

Arne Backer Grønningstæter and
Svein Erik Stave

The Global Goals for Sustainable Development

Challenges and possible implications for Norway



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Svein Erik Stave

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Discussion paper

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Preface

This paper discusses some of the challenges of implementing the Global Goals for Sustainable Development – commonly referred to as the Sustainable Development Goals, or SDGs – in a Norwegian context, with special emphasis on the present status, existing policies, and sources of information for the various thematic areas covered by the SDGs. The SDGs cover a wide range of topics, of which this report covers a selection. We hope, however, that our analysis provides a basis for further discussion on how the SDGs can be achieved in a Norwegian context, including for those topics not covered in the paper. This discussion will be catalyzed once the official indicators for how to measure the progress towards SDGs are decided, at which point a detailed assessment of the availability of relevant data can be carried out.

The paper has been written by Arne Backer Grønningsæter and Svein Erik Stave of Fafo. Fafo would like to thank the United Nations Association of Norway and Unicef Norway for their support to this interesting project.

Oslo, 20 October 2015

Arne Backer Grønningsæter and Svein Erik Stave

Introduction

Before we begin to discuss how the goals for sustainable development can be implemented in a Norwegian context, it is important to congratulate the UN and all of us on the fact that the member states in the UN have managed to agree on an agenda for sustainable development. This is important because irrespective of the views one may have on the 17 goals, targets and coming indicators, the adoption of ambitious global aims will influence the national, regional and global political agendas. Politicians all over the world will have to account for these goals. The idea is ambitious because it includes all countries and comprises a broad set of goals and indicators, and the goals themselves are ambitious. At the same time, there are bound to be some complications when countries having very different sets of circumstances aim at reaching the same goals.

Norway is a small and wealthy country with a low poverty risk level. Norway's scores on different health indicators are high. Norway scores high on international indexes on human development, equality, gender equality, as well as human rights. How can one make a fair comparison between Norway and countries with a high level of poverty risk, with huge economic disparities, gender differences and poor implementation of basic human rights?

The SDGs cover a wide range of thematic areas, and each of them requires in-depth knowledge and understanding to be able to identify possible ways to achieve the different SDGs. In addition, all thematic areas and goals are interrelated, and if we are to achieve the overarching goals of sustainable development, it is necessary to have a systemic perspective of the various goals.

An in-depth presentation of all the different topics included in the SDGs is beyond the scope of this brief study. Hence, the intention of the present discussion paper is merely to provide some background for further discussion by outlining some of the challenges and opportunities related to implementing the SDGs in a Norwegian context. Even though the SDGs are quite clear in their ambitions, many of them are also of a very general nature. The ways by which to achieve them are also many and varied, and they should and will be considered in the time to come.

What we want to do in this paper is to discuss some issues related to the SDGs that we believe challenge the Norwegian authorities and society, and we want to discuss how the different goals can be measured in a Norwegian context. Is it necessary for our government to develop new tools for measuring and documenting the development of relevant issues?

At this point in time, we see five main challenges arising when these goals will be implemented in a Norwegian context. In some instances, there might be a lack of policy from Norwegian authorities. In other instances, the dominating policies will not lead to fulfillment of the agreed goal. There are also examples of lacking data that are needed to measure whether the goals are fulfilled. Several of the goals are formulated in such a way that they make fulfillment a qualitative issue. There might therefore be a need for new ways to measure goal achievement. The last challenge is linked to the fact that when we chose indicators, we might need to be quite selective, because the indicators are not mainly formulated with a Norwegian context in mind.

In this paper, we go through all the 17 SDGs and discuss the targets of most relevance for Norway, that is, the targets that address challenges in a Norwegian context. Emphasis has been on identifying necessary changes in policy to be able to achieve the targeted goals and on identifying gaps in data availability in order to be able to measure progress towards goal achievement.

Poverty and inequality

Under this heading, we will discuss goal number 1 and some targets under goal number 10. The fact that the goal to end poverty is placed as goal number 1 is a strong symbol. The goal is also very ambitious in the global formulation “in all its forms everywhere”. A general goal at this level can be criticised as being unrealistic. If we look at the targets, however, they are more concrete and more realistic. Target 1.1 contains a definition of poverty that cannot be used in a “northern” context, while target 1.2 has a more general formulation pointing at different national definitions. Target 1.2 also mentions men, women and children separately. Poverty and economic inequality are strongly related issues. Consequently, several of the targets under the goal to reduce inequality (goal 10) are also relevant under this heading.

In 2011, Fafo published a report called “Kunnskap om fattigdom i Norge” [Knowledge about poverty in Norway] (Fløtten et al. 2011)¹. In this report the researchers discuss how to fight poverty in light of different definitions of poverty, documentation of poverty risk and the political discussions about poverty in Norway.

Goals and targets

Under this heading, our focus is on targets found under Goal 1, poverty, and some of the targets under Goal 10, inequality. The selected targets are:

- Target 1.2: By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions
- Target 1.3: Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable by 2030
- Target 10.1: By 2030, progressively achieve and sustain income growth of the bottom 40 per cent of the population at a rate higher than the national average

To fight poverty

Target 1.2 has as a premise that there is a national definition of poverty. Norway, like most western countries, does not have an official definition of poverty. The two most used definitions are those of the OECD and the EU. OECD sets the poverty line at 50 per cent of median income, while EU defines those under 60 per cent of median income as being at risk of poverty. The two organizations also have different equivalent scales to measure consequences of the household sizes. In the Norwegian context, the most commonly used definition of poverty is low income (EU definition) lasting for three

¹ T. Fløtten, I. L. S. Hansen, A. S. Grødem, A. B. Grønningsæter & R. A. Nielsen (2011). Kunnskap om fattigdom i Norge. En oppsummering (Knowledge about poverty in Norway). Fafo-report 2011:21

years or more. This is used, for example, in the governmental action plans for fighting poverty among children (2015–2017)².

Since 2001, poverty has been high on the political agenda in Norway and governments of different political colours have included in their programmes measures to counter and eradicate poverty. Despite this fact, the number of people below the low-income line has remained quite stable. The latest figures from the European Union and Statistics Norway indicate that 11 percent of the Norwegian population live under the EU-defined poverty risk line³.

The Norwegian strategies to fight poverty have mainly encompassed two kinds of measures, labour market inclusion and income transfers. This strategy can be described as quite successful, due to the fact that the number of people living below the poverty risk line is low compared to most countries in the world. Despite this, it is still an aim to reduce poverty substantially. The question is why it seems that the success in continued lowering of poverty is so limited. A basic question to the Norwegian governments is therefore if it is possible to reduce by one-half the number of poor people applying today's measures. Do we have to be willing to find new measures? The combination of labour market inclusion measures, relatively generous income security and good welfare services has been successful, but do we need new policies? We believe that these kinds of mixed policies work best. If we are to be able to reduce poverty by half, however, it is, necessary to scrutinize the balance between different kinds of measures. Will it be necessary to increase the minimum income security level?

