

**Submission to the  
Senate Committee  
inquiry into the  
United Nations  
Sustainable  
Development Goals**

March 2018

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For further information on this submission, please contact:

**Dane Moores**

Senior Economic Development Policy Advisor

World Vision Australia

[Dane.Moores@worldvision.com.au](mailto:Dane.Moores@worldvision.com.au)

# Summary of World Vision Australia's recommendations

## Recommendations for the Australian Government:

World Vision Australia has 20 recommendations that the Australian Government should implement by 2020. World Vision Australia recommends that the Australian Government:

### Adopt an **integrated approach** to the Goals

1. Develop, implement and monitor delivery of an integrated national action plan, to be led jointly by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, in consultation with state and territory governments, to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals in Australia and contribute to their achievement globally through Australia's international engagement.

### Advance the Goals **domestically** and **abroad**

2. Commission each federal policy portfolio, including but not limited to foreign affairs, the environment and energy, education and training, infrastructure, taxation, immigration, health and social services, to review how Australia's policies within that portfolio align with the Sustainable Development Goals and to make recommendations on how policies should be realigned, where required.
3. Report on gaps and opportunities in Australia's domestic and international contributions to advancing the Sustainable Development Goals in Australia's Voluntary National Review to the United Nations High-Level Political Forum in July 2018.

### Leave **no one behind** in advancing the Goals

4. Mainstream a focus on children in Australia's implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and ensure that sustainable development programs, regardless of their primary objectives, protect the rights of all children and effectively promote child well-being.
5. Join the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children as a pathfinding country, committing to accelerate action domestically and overseas over the next three to five years to protect children.
6. Redefine the objective of the Australian aid program to be fundamentally about helping people to overcome poverty and realise the benefits of sustainable development, as articulated in the Sustainable Development Goals.

7. Increase the allocation of Australia's aid investments to fragile, conflict-affected and low-income states and, within these states, prioritise support for the most vulnerable groups such as women, children, people with a disability, Indigenous people and ethnic and sexual minorities to ensure that no one is left behind.

**Adopt an evidence-based approach to achieving the Goals**

8. Make the Sustainable Development Goals the overarching evaluation framework against which Australia's domestic and foreign policies, including the Australian aid program, are monitored and evaluated, supported by uniform standards to planning, delivery, monitoring and reporting across government departments.
9. Conduct a gap analysis of data availability, specificity and quality to ensure data is adequately captured to measure progress against the Sustainable Development Goals in both Australia's domestic and foreign policies (including Australian aid), noting the importance of disaggregated data by age, sex and geography and other related variables such as disability and ethnicity to ensure no one is left behind.
10. Invest an additional \$5 million annually in resourcing for the Office of Development Effectiveness to expand its mandate to regularly assess the Australian aid program against the Sustainable Development Goals and identify and disseminate best practice examples.

**Increase public awareness of and commitment to the Goals**

11. Release a public synthesis report every two years on Australia's contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals and the benefits of programs in Australia and overseas, sharing key achievements and lessons through multiple media channels including social media, traditional media and blogs.
12. Integrate education on the Sustainable Development Goals into the national curriculum for all primary and secondary schools in Australia.

**Foster accountability for the Goals**

13. Appoint an Assistant Minister for Sustainable Development to provide high-level visibility and political support for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and to assist the Prime Minister and the Minister for Foreign Affairs in developing the national action plan (as referred to in recommendation 1) and coordinating, monitoring and communicating Australia's contributions to the Goals.
14. Develop an Intergovernmental Agreement on the Sustainable Development Goals for agreement at the Council of Australian Governments to signal the Goals as a national priority and to unify action on sustainable development across Australian jurisdictions.

15. Establish a Working Group on Sustainable Development under the Council of Australian Governments to endorse the integrated national action plan on the Sustainable Development Goals (as referred to in recommendation 1) and to coordinate its implementation across jurisdictions.

#### **Increase and incentivise financing for the Goals**

16. Rebuild the Australian aid budget back to 0.33% of Gross National Income (GNI) over six years (by 2023-24) and continue to incrementally increase funding to deliver on Australia's international commitments as embodied in the Sustainable Development Goals, noting the 2030 Agenda encourages developing countries like Australia to invest 0.7% of GNI in aid for developing countries and 0.15-0.20% of GNI to least developed countries.
17. Establish a \$100 million Sustainable Development Impact Fund using an impact investing model aimed at incentivising private sector investment to advance the Sustainable Development Goals in Australia and overseas, with a focus on the most disadvantaged groups to ensure no one is left behind.

#### **Build partnerships for the Goals**

18. Establish an online sustainable development portal for tools, guidelines, case studies, lessons learned and other resources to assist Australian businesses, academic institutions and organisations in engaging with and contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals in Australia and overseas.
19. Continue to host a national, cross-sector Sustainable Development Goals Summit every two years that brings the public, private, academic and NGO sectors together to monitor implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals domestically and internationally and share best practice.
20. Continue to partner with and support the Global Compact Network Australia to encourage Australian-based companies to adopt, implement and report on sustainable business policies that advance achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and protect children's rights.

# Introduction to **World Vision Australia's** submission

## About World Vision Australia

World Vision is a worldwide community development organisation that provides short-term and long-term assistance to 100 million people worldwide (including 77 million children). For six decades, World Vision has been engaging people to work towards eliminating poverty and its causes, focusing on the most vulnerable children. Our track record demonstrates that advancing sustainable development and eliminating poverty are core to our work:

- In 2015 alone, World Vision's programs rehabilitated more than 160,000 acutely malnourished children under 5 years old, educated more than 8 million children in 55 countries, and improved water sources for approximately 2.4 million people
- Last year, 91% of the severely malnourished children that World Vision treated made a full recovery
- Today, World Vision is reaching one new person with clean water every 10 seconds and is reaching four more schools every day with clean water
- Since 2011, we have impacted the lives of over 200 million vulnerable children by tackling the root causes of poverty

World Vision Australia has a productive working relationship with the Australian Government in partnering to deliver the Australian aid program. Our partnerships span food security programs in East Africa, livelihoods and resilience programming in fragile contexts, gender-based violence programs in the Pacific, and programs piloting innovative approaches in South East Asia. The Australia NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP) partnership is at the core of this relationship, supporting community development globally.

World Vision Australia also engages in dialogue with the Australian Government on matters of policy and practice. We have been an active participant in consultations with the Australian Government on sustainable development, especially in the lead up to Australia's Voluntary National Review on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) due to be presented at the United Nations High-Level Political Forum in July 2018.

World Vision Australia welcomes the opportunity to further contribute to the public debate on sustainable development and make a submission to the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee inquiry into the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, sharing our views on the role Australia should play in advancing the SDGs, both domestically and internationally.

