

# Voluntary National Review of Hungary on the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda



*Transformation towards sustainable and  
resilient societies*

*2018*



MINISTRY OF  
FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE  
OF HUNGARY



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## **I. Hungary and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

After the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in September 2015, the implementation phase began at national, regional, and global levels, in which all countries have a crucial role, and their valuable support advance the world on a path to the sustainable future we want.

Hungary presents its Voluntary National Review (VNR) at the UN High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development for the first time in 2018. The review is a stocktaking exercise, providing a comprehensive overview of the different national policies, strategies, initiatives, and best practices which further the achievement of the SDGs within and outside the country. It also gives a broad picture of where we stand in the process of moving forward to achieve sustainable development (SD).

Our country has a firm and longstanding dedication to contribute at all levels to the ambitious realization of the universal framework of the 2030 Agenda, and is committed to strengthening international cooperation to ensure its accomplishment. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development offers an inspired response to the greatest challenges of our time. The implementation of the overarching Goals of the framework to eradicate poverty in all its forms and dimensions, to create inclusive and resilient societies, and to ensure sustained economic growth while respecting the planetary boundaries and leaving no one behind is of utmost importance for our country in order to boost the prosperity and wellbeing of its citizens in a sustainable way, ensuring a safe and peaceful environment. When nationalizing this new, transformative vision, Hungary

puts great emphasis on the most vulnerable and the furthest behind, as well as on the aim of strengthening solidarity, both at the national and global level, while remaining committed to the renewed Global Partnership to maximize international cooperation for a hunger-free world.

Inclusive, sustained, and sustainable economic growth and the sustainable use of natural resources are indispensable if we seek to create prosperity and promote the wellbeing of nations, processes in which increasing competitiveness and the fostering of innovation, technology, and digitalization have crucial roles. One of the Government's primary aims, therefore, is to reinforce competitiveness in all sectors of the economy in part by excelling in the fields of science, innovation, and technology.

Hungary feels a unique ownership of the Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and a special commitment to their accomplishment. Our country, which co-chaired the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals between 2013 and 2014, actively participated in the elaboration of the diverse, complex, yet closely interconnected set of Goals, which are built on the holistic unity of economic development, social inclusion, and environmental sustainability. During the negotiations, in the position of a co-chair, Hungary put particular emphasis on the human rights aspects of and the holistic approach to the sustainable development framework. We also attached utmost importance to universal access to clean water and sanitation in sustainable development, therefore Hungary proposed

that the issue of water and sanitation be highlighted as a standalone goal within the framework. As the horizontal review of SDG 6 is expected to be completed first in 2018, we have decided to contribute to this process with our first VNR as well.

The Budapest Water Summits in 2013 and 2016, organised under the patronage of President János Áder, emphasised the crucial role assumed by water in sustainable development, peace, and security. The underlying theme of the 2013 Summit was to promote the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (“Give the Future a Chance”), together with the creation of a standalone goal pertaining to water and sanitation. Three years later, the 2016 Summit focused on the need to promote water as a source of cooperation (“Water Connects”) and the need to formulate action-oriented objectives under SDG 6. The President, as a member of the UN High Level Panel on Water and a firm proponent of the need to address the global water crisis, promotes the cause of ensuring universal access to clean water and sanitation through the application of innovative sustainable water management practices. Hungary also contributed to the report of the High Level Panel on Water entitled “Making Every Drop Count”, published in March 2018, in which the members of the panel have identified comprehensive recommendations and initiatives for action to safeguard fragile accessibility to water in the world.

The President of the country is exceptionally dedicated to environmental sustainability and the fight against the harmful effects of climate change, since a sustainable environment and biodiversity are preconditions for social and economic wellbeing, which form the basis of sustainable and resilient societies. To strengthen this commitment, a new Directorate was created within the Office of the President in 2015. The Directorate for Environmental Sustainability is responsible for long-term sustainability issues, which arch over governing cycles. The Directorate maintains contacts with national and international bodies, educational institutions, and organisations and also prepares background information and supports the President’s Office in issues related to sustainable development.

Climate change poses one of the biggest threats to sustainability. The coherent and coordinated universal accomplishment of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement is therefore a basic requirement to be able to achieve the Goals and targets of the sustainable development framework. Hungary is committed to complying with the uncompromised implementation of the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) of the Paris Agreement. To give emphasis to this promise, after the ceremonial signature of the agreement in New York in April 2016, Hungary was the first EU member state to ratify it - already in May - to further the process of it coming into effect.

## I. 1 Institutions and overarching strategies for promoting sustainability in Hungary

Several prominent governmental and non-governmental entities have been dealing with facilitating the inclusion of the concept of sustainable development in both the internal and external strategic plans and policies of the country. The new Fundamental Law of Hungary came into force on 1 January 2012. As one of only very few such documents in the world containing clear articulation of the principles of the rights of future generations, this Fundamental Law supports the preservation and protection of our material, intellectual, and natural resources and advocates the mainstreaming of the concept of sustainability into public policies.

The principal body for the protection of the Fundamental Law is the Constitutional Court, which judges the violation of fundamental rights presented by the Ombudsman and, if necessary, can annul laws and decrees that are in contradiction with the principles of sustainable development.

“We commit to promoting and safeguarding our heritage, our unique language, Hungarian culture, the languages and cultures of nationalities living in Hungary, along with all man-made and natural assets of the Carpathian Basin. We bear responsibility for our descendants; therefore we shall protect the living conditions of future generations by making prudent use of our material, intellectual and natural resources.

All natural resources, especially agricultural land, forests and drinking water supplies, biodiversity – in particular native plant and animal species – and cultural assets shall form part of the nation’s common heritage, and the State and every person shall be obliged to protect, sustain and preserve them for future generations.”

(Excerpt from the Fundamental Law of Hungary)

Sustainability is a core strategic principle, and as such is central to policy making in Hungary. The Government sets policies and regulations in order to carry out all the goals established in the Fundamental Law, international agreements, national legislation and strategies, and in connection with the SDGs. Mainstreaming the concept of sustainability into government policies is ensured by the fact that all bills in Hungary have to be examined from the point of view of meeting the requirements of SD in the form of an impact assessment before being passed for adoption.

National parliaments also have a substantial role in supporting the accomplishment of the SDGs by enacting legislation and adopting of budgets. The Hungarian National Assembly ensures the realization of the sustainable development framework by adopting the Fundamental Law, the National Framework Strategy for Sustainable Development, and other SD relevant laws.

Before the adoption of the Fundamental Law, a standing Committee on Sustainable Development in Parliament had been established in 2010 as the successor to the former Committee on Environmental Protection. The Committee addresses issues related to environmental and nature conservation, sustainable land use, and the sustainable management of natural resources.

The National Council for Sustainable Development was set up by the Hungarian Parliament as a conciliatory, consultative, and advisory body for issues in the field of sustainable

development in 2008. One of the Council's priorities is to promote a change of attitude in all the segments of society. To strengthen social engagement, it encourages and supports public outreach activities on a wide scale. It has about 30 members representing key national stakeholders, including political parties, representatives of the academia, the private sector, CSOs, and church organizations. The Chairperson of the Council is always the current Speaker of the Hungarian Parliament.

After its establishment, the National Council for Sustainable Development prepared the second, renewed sustainable development strategy through a wide range of public consultation processes from 2009 to 2012. These processes included consultations with families and citizens as well as members of the business sector, small communities, civil organizations and religious communities. In March 2013, the Hungarian Parliament adopted the new National Framework Strategy on Sustainable Development (NFSSD) for 2012–2024. The Strategy also defines the tasks of the national Government and municipalities, putting the sustainability goals into a Hungarian context. According to the Strategy, the main task for the development of a sustainable society is the preservation and enhancement of national resources, which can be categorized as human, social, environmental, and economic.

The human resources part of the Strategy focuses on a stable and healthy population, meeting the challenges of the elderly with skills and knowledge and achieving demographic stability in the country. The social resources part of the NFSSD concentrates on creating a sustainable culture with positive values, moral norms,

and attitudes, including employment and family values. The main goals set in the environmental resources section aim to increase biodiversity, protect renewable natural resources, and ensure the reasonable and responsible management of non-renewable resources. The economic resources part highlights the importance of strengthening entrepreneurial capital and innovation, expanding employment, reinforcing the entrepreneurial layer, gradually increasing capital investments, and reducing foreign exposure.

Every two years, a progress report is prepared on the implementation of the NFSSD. Two biennial reports were made in 2015 and in 2017 with the involvement of several participants (NCSD, the Ministry of Agriculture, NGOs, and other stakeholders). The systematic analysis of the Strategy carried out after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda set out in a monitoring report that the four priorities of the Framework Strategy, i.e. the human, social, environmental, and economic resources, were in compliance with the 17 SDGs.

The role of the Ombudsman for Future Generations with regard to the institutions fostering sustainability in Hungary also merits emphasis, as it is exceptional worldwide. The Office of the Ombudsman for Future Generations (“Ombudsman”) was founded in 2008, and it has been operating ever since as a unique body advocating the interests of future generations at the national level. The Ombudsman also acts as a deputy to the Parliamentary Commissioner for Fundamental Rights and is responsible for the protection of the constitutional right to a healthy environment, the right to the preservation of physical and mental health in connection with sustainable

development, and the protection of the environmental and cultural heritage of the nation. The description of the scope of authority and the activities of the Office of the Ombudsman for Future Generations will be dealt with in detail in the last section of our report covering the contributions of our partners.

Hungary delivers on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in its external relations as well. The implementation of the external dimension of the sustainable development framework is set by the

International Development Cooperation (IDC) Strategy of Hungary. The IDC Strategy for the period of 2014–2020 was adopted by the Government in 2014, which outlines the priorities and tasks for the Hungarian development cooperation. After the midterm review of the Strategy adopted by the Inter-ministerial Coordinative Committee for International Development Cooperation in December 2017, the Action Plan of the IDC Strategy for 2018–2020 calls for the alignment of the IDC Strategy with the 2030 Agenda.

## **I. 2 Integrated coordination mechanisms to deliver on the SDGs leave no one behind**

The realization of the SDGs requires a holistic approach and strong political support, since the complex, interconnected set of Goals embraces all the internal and external policies of a country. In addition, the successful accomplishment of one target has a beneficial effect on efforts to reach other targets as well.

In Hungary, it was necessary to translate the Sustainable Development Goals across national government structures and mandates applying a cross-sectoral approach primarily through the establishment of a coordination mechanism for the realization of the global framework for sustainability.

The relevant line ministries, having a wide range of portfolio in our country, are jointly responsible for the national implementation of the 2030 Agenda through the different policy areas, strategies, and initiatives. During the process of developing sectoral policies, they confer with the relevant stakeholders using their own practices, methods, and frameworks for consultation.

Given that the fulfilment of the Goals and targets involves all the line ministries, an overarching coordination mechanism has been needed to strengthen policy coherence by facilitating the mainstreaming of sustainable development into government policies and to consult on questions concerning the realization of the SDGs.

With the new Agenda coming into effect in January 2016, our country also started to develop its institutional framework for implementation. As the first step, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) was assigned the task of coordinating the national accomplishment of the sustainable development framework. Regarding coordination, MFAT looks back on an important assignment, since during the Post-2015 negotiations, the Ministry executed the coordination of the Hungarian official position. In the first phase of the realization of the 2030 Agenda, coordination was performed through the Inter-ministerial Coordinative Committee for International Development Cooperation established in 2014, consisting of high-level



officials from the line ministries. The responsibility of the Committee was originally to coordinate the IDC activities of the different line ministries, since all Hungarian line ministries and governmental organizations are entitled to perform their own development projects within their spheres of competence and their budgetary capacities.

Three immediately emerging needs were met after the endorsement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015. First, to facilitate implementation, the ministries responsible for the national policies and strategies embedded in the Goals were identified. This process required profound, methodological analysis of the linkages between the national policies and the SDGs and targets, which was performed by the coordinating MFAT and the line ministries. The outcome of the analysis revealed the system of correlation between the responsible ministries, the national policy areas, and the relevant Goals and targets. To break silo thinking, in most cases a specific Goal or target was assigned to several ministries, when certain areas of a policy were the responsibility of more than one ministry. In these cases, one of the ministries responsible for most of the content elements of a target was assigned primary responsibility over the given target.

Second, the UNGA Resolution containing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was translated into Hungarian with the collaboration of the line ministries and the involvement of an independent expert from the academia last year. During the coordination process of the translation, particular attention was paid to the proper usage of terms and expressions used in different sectoral policies, to which the line ministries gave their valuable professional

input. The Hungarian version of the document has been published on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and it is considered the official government translation of the text of the UNGA resolution. The translation has provided governmental organisations with an important tool of reference in questions related to SDGs. Additionally, the aim of the translation is to bring the 2030 Agenda closer to the public, to raise awareness of the fact that sustainable development is a possible answer to our global problems, and last but not least to ensure broad public support for the national accomplishment of the sustainable development framework.

Third, the strategic policy documents and initiatives which foster the achievement of the SDGs in Hungary also needed to be identified through the detailed exploration of the contents of the Goals and targets and the national policies. The identification of these programs may serve as a compass for aligning the aims included in these strategic documents with the Sustainable Development Goals during the process of their review or renewal.

The Government decision last year to submit Hungary's Voluntary National Review in 2018 made the strengthening and furthering of the coordination practice inevitable. The country's report has been prepared through a newly established inter-ministerial coordination mechanism set up in 2017, which has greatly enhanced both policy coherence for sustainable development and the achievement of the sustainable development framework. Based on this mechanism, a platform has been created which facilitates the involvement of non-governmental entities as well, including the Hungarian Central Statistical Office and other consultative stakeholders,

e.g. CSOs, the academia and the business sector. This coordination entity is involved in the national-level realization of the sustainable development framework, while the Inter-ministerial Coordinative Committee for International Development Cooperation continues to be responsible for the coordination of the implementation of the external dimensions of the 2030 Agenda.

At the end of January 2018, the focal points of the new body had a kick-off meeting with the purpose of preparing Hungary's first VNR. The meeting offered an opportunity to agree on the structure and the main content elements of the review and the partners to be involved in the report, as well as the roadmap of preparing it. Our first Voluntary National Review was compiled by the team, consisting of the focal points of the different line ministries, with the coordination of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade using the coordination mechanism mentioned above. After the kick-off meeting, a consultation process of several rounds began on the constituents of the review structured around the 17 SDGs in detail. The line ministries formulated their contributions after studying and evaluating the strategies and policies belonging to the scope of authority of their respective ministries. After a preliminary draft had been worked out, a pen holding line ministry was appointed for each Goal to be in charge of the final version of the report on the given SDG. With this working method, we managed to ensure a holistic approach, as in most cases more line ministries were involved in the cooperation

related to each Goal. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade compiled the final text of the VNR. The structure of the Hungarian report takes the guidelines and recommendations in the handbook prepared by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) into account.

Our national report opens with an introduction highlighting the long-term connections between Hungary and sustainability and describing the institutions, institutional framework, and coordinating mechanisms furthering SD in the country.

The second part offers a detailed presentation of the proactive steps and measures taken by the Government to accomplish the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

The third section of the report contains the input of our main partners in the national implementation of the sustainable development framework. In addition to the ministries, other institutions and non-governmental entities also made valuable contributions to our review: the Hungarian Central Statistical Office, the Ombudsman for Future Generations (Deputy Commissioner for Fundamental Rights), the Business Council for Sustainable Development in Hungary (BCSDH), the Civil Roundtable for Sustainable Development founded in 2017, and the Hungarian UN Youth Delegate. The significant input of the National Council for Sustainable Development is incorporated in the introductory part of our report.

### **I. 3 Partnerships, inclusive dialogues and consultations**

Although the Government has the main ownership over the achievement of the SDGs, it cannot succeed alone. Thus, it is essential to involve all the stakeholders concerned to be able to realize sustainable development and eradicate poverty.

The National Assembly, the Directorate for Environmental Sustainability within the Office of the President of Hungary, the National Council for Sustainable Development, the Ombudsman for Future Generations (Deputy Commissioner for Fundamental Rights), the Constitutional Court, the Hungarian Central Statistical Office, the State Audit Office of Hungary, the academia (the Institute of Sustainable Development Studies of the National University of Public Service), and the Hungarian UN Youth Delegate are all key actors in promoting sustainable development in Hungary, and they all have made noteworthy contributions to delivery on the Sustainable Development Goals in the country.

Follow-up and review play a significant role in the successful achievement of SD strategies. The Hungarian Central Statistical Office (HCSO) is one of the main partners of the Government in its efforts to accomplish the 2030 Agenda successfully by providing data on the status of the country with regard to sustainability. The Office has likewise proactively collaborated in advancing the realization of the Goals at the global level by participating in the elaboration of the global indicators for monitoring the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. With regard to the global indicators for the SDGs, at present approximately 75% of them are available for Hungary.

HCSO has published reports on the indicators for sustainable development in relation to the National Framework Strategy for Sustainable Development biannually since 2007. The latest publication was issued in 2017: <http://www.ksh.hu/docs/eng/xftp/idoszaki/fenntartfejl/efenntartfejl16.pdf>. Parallel to the biannual report on the indicators for sustainable development, HCSO has developed an interactive website as well, where information on key indicators in connection with the 17 SDGs can be found.

Consultations through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade are continuous with all the stakeholders. Since the adoption of the new framework, several conferences have been organized by the abovementioned governmental and non-governmental entities in which the stakeholders involved in the implementation participated and highlighted their roles in the process.

The National Council for Sustainable Development and the National Society of Conservationists co-organized conferences in February and November 2017 entitled “The accomplishment of the Sustainable Development Goals in Hungary”. In the interactive segment of the conferences, the participants representing the different stakeholders involved in advancing sustainable development had opportunities to exchange views on their contributions to the realization of the sustainable development framework in Hungary. The Hungarian National Assembly and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) jointly organized a regional seminar on the SDGs for the Parliaments of Central and Eastern Europe, as well as Central Asia in February

2017. The Seminar focused on how parliaments can effectively engage in policymaking to facilitate the national realization of the SDGs. A high-level representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade also contributed to most of the conferences with keynote speeches on the 2030 Agenda and its effective accomplishment.

In addition to these conferences, several other events on the implementation of the Agenda have been organized, for example by the National Council on the Environment, the National Society of Conservationists-Friends of the Earth Hungary, the Association of Hungarian Librarians, the Institute of Sustainable Development Studies of the National University of Public Service, and the GWP Hungary Foundation.

PricewaterhouseCoopers held a business breakfast during which participants discussed the role of the business sector in moving forward the issue of sustainable development in 2017. The Deloitte Central European Sustainability Report Award, the Green Frog Award ceremony also took place in November 2017. The award was launched in Hungary in 2000 for the first

time in the Central European region.

In order to advance the accomplishment of the 2030 Agenda with distinct attention to Hungary's first VNR, the Office of the Ombudsman for Future Generations, the National Council for Sustainable Development, the National Society of Conservationists, and the HAND Hungarian Association of NGOs for Development and Humanitarian Aid co-organized a conference entitled "Hungary and the Sustainable Development Goals" in May 2018. The proposals of the Civil Roundtable for the Sustainable Development Goals and the Office of the Ombudsman for Future Generations to enhance the national realization of the new global framework for SD were presented at the conference.

During these meetings and conferences, all the stakeholders demonstrated their commitment to contribute to the achievement of the SDGs in Hungary. They are eager to learn about possibilities to demonstrate their involvement and input, having realized that the 2030 Agenda is an opportunity not to be missed in order to be able to change our future and transform our fragile world into a sustainable one.



## II. Sustainable Development Goals



*End poverty in all its forms everywhere*

Poverty eradication is a strategically focused area in Hungary, since 1 in 4 people (26.3% of the population) was affected by the risk of poverty or social exclusion in 2016, though it is important to note that the poverty line applied in our country is many times higher than the reference value determined by the UN. However, in recent years, the number of people exposed to poverty has been decreasing significantly. The Hungarian Government is committed to achieving the ambitious poverty target of the European Union 2020 Strategy and is on the path to fulfilling this promise. The efforts related to this will be presented below.

The Hungarian National Social Inclusion Strategy II. (2011-2020) sets the framework for government intervention. The three-year action plans for the implementation of the strategy are focused on the following areas: increasing children's wellbeing, promoting inclusive education, broadening employment opportunities for people with low-level educational qualifications, furthering economic integration, ensuring access to proper medical care, decreasing geographical disadvantages, and eliminating housing problems.

In the last 4–5 years, poverty has dropped primarily due to socially oriented economic policy measures:

- fostering public employment, then reducing it in parallel with job

creation in the business sector (taking advantage of the transitive nature of public employment);

- extending employment (Hungary has one of the lowest unemployment rates in the EU; people with low educational degrees can especially benefit from this as a result of the horizontal measures promoting the employment of people from disadvantaged backgrounds, e.g. tax breaks, the compulsory employment of persons with reduced work capacities, etc.);
- economic growth, increasing the minimum wage;
- considerable tax reduction and financial support for families with children; and
- a permanent reduction in the costs of utilities and normalising the circumstances of heavily indebted households.

These short-term interventions have been implemented in various mid-term steps, primarily to increase the disadvantage-compensation factor of public education. In addition, one of the principles of the Hungarian social policy is that working-age citizens should take steps to improve their circumstances in the spirit of individual responsibility, achieving social inclusion primarily through work. Social benefits are therefore tied to the fulfilment of behavioural expectations requiring an

average amount of effort. At the same time, an appropriate level of social security is provided to people of both working age and non-working age who are involuntarily unemployed.

Further to the above, decreasing childhood poverty and thus preventing the reproduction of poverty is a goal of key importance. Child support programs serving this goal have reached more than 100,000 children so far (2/3 of whom come from disadvantaged backgrounds). The constant development and extension of the early childhood support system targeting children under 3 years of age and their families are priorities of Hungarian social policy. Over the course of the last two years, almost 2,000 new nursery schools have been created and 250 early childhood institutions have been founded. In 2016, there were 112 Sure Start Children's Houses (early childhood development support centres) in the most disadvantaged, service-deprived municipalities. Moreover, to help alleviate family poverty, the extension of free or reduced rate meals within the framework of school catering and free meals for children during school holidays has helped break the generational cycle of poverty and promote adequate child development. In 2017, 626,777 children received free or reduced rate meals, and 133,521 children got free meals during the school break in the summer. As a result of these programs, the rate of people at risk of poverty aged 0–17 decreased considerably, from 19.9% in 2016 to 14.8% in 2017.

