

Involving all Partners in Implementation and Review
Perspectives from Parliament and Civil Society (Germany)

Side-Event at the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, 19 July 2016, 6:15
p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

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We are representing the German Youth Council, which in turn represents 6 Million young people in Germany.

Youth organisations already work in the field of sustainable live-styles, they work on education for sustainable development, they build up partnerships with organisations in other countries. So they are not only ready to implement the 2030 Agenda, they are actually doing it in their activities.

Now I want to quickly share some of our positions on the draft of national strategy on sustainability:

- First of all, we welcome the reflection of all 17 Sustainable Development Goals in the national Strategy. Which shows a strong commitment to the 2030 Agenda.
- We also find the process very inclusive. So far we were able to contribute in a hearing and also through giving in written feedback on the Draft of the national strategy. But of course the strategy is not yet finalised.

So what are the points where we think the national strategy needs to improve?

- As representatives of young people and youth organisation, who are already actively working on the 2030 Agenda, we stress the need to identify young people as active partners in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. But so far this is not reflected in the national strategy, young people are only seen as objects in the areas of education and health...but not as active partners.
- Education for sustainable development is a critical factor. But education and learning does not only happen in schools or universities – non-Formal education is crucial for capacity building. And youth organisations are strong providers of non-formal education. In youth organisation young people learn to act

responsibly by doing it. They gain competences and knowledge that can't be learned by heart. Therefore the role of non-formal education, is an important contribution to the sustainable development process and has to be reflected in the national strategy.

- The 2030 Agenda must be implemented not only on national level but also in all 16 German federal states. Personally I am also active on federal state level in Bavaria, where my youth organisation is lobbying for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.... But this government still doesn't understand that this means more than continuing business as usual. So even though the national strategy for sustainability is quite ambitious, some of the federal states still need to understand the universal approach of the 2030-Agenda.

When we speak as youth Delegates, we are quite often told that young people are not interested in politics any more. This is not true.

Young people are very much interested in shaping their future and they see the urgent need for change. Young people know that climate change is real, they know that we exceed planetary boundaries and they are aware, that the unprecedented migration movements will affect all our future. So young people are interested.

The problem is, that this interest does not always lead to engagement in the political system. Why is this?

Because for many young people it doesn't seem like our political system is really standing up to the fundamental challenges of our time. It often seems that it is always the easiest path, that is chosen. Which means attempting to eradicate symptoms and continuing business as usual, without facing the real cause of the problem.

The implementation of the 2030 Agenda is a great chance to change this. This universal plan is exactly what young people are looking for. And if the government makes an honest, ambitious and authentic approach to implement this Agenda, young people will make the 2030 Agenda their agenda.

We all know that it will not be easy to bring economic success together with universal sustainability – we all know that we have to reshape our lives if we really want to

make a change - but this has to be reflected in the national strategy und it's communication.

... we need to undertake a fundamental system change including the German agricultural sector and our economic activities. And this chance can not happen without the engagement of youth.

The recent Brexit vote is a very sad example of a decision that was made against the future and against the will of young people. If we want the 2030 agenda to be a success we need young people to make it their own agenda.