## World Vision and sustainable development

The SDGs – comprised of 17 Goals, 169 targets and 230 measurement indicators – are an ambitious agenda for change, but one that World Vision Australia believes can be achieved through innovation, partnerships and commitment, and we are leading by example.

### World Vision adopts a child-centric approach to sustainable development

The vision of World Vision is: ‘for every child, life in all its fullness; our prayer for every heart, the will to make it so.’ As a child-focused organisation, World Vision believes that sustainable development begins with healthy, educated, safe and free children – and the SDGs represent an unprecedented opportunity to make these aspirations a reality.

Though the Goals focus on sustainable development, they are intimately linked to human rights generally, and the rights of children particularly. Children are affected by all of the SDGs, whether poverty (SDG 1), hunger (SDG 2), health (SDG 3), education (SDG 4), gender equality (SDG 5), climate change (SDG 13) or violence against children (SDG 16.2). A child who is six years old in 2018 will reach adulthood by 2030, when the SDGs are due to be achieved. Therefore, all the SDGs are relevant to today’s children, not only those goals that specifically refer to children. Ultimately, children will be deeply affected by the success or failure of the 2030 Agenda.

### World Vision Australia’s track record in sustainable development

Given the strong links between child well-being and sustainable development, the SDGs are core to World Vision’s business. The focus of World Vision is to empower children so they can experience life in all its fullness and, for that to happen, the SDGs need to reach the most vulnerable children, including those living in conflict-affected, fragile and unstable contexts. This means implementing the SDGs in full, including eliminating child poverty, improving child nutrition, ending child marriage, stopping preventable child deaths, improving maternal and reproductive health, combating child mortality, eliminating violence against children (including harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation) and ending child labour and child trafficking once and for all.

Some examples of World Vision Australia’s recent projects on sustainable development include:

SDG	World Vision Australia project (2016-17)
	<b>Baucau Community Economic Development Project in Timor-Leste:</b> The incomes of approximately 1,500 people were improved through agricultural training, crop diversification and improved market access.
	<b>Farming for Nutrition Project in Laos:</b> Helped more than 1,000 women farmers improve food production through agriculture practices, piloted 16 home gardens, organised 18 farmer groups and increased incomes for 500 farmers.

SDG	World Vision Australia project (2016-17)
	<p><b>Integrated Initiatives for Mothers’ and Under-2-Children’s Health Project in Indonesia:</b> Reduced malnutrition by setting up home gardens, decreasing the prevalence of stunting and underweight children.</p>
	<p><b>Education Project in Papua New Guinea:</b> Supported enrolment of almost 1,700 children in community learning centres, trained 99 volunteers as pre-service teachers and raised awareness of education, benefitting more than 20,000 people.</p>
	<p><b>Afghanistan Women’s Governance Project:</b> Increased participation of women in civil and political activities in Herat Province through Community Change groups that identified cultural barriers and implemented actions to change attitudes.</p>
	<p><b>Maternal, Newborn and Child Health and Nutrition Project in Myanmar:</b> Around 76 water sources were constructed or renovated in Myanmar, supporting the recovery of more than 3,700 malnourished children and improving hygiene.</p>
	<p><b>An Inclusive Approach to Empowering Working Children Project in Bangladesh:</b> Enabled more than 1,700 children to stop working in hazardous jobs by providing increased access to non-formal primary education and vocational training.</p>
	<p><b>Enhancing Resilience in Somaliland through Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration Project:</b> Protected 200 hectares of degraded forest land to allow natural regeneration, while training 124 farming households in sustainable land use.</p>
	<p><b>Pacific and Timor-Leste Reducing Gender-Based Violence Project:</b> Worked with almost 3,000 people on primary prevention and child protection and facilitated counselling services and access to justice for survivors.</p>

The table above provides a snapshot of the type of projects that World Vision Australia implements to advance sustainable development for all, especially children. This table, however, is by no means comprehensive, as World Vision contributes to many more SDGs in Australia and overseas. In addition, World Vision approaches development holistically, so a lot of our work contributes to multiple SDGs at the same time.

World Vision Australia is committed to continuing to advance the SDGs in collaboration with local communities and in partnership with a range of organisations, including governments and businesses that share our goal of promoting sustainable development and empowering children. This mode of working is embodied in SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals, which calls for cross-sector collaboration and cooperation to champion sustainable development.



# Response to the **terms of reference**

Commitments to the SDGs made by governments, including the Australian Government, now need to be translated into actions to achieve this diverse set of goals. By harnessing the tremendous technological improvements of the last decade, brokering new partnerships, and by mobilising untapped sources of finance, extreme poverty can be eliminated once and for all and the ambitions of the SDGs can be realised for all.

While many of the SDGs require multilateral commitment at the global level if they are to be achieved – particularly those associated with climate change and the global economy – they also demand national action that is well within the jurisdiction of the Australian Government to progress.

To this end, World Vision Australia welcomes the opportunity to respond to the terms of reference of the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee inquiry into the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Rather than addressing each of the terms of reference separately, this submission adopts a thematic approach, exploring and making recommendations on the key issues for Australia’s overall approach to the SDGs, covering cross-cutting issues such as integration, prioritisation, awareness, accountability, financing, and partnerships for the SDGs.

## **Adopt an integrated approach to the Goals**

The 17 SDGs and their associated 169 targets are an integrated agenda; interrelated and indivisible. As illustrated in Figure 1,<sup>1</sup> interlinkages between the SDGs are extensive and complex. It is important to understand these linkages because they will inform a holistic and integrated approach to implementation. Not doing so risks undertaking activities that advance one goal, but which have unintended consequences for another goal.

### **Towards integrated priorities**

One of the questions posed in the terms of reference for this inquiry asks: “which of the SDGs

**Figure 1: Interconnectedness of the SDGs**



<sup>1</sup> International Council on Mining and Metals, *The Sustainable Development Goals*, 2018, <https://www.icmm.com/en-gb/metals-and-minerals/making-a-positive-contribution/sdgs>.

is Australia best suited to achieving through our ODA program, and should Australia's ODA be consolidated to focus on achieving core SDGs?" This line of questioning on prioritisation is problematic due to the indivisible nature of the SDGs.

