



Sustainable Development Goals Policy Statement

The Public Health Association endorses the Sustainable Development Goals as developed and agreed by the United Nations and agreed by New Zealand. The PHA urges the New Zealand government to develop a Plan of Action for implementing the Sustainable Development Goals in New Zealand. The PHA will develop its own action plan based on its strategic priorities.

Overview

The United Nations developed the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to replace the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The 17 SDGs were adopted on September 25th 2015 to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all as part of a new sustainable development agenda.¹ The number and breadth of these goals reflects the interrelated nature of the challenges faced by humanity now and over the coming decades.²

This policy statement is based on the ethical values of public health as set out in PHA's 2012 *Ture Whakaruruhau: Code of ethical principles for public health*³, as well as on global health ethical values, in particular those relating to human rights and justice; the need to recognise and redress historical and present wrongs; solidarity and collective long-term self-interest.

The Sustainable Development Goals

The goals took effect from January 2016, and each goal has specific targets to be achieved over 15 years - up to 2030 - as elements of a global sustainable development agenda. The goals are:

- Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere
- Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
- Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
- Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
- Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
- Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
- Goal 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
- Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

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- Goal 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation
- Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries
- Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
- Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
- Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts (acknowledging the *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change* as the primary forum for negotiating the global response to climate change)
- Goal 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
- Goal 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss
- Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
- Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

The 17 goals are compatible with both the general principles of the PHA, and specific policy statements. The SDGs provide a tool to support the PHA's values and objectives, and the PHA is committed to using the goals to this effect.

Relevance for New Zealand

The Crown's commitment to the Treaty of Waitangi requires endorsing the SDGs where they concern New Zealand (for instance, as identified above in relation to the SDG goals concerning poverty, inequalities, environmental management etc.) – in accordance with Articles 2 and 3. In relation to global obligations, endorsing the SDGs gives effect to the Crown's obligation to protect Māori (Article 1).

The Sustainable Development Goals are universal, and explicitly relate to developed countries as well as countries in development. This means all countries – including New Zealand – will be responsible for working towards achieving the goals and measuring their progress.

The SDGs apply globally and for each member of the United Nations. The PHA recognises that New Zealand is legally and morally obliged to take action to give effect to the SDGs, both as a member of the international community and because it is a signatory country to the SDGs. Not just the health SDG, but each of the SDG goals are concerns of the PHA because they also impact on the health of New Zealanders; for example, both poverty and inequalities exist that drive unequal health outcomes in New Zealand (Goals 1 and 10); the nutritional status of New Zealanders requires improvement, a major health concern (Goal 2); and sustainable management of water, of oceans, seas and marine resources, as well as terrestrial ecosystems, forests, and biodiversity are a challenge in New Zealand as they are worldwide, unmet create huge risks for our public health system (Goals 14 and 15). The need to endorse the SDGs is based both on New Zealand's obligations to the world in general and to its own citizens. As noted by Associate Professor Glenn Banks, from the School of People, Environment and Planning:

“The SDGs will force all countries, including ourselves, to think seriously about our own societies, and our relationship to the rest of the globe. They provide an opportunity to envisage where we want to be in 2030 as a society, and force us to reflect strategically on what we need to do to get there, rather than focus on the immediate and the short term.”⁴

Priorities

Governmental

The Public Health Association supports *The People’s Report on the 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals*⁵ recommendations that government:

1. Fully engage in its commitment and obligations to the global 2030 Agenda and the SDGs within a Te Tiriti o Waitangi partnership model, and through meaningful engagement with civil society. As a Treaty Partner, government must remain mindful that under Article One of Te Tiriti there is a duty and responsibility to protect Māori in the pursuit of Article Two, Rights to Taonga, which includes ngā Hua Māori.
2. Fully engage with all members of civil society in the global 2030 Agenda, with central and local government policies that lead to bold and effective actions, recognising the value of the involvement of civil society including: All young people both as members of their families and as students at their school or members of wider community groups; tangata whenua, with a commitment to building mana enhancing futures together, through the shared visions of hapū and iwi; the community and voluntary sector and non-governmental organisations (NGOs); universities, wananga, schools; Pacific people; people living with disabilities and rare disorders; the elderly; recent migrants, refugees, ethnic communities; LGBTQTI+; Unions; and the private sector. With alignment of current and future policies and programmes, including clearer linkages between the Living Standards Framework, Wellbeing budget and the 2030 Agenda.
3. Establish an SDG ministerial portfolio, with placement of responsibility for the government’s SDG response with the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet. Response to the SDGs must be monitored for both: a just and effective transition to a low carbon and low emission economy; maximising the civil society engagement through full implementation of the Open Government Partnership National Action Plan.
4. Promote and facilitate the involvement of all people in volunteering for the achievement of the SDGs in line with the 2015 UN Resolution: Integrating volunteering in the next decade.
5. Continue building stakeholder partnerships on the SDGs, namely;
 - Aid for Trade strategy, with focus on poverty reduction
 - Joining the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children
 - Fuller implementation of the Pacific reset
 - Working in partnership and across government to reduce violence against women and children
 - Working together to develop resilience and mitigation and adaptation in the face of climate change
6. Adopt a target to increase the share of the bottom 40% of incomes by between 1-2 percentage points by 2030, similar to the most equal OECD countries.
7. Set targets to reduce the Gini coefficient to 26 and/or Palma Ratio to 0.9 or less are necessary to achieve levels which are similar to the most equal OECD countries.
8. Implement the recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and to implement a National Women’s Action Plan as recommended by CEDAW.