Various employment policy measures have also been introduced to increase employability and employment levels among people from disadvantaged backgrounds, including Roma. Measures

which balance gender-based employment imbalances play a key role in this field, for example, the 'Growing Chances' program, which helps further the employment of Roma women in social and childcare institutions and supports them in their efforts to obtain qualifications. More than 1,000 Roma women had participated in the program before 2016, and another 1,000 people are joining the continuing program. In connection with the efforts to increase employability, more vocational training programs facilitate the completion of high school and help further skills development. By the beginning of 2017, almost 45,000 low-skilled people had received training, and another 52,000 had participated in complex job market programs. In addition, more than 2,000 people were involved in social land programs.

In addition to projects designed to alleviate poverty, housing integration is promoted by complex housing programs for people living in segregated areas and in extreme poverty. These contain both human and infrastructural elements and require a constant professional presence. They provide help for people living in segregated areas by offering training, employment, healthcare, and social and other services, improving their housing conditions and helping them move into a sustainable housing environment. By 2016, more than 5,000 people from 67 segregated areas had been involved, and the housing conditions of almost 500 members of 125 families had improved.

The Roma population, which makes up approximately 7% of the entire population of Hungary, is the most exposed to social exclusion and the risk of poverty, although the poverty level of this ethnic minority is decreasing. According to the most recent

data (2017) of the Hungarian Central Statistical Office, the rate of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion among the Roma population decreased from 82.8% to

75.6% in 2016, and the rate of Roma people living in households with low work intensity decreased by a sizeable 10%, from 35.9% in 2016 to 25.2% in 2017.



***End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture***

Ensuring sustainable agricultural production and strengthening protection against extreme weather, such as droughts, flooding, or hail, are closely linked to the aim of ending poverty. In order to achieve these goals, the Hungarian Government has adopted comprehensive strategies.

The National Water Strategy, approved in 2017, fosters the protection of agricultural areas against damages caused by water (flooding, inland inundation). The Irrigation Development Strategy also began to be developed in 2017 with the aim of increasing irrigated areas in the country. In 2016, the Government decided to build up the National Hail Prevention System to protect agricultural production, which became operational on 1 May 2018.

The reasonable use of pesticides is one of the most important elements of sustainable crop production. The European Parliament and the Council adopted a framework for Community action to achieve the sustainable use of pesticides by reducing the risks and impacts of pesticide use, following the guidelines of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and by increasing the use of alternative approaches or techniques, in effect since 1 January 2014. The Member States have to work out and adopt National Action Plans with quantitative objectives,

measures, and timetables to encourage the introduction and development of integrated pest management and alternative approaches or techniques to reduce dependency on and the risks posed by pesticides.

In line with this, Hungary developed its own National Plant Protection Action Plan in 2012. The country's objective is to use plant protection products to foster sustainable agriculture, to protect plants and plant products from harmful organisms, and to produce high quality, safe foods. Since the reduction of the quantities of plant protection products expressed in natural units (kg) does not necessarily coincide with the aim of mitigating the environmental and health risks, the primary goal of the National Action Plan is to moderate the risks posed by applying plant protection products and enhancing their reasonable use. The Plant Protection Committee reviews the National Action Plan every five years following its adoption.

As sustainable agriculture is based on comprehensive and integrated production, one of the main targets of the present National Plant Protection Action Plan is to encourage the introduction and development of integrated production. Integrated production is a farming practice

requiring harmonised and complex knowledge sharing, from the selection of the production site to consumption. In addition, it contributes to food safety and the protection of human health and the environment by applying plant protection products properly, producing healthy and safe plant products (lower Maximum Residue Levels, less active substances in the products), reducing environmental loading (particularly the protection of sub-surface waters, surface waters, soils), safeguarding biological diversity, and strengthening the consumers' confidence in plant products of national origin.

The Government also contributes to the preservation of genetic resources. In 2018–2020, several projects will be supported involving research on traditional Hungarian species in order to involve these species in the national genetic preservation system with the aim of increasing the state's role in the field of gene conservation. The Homestead Development Program introduced in 2011 creates an opportunity to protect and preserve indigenous animal and plant species. During the project selection, applicants who choose to keep indigenous animals and/or grow local specialties or plant local fruit trees are preferred. Additionally, in 2016, extra points were given for keeping one of the nine traditional Hungarian dog breeds. Balancing plant growing and livestock breeding is particularly important for sustainable agriculture as well. In traditional farming, considerable attention has been devoted to maintaining the fertility of the land. The spread of the use of artificial fertilizers has reduced the use of organic fertilizers and their positive effects. In order to curb this trend, the relevant ministry encourages applicants under the abovementioned

program to submit complex projects that include the production of organic fertilizers.

Through the promotion of sustainable agriculture and food security, the improvement of nutrition could also be achieved. Government measures that make public catering healthier (e.g. the 2014 Public Catering Act on the regulation of the selection of school cafeterias) promote the realisation of equal opportunities and the fight against poverty and hunger, as they provide children, especially in disadvantaged regions, with hot meals with an age-appropriate energy content and nutritional value. As a result of the amendment of the relevant regulations, there are more vegetables, fruits, milk, dairy products, and whole grain products in public catering, and the salt, sugar, and saturated fat content of foods has become lower. The Public Health Product Tax, based on an impact assessment and in effect since September 2011, has reached its public health goals: the supply and the turnover of products with ingredients that have proven adverse effects on health have decreased. In order to make the selection in school cafeterias healthier, regulations prescribe that if there is a school cafeteria or a vending machine at school, the school health service must decide if the planned selection matches the recommendations on healthy nutrition. The Public Health Product Tax also specifies that products listed in the Act on Public Health Product Tax (e.g. pre-packed sugary products, soft drinks, energy drinks, savoury snacks) and alcoholic and tobacco products shall not be sold at events organized for children and students.

As regards the elimination of hunger in international development cooperation, Hungary is concerned about the food and



nutrition situation in the developing countries of Africa, especially since malnutrition and famine are two of the severest instances of human suffering, and are among the main drivers of mass migration. In addition to our regular annual

payments, in 2017 Hungary allocated a sum of 1 million EUR to the World Food Programme to fund food assistance projects in the Sahel region, addressing the largest famine of the last few decades.



***Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages***

In recent years, the importance of staying healthy has become the centre of the current thinking on healthcare. Disease prevention builds on the promotion of taking responsibility on the individual and social levels and the health-conscious thinking of the public. This view serves as a compass for a better, higher quality, and consequently happier life.

In Hungary, as a result of general improvements, the infant mortality rate dropped to under 5 per mille in 2011 and to 3.9 per mille by 2016, presenting the lowest ratio ever measured in official population statistics by the Hungarian Central Statistical Office. Hungary is the only Member State of the European Union that provides children and citizens with vaccinations for a wide range of infectious diseases as part of a compulsory and state-funded system. The country has created a compulsory vaccination system against the most common and most severe childhood infections in this climate, and consequently, due to the high level of coverage, these diseases have been eradicated.

In order to prevent cardiovascular diseases, which make up the highest percentage of premature deaths, new regulations were introduced in 2013, as a result of which an

80% decrease in the ratio of foods with high trans fatty acid content was observed by 2014. As part of the measures against tumorous diseases, which are the other major cause of premature deaths in Hungary,

- a vaccination has been introduced against human papillomavirus (HPV) infection for 7th graders;
- a screening system has been developed for breast and cervical cancer;
- health promotion offices have been set up to contribute to decreasing the number of cardiovascular and tumorous diseases, as well as to improve attitudes and habits having an impact on health preservation.

In addition, the prevention and discouraging of alcoholism and drug consumption are also important. In the interest of reducing excessive alcohol consumption, an alcohol protocol has been compiled for health promotion offices with the aim of helping screen for alcohol addiction, and platform-specific alcohol consumption prevention programs have been introduced for schools, communities, and workplaces. State funding of drug prevention and treatment programs has also increased, and a

previously unavailable service has appeared in the area of child and youth addictology care: three providers were set up in 2015 to ensure the rehabilitation of drug addicts aged 10-16. With the purpose of decreasing smoking and protecting non-smokers, regulations concerning tobacco products have become stricter. As a result of these measures, indoor pollution has decreased considerably and the number of adult smokers and everyday smokers both dropped from 30.2% in 2000 to 25.8% in 2014.

In 2017, an Act on expanding state support for in vitro fertilisation and reinforcing the state-funded institutions providing artificial insemination was adopted, as a result of which more state-funded institutions have started to provide infertility treatments. Funding for the necessary medications has increased considerably, and the procurement of the medical technical devices and instruments used in the process has also become state subsidized.

Hungary is committed to improving the health situation of the country. One of its major objectives is continuously to improve the overall health of the population. In addition to efforts intended to further prevention, the Government also aims to improve the recovery chances of patients, so even more indebted healthcare institutions have been kept under state maintenance, which guarantees a more efficient and safer operation on the long term.

The Government has also renewed the hospital infrastructure. In many hospitals, the buildings have been renovated and the equipment has been modernized, mainly in disadvantaged rural areas in order to compensate for the territorial inequalities in the care system. In the period between 2007

and 2013, significant funds were spent on the implementation of healthcare developments from available development sources. The healthcare infrastructure was undergoing unprecedented development, with healthcare investment amounting to EUR 1.5 billion. The basic objective of this period was to reinforce and restructure the infrastructural background of healthcare and make the public healthcare service system suitable to give adequate responses to the major public health challenges of our age by using EU support efficiently.

For the purpose of increasing access to healthcare, a program focusing on the reduction of waiting lists has been completed. As a result, the number of patients on the waiting list decreased from 70,000 in 2012 to less than 28,000 in the first half of 2018.

Hungary has reinforced the primary care provided by general practitioners both in function and in funding. Since 2015, a “group practice” program – as part of a community development process – has been operating involving local Roma communities. Within the framework of this program approximately 36,000 people, including nearly 10,000 members of the Roma minority, have attended screenings for more than 20 parameters and related lifestyle counselling. Moreover, a Digital Immune Stimulation Program was initiated in May 2017 in order to ensure a healthier online environment for young people and to facilitate utilising the opportunities provided by the online world more consciously and conscientiously.

Hungary also puts specific emphasis on improving air quality to promote a healthy environment. In this context, a nationwide Intersectoral Action Program for the

Reduction of Particulate Matter (PM10) has been developed to further reduce PM10 pollution in a 2011–2030 timeframe. The estimated budget of this program is approx. 2.5 billion EUR. By the end of 2016, the Government spent more than 504 million EUR on the implementation of the PM10 program. The largest investments have happened in the transportation sector and the energy efficiency and green investment sector, for example the improvement of the Hungarian Air Quality Network within the relevant Operational Programs.

Furthermore, particular attention is paid to implementing important elements of chemical safety. The country plays an active role promoting education on the risks of chemical use, and it also focuses on the identification of the dangers and the risks of hazardous materials in order to determine the rules for safe use, as well as restrictions and prohibitions, if necessary. In addition, online access to information on the current rate of air pollution and pollen load is free-of-charge for every citizen.

According to the World Health Organization industrially contaminated sites are one of the most significant risk factors for human health, so reducing the human and ecological risks of these sites is essential in order to ensure a healthy environment. Consequently, the National Environmental Remediation Program was established in 1996 for the identification, assessment, and remediation of contaminated land and groundwater. Data on the identification, registration, and technical classification of all contaminated sites are stored in the National Environmental Information System. Financing the clean-up of contaminated sites is generally guided by the “polluter pays principle”. In cases when this is not

applicable, funds are allocated from the government budget or financed through the EU Cohesion Fund. Most of the contaminated historical sites are managed by the state and financed by the national budget. More than 45 sites were managed within the framework of the Remediation Program, using approximately 95 million EUR between 2015 and 2017.

Hungary is committed to the wellbeing of all at the global level as well. As part of its international development strategy, the country therefore promotes the achievement of universal health coverage and providing access to quality essential health-care services and medicines in indigent regions. In line with this commitment, financial assistance has been provided by the country for medical supplies (e.g. 470,000 EUR to the St. Joseph Hospital in Erbil, Iraq) since 2015, funding has been provided for psycho-sociological programs (e.g. 30,000 EUR in Lebanon), and reconstructed hospitals (e.g. 169,000 EUR in Aleppo, Syria) were provided.

To foster the prevention of non-communicable diseases, with the financial support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, a project to assist the prevention and the early detection of breast cancer was implemented in Albania in 2015. One of the most prominent results of the project is that it has presented the risk factors for developing breast cancer, the most affected age groups and target groups, and the methods and importance of self-examination in detail. Furthermore, healthcare training is in the IDC activities of our country, too. The main goal of a training program being carried out in Ethiopia is to improve the living conditions of people residing in Ethiopia’s region with severe leprosy. This program aims to provide a

two-day professional training course for 50 healthcare workers to learn the basic information about the early symptoms of

leprosy, healing, complications, psychological assistance, and home care of the illness.



***Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all***

Inclusive and equitable quality education is one of the most important tools in the creation of inclusive societies in which no one is left behind. The goal of the development of public education is to create an environment offering equal opportunities in the entire country and provide students with a quality, supportive educational system that conveys values. For Hungarian students, family background is a decisive factor: the more financially advantaged one's family, the more likely they are to do well in school. For this reason, the Government interventions to decrease the rate of students who fail to complete school and to support inclusive education are especially important, therefore an early warning and educational support system has been implemented. Based on this system, schools where drop-out rates are the highest receive extra educational support, and the extra work necessary for the effective education of children with multiple disadvantages is acknowledged by higher wages. In addition, school social workers, children, and youth protection experts have become integral actors in schoolwork.

Focusing on inclusive education, the Hungarian mentorship programs for the inclusion of students from disadvantaged backgrounds (the "Útravaló" and "AranyJános" programs), including Roma students, are internationally acknowledged.

In 2017, more than 13,000 students received a grant or mentorship, and approximately 10,000 students receive support through programs developed to prevent students from leaving school before having completed a program of study ("Tanoda", "Second Chance", and a program intended to prevent Roma girls from leaving school early). Furthermore, free provision of textbooks and measures which make electronic textbooks and next-generation study materials accessible free of charge for all through the National Public Education Portal also serve to compensate for disadvantages. Since September 2015, participation in kindergarten education has been compulsory from the age of three. Concerning the access to quality early childhood development, care, and pre-primary education, in Hungary 91% of Roma children go to kindergarten; this ratio is close to that of the non-Roma children, and it is the highest in the region. The introduction of compulsory kindergarten attendance required an increase in kindergarten places, so between 2010 and 2016 approximately 9,200 new kindergarten places were created.

Supporting innovation and talent at all levels of public education is also an important focus area, as is ensuring the professional development of teachers and increasing participation in lifelong learning

in order to match working-age citizens to job market requirements. In recent years, our country has witnessed several positive changes in the national educational system. The favourable trends have included an increase in the ratio of participants in vocational training programs and in educational expenditures as a percentage of the GDP.

The Government places emphasis on dual education, through which students in institutions of higher education can gain practical experience at companies while pursuing their studies in the theory of the respective professions. Participation in dual education can potentially be advantageous for both students and the business sector. The conclusion of student contracts as the basis of dual vocational education has become an option in adult education, too. In addition, companies are given tax benefits and other forms of assistance as incentives to participate in offering hands-on education for the largest possible number of young people. With the introduction of further support, business operators can invest considerable amounts in practical training.

By the beginning of 2016, the National Qualification Register, which covers the professional and vocational qualifications recognised by the state, had been subjected to review. In general, timeframes of the individual professional and vocational training programs in adult education have been reduced by 10–20%, new partial vocational qualifications have been introduced, and the number of additional vocational qualifications requiring special vocational skills has also been increased. A Special Development Centre for the Promotion of Employment in the Labour Market has been established as the first

constituent of the institutional network for the labour market placement of students with disabilities and young people. These governmental measures have been efficient because they respond to realistic demands and trends in the labour market.

There are several additional programs designed to foster the accomplishment of Goal 4. The Government has approved a concept named ‘Vocational Training that Serves Economy’, with objectives like meeting economic demands by training more skilled workers and technicians; strengthening dual education by providing practice-oriented knowledge; enhancing the prestige of organized vocational education and developing the vocational educational system. Based on this concept, vocational training centres have been set up. In July 2015, 340 vocational training institutions were taken over by the Ministry for National Economy, and they now operate within the framework of 44 new centres and can perform their tasks in a more independent, self-reliant, and accountable manner than before.

The structure of trainings was recently renewed. Beginning in the 2016/2017 school year, vocational high schools and vocational schools were transformed into specialized high schools and vocational high schools. As a result, the general certificate of secondary education and the vocational certificate have become equally achievable in both types of schools. Thus, this measure can facilitate successful entry into the labour market and the pursuit of studies in higher education. The educational system of specialized high schools has also been renewed. In the phase preparing for the general certificate of secondary education, an optional vocational qualification can be obtained, and after one additional year, a

technician qualification can be received as well. Students who do not want to study for a vocational qualification before the general certificate of secondary education have several alternatives to choose from in this flexible and diversified educational system. Beginning in the 2017/2018 school year, finance and business studies were introduced to Year 10 of all specialized high schools. In addition to these measures, two vocational qualifications can be obtained instead of one within the same duration of training (4+1=5 years), which allows the attainment of broader scopes of vocational and professional skills and can facilitate early employment on the labour market.

In full-time formal education, the earlier 21-year age limit, which proved too narrow, has been increased to 25 years, thus young people have more time to join vocational training programs and complete their studies. Consequently, more students return to formal vocational education, and dropout tendencies decrease. Since September 2015, the attainment of a second vocational qualification has been free of charge in adult education, which thereby fosters the process of lifelong learning. This path offers free further education opportunities to those who want to develop their skills in vocational training instead of higher education.

Adult education has been strengthened as well: in addition to the option to study in order to obtain a second vocational qualification for free, particular attention has been paid to the reinforcement of the adult education capacities at the vocational training centres. Moreover, student contracts can now be concluded within the framework of adult education too, which gives people returning to education a chance to receive vocational training which

meets high standards and is practice-oriented. As a result of the abovementioned measures, the number of students studying in vocational training centres has reached 50,000 by now. The Vocational Training Bridge Program has been launched to offer an alternative chance to pursue studies or returning to the system of vocational training for young people between 15 and 23 years of age, dropping out or having already dropped out from the educational system. During their studies, the students receive scholarships in order to help them return to the educational system and earn their vocational qualifications.

In order to ensure an equitable and efficient operation of public education and vocational training, and increase students' digital competences, the Digital Education Strategy of Hungary, adopted in 2016, will ensure the presence of the pre-defined digital equipment in public education and vocational training institutions, paying special attention to students with special needs. Furthermore, aligned with the goals of the Digital Welfare Program adopted by the Government, a program entitled "Closing the Digital Gap" contributes to the shaping of the adult population's attitude to the digital landscape, enhances their digital literacy, and spreads the use of ICT devices and electronic administration. Launched in 2015, the program has involved 270,000 employees in the development of digital literacy. Another noteworthy program focuses on the establishment of the vocational training centres, where the centres have been given an opportunity to provide the necessary equipment for instruction in mathematics based on skills development and for the preparation of teachers for the application of new pedagogical methods. Within the

framework of this program, the individual vocational training centres have the chance to set up their own so-called Digital Communal Creative Workshop, which is a special educational space that accommodates project-based pilot programs drawn from the participants' own motivations as well as the quick development of non-industrial, unique prototypes and training.

Since Global Education (Global Responsibility Education, GRE) has been an integral part of Hungarian IDC for over a decade, the Government strengthened the concept of GRE in 2016, in the spirit of the 2030 Agenda both within formal and non-formal education. In connection with the global expansion of the number of scholarships available to developing countries, the Stipendium Hungaricum Scholarship Programme (SHCP) was launched in 2013, which is operated by the Tempus Public Foundation under the supervision of the Ministry of Human Capacities. The aim of the SHCP is to increase the number of foreign students in Hungary and to encourage Hungarian higher education institutions to attract top foreign students. The program is based on bilateral educational cooperation agreements and currently 60 Sending Partners are engaged in it on four different continents. Students can apply to study at the bachelor, master, and doctoral levels, and they can also apply to take preparatory courses. In addition to the tuition-free education, the SHCP provides monthly stipends, medical insurance, and a housing allowance for scholarship holders. The number of applicants is continuously

increasing as is the number of available scholarship places. In the 2017/2018 round of applications, more than 3,800 scholarships were awarded.

As part of Hungary's international development strategy, the Government puts considerable emphasis on contributing to inclusive and equitable quality education in regions in need. Therefore, financial assistance was provided for the establishment of new schools (e.g. 390,000 EUR in Erbil, Iraq, for the education of internally displaced children) and youth centres (e.g. 20,000 EUR for the youth centre of the Za'atar refugee camp in Jordan). In addition, Hungary has launched bilateral educational cooperation programs with several countries (e.g. Egypt, Israel etc.) with the aim of contributing to the wellbeing of developing countries. Moreover, another educational project in the Democratic Republic of Congo. "The College Othniel Renewal" project has provided better quality education contributing to raising the quality of life. The refurbished classrooms ensure appropriate conditions for organizing various training courses, where both children and parents can learn about topics such as HIV/AIDS diseases and environmental protection. The project was implemented between 2015 and 2016. Furthermore, the Eastern Partnership Program since 2012 has aimed to refurbish educational and cultural institutions in Ukraine (schools, kindergartens, cultural centres, ecclesiastical community spaces, arts schools, theatres, and archives). The program includes a regional development program with Ukrainian public institutions.



## *Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls*

Gender equality and women's empowerment are not simply goals without the achievement of which sustainable development cannot be realised, they are also indispensable means of creating a sustainable world. The Government of Hungary is dedicated to empowering women, which is impossible without a balance of family life and career. It therefore intends to increase women's employment and offer support to mothers with young children in order to facilitate their entry into the labour market. Based on the statistical data provided by the Hungarian Central Statistical Office, in 2017 the employment rate of women was higher (61.3%) than it has been in more than 20 years. The greatest improvement in women's employment is detectable in the group of women who are raising children under the age of 6.