World Vision Australia cautions against 'cherry picking' the SDGs or consolidating investments to focus narrowly on advancing a few priority SDGs. Rather, it is recommended that the Australian Government advance all the SDGs as a holistic and comprehensive agenda, considering the synergies, flow-on effects and trade-offs between goals:

- **Synergies:** The SDGs are interconnected and build on each other, meaning that the achievement of each goal is contingent on the achievement of others. For instance, progress in universal education (SDG 4) helps increase the productive capacities of economies (SDG 8) which, in turn, contributes to the eradication of poverty and inequality (SDGs 1 and 10). In this way, the SDGs can create a virtuous cycle of development – progress in one area often begets progress in others.
- **Flow-on effects:** Stagnation or regression on one SDG can hold up progress on other SDGs. For example, lack of employment opportunities and economic growth (SDG 8) can lead to unemployment and higher rates of poverty and hunger (SDGs 1 and 2), which, in turn, can lead to worse health outcomes (SDG 3) and higher inequalities within and among countries (SDG 10).
- **Trade-offs:** An isolated focus on one SDG can be detrimental to others, especially when the trade-offs among SDGs are not considered. For example, if SDG 9 on industry, innovation and infrastructure was selected as a national priority and considered in isolation, then decisions may be made to build economic infrastructure such as roads and factories without considering other environmental and social factors, such as effects on water pollution (SDG 6), responsible production (SDG 12) or climate change (SDG 13).

These examples illustrate that the SDGs are deeply interconnected and, therefore, Australia's approach to implementation needs to be integrated, not selective. The pursuit of a few goals at the expense of the balance may undermine the achievement of the sustainable development agenda as a whole. An integrated approach, on the other hand, will enable the Australian Government to identify synergies and trade-offs in implementation.

#### **Towards integrated planning**

The wide scope and interconnected nature of the SDGs means that implementation must not only be integrated; it must also be coordinated. This will require the Australian Government to take a leadership role in coordinating efforts across policy portfolios, sectors and levels of government.

Within the Australian Government itself, advancing the cross-cutting 2030 Agenda will require the Australian Public Service to overcome institutional silos.

It will require working across policy portfolios, domestically and overseas, on everything from climate action (SDG 13), to implementing grassroots projects to deliver food, healthcare and education (SDGs 2, 3 and 4).

To set up a framework for national action, World Vision Australia recommends that the Australian Government develop and implement a national action plan on the SDGs, outlining how Australia will achieve the Goals, both nationally and through our international development and humanitarian assistance efforts. However, Australia has not yet developed a national implementation plan and has not announced plans to do so.

China,<sup>2</sup> Finland,<sup>3</sup> Denmark<sup>4</sup> and Germany<sup>5</sup> are among the many countries that have already produced national action plans to implement the SDGs, and Australia should follow their example.

A national plan for sustainable development should:

- Define a shared vision of how the SDGs apply to Australia that reflects community consultation
- Establish mechanisms to coordinate and drive SDG action with clear lines of responsibility
- Identify longer-term and shorter-term targets and outline commitments and actions against each SDG
- Outline actions to protect child rights and address children's needs and priorities domestically and internationally, given the centrality of children to the SDGs

Such a document would provide an impetus for action, encourage accountability and provide an opportunity for ongoing public engagement. Consultation for developing the national action plan should be wide-ranging, involving multiple levels of government (including states and territories), civil society organisations, business and academia.

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<sup>2</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, *China's National Plan on Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, 2016, available at: [http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/zxxx\\_662805/W020161014332600482185.pdf](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/W020161014332600482185.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> Finland Prime Minister's Office, *Government Report on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: Sustainable Development in Finland – Long-term, Coherent and Inclusive Action*, 2017, available at: [https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/1519VNK\\_J1117\\_Government\\_Report\\_2030Agenda\\_KANSILLA\\_netti.pdf](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/1519VNK_J1117_Government_Report_2030Agenda_KANSILLA_netti.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> Government of Denmark, *Action Plan for the United Nations Global Goals: Denmark's follow-up to the UN world goals for sustainable development*, 2017, available at: [https://www.regeringen.dk/media/3242/150517-handlingsplan-for-fn-verdensmaalene\\_web.pdf](https://www.regeringen.dk/media/3242/150517-handlingsplan-for-fn-verdensmaalene_web.pdf) (in Danish).

<sup>5</sup> Federal Government of Germany, *German Sustainable Development Strategy*, 2016, available at: [https://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/DE/\\_Anlagen/Nachhaltigkeit-wiederhergestellt/2017-06-20-nachhaltigkeit-neuaufgabe-engl.pdf;jsessionid=952D511CC56CEE4A2BDF452372F6195C.s1t1?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile&v=2](https://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/DE/_Anlagen/Nachhaltigkeit-wiederhergestellt/2017-06-20-nachhaltigkeit-neuaufgabe-engl.pdf;jsessionid=952D511CC56CEE4A2BDF452372F6195C.s1t1?__blob=publicationFile&v=2).

**Recommendation 1:** That the Australian Government develop, implement and monitor delivery of an integrated national action plan, to be led jointly by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, in consultation with state and territory governments, to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals in Australia and contribute to their achievement globally through Australia's international engagement.

## Advance the Goals domestically and abroad

The SDGs have a domestic and international dimension for developed countries. For example, in their Voluntary National Reviews, Germany, Denmark, Finland and Estonia, among others, reported to the United Nations on both the national and international dimensions of their SDG contributions.<sup>6</sup> World Vision Australia believes that domestic and international programs on the SDGs are complementary, not competing, agendas and that the Australian Government should pursue SDG programming at both levels as one cohesive strategy.

### Contributing to the SDGs domestically

When implemented domestically, the SDGs will make Australia itself more prosperous, fair and sustainable. Examples include advancing gender equality (SDG 5), reducing non-communicable diseases (SDG 3), improving the sustainability of consumption and production (SDG 12) and combatting climate change (SDG 13).

Although Australia performs well on many sustainable development metrics, there is significant room for improvement. For example, despite overall economic growth, income inequalities are widening, with real incomes for the top quintile of Australian households growing by more than 40% between 2004-2014 while those for the lowest quintile only grew by about 25%.<sup>7</sup> The OECD has found that "inclusiveness has been eroded" in Australia over the past two decades and the International Monetary Fund lists Australia among countries with the highest growth in income inequality in the world over the past 30 years.<sup>8</sup> The recent Closing the Gap report illustrates the vast gulf between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. The SDGs provide a new opportunity to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community development in partnership with communities, recognising their long-standing sustainable development expertise. It is vital that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have a key leadership role around the SDGs, in both governance and implementation.

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<sup>6</sup> See United Nations Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform, *Voluntary National Reviews Database*, 2017, available at: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/vnrs/>.

<sup>7</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *OECD Economic Surveys: Australia*, 2017, available at: <https://www.oecd.org/eco/surveys/Australia-2017-OECD-economic-survey-overview.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> International Monetary Fund, *IMF Fiscal Monitor: Tackling Inequality*, 2017, available at: <http://www.imf.org/en/publications/fm/issues/2017/10/05/fiscal-monitor-october-2017>.

