



SDG Position Paper

**A hope for the world:
Sustainable Development Goals
and the 2030 Agenda**

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**Seek justice,
correct oppression;
bring justice to the fatherless,
plead the widow's cause.**

(Isaiah 1,17)

Introduction

Members and partners of Center of Church Based Development (henceforth: CKU) consider the vision of the Sustainable Development Goals, ultimately to ending poverty, to be a moral and spiritual imperative. The 2030 agenda is a continuation of our commitment as Christians to the world we live in ¹⁾.

As a faith-based network of churches and organizations, CKU shares the Sustainable Development Goals' vision for the world. CKU perceives the 2030 Agenda is in line with God's mission of justice, peace and respect for all creation and believes that pursuing the SDG agenda is also to seek for the meaningful, joyful, and eternal life which God has intended for everyone. Leaving no-one behind is a key Biblical value which we work to promote in political choices.

CKU members and partners (in short CKU) share the vision presented in the 2030 Agenda and recognizes the urgent need for global answers to global challenges.

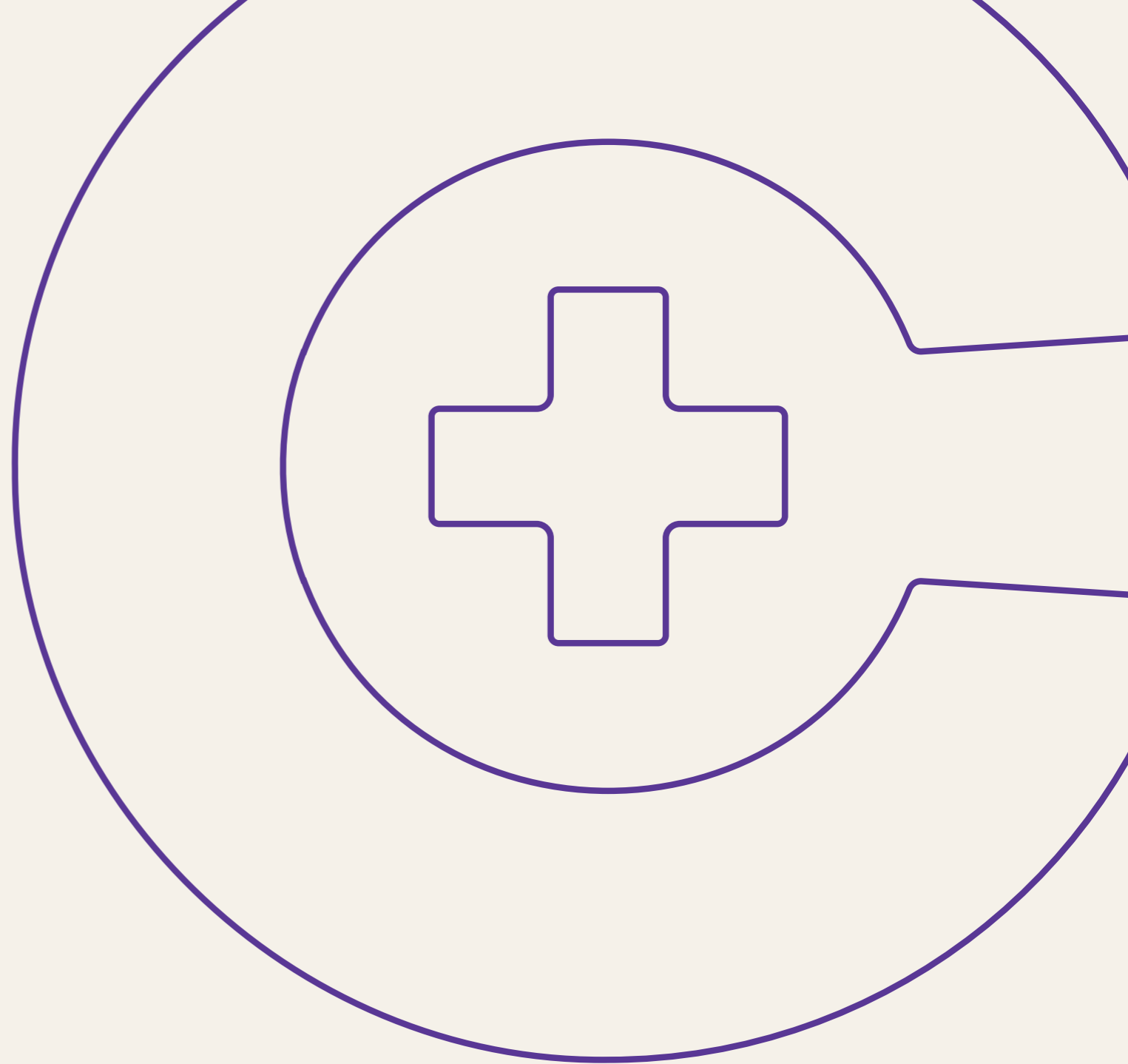
CKU considers the ambitions and values contained in the 2030 Agenda as a sound and relevant platform for our diaconal engagement, well captured in the principle of Leaving No-one Behind, which res-