The target mentions men, women and children separately. The Norwegian government has issued a special action plan for children living in poverty. The plan covers 64 points. The main cause of children in poverty is that they live in poor households. The good intentions behind all these measures leave us with one additional question: Are we willing to implement policies that will keep more children out of poverty?

Looking at the Norwegian poverty statistics, we find there is a gender dimension, there is an ethnic dimension and there is an age dimension. The risk of poverty is higher among women than among men, and higher among non-western immigrants than among people of Norwegian heritage. According to the government's action plan against child poverty, 84 000 children were living in persistent poverty⁴. The focus on children living in poverty is linked to a fear of the long-term consequences from growing up in poverty. This aim therefore calls for a special focus on children and gender in poverty reduction.

Economic inequality

Goal 10 concerns inequality, with a focus on two aspects, within and among countries. Even though these two aims have inequality in common, they will require quite different measures.

Reduction of inequality within each country presupposes social policy, income maintenance and welfare measures. The definition of relative poverty also contains a dimension of inequality to some extent. Goals 1 and 10 should consequently be seen in connection with each other.

² <https://www.regjeringen.no/no/dokumenter/barn-som-lever-i-fattigdom/id2410107/>

³ <http://www.ssb.no/inntekt-og-forbruk/artikler-og-publikasjoner/fortsatt-fa-fattige-og-sosialt-ekskluderte-i-norge>

⁴ https://www.regjeringen.no/contentassets/ff601d1ab03d4f2dad1e86e706dc4fd3/barn-som-lever-i-fattigdom_q-1230-b.pdf

A way to measure inequality in a country is to use the Gini-coefficient. The Gini-coefficient is a measure for the relation between the haves and have-nots. If everybody has the same income, the Gini will be zero (0); if one has all the income the Gini will be one (1). Norway is one of the countries with the lowest Gini. Statistics Norway reports on development in income differences, and according to their reports the income growth has been the highest for the households with the highest income. The lowest centile got 3.9 per cent of all income in 2013⁵. The Gini-coefficient increased from 0,239 in 2012 to 0,241 in 2013. In other words, the differences in income are low and stable, but nevertheless show slightly widening gap.

Target 10.1 set as an aim income growth for the bottom 40 per cent of the population. Whether we use the Gini-coefficient as a measure, income divided in centiles, or growth in the lowest part of the population, the widening gap in income on a national basis is a challenge. Norway has a relatively low level of difference, and this low level has remained stable over time. At the same time, however, the development has gone in the wrong direction, that is, towards a small increase in income difference. The challenge to the Government and authorities in Norway is obvious; how do we turn this trend around?

Social protection

Target 1.3 focuses on social protection systems and measures for all citizens and systems for achieving substantial coverage. Seen from one point of view, this aim has already been reached. On the other hand, it is necessary to ascertain whether there are groups that fall outside the welfare measures. We do not have a lot of research on this dimension, but we want to point to the fact that there are people in our country who are not covered by universal welfare. We find at least two groups that are inadequately covered. Firstly, there is the group of people staying in Norway who do not have residence permits. In a report published in 2008 by UDI, Fafo and SSB, the irregular resident population of non-EU origin is estimated at approximately 18,000 people⁶. These figures are approximate and are not up-to-date. The reasons for living in Norway without a residence permit can also be quite different. Some of these individuals are asylum seekers who were not granted asylum but were unable or unwilling to leave the country; some never asked for asylum, and for still others, their permit has expired. These figures do demonstrate, however, that there is a substantially large group of people in Norway who are living without access to most of the welfare state benefits and services. There is an obvious tension between, on the one hand, the humanitarian objective to secure a decent life for everyone and the need to implement Norwegian legislation and policy concerning migration.

The so-called undocumented migrants are not entitled to work; if they work, they do so in the black labour market. They do not have the right to social services, but in emergencies, they can get basic life-essential aid.

The other group that comes to mind is the group of people from countries in Southern Europe coming to Norway not to work, but to subsist from begging. These people are not undocumented, but they live on the margins of Norwegian society and seem to be completely dependent on charity and begging. A Fafo-report from 2015 concludes that these people are *“definitely poor, they are not organised by traffickers, the money is*

⁵ <http://www.ssb.no/en/inntekt-og-forbruk/statistikker/ifhus/aar>

⁶ Learning About Illegals: Issues and Methods. UDI FoU-report June 2008

sorely needed and spent on necessities, and criminal activities are not closely associated with begging". (Djuve et al. 2015⁷).

These two groups do not comprise many people, but they are individuals with serious needs. Today we do not have data to measure the groups that fall outside welfare coverage.

Indicators and data

There is no official poverty line in Norway. Although a poverty line might not be needed, Target 1.2 sets the existence of a poverty line as a precondition. Poverty and economic inequality are researched and measured by Statistics Norway and the EU-SILC studies. The EU statistics on income and living conditions, abbreviated as EU-SILC, is the reference source for comparative statistics on income distribution and social inclusion in the European Union (EU⁸). Norway is included as a part of the EES agreement.

The Gini-coefficient and other measures of economic inequality are available from Statistics Norway. Register-based data on labour market participation, benefits and transfers are also available.

However, we lack good figures pertaining to people who fall outside the welfare system. A paper from UDI, Fafo and SSB from 2008 suggests that we need better qualitative data as well as more accurate quantitative knowledge about the size and challenges of these groups⁹.

Challenges

Does the Norwegian government have a policy that further reduces poverty, and prevents children for growing up in poverty?

Is the Norwegian society ready to include the poorest and undocumented immigrants in the welfare system?

What to do with the gap in universal coverage of welfare services? Are the welfare services equitable?

⁷ A. B. Djuve, J. H. Friberg, G. Tyldum & H. Zhang (2015). When poverty meets affluence. Migrants from Romania on the streets of the Scandinavian capitals. Fafo

⁸ <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Glossary:EU-SILC>

⁹ Learning About Illegals: Issues and Methods. UDI FoU-report June 2008

Health

Goals 2 and 3 are both health-related. Goal 2 pertains to hunger and food security, which are indirectly about health. Goal 3 targets health issues directly. We have chosen not to discuss the implementation of Goal 2 in the Norwegian context, mainly because of the fact that hunger is not a problem in a Norwegian context to an extent or level that make it statistically measurable.

Goals and targets

Goal 3 focuses on health. The targets represent a continuation of four out of eight millennium goals. These include child mortality, pregnancy related deaths, HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, as well as access to unpolluted water. Goal 3 has 13 targets. In this area as well, we need to establish a balance between the fact that Norway on the one hand scores high on many of the possible indicators linked to the targets, and on the other hand pursues the aim to improve the situation under many of the same goals.

Under “Goal 3 Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being”, we have chosen six targets that we consider most relevant in Norway.