**Contributing to the SDGs internationally**

Although all countries are responsible for implementing the SDGs, not all are in the same starting position. The sustainable development agenda recognises that some countries – such as least developed countries, small island developing states and states in conflict or post-conflict situations – face compounding challenges that make the SDGs more difficult to achieve. For this reason, the 2030 Agenda places greater responsibility on developed economies to assist vulnerable countries to achieve the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda by sharing knowledge, capability, resources and technology. Australia has an opportunity to be a leader on sustainable development in the Indo-Pacific and should prioritise the SDGs in its foreign engagement, including through its aid and development assistance, trade policies, diplomatic engagements and participation in multilateral fora.

**Policy coherence for sustainable development**

The SDGs present a significant opportunity for Australia to align around a coherent, shared vision for the country and its role in the region. As a universal agenda, all Australian public policies – domestic and international – should be aligned to the SDGs. A siloed, two-track approach to the SDGs should be avoided by ensuring coherence between domestic and international action.

As a first step, the SDGs should be highlighted as a priority by the Prime Minister and included as a key responsibility in the charter letters for all ministers. The Government must ensure that all ministers and senior government officials understand the importance and relevance of the SDGs to their own portfolio. It is recommended that the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet coordinate a review across all agencies to ensure existing policies and programs align with the SDGs. For example, the Department of Environment and Energy should review Australia's current energy mix and policies against the backdrop of SDGs on climate action (SDG 13) and affordable clean energy (SDG 7), among other relevant goals. Similarly, the Treasury and Department of Social Services, among others, should assess national progress towards income equality targets (SDG 10) and decent work for all (SDG 8).

**Report regularly, not just through voluntary UN mechanisms**

In addition to reviewing policy alignment with the SDGs, the Australian Government should conduct an initial self-assessment as soon as possible to establish a performance baseline against the SDGs. The Australian Government has committed to present its Voluntary National Review on progress towards the SDGs in July 2018, which provides a timely opportunity to establish this baseline and identify gaps and opportunities in Australia's approach.

Under the SDG framework, governments are encouraged to voluntarily report to the United Nations twice between 2016 to 2030. World Vision Australia recommends that these reporting mechanisms be supplemented by self-assessments every three to five years. We believe this strikes the right balance to maintain momentum and build accountability while minimising the reporting

burden on Government. Each report should focus on what has been achieved and what is still to be done, as well as good practices and lessons learned. A common reporting framework should also be developed to enable civil society, the private sector, academia and other actors to monitor and report on their SDG implementation in a nationally-consistent way. This may require the development of a voluntary reporting framework or reporting guidelines.

**Recommendation 2:** That the Australian Government commission each federal policy portfolio, including but not limited to foreign affairs, the environment and energy, education and training, infrastructure, taxation, immigration, health and social services, to review how Australia's policies within that portfolio align with the Sustainable Development Goals and to make recommendations on how policies should be realigned, where required.

**Recommendation 3:** That the Australian Government report on gaps and opportunities in Australia's domestic and international contributions to advancing the Sustainable Development Goals in Australia's Voluntary National Review to the United Nations High-Level Political Forum in July 2018.

## Leave no one behind in advancing the Goals

The underlying principle of the SDGs is to leave no one behind and to reach those who are furthest behind first. For World Vision, leave no one behind means reaching vulnerable children in the world's hardest places to live. They are the children living in poverty in remote areas, amid intractable conflicts and those affected by droughts exacerbated by climate change.

Vulnerable children such as these are not only included, but prioritised, in the inclusive approach of the SDGs. The two most frequently-used words in the description of the SDG targets are "for all." To improve the lives of everyone, care must be taken to ensure those who are most disadvantaged benefit from SDG progress. This comes from a recognition that progress for one group of people does not automatically translate into progress for everyone. Australia's domestic and international policies therefore need to prioritise marginalised and vulnerable groups, including but not limited to women, children, people with a disability, Indigenous people and ethnic and sexual minorities.

### Leave no domestic communities behind

In the domestic context, one of the most significant applications of the leave no one behind principle is reducing the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. Currently, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have a life expectancy that is around ten years lower than that of non-Indigenous Australians.<sup>9</sup> Approximately 30% of adults in Indigenous

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<sup>9</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, *Deaths*, 2017, available at: <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/life-expectancy-death/deaths-in-australia/contents/summary>.

communities live with Type 2 diabetes – more than three times higher than non-Indigenous communities – and Indigenous people are 60% more likely than non-Indigenous people to die from cancer.<sup>10</sup> Progress is being made through the Close the Gap Campaign to close this health and life expectancy gap, but projections are that the gap will not be closed by 2030 if the current course continues.<sup>11</sup> Achieving the SDGs for Indigenous Australians must be prioritised to ensure the benefits of sustainable development are realised by all Australians.

#### **Leave no international communities behind**

The principle of leaving no one behind equally applies to Australia's work overseas, including through its diplomatic and trade engagements and the Australian aid program. To support the most vulnerable and disadvantaged, Australian aid should be targeted at low-income countries, fragile states, and conflict-affected and post-conflict states. Under this approach, Australian aid would be allocated to those who need it most.

The Australian Government must take care in implementing its commitments under the SDGs to ensure the inclusion of all groups. We recommend that the Government develop concrete strategies to support inclusion of disadvantaged groups in the design, delivery and monitoring and evaluation of services and programs. The needs and rights of children should be considered and prioritised, not only in Australia's application of the SDGs but also throughout the Australian aid program given children are often the first forgotten in times of hardship and emergency.

In line with this pivot to a needs-based aid model, the purpose of the Australian aid program should be redefined to be fundamentally about helping people to overcome poverty and reaching those furthest behind first. The SDGs must be affirmed in the purpose of Australia's aid program, and integrated across its policies, programs, reporting and performance benchmarks.

One practical way that the Australian Government can show leadership on leaving no one behind in the Indo-Pacific region is by being an advocate for child protection and the elimination of violence against children. At least three out of every four of the world's children – 1.7 billion – have experienced violence, and it is particularly prevalent in the Pacific.<sup>12</sup> World Vision Australia recommends that the Australian Government join the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children as a 'pathfinding country'.

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<sup>10</sup> Oxfam Australia, *10 shameful facts that will make you want to Close the Gap*, 2017, available at:

<https://www.oxfam.org.au/2017/03/10-shameful-facts-that-will-make-you-want-to-close-the-gap/>.

<sup>11</sup> Close the Gap Campaign Steering Committee for Indigenous Health Equality, *A ten-year review: The Closing the Gap Strategy and Recommendations for Reset*, 2018, available at:

[https://www.humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/document/publication/CTG%202018\\_FINAL-WEB.pdf](https://www.humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/document/publication/CTG%202018_FINAL-WEB.pdf).

<sup>12</sup> Know Violence in Childhood, *Ending Violence in Childhood: Global Report 2017*, 2017, available at:

<http://globalreport.knowviolenceinchildhood.org/global-report-2017/>.

