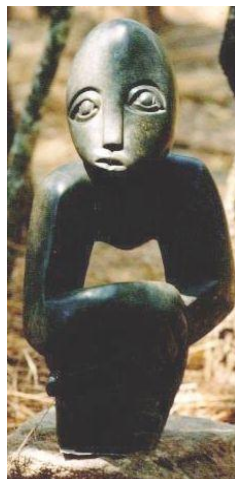




SDGs – A new challenge

On 25 September 2015, the General Assembly of the United Nations passed the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) replace the Millennium



Development Goals (MDGs). They link the principle of sustainability with economic, environmental and social development. The SDGs concern all, industrialised, emerging and developing nations alike. The realisation of these goals and targets would be an important step to stem the massive flow of migrants and refugees who have left their homes in search of security and a better life. The implementation of the SDGs will not succeed without strong political pressure from civil society. AEFJN has already worked for many years on some of the SDGs. During the weeks of Lent we will present some of the new development goals and ask ourselves how we could contribute to their implementation.

What are the strengths of the SDGs?

Compared to the Millennium Goals (MDGs) the sustainable development Goals (SDGs) present a considerable progress:

- They oblige not only developing countries, but all states. European countries also need a new sustainability strategy.
- The MDGs focussed on cutting the number of the poor by half. The SDGs want to link poverty reduction with the sustainability goals decided during the world summit of 1992 in Rio de Janeiro.
- As the starting point for development is very different in each country, every government must define its own goals and targets.

What are the weaknesses of the SDGs?

The 17 goals and the 168 targets contain some contradictions:

- They are not legally binding and do not foresee any sanctions.
- They are based on a neo-liberal economic model with a strong emphasis on economic growth and technical progress. Yet a truly sustainable system cannot be achieved without radical changes in our present patterns of consumption and production.
- They remain rather vague without measureable targets.

Words to challenge us

We can no longer speak of sustainable development apart from intergenerational solidarity. Once we start to think about the kind of world we are leaving to future generations, we look at things differently; we realize that the world is a gift which we have freely received and must share with others. (Laudato Si 159)

‘As never before in history, common destiny beckons us to seek a new beginning... Let ours be a time remembered for the awakening of a new reverence for life, the firm resolve to achieve sustainability, the quickening of the struggle for justice and peace, and the joyful celebration of life.’ (LS 207)

The 17 SDGs

- 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
- 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
- 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