- Target 3.3: By 2030, end the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected tropical diseases and combat hepatitis, water-borne diseases and other communicable diseases
- Target 3.5: Strengthen the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including narcotic drug abuse and harmful use of alcohol
- Target 3.6: By 2020, halve the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents
- Target 3.8: Achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all
- Target 3.9: By 2030, substantially reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and air, water and soil pollution and contamination

This goal is divided into nine targets and four policy goals. We have chosen to focus on six objectives: epidemics, substance abuse, health coverage, death from pollution, as well as the first two targets (3.1. and 3.2) concerning maternal mortality and death of newborns and children. The aim linked to maternal mortality is 70 per 100 000 live births. For many years, Norway has been beyond achievement of this goal. The newborn mortality rate is one of the most important indicators of the general health in a country. The level of child mortality is therefore used as a way to compare the total health situation in different countries, for example by WHO. Today, fewer than five out of 1000 newborn babies die during childbirth or their first week of life¹⁰. The figures have decreased during the past ten years. The number of deaths of newborns is also below the set goal.

¹⁰ http://www.fhi.no/eway/default.aspx?pid=240&trg=MainContent_6894&Main_6664=6894:0:25,7628:1:0:0:::0:0&MainContent_6894=6706:0:25,9135:1:0:0:::0:0

Communicable diseases

The HIV/AIDS epidemic can stand as a good example of health challenges seen from a Norwegian point of view. Norway has low figures when it comes to HIV prevalence. By the end of 2014, some 5622¹¹ persons were diagnosed with HIV in Norway. In an international context, these figures are quite low. The number of new cases of people diagnosed with HIV remains quite stable, but there are some troubling figures behind this statistics. One of the most alarming is probably the fact that there is a (small) increase in heterosexual transmission as well as with homosexual transmission among people living in Norway. The general international picture is that the epidemic is waning, but (from a low level) this is not the case in Norway. It seems that the Norwegian authorities have failed in their preventive efforts (Mandal et al. 2009¹²).

Tuberculosis is an infectious disease closely linked to HIV in the sense that both HIV and tuberculosis become much more dangerous when they operate together. Tuberculosis is mainly an imported disease, but the few cases that arrive in Norway might indicate a need for renewed attention.

Substance abuse

Prevention and treatment of substance abuse is another relevant issue. Since 2012, the research institute Sirius has conducted a yearly survey on the use of illegal drugs in Norway. The result points to a relatively low level of drug use (Sandøy 2015¹³). One of the more alarming drug-related issues on the public agenda in Norway is the fact that Norway has a relatively high level of deaths due to drug overdoses. According to the European statistics, we are number two in Europe¹⁴. These comparative figures may be based on underreporting in some countries, but at the same time, there is no doubt that the Norwegian figures are nevertheless “too high”. Norway has the highest prevalence of overdose deaths in the Nordic region. Since the Aids epidemic came to Norway in the 1980s, Norway has pursued a policy of harm reduction. One of the issues on the political agenda in Norway is still the extent to which it is defensible to go in implementing these kinds of treatment and prevention measures. One of the issues on the agenda is the use of legally prescribed heroin treatment. Another is the issue of whether it should be allowed to smoke heroin in the so-called “needle rooms”. The question is and has traditionally been how to ascertain when harm reduction becomes legitimization of illegal drugs. The target challenges these kinds of issues.

Accidents and pollution

In terms of the number of deaths from traffic accidents, the Norwegian figures show a drastic improvement over the past 20 years¹⁵. Much is being done to prevent accidents

¹¹ Source: Folkehelseinstituttet; http://www.fhi.no/eway/default.aspx?pid=239&trg=Content_6496&Main_6157=6263:0:25,6055&MainContent_6263=6496:0:25,6062&Content_6496=6178:114218:25,6062:0:6562:1:::0:0

¹² R. Mandal, B. Nuland & A. B. Grønningsæter (2008). HIV in Norway: Knowledge and Attitudes. Fafo-report 2008:44

¹³ T. A. Sandøy (2015). Bruk av illegale rusmidler: Resultater fra befolkningsundersøkelser 2012-2014. SIRUS-rapport 4/2015

¹⁴ Source: European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug addiction: <http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/publications/edr/trends-developments/2014>

¹⁵ http://www.vegvesen.no/_attachment/471615/binary/1044317?fast_title=%C3%85rsrapport++Trafikkulykker+2014.pdf

and much has been achieved. The aim is to reduce by half. In this respect, it is difficult to approach this goal in a Norwegian context. At the same time, however, there are still challenges and Norway pursues the objective to further reduce traffic accidents. The organisation “Trygg trafikk” [The Norwegian Council for Road Safety] point to three important challenges: to ensure the safety of children on their way to school, to better protect pedestrians and cyclists in the cities.

The Norwegian Working Environment Act obligates medical doctors to report illnesses that can be traced back to the work environment. This includes pollution and hazardous chemicals. According to the Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority, work-related accidents or illnesses represent a substantial portion of the hazards to people’s health. An Internet-search on Norwegian newspapers reveals that every year, mostly in the larger cities, there are days when the air is polluted to an extent that makes it dangerous to health. The target is not very concrete (“substantially reduce”) but it is still an important reminder to our local and central authorities that this is an issue that needs to be targeted.

Health coverage

Goal 3, however, contains more than merely aims to reduce different health hazards. It also contains a target about universal health coverage. As a general statement, one can say that Norway has (almost) free and universal access to health services. Again, the question must be raised as to whether all groups of people are included, and like access to welfare services, we can see two groups that fall through the safety net: illegal immigrants and immigrants from poor countries coming to Norway to subsist on begging.

According to the Norwegian Patients’ Rights Act, everybody has the right to emergency healthcare services. There seems to be a gap in the implementation of this right and it is up to the individual doctor to judge if there is an acute need for treatment.

Indicators and data

The Norwegian statistical systems are quite good when it comes to measuring the development of health and diseases. The Norwegian Institute for Public Health (“Folkehelseinstituttet”) has a reporting system for communicable diseases (MSIS)¹⁶. Statistics Norway has good figures on road accidents. The Labour Inspection Authority has a good reporting system for work-related illnesses and accidents. The research institute SIRUS monitors the development of drug and alcohol use.

We will need more research if we want to know more about health coverage.

Challenges

One of the most difficult challenges that comes out of the health targets is that of substance abuse. There is a need to continue to develop new policies to prevent death from overdoses.

It also seems to be necessary to develop new programmes to prevent communicable diseases, not least sexually transmitted infections (STIs), HIV and tuberculosis.

¹⁶ <http://www.msis.no/>

Education

Education is a fundamental premise for sustainable development at all levels of society, from personal development potential in the pursuit of one's aspirations to development of the economy and society as a whole. Furthermore, education is a premise for building understanding and knowledge on sustainable development and for achieving it.

Goals and targets

SDG 4 reads “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”, and focuses on three main aspects: Equal opportunities for all children to receive education, including vulnerable groups; the quality of education; and inclusion of sustainable development education in school curriculums. More specifically, SDG 4 contains seven targets to be achieved by 2030:

- Target 4.1: Ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes
- Target 4.2: Ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education
- Target 4.3: Ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university
- Target 4.4: Substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship
- Target 4.5: Eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations
- Target 4.6: Ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy
- Target 4.7: Ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development

The Norwegian context

The fundamental importance of education in fostering human development is reflected in the Norwegian government's high prioritisation of domestic and international education. The quantitative targets of SDG 4 have long since been fulfilled in Norway and are safeguarded by functioning laws and regulations. This includes all children completing

free primary and secondary education of high quality when compared to international standards; free and equal access to early childhood development, care and pre-primary education; right to tertiary education for youth and adults; and the total population being literate and numerate.