In the interest of the achievement of the abovementioned goals, several measures have been introduced to ensure the economic empowerment of women with small children. The new Labour Code (in force as of 2012) highlights flexible and atypical forms of employment, which ensure that the employment of women is as continuous as possible. It obliges employers to continue employing parents part-time until their child reaches the age of 3. As of 2015, the period of this obligation has been extended to the fifth year of a child's age for large families. Furthermore, the Workplace Protection Action Plan (2013–2020), as will be discussed under Goals 8 and 10,

encourages employers to employ members of the female labour force. Within the framework of this Action Plan, as of 1 January 2013, employers of people in disadvantaged employment situations (e.g. untrained employees, employees under the age of 25 or over the age of 55, permanent job-seekers, parents with young children) can rely on allowances.

Furthermore, the Childcare Fee Extra program, which was introduced in 2014, aims to ensure that having children does not automatically mean that parents are excluded from the labour market and mothers are forced to decide whether they want to stay at home with their children or return to the job market. Since 1 January 2016, mothers can return to the job once their child is six months of age, while continuing to receive child home care allowance and the child care fee. From the date of the birth of a new sibling, parents remain eligible for the previous allowances as well (the sibling child care fee). In the case of the birth of twins (born in 2014 or later), the duration of the child home care allowance period has been extended for a further year, and it expires when the children reach the age of three (the twin child care fee). Within the framework of the Childcare Fee Extra program, parents who are students attending an institution of higher education receive childcare benefits for one year, and this was increased to two years in January 2018. Since 2012, both parents receive two extra days off per year for each child, which can also improve the



situation of mothers. In addition to the above, the Family Home-Creation Allowance was introduced in 2015 to assist families with the purchase of new or used flats or the construction of new houses.

The easy reconciliation of work and family obligations and the availability of adequate accommodation and daycare for children in all settlements are of key importance for families. In January 2017, the daycare system for children was transformed with the purpose of creating a flexible system, which, in addition to creating the proper institutional frameworks, can provide daycare and day-to-day supervision in the forms of family childcare in private homes or at workplaces, in harmony with the local and individual needs and parents' work schedules. All forms of education and care for children under the age of 3 are considered crèches. Since 2017, daycare for children has been provided in 2 institutional forms (crèche, mini crèche) and 2 service forms (family nursery, in-office crèche). Also since 2017, the organisation of children's daycare is mandatory if the number of residents under the age of 3 in a settlement exceeds 40 or if 5 families need daycare service. Municipalities can take into account the needs of parents when organising these kinds of services. In January 2018, the funding system for crèches and mini crèches changed: normative funding was replaced by task-based financing, which, by providing wage subsidies and operational support, allows municipal governments to provide long-term, profitable operation of crèches. The Hungarian Government aims to increase the number of crèches to 60,000 from the current 48,000 by 2020. Taking into account the age-related population data expected for 2020, this measure will

provide daycare for about one-third of children between the ages of 1 and 3. The program entitled "Women 40", which was launched in 2011, gives women the opportunity to retire after an eligibility period of 40 years (employment and time spent raising children), regardless of retirement age. It also promotes the daytime care of grandchildren, since it supports young mothers who wish to reenter the labour market by allowing grandmothers to play a more active role in childcare.

Women face many difficulties in finding a balance between family life and career, so in addition to the measures mentioned above, the Hungarian Government has taken several steps to improve their situation. According to the EUROSTAT data, the gender pay gap in Hungary was 14% in 2016. In recent years, a substantial wage increase has been carried out in some sectors which are dominated mostly by women, such as healthcare, child welfare, and child protection. Hungarian families are also entitled to tax allowances based on the number of children they have. As part of these allowances, personal income tax can be reduced after the birth of a child or more children. These reductions are made on a monthly basis per child. In addition, since 2014 the family tax benefit can be deducted from the pension and health care contributions, in addition to the personal income tax reductions. Furthermore, as of 2015, couples in their first-marriage can reduce their tax base. A newlywed couple, provided that it is the first marriage for both of them, is eligible for a tax allowance for a maximum of two years. As a result, until the end of 2016, 52,000 couples were able to reduce their tax base by a total of 0.7 million EUR. Since 2017, the Government has also supported single-parent families by giving

them priority in crèche admission.

A tender of around 44 million EUR was issued in June 2017 entitled “Women in the Family and at the Workplace” in order to improve the employment situation of women. Within the framework of this tender, projects are supported which contribute to the flexible employment of women and the reconciliation of work and private life. Local governments, NGOs, churches, and other associations can apply for this call for submissions. Raising awareness and developing opportunities facilitating women’s social and economic engagement were important tasks to be fulfilled by the applicants. When the evaluation of this tender was completed, 71 applicants got support nationwide. Consequently, there will be 71 Family and Career Points established in Hungary, where trainings and coaching will be organized on the personal development, entrepreneurial, and self-employment skills of women. Providing services related to rural development, small-scale activities, local traditions, childcare, and other services are also important aspects of the tender. Since April 2018, 22 Family and Career Points have opened their doors to women and families raising children.

In Hungary, the Roma population is the most exposed to social exclusion, therefore it is particularly important to strengthen the employment of Roma women. To this end, the Hungarian Government created a training and employment program in 2012. In this program, 1,012 Roma women have acquired vocational qualifications in one of the following fields: kindergarten teacher; caregiver and educator of young children; paediatric intensive care nurse; social care provider and nurse; and social work assistant. As a result, 499 of those trained

have been employed in the social welfare and child welfare system. The immediate employment of the women concerned makes it possible to accommodate them quickly into the employer’s institution, where they will work full-time after having completed the training. Within the framework of the program, 1,100 Roma women will be trained and integrated into the employment system. Their period of supported employment (24 months) will be followed by a period of compulsory employment for 12 months. In order to reduce the rate of Roma girls who leave school without having completed a course of study and improve their chances of pursuing continued education, a new program entitled “Bari Shej” was launched in October 2015, the target group of which is girls aged 10–18 who attend primary or secondary school and face the risk of dropping out. Until 2016, funding for the program was part of the national budget, and in 2017 another program was started using EU funds. This program reached out to as many as 1,800 students that year alone.

In the context of the Government’s efforts to eradicate violence against women, numerous measures have been made to stop violence and the abuse of women. The Hungarian Criminal Code recognises domestic violence as a standalone criminal offence. The National Crisis Management and Information Telephone Service is available 24 hours a day all over the country, and calls are free of charge with all the providers. Crisis centres offer accommodation and complex services for victims of domestic violence who are forced to leave their homes because of violence, with or without children. “The Secret Shelter”, with its 29 sites, is a special component of crisis management, which

welcomes and provides shelter for victims of serious domestic violence whose lives are in danger. “Halfway Houses” provide housing for 5 years and professional assistance (including legal and psychological help) for the social reintegration of those cared for in crisis management centres. In 2018, crisis ambulances start their operations as new service elements. The goal of the ambulances is both prevention, i.e. handling problems before violent episodes occur, and

the reinforcement of regional cooperation among institutions involved in combating domestic violence. Transitional shelters provide victims of human trafficking with protection and support services. Hungary puts particular emphasis on preventing victimisation, on training, and on raising awareness. The current national anti-trafficking strategy, as will be discussed under Goal 16, prioritizes effective prevention and efforts to raise awareness as a major area of intervention.



***Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all***

Hungary has taken a number of steps to ensure that it fulfils its commitments with respect to SDG 6. In accordance with the principles underpinning integrated water resources management and with a view to addressing the global water crisis, Hungary has harmonised both its domestic and foreign policy with the stipulations laid out in the 2030 Agenda.

Through the promulgation of the Government Decision concerning the National Water Strategy and the Acceptance of its Implementation Plan, Hungary has established a set of objectives, in line with the 2030 Agenda, pertaining to the accomplishment of sustainable and integrated water management. The National Water Strategy has identified seven objectives to be attained by 2030. The first is the achievement of better rates for water retention and distribution, as well as increased in the efficiency of water uses. In addition, risk prevention measures against water damage also must be considered,

along with the improvement of the quality of our water resources and the achievement of sustainable, good status. Another important objective is the maintenance of the high quality of public water utility services and the management of rainfall-runoff without imposing an unreasonable burden on consumers. Furthermore, the improvement of the relationship between water and society, the renewal of planning and management measures, and the reorganisation of the regulatory structure pertaining to water management are also essential.

Hungary has begun to implement these objectives through projects jointly funded by the Government and the European Union (EU), as well as through measures aimed at developing the water management sector. It is worth noting that Hungary’s domestic water management policies were previously aligned with the principles of integrated water resources management (IWRM) and the relevant EU legislation on water;

indeed, the motive behind the National Water Strategy was to accelerate the fulfilment of IWRM. In addition to the aforementioned Strategy, the Government of Hungary is currently formulating a National Strategy on Water Diplomacy and Water Sector Exports, thereby providing Hungary with a framework governing its international diplomatic efforts with respect to SDG 6. In Hungary, the degree of implementation of integrated water resources management was 73% in 2016.

Essentially, the entire population has access to drinking water and sanitation facilities. Based on data compiled in 2016, 95.2% of households in Hungary have direct access to public utility drinking water supply services. Approximately two-thirds of the households without direct access (approximately 207,169 households in Hungary) had access to public utility drinking water supply services not more than 300 metres from their place of residence. The remaining proportion of the population (amounting to circa 2% of the total population) acquired water intended for human consumption by way of their own drinking water facilities (i.e. wells) or through other means. An estimated 81.5% of the population used safely managed drinking water services by 2015, which translates into an increase of 12.2 percentage points between the years of 2010 and 2015. This surge is attributable to the increase in the number of households connected to public drinking water supply networks and to the countrywide safety measures applied to public supply networks. Hungary reaches very high rates of compliance in terms of microbiological parameters, with a compliance rate of nearly 100%. Hungary also demonstrates 98.6% and 97.1% compliance rates with chemical

and indicator parameters laid down in the EU Drinking Water Directive.

Hungary's rules and regulations with respect to the provision of drinking water services accord with the modern, internationally recognised standards and approaches to safe drinking water. Hungarian providers are required to apply risk-based management approaches; in 2009, an obligation was introduced requiring large water suppliers to conduct water safety plans. Notably, this legislation preceded the EU legislation stipulating the need to conduct such plans. Since 2013, this legislation has been extended so as to incrementally apply to all water suppliers.

Open defecation is not an issue in Hungary. In large part due to public investments into sewerage, the proportion of households connected to the public sewerage systems continued to increase over the course of previous years. According to statistics compiled in 2016, 80.6% of households in Hungary have direct access to sanitation systems (including the possibility of hand washing with soap and water), which represents an increase of 8.3% since 2010.

A so-called "Water Reuse in Hungary" project was initiated in 2018, which aims to conduct a nationwide mapping of possibilities for water reuse. The project will serve as a basis for the elaboration and realisation of measures aimed at improving water reuse in Hungary. Although the proportion of wastewater treated safely in Hungary (based on public wastewater discharge) was 97.4% in 2016, the water reuse rate in terms of the total amount of wastewater produced in Hungary was 1.74% in 2013; fields of use included spruce irrigation, energy plantation irrigation, desiccation, and recharge. The

aforementioned project seeks to increase the rate of water reuse. The change in water-use efficiency over time, according to a measure conducted in 2012, was 19.4 USD/m<sup>3</sup>.

Although Hungary currently has abundant water resources, in view of projected trends, through the adoption of the National Water Strategy, the Government of Hungary has taken steps to avoid water scarcity in the future. An important element of integrated water resources management measures aimed at eliminating water scarcity in Hungary involves the dissemination of modern approaches to rainwater management. As opposed to relying merely on widespread water drainage, measures have been initiated whereby water retention, *in situ* utilization (both on land and on estate), water storage, slowdown of runoff, and alignments of water governance are put in place. In 2017, as a first step, the Municipal Rainwater Management Policy was finalised, and its adoption by the Government is currently underway.

Legislation in Hungary pertaining to the quality of water bodies mirrors those set out in the EU Water Framework Directive, the overarching objective of which is to ensure access to good quality water in sufficient quantity for all Europeans. Data compiled in 2016 suggest that the proportion of bodies of water in Hungary with good ambient water quality is 57.6%. In the case of bathing waters, 80.5% of the water bodies assessed were of *at least* good quality.

The need to protect the environment due to its profound importance to humankind is enshrined in the Constitution of Hungary. Accordingly, an inter-ministerial working group was established for the elaboration of

the methodology of the delineation and status assessment of water-dependent ecosystems and to support tasks involved in the reporting on the relevant indicator.

Hungary has had measures in place for over a decade now concerning the need to regulate diffuse and point source pollution originating from agricultural production. For example, a 2006 Government Decree ensures the protection of waters against nitrate pollution from agriculture; and a 2008 Ministerial Decree contains the rules related to nitrate emission of agricultural production (Good Agricultural Practice).

Water stress in Hungary is 69.4% according to a pilot study conducted in 2012. With regard to water use in the agricultural sector, the Government of Hungary is currently formulating an Irrigation Development Strategy in order to put into effect water use measures.

Hungary supports proactive and constructive measures aimed at multi-stakeholder engagement, including civil society engagement. The country is a member of the Global Water Partnership (GWP). The SDG Water Preparedness Facility Program in Hungary was launched by GWP Hungary in November of 2017. International Danube Day, an initiative originally conceived by the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube (an international organisation of which Hungary is a member), is celebrated every year on 29 June. As part of the celebrations, the Government organizes several programs in an effort to draw attention to the significance of the Danube River and its tributaries, their roles in our everyday lives, and the importance of the protection and proper management of waters. Together with the support of the

Ministry of Agriculture of Hungary, the Plastic Cup is held each year in the autumn, an initiative aimed at ridding Hungary's water resources of plastic (polyethylene terephthalate). Local administrative units with established operational policies and procedures for the participation of local communities in water and sanitation management are yet to be identified.

As a testament to its commitment to water diplomacy, in 2017 the Department for Water Diplomacy and Tied Aid Credits was established within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary. Given that the country's territory lies entirely in the Danube River Basin, transboundary water cooperation is of outstanding importance. In an attempt to ensure its own water security and to manage effectively our shared water resources, Hungary has entered into bilateral agreements with all seven of its neighbouring countries; accordingly, Hungary has operational arrangements in place for water cooperation with 100% of the countries in the transboundary basin area. These agreements all have a substantive scope, including virtually all water-related activities, and their territorial scope extends to surface and groundwater forming and/or crossing state boundaries. Two of these aforementioned bilateral agreements (those with Slovakia and the Republic of Serbia) are currently being renegotiated and amended in order to address current challenges.

Hungary has entered into international agreements pertaining to (but in some cases not limited to) water management with 29 non-neighbouring countries. These agreements similarly extend to areas such as the sharing of good practices, experiences and knowledge, education and training, and the implementation of development

projects. Provisions for water allocation have been included in two of the bilateral relations, mainly with respect to significant watercourses. Increasing water demand and the extreme distribution of precipitation make water allocation agreements with the neighbouring countries increasingly important. For this reason, a harmonised methodology is currently being elaborated, one which is to be applied in all transboundary water cooperation agreements and which will ensure a common water balance and allocation.

Hungary is party to the Danube River Protection Convention, which plays a coordinating role in the implementation of the transboundary cooperative aspects of the Water Framework Directive and the Floods Directive at Danube River Basin level. Hungary will hold the Presidency of the Commission in 2019.

Hungary has assumed a leading role in the European Union Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR), coordinating its Priority Areas that pertain to water quality and flood management. One such example of a transnational project to be carried out within the EUSDR is JoinTisza, a project which involves the harmonisation and exchange of flood management and environmental protection policies of the five countries situated along the Tisza River. The project is to be carried out under the leadership of the Hungarian authorities and through the cooperation of relevant international organisations.

Hungary has likewise signed and ratified the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes. Hungary actively promotes the universalisation of the Convention. The accession of the first

African State Party and thus the commencement of the “universalisation process” (global opening) of the Convention occurred during the Hungarian Presidency of the Water Convention (2015–2018). Moreover, further negotiations with new potential States Parties were commenced during this period.

With regard to Hungary’s foreign development initiatives, in 2016, the amount of official development assistance came to 2,721,799 USD. By way of example, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary provided assistance to Peru in the form of a mobile water purification system as a response to the flood disasters that devastated parts of the country’s infrastructure in December 2016. Yet another mobile container was donated to Turkish authorities in 2016 with the ultimate aim of supplying clean drinking water to a refugee camp located near Yayladagi, Turkey. A similar mobile water purification system was provided to Cuba in 2017 as a response to massive storms afflicting the country. With the financial support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, a water development project was implemented in the capital of the Democratic Republic of Congo, in Kinshasa, at the College Othniel, and the La Providence orphanage and its immediate surroundings. The project entitled “Visibility - Water / Sanitation - Clean Water for the Future of Congolese Children” was launched and completed between 2014 and 2016.

Through its global engagement, Hungary seeks to promote international cooperation and capacity building in developing (and developed) countries. The National Water Strategy and the draft Water Diplomacy Strategy, both of which were mentioned

above, seek further to enhance Hungary’s international involvement. Hungary participated and still participates in and actively contributes to the work of the following international initiatives on a higher level: Friends of Water; the Water Governance Initiative of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development; the 2030 Water Resources Group (now part of the World Bank); the World Water Council; the High Level Panel on Water; the Global High-Level Panel on Water and Peace; and the International Hydrological Programme of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

It is worth emphasising that Hungary is one of the largest donors of the 2030 Water Resources Group. Furthermore, as it did in 2013 and 2016, in 2019 Hungary plans again to organise the Budapest Water Summit, with the ultimate aim of providing a forum for the world’s representatives active in the field of water management to discuss pertinent issues and identify solutions related to the implementation of SDG 6.

In order to promote the fulfilment of the 2030 Agenda and in recognition of the threat that migration poses to international security, Hungary plans to consider further aid initiatives seeking to encourage sustainable development in countries which are either less developed, unstable, or gravely threatened by climate change. Providing universal access to clean water and the sustainable management of water and sanitation are important elements of Hungary’s IDC projects and humanitarian assistance activities as well.

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development project was implemented in the capital of the Democratic Republic of Congo, in Kinshasa, at the College Othniel, and the La Providence orphanage and its immediate surroundings between 2014 and

2016. The project “Visibility - Water / Sanitation - Clean Water for the Future of Congolese Children” had a positive effect on the lives of 750 people, and indirectly on 15,000–20,000 inhabitants.



***Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all***

Sustainable, safe, and affordable energy plays an important role in the policy goals of the Hungarian Government, in line with the three dimensions of sustainable development. The country promotes the fulfilment of energy and climate goals with numerous instruments. Its efforts to improve energy efficiency, reduce greenhouse gas emissions (hereinafter: GHG), spread innovative technologies, and increase the use of renewable energy sources all point towards these objectives. The Government supports all measures designed to improve both domestic and EU competitiveness, promote sustainable economic growth, and create quality jobs in the energy efficiency and renewable energy sectors.

In order to enhance the security of supply, ensuring sustainability and competition in the field of energy supply, in October 2011 the National Energy Strategy 2030 was adopted. The objective of the Energy Strategy is to guarantee the safe energy supply in Hungary at all times, by also taking into account the country’s economic competitiveness and environmental sustainability needs and the load-bearing capacity of consumers. At a practical level, implementation consists of the following five tools:

- Increasing energy efficiency. A decrease in the amount of energy used will consequently enhance Hungarian energy security.
- Boosting the share of renewable energy sources in the national energy mix. Hungary has a relatively good renewable energy potential in terms of solar energy, biomass, biogas, and geothermal energy. The mandatory share of renewable energy sources in the gross final energy consumption is 13% by 2020 according to the EU Renewable Energy Directive (RED), but it has been voluntarily raised to 14.65% by the Hungarian Government in its National Action Plan. According to the EUROSTAT database, in 2016 the renewable energy share of 14.2% of the gross final energy consumption was higher than the originally scheduled goal (9.30%) of the same year.
- Maintaining the current levels of nuclear energy capacity. As nuclear power plants are almost emission-free producers of electricity, they are economical and efficient tools of meeting the environmental and climate protection targets, while



also increasing energy security.

- Enhancing regional cooperation. Cooperation and infrastructure development help ensure price stability, diversify energy sources and supply routes, and increase the regulatory network capacities.
- A system of institutions ensuring the predictability of the investor environment needs to be established in Hungary, therefore it is essential to renew the Government's energy institution system.

In the interest of achieving the national energy policy goals, the Strategy stipulates the necessary efforts and defines the establishment of different Operational Programs and Action Plans.

For the period between 2014 and 2020, the Hungarian Government has allocated over 2.5 billion EUR to Operational Programs supporting energy. These Programs are intended to support areas and sectors of the economy that predominantly focus on developing renewable energy sources, increasing energy efficiency, and reducing GHGs emissions. The Operational Programs, with their aims and output indicators, have been preapproved by the European Commission.

In the energy sector, two action plans were recently elaborated to promote sustainable energy consumption, one of them deals with the issue of reserve management. The main aim is for the mineral reserves in Hungary to be utilised in a sustainable manner. To achieve this, an Action Plan was adopted in 2017 that promotes R&D and pilot projects in the sector. The Action Plan supports the development of the exploration and registration of the reserves.

The other plan, entitled Energy industry development and R&D&I Action Plan, was adopted in 2018. The target of this Action Plan is to show directions and give policy support for the national industry and stakeholders for their R&D and investment activity. The role of the Action Plan is to introduce the medium to long-term energy security priorities of the Government to the private sector.

Hungary is also committed to making efforts and taking further steps towards advanced and cleaner fossil-fuel technology and to promoting investment in energy infrastructure. Low CO<sub>2</sub> alternatives to oil are indispensable to the gradual decarbonisation of the transport sector. To promote alternative fuels and develop the relevant infrastructure, a "National policy framework on the deployment of alternative fuels infrastructure in Hungary" was adopted in 2016. This National Framework identifies national targets on the deployment of alternative fuel infrastructure by 2020, 2025, and 2030 and summarizes the legal and financial incentives allocated for the deployment and R&D concerning these type of fuels.

On 1 January 2017, the new Hungarian support system for electricity production from renewable energy sources (so-called METÁR) was introduced. The aim of METÁR is to integrate the producers into the market. The producers are now required to sell electricity on the free market, and a subsidy for operation is paid as premium on top of the market reference price (power plants with less than 0.5 MW capacity and demonstration projects are eligible to sell their output at a regulated price that is above market reference). The maximum budget for subsidies to renewable energy sources is 145 million EUR per year between 2017

and 2026. The program is deemed successful; approximately 270 individual requests (cumulatively exceeding 200 MW) have been received since the start of the new METÁR system. Although in Hungary district heating is dominated by gas combustion power plants, local governments are increasingly under pressure to shift to renewable energy. Sustainable and smart solutions are important both in large cities and in smaller municipalities.