9. Form partnerships between government agencies and appropriate Māori providers and community services to: encourage community and cultural solutions to New Zealand's high levels of violence against women and children.
10. Implement recommendations from the Universal Periodic Review including explicit prohibition of discrimination against transgender people in the Human Rights Act and develop legislation and policy to enable people across the gender continuum to "be who I am" and express their identity, and enjoy equal opportunity without discrimination.
11. Fully put into action the concluding observations from the third periodic review of the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
12. Develop a national homelessness strategy to be co-designed by the sector and resourced by central and local government to ensure housing is affordable and sustainable. This needs to include wrap around services to address the special needs of youth and other vulnerable groups.
13. Move to a low carbon environment and low emissions economy, understanding it requires a Just Transition so that affected communities are not further disadvantaged. The 2019 report *Whakamana Tāngata: Restoring Dignity to Social Security in New Zealand*⁶ has important recommendations to ensure economic inclusion.
14. Increase New Zealand's climate-related support in line with the promise from developed countries of US\$100 billion by 2020, part of this to be used for sustainable energy access that also limits deforestation and fossil fuel use, contributing to both SDG 13 and SDG 7.
15. Map and publicise non-sustainable practices and native species at risk of extinction. Involve communities in the response.
16. Implement international marine agreements to protect our waters: Reinvigorate and review the Oceans Policy project and ocean/seawater management legislation to achieve a more sustainable ecosystem, and address pollution of marine reserves; Review and enhance New Zealand's national plan of action on illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.
17. Support Hua Parakore / organic farming / regenerative agriculture with a holistic approach to landcare management by: subsidising farmers and producers to adopt natural, harmless methods of pest and disease management; encouraging localised bio regions supporting cultural, social and economic values; Strictly enforce with higher penalties any harm caused from pesticides, and immediately phase out the most toxic harmful herbicide such as glyphosate.
18. Ensure our cities and their people are increasingly resilient through preparing for short and long term challenges related to disasters and rising sea levels, and in managing their impact with the involvement of central and local government, communities, networks and volunteers.

Central and Local Governments

1. Work inclusively with NGOs and community to recognise the vital role of Māori designed frameworks that address the multiple inequalities and provide solutions that are Māori led and adequately funded.
2. Work with NGOs and the private sector to apply urgent attention to align housing, health, education and employment policies to support people experiencing inequalities to live a better life.
3. Advocate to agencies responsible for education to lead integrated history programmes that educate New Zealand children on the history of their country, beginning with Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and also ensure that children's rights underpin the implementation plan for the Child, Youth and Wellbeing strategy and the SDGs.
4. Apply more collaborative and cross cutting approaches to understand and address the many causes of poor mental health, and provide better access to services and pathways for continuum of care from primary to secondary services. This also requires greater monitoring of new funding and progress against best practice.
5. Ensure people have "the right to the highest attainable standard of health" and universal quality health care, through a more cohesive approach, with priority placed on those with most need: Māori, Pacific, people living with disabilities and those living with rare disorders and other vulnerable groups.
6. Work with stakeholders to change the pervasive gender stereotypes, attitudes and norms that drive sexual and family violence and gender inequality.
7. Create pay equity and parity by: increasing the number of women in governance and leadership across sectors; ensuring greater flexibility in work places; encouraging a culture of support for men to take parental leave.
8. Promote with urgency individual and collective actions to: support zero waste and carbon zero solutions; support marginalised communities impacted by climate without causing further disadvantage; use a gender analysis framework when planning climate, development or community activity; reduce emissions including those from households and cars, and increase sources of renewable energy; equip hapū with the necessary access to upskilling, and participating in alternative energy solutions for maintaining rangatiratanga, or sovereignty of their own whenua; provide climate finance, and establish climate aligned investment and finance mechanisms to ensure mitigation and adaptation at the local level.
9. Work with the private sector to improve efficient public transport and incentivise the use of low or no emission; transport options, including vehicles. Discourage emission producing transport (through disincentives).
10. Reduce energy cost and hardship and enable community-owned generation and distribution networks, providing income generating activities.
11. Assist vulnerable and medically dependent people in marginalized areas with improvements in energy efficiency and transitions to renewable energy, thus also reducing energy costs and energy poverty.

PHA actions to support this policy include:

Nationally:

1. Advocate for action by central government in the areas identified above, and for including civil society in developing a national plan of action.
2. Communicate to local government the need to take steps to give effect to the SDGs in their communities; and support PHA branches to work with local authorities for this purpose.

3. Work with other NGOs to develop joint policy statements as a basis of advocacy to central and local government on the SDGs.
4. Ensure that PHA policy statements identify, where appropriate, the relevance of that policy position to the SDGs.
5. Ensure that the PHA website includes information on organisations with responsibilities for the SDGs and NGOs both in NZ and elsewhere.
6. Include in PHA submissions, where relevant, reference to how the topic of the submission relates to New Zealand's SDG commitments.
7. Participate in discussions and consultative processes, and work with Pacific public health NGOs in Aotearoa New Zealand, and the Pacific PHA on issues relevant to the implementation of the SDGs in New Zealand and the Pacific.

Internationally:

8. Work with Public Health Association of Australia for a resolution/declaration by the World Federation of PHAs (WFPHA) on the SDGs.
9. Advocate for implementation of the SDGs to be addressed at relevant international forums such as conferences and WHO meetings.

References

¹ [Resolution A. RES/70/1. Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Seventieth session United Nations General Assembly, New York. 2015 Sep;25.](#)

² http://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/about-massey/news/article.cfm?mnarticle_uuid=816ED3F0-E30A-D79A-CD3C-32008708D274

³ <https://app.box.com/file/140486696624>

⁴ Ibid (see ²)

⁵ <https://www.sdg.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/SDG-Report-2019-8.pdf>

⁶ <http://weag.govt.nz/assets/documents/WEAG-report/aed960c3ce/WEAG-Report.pdf>