoming poverty and providing dignified living conditions for all, and to conserving natural resources. Caritas works at a political level to ensure Switzerland observes this obligation. At the same time, Caritas aims to make a lasting impact through its own projects to the fight against poverty and to universal social integration within and outside Switzerland.

Caritas expects the federal government to systematically review its policies to ensure they contribute to the aims of the 2030 Agenda and to take every opportunity to provide updates on its progress and provide the required resources, that includes an interdisciplinary 2030 Agenda office plus a standing committee to monitor implementation.

### **Economiesuisse and ICC Switzerland**

Economiesuisse is an umbrella organisation representing Swiss business. The members of economiesuisse include 100 industry associations, 20 cantonal chambers of commerce and individual companies. ICC Switzerland is part of the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) and is managed by economiesuisse. Its members include internationally oriented companies, larger or specialised law firms, chambers of commerce and major economic associations.

The 2030 Agenda is a global compass and vision for the implementation of sustainable development. Its challenges cannot be met without the involvement of the private sector and entrepreneurial solutions. The business sector has been actively involved from the outset through the ICC. Its aims are actually in the interests of the economy: where poverty is disappearing and legal certainty is growing is where the markets are also growing. This brings prosperity and peace through trade and investment.

According to its articles of association, *economiesuisse* is committed to a free and market-based economic order and meets its overall social and ecological responsibility. *Economiesuisse* and ICC Switzerland contribute in that respect to targeted cooperation among authorities, civil society and the corporate sector, which creates new opportunities for people, the environment and economy worldwide.

The 2030 Agenda has to function on a market-economy basis and achieve its goals in a free environment. It does not provide grounds for new regulations or a blank cheque for state activism. That would result in a failed planned economy. Cooperation and transparency are more important for the economy. The government/federal government has a correspondingly subsidiary role and goes to visible lengths to harmonise its policy with the goals of the 2030 Agenda.

## **Öbu**

Öbu is the association for sustainable business in Switzerland and has about 360 companies, organisations and institutions among its members.

Öbu considers sustainability as an integral component of a forward-looking business strategy to ensure the Swiss economy's competitiveness over the long term. The 2030 Agenda is a globally recognised reference framework that helps us to support our members in implementing their sustainability strategies and makes a tangible contribution to achieving the SDGs.

Öbu contributes mainly to the implementation of SDGs 8, 9, 12 and 17 through its four main themes 'supply chain management and procurement', 'the circular economy', 'workplace in transition' and 'sustainable communication'. The association promotes the raising of awareness among Swiss companies and helps them align their sustainability commitment with the SDGs.

As a representative of sustainably-oriented Swiss companies, öbu expects the federal government to attach more importance to its leading role in key issues, such as the promotion of sustainable procurement and the circular economy and to contribute even more to raising awareness in the Swiss economic sector and among the general public.

## **National Youth Council of Switzerland**

The National Youth Council of Switzerland (SAJV) is the umbrella organisation for about 60 youth organisations in Switzerland and it represents their interests to the authorities, the public and in political committees.

The SAJV sees the 2030 Agenda as a big opportunity for youth. It forms a shared framework on the way to a fairer world closer to people and nature. It is an inspiring, optimistic vision based on the participation and rights of everyone.

The SAJV makes a major contribution to the 2030 Agenda, particularly goals 3, 4.7, 10.2 and 16.7. The SAJV is a platform for young people and offers them the opportunity to participate in politics and society. Its main participation in the 2030 Agenda is in the cross-cutting issue of youth (preamble) and important voluntary work.

The federal government shows commitment in implementing the 2030 Agenda. However, improved policy and legal coherence vis-à-vis the 2030 Agenda is also called for. The SAJV wants to commit to achieving the SDGs, as do many other civil society organisations. However, it needs corresponding financial and political support.

## **Umweltallianz (Environmental Alliance)**

The Umweltallianz is a loose coalition of the four main environmental organisations Greenpeace, Pro Natura, VCS and WWF. It aims to better promote the interests of nature and the environment at the political level. It works together with the Swiss Energy Foundation, BirdLife and the Swiss Alpine Initiative.

The Umweltallianz sees the 2030 Agenda as a central instrument and reference framework on the way to a sustainable world. The alliance's goals in the areas of biodiversity, climate and energy as well as sustainability of transport, the financial centre and economy can only be achieved if all the sectors play their part.

The political work and specific projects of its member organisations within and outside Switzerland contribute directly to the implementation of many of the SDGs, for example in maintaining the ecosystems on land and in water, protecting endangered species, sustainable food systems, clean energy supply and improving the income of local populations.