To ensure modern energy services, Hungary attaches great potential to small-scale domestic plants that can benefit from net metering up to 50 kW. This is a regulatory framework under which the excess electricity that feeds into the grid can be used at a later time to offset consumption during times when their onsite renewable generation is absent or not sufficient. The self-produced electricity that feeds into the grid is charged at the same price as consumed electricity. In recent years, there has been a sharp upturn in the sector of small-scale domestic plants. Since 2010, the capacity of small-scale power plants has increased almost seventy-fold (2010: 85 kW; 2016: 164 080 kW). Although this trend poses challenges for transmission system control, it goes in a good direction. The country therefore intends to support the tendency in the future, especially when the end result leads to self-sustaining households.

Hungary emphasises the importance of energy efficiency with a complex strategy that presents, on the one hand, the current energy efficiency situation in Hungary and, on the other, the main directions of development. The framework of the energy efficiency measures has been set out in the National Energy Efficiency Action Plan.

This Action Plan ensures the transposition of the EU Energy Efficiency Directive 2012, and this is therefore also the main strategy of the contribution to several UN Sustainable Development Goals.

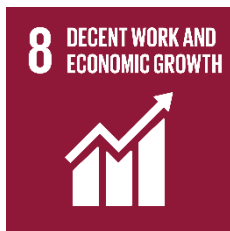
In the context of sustainable development, one of the main objectives of the Hungarian Government is to reduce national energy consumption. In the autumn of 2014, the Warmth of Homes Program, financed from the Hungarian national budget of 102 million EUR, was launched. The purpose of the Program is to provide households with non-refundable financial support throughout the country to increase the energy efficiency of homes. Within the framework of the Warmth of Homes Program, 10 subprograms have been announced to improve the energy efficiency of residential buildings and the installation of renewable energy systems. Nowadays, the Warmth of Homes Program has contributed to the modernization of more than 200,000 households, totalling approximately 98 million EUR worth of investment, meaning that the program has reached 5% of Hungarian households over the course of the last 3 years. These grants have resulted in CO<sub>2</sub> emission reductions of 99,000 tonnes/year and energy savings of 260 million kWh/year. The Government is keen on continuing the Program and consults with the public and professionals alike to see how it can be improved.

From their corporate income tax, taxpayers are enabled to apply for tax benefits for the commissioning and operation of investments serving energy efficiency targets, up to 30% (40% for medium-sized and 50% for small businesses) of the eligible costs of such investments, with a maximum HUF equivalent of 15 million EUR. In addition to the corporate income

tax, this tax benefit can be applied to the special tax payable by energy suppliers. This measure can considerably contribute to the access of domestic enterprises to modern energy. Tax base allowances can be demanded for the two abovementioned tax types in relation to investments connected with electric vehicle charging stations, which is designed to promote the domestic spread of electro-mobility, thereby contributing to the modernization of energy use.

Transport is one of the main causes of atmospheric emissions that are closely related to climate change. For the purpose of reducing emissions, the so-called “Jedlik Ányos Plan”, which has been in force since 2015, aims to support developments and innovative activities to spread electro-mobility and promote the spread of electric cars. It is essential to set up a proper charging infrastructure, for the purpose of which various state-funded charging station installation programs have been launched (in the area of municipalities, cities of county rank, the capital, important tourist destinations, as well as along the motorways). As a result, several hundred charging units will be installed throughout Hungary in the near future. Although the operating costs of the electric vehicles are favorable, their selling price at the moment is much higher than the purchase price of the vehicles with internal combustion engines. Within the framework of the electric car purchase program run by the

Government since 2016, the state provides approximately 6.3 million EUR to support the purchase of purely electric-powered passenger cars and light commercial vehicles. According to the grant application scheme, beneficiaries can apply for a non-repayable grant of at most around 5,000 EUR per car. So far, the program has supported the purchase of 600 purely electric-powered cars. Furthermore, the owners of the environmental-friendly cars can enjoy several tax and duty benefits. Electro-mobility is still narrowly accepted and known in Hungary at the moment, which can hinder sales. For this reason, the relevant ministry supports several so-called socialization initiatives to promote acceptance. As a result of the implementation of these projects, the domestic population’s knowledge of and familiarity with electro-mobility is significantly increasing, which increases the demand for electric vehicles. Consequently, the highest electric car sales in the region have been achieved in Hungary, according to the feedback of importers. In order to stop pollution generated by transport, there are continuous governmental consultations to explore the professional, social, and other effects of the currently effective measures taken to promote the spread of electro-mobility, as well as to search for other opportunities to further the achievement of the abovementioned objectives.



*Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all*

Economic growth is only valuable if it is sustainable. Since 2013, the Hungarian economy has improved considerably, as demonstrated by a number of indicators. The Government has adopted several measures in order to increase the competitiveness and productivity of the national economy and promote sustainable, inclusive economic growth. A proactive reinforcement of the favourable trends in the labour market has been a key priority of the Government's economic policy, which has adopted several important programs in this area.

In 2013, the growth of the national gross domestic product (GDP) became balanced. The data concerning GDP growth shows that this trend is stable, as expansion is based on multiple pillars and is underpinned by almost every sector. Hungary is on the right track, as the structure of GDP has become sustainable and growth is not driven by indebtedness. This positive trend is also underlined by recent statistical data: the Hungarian GDP grew by 4.0% in 2017; however, the underlying growth (when GDP growth is adjusted to the working days' effect and seasonality) was even higher: 4.2%. Meanwhile, the budget deficit has dropped under 3%. It was around 2.2% on average over the course of the past 5 years. The debt-to-GDP ratio decreased to 72.1% in 2017. It was as high as 79.7% in 2010.

Recent years have also seen fairly favourable trends in the labour market.

Employment has been on a consistent rise since 2010, in addition, in 2016 the employment rate was 68.7%, and by Q4 of 2017 it increased to 73.8%, accompanied by shrinking unemployment since 2013, which reached a record low level in 2017: 3.8%. The employment potential of the business sphere has improved, and wages and salaries have increased considerably. As a result of the improving employment conditions, the rate of system dependence has moderated. These processes have been driven by governmental measures and programs, such as the conclusion of the 6-year wage and tax agreement of 2016, the adoption of the Workplace Protection Action Plan, and the reduction of taxes and contributions on wages.

The aforementioned Workplace Protection Action Plan (2013–2020) went into effect on 1 January 2013 with the goal of reducing the costs of wages for employers in relation to the groups of employees who are in the most sensitive situations: untrained employees, employees under the age of 25 or over the age of 55, permanent job-seekers, and parents with young children. Since 2012, parents with young children have had the opportunity to be employed part-time at their workplaces until their children reach the age of three, and from 2015 mothers of at least three children can rely on this opportunity until their youngest child turns five. Moreover, since 2016, the rehabilitation of people with reduced work capacities has also been facilitated through a rehabilitation allowance without any time

limitation. As a result of the measures taken in recent years, the employment rate of people under 25 has increased considerably. Therefore, in 2016, the employment rate of people between the ages of 15 and 24 was 28.1%, which is the most favourable data since 2003. In addition, since 1 January 2018, the first language certificate of young people under 35 and the driving course and test for people under 20 have become state funded.

Furthermore, due to the reform of tax administration, the administration and tax burdens of enterprises have decreased. The productivity and added values of Hungarian small and medium-sized businesses have improved. With the effective date of 1 January 2017, the corporate income tax rate has been lowered to a uniform rate of 9% from the earlier 10% and 19%. With the aim of targeting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), the small business tax rate was brought down from the earlier rate of 16% to 14% on 1 January 2017, and then to 13% with the effective date of 1 January 2018. These positive changes were recognised by the international credit rating agencies in 2017. The favourable trends can be attributed to the diverse economic policy measures taken by the Hungarian Government, the adoption of a coherent set of strategies (e.g. Strategy for Small and Medium-Sized Businesses 2014–2020), which targeted the establishment of prudent budget management, the reduction of the level of public debt, and the moderation of the burdens on households and businesses.

As a consultative body of the Government, the National Competitiveness Council, which was established in March 2017, is responsible for the formulation of opinions and proposals with regard to the initiatives relating to the competitiveness of the

Hungarian economy. Consisting of recognised members of the business sector, economic entities, and scientific life, this body discusses issues which have the potential to influence competitiveness through the improvement of the business environment.

The Hungarian Government also supports the development of enterprises by furnishing considerable amounts of EU and domestic funds, including technological developments for the improvement of productivity, the encouragement of cooperation among suppliers, the spread of industry 4.0 technologies among SMEs, mentoring, and industry development. Within the structure of the economy, particular attention is paid to the priority sectors of the national economy, such as food processing, energy, biotechnology, the health industry, environmental protection, and sustainable development.

With the endorsement of the “Irinnyi” Plan (2016–2020), the government sector intends to define key directions of economic development. It aims to drive well-balanced industry development and increase the GDP-proportionate share of industry from the current 24% to 30%. During the elaboration of the strategies and action plans, the representatives of the economic sectors were involved in order to give a comprehensive view of the individual value chains of production and the inherent problems and to identify breakthrough points. As a result of the programs in operation, there are preferential bank loans available which take the goals of the “Irinnyi” Plan into account. The Ministry of National Economy established the “Irinnyi” Target Fund in order to promote the utilization of novel knowledge or technologies, product development

representing considerable innovation and added intellectual value, and the development of prototypes of new or fundamentally reworked products, services, and procedures.

The so-called “Path to the Labour Market” program (2015–2021) is designed to improve the employability of job-seekers under the age of 25 years and inactive people, the provision of support for their employment in the open labour market, and the facilitation of the shift from public work schemes to the primary labour market. The program is being implemented from a total amount of about 727 million EUR, and it is foreseen to contribute to the labour market integration of approximately 188,000 people. The start-up of the enterprises of job-seekers over the age of 30 is supported by providing training for these job-seekers and giving them financial support of approximately 31 million EUR, thereby assisting the establishment of at least 1,600 new businesses.

For Hungary, providing support for young people has a significant role. For example, the three programs of the Youth Guarantee System provide support for “Not in Education, Employment, or Training” (NEET) people under the age of 25. The core of the system is the Youth Guarantee active labour market policy. In this program (2015–2021), from a total amount of about 600 million EUR, young people contacting the employment service are offered subsidized employment opportunities, wage subsidies, mobility and housing aids, support for business start-ups, and the acquisition of marketable vocational qualifications. Beyond the direct creation of jobs, the goal of the trainee program is the provision of early workplace experience for young people with vocational qualifications

and the improvement of their employability and long-term chances in the labour market. The employment of young people is encouraged by means of wage and tax subsidies and mentoring within the respective companies, where approximately 94 million EUR will contribute to the acquisition of work experience by at least 9,000 trainees. Within the framework of the program, more than 78.4 million EUR is available for the creation of 4,500 new enterprises through the preparation of young people and the provision of financial support for the start-up costs of these businesses.

Further to the above, tourism, as a flagship sector of the national economy, is considered a strategic area in Hungary, which contributes 10% of the GDP and employs almost 350,000 people. According to the Government’s goal, by 2030, tourism will comprise 16% of the GDP. In order to achieve the latter objective, over 2.5 billion EUR will be provided until 2030 to fund development projects.

On account of this, Hungary has adopted the National Tourism Development Strategy (2017–2030) to exploit fully the potentials of national tourism, enhance the quality of services, and thus increase the number of guest nights and tourist spending. In addition, the new approach of tourist attraction and basic infrastructure development is to supplement the destination-based approach, and it will guarantee the economic, social, and ecological sustainability of the attractions which are developed. This strategy follows key global trends and challenges which are shaping the future of tourism, and it emphasizes the importance of creating a national brand of tourism and protecting our environment and national values and

encouraging consumer responsibility. The main pillar of the National Tourism Development Strategy, the “Kisfaludy Tourism Development Program” for 2030 was launched in 2017. It outlines the development paths for tourism destinations, products, and attractions and aims to achieve a uniform regional concept and profitability, along with social-economic-ecological sustainability.

Moreover, Hungary is fully committed to the future of sustainable tourism. For this reason, the Hungarian tourism administration intends to organize the World Tourism Day (WTD) in September 2018. The WTD will highlight new aspects and innovative ideas regarding digitalization in tourism: the sharing economy, start-ups in tourism,

sustainability, new technologies, and traditional resources.

Hungary advocates the building of sustainable and resilient societies by fostering economic growth and employability in the field of international development cooperation as well. Hungary has contributed multilaterally to the EUTF Africa (European Union Emergency Trust Fund for stability and addressing root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa) in order to strengthen resilience and the fight against human trafficking. Within the framework of V4 cooperation, there is a common V4 project in Kenya led by Slovakia, which aims to create better economic and employment opportunities and promote sustainable farming and consumption.



***Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation***

Recognising that resilient infrastructure and inclusive industrialization are cornerstones in the creation of a sustainable world, Hungary has made support for research, development, and innovation (RDI) a priority. The Government believes that RDI as well as science and technology are the engines of economic growth and key factors in strengthening competitiveness, therefore puts particular emphasis on promoting high-technology investments with a wide range of incentives aimed at securing continuous and sustainable economic development and transforming the country into the most attractive research and development centre of Central Europe. During the 2014–2020 planning period, the

budget, which was allocated for RDI (approximately 2 billion EUR plus national co-financing), was more than double the amount invested in the 2007–2013 period. The main target of the Government is to increase RDI expenditure to 1.8% of the GDP by 2020 and 3% by 2030. This policy is translated into action in the country’s international relations as well. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade has been focusing on science diplomacy since 2014, promoting Hungary’s accomplishments in science, technology, and RDI abroad and building international partnerships in this field.

Hungary is committed to making the domestic RDI system internationally

competitive; there are several RDI-intensive industries with comparative advantages. For example, we are particularly strong in pharmaceutical manufacturing, the health industry, IT, biotechnology, green technologies, and automobile manufacturing. Budapest, the Hungarian capital, and its surroundings are already considered a major knowledge-producing region on a European scale. Its RDI performance is significant even at the level of the European Research Area. Based on the 2016 analysis of the most successful European technology clusters, Budapest is the seventh most significant technology centre, surpassing the entire Central and Eastern European region. On Bloomberg's latest innovation list for 2018, Hungary placed 27<sup>th</sup> this year, retaining its ranking from last year. The country was particularly well-placed in the categories of labour market utilization of education and productivity.

The Hungarian RDI policy is defined by the National Research and Development and Innovation Strategy for 2014–2020, which is currently under review and the renewed version of which, it is anticipated, will be approved by the Government in 2018. The key concept and central organizational element of this period is the new Industrial Revolution, known as Industry 4.0. The aforementioned "Irianyi" Plan (2016–2020) addresses the challenges of the Industry 4.0 era, focusing on digitalization, which creates the technological basis for new industrialization. Furthermore, within the framework of the Plan, developments will be launched in connection with rail-mounted vehicle manufacturing, and as a result, the vehicle assemblies of the underground railway and the cogwheel railway will be renewed. In addition, it aims

to develop vehicle assemblies of the suburban railway and even large railway vehicle assemblies. Similarly to the already accepted strategies, action plans and strategies fostering the development of individual sectors are continuously being worked out. They include plans for the development of subsectors, such as the green economy, the chemical industry, information and communication technology (ICT), electronics manufacturing, and the health industry.

Another priority goal for the country is the improvement of the competitiveness of the domestic small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) sector, and to this end several different economic development programs are in operation. To foster domestic innovation, since 2017, tax base allowances can be demanded from the corporate income tax for participations in early-phase (start-up) businesses. This measure largely facilitates the capitalization of start-up enterprises, which strengthens domestic innovation.

Further to the above, in 2015, a comprehensive strategy on digitalization called the Digital Welfare Program was launched. This program is a coordinated government effort concerning the entire digital ecosystem. The Government's objective is to make the advantages of digital technology beneficial for all of society and to help everyone move forward and become more prepared to face the challenges and reap the rewards of the digital age. The first strategy-forming phase of the program was completed early in 2017. The digital export development, education, start-up, and child protection strategies have created a unique platform in Central Europe to implement a comprehensive vision of digitalization.



Currently, the program focuses on the rapid deployment of 5G coverage for the most advanced applications. In connection with this, the Superfast Internet Program has been launched, aiming to provide all Hungarian households with the possibility to subscribe to an Internet service with a minimum of 30 Mbit/s by the end of 2018, as a result of large-scale network developments. In order to achieve this goal, the digital infrastructure for broadband access should be built in settlements. Beginning in 2019, network development investments will affect nearly 885,000 households. The sum of development resources comes to approximately 502–549 million EUR. Nearly 230,000 households, which previously were not connected, were able to have Internet service of at least 30 Mbps by the end of 2016. In order to create Internet connections for anyone, Hungary was the first country in the European Union to decide to reduce the value added tax (VAT) on Internet services. Instead of the standard 27%, this tax has been reduced to 5% since 1 January 2018, which has enabled many to enter the digital world.

As highlighted above, the Hungarian Government, within the framework of the Digital Welfare Program, intends to become the European centre for 5G developments. According to the Global Innovation Index of 127 countries, Hungary ranked 39<sup>th</sup> in 2017, largely due to the broadband Internet currently in operation. In June 2017, the so-called 5G Coalition was set up with the participation of 46 representatives from the public and private sector, professional organizations, associations, and universities. This strategic and professional platform has set the goal of developing the fifth-generation mobile technology and its rapid introduction in Hungary among the

first countries in Europe. The latest generation of mobile networks providing fast and efficient interconnection among digital devices will provide far greater coverage than before, and it will further promote the spread of artificial intelligence-based developments. The first Hungarian test site of 5G technology will be set up at the ZalaZone test track for autonomous vehicles in Zalaegerszeg (South-Western town in Hungary). This entirely Hungarian public investment, for which traditionally strong and dynamically developed Hungarian vehicle engineer training provides a good basis, will be completed by 2020.

Hungary pays close attention to the technological development of intelligent solutions applied on an urban scale. In recent years, several national companies proved successful on the market of smart city services. The smart city concept and digitalization in general are rich topics for innovators. The smart city concept first appeared in the abovementioned Digital Welfare Program, which designated a coordinating body (Lechner Knowledge Center) to create, operate, and monitor the interconnected and overarching system of smart services as part of a comprehensive info-communication strategy. This coordinating body supports Hungarian local governments in their efforts to develop their specific smart strategies and also plays a facilitating role between cities, stakeholders in the business community, and civil society. In 2018, the Smartpolis Smart City Excellence Center, operating under the Budapest Technical University, and the Council of Budapest City signed a Memorandum of Understanding on the founding of the Central Eastern European Smart City Forum. This initiative is

expected to boost the regional cooperation among enterprises and municipalities in smart urban solutions.

To allow and support Hungarian researchers to access international research infrastructures, Hungary has joined and become a member of a number of large infrastructures operated in Europe. Annually, a budget line of approximately 11 million EUR ensures the country's participation in these cutting edge research facilities. In accordance with the Hungarian Government's policy which envisages the development of world-class RDI infrastructure Hungary has established the Extreme Light Infrastructure (ELI-ALPS)

project in Szeged (a city in southern Hungary), which is an integral part of the European plan to build the next generation of globally outstanding research infrastructures. ELI-ALPS, launched in 2017, has a considerable impact on numerous fields of material sciences, medicine, and environmental protection. It is the first civilian large-scale, high-power laser research facility to be realised with trans-European cooperation and the worldwide scientific community. The primary mission of this unique research facility is to make a wide range of ultrashort light laser sources accessible to users in the international scientific community.



***Reduce inequality within and among countries***

According to the Fundamental Law, Hungary guarantees the fundamental rights of everyone without discrimination on any grounds (such as race, colour, sex, disability, language, religion, political or any other opinion, ethnic or social origin, wealth, birth or any other circumstance whatsoever). As the primary source of law in the Hungarian legal system, the provisions of the Fundamental Law are to be applied and respected in all areas of life and fields of law.

The principle of equal treatment is also enshrined in the Act of 2003 on Equal Treatment and Promotion of Equal Opportunities (hereinafter: Equal Treatment Act), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of the foregoing protected characteristics: gender, ethnic origin, race, skin colour, age, mother

tongue, disability, state of health, motherhood (pregnancy) or fatherhood, family status, sexual orientation, gender identity, social origin, financial status, religious or ideological conviction, political or other opinion, part-time status or fixed-term of employment relationship, membership in an organization representing interests, and any other status. The Equal Treatment Act ensures complete independence for the Equal Treatment Authority, the organ responsible for overseeing compliance with the obligation of equal treatment.

Fostering the social, economic, and political inclusion of all is of utmost importance in forming domestic policies in Hungary, including in the fields of education, employment, housing, or health care. In the field of education, for example, it is a

primary goal to ensure equitable quality education. In this context, one of the headline targets is to mitigate segregation and promote inclusiveness and integration in nursery schools and schools. In order to achieve these goals, Hungary has established the objectives of the educational sector in the Public Education Development Strategy (hereinafter: Strategy) for the period of 2014–2020. These objectives include the priority measures of reducing the rate of young people who quit pursuing education or training before having completed a course of study and providing support for inclusive education. As concerns the health care section, it is important to set out that everyone has equal access to the health care system in Hungary. In order to cover the health care costs of the population, the State contributes a yearly allowance to the health insurance fund, paying a per capita amount for those who are covered by the health insurance scheme without the obligation of paying contributions. Those who are not insured or entitled to health care by law can obtain the right (and access) to the health insurance services by paying a flat-rate contribution established by law.

Furthermore, in Hungary, the extent of poverty and social exclusion and the ratio of people living under circumstances of severe material deprivation have been consistently decreasing in recent years. The reasons underlying this shift include improvements in living conditions (e.g. increases in real wages and salaries in the business sector) and the targeted measures of the Government. The domestic family support system encompasses programs targeting the improvement of the material and housing circumstances of families, the labour market integration of parents with young

children (Childcare Fee Extra program), and efforts to encourage people to have children (Family Home-Creation Allowance). In recent years, numerous measures aiming specifically at the alleviation of financial burdens on families with children (e.g. a larger family tax benefit, the provision of free meals and schoolbooks for children) have been implemented, and in general they have succeeded in decreasing the number of Hungarian children living in poverty. For instance, the Government aspires to increase the demand for disadvantaged people in the labour market by cutting the costs of labour. Within the framework of the Workplace Protection Action Plan, for instance, the employers of people in disadvantaged employment situations can rely on allowances from the social contribution tax and vocational training contributions. The labour market integration of members of the Roma communities in Hungary has been promoted by the Start Work programs launched as a consequence of cooperation between the Hungarian Government and the National Roma Council.

