

Motion: UN Sustainable Development Goals

Propose that:

The Association values the importance of the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that address the global challenges we face including poverty, inequality, climate, environmental degradation and prosperity. We welcome the work being done ahead of the upcoming Voluntary National Review (VNR) in July that will consider how the UK's programmes and policies are contributing to achieving these Global Goals. The Association also welcomes the importance placed by HM Government that all levels of government work together and that its partnership with local government is a key component to successful domestic implementation of the SDGs.

Local government has a vital role to play in terms of the planning, implementation and monitoring in local areas, work that will be key in delivering the UK's progress on meeting the ambitions of the Agenda 2030.

SDG Goal 13 calls on partners to take urgent action to combat climate change. The Association recognises that a growing number of UK local authorities have already passed 'Climate Emergency' motions with cross-party support, in recognition of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) warning that urgent action is required in order to avoid runaway global warming and climate breakdown.

If implemented properly, each of the SDGs has the potential to be transformative in moving our areas toward a more sustainable society with many of the Goals best supported by local co-ordination and delivery through local government and its partners. Our role can also help raise awareness of these challenges by engaging our areas through local partnerships and with our citizens.

Whilst the Association agrees with Government that such partnerships are a vital component and members have supported work on developing models that engage local stakeholders as effectively as possible, this engagement needs sustainable funding and support in order for councils to effectively share research and engagement with our networks, partners and citizens, particularly given our sector's continuing funding pressures.

The benefits of exploring SDG partnership co-ordinators would be to provide a focal point for activity in our areas and demonstrate the need for local perspectives to be embedded in the delivery of the SDGs, as well as improve the capacity for councils to deliver on the Goals. Supporting such positions would also provide a common language and common roles across different areas, would facilitate the sharing of best practice and further enable the delivery of global and local priorities at the same time.

This Association therefore:

- Calls upon Her Majesty's Government to explore supporting domestic implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals through funded partnership roles within each local authority area;
- Encourages councils to continue their work on linking their local priorities with the overall ambitions of the SDGs; and
- Declares a 'Climate Emergency', and commits to supporting councils in their work to tackle climate change by providing a strong unified voice for councils in lobbying for support to address this emergency, and sharing best practice across all councils.

LGA Response

The LGA supports this motion and is committed to playing its part in enabling local government to contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals. If the Government is committed to delivering on our commitments to improving economic, social and environmental sustainability, it must be embraced across all Whitehall departments. Councils have a crucial role to play in shaping more prosperous and inclusive places, but they must be empowered and funded sustainably if we are to achieve our shared ambitions for the country, whether that is putting funding back into preventative services or enabling a more devolved employment and skills service.

We will set out to the new Prime Minister how councils can be a powerful ally in delivering on our shared priorities, and will use the upcoming Spending Review and all other opportunities to do so. We will also work with our member councils to share the excellent work that is already taking place around the Sustainable Development Goals and help other councils develop their activity.

This morning we have declared a climate emergency and the LGA will work to support councils taking this step, and in some cases committing to specific timescales for achieving net zero carbon. Councils are already mitigating and helping communities to adapt to climate change on matters such as air quality, flooding, transport and energy. The LGA will work with our membership and Government to understand the additional powers and resources that councils will need to achieve their ambitions. We will keep Members informed as this work progresses.