Hence, challenges related to education in a Norwegian context are more of a qualitative nature, such as how to increase the quality of education further to be reflected in international test results and comparisons (e.g. PISA and PIRLS), and how to improve relationships between education and demands in the labour market. In this respect, the Norwegian government has given higher priority to increasing the quality of research and higher education as outlined in the White Paper “Long-term plan for research and higher education 2015–2024”. A key target listed in the White Paper is to increase research and development (R&D) appropriations to an amount equalling 1 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP) by 2024, and to scale up appropriations for research and higher education within six long-term priority areas aimed at promoting sustainable development .

International education has become the key priority of Norwegian development cooperation, and targets are well aligned with the new SDGs. In June 2014, the government launched the White Paper “Education for Development”, which outlines ambitious goals for Norwegian contributions to international education through its foreign policy and international development cooperation. The key targets given in the White Paper are:

1. Increase the share of funding to international education from 7.2 per cent of the total development aid budget (2013) to 13.3 per cent
2. Contribute to ensure that all children receive equal opportunities of accessing and completing school
3. Contribute to ensure that all children and young people obtain basic skills and are prepared for life
4. Contribute to ensure that as many children and young people obtain skills which ensure transition to employment, and improve the premises for economic growth and development in a wide sense

Challenges

Although universal, equal and quality education has long been given high priority in Norway, and despite the fact that the present education system already fulfils the main targets of SDG 4, this does not mean that the goal is irrelevant in a Norwegian context. Beyond what is already stated as key priorities and targets in Norwegian education policy and strategies, the following SDG 4 aspects could be of relevance in a Norwegian context:

1. Certain groups in society have particular challenges in obtaining effective learning outcomes and are vulnerable to marginalization. Examples are children and adults in immigrant families with little or no educational background and/or limited language abilities, children in vulnerable situations, and to some extent children from ethnic minorities. Hence, relationships between effective learning outcomes and children’s social, ethnic and cultural background should be monitored to ensure inclusion and equal opportunities for all irrespective of background.

2. In spite of a comprehensive national regulatory framework that ensures equal and quality education, the fact that the municipalities are responsible for pre-school and elementary education results in geographical differences in the quality of education. To a certain extent, municipalities grant dispensations from fulfilling the minimum teacher education standards of formal competence in primary and secondary schools and for staff in kindergartens. This situation is well monitored by statistics which could be used as part of a SDG-4 monitoring system in Norway.
3. As already stated, the target of literacy and numeracy is in practice fully achieved in Norway. However, these skills are to some degree relative to the context in which one lives, and the ability to apply literacy and numeracy in complex societies varies among people. Hence, the more qualitative aspects of applying literacy and numeracy in practice should be part of monitoring SDG-4 achievements in Norway. A standard international test has already been developed and can be used to obtain indicators for this aspect. PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study) maps children's interest and ability in reading written texts, and TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study) maps children's interest and abilities in solving numeric challenges.
4. A key challenge of education policy is to balance the relationship between the contents and types of education and the skills requirements in a dynamic economy and society. This is particularly true in the context of sustainability, where a long-term perspective is required. Many education policies tend to focus on present challenges and skills requirements, while a premise for ensuring sustainability is also to preserve a basis for solving future and yet unknown challenges. The concept of resilience, which has become a buzzword in discussions on sustainability, points to the importance of promoting diversity and the need to occasionally sacrifice short-term gains in order to ensure long-term sustainability. This concept is also highly relevant for education policies, for example in the fostering of innovativeness, and in showing caution so as not to mainstream too much education – and measures – towards known challenges and requirements within present economic and industrial patterns.
5. The availability of existing data that can be used to measure progress towards SDG-4 targets is relatively high. Registers are well developed, such as “Grunnskolen Informasjonssystem” (The Elementary Schools Information System) (GISI), and Statistics Norway collects and produces comprehensive statistics on education (Statistikkbanken). In addition, results from national and international standardized test can be used. However, some important aspects are not covered by existing statistics, such as relationships between educational achievements and social background, and consideration should be given to measuring these aspects.

Equality and anti-discrimination

Norway has developed a set of four anti-discrimination laws. These laws cover 1) gender, 2) ethnicity, religion and view of life, 3) disabilities, 4) sexual orientation and gender identity. The Norwegian government has announced that work has begun on developing a new, general anti-discrimination law. We have therefore chosen to discuss goals and targets that concern equality and anti-discrimination under one heading.

Goals and targets

The full phrase in Goal 5 is “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”. There are ten targets. We have chosen to focus on three of them:

- Target 5.1: End all forms of discrimination against women and girls everywhere
- Target 5.5: Ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life
- Target 5c: Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all woman and girls at all levels

In this chapter we also want to focus on two of the targets under Goal 10 Reduce inequality:

- Target 10.2: By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion and economic status
- Target 10.3: Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard.

Gender equality

Gender equality has become a source of pride and part of the Norwegian national identity. The Scandinavian countries have been described as representative of state feminism (Hernes 1987)¹⁷ In October 2015, the Norwegian government published a parliamentary paper on gender equality¹⁸. The paper aims at drawing a general picture of gender equality, aims and measures to promote equality. The paper points to the need for mainstreaming and the necessity that all sectors in society actively participate. Important governmental measures, according to the Parliamentary paper on gender equality, strengthened the implementation of antidiscrimination laws, emphasising the responsibility of authorities in all sectors of the society, in cooperation with working life parties, civil society, municipalities and researchers. Five issues received special attention in the paper: working life, violence and abuse, health, women in business, and international engagement.

¹⁷ H. Hernes (1987). *Welfare State and Woman Power: Essays in State Feminism*. Universitetsforlaget

¹⁸ <https://www.regjeringen.no/no/dokumenter/meld.-st.-7-20152016/id2456562/>

Moreover, as mirrored in the Parliamentary paper, most political actors will say that there is still a long way to go before gender equality as it is formulated in target 5.1 is achieved, namely: “End all forms of discrimination [...] everywhere”.

The second target on gender issues that we have chosen to highlight in this paper focuses on participation and opportunities for leadership. Some 38 per cent of the newly elected members of municipal councils are women, according to Kommunal rapport¹⁹. In today’s Storting, 40 per cent of the members are women. The government has been criticized for including few women in the positions of state secretaries and political advisors to the government.

In 2003, the Storting adopted a law relating to gender quotation in the boards of corporations. This has resulted in an increase in women board members, but it does not seem to have had the same recruitment effect for women to other leading positions in the corporate world.

Norway has high female participation in the labour market, but at the same time a strongly gender-divided labour force. The wage gap between women and men and between female-dominated professions and male dominated professions is an obvious challenge.