The Umweltallianz expects the federal government to facilitate consistent integration of SDGs in all sectoral policies and to divert subsidies and investments that run counter to the 2030 Agenda. This calls for commitment at the highest level, coordination reporting directly to the Federal Council and additional resources. The process must be transparent and participative with clear, measurable goals at national level.

## **Appendix 3: Responses to the baseline assessment**

Responses to the baseline assessment from organisations from the business sector, civil society and the scientific community are set out below.

### **The response of the business community**

#### **General points**

The UN Sustainable Development Goals cannot be achieved without entrepreneurial solutions. The business community therefore welcomes the fact that Switzerland's baseline assessment and Country Report adopt this fundamental spirit of partnership, which has been well rooted in Switzerland for many years. Cooperation between businesses, the state and civil society – which is already close – can be stepped up still further, because dialogue and competition between ideas create win-win situations that generate added value for businesses and society alike. This nonetheless depends on the 2030 Agenda being interpreted as a guidance framework and not as a programme of regulation. Here, efforts must be made to ensure coherence between the goal and the measures intended to achieve it.

The 2030 Agenda provides the outline for a common framework within which all actors can work together in partnership. This baseline assessment illustrates that Switzerland is on the right track. The private and public sectors, or businesses and civil society, are already working together successfully in many areas, and have thereby produced model solutions, such as the dual system of education (SDG 4), the social partnership approach to industrial relations, or the pension system, which enjoys comparatively stable funding. It is also clear from the Report that, as a country with tried-and-tested experience in dialogue, a long humanitarian tradition and an economy with strong international ties, Switzerland has a prime fundamental interest in a sustainable, forward-looking world. Switzerland has nothing to fear from an international comparison, and ranks among the top countries in key areas such as environmental conservation, social cohesion, quality of life and sustainable business.

It becomes particularly clear in the context of SDG 8 that business and sustainability are not mutually exclusive. Indeed, the UN Sustainable Development Goals support the interests of the private sector, because markets grow wherever poverty declines and legal certainty increases. This results in prosperity and peace by means of trade and investment. With its commitment within international institutions such as the WTO, OECD, World Bank and IMF, Switzerland contributes internationally to SDG 8, for example by being an active proponent of better market access for developing countries. Furthermore, the Swiss economy is strongly opposed to protectionist movements.

Although Switzerland still has challenges to face, especially where sustainable consumption is concerned, it must be noted that the Swiss economy has displayed considerable innovative

drive for decades now, emerging as a pioneer on many important issues such as recycling, which is relevant to SDG 12. For example, the Swiss private sector was the first in the world to introduce a privately organised waste disposal system for unwanted electrical and electronic appliances and devices, even before the obligation to take such items back and recycle them became enshrined in Swiss law in 1998. Businesses in Switzerland continue to make significant contributions towards SDG 12. In areas in which it makes economic and ecological sense, the 'circular economy' approach is becoming increasingly widespread among Swiss companies. Technological advances are lowering barriers all the time, meaning that more and more materials can be reclaimed economically and fed back into the production process. The key point here is that there is no increase in the overall impact on the environment.

All in all, Switzerland has demonstrated in many areas that outstanding results can be achieved simply by largely voluntary cooperation and mutual respect. Especially where goals are defined clearly, the business community has demonstrated very successfully how it can take independent responsibility and independent action. One example here is the reduction in greenhouse gases being achieved by the implementation tools provided by EnAW, the energy agency for the Swiss private sector, and Act, the Swiss cleantech agency.

Coherence and transparency in the sense of SDG 17 are also proven, and yet pioneering, elements of sustainable development. In this context, businesses are called upon to ensure coherent reporting. Room for improvement continues to exist in the way in which coherence and transparency are supported by, and rooted in, policy and political decision-making, however. While many businesses integrate the SDGs into their strategic planning, politics still pursues many individual processes that are characterised by special interests. This hinders a concerted overall approach.

Finally, it should be remembered that there is a very fine line between over-regulation and efforts to strengthen independent responsibility in business. Both partners have an obligation here: the state, to grant businesses maximum freedom when implementing the SDGs, and the businesses themselves, to act on their responsibility. Strategies and action are what are needed, not legal confrontations, because it will be impossible to meet global challenges without the cooperation of the private sector and without entrepreneurial solutions.

