What is the history of this issue and how does it impact First Nations?

Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda) is a United Nations Resolution unanimously adopted by the General Assembly in 2015 and affirmed over 40 times. The 2030 Agenda comes with 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that articulate global action to eradicate poverty and set a forward-looking path to a sustainable, prosperous planet with resilient peoples.

The Government of Canada has made the SDG commitments a priority and is developing a national strategy to track progress on SDG implementation domestically. As part of this process, and as mentioned in Towards Canada’s 2030 Agenda National Strategy, Canada has specifically mentioned supporting Reconciliation as part of the implementation of the SDGs. For Canada to fulfill its commitment to achieve the SDGs and “leave no one behind”, a rights-based approach that is coherent, comprehensive and balanced is needed that will guarantee the meaningful inclusion and decision-making of First Nations in the implementation and monitoring of the SDGs.

Since 2020, the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) have signed an funding agreement with Employment and Skills Development Canada (ESDC) to work on developing awareness and capacity around SDGs, with a goal of providing direction towards the development and implementation of the 2030 Agenda National Strategy.

How has the AFN’s recent advocacy affected this area?

Chiefs-in-Assembly have provided many mandates to AFN that align with the individual SDGs, but there is a need to connect those mandates to create a coherent message to drive support to integrate First Nations perspectives in the development of Canada’s 2030 Agenda.

In addition, the AFN has been engaged in the development of a National Outcomes-Based Framework as a key mechanism of mutual accountability within a new fiscal relationship that delivers results by measuring progress in closing the socio-economic gaps between First Nations and non-Indigenous Canadians. This work strongly aligns with the SDGs as a whole and aims to develop frameworks, indicators and data that will inform AFN’s advocacy.
Where do we hope to go in the future?

Ensuring the inclusion of First Nations priorities in the implementation of the SDGs domestically

Policy development around the SDGs will likely be an iterative process and AFN can guide this process by ensuring the inclusion of First Nations in Canada’s 2030 national strategy, as directed by resolutions. The SDGs have substantial links to humans’ rights and to the UN Declaration, and these linkages will be used the AFN to inform input into the national strategy. Additionally, AFN’s advocacy can ensure that the implementation of the national strategy addresses underlying issues that perpetuate poverty and inequality for First Nations, addresses data gaps and uses First Nation appropriate indicators that reflect true progress on the ground.

Using the SDGs as a mutual accountability framework to address the socio-economic gaps between First Nations and non-Indigenous Canadians.

Through the process of engaging in the development of the 2030 Agenda national strategy and Canadian Indicator Framework, AFN’s advocacy can allow for improved engagement on policy development specifically around addressing the socio-economic gaps between First Nations and non-Indigenous Canadians, which are a result of historic marginalization and discrimination towards First Nations. The SDGs can supplement existing First Nations frameworks by addressing data gaps, informing indicator development and developing mutual accountability.

Links:
- Towards Canada’s 2030 Agenda National Strategy
- 2019 AGA – 2030 Agenda and the SDGs
- AFN’s International Advocacy

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1 15 of the 17 SDGs are closely linked to human rights and 73 out of the 169 targets have substantial links to the UN Declaration. See the SDGs and Indigenous Peoples Infographic.

The AFN is the national organization representing First Nations citizens in Canada.

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For more information please go to: www.afn.ca