Considering the prevailing tendencies in recent years, it is worth noting that 2013 is considered the starting point of mass migration, which has paralyzed the EU (there were 18,900 asylum seekers in 2013, which constitutes a dramatic increase from the figures from the previous years). The situation with regard to mass migration became very critical in 2015. The Hungarian Government considers the issue of migration primarily a question of national security as stated in the document “Security First”, being the guidelines for Hungary’s migration policy.



***Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable***

National and regional territorial spatial plans put special emphasis on maintaining the land, natural, ecological, and cultural characteristics and heritage of Hungary. Working hand-in-hand with cross-border regional policies involving national and territorial development, they strengthen local economies through strategic actions that include reducing segregation and helping peripheral rural regions facing permanent disadvantages. “Conventional” sustainability aspects like the climate change-related challenges of settlements, waste prevention and management, and the development of the green infrastructure network are also addressed through longer-term planning and continuous efforts.

For the purpose of maintaining reasonable and economical use of territory and promoting economic, social, and environmental sustainability, national and regional territorial spatial plans and the plan for the priority regions have been integrated. As a result, the system is based on harmonised basic maps in the real estate register, and the values that need protection can be defined more accurately within the territorial and settlement management plans. Thus, in addition to the previous levels of protection in general, the protection of forests, croplands with exceptional productivity, landscape and traditional uses of land, inland and ground waters is ensured.

The Government is committed to integrating the requirement of responsible land use into both the new and existing

strategies by incorporating the actions specified in the National Landscape Strategy (2017–2026) into sectoral policies, with changes in landscapes also being monitored at a ministerial level. In order to improve participation and representation, a methodological manual has been compiled on social dialogue and cooperation, assisting local governments in updating their settlement development and land-use plans. National regulations have also been amended in order to make the coordination and adoption of settlement development documents and settlement land-use plans more open.

The preservation of local heritage is a specific area in which strengthening the bond between the local population and its values is particularly important in Hungary. In addition to the Act of 2016 on townscapes, the development of the regulatory and other tools helping protection at the local level (e.g. decrees on townscape protection and townscape image handbooks) also serves this purpose.

In Hungary, the promotion of housing integration and healthy living circumstances within the complex rural settlement programs was launched in 2011, with associated housing investments as of 2014. For a standardised approach to tasks connected with the elimination of housing gaps, a strategy for the management of housing in closed settlement blocks has been elaborated in association with the settlement programs. In order to ensure access to adequate, safe and affordable

housing and basic services for all and to help better identify segregated areas and areas at risk of segregation, a national segregation map has been set up. A special internet application helps local governments have cost-free and direct access to their segregation data, which reduces their administrative and financial burdens.

In addition, the country has taken steps in recent years to simplify the legal framework for granting building permits in order to make home-building easier for families. The Hungarian Government supports the idea that financial assistance for affordable, adequate, and safe housing should be addressed together with family allowances and investments in the construction industry, which strengthens the economy and reinforces the middle class, which forms the core of society.

At a more overarching level, the National Development and Territorial Development Concept (2014–2030) has a priority focus on the development of peripheral rural regions facing multiple disadvantages. One of the main goals is to strengthen local economies by focusing on the following aspects: supporting investments and enterprise development, reinforcing small and medium-sized enterprises (including family farms), broadening market opportunities, ensuring safe food supply, restoring the autonomous, self-sustaining, and self-caring capacities of local communities.

Hungary's primary program to make cities sustainable, the Modern Cities Program (2016–2022), is carried out with the help of various EU and domestic funds. In order to improve the appeal of towns, the program focuses on infrastructure development and

provides support for the shaping of the environments of towns that have the potential to intensify economic life and attract businesses, while remaining sustainable in economic, environmental, and social terms. The Modern Cities Program furthers the competitiveness of large urban regions on the Central European and European scales, and in this context, the Hungarian Government has entered into agreements with 23 cities of county rank with respect to their key infrastructure and settlement development projects.

Within the extended framework of regional policy, which by nature and for enhanced effectiveness requires active cross-border links, Hungary has taken steps to strengthen the cooperation with the other Visegrád Countries (the Czech Republic, Poland, and Slovakia) in the fields of territorial management and urban policy. A good example of regional cooperation is the coordination of the national digital planning of regions. These efforts also contribute to the implementation of the Territorial Agenda of the European Union 2020.

In order to achieve greener cities that generate less waste, and which thus make a difference in climate action, the Green City Operative Program (2016–2020) provides a system of policy and technical requirements for the promotion of the sustainable renewal of a green infrastructural network of municipalities. A dedicated action plan, supported by a manual, enables settlements to establish registers (on trees, shrubs, etc.), to keep records within their green infrastructure network, as well as to monitor continuously its status.

In addition to wide-ranging actions addressing the climate change-related challenges of settlements, Hungary also

aims to contribute to making European regulations, financing, and knowledge-sharing more effective and efficient through the Climate Adaptation Partnership Programme of the Urban Agenda of the European Union. Even more, the National Waste Management Plan 2014–2020 provides the necessary background knowledge for efficient waste management, long-term planning and goals, and the necessary implementation steps. The Management Plan includes a waste policy outlook and a legal background for waste management, and it describes the current state of waste management by waste streams, identifies deficiencies, and defines the objectives to be achieved and the necessary means and measures for enforcement. It also includes a dedicated program on prevention, with well-defined objectives and measures to be taken to contribute to the parallel goals of steady economic growth and of eliminating the environmental impacts caused by waste generation. Backed up by a targeted regulatory development and awareness-raising action (e.g. “Pick it Up!”, a voluntary waste collection campaign for a Clean Hungary since 2011), the result is a continuous increase in recycled municipal waste, with a simultaneous decrease in disposed waste.

Disaster preparedness is indispensable in order to decrease significantly the number of casualties of disasters and mitigate the resulting direct economic losses. Every Hungarian settlement has to be evaluated and classified within a national disaster risk classification system and is required to create an emergency measurement plan that corresponds to its classification level. In addition to the development of a central emergency measurement plan, the National

Directorate General for Disaster Management also organises civil protection field exercises annually to prepare the civil population. In addition to the exercises, the Directorate also informs citizens about the potential disaster risks through numerous platforms, with the cooperation agreement with national media service providers being a key enabling tool.

Furthermore, the important measures of the Intersectoral Action Program for the Reduction of Particulate Matter (PM10) with a 2011–2030 timeframe, as was mentioned earlier under Goal 3, also help adopt inclusive and sustainable cities in Hungary. Since 2016, based on the modifications of tax regulations, vehicles powered by electricity or vehicles meeting the most advanced environmental demands have been vehicle-tax free, and, furthermore, no company-car tax needs to be paid in accordance with the earlier mentioned “Jedlik Ányos Plan”. To improve the efficiency of procurements and the Bus Replacement Program, organizational changes have taken place at the bus companies: the National Bus Procurement Committee was formed in June 2016. Since the establishment of the new procurement system in the suburban and regional Transport Centers, 150 new (EURO VI) and 160 modern used (EURO IV, V) buses have been supplied, replacing 300 buses with EURO 0, I engines.

To draw attention to the importance of air quality, over the course of the last fifteen years, Hungary has successfully organized Car-free Day programs and the European Mobility Week, which aim to improve public health and quality of life by promoting clean mobility and sustainable urban transport. The European Mobility Week campaign gives people a chance to

explore the role of city streets and experiment with practical solutions to tackle urban challenges, such as air pollution. In addition, since 2007, approximately 1,750 km of cycling roads have been constructed from national funds, within the framework of EU projects and some other cross-border projects. In support of sustainable transport development, the number of settlements which maintain a public transport bike-system has been expanded, and now, in addition to Budapest (MOL-BUBI), another 7 cities and also the Ormánság area have these kinds of bike-sharing systems.

Since 2014, the Government within the Warmth of Home Program, mentioned earlier under SDG 7, has announced several applications annually for the energy efficient modernization of family houses, apartment houses, and the exchange of outdated household appliances for energy efficient models. Another program focused on raising awareness in Hungary is the so-called “Heat Wisely!” campaign, which is related to the achievement of sustainable urban environments with improvements to air quality and suggesting best practices for the usage of fuels, since improper residential heating is responsible for the level of air pollution, which nowadays is one of the most significant health risk factors.

Hungary is highly committed to safeguarding the world’s cultural heritage in its international development cooperation activities as well. The Government has

provided significant financial assistance for the reconstruction of Christian temples and shrines in the Middle East, and 200,000 EUR has been contributed to the reconstruction of the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem and 100,000 EUR to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem.

Protecting people in vulnerable situations is also in the focus of the Hungarian Government, a pledge of 100,000 EUR was offered to alleviate the damage caused by floods in Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2014, when floods resulting from heavy rainfall affected 81 settlements and nearly 1.5 million people. The amount of the pledge was divided equally between Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and it supported flood protection, reconstruction, housing, and agricultural projects.

Helping affected communities tackle the sudden and often unforeseeable consequences of climate change, such as the devastation of hurricanes, torrential rains, floods, landslides, forest fires, earthquakes, volcano eruptions etc., constitutes a large part of the country’s humanitarian assistance program. Following the natural disaster in December 2016 in Peru, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary offered water purification equipment, which supplies drinking water for five thousand people in Huarmaca. Financial support has also been provided for recovery and reconstruction projects in Ecuador, Georgia, Albania, Sierra Leone, and Sri Lanka.



## *Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns*

Sustainable consumption and production (SCP) is key to achieving sustainable development, so Hungary attaches high importance to it. Hungary played an active role in the elaboration of the 10 Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns (10YFP) and took part in voluntary sustainable consumption and production pilot reporting in 2015 and 2017. The delegate of the Ministry of Agriculture has been representing the Eastern European Region on the Management Board of the 10YFP since 2017 and also as a member of the Strategy Task Force.

The National Framework Strategy on Sustainable Development of Hungary, mentioned earlier in this report (NFSSD), serves as the main framework for the realization of sustainable consumption and production policies. There are several sectoral strategies and policy documents supporting the shift towards SCP, such as the revised National Climate Change Strategy (2017–2025, with an outlook to 2050); the Renewable Energy Utilization Action Plan (2010–2020); the National Environmental Technology Innovation Strategy (NETIS, 2011–2020); the National Forestry Strategy (2016–2030); the National Strategy for the Conservation of Biodiversity (2015–2020); the National Strategy on the Preservation of Food Genetic Resources (2013–2020); and the National Waste Management Plan (2014–2020).

By adopting NETIS, the Hungarian Government has demonstrated its commitment to mainstreaming the concept of a green economy. NETIS explores the fundamental linkages between innovation and the green economy, highlighting the importance of stimulating green and sustainable public procurement, eco-innovation, eco-design, energy-efficiency, and resource efficiency.

Economic instruments help the shift towards SCP. The Green Investment System and the Green Finance System provide financial support for households to improve their energy efficiency and reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. As a result of these kinds of investments, the environmental load and national CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of households have been reduced significantly.

Agriculture and food production play important roles in SCP and in the implementation of several other SDGs (SDG 1, 2, 3, 8, 13, and 15). Our country is determined to preserve its GMO-free agriculture and food production. The Hungarian Parliament unanimously adopted the Strategy for GMO-free Hungary which came into effect in 2016 and the Fundamental Law of Hungary also includes the promotion of GMO-free agriculture. In the Food Chain Safety Strategy (2013–2022), GMO control is highlighted as a priority, and the destruction of contaminated lots is required.

The protection of genetic diversity has a special importance for the future of



Hungarian agriculture. The National Strategy on the Preservation of Food Genetic Resources (2014–2020) fosters the preservation of genetic resources of food species and varieties. Two main state institutions coordinate gene preservation: the Centre for Plant Diversity and the Centre for Livestock Gene Preservation. Furthermore, universities, research institutions, national parks, civil organizations, and private companies all over the country take part in food genetic resource preservation activities.

There are several programs and initiatives in Hungary that contribute to sustainable consumption and production. The aim of the Short Food Supply Chain Program (which is a thematic sub-program of the National Rural Development Program (2014–2020)) is to increase the income and competitiveness of primary agricultural producers through their better integration into the agricultural/food supply chain. The small farmers and small-scale producers participating in the program use far fewer chemicals and artificial fertilizers and more manpower than large “industrialized” farms. Local products and less packaging result in lower environmental loads. With the initiative of the Year of the Local Products, introduced in 2015, the aim was to encourage the consumption of local products and to train local producers to implement short supply chains, as well as to raise awareness by publishing brochures and through an online campaign. The Homestead Development Program, as of 2016, intends to save the values of this specific kind of farm management and improve living standards and farming conditions.

Since 2008, farmers have met cross compliance requirements in the agricultural

area if they apply for direct payment. Cross compliance rules, such as crop rotation, protection against erosion, providing minimal soil cover, and irrigation, contribute to sustainable agricultural production and the efficient use of natural resources. The Hungarian Minister of Agriculture proposed an EU level debate on food loss and waste at the EU Council of Agriculture Ministers in 2013. The Ministry and the Hungarian Food Bank Association have jointly launched the Forum against Food Loss and Waste, in which the participants commit themselves to making significant reductions in food waste and food losses.

Proper waste management is a basic requirement for SCP. The country’s National Waste Management Plan defines the waste management policy for 2014–2020 and also introduces the legal background. The National Waste Prevention Program strives to achieve the waste reduction goals by promoting material efficiency and quality products in manufacturing chains (longer lifetime of products or higher reutilisation potential). This effort is supported by the extension of the manufacturers’ responsibilities. The waste from electrical and electronic equipment represents a growing environmental and resource use concern. The Government Decree on waste management activities relating to electrical and electronic equipment (2014) deals with these problems.

A circular economy requires enhanced resource efficiency and improved management through the better collection, treatment, and recycling of products at the end of their lifecycle. The environmental product fees, regulated by the Environmental Product Fee Act of 2011,

make the waste management system more efficient. The landfill tax, which aims to transfer waste from landfills to recycling facilities, is based on the quantity, type, class, and nature of the waste deposited in landfills.

The Hungarian national Eco-label is a certification that helps consumers identify products and services with proven reduced environmental impacts throughout their lifecycles. The Hungarian eco-labelling scheme was set up in 1994; the German “Blue Angel” eco-label scheme, the oldest in the world, served as the model.

The EU EMAS scheme was introduced in Hungary in 2004. The voluntary EMAS system provides a means for the organisation to improve and demonstrate its effectiveness and overall environmental performance. There is a regular annual forum, which aims to keep the EMAS Community together and to provide an arena for information sharing.

The goal of sustainability is taken into account in the Public Procurement Act, which contains rules linked to the application of green, social, and quality aspects in public procurement procedures. The energy efficient procurements of public bodies are covered by the Energy Efficiency Act of 2015. The Government Resolution on the promotion of Environmentally Friendly and Energy Efficient Vehicles stipulates that contracting authorities and public service providers shall purchase environmentally friendly and energy effective vehicles. To further promote the implementation of sustainability criteria in public procurement practice, the Public Procurement Authority published a guideline on lifecycle cost methods, as well as various briefings, guides and information about both national and EU law.

Education and efforts to raise awareness have a pivotal role in SCP. The Hungarian Green Kindergarten Program, which has been in operation since 2006, aims to develop the environmental awareness of children at the ages of 3–6, to change the consumption habits of children and their families, to raise awareness of waste management, and to encourage children and their families to experience the beauties of nature. In 2017, there were 931 kindergartens taking part in this green program. The Hungarian ‘Eco-school’ program started in 2004 to support educational institutes in the implementation of the principles of sustainability, environmental awareness, and development and also in order to increase student awareness of environmental issues and sustainability and help change their behaviour and consumption habits. In 2017, there were almost 1,000 Eco-schools in Hungary. The national Forest School Program supports field education. Its main educational task is to develop healthy, unified behavioural capabilities that are in harmony with nature and the environment. The Program was established in 1996 providing interactive experience of the natural treasures of forests, with a focus on agriculture, forestry, wildlife management, and fishing.

All Hungarian national park directorates have a special responsibility for environmental education; they endeavour to acquaint school-age groups with the importance of preserving natural values and ways of living in harmony with nature. In recent years, several events and campaigns have been implemented in order to reinforce a value system and enhance the knowledge of consumers required to create a sustainable lifestyle. The complex

development of national parks to realize sustainable tourism is supported by EU funds. Developing the attractions of sustainable tourism helps to support the local culture and creates employment for the locals in the area.

The Körösvölgy Visitor Center and Animal Park aims to develop the most significant reception area of the Körös-Maros National Park Directorate. The Visitor Center of the Szeleta Park archaeological site puts natural treasures on display, including the special hydrography, the cultural heritage, and the elements of the famous Pleistocene Szeleta-culture of the Bükk Mountains. The Small Balaton (Kis-Balaton) is a cradle of nature conservation in Hungary, and Hungarians have strong ties to this area owing to the influence of the novels of popular Hungarian writer István Fekete. In the Small Balaton Visitor Centre and the István Fekete Memorial Site, 16 establishments of

ecotourism have been renewed. The Danube Bend (Dunakanyar) Visitor Centre will be an interactive and innovative centre where visitors will be introduced to the natural values of the region, serving as a knowledge centre for nature-protection and green tourism.

Hungary has also introduced the “National Park Product” trademark, a common brand for local goods (organic food, salami, cheese, oil, and handicrafts) produced in Hungarian National Parks in order to strengthen their reputation and broaden their market opportunities. In addition to the sustainable use of local natural resources (e.g. organic production), the trademark contributes to the development of quality eco-tourism through the marketing of local products, taking advantage of local economic opportunities, and developing rural self-employment.



***Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts***

Climate change is a cross-border phenomenon, and thus, it cannot be tackled individually. Hungary is therefore a committed member of the international community to combat climate change. Hungary is a Party to all the major UN climate change agreements in effect. The country became a Party to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in 1994, its Kyoto Protocol in 2002, and finally – among the first countries – the Paris Agreement in 2016. We have also ratified the Doha Amendment to the Kyoto Protocol. Demonstrating our commitment

to tackling climate change in all spheres, the country has also finalised its internal ratification procedure of the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol, and we are ready to deposit the instrument of ratification in coordination with the other Member States of the European Union.

Being an EU Member State, Hungary implements one of the most stringent climate regimes in the world. The latest comprehensive strategic document of the EU, the 2030 climate and energy framework, communicated under the Paris Agreement as the joint Nationally

Determined Contribution (NDC) by the EU and its Member States (a drop of at least 40% in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, compared to 1990, on an EU-level) will be achieved through three different policies;

- The EU Emission Trading System (EU ETS): this is a harmonised EU-level policy
- with no targets per Member State. Instead, the approximately 170 Hungarian installations under the scheme (power plants and energy-intensive industries) have obligations. EU ETS is on track to deliver its EU-wide 2020 reduction target. Due to the new rules accepted during the ongoing reform of the system for the 2021–2030 period, the price of the emission allowances is expected to rise significantly, which will further increase the efficiency of the system.
- Effort Sharing Regulation: the legally binding Hungarian national target for the sectors not covered by the EU ETS is a 7% reduction of emissions until 2030 compared to 2005 as the base year (for 2020, the goal is to keep the emission level under 110% of the 2005 level). As specified under the GHG trends, Hungary has been very successful in decreasing its GHG emissions in recent decades, therefore, it is projected to over-achieve both its 2020 and 2030 target under the EU Effort Sharing regulation.
- Land use, land-use change and forestry (LULUCF): the 2030 goal within the EU is that Member States satisfy the so-called “no-debit” rule. This means that the total emissions within the LULUCF sector should

not be higher than its sink capacity. Given the fact that the level of afforestation has increased in Hungary within the past few decades, according to projections, Hungary will be able to meet this target. (There is no EU-target for 2020 in this sector, as it is directly regulated by the Kyoto Protocol).

Hungary’s first National Climate Change Strategy (NCCS-1) for 2008–2025 aims at reducing GHG emissions through improved energy efficiency in buildings, the use of renewable energy sources, and increased environmental sustainability of transport and afforestation. The NCCS-2 for 2030 with an outlook to 2050, which is awaiting parliamentary approval, will include a National Decarbonisation Roadmap, a National Adaptation Strategy, and a Horizontal Tools section with a special focus on awareness-raising and monitoring. These will be supported by a series of three-year-long climate change action plans, which will serve as implementation roadmaps for NCCS-2 by setting concrete emission reduction targets, indicators, monitoring tools, financing schemes, and capacity building with particular regard to sectors with the highest GHG-rising potential.

Our country is also dedicated to developing international climate finance measures to contribute to the commitment of developed countries under the Paris Agreement to mobilize jointly USD 100 billion per year by 2020 from a wide variety of sources. The Government has already made a contribution to the Green Climate Fund, and it is currently carrying out bilateral climate finance projects. It works closely together with the Korean-based international organisation, the Global Green Growth

Institute, to develop a fund, focusing on the Western Balkan region, to assist the implementation of the NDCs in the region.

With regard to the current GHG emission trends, in 2015, the total emissions of greenhouse gases in Hungary were 61.1 million tons carbon dioxide equivalents (CO<sub>2</sub>-eq), excluding the LULUCF sector. Taking into account the mostly carbon absorbing processes in the LULUCF sector, the net emissions of the country were 54.6 million tons of CO<sub>2</sub>-eq in 2015. Being about 6 tons, the Hungarian per capita emissions are below the European average. Our contribution to the EU's total GHG emission is less than 1.5%. The most important greenhouse gas is carbon dioxide, accounting for 77% of total GHG emissions. The main source of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions is the burning of fossil fuels for energy purposes, including transportation. Methane represents 12% in the GHG inventory. Methane is generated mainly at waste disposal sites and on animal farms. Nitrous oxide contributes 7% to the total GHG emissions. Its main sources are agricultural soils and manure management. The total emissions of fluorinated gases amount to 4%. By far the biggest emitting sector was the energy sector, which contributed 71% to total GHG emissions in 2015. Industrial processes and product use were the second largest sector, with 12%, while emissions from agriculture accounted for 11% and the waste sector contributed 6%. In the energy sector, the most important subsector was energy industries with a proportion of 32%, followed by transport and other sectors (e.g. the residential sector), which represented 28%. In 2015, total CO<sub>2</sub> emissions without land use, land-use change and forestry were 35% lower than in 1990. Compared to 1990, emissions

were significantly reduced in the energy (-40%), agriculture (-33%), and industrial processes and product use (-38%) sectors. In contrast, emissions in the waste sector have increased since 1990 (+13%). The land use and land-use change and forestry (LULUCF) sector shows fluctuating behaviour. Looking at the most important sectors under the effort sharing decision, since 2005 emissions decreased in the waste sector (-13%) and other sectors (e.g. the residential sector) (-34%), while emissions from transportation (+2%) and from agriculture increased (+10%).

