Global Goals

Business Conversations

Driving Action on the UN Sustainable Development Goals

Ireland's business leaders share their views

Summary Report

Irish Aid
An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha
Department of Foreign Affairs

CONCERN
worldwide

Global
Goals

Business
Conversations

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FOREWORD

The 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a roadmap to 2030 for our planet.

They seek to provide a stable and prosperous life for all people everywhere and will ensure the health of the planet for generations to come. They are also, of course, hugely ambitious and governments, businesses, communities, and individuals must work in partnership if we are to achieve them. Delivering the SDGs will bring considerable challenges for all.

Concern Worldwide, with support from Irish Aid, has engaged Ireland's business community, raising awareness of the SDGs. We now better understand the private sector's concerns and challenges regarding the goals. This report identifies what supports and policy changes can drive better sustainability actions and results in Ireland and around the world. Called the Global Goals Business Conversations project, this engagement launched in 2020.

A summary of the recommendations from Ireland's current and emerging business leaders are contained in this report. A broader round-up of the views expressed throughout the process is contained in *Perspectives from Ireland's Business Leaders – Views on the UN Sustainable Development Goals* which can be found on concern.net.

This report also includes Concern's observations garnered through our conversations with the business community and our recommendations on how the Government can help to encourage action and facilitate change in Irish businesses. What is clear is that while there is appetite for change, much needs to be done, both within the private sector and at government level, to create viable, sustainable pathways for businesses.

Concern provides relief and assistance to the most vulnerable in the world; those least able to respond to the damage our environmental and social behaviours currently wreak. We witness the desperation of the very poor farmers in the Sahel where rains are continually failing and those at the foot of the Himalayas whose lands are being lost through floods and sea levels rising. Successfully reaching the targets set under the United Nations' 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development requires us all to play our part in safeguarding the future of the planet and its people.

A truly committed private sector is crucial in driving action and bringing lasting change. This begins with strong and effective partnerships. We hope this report can help guide these partnerships in order to create a brighter future for the world.

David Regan
CEO
Concern Worldwide

BACKGROUND

Ireland played a leading role in the development and adoption of the United Nations' 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development.

Together with Kenya, Ireland co-facilitated the intergovernmental negotiations that led to 2015's momentous agreement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Often referred to as 'the SDGs' or 'the Global Goals', they comprise 17 goals that are an urgent call for action by all countries.

The goals, which are illustrated on page four of this report, recognise that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth – all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests. You can read more about these important goals at sdgs.un.org/goals.

While Ireland was instrumental in the development of the Global Goals, our first Voluntary National Review on the implementation of the SDGs in 2018 revealed that, in many areas, Ireland was lagging far behind in achieving the 2030 Agenda. The Government has committed to presenting our next Voluntary National Review to the UN in July 2023.

Partnerships

The Government recently published Ireland's Second National Implementation Plan for the Sustainable Development Goals 2022–2024 and here we note that one of the five strategic objectives is to develop 'Greater partnerships for the goals'. Global Goals Business Conversations, contributes to this partnership approach by engaging with the private sector as a key stakeholder in progressing the 2030 Agenda.

About Global Goals Business Conversations

Funded by Irish Aid and delivered by Concern Worldwide, Global Goals Business Conversations is an engagement with Ireland's private sector to drive action on the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

In line with Goal 17 – Partnership for the Goals, Concern Worldwide took a partnership approach to this engagement, collaborating with industry and sectoral groups, as well as educational institutions, to co-host conversations with the business community and with future business leaders.

We opened dialogues with senior leaders in the private sector in order to raise awareness and inspire leadership at a high level. We believed these conversations could create a trickle-down effect, leading to greater action and ambition on the SDGs. Our goals were:

- To raise awareness of the relevance of the SDGs at senior management level

- To encourage senior leaders to think about how they can personally help drive progress within their organisations

- To identify what barriers are preventing Ireland's private sector from adopting and driving the SDGs in their respective sectors

- To communicate these barriers, challenges, and potential solutions to the Government and the wider business community.

Global Goals Business Conversations

8
Workshops

130
Participants

60
Companies/
Organisations

20
Sectors

Approach

The findings in this report are based on eight conversations involving 130 participants. Five of these conversations were with senior business leaders and three were undertaken with future leaders and young people in the business community. These conversations were organised and hosted in partnership with business representative bodies, state bodies, and educational institutions. A list of participating companies and organisations can be found on page 21.

The initial conversations took place in-person in early 2020 and, having been interrupted by the Covid-19 outbreak, were later continued online. The main format employed was a facilitated round table discussion carried out under the Chatham House rule* where, following scene-setting on the SDGs from Concern Worldwide, business leaders discussed key questions relating to their actions and ambitions around the SDGs, the challenges and barriers to action, and proposed solutions and opportunities.

What has resulted is a small but insightful sample of voices from the senior business community and future business leaders who took part in open, honest conversations, and a deep exploration of their role in progressing the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development.