### **Real-life commitment – data and examples**

The message about the relevance of the SDGs – in commercial as well as other terms – has been well understood by the Swiss business community. Implementing them will be a slow and steady process, although it offers a great deal of potential. That was the finding of a number of studies and analyses conducted in 2017: 70 per cent of respondents in a sustainerv survey of around 100 mostly large Swiss companies from a wide range of sectors said that they regarded the Sustainable Development Goals as relevant, although that by no means implies an active commitment to them. There are many reasons for addressing the SDGs. Breaking the global agenda of Goals down to a specific business context has emerged as one of the greatest challenges in this. The most comprehensive national analysis of sustainability reports to date, conducted by engageability, öbu (the Swiss Business Council for Sustainable Development) and Business School Lausanne, arrived at the same conclusion. Of the total of 101 companies studied – which included SMEs alongside multinationals – just 16 currently factor the SDGs into their strategic deliberations. These companies include representatives of the retail sector, industry, finance and pharmaceuticals. The examples shown below are drawn from this group, and others.

- To support the SDGs and as part of its 'Creating Shared Value' strategy, in March 2017 Nestlé Ltd formulated three long-term objectives that should be achieved by 2020: to help 50 million children attain a healthier lifestyle; to improve the livelihoods of 30 million people in communities directly associated with Nestlé's business activities; and to reduce the company's environmental footprint to zero.



- As part of its integrated sustainability strategy, which factors economic, ecological and social factors into all decision-making processes, Geberit is making specific contributions towards SDGs 6, 8, 9 and 11 through its product portfolio. The individual measures that have been instituted for each Goal are laid down in specific [SDG reporting](#).
- In February 2018, the Federation of Migros Co-operatives published an 11-page [report](#) on the company's contribution to each of the 17 SDGs, listing the defined action areas in detail. It mentions a total of 204 measures and projects, although Migros states that these are only the most important of its commitments to the SDGs.
- UBS links investments with specific SDGs, so that its clients can decide which Goal they would like their investment to contribute to. It also explicitly supports SDG 17 (see [UBS WEF White Paper](#)), and collaborates with other businesses and organisations. For example, UBS was involved in the development of the world's first entirely sustainable investment product, as well as the independent Align17 platform for investments in sustainable projects.
- In addition, February 2018 saw the foundation of 'Go for Impact', a unique alliance between the business sector, the scientific community and the public sector. The aim of this initiative is to support Swiss businesses in reducing their negative environmental impacts and increasing their positive ones, both at home and abroad. The founding members of the initiative are the Federal Office for the Environment, economiesuisse, öbu, the PUSCH organisation for practical environmental conservation in Switzerland, scienceindustries, Swissmem, SwissTextiles and WWF Switzerland.

The number of Swiss companies integrating the SDGs into their strategies, and thus their core businesses, is rising all the time. This is particularly true of corporate groups which already have a systematic sustainability management framework that is based on a materiality analysis and also has measurable targets. A recent study for the Federal Office for the Environment (Daub, Winistörfer and Weber, 2016) nonetheless revealed room for improvement even among major companies with regard to the formulation of clear, ambitious and measurable goals. Efforts must therefore continue to raise awareness of the 2030 Agenda among large sections of the economy, to highlight the many and varied commercial opportunities presented by the SDGs, and to promote effective reporting about what the business sector has achieved. As commercial associations, we are playing an active part in taking this awareness-raising and implementation work forward.

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## **The response of civil society – the social perspective**

By signing the 2030 Agenda, Switzerland committed to making a material contribution to achieving the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. We welcome what has been achieved to date, although the country will have to do much more, both financially and politically, in the future. The Report may serve as a useful basis for further action on implementation. It provides a comprehensive overview of the current legal foundations and the measures that are already underway, primarily at federal level. Unfortunately, the cantons were involved too little, too late, which is why the Report contains considerable omissions, especially where social policy is concerned, as it is to a large extent a cantonal matter.

It is pleasing to see that the Report also mentions a large number of challenges to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda which have still to be tackled. However, it neglects to say when, and by which specific means, this will happen. For example, with regard to SDG 16 the Report

emphasises that more than a third of the resident population in Switzerland is not able to participate in political decision-making, yet it does not mention any plans to improve this situation, especially for non-Swiss residents.

Clearly, meeting the 2030 Agenda cannot be the subject of the Sustainable Development Strategy and the Dispatch on Switzerland's International Cooperation alone. In the future, it must be incorporated as a strategic guiding principle for all areas of policy at federal and cantonal levels alike. This in turn requires the Federal Council to declare the cohesive implementation of the 17 SDGs to be one of the primary strategic objectives of its planning for the next legislative period. There is no mention of that in this Report.