The Hungarian National Energy Strategy 2030 defines the need to develop an Action Plan to spread and strengthen public awareness of climate change and sustainable energy consumption. This action plan, named Climate and Energy Awareness Raising Action Plan, was adopted by the Government in 2015. It identifies different kinds of governmental measures (public campaigns, regulatory tools, and collaborative instruments) to enhance climate and energy awareness. The long-term aim of these measures is that, beyond cost-oriented motivations, the environment-oriented approach would have a key role in the development of consumer habits. Informing the population is an essential for the National Directorate General for Disaster Management. As was noted under SDG 11, the Directorate informs citizens about potential disaster risks through numerous platforms, such as its homepage, mobile applications, and cooperation with the national media service providers. If necessary, live broadcasts can also be interrupted to inform the citizenry about expected risks and to mitigate the possible consequences of the damages.



***Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development***

Despite being a landlocked country, Hungary attaches great importance to the achievement of Goal 14. The core value of the SDGs constitutes the interconnectivity of the goals and targets, therefore due to their integrated and indivisible nature, the ambitious targets of the 2030 Agenda will not be realized without one another.

The Hungarian Government needs also to address the issue of water in a holistic way, since oceans and other types of water resources are interconnected through the planetary water cycle and the global economy. The implementation of SDG 14 emphasises that marine litter, in particular plastic litter, poses a global challenge, directly affecting marine and coastal life and ecosystems and potentially also human health. The oceans are endangered by many factors, such as overfishing, marine pollution, ocean acidification, and the rise of the sea levels caused by climate change. The preservation of the health of the oceans is a global issue in which all countries need to participate. Hungary is dedicated to this cooperation as a member of several international organizations and a signatory to several agreements for preserving and protecting the health and the biodiversity of rivers and oceans, such as the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube (ICPDR), the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, and the Standing Committee of the Washington Convention.

Hungary is committed to reducing the amount of waste and preventing the plastic

waste pollution of the natural environment. The eco-innovations and new products replacing plastics could provide long term solutions to this problem. Within the framework of the Circular Economy Action Plan from 2015, the European Commission elaborated the Plastic Strategy, which is also focused on the reduction of marine litter. The Act on Product Charge, proclaimed in 2011, regulates environmentally harmful products, as an important tool of the government sector to reduce environmental pressure. The aim of this regulation is to promote the rational use of natural resources and to raise funds for the prevention and reduction of the negative environmental impacts of harmful products.

In order to create a sustainable world, the “green issue” has been gaining increasing emphasis in industrial development plans throughout Europe and at the global level, since most of the industrial procedures have an effect on climate change and on the acidification of the oceans and seas. According to the communication from the European Commission on Investing in a smart, innovative and sustainable Industry: A renewed EU Industrial Policy Strategy, which was issued in 2017, the areas of action are built on seven themes in which the promotion of low carbon and a circular economy is included. With the recommendations of the 2030 Agenda and the abovementioned European strategy in mind, the Hungarian Government intends to enhance the development opportunities provided by the involvement of plastics in

the circular economy, especially for the domestic processing industry, with the “Irinnyi” Green Economy Strategy (2016–2020) as part of the “Irinnyi” Plan.

As stated above, the Government is dedicated to reducing environmental pollution. For the purpose of minimizing the landfilling of waste, the Ministry of National Economy initiated a dialogue with the parties concerned (such as domestic and multinational industrial companies, waste processing companies, industrial composting companies, professional organizations, or academic researchers) in order to explore the directions of industrial development and to set up a toolkit and the regulatory environment required for its implementation. A consultation forum has been set up for being acquainted with the views of the domestic plastic industry on its own future as well as with their opinion on the plastic industry-related strategy of the EU, which connects to SDG 14 and the New Plastics Economy model promoted by the UN in several aspects.

Although Hungary is a landlocked country and fish consumption is relatively low despite the good conditions for fish production, it applies national legal regulations for maintaining the aquatic ecosystem and water resilience.

On the one hand, the Act of 2013 on fisheries and the protection of fish regulates the conditions for exercising fisheries rights, activities related to them and the protection of fish and fish habitats in and on the banks of fisheries areas and in fish production facilities on the territory of the country. It also contains the rights and obligations of persons practising these activities or having influence on the tasks and competences related to fisheries management and the conditions for the trade of fish and fish products.

On the other hand, the aim of the Multiannual National Strategy Plan on Aquaculture of Hungary (2014–2020) is the conservation and enhancement of natural values, especially aquatic habitats, and the preservation of fisheries-related traditions in the changing social and economic environment. The central element of the strategy is innovation, and it focuses on sustainable, resource efficient, competitive, and safe production, job creation, and maintenance in rural areas. A further goal is the production of safe and healthy food for consumers by environmentally friendly, innovative technology, and the strategy contributes to the maintenance of wetlands and biodiversity as well.



***Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss***

Hungary's biogeographic region, the Pannonian area, is unique in Europe. It lies on the boundaries of other biogeographic zones, thus several species reach the outmost border of their distribution here. The diverse habitat types are home to several endemic plants and animals.

Due to conservation measures which have been implemented now for many years, Hungary has managed to achieve and even surpass Aichi Target 11, since approximately 22–23% of the country's total area is under legal protection. If the area of the ecological network is taken into account, the protection level can be considered even higher, over 36%. There are several threats to biodiversity, such as the over-exploitation of natural resources, habitat loss, habitat fragmentation, and ecosystem degradation from pollution and development, invasive alien species. In addition, climate change further deteriorates the already stressed environmental systems.

In order to ensure the conservation and sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems and the services they provide, a strategic national project, "Strategic Assessments Supporting the Long-term Conservation of Natural Values of Community Interest as well as the National Implementation of the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020", was launched in October 2016. The project aims to establish a methodological basis for further action, in part through the mapping and assessment of ecosystems at the national level, defining a national list of

ecosystem services, and identifying priority services through a participatory process.

With regard to forestry, the approval of the National Forest Strategy, the modification of the forest act, and the implementation of the forestry measures of the National Rural Development Program (2014–2020) have been the main improvements towards the realization of the SDGs. The first ever National Forest Program (2006–2015) was approved in 2004 and was successfully accomplished. Based on the experiences and considering the new challenges and international commitments, the second National Forest Strategy (2016–2030) was elaborated and adopted in 2016. Increasing forest area (the forest cover has continuously been increased since 1930, from 11% to 21%) has been one of the main priorities of forest and land-use policy. The Strategy foresees 27% of the forest and wood cover in the future. An additional important element of the Strategy is the adaptation of forests and forest management to climate change. A wide range of adaptation measures has been outlined, including close to nature forest management, assisted migration, the favouring of drought-tolerant species, continuous forest cover, and water retention.

The adoption of the modification of the Forest Act in 2017 was a milestone in forest policy towards sustainable forest management. While the modified Forest Act maintains and updates the solid basis of sustainable forest management, which



includes the protection of forest areas, inventory and management plans, the strict control of sustainable management, the balance among different needs for forest goods and services, reinforcing the role of forests in nature conservation, considering climate change and related, predictable consequences, it also reduces the administrative burden, simplifies procedures, and gives more responsibilities to private forestry.

The National Rural Development Program is an essential tool to deliver on sustainable forest management in our country. The main achievement of the last two years has been that EU funds are available for forest management activities, so these funds will be effectively used to the benefit of our forests and sustainable forest management.

The continuous increase in the growing stock of Hungarian forests is a good indicator of careful and sustainable forest management. This increase not only enriches our stock of renewable national resources (wood), it also contributes to climate change mitigation on a global level. The carbon sequestration of our forests is 3–5 million tons carbon dioxide/year, which compensates for 5–8% of our annual national greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Considering the ambitious targets of the national climate and energy policy to reduce GHG emissions significantly by 2050, increasing forest areas and growing stock may compensate considerably for the higher proportion of national GHG emissions in the future through carbon sequestration.

Hungary actively participates in the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). A national consultation was organized at the end of

2016 to inform the scientific community and other stakeholders about the UNCCD's program and to assess the current trends in Hungary's land degradation processes, focusing on available databases. The process is not yet at a stage at which targets could be defined, but the Act on the protection of arable land has provisions on limiting the further reduction of the territory of arable land. Soil protection measures are also in force according to this Act. Support for farmers is linked to measures which help further soil conservation, for example in agri-environmental support programs for ecological farming and greening. The National Water Strategy adopted in 2017 contains measures to prevent agricultural damage caused by droughts, such as the Drought and Water Scarcity Management System, which shall be set up to help drought management and the development of irrigation.

In line with the objective of reducing the degradation of natural habitats, 112 individual projects had been completed by 2015 ensuring the implementation of direct nature conservation interventions, such as the restoration of degraded habitats, improving site management infrastructure, and reducing the negative impacts of linear infrastructure. These measures targeted over 100,000 hectares of protected areas and/or Natura 2000 sites, corresponding to approximately 5% of the national Natura 2000 network. As a continuation, a new package of interventions was initiated in 2015, including 92 individual projects. It will include an additional 100,000 hectares of land, and as a result, the conservation status of at least 10% of species and habitats of community interest will improve.

Actions to end poaching and trafficking in protected species of flora and fauna are in

focus both in the EU and in Hungary. Species listed by the Convention on International Trade in the Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and by the Wildlife Trade Regulations of the European Union (including all native birds of prey and native orchids) are protected by law, and the commercial use of these populations and specimens is prohibited. The Hungarian CITES Management Authority (MA) organized events to raise awareness, which contributed to a thematic exhibition entitled “Illegal Wildlife Trade in Endangered Species” held in one of Hungary’s major cities, Szeged, in 4–31 October 2017. It displayed confiscated specimens of CITES-listed animal and plant species. As regards internal controls, breeders, traders, and pet shops are regularly checked by the competent nature conservation authorities. The Hungarian MA organizes a wildlife trade committee meeting each year, with the participation of the customs, police, nature conservation authorities, veterinary authority, and the representative of the TRAFFIC wildlife monitoring network to discuss enforcement matters. It also holds annual trainings in relation to CITES for nature conservation authorities. In November 2017, the National Bureau of Investigation, in cooperation with the MA, submitted a grant application for financing for the establishment of the National Environmental Security Taskforce to enhance the effectiveness of environmental law enforcement.

The Hungarian Government Regulation on the prevention and management of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species adopted in 2016 determined the competent authorities in charge of the authorization tasks of these groups. Serving

the increased demand for human resources, the Government has increased the staff of the targeted areas, employing 78 additional officers since the beginning of 2017.

The National Strategy for the Conservation of Biodiversity in 2015–2020 was adopted with the aim of integrating ecosystem and biodiversity values into national and local planning. The Strategy intends to halt the loss of biological diversity and the further decline of ecosystem services by 2020 and to improve their status as much as possible. In order to achieve these aims, the aspects of conserving biodiversity must be integrated into cross-sectoral policies, strategies, and programs, and also into their implementation.

Along with other considerations, aspects of biodiversity have been integrated into national strategies and their action plans, such as the National Sustainable Development Framework Strategy 2012–2024, the National Rural Development Strategy 2012–2020, the second National Climate Change Strategy 2014–2025, the National Landscape Strategy 2017–2026, the National Action Plan for the Development of Ecological Farming, and the Fourth National Environmental Program 2015–2020, including the National Nature Conservation Master Plan. However, more progress is needed in these areas. Other sectors and areas, like energy and poverty reduction strategies, have not been successful in the integration of biodiversity considerations.

To promote the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources, the Government has created and enforced its implementing regulation and started developing its control strategy. No procedure has been initiated

against users for unlawful possession and use of genetic resources by the Hungarian authorities. Overall, the country is on track to fulfil its international obligations according to the Nagoya Protocol regarding the protection of genetic resources in time.

The mobilization of financial resources to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity and ecosystems is of special importance.

Since the relevant indicator takes into account both the official development assistance and public expenditure, it covers a large financial area. In addition to national financial sources, several EU and other funds have contributed to the conservation and development of biodiversity and ecosystems.



***Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels***

Rule of law is a key enabler of all the SDGs. The main priorities of Hungary under Goal 16 are the prevention of trafficking in human beings (THB), labour exploitation, prostitution coming from children's homes, counter terrorism, and public esteem. In addition, the Government has pledged to guarantee the achievement of transparent institutions and free access to information.

Accordingly, strong emphasis is placed on effective prevention and awareness raising in connection with human trafficking. In this spirit, prevention can only be efficient if it is realized through the cooperation of the governmental and non-governmental entities and actors and if special attention is paid to the most vulnerable groups with regard to the triggering causes (e.g. women and children in vulnerable positions, communities living in extreme poverty, people with disabilities, unregistered employees, and youths in state care).

The primary aim is therefore to prevent and eliminate trafficking in members of the abovementioned vulnerable groups. Regional units of the Police regularly

organize programs and campaigns to raise awareness of and disseminate information on the dangers of human trafficking, especially those of forcing to prostitution, begging, or labour in order to save oneself from aversive behaviour. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) Budapest is currently implementing a nationwide awareness raising campaign with funding from the Internal Security Fund (ISF). The project consists of two components: a research study on the online awareness of groups at risk of trafficking and a THB awareness raising campaign – both online and offline.

In line with efforts to raise awareness, the Hungarian Government also pays special attention to the training of labour inspectors in order to bring cases of labour exploitation to light as soon as possible and to facilitate the initiation of procedures against the perpetrators. The Ministry of Interior, in cooperation with the Ministry of National Economy, has organized a training course for labour inspectors with the participation of the National Police Headquarters, the

IOM, the Chance for Families 2005 Foundation and the Hungarian Baptist Aid to improve the capabilities of the participating inspectors to identify victims and also to expand their knowledge and introduce problem-oriented working methods. Further sensitization of the relevant experts is carried out within the context of an ISF-funded project of the National Police Headquarters. The training will be organized in every county (19 counties and the Capital City, Budapest). The program aims to reach every labour inspector in Hungary, and it is expected to improve efficient identification of victims.

Since many of the victims of human trafficking and prostitution come from children's homes, the Police play an active role in the sensitization of the residents of children's homes as well as the professionals who are in daily contact with them. To prevent the victimization of children raised in and leaving children's homes and also high school students, county police headquarters have regularly held crime prevention talks in their areas of jurisdiction.

According to the Government Resolution on the National Crime Prevention Strategy (2013–2023), the education of children and youth is one of the most important and fundamental tasks and values of the state and society. In order to provide children with proper information on prevention, cooperation with teachers is of the utmost importance. The National Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) therefore puts high emphasis on trainings for professionals working with youths. Among others, NCPC offers mediation trainings for teachers to handle school conflicts and “train the trainer” courses on experiential education. The involvement of peer groups in crime

prevention offers great potential, therefore Hungary started to train student school mediators and peer support specialists. “Crime prevention at school” is a competency building and methodological training aiming to prepare teachers to be able to hold crime prevention lessons at schools. The pilot program, entitled “School of the future”, was launched in 2016 in order to create an institution where both learning and teaching is enjoyable. The Ministry of Human Capacities is currently analysing the possibility of nationwide implementation of the project. The University of Physical Education in Budapest announced a course in the second semester of the 2017/2018 academic year entitled “The place and role of crime prevention in sports”. The “Re-Action” program is an interactive crime prevention program giving crime prevention knowledge in secondary schools using a complex method reaching many target groups (students, teachers, parents). “Save Gordon!” is another crime prevention program based on experiential education developed by the Crime Prevention Subdivision of Zala County Police Headquarters. The concept of the program is based on the popular “escape games”, because information on crime prevention can better be provided through this communication channel to group of children ages 10–14.

Related to crime prevention, a research study on youth has also been carried out. It examined the correlation between family background, parental attitude, and young people becoming victims or perpetrators in order to get to know the problems and developmental possibilities of children and youth protection. The research was searching for the impacts of school, whether

school itself appeared as a supportive environment or not. It also explored the institutional implementation of the Child Protection Act and cooperation among the members of the signalling system and families. The second part of the research started in 2016 was based on a representative questionnaire from which a study was written entitled “Examination of the living conditions of children and youth primarily from the aspect of crime prevention, becoming perpetrators and victims”.

After 2010, one of the main political objectives of Hungary was to re-establish the public esteem of the state and its institutions. During the coordination of the governmental tasks related to the prevention of corruption, the National Anti-Corruption Program (2015–2018) was developed. The fight against corruption is a social issue. On the occasion of the International Anti-Corruption Day (9 December) the intention of the Government to take preventive measures against corruption were emphasized.

To safeguard effective, accountable, and transparent institutions is also a priority for our country. According to the Public Administration and Public Service Development Strategy (2014–2020), our main objective is to facilitate the organised, professional, cost-effective operation of Hungarian public administration with the least possible administrative burden and to create a true service-providing State.

A very important tool to ensure the freedom of access to information is the Info Act of 2011. The Info Act provides general provisions (definitions, procedures for requests, rules on proactive publication, possible grounds for limitations, legal

remedies) regulating the exercise of the right of access to information and the obligations of the bodies with public service functions. In addition, rules for sector-specific situations are enshrined in a number of legislative instruments. A unique and typical characteristic of the Hungarian legislation is the notion of public data on the grounds of public interest. Although as a general rule the principles of the protection of personal data exclude the publication of personal data, a number of acts of the Parliament explicitly make personal data accessible on the grounds of public interest in cases where the public interest regarding access to this information outweighs the interest of the data subject to protect its personal data.

Thus, the balance of the relevant fundamental rights is provided for in our legal system by an explicit act of Parliament on the basis of the nature and content of the data concerned, bearing in mind the requirement of necessity and proportionality. This latter requirement places the burden on the legislator to tackle the challenge in finding the right balance between conflicting interests when it comes to privacy, the confidential nature of business transactions, and the freedom of information.

The institution of the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights must be highlighted in connection with national human rights institutions, which is an ombudsman-type institution responsible for the protection of fundamental rights in Hungary, covering the whole spectrum of fundamental rights, including the principle of equal treatment and non-discrimination. Furthermore, in order to monitor the enforcement of human rights and to promote related professional communication, the so-called Human

Rights Working Group (HRWG) was established in 2012. As part of this work, the HRWG makes recommendations for the Government and other administrative bodies involved in legislation and the enforcement of laws. This enables the lawmaker to provide for regulations that allow a wider representation of human rights. The HRWG also operates a so-called Human Rights Roundtable to develop dialogues with civil societies, representative associations, and professional organizations scrutinizing the execution of human rights.

As concerns non-discriminatory laws, the relevant Article of the Fundamental Law on the right to equal treatment together with the Equal Treatment Act form the framework of protection against discrimination in compliance with the country's international obligations, including e.g. the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination adopted by the United Nations in 1965. Further guarantees are included in sectorial acts, such as the Civil Code of 2013, which inserted a new legal institution related to the protection of personal rights.

The Government is committed to the fight against racial discrimination, offering efficient protection against hate speech for different social groups through criminal law legislation. In addition, the Hungarian media law expressly prohibits publishing press and/or media content that incites hatred, and it authorizes the Media Council to initiate and conduct investigations in the event of infringements of press and media law requirements, including the prohibition

of hate content, and to take appropriate measures consistent with the gravity of the infringement.

A further aim under this goal is to increase the efficiency of our counter terrorism activity. The Counter Terrorism Centre regularly cooperates with national and international partner services and constantly increases the number of countries and organisations participating in this cooperation.

The importance of promoting peaceful, resilient, and inclusive societies by strengthening national institutions through international cooperation is highlighted in the IDC activities of our country as well. The training event entitled "Supporting the culture of legal volunteering in the Republic of Moldova based on the Hungarian model" was attended by lawyers, academics, and non-governmental organizations interested in legal education. The aim of the project was actively to involve lawyers, attorneys' chambers, law faculties, and civil society actors in the development of innovative forms of cooperation (pro bono projects, legal education, etc.).

Within the framework of V4 cooperation, Hungary has paid 8,750,000 EUR to EUTF Africa to support a project aiming to support integrated border and migration management in Libya. The project helps reinforce the capacity of local authorities, so that these institutions will be able to cope with emerging challenges related to migration, human trafficking, international criminality.



*Strengthen the means of implementation and  
revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable  
Development*

International development cooperation (IDC) is an integral part of Hungary's foreign policy and external relations with the aim of being involved in many initiatives and partnerships in order to strengthen the fulfilment of the Sustainable Development Goals and targets and work together with the international communities and organisations to achieve the 2030 Agenda. The purpose of the country's *Development Cooperation Strategy*, the first policy document since 2001, is to outline the main goals, principles, and directions of the Hungarian development cooperation policy for the period of 2014–2020, taking into account the factors upon which the framework and tools of implementation should be established and transformed. The Strategy complies with the objectives and directions of the national foreign security and economic policy documents, with special emphasis on the global opening policy, and it corresponds to the internationally agreed development goals and principles as well. The document strengthens Hungary's position as a credible and responsible member of the donor community while also promoting economic cooperation and long-term relationships with partner countries. The objectives presented in the *IDC Action Plan for 2018–2020* call for the reflection and streamlining of the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda in Hungarian IDC policy, as well as the commitment to introduce gradually the use of statistical indicators of the sustainable development framework.

To further demonstrate the country's dedication to global efforts to support developing countries and eliminate poverty worldwide, Hungary applied for and gained full membership in the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 2016.

Although humanitarian aid assistance is primarily a tool for saving lives and easing the difficulties of communities at the onset of crises, whether because of unexpected environmental disasters or armed conflicts, Hungary is convinced that if it could plan and implement endeavours in a thoughtful and forward-looking manner, it could pave the way for development projects that are both sustainable and help communities become more resilient.

The Hungarian Government considers it of the utmost importance to support the poorest and heavily indebted countries of the world. It thus participates in the regular replenishments of the capital and resources of the International Development Association (IDA), and it contributes to IDA's Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative and the IMF-World Bank's "Debt Relief Under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC)" initiative as well.