Launched in 2016, the Global Partnership is a coalition of governments, foundations, civil society organisations, universities and businesses dedicated to achieving the SDG target to end violence against children by 2030 (SDG 16.2). By signing on as a pathfinding country, Australia would self-assess its contributions to end violence against children and commit to three to five years of accelerated action.<sup>13</sup> There are currently 15 pathfinding countries globally, and only three in the Indo-Pacific: Sri-Lanka, Indonesia and the Philippines.

**Recommendation 4:** That the Australian Government mainstream a focus on children in Australia's implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and ensure that sustainable development programs, regardless of their primary objectives, protect the rights of all children and effectively promote child well-being.

**Recommendation 5:** That the Australian Government join the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children as a pathfinding country, committing to accelerate action domestically and overseas over the next three to five years to protect children.

**Recommendation 6:** That the Australian Government redefine the objective of the Australian aid program to be fundamentally about helping people to overcome poverty and realise the benefits of sustainable development, as articulated in the Sustainable Development Goals.

**Recommendation 7:** That the Australian Government increase the allocation of Australia's aid investments to fragile, conflict-affected and low-income states and, within these states, prioritise support for the most vulnerable groups such as women, children, people with a disability, Indigenous people and ethnic and sexual minorities to ensure that no one is left behind.

## Adopt an evidence-based approach to achieving the Goals

World Vision Australia recommends that the Australian Government adopt an evidence-based and data-driven approach to the SDGs by establishing robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to define baselines, track progress and identify practical ways to maximise outcomes for the most vulnerable people.

The collection of high-quality, timely and disaggregated data should be prioritised to enable the Australian Government to track the experiences of vulnerable groups such as children, and implement course corrections as needed. For example, the German Government tracks and bi-annually publishes 60 quantitative indicators on the SDGs. Interestingly, these indicators are the most requested publication of Germany's Federal Statistical Office.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Global Partnership to End Violence against Children, *Pathfinding Country Progress Report*, 2017, available at: [http://www.end-violence.org/files/EndViolence\\_Progress\\_Report\\_2017.pdf](http://www.end-violence.org/files/EndViolence_Progress_Report_2017.pdf).

<sup>14</sup> Callum Northcote, Bond, *Implementing the SDGs: Further lessons from Finland, Colombia, Germany and Uganda*, 2017, available at: <https://www.bond.org.uk/news/2017/02/implementing-the-sdgs-lessons-from-finland-colombia-germany-uganda>.



**Disaggregate data, especially by age and sex**

Disaggregated data – by age, sex, disability, income, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, migration status and geographic location, where appropriate – can be used to identify those groups who are missing out and then used to inform resource allocation to ensure no one is left behind. It is therefore recommended that the Australian Government conduct a gap analysis of data availability, specificity and quality to ensure data is sufficiently disaggregated to track SDG progress for particular groups, especially vulnerable groups such as children, people with a disability and Indigenous peoples.

According to UNICEF, data availability for more than half of the 50 child-related global SDG indicators is “limited or poor”.<sup>15</sup> This is because only a small number of child-related indicators are sufficiently disaggregated to enable analysis.

World Vision Australia believes that improving the coverage and quality of child-related data is essential to harnessing the power of the 2030 Agenda for children. While data should be disaggregated by all relevant metrics, disaggregation by age should be made a priority to ensure that no child is left behind. Ultimately, decisions today about investing in disaggregated data collection shape outcomes for children in the future.

**Benchmark aid effectiveness against the SDGs**

The SDGs provide a modern framework against which to measure Australia’s aid and policy effectiveness. As the agreed set of global goals to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure prosperity for all, the SDGs should be at the centre of Australia’s aid program and its evaluation.

World Vision Australia therefore recommends that the Office of Development Effectiveness in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade be given a broader mandate and additional resources to evaluate Australia’s aid projects against the SDGs on a regular basis, at least annually, to ensure the aid program is well targeted.

**Support data for development**

Most countries will have gaps in the datasets required to track progress against each of the 17 SDGs and their 169 targets, but for developing countries these gaps will be especially vast. Australia, through the Australian Bureau of Statistics, is a global leader in statistical standards and methodology, which positions us well to help build the data capability of developing countries, especially in the Indo-Pacific, to improve their collection and use of data to monitor implementation of the SDGs.

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<sup>15</sup> UNICEF, *Is Every Child Counted: Status of data for children in the SDGs*, 2017, available at <https://data.unicef.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/SDGs-publication-SPREADS-WEB-1.pdf>.

Building data capability in the Indo-Pacific region should therefore be a focus of Australian aid. This could involve working with national statistical offices to increase capacity in traditional forms of data collection and analysis such as household surveys and censuses, but also investing in innovative new data sources and technology. We also encourage the Australian Government to join the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data to share with member organisations, including governments, how to fully harness the data revolution for sustainable development.

**Recommendation 8:** That the Australian Government make the Sustainable Development Goals the overarching evaluation framework against which Australia's domestic and foreign policies, including the Australian aid program, are monitored and evaluated, supported by uniform standards to planning, delivery, monitoring and reporting across government departments.

**Recommendation 9:** That the Australian Government conduct a gap analysis of data availability, specificity and quality to ensure data is adequately captured to measure progress against the Sustainable Development Goals in both Australia's domestic and foreign policies (including Australian aid), noting the importance of disaggregated data by age, sex and geography and other related variables such as disability and ethnicity to ensure no one is left behind.

**Recommendation 10:** That the Australian Government invest an additional \$5 million annually in resourcing for the Office of Development Effectiveness to expand its mandate to regularly assess the Australian aid program against the Sustainable Development Goals and identify and disseminate best practice examples.

## Increase public awareness of and commitment to the Goals

Currently the SDGs are neither well known nor well understood in Australia, so raising awareness of them is important.

### Launch a public awareness campaign

To increase public engagement and commitment to sustainable development, the Australian Government should lead a public awareness campaign on the SDGs, drawing on Australian values to explain the sustainable development agenda. The SDGs clearly align with established values of the Australian community such as cooperation, equality, a fair go, freedom and being a good neighbour, and these links should be made clear in public communications.

The SDGs also need to be simplified for public communication. One way to simplify the SDGs is to synthesise them into five categories known as the 'Five P's of Sustainable Development'<sup>16</sup> (see Figure 2).

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<sup>16</sup> One World Centre, *Agenda 2030 and the SDGs*, 2015, available at: <http://www.oneworldcentre.org.au/global-goals/agenda-2030-and-the-sdgs/>.

Rather than explaining each of the 17 SDGs, the set of goals could be summarised into the following five categories:

- **People:** Empower people to reach their potential by ending poverty and hunger
- **Prosperity:** Build prosperous and dignified lives for all
- **Peace:** Ensure a fair go for all, free from fear and violence
- **Partnership:** Work across sectors in solidarity
- **Planet:** Protect the planet and climate for future generations

**Figure 2: Five P's of Sustainable Development**



This categorisation would still capture the broad scope of the SDGs while simplifying the agenda for public messaging.