Furthermore, future action to implement the 2030 Agenda will have to factor in the interdependence of the 17 SDGs to a much greater degree than in the past. Each strategically effective measure should contribute simultaneously to the achievement of a number of the Goals, and on no account be detrimental to any of them. The Report therefore makes multiple reference to the importance of policy coherence on sustainable development, the *multidimensionality* of the issue, and the *interdependence* of the SDGs. The main section on the implementation status of the SDGs nonetheless closely reflects the particular perspective of the individual federal agencies that are responsible. The Goals are not placed in an overall context, and the question of how they relate to and overlap with each other has been delegated to civil society and the external advisory group.

For example, it is of some concern that the Report on SDG 8 emphasises the great opportunity presented by the digital transformation, without making any reference to the potentially negative social consequences. These are addressed separately as a challenge in connection with SDG 1. The Report does not offer any indication about any plans for a federal-level strategy on the digital transformation which integrates the opportunities and risks for various SDGs.

All in all, therefore, the baseline assessment arrives at an *overly positive view* of work that is currently underway to implement the 2030 Agenda. For example, it claims that Switzerland has already made a great deal of progress with regard to social cohesion, while stating with regard to SDG 1 that enormous challenges still exist in terms of the lack of equal access to early-life support through to joining the workforce, as well as to adult education, and a lack of job opportunities. It also fails to mention that the nationwide compromise about what constitutes a minimum standard of living, permitting a life of dignity, is increasingly called into question. There are no binding targets, quite apart from a dedicated Swiss strategy for combating poverty. Resource consumption is presented as particularly problematic overall, while the Report pays too little attention to the socially vulnerable position of those who have been admitted to Switzerland only provisionally, or who do not hold any formal identification documents, the *sans-papiers*.

The Report also fails to mention a raft of recent political decisions at odds with Switzerland's efforts to make a material contribution to the achievement of the SDGs:

- It is extremely concerning that the great majority of the cost-saving measures instituted by the federal government are at the expense of Switzerland's international cooperation activities. Instead of the planned 0.7 per cent, Switzerland's official development assistance (ODA) spending fell to just 0.46 per cent of GDP in 2017. A significant proportion of this figure continues to be derived from the questionable inclusion in development cooperation statistics of spending on asylum-seekers in Switzerland. This makes it all the more problematic that, in the Country Report, the Federal Council once again shies away from setting out a binding timeline for achieving the 0.7 per cent target.
- It should also be noted that the Federal Council is also refusing to examine means of mobilising new and additional public-sector funding for international efforts on climate change. Despite the growing need for these financial resources, it wishes to continue relying on the tight development cooperation budget, which is also to be used to mobilise private-sector funds – a venture fraught with uncertainty.

- Where the implementation of UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights is concerned, the Swiss government and authorities have so far not been able to construct a regulatory framework reflecting the necessary 'smart mix' of voluntary incentives and mandatory rules.
- With regard to Switzerland's trade and investment agreements, the Report emphasises the allegedly positive effects for partner countries, without ever having conducted any empirical studies in this regard. Against the recommendations of the National Council Control Committee, the Federal Council has so far rejected any analysis and reporting of the social impact on partner countries before such agreements are concluded, which would allow those impacts to be factored in to the final round of negotiations.
- In its Tax Proposal 17, the Federal Council puts forward a whole range of substitutes for the current special tax regimes for holding companies, etc. at cantonal level. In this way, it wishes to create a new set of incentives to encourage international companies to bring profits made in poorer countries to Switzerland, where they remain tax-free. This proposal clearly contradicts the 2030 Agenda commitment to action which encourages the mobilisation of domestic resources to promote sustainable development in poorer countries.

Last, but not least, the Report shows that the federal government is not upholding non-discrimination against people with disabilities, or inclusion, either transversally or systematically. Although inclusion in Switzerland is mentioned in the section on SDG 10, as well as superficially in some of the other sections, it is not referred to with regard to many of the core SDGs. In some cases this is despite explicit reference to inclusion in the targets for the individual Goals, such as SDG 4.5. The same applies in the case of international cooperation and humanitarian aid: people with disabilities are never mentioned explicitly, even though the federal government underlines its constitutional remit to alleviate need and poverty around the world (Art. 54) on a number of occasions, and states that it pays special attention to particularly disadvantaged and marginalised groups. To ensure that the 2030 Agenda is put into effect in a way that includes those with disabilities, Switzerland urgently needs a strategy for the comprehensive implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which covers much the same ground as the relevant SDGs. Disability-specific indicators must also be systematically developed and applied, especially since Switzerland has currently made provision for only one, at the national level, and thus falls well short of the 2030 Agenda tenet that no one will be left behind. People with disabilities are being neglected in Switzerland's efforts actively and systematically to involve civil society. They are not represented in the 2030 Agenda Advisory Group, neither were online consultations accessible.

The successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda must naturally be backed by the corresponding administrative and financial resources. In view of the fact that, for several years, Switzerland has repeatedly achieved significant budget surpluses at federal level, there is considerable room for manoeuvre here. It is thus all the more worrying that, for the time being, the Federal Council is not prepared to make any additional personnel or funding available for the coordinated implementation of the Agenda.

*Mark Herkenrath, Alliance Sud and Marianne Hochuli, Caritas Schweiz*

## **The response of civil society – the environmental perspective**

**The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which was adopted in 2015** as well as this baseline assessment and, building on it, Switzerland's Country Report are the product of a broad-based international process that was launched at the UN's 2012 'Rio+20' conference. Compared with its forerunner, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the Agenda covers all of the issues that are relevant to sustainability. The environment is an integral part of the Agenda, accounting for three of the 17 SDGs (13, 14 and 15). Some of the other SDGs also

include environmental aspects, such as SDG 6, on water. *Umweltallianz* welcomes the Agenda and is firmly committed to implementing its Goals in coordination with other objectives and actors. Switzerland has played a full part in the process, and also incorporated key elements from the environmental perspective, such as the principle of planetary boundaries. It is one of the pioneers at the international level and is now reporting to the international community for what is already the second time.

The Country Report was preceded in early 2017 by a detailed, unpublished analysis of all 169 targets. This analysis was intended only as a means of coordinating with the international Goals, but did not contain any specific figures on progress towards those Goals. This was followed by a public online consultation, the 2030 Dialogue, as a basis for collating the key challenges from the point of view of stakeholders.

**Consequently, the Report is not an analysis in the true sense** of the actual situation in Switzerland. It lacks a sound gap analysis to show those targets for which Switzerland still has most work to do (target vs. actual values). As is the case with most reports to international bodies around the world, it instead lists a range of activities intended to help achieve the set Goals, but says nothing about how effective they are. It will therefore be almost impossible to say in four years' time whether or not any progress has been made.

Two of three parameters for which Switzerland scores worst in international comparisons (such as the 2017 report published by [gapframe.org](http://gapframe.org)) concern the environment. Where both biodiversity (SDG 15) and consumption (SDG 12) are concerned, Switzerland is considered 'a threat'. The attendant priorities do not feature in the Report.

### **SDG 15: Life on land: the urgency must be made clearer, and turned into action**

Unfortunately, the online consultation showed that biodiversity did not feature among the seven most important issues, apart from with those interested in the environment. At the same time, the poor state of biodiversity has become increasingly evident in recent years, both nationally and internationally. It was most recently recorded in the [OECD Environmental Performance Review for Switzerland \(2017\)](#). Switzerland has more endangered species and far fewer protected areas than any of its neighbouring countries, but representative surveys (gfs bern, 2013) reveal that only 20 per cent of the population is aware that the country urgently needs to act. Many of those participating in the consultation appear to have a similar level of knowledge, which does not correspond to the scientific facts.

The activities mentioned in the Report take up a number of important narrative strands: make sustainable use of biodiversity, value ecosystem services, construct an ecological infrastructure, make sustainable use of soil and forests, etc. However, no information is given as to whether or not these measures are being implemented in a way that actually has an effect. There is no mention whatsoever of the Biodiversity Switzerland strategy, which is the key instrument protecting the nation's biodiversity, or the related Action Plan. Although a task force has now been set up to work towards an ecological infrastructure, there is still no coordinated strategy. An analysis by NGOs BirdLife Schweiz, Pro Natura and WWF Switzerland (*Strategie Biodiversität Schweiz des Bundesrats – wo steht die Umsetzung in der Schweiz 2017?* ('The Federal Council's Biodiversity Switzerland strategy – what is the status of implementation in Switzerland in 2017?')) shows clearly that Switzerland must do significantly more if it is not to miss almost all of the national and international biodiversity goals, including the SDG 15 targets, by their deadline date of 2020. Priority must be given to meeting the challenges set out in Section 11: raising awareness, making agricultural policy more environmentally-friendly, protecting biodiversity and supporting the sustainable use of resources abroad.