In addition to the abovementioned contributions, the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and the Hungarian Eximbank concluded an agreement on the establishment of a Hungarian donor fund (IFC-Hungary Trust Fund) in March 2014,

according to which Hungary committed itself to contribute a total amount of 20 million USD to the IFC between 2014 and 2016. In terms of the target areas of the Trust Fund, the agreement includes consultation on the water industry, agriculture, healthcare, energy, and the ICT sector. The geographical priorities cover specific Western Balkans, Central and Southeast Asian countries, and African countries.

The Hungarian Government also underlines the necessity of reinforcing a universal, open, and equitable multilateral trading system that contributes to achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and it believes that it is essential to develop a comprehensive, fully-balanced and rules-based system facilitating market access for developing countries while ensuring that they undertake meaningful commitments comparable to those of the developed countries. In line with efforts towards the more effective implementation of sustainable development provisions in bilateral agreements, the Government supports the inclusion of trade-related environmental and labour standards in free trade agreements, which also enables the full realization of trade policy objectives.

As mentioned before, in addition the cross-cutting issue of poverty eradication, Hungary focuses in parallel on several targets of Goal 17 concerning strengthening the means of implementation and revitalizing the Global Partnership for sustainable development. Regarding ODA commitments, in 2016 the total amount of Hungary's ODA increased from the 155 million USD spent in 2015 to 199 million USD, which means that the ODA/GNI rose from 0.13% to 0.17%. Hungary is still committed to meeting the 0.33% ODA/GNI

target set by the EU within the timeframe of the 2030 Agenda to further increase the volume of international development assistance. From 2015 to 2016, through the bilateral expenditures, Hungary almost quadrupled the amount of ODA channelled to the least developed countries.

Hungary actively fosters Global Partnership for sustainable development as well, which is proved by the increase in the country's multilateral contributions. In 2015, Hungary's contribution to the European Union's international development activities was 84.12 million USD (75.87 million EUR) which accounted for the 54.1% of our ODA. In 2016, our contribution increased. It was 114.73 million USD (103.71 million EUR), so our ODA went up to 57.6%.

Concerning the mobilization of additional financial resources to ODA, the Hungarian IDC innovative financing strategy is currently being drafted. These new methods are expected to be instrumental in utilizing additional sources of financing for development, including additional funds from the private sector.

The institutional framework of Hungarian international development cooperation is rather decentralised. The IDC activities performed by line ministries are coordinated, monitored, and statistically summarised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. To enhance policy coherence for development (PCD), the IDC Inter-ministerial Committee was re-established by a Government Decision in 2014. The chair of the committee is a State Secretary appointed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and the cooperating members are Deputy State Secretaries of the line ministries. Experts



and stakeholders, such as civil society organizations, may be invited to the sessions of the IDC Committee. The main tasks of the Committee are to make recommendations regarding IDC, especially on how to use the budgetary instruments available for IDC and humanitarian aid effectively, to take policy coherence for sustainable development (PCSD) into consideration in external relations, to monitor the realization of

Hungary's IDC and humanitarian aid policy, and to discuss current issues. As part of the coordinating function of the IDC Committee, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade puts special emphasis on monitoring the IDC-related activities of the competent ministries. Ministries are requested to provide information on their histories and on their planned and future activities in order to ensure aspects of PCSD in the country's external relations as well.



### **III. Partnerships and stakeholder engagement in Hungary**

#### **III. 1 Activities of the Hungarian Central Statistical Office**

The Hungarian Central Statistical Office (HCSO) has a fundamental role in the national implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by collecting data related to the SDGs and working out the national indicator system. The Office started the collection of data in terms of the global indicators of the sustainable development framework already in July 2015.

As a start, a High Level Meeting with Deputy State Secretaries was organized by the HCSO where a preliminary timetable and terms of reference with regard to the data collection process were adopted and the further cooperation mechanism of the line ministries and HCSO was established. Following this initial meeting, in order to corroborate Hungary's attainments with reliable data in terms of achieving the SDGs, in August 2015 the office set up a coordinating SDG network consisting of the experts of HCSO and those of the line ministries and their background institutions. The primary aim of establishing this network was to create an opportunity for regular meetings and information exchange, and in this framework a closer cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade coordinating the national implementation of the 2030 Agenda was also initiated. From the autumn of 2015 onwards the process of the identification of existing data gaps and lacking data began to detect the potential data owners and to create a basic indicator list, which later was sent to the ministries to provide data in connection with the indicators not gathered by the Statistical Office. In October and November 2015 several meetings were held with the experts of the line ministries and by the end of 2015 almost all data gaps were identified. In 2016, the main task was to collect indicators which are accessible by HCSO on a regular basis. Currently about 75% of global SDG indicators are available for Hungary.

To enhance public awareness and interest as well as to support the accomplishment of the Sustainable Development Goals at the national level, HCSO has created a very informative and interactive website where information on key global indicators can be found regarding to all SDGs. The site is based on a newly generated database documented with short descriptions and analyses, where all indicators are illustrated by graphs or diagrams in order to make the progress of the accomplishment of SDGs easily comprehensible for the general public.

HCSO has also published the national indicators of sustainable development every two years since 2007, the publishing of the first National Sustainable Development Strategy of Hungary. In the latest, second HCSO biannual publication in 2017 on the revised National Framework Strategy on Sustainable Development issued in 2013, a total of 103 indicators were disclosed, which presented the status of human, social, environmental and economic resources in the country. The main challenge in the near future could be the merging of the different initiatives (HCSO publications, the National Framework Strategy on Sustainable Development and the SDGs). Previous ones could provide basic inputs for the implementation of national SDG indicators.

The Statistical Office has proved Hungary's dedication to the realization of the sustainable development framework in numerous ways at the global level as well. It takes part in the international data transfer system by providing data, and as a consultant in the case of data transfer between data providers other than national statistical offices and UN specialized agencies and is also involved in verifying and qualifying data received from the UN agencies. The President of the Hungarian Statistical Office, Dr. Gabriella Vukovich also acts as Co-Chair of the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which provides strategic leadership for the implementation process of the 2030 Agenda in terms of gathering and validating statistical data.

### **III. 2 The Ombudsman for Future Generations**

The role and the importance of the Ombudsman for Future Generations in relation to the national implementation of the 2030 Agenda have already been mentioned in the introductory part of our report. In addition to participating in the national implementation, the Office of the Ombudsman is also actively involved in advocating the issue of creating a sustainable future at the global level as well.

Hungary had a great influence on establishing the Network of Institutions for Future Generations (NFIG) due to the collaboration of our country in the report on "Intergenerational solidarity and the needs of future generations" issued by the former UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon. The report emphasizes the importance of the representation and protection of the needs of future generations and model institutions for the further promotion of intergenerational solidarity at the national, regional and global levels. The Hungarian Ombudsman for Future Generations therefore convened an international conference in Budapest in 2014 to bring together the national institutions mentioned in the report and other interested stakeholders. As a result of the conference a formal network was set up to disseminate best practices, monitor developments on safeguarding the rights and well-being of future generations and support the establishment of new institutions. Further priorities for the NFIG members currently are how they can channel their expertise to assist and advise national governments with respect to the realization of the 2030 Agenda, including advising on focus areas and offering assistance in the implementation processes.

As set out in the Merida Declaration, SDGs directly or indirectly reflect human rights standards, and integrate cross-cutting human rights principles such as participation, accountability and non-discrimination. In 2018 the High Level Political Forum focuses on those 5 goals that coincide with the areas where the Ombudsman's office has in-depth experience. The engagement of the Office of the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights as a National Human Rights Institution (NHRI) in the process of preparing the Hungarian Voluntary National Review therefore shows a dedication to the spirit of the 2030 Agenda. Hence, some factors must be highlighted which are relevant to the methodology of the national implementation and outline certain Ombudsman's recommendations, the realization of which would be important to the national implementation of SDGs. These are related to law-making and to the conduct of public authorities, which are essential legal tools of the effective accomplishment of the sustainable development framework.

Over and above, the functions of the NHRI in the implementation of the SDGs are the followings:

- monitor the progress in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, linking it with already existing human rights monitoring systems,
- participate in the development of national indicators, including providing advice and expertise on a human-rights based approach to data,
- support transparent and inclusive public participation and consultation processes, and
- collaborate in capacity building and sharing of experience in order to contribute to a human rights-based approach to the implementation of the sustainable development framework.

The 2030 Agenda explicitly refers to the realization of the fundamental human rights. Some of the principles are cross-cutting themes, some tasks and target groups are recurring, indicating their key importance in the implementation. For this reason the constitutional responsibility of the Commissioner and his Deputies, including the Ombudsman for Future Generations is to promote the enforcement of the fundamental rights enshrined in the Fundamental Law. Moreover, they aim to help the most vulnerable groups of society throughout their mandates. The table presented below summarizes the recommendations emanating from investigations into citizens’ complaints, which are relevant for the identification of focus areas and the definition of governmental action plans.

SDG	Recommendations based on the Ombudsman’s experience:
6.1	1. Access to clean drinking water, access to adequate levels of sanitation and hygiene should be available to everybody. 2. The construction, extension and renovation of the public utility network should be planned with regard to the number of residents involved and not the number of properties. Furthermore, the territorial placement of the public utility network should not be discriminatory.
6.3	1. The establishment of wells should be carried out only with appropriate official control (based on notification or permitting). The wells already established without permits should be enumerated and their status should be continuously reviewed.
6.4	1. The global food crisis as well as the demand for water increases the value of virtually exported water (i.e. water sold through exporting agricultural products). In valuing the efficiency of domestic agricultural production, the virtually traded water should be accounted for and balanced against the income gained from agricultural export. 2. Land use changes should be integrated into governmental water management policies as land use determines water demand and it may increase or limit the discharge rate of water resources and their ability to replenish.
6.6	1. The network of inland water channels should be designed keeping in mind the threefold objective of the channels, i.e.: to divert, to store and to recircle water.
7.1	1. Energy-efficiency renovations of residential homes should be supported in order to reduce energy expenses. To this end, a subsidy program should be established, the tendering system of which is user-friendly, transparent and widely-accessible.

7.2	<p>1. The tax and subsidy policy for renewable energy should be reconsidered on the basis of long-term environmental considerations. The environmental product fee imposed on solar-and wind energy generating systems should be abolished. A coherent, stable and predictable legal environment should be created for the use of renewable energy sources.</p> <p>2. The potential harm of employing biomass (soil degradation, loss of biodiversity, emission of greenhouse gases) should be taken into account when developing our long-term energy policy.</p>
11.2	<p>1. The accessibility of built environment for persons with disabilities, particularly the accessibility of public transportation should be realized as soon as possible. Legislation enabling the constant postponement of statutory deadline should be abolished.</p> <p>2. In the process of developing urban planning documentation, the aim to reduce traffic noise should get particular attention. The legislator should rely in this respect on the strategic noise maps.</p>
11.3	<p>1. In the anticipated sectoral reform of the built environment, it is essential that the State adequately assures the public's right to access to justice in order to fulfill its obligation under the Fundamental Law and the Aarhus Convention.</p>
11.4	<p>1. During the development and implementation of Act LXXIV of 2016 on the Protection of Townscape and its' enforcement decrees, the legislator should ensure the continuity of laws seeking to protect local monuments - both at the level of central decision-making and municipal laws.</p> <p>2. The State should appoint local chief architects in regions rich in national monuments.</p>
11.6	<p>1. The measures set out in the Hungarian Intersectoral Action Program for the Reduction of PM10 should be implemented.</p> <p>2. It is prohibited to incinerate green and garden waste in Hungary. Nevertheless, the Hungarian legislation allows local municipalities to derogate from this prohibition in municipal laws. This exemption should be abolished and the prohibition should be generally applicable.</p> <p>3. Legal regulation should be enacted regarding qualitative and quantitative standards of lignite sold for domestic heating purposes.</p> <p>4. The quality criteria and conditions for the use of solid fuels in household appliances with an input power of less than 140 kW should be regulated, together with rules of their commercial distribution.</p> <p>5. Local governments should adopt effective regulations on smog alert and ensure that existing smog regulation is consistently enforced.</p>
11.7	<p>1. Legislation on trees in public places should reflect the monetary value of the ecological services provided by such trees, using any of the known tree-value calculating formulas. An urban tree registry should be established.</p>
12.4	<p>1. In the case of the universal environmental licensing procedure, for activities involving hazardous substances, the County Disaster Management Directorate, in cases of exceeding the threshold, the National Directorate General for Disaster</p>

	<p>Management should be involved in the permitting process.</p> <p>2. The existing legal obligation to provide collateral security or the liability insurance system should be effectively implemented and enforced.</p>
12.5	<p>1. The framework for applicable fines relating to illegal waste dumping should be transparent, immediate and of an amount capable of having a deterrent effect.</p> <p>2. The legislator should create consistency between the various types of fines relating to illegal waste dumping.</p> <p>3. A ministerial decree on the payment of public utilities in waste management should be enacted, in which the amount of the fee is proportional to the amount of waste produced.</p>
12.7	<p>1. Green public procurement procedure should be developed, implemented, and operated.</p>
12.8	<p>1. The amount of food additives should also be indicated on food labels, next to their name and category.</p> <p>2. To facilitate the realization and promotion of a sustainable consumer lifestyle, awareness campaign and educational trainings should be put in place.</p>
15.2	<p>1. In State-owned forests the prevailing objective of forest management should serve environmental preservation and public use related (educational, recreational, etc.) functions. These forests shall be managed in a way that serves environmental protection goals in an integrated way. In managing protected forests timber production ought not to be the prime objective.</p> <p>2. In State-owned forests the long-term protection of public use requires replacement of the for-profit forest management entities with not for-profit entities.</p> <p>3. In protected forests, Natura 2000 sites, and in the forest habitat of protected species, priority should be given to conservation driven forest management.</p> <p>4. The Forest Act should ensure that forest coverage can only be decreased if it is strictly necessary for meeting significant public interest purposes.</p> <p>5. Restrictions flowing from Natura 2000 conservation objectives should not be restricted only to those areas of designated sites, where priority species live or priority habitats are found, but they should be applicable to the entirety of sites that are designated under the Habitats Directive.</p> <p>6. Financial incentive system available to owners of Natura 2000 forests should be of a quantum, which is capable of providing an effective compensation for conservation driven restrictions on economic use of forests. Financial tools should thereby act as real incentives for forest owners to comply with restrictions.</p> <p>7. The extent of puffer zones, which serve to protect the nesting of protected bird species and species of community interest against disturbance should not be homogeneously prescribed by law, but should be designated on an ad-hoc basis, having due regard to the local specificities of the given species and nesting place.</p> <p>8. Forest management techniques ensuring continuous forest coverage should be introduced with an increased pace in forests serving environmental protection objectives or public purposes. The possibility to clear-cut state-owned forests should be decreased.</p>

15.3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Harmful processes leading to soil degradation and loss of soil (hectare), and the increase of soil sealing in cities should be stopped.</li> <li>2. Greenfield investments should be limited or banned until complete remediation of brownfields, the National Remedial Program should be reviewed.</li> <li>3. Fertile land (of excellent and good quality) should be placed under increased protection, the change of their functions should be banned and no mining should be allowed on their territory.</li> <li>4. The flora and fauna of soil ('edaphon') should be legally designated as a value to be protected in applicable legislation.</li> <li>5. Soil protection aspects should be integrated into the system of direct agricultural subsidies, with the aim of spreading agricultural practices that integrate environmental interests.</li> <li>6. Special management obligations should be prescribed for farmers as means to fight soil erosion.</li> <li>7. The conditions for integrated (low use of chemical pesticides) plant protection should be established.</li> </ol>
15.4	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Gene pool protection programs should be continued, with providing adequate financial and infrastructural support for them.</li> </ol>

The recommendations of the Ombudsman for Future Generations  
on the national implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, 2017

As far as the general remarks are concerned, the Ombudsman stressed that in selecting the focus areas for national implementation, the Government should consider the following aspects:

- Besides short-term policies, it is also important to prepare comprehensive action plans, which can yield long-term positive changes.<sup>1</sup>
- When designating priority areas for the national implementation, it is important to have a systematic approach, i.e. targeting goals that can trigger a positive snowball effect. Such key objectives could be SDGs of 4, 6, 10 and 11.<sup>2</sup>
- The 2030 Agenda highlights the monitoring of the progress of the implementation. Effective monitoring can only be carried out if Hungary has accurate data and knowledge about the starting situation as well as the problems to be solved.

The Ombudsman has also emphasized that it is crucial to designate the necessary executive persons responsible for the implementation of the SDGs in the governmental decision-making system at an early stage. In order to integrate contributions from other stakeholders, it is important to note that there are a number of institutions whose expertise can be relied upon by the Government, such as the National Council for Sustainable Development, the National Environmental Protection Council, the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (especially the Presidential Committee on Environmental Protection), and other governmental and non-governmental organizations that have outstanding experiences with good practices that can be useful for the successful achievement of the sustainable development framework.

<sup>1</sup> Section 6 of the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development „Transforming Our World”, [http://documents.rec.org/publications/SDGPositionPaperENG\\_May2916.pdf](http://documents.rec.org/publications/SDGPositionPaperENG_May2916.pdf) (Furthermore: „REC Summary”).

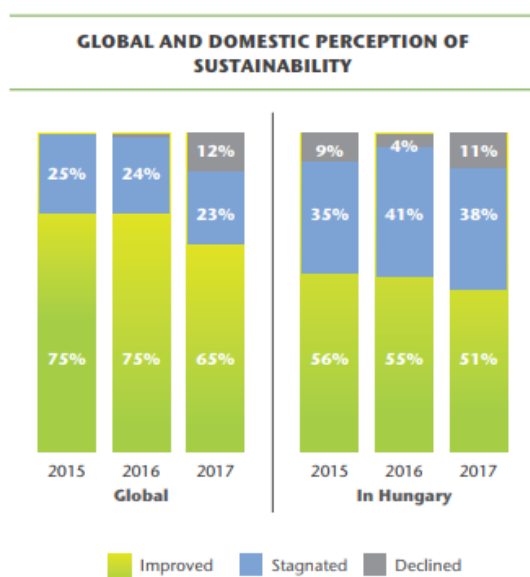
<sup>2</sup> Section 6 of the REC Summary

### **III. 3 Sustainable Development Goals and the business sector in Hungary**<sup>3</sup>

#### ***III. 3. 1 The Hungarian business sector***

The Hungarian business sector consists of 693 662 registered and active business organisations with almost 3 million employees (HCSO, 2016). 99.6% of the registered and operating companies are small enterprises, 0.3% are medium-sized enterprises and only 0.1% are large enterprises. 72% of the employees work in the SME sector producing 54% of the value added, which indicates a huge potential in improvement of efficiency.

The Hungarian economy has expanded in recent years.<sup>4</sup> Business confidence indicator has reached a historical peak in 2017, even in the SME sector. One of the most crucial problems businesses face is the difficulty in finding skilled labour that is prepared to work.



#### ***III. 3. 2 Sustainability and the business sector in Hungary***

In terms of sustainability, expectations towards the business sector have been increasing in Hungary. Regarding the last decade, there is an increasing commitment to sustainability in the Hungarian business sector, but mainly among large companies. The SME sector strongly needs to be improved in the field of knowledge and commitment.

Non-representative CEO Survey of Business Council for Sustainable Development in Hungary (BCSDH) revealed that corporations

play a very active role in advancing the cause of sustainability in Hungary. Sustainability has already reached a level of acceptance above which it is more difficult to make progress.<sup>5 6</sup>

The personal commitment of the CEO is the key incentive to incorporate sustainability into the business operation.<sup>7</sup> In case of multinational companies, the demand from the parent company and from the stakeholders is also considerable. Recommendations of the European Union or guidance of Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), ISO26000 or other standards are also key

<sup>3</sup> This chapter is the final outcome of the collaboration of several business chambers and NGOs coordinated by Business Council for Sustainable Development in Hungary (BCSDH). List of the contributing partners: British Chamber of Commerce in Hungary, Business Council for Sustainable Development in Hungary, Confederation of Hungarian Employers and Industrialists, French-Hungarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Hungarian Donors Forum, Joint Venture Association, KÖVET Association for Sustainable Economies, Netherlands-Hungarian Chamber of Commerce in Budapest, Swisscham Hungary

<sup>4</sup><http://www.oecd.org/newsroom/hungarian-economy-expanding-but-reforms-needed-to-boost-skills-business-investment-and-incomes.htm>

<sup>5</sup> <http://bcsdh.hu/corporations-advance-cause-sustainability-bcsdh-survey-2017/>

<sup>6</sup> Every year, BCSDH conducts a survey among CEOs to obtain a picture of the trends, current state and future prospects of corporate sustainability. 71% of the respondents are representing large companies.

<sup>7</sup> <http://bcsdh.hu/it-does-not-work-without-a-leader/>



drivers, unfortunately SDGs are not among them, yet. Moreover, large companies also have a big influence through their supply chains.

Sustainability related actions of companies are represented in SD or CSR strategies, Code of Ethics, but also in sustainability targets and programs. The results of these programs are usually modest and mainly isolated.

No comprehensive studies about the contribution of the Hungarian business sector to SDGs have been attained yet. Survey of Hungarian Public Relations Association in 2017 pointed out that minor proportion of companies (40%) have heard about SDGs. The preliminary results of BCSDH's non representative survey reveal that 70% of the companies have already committed to one or more of the SDGs.<sup>8</sup>

Awareness and understanding of SDGs strongly needs to be improved, especially in the SME sector, in order to make SDGs the new framework for corporate sustainability strategies, initiatives and actions.

Establishing a continuous cross-sectorial multi-stakeholder dialogue is crucial to reaching the SDGs as a dedicated network could be a catalyst of the knowledge sharing.

### ***III. 3. 3 Business initiatives in the field of sustainability and SDGs***

There are several initiatives that call the Hungarian business sector for immediate action in the field of sustainability and SDGs. These are the most important initiatives:



The objective of Action 2020 Hungary program (led by BCSDH) is to collect examples and raise awareness of business solutions that go beyond business as usual and which can contribute to meeting the 20 macro-level targets as well as SDGs. More than 50 companies are strongly engaged in the program. Until the end of 2017, almost 90 business solutions have been identified.<sup>9</sup>

SDG Compass provides guidance for companies on how they can align their strategies as well as measure and manage their contribution to the realization of the SDGs. The SDG Compass is available in Hungarian language, translated and actively disseminated by BCSDH.<sup>10</sup>



BCSDH was establishing a 'For a Sustainable Future' prize in 2017 with the purpose of recognizing and disseminating to a wide audience the activities of leaders and companies in the field of sustainability. The goal of the prize is to

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<sup>8</sup> The survey 'Contribution of Hungarian companies to the UN Sustainable Development Goals' among the member companies of the contributing organisations was held in February 2018, lead by BCSDH. The results of the survey are going to be published in May 2018.

