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**High-level Political Forum (HLPF) under the 74th Session of the General Assembly
Accelerating the Implementation of the
2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

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Agenda 2030 seeks a more sustainable future for all. This includes emphasising the responsibility of States to respect, protect and promote human rights and that, quite simply, is one of the Council of Europe's main purposes.

The Council of Europe contributed from the outset to the process leading to the adoption of Agenda 2030 and we have been clear about our determination to embed it in our work. All nine operational programmes in our proposed Programme and Budget for 2020-2021 support the implementation of the Agenda. The Council of Europe maintains contact with relevant UN interlocutors in New York and Geneva and participates regularly in various international fora at both global and regional level.

By definition, our philosophy is that most, if not all, of the Council of Europe's activities contribute to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

As such, it has not been necessary for the organisation to set up new objectives, instruments or activities, but rather to align existing activities with the relevant SDGs.

This has been reflected as of the current 2018-2019 biennium programme of activities and budget, which clearly identifies to which specific SDGs each programme is linked. In terms of our new biennial priorities, the SDGs are integral to our programme design. Moreover, our intergovernmental committees have been tasked with contributing in their respective fields to the implementation of the Agenda and reviewing progress regularly.

The unique added-value of the Council of Europe is a combination of:

- its pan-European membership.
- its multi-stakeholder dimension: in addition to its intergovernmental bodies, the Council of Europe's unique structure includes the Parliamentary Assembly, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, the Commissioner for Human Rights, the Conference of International NGOs, as well as the European Court of Human Rights, which contributes to the implementation of a number of Goals through its judgements. These have effect in all 47 of our member states.
- its standards: a comprehensive measurable normative framework which can be used as indicators/benchmarks.

- its monitoring/follow-up bodies and processes – examples include our conventions against trafficking in human beings (CETS 197) and on violence against women (CETS 210). Both have monitoring mechanisms that guide the Parties in stepping up measures to prevent and combat these crimes, directly supporting the implementation of Goals 5, 8 and 16.
- its technical co-operation programmes for individual countries for capacity-building, largely supported by the European Union. The Council of Europe manages multi-annual programmes with a current contractual volume approaching 200 million EUR. Overall, these cooperation programmes currently include some 4000 different support activities to bring our conventions and practices into effective national application.
- its global outreach: most of the organisation's legally-binding conventions and activities are open to participation by non-member states.

While recognising that the main responsibility for the implementation of Agenda 2030 is with the member States, we consider our role as an international organisation as being to assist and facilitate our member States in their contribution to SDG implementation.

In particular, the Council of Europe, through its instruments, can contribute to the national implementation reporting by its member States and a number of member States have already referred to their work in the Council of Europe in their national reporting.

It is with this purpose in mind that we created a specific website to assist member States to draw on the organisation's work in the preparation of the national reviews. Council of Europe member States are thus encouraged to draw on the Information on the website to illustrate that their participation in the organisation's work also contributes to their national implementation of Agenda 2030.

I should like to conclude with a reference to this year's Lisbon Forum on 25-26 November which will focus on the Council of Europe's contribution to the SDGs, bringing together the four main stakeholders of the organisations (governments, parliaments, local and regional authorities and civil society). This Forum will reflect on how a regional player - especially in Europe - could contribute to better achieving the SDGs in addition to action at the national and global levels.