### **SDG 12: Reducing consumption to remain within planetary boundaries**

By contrast, there is considerable agreement about the need to reduce consumption and the resulting pressure on the planet. The Swiss population's current consumption levels are more than three times what is sustainable – meaning that Switzerland is living at the expense of

future generations. Via its consumption of food and feedstuffs (meat, soya, palm oil, etc.), timber and fossil fuels, Switzerland has a significant impact on resources and natural habitats both at home and abroad. In Switzerland itself, high levels of nutrients and pesticides from agriculture result in polluted waters, insects dying off, and poor species diversity. Progressive deforestation in the tropics is attributable first and foremost to the import of the goods described above. The most important action points include creating true-cost pricing which reflects the costs to the environment and creates incentives to consume sustainably, to reduce waste (including food waste), cut back on air travel and to use products sustainably by sharing and repairing them instead of throwing them away, and to promote the circular economy. Unfortunately, consciously buying labelled products is often only a partial solution, as it merely relocates the problem. 'Sustainable' palm oil is one example here. The oil is not grown where pristine forest has been cleared, but demand for non-certified palm oil is still met by forest-clearing. It is also important for international companies to fulfil their corporate responsibility to apply international human rights and environmental standards to their subsidiaries' operations abroad. In addition to positive cooperation with the business world on a voluntary basis, this also requires statutory guidelines which apply equally to all. The Report sets out the clear expectation that businesses should take these human rights and environmental concerns seriously. For as long as consumption is not sustainable, we cannot respect the earth's planetary boundaries. With this in mind, the objective contained in SDG 8, to target continued economic growth in developing countries, must be offset by negative growth in industrialised countries, because there cannot be unlimited growth on a limited planet.

### **Relationships between the SDGs**

Conserving the environment and the world's ecosystems is fundamental to achieving the other Goals. Being able to fall back on nature and its resources enables the poorest people, especially, to survive (the 'GDP of the poor', SDG 1), it ensures our food supplies (SDG 2), promotes our physical and mental health (SDG 3), is particularly important to women and children (SDG 5), and helps to ensure water retention and to limit climate change and its impacts (SDGs 6 and 13). At the same time, these functions are also reliant on sustainable agriculture and the protection and sustainable use of water and other resources (SDGs 6 and 12). These and other relationships are very important to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and require close dialogue. For example, development policy must also make preserving biodiversity a key principle of its projects, and farmers must consistently put environmental targets into practice. The hope that other sectors would take up the biodiversity mantle has not yet been fulfilled, however.

### **Outlook**

These relationships are not addressed very fully in the Report. The next step is to update the Sustainable Development Strategy. It would be desirable for this to attempt to factor in these relationships and fuse them into a coordinated and well-supported agenda. The second key expectation of the strategy and the next HLPF report in four years' time is for them to publish clearly measurable indicators and a genuine status report for each of the Goals. Otherwise, experience with country reports in other international fora such as the UN Convention on Biological Diversity would unfortunately indicate that we will be unable to measure progress, and will not achieve the SDGs by either 2020 or 2030. It would be welcome if everyone were to implement the agenda so effectively by 2022 that Switzerland would also be able to give a clear and legitimate account of its progress, and thus motivate other countries which are starting from a lower base. *Umweltallianz* will happily play its part in achieving that progress.

*Friedrich Wulf, Umweltallianz and Pro Natura*

## **The response of civil society – the youth perspective**

### **Introduction – young people as agents of change**

The 2030 Agenda recognises the role of young people as critical agents of change. They have the energy, creativity and motivation to call into question existing, non-sustainable models. More than simply a catalogue of objectives, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is first and foremost the basis of a paradigm shift. It states as much in its title – ‘Transforming Our World’ – and declares in its preamble: ‘We are determined to take the bold and transformative steps which are urgently needed to shift the world onto a sustainable and resilient path’. Systemic change is required to achieve sustainable development. The baseline assessment and Switzerland's 2018 Voluntary National Review to the HLPF, entitled ‘Switzerland implements the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development’, contain meaningful analysis of a wide range of topics that are set out in the 2030 Agenda. Young people nonetheless tend to believe that the action that has been proposed does not go far enough. The baseline assessment offers few solutions, does not question the current analytical framework, and the 2030 Agenda is not sufficiently understood as a whole. What is needed is a transition to a system that would have social factors served by economic ones, within environmental limits (according to the Sustainability 3.0 perspective). Young people have the capacity that is required to make this transition – to develop innovative solutions for society as a whole – because their thinking is less narrowed by the institutional perspective. Their connectivity and openness to the world also encourages the development of new approaches. Yet if they are to achieve their full potential, young people must be able to enjoy their rights.