<sup>9</sup> <http://action2020.hu/en/>

<sup>10</sup> <http://bcsdh.hu/projects/sdg-compass/>

promote and increase the contribution of business to meeting Sustainable Development Goals.<sup>11</sup> SDGs are also integrated in the Future Leaders Talent Program of BCSDH.<sup>12</sup>

Impact 2030<sup>13</sup> led by Volunteering Hungary - Centre of Social Innovation (“ÖKA”) is a private sector-led initiative, with the unique mission to activate human capital investments through employee volunteer programs to advance the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.



Although direct linkages between these initiatives and SDGs have not been assessed yet, they also support the SDGs.



Hungarian Women Business Leaders Network founded by Hungarian Business Leaders Forum (HBLF) supports equal opportunities of women and the principles of sustainable development. The organisation established the Diversity Target Group to mainstream the concept and best practice of diversity management as part of the sustainable development of business and wider society.<sup>14</sup>

CSR Marketplace<sup>15</sup>, organised by “KÖVET” Association, ensures platform for enterprises to share their sustainability-related solutions and experiences. In the framework of the “ABP” Program, the association collects the measures, projects and investments that are environmentally and economically advantageous. “KÖVET” Association also have Target Groups on CSR and New Economy.<sup>16</sup>



Catalyser Workshops (“Katalizátor műhelybeszélgetések”) hosted by Hungarian Donors Forum gives the opportunity for companies to share their experiences and knowledge about social investments.

### ***III. 3. 4 Contribution of the business sector to the Sustainable Development Goals***

This table shows the level of commitment and business solutions of Hungarian companies related to each of the SDGs.

<sup>11</sup> <http://bcsdh.hu/sustainable-future-prize/>







<sup>12</sup> <http://bcsdh.hu/projects/future-leaders/>

<sup>13</sup> <https://hu-hu.facebook.com/impact2030/>

<sup>14</sup> <https://hblf.hu/index.php?&language=hu&language=en>


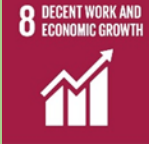





<sup>15</sup> <http://csrpiac.hu/csr-market-2015.html>





<sup>16</sup> <http://kovet.hu/en/>

SDG	Level of commitment <sup>17</sup> (1-5, from weak to strong)	Business solutions, best practices <sup>18</sup>
	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applying fair wages</li> <li>• Company based fair minimum wage</li> <li>• Promoting volunteering programs that help underprivileged people</li> <li>• In-kind donations</li> </ul>
	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing higher wages</li> <li>• Reducing food waste in corporate events</li> <li>• Food donation after corporate events</li> <li>• Use ingredients coming from sustainable farms, certified by an independent certification body</li> </ul>
	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintaining Health and Safety Protection Systems</li> <li>• Providing health screening programmes</li> <li>• Transforming the working conditions at the offices</li> <li>• Responsible alcohol consumption program</li> </ul>
	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting dual education</li> <li>• Compulsory trainings among employees</li> <li>• Development of training systems</li> <li>• Supporting adult education</li> <li>• Supporting the digital transformation of schools</li> </ul>
	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introducing a Diversity Policy</li> <li>• Supporting the career path of women</li> <li>• “Techsajok” program</li> </ul>
	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation of new water saving system</li> <li>• Rainwater usage</li> <li>• Advanced and efficient wastewater treatment</li> <li>• Less water usage</li> </ul>

<sup>17</sup> Level of commitment is coming from the results of the survey ‘Contribution of Hungarian companies to the UN Sustainable Development Goals’ in 2018. Respondents are the member companies of the collaborating partners, n = 50.

<sup>18</sup> Best practices are mentioned by the companies participating in the survey, however there are several other initiatives e.g. reducing food waste in the supply chains.

SDG	Level of commitment <sup>17</sup> (1-5, from weak to strong)	Business solutions, best practices <sup>18</sup>
	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Climate friendly buildings</li> <li>• Improving energy efficiency</li> <li>• Utilization of resources originating from demolition</li> <li>• Carbon footprint measurement and reduction</li> </ul>
	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment of people with reduced capacity to work</li> <li>• Corporate Rehabilitation Service</li> <li>• Flexible employment initiatives</li> <li>• Integration of the ethical adequacy questionnaire in the supplier rating system</li> </ul>
	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integration renewable energy sources</li> <li>• R&amp;D programs in clean and environmentally sound technologies</li> <li>• Utilisation of residual waste from recycling for energy production</li> <li>• Company self-compliance by recycling of packaging waste</li> </ul>
	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diversity &amp; Inclusion programs</li> </ul>
	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introducing Call a Bike / Car sharing services</li> <li>• Supporting the establishment of green and public spaces</li> </ul>
	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reducing food waste</li> <li>• Road to a sustainable lifestyle</li> <li>• Educational campaign for consumers</li> <li>• Paper-free customer service processes</li> </ul>
	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Green road construction</li> <li>• Carbonfree printing</li> <li>• Reduction of emissions through technology modifications</li> </ul>

SDG	Level of commitment <sup>17</sup> (1-5, from weak to strong)	Business solutions, best practices <sup>18</sup>
	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consuming MSC certified fish</li> <li>• Prevention of leakages</li> </ul>
	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Biodiversity action plans</li> <li>• Consuming certified raw materials</li> <li>• Cooperating with national park</li> </ul>
	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compliance and whistle-blower policy</li> </ul>
	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cooperating with local governments, higher educational institutions</li> <li>• Youth Initiatives programs</li> </ul>

### **III. 4 Roundtable of Hungarian Civil Society Organisations for the Sustainable Development Goals: Recommendations for the national implementation**

To implement the Sustainable Development Goals, the concept and the values of sustainable development should be integrated in the everyday and long-term decisions of the actors of the governmental, economic, educational, scientific sector and all citizens. This requires the change of our behaviour; we have to create a new system of ethics and values and rebuild the trust among the various actors of society. **Therefore, the issue of sustainability cannot be managed as only a political or governmental matter, but the various communities, civil society organisations must also play an important role.**

When it was adopted, none of the international programmes had as a strong commitment and broad political support as the Agenda 2030. Despite the extensive preparatory work and ambition, the implementation cannot be regarded as one being carried out as planned. While in Hungary there is not yet the required institutional setup and action plan in place, which would serve the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals, in 2017 the UN admitted<sup>19</sup> that there is no chance to reach the goals globally at the pace followed till then.

<sup>19</sup><https://news.un.org/en/story/2017/07/561632-un-report-urges-accelerated-efforts-achieve-sustainable-development-goals#.WY0DuogrJaQ>

Experiencing the shortfall both internationally and nationally, several sectors have taken independent initiatives. The organisations of the economic, academic and civil sectors have begun to organise themselves, and have created various platforms to assist the process of implementation. As one of these platforms, the **Roundtable of Hungarian Civil Society Organisations for the Sustainable Development Goals** was established by 11 national organisations in October, 2017 with the following objectives<sup>20</sup>:

- promoting the UN's Sustainable Development Goals and raising public awareness in the society and in the public discourse;
- monitoring the implementation of the goals in Hungary, and making recommendations to the government and various actors of society;
- promoting a structured dialogue between the governmental and non-governmental organisations;
- exchanging information between the members and getting to know each other's efforts and work related to the SDGs.

Since its establishment, the Roundtable has created the website <http://ffcelok.hu>, which is the first Hungarian site dedicated to the Agenda 2030 and its implementation. Among others the website provides information on the actual state of national implementation, *inter alia*, by means of 80 indicators on where Hungary stands in implementation, and on the commitments of more than 75 civil society organisations contributing to the implementation with their activities.

The members of the Roundtable have started to collect good examples and prepare recommendations in their fields of expertise. Our aim is to support the implementation and set an example for other sectors too; to start a dialogue within the civil sector and with other stakeholders on how the goals can be reached in a systemic approach, when the solutions strengthen not weaken each other.

### **Imperativeness of national implementation**

Civil society organisations also took part in the elaboration and adoption of the National Framework Strategy on Sustainable Development, which identified 16 key indicators for the evaluation of the state of our national resources (e.g. public debt, productivity ratio, biologically inactive territories). These indicators mainly rely on the data of the Hungarian Central Statistical Office. According to the most recent progress report of the strategy, half of the key indicators have negative trend, 5 have positive trend and stagnation was observed for the remaining ones. Compared to the EU average, 8 out of 16 key indicators are below average. None of the indicators is above average, and there are only two, which are at the EU's average value and demonstrate positive trend at the same time. This also clearly indicates that **we need to take**

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<sup>20</sup> **The founding organisations of the Roundtable:** CEEweb for Biodiversity, Foundation for Development of Democratic Rights (DemNet), Hungarian Association of NGOs for Development and Humanitarian Aid (HAND), KÖVET Association for Sustainable Economies, Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta, Hungarian Anti-Poverty Network, National Society of Conservationists, Hungarian Climate Alliance, Batthyány Society of Professors, Protect the Future, WWF Hungary

**much stronger steps to identify and implement the national actions arising from the Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals approved also by Hungary.**

### **The integrated implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals**

The international program combines the goals and tools of the hitherto separate and mainly inconsistent development cooperation and sustainable development agenda, and use the more holistic concept of sustainable development. The problem is that *it tries to solve the problems separately*, although the solutions should be identified in a *system*, in the context of environment and development. In addition, it is essential to attempt *to change the driving forces* which create the problems.

Another deficiency is that it does not take into account the *conflicts between the specific goals*, such as the contradictions between the goals related to energy, economic growth and the conservation of natural resources. Since mankind has already exceeded the carrying capacity of our planet, the objective of all subprograms should include the reduction of resource use and the *careful and sustainable use of natural resources*.

To eliminate the above problems we need such holistic, systematic solutions that have an impact at the level of the driving forces, and thus they contribute to the implementation of more goals:

- The basis of *poverty* eradication is that everybody should have equal access to the conditions of income generation such as natural resources, knowledge, information, market and affordable loans.
- Sustainable society requires *people that understand systems-based approach*, who are able to identify the interrelations and act accordingly; that is why an education reform is necessary. We must pay much more attention to education aiming at raising awareness of global issues and their interconnectedness. We must strengthen the role of *ethics* and consciousness related to sustainability in politics, society and economy.
- There is a need to shift towards *community possession of natural resources* including land and the forest. We can only create sustainable production and consumption systems if *the total consumption of material, energy and land continuously decreases*. We must support the establishment of *local community economies* and interest-free substitutes for money, which help keep the benefits on local level.
- It is essential to create *policy coherence* and harmonise the sectoral plans with the sustainable development framework.
- Activities supported by public funds must not cause harm in the social and environmental systems. The *harmful subsidies* should be eliminated, including the support of fossil fuel use. The sources provided to the support of agriculture must be shifted to activities fulfilling ecological conditions and supporting labour. The respect of environmental considerations, equality and anti-discrimination should be ensured in the development policy. We must increase the transparency and the community control of the spending of public funds.
- It is necessary to create a set of coherent objectives within the Hungarian framework of *international development cooperation* along with a more efficient institutional system (e.g. establishing an implementing agency); a complex monitoring and evaluation system (not limited only to the projects of the Ministry responsible for foreign affairs); a strengthened social dialogue; as well as the systematic increase of resources. The

development aid must not serve economic interests and enable the transfer of the developed world's unsustainable patterns. Aid must strengthen the identity of local communities, the self-government of their societies, the protection of their natural resources and their economic autonomy.

- During the implementation of the goals, there is a need to rely on resources available both in the business sector and the civil society. We must support the *self-organising groups of the civil society and churches*, which increase social trust relying on the cooperation of individuals and families.

### **The importance of the institutional system**

The ability of the *governmental institutions must be examined* regarding the implementation of the tasks resulting from the Agenda 2030. It is necessary to harmonise the sectoral strategies with the sustainable development framework.

It is essential to carry out the strategic coordination of implementation of the SDGs at the government level that could be realised most effectively at secretary of state level, also in accordance with National Sustainable Development Strategy adopted in 2013 by the Parliament.

We need a more effective, open and proactive *social cooperation* than before. Besides entrusting the *National Council for Sustainable Development* with an appropriate professional conciliatory and advisory role, there is a need for a more active cooperation with the various stakeholders of the society.

The institutional system responsible for the implementation of the National Framework Strategy on Sustainable Development and the Hungarian participation in the international development cooperation is currently isolated. *A stronger relationship* is needed within the framework of some coordinative mechanism *between those national institutions which deal with sustainable development and international development cooperation*.

### **The basic features of the public participation**

For the successful implementation of the SDGs, a relevant national institutional system providing broad public participation ought to be established.

The relevant stakeholders must be involved in the partnership, for instance the business sector, the municipalities and the civil society organisations. It is also important that the national plans and such reports are considered by the National Assembly.

We recommend the following as the elements of the institutional system of public participation:

#### *1) Access to information*

The relevant international and national documents in connection with the implementation of the goals as well as their comprehensible summaries must be made available on a public website.



## 2) *Wide public communication*

It is important that the government continuously inform the Hungarian society about the implementation process of the Sustainable Development Goals by using different tools.

## 3) *Active involvement of the partners*

The different stakeholders must actively be involved in the implementation, monitoring and reporting. The drafts of the documents must be sent to the organisations concerned in an early phase, the incoming opinions must be considered, and a response must be sent to the participants. It is also necessary to organise events which enable personal participation.

## 4) *The continuous, direct participation of the stakeholders*

Sectoral and whole-of-government working groups should be formed, which deal with the planning, monitoring, reporting of the implementation. The representative bodies of the stakeholders must be involved in these working groups as permanent members.

### **The situation and role of civil society organisations in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals**

The public participation in the SDG implementation and progress reporting process should be upscaled, assisted, institutionally and financially supported in line with SDG 17.

The goals were planned so that science, economy, government, and civil society could work together to provide a good basis for the common actions. The members of the Roundtable of Hungarian Civil Society Organisations for the Sustainable Development Goals and other organisations contribute to the achievement of the goals through their various programs while also cooperating with other sectors (link: [http://ffcelok.hu/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/sdg\\_good\\_practices.pdf](http://ffcelok.hu/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/sdg_good_practices.pdf)).

### **III. 5 Fresh Perspectives on the Hungarian VNR: A Section of the Youth Delegates of Hungary to the UN**

The Government of Hungary recognizes and supports the crucial and positive contribution of young people to the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals. In 2016, to further amplify their voice, Hungary joined a growing movement of member states sending *youth delegates* to the various meetings of the United Nations. These representatives serve as spokespersons for their generation, drawing attention to the interests and innovative ideas of the youth, both at home and abroad.

Assisted by the joint efforts of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Ministry of Human Capacities and the National Youth Council of Hungary, Hungarian youth delegates have participated in the work of various UN bodies, including the ECOSOC and the HLPF on Sustainable Development. While bringing the youth perspective to the international stage on various matters, they have also been actively engaged in exploring and shaping the youth experience with sustainable development throughout Hungary. The consultations with different groups of young people, NGOs, the private sector, and local government yielded valuable recommendations informing our decision-making processes.

Hungarian youth delegates have personally met thousands of young people during several country tours, revealing hitherto unnoticed connections between youth leadership and the issues of sustainability. According to their experience, young people may lack sufficient information about the SDGs, but once that gap is filled they are quicker than others to realize its importance. Helping them establish a connection between SDGs and local issues triggers their curiosity to come up with solutions. When they understand that the 17 goals are addressing problems directly affecting them, they immediately show enthusiasm and readiness for action.

This observation gives both hope and reason for Hungary and the whole World to reaffirm its commitment to the inclusion of youth in the popularization and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. As agents of change, the potential of young people must be harnessed at all levels of action to bring about a more sustainable future. However, for that they must also be enabled to act.

Here, we will examine five key areas connected to sustainable development, which are important for the youth of Hungary. By reviewing both our achievements and challenges we hope to encourage our readers to engage with the *youth factor* more actively in all discussion and action concerning Agenda 2030. In this section, we present the findings of our youth delegates, combined with data provided by the comprehensive Hungarian Youth Research (YR) of the New Generation Programme conducted in 2016, and the Youth Progress Index (YPI) produced by the European Youth Forum in 2017.

The following themes will be discussed in conjunction with the SDGs most relevant to each:

1. **Civic Activism:** Education, Leadership and Personal Rights
2. **Family for the Future:** Sustainable Communities, Having Children and Gender Equality
3. **Innovative Labor Market Integration:** Bridging the Gap between Education and the Workplace
4. **Health and Wellbeing:** Mental and Physical Health
5. **21<sup>st</sup> Century Foundations:** Digitalization and Technological Innovation

### ***III. 5. 1 CIVIC ACTIVISM - SDGs: 4, 10, 16, 17***

In this section we would like to deal with the opportunities provided for young people on the fields of: personal rights, personal freedom and choice and education.

When it comes to personal rights, we can confidently state that from a historical point of view young people in Hungary have always been very passionate about their rights, especially freedom of speech and political rights. They were the ones who raised their voices when they saw injustice and who initiated reforms and revolutions when they wanted change. Still, according to the Youth Research (YR), in 2016 44% of young people were not interested in politics at all and 22% of them were barely interested. What is the cause of this anomaly?

According to our experiences, there is a clear connection between education and the political attitude of young people.

In many cases - during our country- tour we were told by young people that they felt they were not fully informed about their political and civic rights and for this reason they were not that interested in politics and public life, since they do not have the tools and the knowledge to

influence it or change it. We believe that education is one of the best tools through which we can transform the mindset of young people in a good way but this can only happen in a reformed education system which is not outdated and which enables young people to adapt to the challenges of the rapidly developing 21st century

There are already lots of best practices on this field, since many elementary and high school have specific lessons where they are taught about civic knowledge, but we still encourage our decision makers to make this practice compulsory from as early age as possible.

### ***III. 5. 2 FAMILY AND DEMOGRAPHIC POLICY - SDGs: 3, 5, 10, 16***

2018 is the “Year of the families” in Hungary. Family and demographics has always been the Government’s prioritized objectives, especially since 2010 when our population has fallen under 10 million inhabitants.

The most important dimension of the Hungarian family policy is to strengthen families with all possible means. The family support system provides various forms of welfares, allowances and benefits for young people in order to ensure that all young parents and parents-to-be are provided with long-term stability and a reliable financial situation.

According to the YR, in 2016 2/3rd of the questioned young people have said that they surely want to get married in the future and only 6% said the opposite. Compared to data from 2012, there has been a significant growth in the number of young people who are planning to get married in the future.

Most of the young people that we talked with said that they would like to start a family someday but only if they are provided with all the necessary conditions in order to have a safe and stable environment in which they can raise their children.

They - mostly women - also highlighted that they need support when it comes to harmonizing their career and raising children in order to have a healthy work-life balance.

The Government of Hungary recognizes and firmly believes that sustainability can be achieved not only by sustaining our planet but also by sustaining ourselves, the humankind.

In order to preserve our planet for future generations, the very first step is to actually have a future generation.

### ***III. 5. 3 INNOVATIVE LABOR MARKET INTEGRATION - SDGs: 1, 8, 9, 11***

Successful integration of young people into our societies is a priority for every country, as well as for Hungary.

One of the most important steps in this integration process is to provide them with the chance to successfully enter the labor market.

According to the YR, in 2016 54% of young people were employed which shows significant development compared to the 40% in 2012.

Still, young people reported that many time they feel no communication between the potential employers and potential employees. There are no clear demands from the employers’ side and no sufficient qualifications from the employees’ side.

Also, the most common problem young people experience during labor market integration is the phenomena of “qualifications mismatch” which brings us to education (again).

It's not just about the problem of the amount of theoretical knowledge compared to practical knowledge anymore. The problem is, young people are not provided with enough information and personalized advice when it comes to career choice and orientation.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, young people have to face the changing demands of the transforming job market and also the phenomena of automation and artificial intelligence on the job market.

In order to successfully prepare them for this change, they need to be provided with information, personalized advice and constant support.

We can proudly report that innovations were made on this field through the spread of different personalized mentoring programs, in which young people are taken care of and receive personal mentoring from the start of their education until they successfully enter the job market.

We need to stop looking at young people only as "work force" and instead focus on discovering their potentials and bring the best out of them.

### ***III. 5. 4 HEALTH & WELLNESS - SDGs: 2, 3, 6, 7***

When it comes to health and basic human needs, we can state that in 2016 79% of young people said to be satisfied with their health and the way they feel.

Still, what we have seen as a common phenomenon among young people is that they are so focused on their physical well-being that they do not pay attention to their mental health, or to be precise, they surely do not consider that as important as physical well-being.

However, these two factors of health are closely interlinked on many levels.

Many times, we have seen that lots of young people who suffered from mental health problems were not even aware that they have a mental health insufficiency.

What we see as the biggest need is to establish a culture and an atmosphere in which young people are taught about the importance of mental health and that it is as essential for well-being as physical health. Dealing with mental health issues should not be a thing that young people feel ashamed of or consider as awkward.

Young people need to adopt a mindset in which they do not only focus on the well-being of their body but on the health of their soul as well.

### ***III. 5. 5 21st CENTURY WELFARE***

For the young generation of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, keeping up with technological development and innovation is not a choice but an existential question.

At the age of digital and technological revolutions, boosting and improving the digital knowledge of young people becomes essential. At the same time, they need to be educated about the importance of how to be part of this process in a way that is not at the expense of their (personal) safety and security.

For the above mentioned reasons we are glad to see that Hungary puts a huge emphasis on providing young people with all the information and security needed to successfully navigate in the digital world.

Digital Wellbeing Program, for example, is a program through which young people and also their parent are able to use all the benefits of digitalization knowing that they can do this in a safe environment where all the harm and danger is filtered out. Another best practice on this field is the No Hate Speech Movement, which tackles cybercrimes, and cyber bullying committed against young users.

As a benefit of digital revolution, young people are provided with the chance to express their thoughts and opinions on many different online platforms. Still, not all of them are fully aware of the dangers of this process. This is exactly the reason why they cannot cope with cyber bullying, for example. They are given the chance to express themselves, but not prepared how to use this opportunity wisely and safely!

We believe that inclusive and safe online spaces for open debate and productive co-working should become universally accessible to new generations.