#### Highlight successes and real-world stories

For the public and other stakeholders to support the SDGs, they need to not only understand what the SDGs are, they also need to see and understand their benefits. World Vision Australia recommends that a public summary report be produced every two years on Australia's contributions to the SDGs and the benefits of SDG programming. This report should be accessible for the public, sharing key achievements in simple language and through infographics and case study videos that showcase the benefits of the SDGs for all.

#### Embed the SDGs into the national curriculum

Students and teachers have limited awareness of the 2030 Agenda. There are no specific references to the SDGs in the Australian national school curriculum. While sustainability is highlighted as one of the cross-cutting curriculum priorities and while the Year 10 curricula does include content on the United Nations and its initiatives, the SDGs are not included as a core part of primary or secondary education in Australia.<sup>17</sup>

Education is both a goal in itself and a means for attaining all the other SDGs. It is also valuable for garnering public support. Recognising this, the Commonwealth Secretariat developed a Curriculum Framework for the SDGs to support member countries in addressing all 17 SDGs through education. Individual schools are also taking up the challenge to promote the SDGs.

<sup>17</sup> Australian Curriculum, *Cross-curriculum priorities: Sustainability*, available at: <https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/cross-curriculum-priorities/sustainability/>.

At Torriano Primary School in London, for example, teachers have mapped the SDGs onto the existing curriculum, organised staff training days, and read about the SDGs to their students, teaching one SDG theme per term.

World Vision Australia recommends that education on the SDGs be integrated in a systemic way into the national curriculum for all primary and secondary schools in Australia to raise awareness of the 2030 Agenda and the issues of gender equality, poverty and climate change, among others. Education on the SDGs will help prepare the next generation to contribute positively to the sustainable development agenda.

**Recommendation 11:** That the Australian Government release a public synthesis report every two years on Australia's contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals and the benefits of programs in Australia and overseas, sharing key achievements and lessons through multiple media channels including social media, traditional media and blogs.

**Recommendation 12:** That the Australian Government integrate education on the Sustainable Development Goals into the national curriculum for all primary and secondary schools in Australia.

## Foster accountability for the Goals

Governance mechanisms for the SDGs should be carefully designed to clarify accountabilities and enable greater policy coherence across different departments and levels of government, while giving a voice to civil society actors and businesses.

### Accountability across the Australian Government

The SDGs require dedicated leadership at the political level given their significance and broad reach. For this reason, the Australian Government should appoint a capable and experienced Assistant Minister for Sustainable Development to champion the SDGs within Government, coordinate efforts across Government and hold the relevant ministers accountable for implementation. Other countries have appointed ministers to lead on the SDGs. For example, Belgium has a dedicated Minister for Sustainable Development, France has a Minister for Ecology, Sustainable Development and Energy, and Luxemburg has a Minister for Sustainable Development and Infrastructure.

It is proposed that the Assistant Minister for Sustainable Development should sit within the Prime Minister's portfolio and be supported by an Office for Sustainable Development in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, much like the Minister for Women is currently supported by the Office for Women. The Assistant Minister for Sustainable Development would lead the national action plan process (as referred to in recommendation 1) and work with the Prime Minister and the Minister for Foreign Affairs in coordinating, monitoring and communicating Australia's contributions to the SDGs.

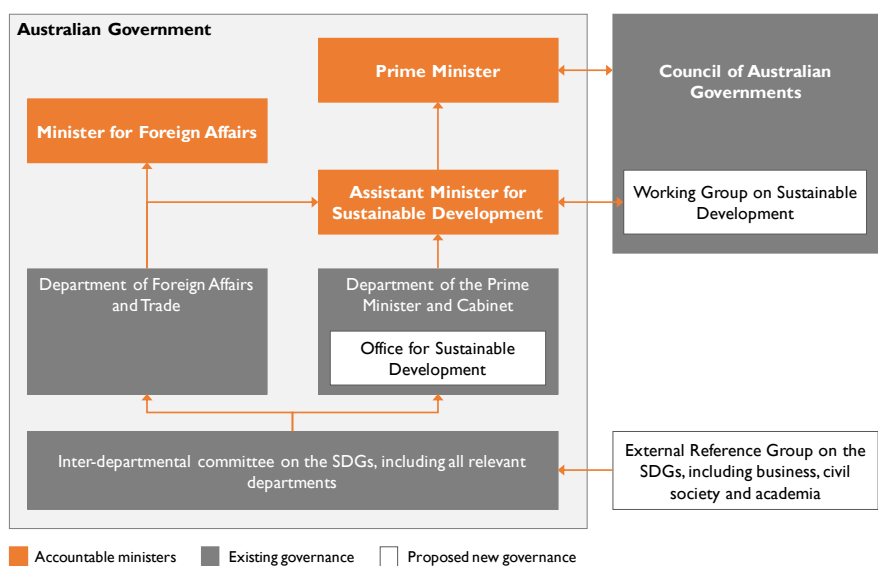
Central SDG coordination mechanisms should also be strengthened within the federal public service. An inter-departmental committee co-chaired by Deputy Secretaries of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet has been established to coordinate monitoring and reporting of the SDGs across federal government departments, at least in preparation for Australia’s Voluntary National Review. This inter-departmental committee should be continued following Australia’s Voluntary National Review to coordinate implementation across the Australian Public Service. To incorporate other stakeholder views within this governance structure, it is recommended that a multi-sectoral reference group be established comprising representatives from civil society, the private sector and academia to sit alongside the inter-departmental committee to provide advice and enhance transparency and collaboration.

**Accountability across Australian jurisdictions**

National coordination across levels of government is vital for SDG implementation in a federation like Australia, to both drive action and prevent duplication. To coordinate efforts across Australian jurisdictions, it is recommended that a Sustainable Development Working Group be established under the Council of Australian Governments to drive and keep track of implementation efforts across Australian jurisdictions. The Working Group will help ensure a nationally consistent approach to the SDGs.

To signal the SDGs as a national priority across federal, state and territory governments, it is recommended that the Council of Australian Governments develop and endorse an Intergovernmental Agreement on the Sustainable Development Goals, reaffirming each government’s commitment to the SDGs and announcing the formation of the Sustainable Development Working Group to champion and coordinate action to ensure no one and no goal is left behind.

**Figure 3: Proposed governance to foster accountability for the Goals**



**Recommendation 13:** That the Australian Government appoint an Assistant Minister for Sustainable Development to provide high-level visibility and political support for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and to assist the Prime Minister and the Minister for Foreign Affairs in developing the national action plan (as referred to in recommendation 1) and coordinating, monitoring and communicating Australia's contributions to the Goals.