onates clearly with the Christian values of our CKU's members and their partners to "bring justice to the fatherless and plead the widow's cause" (Isaiah 1,15). In The old Testament, the orphans, the widows, the strangers, and the poor are mentioned as particularly the people to bear in mind and heart and care for. This is in accordance with New Testament texts such as the Beatitudes and the Acts of the Apostles, where Christians build on the legacy from Moses and the Prophets, and unfold, how Pastors and Deacons and all Christians together should work for the orphans, the widows, the strangers and the poor.

CKU believes that real progress towards eradication of extreme poverty, inequality, injustice, and unsustainable practices can only be achieved by 2030, if all relevant actors engage in a unified and targeted struggle for sustainable development, equity, justice, and prosperity for all.

Note:

1) "Accra Confession"/World Alliance of Reformed Churches, 2004, consider the mission of ending poverty as a faith issue.



The Sustainable Development Goals in brief

The SDGs – unique in ambition and scope – economic, social, and environmental development:

The concerted efforts of the international community have led to remarkable results. In the past two decades, for example, the number of people living in extreme poverty has been reduced with half. Still, however, more than a billion men, women and children remain trapped in poverty mainly because of political mismanagement, corruption, warfare, and climate change.

In 2015 all UN member states agreed on the 17 global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), an ambitious answer to the global challenges. In doing so, the members committed themselves to an agenda of achieving sustainable development by 2030. The 2030 Agenda has three integrated dimensions – economic, social, and environmental development – intended to shift the world on to a sustainable and resilient path, and with indicators to track how this development is progressing. Combined with the overall principle of leaving no one behind the 2030 Agenda aims to deliver sustainable development to all, even the most marginalized and vulnerable people.

The vision of the Sustainable Development Goals

The vision presented in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is an ambitious and transformative vision of a world free of poverty, hunger and diseases, where all life can thrive. It includes:

1. Access to basic services: a world free of violence, with universal literacy, equitable and universal access to quality education, health care and social protection, safe drinking water, improved sanitation and hygiene, as well as sufficient, affordable and nutritious food, and reliable and sustainable energy.

2. Fulfilment of human rights: a world with universal respect for human rights and human dignity, rule of law, justice, equality and non-discrimination; and of equal opportunity permitting the full realization of human potential and contributing to shared prosperity. It envisions a world that

invests in its children and where every woman and girl enjoy full gender equality.

3. Sustainable economic growth: a world in which every country enjoys sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth and decent work for all, where consumption and production patterns and use of natural resources are sustainable, where development and the applications of technology is resilient, climate sensitive and respects biodiversity. Where humanity lives in harmony with nature and in which wildlife and other living species are protected.

4. Good governance for all: a world in which democracy and good governance and rule of law are essential for sustainable development, and where the marginalised and vulnerable, poor and weak, are included as participants and beneficiaries.





“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future”.

Jeremiah 29:11

CKU as part of the SDGs

The SDGs are universal and represent global commitment to embark on a collective journey towards healing and safeguarding the planet and its people. A commitment which requires multiple efforts from state as well as non-state actors. The role of religious leaders and faith-based organisations is increasingly being acknowledged by Governments and multilateral organizations ²⁾. In Danida’s 2030 Strategy, for example, it is stated:

“Denmark recognizes the role played by religious leaders and faith-based organisations in the development of many soci-

eties, including in relation to promoting dialogue, peace and reconciliation. This also applies to the possibility of addressing value-related, religious challenges, for instance related to gender equality.”