### **Leaving no one behind – young people as rights-holders**

The preamble to the 2030 Agenda continues thus: ‘As we embark on this collective journey, we pledge that no one will be left behind’. This core element of the ideology behind the 2030 Agenda is recalled several times in the guidelines for voluntary national reports: the importance of focusing the report on the most vulnerable, adopting a gender-based approach to analysis, and highlighting the inclusion of women and young people in the process. These fundamental points are unfortunately absent from the baseline assessment. We regret that gender is treated as binary in SDG 5, thus excluding everyone who does not identify as either a man or a woman. That said, equal treatment for transsexual and intersex individuals is addressed under SDG 10, alongside sexual orientation, which we welcome. It is essential for special attention to be paid to young people and every other group or sub-group whose rights are threatened (such as those living with disabilities, refugees and displaced persons, etc.). This is the only way to approach the key objective of the 2030 Agenda: that no one should be left behind. There are two aspects to this attention, specifically tracking indicators relating to them, and collecting and disseminating disaggregated data (by age, gender, etc.), and giving them significant ways of participating in the implementation and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda by setting up appropriate, binding and inclusive participation processes.

### **Citizenship – youth organisations as a catalyst for young people's efforts**

In order to permit young people to contribute to all aspects of society, youth organisations support their involvement and are committed to giving them a platform from which to have their voices heard. By promoting citizenship, they help them exercise their right to participation, and also help to reinforce social cohesion and democracy. As mentioned under the review of SDG 16, a significant proportion of the Swiss population is excluded from formal political participation, because they are minors or do not hold Swiss citizenship. The SAJV-CSAJ youth organisation, like others, is committed to increasing this participation. It advocates the right to vote from the age of 16, and encourages participation among young people from migrant backgrounds. This is typically done through projects such as the youth sessions of the federal parliament, or youth parliaments in Switzerland's towns and cities, as indicated in the remarks on SDG 16. Furthermore, youth organisations are generally a place in which democracy is open to all and which are actively committed to inclusion. In providing non-formal education, they have a very important part to play in teaching young people about sustainable development.

Thus, to allow these organisations to continue fostering citizenship, the federal government must support their work and, specifically, fund them adequately.

### **Health – young people as a vulnerable, marginalised group**

Young people are subject to marginalisation and are at particular risk of mental health problems and suicide. Certain sub-groups, such as young people from the LGBT community, are at an even higher risk in this regard. Furthermore, it is among the young that addictions develop, for example to alcohol, tobacco, drugs, as well as gambling. Here it is important to emphasise the damage done by tobacco advertising targeting young people. Although addiction and mental health are addressed in the review of SDG 3, there is no mention of the particular vulnerability of young people. To combat this, the SAJV-CSAJ promotes an empowerment perspective, helping young people to develop their risk-handling skills. This makes them better able to judge what risks they are willing to take and the consequences that they may have, without systematically resorting to banning certain substances. These skills can then be applied to many different situations and areas. Youth organisations also do sound prevention work, with the Voilà project, for example. They call on the political sphere to do more to recognise and promote this prevention and health promotion work.

### **Volunteering – youth organisations need sustainable development, and sustainable development needs youth organisations**

Young people and youth organisations are vital to achieving sustainable development, because they make an important contribution to it. Volunteering plays a key role in the 2030 Agenda, for example. This was recognised by the UN General Assembly in its resolution A/RES/70/129. As their objectives are linked, youth organisation and sustainable development go hand in hand. However, if participation and inclusion projects, such as the youth session of parliament, are to continue to be run, additional funding is needed. It will be impossible to achieve the 2030 Agenda without allocating more financial resources to organisations which are committed to sustainable development. The absence of a national strategy for funding sustainable development, as mentioned in section 8.3 of the baseline assessment, shows that the political will has not yet been established.

### **Conclusion – young people represent future generations and their rights and needs**

As the flag-bearers of intergenerational solidarity, and particularly that with future generations, young people must be more broadly included in the next steps of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at national level, to help root its objectives more firmly among the population and to achieve a sustainable future. The Federal Council's Sustainable Development Strategy for the 2020–2030 period will be a key document. The various actors and legal subjects, specifically women and young people, must be closely involved in its development to ensure that no one is left behind.