**Recommendation 14:** That the Australian Government develop an Intergovernmental Agreement on the Sustainable Development Goals for agreement at the Council of Australian Governments to signal the Goals as a national priority and to unify action on sustainable development across Australian jurisdictions.

**Recommendation 15:** That the Australian Government establish a Working Group on Sustainable Development under the Council of Australian Governments to endorse the integrated national action plan on the Sustainable Development Goals (as referred to in recommendation 1) and to coordinate its implementation across jurisdictions.

## Increase and incentivise financing for the Goals

The United Nations Addis Ababa Action Agenda sits alongside the SDGs as the global plan to fund the implementation of the Goals. Among other items, the Action Agenda calls for the SDGs to be embedded within Official Development Assistance (ODA) programs and, importantly, it calls for the mobilisation of different forms of public and private finance for sustainable development.<sup>18</sup>

Worldwide, the funding required to meet the SDGs in developing countries alone exceeds the total global aid budget by US\$2.5 trillion.<sup>19</sup> New and innovative sources of development finance are therefore needed to bridge this financing gap. Non-traditional forms of development finance include social impact investing, results-based financing including Development Impact Bonds, domestic resource mobilisation, remittances, foreign direct investment, private sector partnerships, new types of private sector finance and philanthropic funds, to name a few.

In the near term, these new financial instruments will not diminish the need for aid or an effective and well-funded Australian aid program. Aid is now even more critical to support and incentivise new forms of finance, and vital to support the achievement of the SDGs in communities where other forms of capital cannot or will not immediately flow.

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<sup>18</sup> United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development*, 2015, available at: [http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/AAAA\\_Outcome.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/AAAA_Outcome.pdf).

<sup>19</sup> United Nations Development Programme, *Impact Investment to Close the SDG funding gap*, 2017, available at: <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/blog/2017/7/13/What-kind-of-blender-do-we-need-to-finance-the-SDGs-.html>.

### **Rebuild the Australian aid budget**

Although ODA is just part of the solution to raising development finance for the SDGs, it still plays a vital role. Goal 17 – ‘Partnerships for the Goals’ – encourages developed countries like Australia to invest 0.7% of Gross National Income (GNI) in aid for developing countries and 0.15-0.20% to least developed countries to help them realise the benefits of sustainable development.<sup>20</sup> However, instead of rising to meet this challenge, Australian aid fell to its lowest levels in history in the current 2017-18 year, reaching 0.22% of GNI or \$3.912 billion.<sup>21</sup> This places Australia 17th out of 28 countries in the OECD’s aid rankings.<sup>22</sup>

World Vision Australia contends that rebuilding Australia’s aid budget to 0.33% of GNI over the next six years through a planned, stepped and predictable trajectory is a manageable and achievable goal, which will set us back on a positive path, with a renewed capacity to meet our SDG commitments.

Over the long-term Australia should map out a pathway to grow Australia’s aid to 0.7% of GNI, in line with our previous international commitments and as achieved or exceeded by the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Denmark, Luxembourg, Norway and Sweden. There is growing concern that if the Australian Government does not act soon to restore aid to previous levels, we will fail to meet our commitments under the SDGs.

### **Pilot impact investing for sustainable development**

There is significant potential for impact investing to help reduce the financing gap for the SDGs. Impact investing refers to investments made in companies, organisations and funds to generate a social and environmental impact – in this case advancing the SDGs – while achieving a financial return.<sup>23</sup> While impact investing is becoming more common in OECD countries, private investors are often cautious about investing in riskier developing markets.<sup>24</sup> In these settings, ODA can provide seed money to protect, encourage or ‘de-risk’ investment.

To this end, World Vision Australia welcomes the Australian Government’s announcement to establish a \$40 million ‘fund of funds’, known as the Emerging Markets Impact Investment Fund (EMIIF), to support investment in small and medium-sized enterprises in the Asia Pacific region.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, *Goal 17: Partnerships for the Goals – Target 17.2: ODA commitments*, 2016, available at [http://stats.unctad.org/Dgff2016/partnership/goal17/target\\_17\\_2.html](http://stats.unctad.org/Dgff2016/partnership/goal17/target_17_2.html).

<sup>21</sup> Lowy Institute, *The state of Australian aid*, 2017, available at: <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/issues/australian-foreign-aid>.

<sup>22</sup> OECD, *Development aid rises again in 2016*, 2017, available at: <http://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-data/ODA-2016-detailed-summary.pdf>.

<sup>23</sup> Global Impact Investing Network, *Impact Investing*, 2018, available at: <https://thegiin.org/impact-investing/>.

<sup>24</sup> United Nations Development Programme, *Impact Investment to Close the SDG funding gap*, 2017, available at: <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/blog/2017/7/13/What-kind-of-blender-do-we-need-to-finance-the-SDGs-.html>.

<sup>25</sup> Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Hon Julie Bishop MP, *Impact investment for economic development*, 2017, available: [https://foreignminister.gov.au/releases/Pages/2017/jb\\_mr\\_171114.aspx](https://foreignminister.gov.au/releases/Pages/2017/jb_mr_171114.aspx).

EMIIF's three key impact objectives are to:

1. Build the gender lens and impact investment market in the South and South East Asian region (plus the Pacific and Pakistan through the Innovation Window)
2. Test how effective the activities of small and medium-sized enterprises can be at achieving Australia's development impact objectives
3. Draw organisational learnings for the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Being sector agnostic at this stage, it is not yet clear which SDGs the EMIIF will contribute to other than those directly related to economic growth through a gender lens. Based on our analysis, we believe the EMIIF will directly contribute to SDG 5: Gender Equality; SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth; SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure; SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities; and SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals. World Vision Australia recommends that the Australian Government leverage the early learnings obtained through EMIIF and build upon its initial three-year investment of \$40 million to crowd-in additional capital with a focus to addressing all of the SDGs as a whole. We propose that EMIIF could be complemented by a \$100 million Sustainable Development Impact Fund to augment its aid and social services funding by providing finance to the private sector for investments that promote sustainable development in Australia and in aid recipient countries. The SDGs would be directly integrated into the impact management framework of this fund.

**Recommendation 16:** That the Australian Government rebuild the Australian aid budget back to 0.33% of Gross National Income (GNI) over six years (by 2023-24) and continue to incrementally increase funding to deliver on Australia's international commitments as embodied in the Sustainable Development Goals, noting the 2030 Agenda encourages developing countries like Australia to invest 0.7% of GNI in aid for developing countries and 0.15-0.20% of GNI to least developed countries.

