

Open letter to party leaders: The 2021 Scottish Election and a Wellbeing and Sustainable Development (Scotland) Bill

Communications pack

Thank you for doing your bit to help us communicate this [open letter](#) being sent to all party leaders in Scotland asking them to commit their parties to a Wellbeing and Sustainable Development (Scotland) Bill. This pack will help you spread the message about why we have all put our collective energy behind this ambitious recommendation.

If you have any questions, please contact the coordinator for SDG Network Scotland, Paul Bradley, at paul.bradley@scvo.org.uk. You can find out more about the network and join us [here](#).

Social media

You can retweet the @SDGScotland by [clicking here](#).

Alternatively, you can publish your own tweet.

Start by downloading this [image](#) (right click and copy or download from here) and sharing on Twitter to help us get the message out:

You could use any of the following twitter example text, amended as you see fit, alongside one of the images on any social media platform:

This week, we joined forces with over 70 organisations across #Scotland as part of @SDGScotland and wrote to @ScotParl party leaders asking them to commit to bold legislation on #wellbeing and #SDGs ahead of the #Holyrood2021 elections.

Like and share to show your support!

Alternative text you could use :

We're calling for a new Bill on #wellbeing and #SDGs ahead of the #Holyrood2021 elections. Can @ScotParl parties show their commitment to helping the next @ScotGov do better for people and planet?

Read @SDGScotland open letter from over 70 organisations. Share and like!

Newsletter

Do you or your organisation send out a regular newsletter to members, supporters or customers? If so, you could include the following news item in your next release:

As the new year gets underway, many of us around the world still find ourselves in the grip of a global pandemic. The impacts on our collective health and wellbeing have already been grave; the social, environmental and economic determinants of inequality put under the spotlight; and our interdependencies starkly illustrated.

As we look towards the future, we must be ambitious and bold to ensure we do not make our planet uninhabitable through irreversible biodiversity and climate chaos, leave people behind or lose sight of what is important in terms of our own wellbeing and how that connects to others.

That's why we [\[insert organisation\]](#) teamed up with over 70 other organisations across Scotland as part of [the SDG Network Scotland](#) and wrote [an open letter to Scotland's First Minister and other Party Leaders](#) in Scotland asking them to bring forward a Wellbeing and Sustainable Development (Scotland) Bill during the next Parliament (WSD Bill).

This Bill would aim to ensure actions in Scotland contribute to the betterment of wellbeing, both here in Scotland and elsewhere as we navigate out of converging global crises.

[Find out more.](#)

Blog/Article

Do you run your own blog/articles or does your organisation host guest blogs on its website? If so, please cross-post either our blog or article to your site:

We [\[insert organisation\]](#) teamed up with over 70 other organisations across Scotland as part of [the SDG Network Scotland](#) and wrote [an open letter to Scotland's First Minister and other Party Leaders](#) in Scotland asking them to bring forward a Wellbeing and Sustainable Development (Scotland) Bill during the next Parliament (WSD Bill).

In some ways, the rhetoric around the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Scotland has been ahead of the curve in UK terms for many years. However, this has not been backed up by enough concrete action to ensure policymaking and decisions are genuinely always supportive of sustainable development outcomes, here and elsewhere.

More importantly, as the new year gets underway, many of us around the world still find ourselves in the grip of a global pandemic. The impacts on our collective health and

wellbeing have already been grave; the social, environmental and economic determinants of inequality put under the spotlight; and our interdependencies starkly illustrated.

To ensure we do not make our planet uninhabitable through irreversible biodiversity and climate chaos, leave people behind or lose sight of what is important in terms of our own wellbeing and how that connects to others, it is more important than ever that we find a way to make sure we work together better and in a systematic way, especially in government, but also across the whole of society.

Those of us who understand and support the holistic ambition of the SDGs get this more than most. By coming together and building on existing legislation with a Wellbeing and Sustainable Development Bill, the next Scottish Government can ensure that policy-makers and decision-makers, from national to local, are bound by sustainable development principles in everything they do.

The [Community Empowerment Act 2015](#), which puts Scotland's National Performance Framework (NPF) on a statutory footing, was a good start. The latest iteration of the NPF (2018) sets out [11 National Outcomes](#). There is broad top-level alignment to the SDGs and it has the stated aim to 'reduce inequalities and give equal importance to economic, environmental and social progress'.

However, this act only requires Scottish ministers to consult on, develop and publish a new NPF every five years. It does not require public bodies, the Scottish Parliament or local authorities to consult on the way we measure progress towards those national outcomes, nor does it require institutions to assess the impact of their decisions and actions against the 11 National Outcomes.

There is also limited understanding of how progress on the different outcomes impact upon one another. This act alone, then, cannot ensure a coherent approach to policymaking towards the realisation of the national outcomes contained within the NPF, nor the broader SDGs.

To that end, the legislation would make it a statutory requirement for all public bodies and local authorities in Scotland to take full account of the short and long-term Sustainable Development impact of their decisions, both in Scotland and elsewhere, and set objectives towards achieving all the SDGs and National Outcomes, ensuring that they impact positively on people's wellbeing and the environment here in Scotland and globally.

Crucially, this would include a requirement to ensure, minimally, that decisions not only avoid negative social, economic and environmental impacts here in Scotland but also have no negative impact on the lives and livelihoods of people elsewhere, particularly in low-income countries.

The legislation would also be linked to the SDGs and the NPF, would require that public bodies and local authorities set and monitor, with public participation, legally binding targets on all SDGs and National Outcomes, including:

- Poverty and inequality, including gender equality;
- Net-zero carbon emissions (including emissions created by goods & services produced overseas, but consumed in Scotland);
- Recovery from biodiversity loss;
- Universal human rights, linking directly to the UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill and forthcoming Scottish human rights legislation incorporating social, economic, cultural and environmental rights;
- Mitigation of Climate-related socio-ecological disaster risks, impacting differentially on vulnerable communities;
- Social, economic and environmental impacts in majority world and lower income countries.

The Bill would also create an independent commission and knowledge exchange network to support public bodies to work towards sustainable development and wellbeing goals across their policy remits, monitor progress in setting realistic and achievable objectives, and review their outcomes.

Now is the time for political parties in Scotland to demonstrate their leadership and commitment to the SDGs.

Quotes:

Lewis Ryder-Jones (SDG Scotland Network Chair and Deputy CEO at Scotland's International Development Alliance) said:

"People everywhere are facing the twin challenges of the pandemic and the climate crisis, with warnings of a new tidal wave of poverty and suffering on the horizon.

"Our political leaders must do everything in their power to ensure that Scotland acts now for its own citizens while remaining globally responsible.

"While financial support remains a critical tool in tackling poverty here and elsewhere, we also know that everything we do in – and from – Scotland can impact on the wellbeing of people everywhere and the planet. It is therefore critical that global and local factors are taken into account across the full spectrum of decision-making here in Scotland

"We hope all political parties support this call for a Wellbeing and Sustainable Development Bill. Tackling poverty and inequality and standing in solidarity with the most marginalised and vulnerable people across the world must be at the heart of everything we do."

"This Bill would be a critical step towards delivering the outward facing, compassionate, and environmentally sustainable country we all want to live in."