

*THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AGENDA 2030
AND ODIHR PROGRAMMATIC PRIORITIES*

What are the Sustainable Development Goals? There are many things, but I will only mention three.

First, the SDGs are a spotlight on some of the world's biggest issues. But this spotlight alone would just put us all into a state of fear and depression if it was not accompanied with a belief in our ability to shape our impact on these issues. The world is at a crossroads, and "business as usual" is no longer good enough. SDGs require us to take a critical look at what we have been doing and how we have been working so far. They require us to focus and prioritize on where the needs – and our abilities to address them – are the greatest, and think out of the box to find creative solutions.

It was this same thinking that guided ODIHR's year-long consultative process of formulating the priorities for our work in the human dimension. We first looked at critical issues affecting democracy and human rights today. We then asked ourselves: What would be needed to guarantee human rights for all across the OSCE region? How can we put our mandate and our meagre resources to the best, most impactful use towards this vision?

This is how we came up with the four strategic outcomes: 1) democratic institutions that are based on human rights and the rule of law, participatory and representative, accountable and trusted; 2) civil society that is able to advance democracy and human rights; 3) societies that are equal, inclusive, resilient and free of all forms of discrimination and marginalization and, as a horizontal outcome, 4) equal human rights for women.

I'm sure you can immediately see how working towards our strategic priority outcomes can support several Sustainable Development Goals. Let me give you some examples.

Under the strategic priority 1, our project designed to support democratic institutions so they become more inclusive and accountable is clearly contributing to SDG 16 on promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, providing access to justice for all and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

In our strategic priority 2, the project on human rights education and promoting democratic citizenship online and offline will support SDG 4 on inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Our Words into Action project under strategic priority 3 will assist security and educational institutions, civil society organizations and legislators to address various forms of discrimination and hate crime. This is an example of how we will contribute to Goal 10 on reducing inequality within and among countries.

Finally, our CHANGE project under horizontal strategic priority 4 will use a transformative and multi-dimensional approach to advance gender equality at the individual, collective and institutional levels. This initiative will support SDG 5 on gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls.

Secondly, SDGs are a moral and ethical compass. And a moral and ethical compass is essential to every democratic society. But a compass would be of no use unless there is a road to travel and a means to travel this road. The way we see it, our work is to build roads and offer means to travel them, thus putting SDGs into practice. From supporting democratic, open, inclusive and consultative

law-making processes to educating young people on democratic values and human rights, helping institutions to provide effective responses to discrimination, and promoting equal participation and voice of women in public and political life, all our programs and projects offer practical tools to address contemporary challenges in democracy and human rights.

Thirdly, SDGs are a call for a co-ordinated and collective action. SDGs tell us that to create far-reaching changes in multiple dimensions, we need systemic, not patchwork thinking. Our strategy's title - "the One ODIHR" - recognizes the fact that our priority outcomes, like SDGs, are interrelated and interdependent and require building bridges across different thematic portfolios within ODIHR and with other international organizations. For example, we cannot just offer training tools to support effective migrant integration, and at the same time fail to look at issues such as legal framework, meaningful participation of migrants in decision-making, and inclusive social attitudes.

We also know that neither the SDGs nor our priority outcomes are attainable by any one organization alone, no matter how well intentioned. Achieving them requires collaboration across sectors, organizations and individuals dedicated to improving the human experience for all. That is why in our strategy we have prioritized dialogue and partnerships with international organizations, democratic institutions, civil society and donors towards the implementation of OSCE commitments in the human dimension. We all need to prioritize and focus, building greater coherence and learning from one another.

Next year around this time, we will celebrate 30 years of the CSCE Charter of Paris for a New Europe. There, participating States said: "Ours is a time for fulfilling the hopes and expectations our peoples have cherished for decades: steadfast commitment to democracy based on human rights and fundamental

freedoms; prosperity through economic liberty and social justice; and equal security for all our countries.”

These words were, just like the SDGs are now, about who, as the humanity, do we want to be. Are we all doing enough to make these words a reality for all people in the decade remaining to 2030? Are we investing enough in fostering peaceful, just and inclusive societies that are free from fear and violence? Are we doing enough to ensure that all people across the OSCE region can fulfil their potential in dignity and equality?

According to the People's Report Card, which grades our performance on the Global Goals on a scale from F – the worst to A – the best, our world today is scoring a C-. The OSCE commitments and the SDGs are all about getting to an A. But getting to an A will only happen if we work smarter and do things differently. “Business as usual” is no longer good enough.