Social inclusion

Discrimination and marginalization have many faces, and under Goal 10 some of the most common groups at risk are mentioned. Target 10.2 takes up inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or other status. As mentioned above, the Norwegian anti-discrimination legislation covers four areas of discrimination: gender, ethnicity and religion, disabilities and sexual orientation and gender identity. The Ombudsman for Equality and Discrimination (Likestillings- og diskrimineringsombudet) is an important monitoring institution.

During recent years, several studies have documented discrimination both against people living with disabilities and against ethnic and religious groups. Rogstad and Midtbøen. (2012²⁰) conducted a study in which they applied for different jobs listing almost identical qualifications, but intentionally gave the applicants alternately Norwegian ethnic names and foreign names. Bore et al (2013²¹) provides an overview of research-based knowledge on ethnic diversity and equality in working life. They report discrimination in the hiring processes and few results of mandatory reporting in the reporting system that employers are obliged to follow.

The three of the four bases for discrimination covered in Norwegian law are obviously included in the list in target 10.2. However, one is not mentioned. A blog on the UNDP website²² states that the new SDGs cover all people and therefore “Ending LGBTI discrimination is key to achieving SDGs”. LGBTI is obvious a controversial issue in international bodies. The silence on LGBTI in the goals that basically cover all issues possible should urge the Norwegian government to raise this issue in international

¹⁹ <http://kommunal-rapport.no/kommunevalg-2015/2015/09/nar-ikke-malet-om-flere-kvinner-i-kommune-styrene>

²⁰ J. Rogstad & A. H. Midtbøen (2012). Diskrimineringsens omfang og årsaker. Etniske minoriteters tilgang til norsk arbeidsliv. Rapport 1/12. Institutt for samfunnsforskning

²¹ L. Bore, A. B. Djuve & K. R. Tronstad (2013). Etnisk mangfold og likestilling i arbeidslivet. En kunnskapsstatus. Fafo-rapport 2013:11

²² http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/blog/2015/9/29/Ending-discrimination-based-on-gender-identity-and-sexual-orientation-is-key-to-achieving-the-SDGs/?cq_ck=1443539001314

forums. It is also a question of whether LGBTI issues should be included in the Norwegian reporting to the UN.

The goal of reducing inequality is very broad. How does the national government promote inclusion? Labour market inclusion is the main aim in Norwegian social policy. This policy is called the “work-line” (arbeidslinja).

The goal of promoting inclusion for all as formulated in Goal 10 is quite ambitious. At this point, it is possible to identify several groups that challenge the welfare state. We know, for example, that children who come under child protection (i.e., are in foster care or institutions) represent vulnerable groups. Backe-Hansen et al. (2014²³) report that research on young adults having a background of childcare services have a high risk of being marginalized in many life arenas. They also report a high risk of mental health problems. Consequently, it does not seem that Child Care Services are able to compensate for the lack of health, or social and human capital among these vulnerable individuals.

Indicators and data

Statistics Norway produces data on labour market participation and gender differences in wage level. These figures are obvious indicators for monitoring gender differences and inequalities. Figures showing women’s participation in governing bodies and boards are also readily available.

It is nevertheless much more difficult to monitor discrimination. Public registers will not be able to produce figures covering all the relevant policy areas and issues and will be unable to provide an adequate picture of discrimination or lack of social inclusion. Some of the targets are also quite policy-oriented. Implementing policies within these social areas can hardly be measured by statistics alone. There will therefore also be a need for qualitative measures and indicators. Target 10.3 is a good example in this regard. Equal opportunities and equitable services beg to be defined, and in this respect, we will need to develop a new way to monitor development.

According to the anti-discrimination laws, all private companies over a given size and all public workplaces are obliged to report on antidiscrimination. The labour market authorities could collect and systematize these reports; however, to make this kind of knowledge meaningful, it would probably be necessary to supplement these reports with more qualitative and substantial knowledge.

Challenges

The goal and targets covering gender equality and social inclusion for all represent challenges to the Norwegian society in the sense that, on one hand, we score high on international indexes and are proud of good results. On the other hand, there is still a long way to go. This is very well documented in the parliamentary paper on gender discrimination.

Some of the challenges in this area are difficult to monitor and we might need to develop new ways to monitor development the fields of gender equality and social inclusion.

²³ E. Backe-Hansen, C. Madsen, L. Kristofersen & S. Sverdrup (2014). Overganger til voksenlivet for unge voksne med barnevernserfaring. I E. Backe-Hansen, C. Madsen, L. B. Kristofersen & B. Hvinden (red.), Barnevern i Norge 1990-2010. En longitudinell studie. NOVA, rapport nr. 9/2014

Justice for all

“Peace and justice” is the brief heading of Goal 16 presented by the UN Association of Norway. The goal is quite broad: promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. In the Norwegian context, we will focus on the rule of law and accountability.

Goals and targets

Goal 16 contains several different goals that have in common inclusion and rights. We have chosen to focus on the following targets:

- Target 16.1: Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere
- Target 16.2: End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children
- Target 16.3: Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all
- Target 16.5: Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms
- Target 16.6: Develop effective accountable and transparent institutions at all levels
- Target 16.10: Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislations and international agreements

Access to justice

Goal 16 and its targets covers rule of law. Several targets cover violence, exploitation, torture, trafficking and abuse. Children are mentioned explicitly in target 16.2. Furthermore, there are targets with reference to corruption, bribery, on one hand, and accountability and transparency on the other.

Violence and abuse is still a problem in Norway. The aim is to reduce all forms of violence. Children are mentioned specifically in Target 16.3. On this point, the targets go further by saying that we shall end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and violence. These aims can be seen as unrealistic, but at the same time, we all agree that these problems are intolerable. There seems to be a need for better statistics on violence against children in Norway. Monitoring should visualize both children per se and how they are particularly vulnerable. At this point, statistics provided by the police could be better. At the same time, we know that the statistics from the police only cover reported cases. Therefore, there appears to be a need to supplement the official figures with more in-depth surveys and research-based knowledge.

According to a rapport on knowledge about violence against children²⁴, the figures vary between different research reports. NOVA (Norsk institutt for forskning om oppvekst, velferd og aldring) present figures that indicate that 25 per cent of person between eighteen and nineteen years of age have experienced abuse from a parent in the course of their life.

Goal 16 contains a series of targets that are difficult to measure. At the same time, it is important that these targets be included on the public agenda. It is important to preserve the rule of law, not least for children. In relation to this goal, we therefore want to emphasize children's rights. The most important background document in this context will be the UN Convention on Rights of the Child.

The convention is monitored by The Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC). The committee presented considerations and observation of the report from Norway in 2010²⁵. The report contains a series of recommendation's and considerations. The committee notes for instance that the Ombudsman for children have not got mandate to receive complaints from children.

The Third Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child introduces a procedure that allows children, groups of children or their representatives to submit a complaint about violations of their rights by their State to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. Norway has not ratified this protocol. Both UNICEF in Norway and Save the Children have challenged the government on this issue²⁶.