This report summarises the outcomes of the conversations based on the views expressed by participants and should not be taken to be the views of Concern Worldwide (except where indicated), the report's author, or co-hosting organisations. The report attempts to capture, in brief, the main ideas and perspectives expressed across the conversations, however it does not imply consensus amongst all participants.

* The Chatham House Rule allows for the dissemination of what was said at a meeting, while preserving the anonymity of speakers/participants. Therefore quotes are anonymised. In this case, participants agreed for their company/ organisation to be listed.

Watch the video ➡ Global Goals Business Conversations

KEY FINDINGS

Businesses have the power to influence change, but they need help.

Throughout the course of discussions within the Global Goals Business Conversations a number of key themes and insights arose.

First and foremost, it was noted that the business community must play its part in driving progress on the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Businesses have the power to make and influence change, however, while they must be ambitious in their actions, they will need the support of policy to bring about a wide and deep transformation.

The conversations also highlighted that the SDGs are a challenging framework for Irish businesses. They feel overwhelmingly broad and high-level and participants called for them to be made more accessible and tangible.

In terms of progressing and delivering the 2030 Agenda, the participants believed that:

- **The SDGs must be part of, not an add-on to, corporate strategy**
  For real change to take place, the SDGs must be 'baked in' to corporate strategy and sustainability must have a seat at the senior management table.

- **Sustainability commitments must be based on clear actionable and measurable targets**
  Businesses must set clear measurable targets and must report transparently and consistently on progress. This needs to be facilitated by universal frameworks aligned to the SDGs that can be tailored for each sector and business.

- **Strong leadership will be essential to progress**
  Leadership on sustainability is lacking. Strong, consistent, and clear leadership is required from government, from sectoral and industry bodies, and from CEOs.

- **Education must evolve to meet the sustainability challenge**
  There are gaps in sustainability education, skills, and knowledge in the business sector. This needs to be addressed by the business community, facilitated by the education sector, and resourced by government.

- **Collaboration and partnership are key**
  We will need to see stronger and more active partnership across and between government, the private sector, educational institutions, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and civil society in order to progress the 2030 Agenda and accelerate change. While competition is important to drive innovation within the private sector, the goals will not be achieved without openness and collaboration.

Tensions

Some participants noted conflicts between a number of the Sustainable Development Goals; specifically around how sustainability can marry peacefully with economic growth. Throughout our discussions a notable minority spoke about consumption and growth as the 'elephant in the room', and highlighted the tensions between the business sector's drive for profit with the need to address the pressing climate and sustainability challenges.

These contradictions between the goals were highlighted throughout the conversations, in particular how the objectives to eradicate poverty and hunger (Goals 1 and 2) and provide work and economic growth (Goal 8) can be achieved while promoting responsible consumption and production (Goal 12) and climate action (Goal 13). One participant noted:

'It's difficult to see how there can be a business model around producing less and being less wasteful. The fastest way to make change is if the Government makes it attractive through tax policy.'

ACTIONS

Businesses must prioritise sustainability and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Large companies are increasingly aligning their strategy with the SDGs. However, while sustainability is on the agenda of most big companies, levels of engagement vary greatly. Some have fully aligned their corporate strategy to the SDGs, some have a separate sustainability strategy, many say they are just beginning the journey.

There is a concern, however, that smaller businesses will be left behind. Though most businesses participating in the conversations were large, they noted that progressing the SDGs would be a particular challenge for small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) who may lack the resources to take action and will therefore need additional supports.

'Businesses under pressure are not going to care about climate and sustainability. If businesses feel constantly put upon, if they are struggling, they can't focus on this. It needs to become relevant to what they do on a daily basis... They need to be able to look at what they do every day and understand how they can do it a little bit better – that's how you get buy in at an entry level.'

Focus and Actions

Many participants reported that their businesses focus more on local impact rather than global urgency. They tend to align with specific goals where they feel they can have the greatest impact, rather than focus on global issues which feel urgent but more out of reach.

The majority of companies who took part in the conversations have taken some actions that align with the SDGs, although these were not always framed under them. The main areas

where progress is already underway include:
- Workplace diversity and inclusion
- Employment conditions, health, and wellbeing
- Waste reduction and management
- Carbon reduction, energy, and green buildings
- Community and CSR projects

Some, but much fewer, companies had also implemented activities relating to:
- Sustainable supply chains
- Sustainability education and training
- Sustainable products and services

Impact

A number of participants felt that the business community is avoiding addressing areas where it can have most impact, particularly around promoting Goal 12 – Responsible Consumption and Production. New ways of doing business, that can reconcile Goal 12 with Goal 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth, are required. As one participant said:

'The way to stop over-consumption is "don't make it". But it is a huge dilemma – how do we make this compatible with economic growth? Business has goal of making profit. The key word is "responsible" consumption; we need to focus on better quality. There is also a responsibility amongst citizens to be more responsible in their consumption but business action can help facilitate and drive this.'

Pace of Progress

The ambition and pace of progress needs to be accelerated if Ireland is to achieve targets set under the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Business leaders recognised their role in actioning the goals, noting that in many ways the private sector is more agile than government and can bring about change more quickly. However, the majority felt that clear leadership, consistent signalling, and bold policy from government were required to raise the ambition, breadth, and depth of change.

