

Thank you, chair.

We commend the Icelandic government on its overall ambitious progress report.

However, we note the challenge of achieving complete policy coherence to promote well-being for all. All too often short-term economic considerations and corporate profit interests dominate policy-making, jeopardizing progress on sustainable development. How will Iceland ensure that policy decisions in health, environment and all other areas are taken in the public interest? And how will these efforts be safeguarded against fundamental conflicts of interest of some private sector actors?

Second, although the report states that various stakeholders were consulted, young people's criticism voiced during the consultation is missing from the report. Although we value the emphasis on mobilizing youth in the implementation of the SDGs, the methods do matter. It is unorthodox for governments to select their own council to provide a youth perspective. How will the Icelandic government involve young people formally and democratically, in the working group on SDGs – to ensure meaningful participation?

Third, it was worrying to see the reduction of Iceland's development aid by 2.38 million USD. How is the government planning to increase its development aid by 43% again?

Further, regarding the climate crisis, how is Iceland going to challenge leaders of other nations to set the aim of carbon neutrality similar to the one Iceland has set for itself by 2040? Will the government require the private sector to calculate their carbon footprint and incentivise reductions in emissions?

Our final question concerns cross-sectorial, horizontal integration and collaboration. How is the government working to better address inter-linkages between SDGs and to more systematically tackle cross-cutting barriers to achieving the SDGs?

## **Statement 2**

In elaboration of our previous questions, we want to commend the government of Iceland for putting strong emphasis on the role of prevention and health promotion for sustainable development.

The reports lists "chronic diseases linked to lifestyle" as one of the main challenges. This is important because the heavy and growing burden of Non-Communicable diseases like heart diseases, mental ill-health or cancer are fueled by health risk factors such as tobacco and alcohol, and the economic operators behind these products.

For example, alcohol harm is a major and cross-cutting obstacle to Sustainable Development, adversely affecting not only health but 12 other SDGs, too. The Icelandic alcohol policy model belongs to the best in the world and is critical to achieve what Prime Minister Jakobsdottir wrote in the introduction of the report: achieve "human economic and social wellbeing for all and protection of the rights of children and marginalized groups".

We note with concern that the alcohol policy model, especially the government retail monopoly and the advertising ban, is under attack. How is the government planning to develop the Icelandic alcohol policy model as an integral part of its commitment to sustainable development?

In addition to that, Iceland has received well-deserved international acclaim for its comprehensive, scientific, and highly impactful approach to prevention of harm caused by alcohol and other drugs, as effective means to strengthen communities, increase well-being and foster development. Is the government planning to include this know-how and best practice into its international development assistance efforts?