CKU has as part of a global Christian movement through many years built up a unique knowledge about religious leaders and communities in the Global South and learned in what ways they may best contribute to the SDGs. CKU, churches and church-based organizations is playing, and has a potential to play, a significant role in accomplishing the SDGs.

CKU members’ and partners’ contribution to the achievement of the SDGs is fully in line with God’s promise of hope and future. CKU are already actively part of the struggle for sustainable development, equity, justice, and prosperity for all.

CKU recognizes that the dignity of all human beings is fundamental and wish to see the SDGs and targets are met for all nations and peoples and for all segments of society ³⁾. CKU finds that the 2030 Agenda provides an important platform for action.

Notes:

2) The World 2030: Denmark’s strategy for development cooperation and humanitarian action. Danida 2017
This recognition is international, e.g. Charter for the Future. One world, our responsibility, GTZ 2014

3) All African Council of Churches speaks about justice, peace and dignity as a key formulation in their work, to contextualize universal SDGs and human rights to an African context.

What is CKU's approach to the Sustainable Development Goals Agenda?

We welcome the SDGs as a leverage for our diaconical work and as an appreciated opportunity for partnerships on sustainable development. This is in line with international ecumenical bodies ⁴⁾.

Hence, we aim to making active use of the SDG framework at different levels and in different ways.

As such CKU members and partners are committed, with our faith-based networks, to:

- Promote inclusion of all and uphold human rights, especially of the most vulnerable, making sure that no one is left behind.
- Fight the structural root causes of poverty, injustice, and discrimination by advocating those with responsibility and power and reminding them of their duty to make the necessary changes in order to achieve the goals.
- Develop proper means and methods to ensure that the SDG framework is included in our development efforts, suited to CKU's diaconical way of working.

- Support members and local partners to adopt explicitly the 2030 agenda within their own activism for a better world.

Through visible and invisible assets, CKU members and partners brings a unique contribution to the SDGs. Through the mandate of member and partner churches and faith-based organisations, their leaders, and their networks and fellowships, mobilise civil society to take part in the fulfilment of the SDGs.

It should be noted that these assets of these networks are more than instrumental, they are meaningful actions in themselves and not only bound to fulfilment of the SDGs.

Note:

4) For an in-depth discussion, please refer to World Council of Churches (WCC)'s and ACT Alliance's SDG paper: 'Ecumenical Diaconia' (approved by ACT and recommended to be approved by WCC in August 2020), where the SDGs are seen as a part of the diaconical work.

Visible assets:

1. **PRAXIS - LONG EXPERIENCE** with caring for the poorest of the poor, struggling to leave no one behind
2. **INSTITUTIONS & STRUCTURES** incl. buildings and networks (local, national, and international) - are already in place in many poor communities
3. **PEOPLE (volunteers), CONGREGATIONS AND STAFF** - motivated through faith and committed to community
4. **ECONOMIC RESSOURCES** - tradition of private giving, foundations, and public sources
5. **EDUCATION & COMMUNICATION RESOURCES** - lay-teaching, schools, higher education, and community outreach

Invisible assets:

1. **COLLECTIVE MEMORY AND FAITH PRAXIS** - The strong narratives about the prophets, Jesus Christ, as well as dedicated and verbal leaders such as Mother Teresa and Desmond Tutu. This sets example and motivates to follow suit.
2. **TRADITIONS AND RITUALS** that strengthens peoples' faith and hope, aiming to promoter the love of neighbor. Traditions and community nurture self-esteem and courage, which again helps to overcome opposition, setbacks, and despair, and thereby strengthens resilience.
3. **VALUE SYSTEMS** promote human dignity, trust and honesty.
4. **RELATIONSHIPS** - to be part of a fellowship or community motivates care, and lead to active citizenship and mobilization of communities.
5. **SUSTAINABILITY** -religious communities and faith-based communities were there before the international NGO's, come in, and stay when they leave.

What is CKU's approach to the SDG Agenda as an umbrella organisation and Pooled Fund?

We welcome the SDGs as a leverage for our diaconical work and as an appreciated opportunity for partnership on sustainable development. This is in line with international ecumenical bodies ⁵⁾.

Hence, we aim to demonstrate a proactive SDG approach by making active use of the SDG framework at different levels and in different ways.

Why will CKU focus on specific SDGs?

