



THE SENATE
SENATE FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DEFENCE AND TRADE
REFERENCES COMMITTEE

Inquiry into the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)
Public Hearing –7 December 2018
Questions Taken on Notice
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

1 HANSARD, p. 21

Senator MOORE: When I went to the last couple, they just had 'Australian government'. I presumed it was DFAT because DFAT has been taking the lead, but I genuinely don't know where the funding for that would come from. So can I ask you to take on notice where that funding would come from and where that funding has come from, because we know that's happened. So where has the funding come from in the last two or three years, and has there been a discussion or a decision about providing funding again? It's costly to bring people from all around the country to it. I know lots of people self-fund to get there, but just to put on a major forum for a couple of days always costs money. So I just want to know whether that's been committed to into the future. We did the voluntary response last year. Has there been any interaction between Australia and the UN about what we are doing with the SDG agenda between now and the next voluntary report?

Dr Rogers: We are just checking—

Senator MOORE: You can take these questions on notice. My understanding is that, when the UN aid group looks at the countries that are doing voluntary reports, they also look at that in a wider discussion of a couple of chosen goals. So they have a focus on the gender equality goal that was linked to the forums that people came to and gave evidence on for their countries. I forget which goal it was this year, but my understanding is that that is going to be a cycle. So 2019 will have a focus on another goal. Everyone is invited to come and talk about that goal and they have side panels about that process. Even though Australia will not be—I feel certain—doing a second voluntary report next year, I'm just wondering how we determine who goes and presents the report. I know this is not a formal report, but if, for instance, they were focusing on goal 11 this year, who would be invited to go and what would be our engagement?

Dr Rogers: We'll check on that process.

Ms Livermore: Maybe I could elaborate. At each year of reporting at the high-level political forum there have been four goals that have been examined. By the end of 2019, each of the 17 goals will have had that level of focus. The UN is looking at that format. So, beyond 2019, it may not be the same format of having that deep dive into four particular goals.

Senator MOORE: So what happened in 2016 and 2017 when we weren't voluntarily reporting? What was Australia's role in 2016 and 2017, and what do you anticipate Australia's role will be in 2019? That can be taken on notice.

Ms Livermore: Sure.

Response:

Where has the funding come from (for the Australian Sustainable Development Goals Summits) in the last two or three years, and has there been a discussion or a decision about providing funding again?

SDG Summit 2016

The Australian Council for International Development (ACFID), Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS), Sustainable Development Solutions Network Australia/Pacific (SDSN Australia) and Global Compact Network Australia (GCNA) co-hosted the inaugural Australian SDG Summit on 7 September 2016. DFAT has funding agreements with ACFID and GCNA. These funding agreements list the SDGs and Addis Ababa Action Agenda as priority areas. No additional funding was provided by DFAT for the 2016 summit.

SDG Summit 2018

The SDG Summit held on 13 March 2018, was co-hosted by ACFID, ACOSS, GCNA, SDSN Australia and the United Nations Association of Australia. Monash University was the contracting party for the event. DFAT provided a grant of \$20,000 to Monash University to use for the 2018 Australia SDG Summit.

Future SDG Summit(s)

DFAT will respond to any future requests for funding in accordance with procurement policy.

What was Australia's role (at the UN High Level Political Forum) in 2016 and 2017, and what do you anticipate Australia's role will be in 2019?

UN High Level Political Forum 2016

Australia participated in the 2016 UN High Level Political Forum (HLPF) to discuss, share and consider approaches to support the implementation and review of the 2030 Agenda. This was achieved through bilateral meetings, meetings with UN agencies and NGOs, attendance at side events, listening to countries who presented first Voluntary National Reviews. Australia delivered a National Statement in support of the 2030 Agenda; and contributed to, and supported, the HLPF Ministerial Statement, which concludes the discussions of the HLPF.

UN High Level Political Forum 2017

Australia's outcomes at the 2017 HLPF were similar to those achieved at the 2016 Forum. Australia adopted a more active participation, for example through giving interventions at side events.

In addition, DFAT sponsored a side event titled 'Closing the gender data gap: measuring poverty, disability and multi-dimensional deprivation'. This event examined the need to close gender data gaps to ensure high quality evidence supports efforts to achieve the targets and goals of the 2030 Agenda.

During the 2017 HLPF, the Australian Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations announced that Australia would present our first Voluntary National Review (VNR) at the 2018 HLPF. As such, the delegation had an increased focus on considering and learning from the review approaches taken by VNR presenting countries.

UN High Level Political Forum 2019

Australia will again be an active participant in the 2019 HLPF. It is likely that Australia will host an Australia-led side event at the 2019 HLPF. Details have not been finalised at this stage and consultations with key stakeholders is underway. Australia will provide support as required to Pacific partners who are delivering VNRs.