



Summary

The Government's preparedness to implement the sustainable development goals

In 2015, all United Nations members signed up to *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (the 2030 Agenda). The 2030 Agenda seeks to improve life for current and future generations, particularly for those who are more vulnerable or described by the 2030 Agenda as being “the furthest behind”. It sets out 17 sustainable development goals to be achieved by 2030. These goals encompass social, environmental, and economic sustainable development. Each goal has several targets designed to create urgent action. There are 169 targets overall.

We carried out a review of how the Government is demonstrating its commitment to the 2030 Agenda. We looked at what arrangements are in place and how the Government is encouraging stakeholders and the public to engage with efforts to achieve the sustainable development goals by 2030.

The Government has stated that it intends to achieve the sustainable development goals “through a combination of domestic action, international leadership on global issues and support for developing countries”.

The Government produced its first report on New Zealand's progress towards the sustainable development goals in 2019. The report, *He waka eke noa – Towards a better future, together: New Zealand's progress towards the SDGs 2019* highlights a range of policies and activities that broadly contribute to the sustainable development goals.

Although the report refers to some targets that align with sustainable development goals, such as reducing child poverty and greenhouse gas emissions, it has not specified targets across all the sustainable development goals that New Zealand has committed to achieving by 2030, or whether the country is on track to achieve them. In our view, the Government still needs to clarify:

- whether it will set targets for each of the sustainable development goals New Zealand will work towards and, if so, in which areas;
- what specific actions it will take to implement the sustainable development goals; and
- how it will measure progress.



After that commitment has been clarified, the roles, responsibilities, and expectations of government agencies need to be more clearly defined. The Government also needs to consider how it will work with Māori to ensure that plans to achieve the sustainable development goals uphold and reflect te Tiriti o Waitangi.

Engagement with stakeholders and the public is also needed to increase awareness of New Zealand's commitment to the goals and to encourage participation across all sectors.

Being clear about targets and transparently reporting on progress are both necessary to enable Parliament and the public to assess the Government's performance and hold it to account.

The Government has improved the data that is available about well-being. We support the Government's efforts in this area. Two monitoring frameworks that assess well-being outcomes have

been developed, and these have several indicators that align with the sustainable development goals.

However, improvements are needed if these frameworks are to adequately monitor progress. Although there are efforts under way to address data gaps, and we acknowledge the challenges in this work, we are concerned that these efforts might come too late to help determine New Zealand's baseline data and subsequent progress towards achieving the sustainable development goals' 2030 targets.

In 2020, the United Nations referred to the remaining years to 2030 as the "decade of action" for the sustainable development goals. It is our hope that the Government acts on our recommendations and takes the necessary steps to define, measure progress against, and ultimately achieve New Zealand's commitments to the sustainable development goals by 2030.