Norway performs well on international indexes, whether in the areas of transparency, liberty or rule of law. See Transparency international's corruption index. Nevertheless, we are not listed on top of the indexes, which indicate that it is possible to perform better. This is another challenge for Norwegian authorities.

Another issue for which Norway has received international criticism is the level of the use of detention. The criticism is based on the principle that a person is innocent until proven guilty.

²⁴ From Nasjonalt kunnskapssenter om vold og traumatisk stress; <http://www.nkvt.no/tema/Sider/Fysiske-overgrepMotBarnKunnskapsstatus.aspx>

²⁵ <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/docs/CRC.C.NOR.CO.4.pdf>

²⁶ <http://www.reddbarna.no/nyheter/svikter-barn-paa-fem-av-ti-omraader>
<https://www.unicef.no/nyheter/8687/dette-er-pinlig-regjeringen>

Economy, industries and jobs

Sustaining economic growth and employment is one of the overarching objectives of the SDGs. However, aligning this with a reduction in negative environmental effects of economic and industrial activities will require a re-structuring of the economy towards “greener” industries and jobs. Norway has one of the highest GDPs per capita in the world, low unemployment rates, and a well-organized labour market compared to most other countries. The economy, however, is relatively dependent on the oil industry, and a key challenge in making the Norwegian economy more sustainable is to lessen oil dependency while at the same time developing other industries, particularly “green” industries.

Goals and targets

SDGs related to industrial production and jobs are comprised under Goal 8 (promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all), and Goal 9 (build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation). These SDGs cover a range of thematic areas, and it is beyond the scope of this paper to address all of them in the context of present Norwegian policy and challenges. Hence we have limited our comments to one of the challenges faced by the Norwegian economy recent years, namely the need for reducing the national economy’s dependency on the petroleum industry and to develop so-called green industries and jobs.

SDG targets related to this topic are:

- Target 8.1: Sustain per capita economic growth in accordance with national circumstances and, in particular, at least 7 per cent gross domestic product growth per annum in the least developed countries
- Target 8.2: Achieve higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation, including a focus on high-value added and labour-intensive sectors
- Target 8.3: Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including access to financial services
- Target 9.4: By 2030, upgrade infrastructure and retrofit industries to make them sustainable, with increased resource-use efficiency and greater adoption of clean and environmentally sound technologies and industrial processes, with all countries taking action in accordance with their respective capabilities
- Target 9.5: Enhance scientific research, upgrade the technological capabilities of industrial sectors in all countries, in particular developing countries, including, by 2030, encouraging innovation and substantially increasing the number of research and development workers per 1 million people and public and private research and development spending

In addition, Targets 8.5 and 8.6 are considered to be important in a Norwegian context as well:

- Target 8.5: By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value
- Target 8.6: By 2020, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training

Challenges

Income from petroleum-related activities covers about 12 percent of an annual Norwegian state budget and amounts to about 17 percent of total GDP. At the same time, investments in the Norwegian petroleum industry reached an all-time high in 2014, at about 230 billion NOK. Furthermore, a total of 330,000 Norwegians are employed in petroleum-related industries²⁷, according to a study by the International Research Institute of Stavanger (IRIS). This number constitutes about 13 percent of total employment in 2014.

Petroleum dependency makes the economy and jobs vulnerable to fluctuations in oil prices and more importantly, in a sustainability perspective, to a longer-term shift in the demand for petroleum products. Hence, re-structuring the economy away from petroleum-related industries and jobs towards non-petroleum and “green” industries is one of the main SDG challenges for Norway.

Greening of the economy is high on the political agenda, and there are many initiatives for promoting a more diversified industrial structure and the creation of green jobs. The Government has just recently decided to develop a national bio-economy strategy that may be an important instrument for creating new green industries and making the Norwegian economy less dependent on petroleum.

A “trade-off” from the Norwegian petroleum industry is the Norwegian Pension Fund, which is one of the largest global investments funds, presently worth about 7,000 billion NOK. The Pension Fund provides Norway with a unique tool for promoting international sustainable development beyond merely addressing national challenges associated with sustainability. Through the influence over a large number of international companies and the opportunity to channel investments into sustainable industries, the fund can contribute to fulfilling the SDGs on an international basis.

A key challenge in measuring the “greening” of the economy is clearly defining what green industries and green jobs are. Many on-going initiatives to deal with this challenge already exist, for example those of the International Labour Organization. The same challenges are attributed to other aspects of the SDGs related to economy, industries and jobs, such as defining “decent jobs”. None of these challenges are unsolvable. Fafo, for example, has developed a Just Jobs Index²⁸, which is used to measure aspects of job quality internationally, and to compare the level of “decent jobs” between countries. The challenge is more related to developing new statistics that reflect new needs.

²⁷ <https://www.norskoljeoggass.no/Global/2015%20dokumenter/Industribyggerne%202015.pdf>

²⁸ <http://www.justjobsindex.org/>

Urban development

Sustainable urban development can be seen as a “laboratory” for promoting sustainability at a micro-scale level, including environmental, social and economic dimensions. Hence, many of the aspects included in SDG 11 are also related to national targets treated in other SDGs, such as promoting energy efficiency, reducing pollution, and providing safe and stimulating public areas.

Goals and targets

Targets related to sustainable urban development are listed under SDG 11 (*make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable*), and include the following of particular relevance for Norway:

- Target 11.1: By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums
- Target 11.2: By 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities, and older persons
- Target 11.6: By 2030, reduce the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities, including by paying special attention to air quality and municipal and other waste management
- Target 11.7: By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities

Challenges

Development of sustainable cities poses challenges but also the opportunity to define uses of urban space. One of the main challenges in Norwegian cities is to reduce air pollution, particular from road traffic. About 70 per cent of the total nitrogen dioxide emissions in Oslo come from road traffic. Although many initiatives have been taken to reduce emissions from road traffic and from other sources in Norwegian cities, the problem is still significant²⁹.

A re-thinking of urban transportation seems to be one key to more sustainable cities, particularly in terms of improving air and environmental quality (target 11.6), reducing energy consumption and the use of fossil fuels (target 11.2), and in providing space for alternative use of public spaces (target 11.7).

Statistics Norway produces many relevant statistics for measuring SDG-11 targets. Central sources are the Living environment survey (Boforholdsundersøkelsen) (Target 11.1), the Living conditions survey (Target 11.7), and various environmental statistics, including land use statistics, emission, and energy consumption).

²⁹ See e.g.: <http://www.miljostatus.no/Tema/Luftforurensning/Lokal-luftforurensning/>

Climate and environment

Conserving the natural environment is a fundamental pillar of sustainable development, and decoupling economic growth from environmental degradation is stated as an overarching objective of the SDGs. Environmental degradation is however strongly related to present economic activities and patterns, and achieving the SDG related to climate and environment will require relatively radical shifts in the ways society and the economy are organized, and in the way people live their daily lives. Required actions will include addressing risks and negative trends as well as taking advantage of new opportunities for economic, industrial and social development.