**Recommendation 17:** That the Australian Government establish a \$100 million Sustainable Development Impact Fund using an impact investing model aimed at incentivising private sector investment to advance the Sustainable Development Goals in Australia and overseas, with a focus on the most disadvantaged groups to ensure no one is left behind.

## Build partnerships for the Goals

Given the complexity and intractability of the issues captured in the SDGs, it will be critical to build partnerships at all levels to leverage the skills, expertise and resources of different sectors and organisations.

### Support information sharing across sectors

Different sectors, and different organisations within those sectors, are at various stages of understanding and implementation of the SDGs, so there is an



opportunity for partnerships to share information and capabilities. A national knowledge sharing and learning platform would help organisations and businesses to fast-track their implementation of the SDGs and avoid wasting time and resources 'reinventing the wheel'.

It is therefore recommended that the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, as the appointed lead department for SDG 17 on Partnerships for the Goals, set up an online sustainable development portal for businesses, governments, academia and civil society organisations to share tools, guidance and best practice case studies on SDG planning and implementation. This would especially benefit those Australian organisations not familiar with the SDGs, enabling them to learn from the experiences of others that already have established SDG initiatives in place. Within this platform, like-minded organisations should be able to establish communities of practice to pursue collective learning on particular SDGs (such as gender equality or poverty reduction) or aspects of SDGs (such as governance or financing).

#### **Facilitate collaboration across sectors**

The United Nations made a concerted effort to engage a range of actors in the negotiation and agreement of the SDGs, and this cross-sector collaboration must continue into SDG implementation.

One way that the Australian Government could strengthen collaboration is by continuing to host national Sustainable Development Goals Summits every two years, bringing multiple sectors together to share best practice and make connections. The Government should also explore ways to reduce barriers to cross-sector partnerships in the delivery of Australian aid by encouraging cross-sector consortia in its procurement processes.

#### **Leverage the strengths, experience and resources of the private sector**

While private sector engagement on the SDGs has been increasing, there is much work to be done to get a wide range of businesses involved. This is important because the 2030 Agenda is not just relevant to those businesses engaging in developing countries, but to all businesses.

At a minimum, Australian companies must ensure that they comply with international standards and agreements that protect labour rights, child rights, human rights, Indigenous peoples and the natural environment, making sure they conduct business in ways that are sustainable, transparent, ethical and inclusive. Children's rights must be upheld in all business practices.

The United Nations Global Compact is the world's largest corporate sustainability initiative, encouraging businesses worldwide to adopt sustainable and socially responsible policies. In Australia, the business-led Global Compact Network Australia (GCNA) brings together signatories to the UN Global Compact in Australia – including Australian companies, not-for-profits and universities –

to advance the private sector's contribution to sustainable development.<sup>26</sup> Business sector members of the GCNA include but are not limited to BHP Billiton, Rio Tinto, Fortescue Metals Group, Nestle, Shell, ANZ Bank and Westpac. World Vision Australia is a non-profit organisation member of the GCNA.

Since 2015, the GCNA has partnered with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade to both engage the private sector in sustainable development and provide a channel for businesses to connect with the Australian Government on sustainable development issues. Under this partnership, the GCNA has established the Sustainable Development Leadership Group focused on engaging business in development and promoting the SDGs. In September 2016, the GCNA launched the CEO Statement of Support for the Sustainable Development Goals, with over 30 leaders from the Australian business community committing to help realise a sustainable future.<sup>27</sup> More recently, the GCNA launched an online Australian SDGs Hub for Business: a step-by-step guide through each SDG that outlines how that SDG is relevant to businesses and how businesses can contribute to its achievement.<sup>28</sup> World Vision Australia recommends that GCNA's partnership with the Australian Government be continued and strengthened to advance the contribution of Australian-based companies to achieving the SDGs.

**Recommendation 18:** That the Australian Government establish an online sustainable development portal for tools, guidelines, case studies, lessons learned and other resources to assist Australian businesses, academic institutions and organisations in engaging with and contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals in Australia and overseas.

**Recommendation 19:** That the Australian Government continue to host a national, cross-sector Sustainable Development Goals Summit every two years that brings the public, private, academic and NGO sectors together to monitor implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals domestically and internationally and share best practice.

**Recommendation 20:** That the Australian Government continue to partner with and support the Global Compact Network Australia to encourage Australian-based companies to adopt, implement and report on sustainable business policies that advance achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and protect children's rights.

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<sup>26</sup> UN Global Compact Network Australia, *2017 Annual Report*, 2017, available at: <http://www.unglobalcompact.org.au/new/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/2017-Annual-Report.pdf>.

<sup>27</sup> UN Global Compact Network Australia, *Australian business leaders show support for the Sustainable Development Goals*, 2016, available at: <http://www.unglobalcompact.org.au/new/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/GCNA-Media-Release-CEO-Statement-of-Support-for-SDGs-1.pdf>.

<sup>28</sup> UN Global Compact Network Australia, *Australian SDGs Hub for Business*, 2016, available at: <http://www.unglobalcompact.org.au/issues/sustainable-development/sustainable-development-goals-sdgs>.

## Call to action

The Australian Government's commitments to the SDGs now need to be translated into action. While many SDGs require multilateral action or commitment at the global level, they also demand national action and the Australian Government needs to lead the way.

While many of Australia's domestic and international policies and programs may already align with the SDGs, fully implementing this transformative agenda requires going beyond business as usual. To truly unlock the benefits of sustainable development for Australians and for those in our region, World Vision Australia calls on the Australian Government to:

- **Develop and implement an integrated national action plan** in consultation with state and territory governments, outlining practical steps that will be taken to realise the ambitions of the SDGs for all
- **Review how Australia's policies align with SDGs** and make recommendations on how policies should be realigned, where required
- **Mainstream a focus on children** in Australia's implementation of the SDGs, in both domestic policy and internationally through Australia's aid, trade and diplomatic engagement
- **Integrate education on the SDGs into the national curriculum** for all primary and secondary schools in Australia
- **Appoint an Assistant Minister for Sustainable Development** to provide high-level visibility, coordination and political support for the achievement of the SDGs
- **Rebuild the Australian aid budget** back to 0.33% of GNI over six years (by 2023/24) and continue to incrementally increase funding to deliver on Australia's international commitments as embodied in the SDGs

World Vision Australia believes that the measure of Australia's progress towards the SDGs will be how well it meets the needs of children. Children need to be considered, involved, respected and prioritised as full human beings in their own right. They are the major "social capital" of sustainable development: their education is the cornerstone of broader economic and social progress; their health and well-being can improve longevity and quality of life; and their social attitudes can help transform societies to be more peaceful and inclusive. Children should be central to Australia's approach to the SDGs.

World Vision Australia is available to answer any questions that the Senate Committee may have regarding its submission, and we would welcome the opportunity to present at any upcoming hearings of the Senate Committee on this important topic: the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.