CKU recognizes that the SDG framework represents a universal agenda that applies to all countries; it is integrated, indivisible, and it is based on a clear set of principles in line with Christian values.

Despite being indivisible, CKU will focus its efforts on the SDGs for which it has special competencies and best opportunities for contributing to goal attainment.



SDG 1: No poverty and SDG 17: Partnership for action, describe how CKU has always worked. In our actions we strive to deal with the underlying causes of poverty, contribute to social protection for the poor and vulnerable and increase their access to basic services. Moreover, we acknowledge the need for close cooperation and partnership across societal sectors, where everyone plays an important role, and where everyone forms part of the solution. Thus, SDG 1 and 17 form part of our overall goals for and approach to the development work we support through our members and local partners in the Global South.



A mapping of CKU members and partners' project work ⁶⁾, showed that CKU's members and partners at a practice-oriented level particularly focus on SDG 2: Zero Hunger, SDG 5: Gender equality, SDG 10: Reduced inequality, and SDG 16: Peace, justice and strong institutions, particularly SDG 16.2: Child Protection, and SDG 16.10: Fundamental Freedoms ⁷⁾, particularly Freedom of Religion and Belief. These SDGs are of particular relevance to our development efforts and include targets and indicators which correspond well with the major thematic intervention areas supported by the CKU Pooled

Funds, namely Agriculture/Food Security, often through Strengthening Local Communities, Gender Equality, and Child Protection (and protection of vulnerable groups), as well as Freedom of Religion and Belief. Historically, CKU members and partners have furthermore been engaged in quality health and education, and many of the current projects include elements of education or health interventions.

Notes:

5) For an in-depth discussion, please refer to World Council of Churches (WCC)'s and ACT Alliance's SDG paper: 'Ecumenical Diaconia' (approved by ACT and recommended to be approved by WCC in August 2020), where the SDGs are seen as a part of the diaconical work.

6) DMCCD SDG mapping report 2018, see reference to website

7) Target in full: "ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements"





CKU members and partners build capacity on the SDGs

By 2020, CKU, our members and local partners have confirmed their commitment to the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda. CKU aims to progressively increase the collective capacity to operationalize the SDGs by developing strategies for action to align with global communities of actors and by equipping members and local partners to assume an active and effective role in relation to the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda. CKU will address specific SDGs in our development projects; and monitor and report on individual and collective SDG achievements to allow for global assessment of accomplishments of the agenda. Furthermore, since this is a challenging area with the current civic space in many areas of the world, CKU's members and partners will focus on building capacity to conduct policy dialogue and advocacy in relation to the SDGs on behalf of those who have been left behind.

How CKU members and partners will operationalize the SDGs?

The SDG framework consists of 17 goals, 169 targets and a larger number of indicators. We encourage our members to apply and operationalize the SDGs, and we ask all applicants to the CKU Pooled Funds to include reflections on the SDG agenda and how it is contained in projects for example in information and advocacy work, or in the results framework. CKU has strategically selected relevant targets and indicators from the Global indicator framework, which members are encouraged to apply in their results frameworks and subsequent monitoring and evaluation in order to align our interventions and be able to trace our contributions to the fulfilment of the SDGs. These targets and indicators have become part of our application and reporting formats.

How will CKU members and partners advocate for the SDGs

Mass mobilization, communication, policy dialogue and advocacy are the key strategic elements for implementing the SDG agenda. The UN member states have voluntarily committed themselves to realizing the goals through a so-called "domestication" process whereby the SDGs are integrated into national policy and development frameworks. Governments can subsequently be held accountable if they do not meet their promises. We will contribute to advocacy by building advocacy capacity and by supporting the empowerment of members and partners, and from there to the constituencies - empowerment to hold duty-bearers to account for their commitments and take part in monitoring progress towards the fulfilment of the SDGs.

How will CKU members and partners report on the SDGs?

CKU supports multiple development activities within multiple thematic areas. We will report annually on the proportion of projects granted by the CKU Pooled Fund, that includes a) information and/or advocacy on the SDGs, and b) SDG targets and indicators as part of the results framework. In order also to document our aggregated contribution to the fulfilment of SDGs, we will seek to trace our collective achievement towards the SDGs which embrace the most common development interventions supported by the CKU Pooled Fund. Thus, we aim to document and report on how CKU, and thus Danish churches and church-based organizations, contribute to the fulfilment of the SDGs.