Goals and targets

The following SDGs are related to climate and environment: Goal 12 (*ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns*), Goal 13 (*take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts*), Goal 14 (*conserve and sustainable use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development*), and Goal 15 (*protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat deforestation, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss*).

In a Norwegian context, certain targets attributed to these SDGs are more relevant than others are. Combatting climate change is perhaps the greatest environmental challenge for Norway given the relatively modest results of actions taken up to now. SDG-13 does not set targets for reduction in climate gas emissions, but refers to the targets already set in the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. Instead, SDG-13 sets targets for how combatting and adapting to climate change can be achieved. The three targets under SDSG-13 are:

- Target 13.1: Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries
- Target 13.2: Integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning
- Target 13.3: Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning

In addition, the following policy goal is relevant for Norwegian policy and international development cooperation:

- Target 13a: *Implement the commitment undertaken by developed-country parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to a goal of mobilizing jointly \$100 billion annually by 2020 from all sources to address the needs of developing countries in the context of meaningful mitigation actions and transparency on implementation and fully operationalize the Green Climate Fund through its capitalization as soon as possible.*

SDG-12 refers to consumption and production patterns, of which *implementation of the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production* is referred to as the main tool for achieving the overall goal (target 12.1). Other targets under Goal 12 are also more related to policy and process rather than setting specific targets for the state of the environment. Examples are:

- Target 12.6: Encourage companies, especially large and transnational companies, to adopt sustainable practices and to integrate sustainability information into their reporting cycle
- Target 12.7: Promote public procurement practices that are sustainable, in accordance with national policies and priorities
- Target 12.8: By 2030, ensure that people everywhere have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature

The exception to this is the three targets related to waste management:

- Target 12.3: By 2030, halve per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reduce food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses
- Target 12.4: By 2020, achieve the environmentally sound management of chemicals and all wastes throughout their life cycle, in accordance with agreed international frameworks, and significantly reduce their release to air, water and soil in order to minimize their adverse impacts on human health and the environment
- Target 12.5: By 2030, substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse

SDGs 14 and 15 focus on the need for conserving and sustainably using marine and terrestrial ecosystems. Most of the targets under these two goals also refer to policy and strategic processes rather than pointing to specific and directly measurable targets. However, the SDGs related to climate and environment in general largely refer to already existing international conventions and agreements, such as the UNFCCC and the Convention on Biological Diversity, in which targets are specified.

Combatting climate change

According to the Kyoto Protocol, Norway's emissions of climate gasses in the period 2013-2020 shall be 16 percent lower on average than the total emission in the reference year 1990, and the total emissions in 2020 shall be 30 percent lower than in 1990³⁰. In March 2015, the Norwegian Government decided to increase Norway's level of ambition by 10 percent, to a 40 percent reduction of total climate gas emissions by 2020 compared to the emissions in 1990.

At present, Norway is relatively far from fulfilling these ambitions. The total climate gas emissions in Norway in 2014 were 3.5 per cent higher than the emissions in 1990. During the same period, emissions from the oil and gas sector increased by 91 percent, while emissions from road traffic and air and sea transport increased by 31 and 14 percent, respectively³¹.

³⁰ <https://www.regjeringen.no/no/dokumenter/prop-173-s-20122013/id728699/?ch=3>

³¹ Source: Statistics Norway (<https://www.ssb.no/klimagassn/>)

As of the present date, therefore, Norway is dependent on using the Emissions Trading Mechanism and the Clean Development Mechanism under the Protocol to fulfil its obligations. Furthermore, the national and local (e.g. the “Future Cities” initiative³²) policies and initiatives implemented so far to reduce climate gas emissions have proved to be insufficient in changing the present trend.

Internationally, however, Norway is a driving force in cooperation to reduce climate gas emissions through its active involvement in REDD+ and, not least, its own International Climate and Forest Initiative (NICFI). NICFI has the following key objectives, adopted by the Norwegian parliament: 1) to contribute to the inclusion of REDD+ under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). 2) to contribute to early actions for measurable emission reductions from deforestation and forest degradation, and 3) to promote the conservation of primary forests, due to their particular importance as carbon stores and for their biological diversity. Norway has pledged up to 3 billion NOK per year for the initiative since 2007, and plans to increase this amount in the period up to 2020.

SDG-13 refers to UNFCCC with respect to reducing climate gas emission, while the targets specified under the goal refer to strengthening climate adaptation measures and to integration of climate issues into policies, education, etc.

In Norway, climate changes are expected to cause higher sea-levels in coastal areas, less snow in the winter, more extreme weather events (including periods of heavy rainfall), and higher temperatures.

Challenges related to these changes were identified by the Climate Adaptation Committee (Klimatilpasningsutvalget) appointed by the Government in 2008 and which issued its report in 2010. The key challenges were related to heavier rainfall, and the present capacity and state of the wastewater and drainage pipeline system was identified as a main challenge along with moisture problems in buildings.

Furthermore, the report pointed at drainage problems in built environments, and at lack of knowledge and awareness among planners and the general public. The committee also pointed out the fact that the present regulatory framework is well developed and able to handle many of the challenges, but that the municipalities, which are responsible for most of the adaptations at ground level, grant too many dispensations from the framework. The recommendations from the Climate Adaptation Committee were followed up by the White Paper “Climate change adaptation in Norway” in 2012³³.

Consumption and production patterns

The most specific targets related to consumption and production under SDG 12 are those pertaining to reduction of waste generation, and in particular food waste. According to a report from the Norwegian Institute of Bioeconomy Research (NILF)³⁴ an estimated 361,000 tons of food waste were generated in Norway in 2013, of which 231,000 tons were generated by consumers, 60,000 tons by the food industry, and 68,000 tons by food stores.

Waste generation in Norway, including food waste, has been highly correlated to GDP and there are no signs of a decoupling of this correlation at present. Hence, fulfil-

³² See: <https://www.regjeringen.no/no/tema/kommuner-og-regioner/by--og-stedsutvikling/framtidsbyer/id547992/>

³³ Climate change adaptation in Norway — Meld. St. 33 (2012–2013) Report to the Storting (white paper)

³⁴ H. Helgesen: Diskusjonsnotat Nr. 2015-03 Matsvinn og matavfall i Norge Hvor mye spiselig mat kastes? Hva er årsakene og miljøeffektene?

ling the SDG targets related to waste generation is a clear challenge under the present waste-generation regime in Norway.

Another challenge is the fact that there are no clear statistics on the generation of food waste. In official statistics, food waste is categorised as a part of the organic waste mass that also comprises other degradable components such as plants and paper.

Conservation of ecosystems and biodiversity

Increasingly more information and statistics on ecosystems and biodiversity have been generated, and there has been keener focus on the degradation of natural environments. Monitoring of marine, coastal and terrestrial ecosystems is relatively well established in Norway, and two initiatives in particular have the potential of covering the data needs related to the SDG targets on nature conservation. These are the Nature Index³⁵ and the Species Databank (Artsdatabanken)³⁶.