*Sophie Neuhaus, SAJV-CSAJ*

## **The response of the scientific community**

With the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), industrialised countries have undertaken to work together more closely to achieve sustainable development around the world. The 2030 Agenda is a declaration of belief in knowledge-led decisions. Representing the scientific community across its various institutions and disciplines, the Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences welcome this development and accept the responsibility of working with politicians, business and civil society to help bring about the necessary transformation. We would like to take this opportunity to call for a change of direction on science policy in the sense of greater efforts to promote research, as interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research helps to shape democratic negotiating, learning and decision-making processes. The Academies intend to play their part in this in the coming years by drawing up a research agenda that focuses on handling the

conflicting objectives between the various SDGs. Switzerland should help to drive such a science policy offensive forward with its environmental, economic, social and foreign policy, with the aim of the coherent implementation of the 2030 Agenda. With this guiding principle in mind, below we comment on individual points in the baseline assessment.

- **SDG 1 (Poverty):** The striking change in living conditions in Switzerland since the 1970s has resulted in new forms of living and family life, with the corresponding opportunities for personal development, but also new social risks, such as the rise of new risk groups. To combat poverty effectively, social policy must be geared to these social circumstances. The undisputed need for action should always be viewed in terms of its interaction with other areas, specifically family, old-age, fiscal and labour market policy, and it is essential that efforts are made to simplify the institutional system.
- **SDG 3 (Good health):** The ageing population poses an enormous challenge and requires changes to be made in a variety of areas of life. Switzerland has adopted the WHO strategy (2015), with its new definition of health and the important range of implications that this has. As such, it has committed to permitting all older people in Switzerland a good quality of life by 2030. Functioning concepts of quality of life which combine individual and contextual elements offer a sustainable basis for the five strategic action areas identified by the WHO to be addressed in an interdisciplinary approach.
- **SDG 4 (Education):** The high quality Swiss higher education system is an important contributor to the 2030 Agenda, as it equips graduates to work both within their own and across other disciplines to formulate possible approaches to key national and global challenges. It is vital that this asset is cultivated. Via cooperation programmes with partner institutions, a large number of institutes of higher education also help to build knowledge about the transformation, and to train researchers in countries of the Global South. Research partnerships on sustainable development must be given a prominent position as an instrument of research policy. Continuing education programmes allow attendees to examine new problems and strategies for solving them time and again throughout their lives. New funding concepts and open access strategies are required to make these courses accessible to genuinely broad sections of the population.
- **SDG 5 (Gender equality):** This transverse Goal affects all areas of society, such as the labour market, poverty and social policy, the family, and justice. Work in this area should therefore look at relationships between the sexes and generations, to promote peaceful and just co-existence and to support human capital in all of its forms. Ideas and inspiration for this can be found in the concept of generational policy, and its central objectives of a balance between work and family life and the active participation of all generations in the life of society. In this way the increasingly untenable ways of old, in which people were expected to live and act in accordance with their age and phase of life, can be overcome.
- **SDG 11 (Sustainable cities):** Urban, neighbourhood and infrastructure planning must take greater account of the ageing population. The aforementioned WHO strategy advocates the creation of age-friendly environments, in other words inclusive spaces which meet the needs of all generations and thus support the health, autonomy, independence and participation of the individual into advanced age.
- **SDG 13 (Climate change):** The Report's description of the background situation and activities fails to mention Switzerland's grey emissions, i.e. those caused abroad by the production of goods consumed in Switzerland. These emissions are relatively high compared with those of other countries, and at least as high per capita as Switzerland's own direct emissions. Action must therefore be taken towards reducing these emissions, even though they are more difficult to influence than those generated domestically. Education and awareness-raising must focus heavily on conveying knowledge, with an emphasis on the importance of behavioural and communication psychology, as well as the co-generation of knowledge in transdisciplinary research. Producing and



applying the relevant knowledge together with social actors is crucial to achieving changes to behaviour.

- **SDG 15 (Land ecosystems):** The prominence given in the baseline assessment to protected areas is welcomed, but in Switzerland especially, the term 'protected areas' often does not include parks of national importance. Many of the activities that contribute to the achievement of the SDGs happen in these parks of national significance, such as the separating-off of forest reserves, or an FOEN pilot project to promote ecological infrastructure. Explicit mention should therefore be made of their importance.
- **SDG 16 (Peace, justice and strong institutions):** Switzerland's early ratification of important conventions and covenants (the UN Refugee Convention in 1955, and the European Convention on Human Rights in 1974) means that human rights have long been part of the Swiss legal landscape. In more recent times these instruments have been joined by others, such as the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women. Although human rights principles are also enshrined in the Swiss constitution, we believe that one of the major challenges of the 2030 Agenda will be to implement existing relevant legal rulings on the 17 SDGs, and to ensure that the actors responsible, and practitioners, have the resources they need.

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