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Keynote

New partnerships for a universal, transformative 2030 Agenda: we are all in this together!,
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Jumpstarting is a wonderful metaphor. Because it makes you think. Those who jump high must come down again. You'd better be aware of this reality when you prepare for jumping. And another one: In my previous life when I found my vehicle's battery discharged I jumpstarted my car. I was obsessed with spare batteries and stuff. Nowadays, it is different. With a more sustainable lifestyle, I do not own a vehicle any more, and jumpstarting is a long forgotten exercise.

The theme of this conference makes a good point. It is high time to check up on our domestic agenda and the readiness for governments and non-government actors to work together.

Germany is now well placed to deliver meaningful action. This is what I want to talk about. And I will also make the point that we have to reconfigure what we have in order to bring ourselves up to speed.

The fact that we do have governance elements in place for sustainable development must not be taken as granted. Nor is it a reason for us to now just sit on our hands. Learnings are important. We (Germany) meandered through a couple of blind shots and weak initiatives. In Government departmental silo architectures failed. In civil society I see a withdrawal from comprehensive approaches. The private sector was too much focussed on reputation.

Ten to fifteen years ago, traction increased. At first slowly, and it is still today clearly not sufficient. But after all:

- We have a governance model that works.
- We have stitched goals and targets, monitoring and reviewing to a routine that informs the political debate.
- We have created a mindset that drives the idea of sustainability.

But I am sure: We need to do more and we need to do better.

Politically we have not yet banned the danger that sustainable development is sidelined or put on the back burner. The best practice of a couple of hundreds top enterprises has not yet changed the mainstream. There is still no political framing that would incentivize cross cutting partnerships. The silo is still not dead.

That is why there is an agenda for doing more and doing better.

1. The first point is on the core process management.

In Germany, the Chancellery is in charge of coordination and resolution of conflicts of interest which in principle is good. But we need to increase managerial capacities and we need to institutionalize the due diligence of departments. And we need to increase for public visibility of proactive action.

2. The second point is on the promotion of new ideas.

The interface of politics/society/science is the most important part of transformative governance. The core driver for this, in Germany, is the Council for SD with its fifteen members from the public and private sector. In our role as advisor we are reporting back to the Chancellery. We also have the right to independently initiate action such as e.g. the Sustainability Reporting Code.

But that is not all. We will publish the *German SD Almanach* informing foreign interested parties about what we are doing in Germany. As we speak we are about to improve the vertical integration of SD strategies by establishing four *regional networking hubs*. Plus, my colleague Verónica Tomei is here with me today to introduce the *open SDGClub.Berlin* that will start in November.

3. The third issue is on democracy and the rule of law.

Involving regulators in strategizing sustainability is important. In Germany, the Parliamentary Body on SD makes sustainability a continued element in legislator routines. Here, I am advocating a next level of debate and anchoring sustainable development in the German Constitutional Law.

As we speak, the German Government is putting together a new German SD strategy. Alignment is a key issue. The domestic SDS goals and targets are the intended national determined contributions to the universe Agenda for a sustainable development.

As early as 2014 the Council was tasked with a first assessment of what SDG would mean for Germany? We did a broad stakeholder based analyses and, as result, we suggested a full revision to the national SDS. We established a new reading of the domestic / global interlinkages. This is the “triple approach”: measures to be taken domestically, measures to be taken in Germany but against the backdrop of global responsibility or domestic capacities to contribute globally valuable solutions, measures to be taken in international partnership and multinational competence.

We also recommended advancing what I call the machinery of implementation. Germany has experience with two Peer Reviews that in scope and method differ from conventional one-

point peer review exercises. We now need to valorise and institutionalize reviews on all levels.

Self-governance and full regulation must not be perceived as antagonistic any longer. In concluding, I like to make this point with reference on natural soil resources.

Modern German soil policies started with a conceptual framework (1985) and with increasing research efforts, raising public awareness and promoting voluntary measures. E.g. we checked old industrial archives in order to better understand the legacy of contaminated brownfields and leaking waste dumps.

But we did not succeed in establishing soil legislation and binding protocols.

Then, something happened. The German unification piled up the number of contaminated sites. The question was “how clean is clean”, how to regulate hazardous soil, how to adapt the polluter pays principle and how to establish precaution against further deterioration became serious. Would we need to clean up soil and groundwater to pristine level, to multifunctional usability, or to a reasonable but risk adverse level that would go with the intended use of the soil?

The German Soil Protection Legislation responded with a legal and functional framework for cleanup and some elements of precaution that, in principle, works quite well. This piece of legislation can provide valuable orientation for other countries' implementation of soil-related SDGs.

Meanwhile, for Germany the Council recommended stepping up on soil sustainability. For phosphorus we should enter a recycling mode. Radically addressing food loss and waste is a precaution measure for soils. Zero soil degradation policies would phase out open top landfilling of plastic waste, and would significantly reduce marine plastic littering. We also advocate for the SD strategy to finally embark on a target and indicator addressing sustainable consumption. We recommend adapting the Sustainable Shopping Basket for this purpose, and adding an indicator for frugal lifestyle.

In addition I suggest a soil transparency initiative. Transparency and due diligence would decrease corruption, speculation and financial malpractice. It would address the unhealthy influx of non-agro financial capital into the rural soil economy.

And I suggest an underpinning of the conceptual SDG wording of land degradation neutrality. For Germany, the ambitious target on reducing land consumption must be kept an important element of the SDS. The same goes for the domestic goals for the share of organic farming. Additional efforts are needed to equal the amount of soil being degraded and being reclaimed back to greenfield quality. I advocate introducing a major soil stewardship initiative combining private sector frontrunners, civil society and Government.