The Nature Index measures trends in the state of biodiversity in seven major ecosystems in Norway using more than 300 indicators. The indicators are chosen from a variety of species groups for each ecosystem, and they measure deviation from a reference state which is intended to represent ecological sustainability.

The index covers both marine and terrestrial ecosystems. However, the marine component of the index does not at present provide a full picture of the state of the marine environment, and must be further developed.

³⁵ <http://www.miljodirektoratet.no/no/Tema/Arter-og-naturtyper/Naturindeks-for-Norge/>

³⁶ <http://www.artsdatabanken.no/>

Contributions to global sustainable development

Norway has a long tradition of being a strong contributor to international development initiatives. The annual budget for development aid has been above 1 percent of the gross national income (GNI) for many years. The International Forest and Climate Initiative (IFCI) constitutes about 10 percent of the annual development aid budget.

Goals and targets

Many targets associated with contributions to international development are embedded in the various thematic SDGs, and only SDG-17 explicitly refers to the strengthening of the global partnership for sustainable development. Norway's contributions in the fields of environment and climate, education, etc. have been mentioned in a previous section of this report. In this section, we will look only at Norway's official development assistance (ODA) commitments (target 17.2) and Norway's import from the least developed countries (LDCs) (Target 17.11).

- Target 17.2: Developed countries to implement fully their official development assistance commitments, including the commitment by many developed countries to achieve the target of 0.7 per cent of ODA/GNI to developing countries and 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of ODA/GNI to least developed countries; ODA providers are encouraged to consider setting a target to provide at least 0.20 per cent of ODA/GNI to least developed countries
- Target 17.11: Significantly increase the exports of developing countries, in particular with a view to doubling the least developed countries' share of global exports by 2020

Challenges

As mentioned in the introduction, Norway's budget for ODA has constituted around 1 per cent of GNI for many years. For 2014 the figure was slightly below 1 per cent, and the total budget amounted to 31.7 billion NOK. 6.2 billion NOK was allocated to LDCs in 2013, constituting about 20 percent of the total budget. Hence, both Norway's total ODA contributions as well as the contributions to LDCs are above the SDG target. The share of total ODA allocated to LDCs, however, has been reduced by 35 percent from 2004³⁷.

With respect to trade with LDCs the situation is less positive. Total imports from LDCs constitute only about 1 per cent of total imports and do not show clear signs of increasing. Norway currently has no tax on imports from LDCs, but additional initiatives need to be implemented to contribute towards achieving SDG Target 17.

³⁷ <http://www.norad.no/om-bistand/tallenes-tale/en-stadig-mindre-andel-av-norges-bistand-gar-til-de-minst-utviklede-landene/>

Summary

The UN Sustainable Development Goals are global. In other words, the aim is that they shall be implemented in all countries. Norway is a rich country with a relatively low average level of poverty. Norway scores high on important health indicators as well as indicators for economic, social and gender equality. The country also ranks high when it comes to implementation of human rights. It can therefore be complicated to compare Norway to countries with more obvious development challenges. One of the main aims of the SDGs is to increase awareness and engagement on important issues. If Norwegian authorities remain merely satisfied with good performance on all targets, the SDGs will not have the intended impact. There is always room and need for improvement, and for developing new opportunities. The SDGs should therefore challenge rather than support national pride.

Going through all of the 169 targets under the 17 SDGs has not been possible within the scope of this limited study. Hence, we have made a selection of targets that we consider as relevant for Norway, and we present challenges related to these targets under nine different headings rather than under all of the 17 goals. These headings are:

- Poverty and inequality
- Health
- Education
- Equality and anti-discrimination
- Justice for all
- Economy, industries and jobs
- Urban development
- Climate and environment
- Contributions to international sustainable development

There seems to be at least three kinds of challenges when it comes to implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals in a Norwegian context. In some areas, there is a lack of policies; in others, there is a lack of data for monitoring, and some targets can be monitored only through qualitative approaches.

The main questions and challenges identified under the various headings in this report are:

Poverty and inequality:

- Do we need new approaches to reduce poverty and prevent children from growing up in poverty?
- Is the Norwegian society ready to include the poorest and the undocumented immigrants in the welfare system?
- Are the welfare services equitable?

Health:

- Do we need new measures to prevent deaths from drug overdoses?
- Do we need new programmes to prevent communicable diseases, not least sexually transmitted infections (STIs), HIV and tuberculosis?

Education:

- How do we address education for groups that are vulnerable to marginalization?
- Do we have policies that address geographical differences in the quality of schools?
- Do we have education programmes that address the more qualitative aspects in applying literacy and numeracy?
- Is there a balance between the contents and types of education and the skills requirements in a dynamic economy and society?
- Some important aspects are not covered by existing statistics, such as relationships between educational achievements and social background, and should be considered for development.

Equality and anti-discrimination:

- We need more systematic qualitative monitoring of discrimination encompassing both gender and other forms of discrimination.

Justice for all:

- Can children be given access to complain to the UN Children's Rights Committee?
- Should there be stronger emphasis on fighting corruption in Norway?
- Is there too much use of detention?

Economy, industries and jobs:

- A main challenge is to make industrial production, jobs and the national economy more resilient through reducing the dependency on petroleum production, and to promote "green" industries, innovation and diversification of industrial production.

Urban development:

- A main challenge is to reduce negative environmental effects from traffic and use of fossil fuels, primarily air pollution. Sustainable urban development also opens great opportunities for re-thinking uses of urban space, such as expanding areas free of traffic and developing alternative modes of transportation.

Climate and environment:

- A main challenge is to reduce national climate gas emission according to the targets defined by the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.
- Another important aspect of the SDGs related to climate and environment is to strengthen public knowledge and awareness of environmental sustainability.

Contributions to international sustainable development:

- A main challenge is to ensure expected end-effects of international development cooperation activities, rather than seeing financial contributions as an end target by itself.
- An assessment of Norway's contributions to international sustainable development should also cover potential impacts of Norwegian economic and political activities in general, and not only the effects from development cooperation activities.

Experiences with previous sustainable development indicators point to the fact that they can easily become mechanical, and that they do not trigger discussion and engagement. An important aspect of the SDGs is that they are to promote participation and engagement both in the general population and among experts and authorities.

Acknowledging this fact, we want to suggest a monitoring and follow-up system for the SDGs. Our suggestion is also based on the experience acquired while working with this paper. The issues covered by the SDGs are extremely broad and it is complicated

for one or two persons to cover all the issues. We therefore suggest a network of expert groups in different fields, for instance within the nine thematic areas covered by this paper, or within each of the 17 SDGs.

These expert groups might be given a threefold mandate:

- They should define quantitative indicators within their field.
- They should develop qualitative monitoring procedures, for example by establishing thematic reference groups.
- They should contribute to public discussions on how the implementation of the SDGs is developing.

The Global Goals for Sustainable Development

The UN has adopted 17 Sustainable Development Goals. The goals are universal. The aim of the SDGs is to increase awareness and engagement on important issues. In this discussion paper we discuss how these goals challenge Norwegian authorities both when it comes to implementation and monitoring.



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