How can the business community make a difference?

1 **Every business can embrace the Sustainable Development Goals**
Every business, irrespective of size or resources, can make changes and have positive impact. Areas that businesses can address as a starting point are:

- Waste reduction and circular economy; energy, and water management
- Remote and flexible working policies
- Hiring policies and workplace diversity and inclusion
- Incentivising more sustainable transport choices
- Partnering with an NGO/community organisation

2 **Businesses must embed sustainability goals in everything they do**
For business to become truly sustainable, sustainability action needs to be fully embedded in, not separate to, corporate strategy with a member of the senior management team taking leadership on it. It should be a consideration for every section and department of a business, and every development and activity should be considered through the lens of sustainability.

3 **The business community can drive ambition and action**
The business community has power and influence. By providing leadership on sustainability, businesses can have positive impact far beyond their own direct actions by:

- Acting with a collective voice to advocate for change and communicate the benefits of change through strong messaging
- Demanding sustainable practices throughout their supply chains, driving demand for sustainable products and services, and supporting their suppliers to adapt
- Collaborating across the business community and assisting all businesses to become more sustainable
- Driving innovation
- Supporting education and upskilling
- Demanding greater action from government and supporting bold policies that foster sustainable development.

CHALLENGES & BARRIERS

The scale of the challenge and the breadth of the Sustainable Development Goals are overwhelming.

The number of goals and targets within the UN Sustainable Development Goals – combined with the high level they are pitched at – were cited as a barrier to engagement by all groups who participated in the Global Goals Business Conversations.

As one participant declared:

'17 goals, 160 targets… that's just huge for a business. It's a staggeringly large challenge and unfortunately I think they present a barrier to engagement and lead to inertia in companies. Businesses struggling to survive will look at this and say "I don't know what I should be doing so I'll do nothing".'

However, while the SDGs are regarded as inaccessible and intangible for business, they can be translated into relevant business goals. Supporting businesses to adapt the goals within their own business model is crucial to progress the 2030 Agenda.

Other challenges and barriers that were identified include:

- **A lack of resources, knowledge and commitment**
  Within companies, the key barriers to action are (1) time and money to support actions and (2) a lack of knowledge about what actions to take and how. However, business leaders also said that there needed to be greater commitment to sustainability action and that this should come from senior management. Appropriate resources must be allocated to staff with sustainability roles and a sustainability commitment must be

integrated into every facet of the business strategy so it cannot be sidelined.

- **External barriers that require policy and systems change**
  Business leaders said that progress on the SDGs within the private sector was being held back by:

  - Lack of investment and timely progress on innovation and infrastructure
  - A culture of self-interest and resistance to change
  - The need for bolder public policy
  - Gaps in education and skills

All of these areas require leadership from government. Participants also identified the slow pace of change, the politicisation of sustainability issues, and consumerism as challenges.

Credibility

Credibility issues additionally have the potential to hamper real progress. Sustainability claims must be sincere and verifiable, awards and certifications must be credible, and actions must be supported by measurable targets and consistent reporting frameworks.

One future business leader explained:

'Every television and radio ad has some sort of sustainability angle in it and the number of pages dedicated to ESG and environmental topics in quarterly and annual reports has gone through the roof, but is there real cultural change? Is it that businesses are trying to catch up very quickly and they haven't instituted the policies that are going to make a real, long term difference yet so it's coming off like greenwashing? Or is it a cynical attempt to exploit people's interest in the area?'

What is driving and facilitating action in the private sector?

1 **Urgency and ambition from leaders**
The lack of strong leadership was a repeated theme throughout the Global Goals Business Conversations but everyone agreed it was vital to drive action. Government needs to lead with clear messaging and strong policy. Sectoral representatives and industry bodies must provide leadership to make sustainability progress a priority and support change within their sector/industry. CEOs must lead from the top within companies and repeatedly voice their commitment to the SDGs. Their duty is to ensure board buy-in so that sustainability becomes an integral part of everyday business.

2 **Education, engagement, and collaboration**
Demand from staff, especially new entrants and young staff, is a key driver of the sustainability agenda. Engagement is a vital facilitator of progress within companies; both in terms of clearly communicating strategy and targets, as well as getting staff involved in ideas, decision-making, and implementation. An open environment of peer learning, sharing, and support across the business community, as well as support for education and upskilling, are essential facilitators. It is also important that the business community comes together with a collective voice to advocate for and support change.

3 **Reputation and regulation**
Consumer, client, and employee demand are all driving companies to make sustainability commitments that bolster their reputations for sustainability action. Sustainability is also seen as having clear benefits in terms of marketing and PR, and is regarded as a way of differentiating from competitors. In the Public Limited Company (PLC) sector, corporate reputation amongst investors is an important driver and this in turn is being driven by regulation around disclosures on Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) initiatives.

PERSPECTIVES

Future business leaders and employees call for more action.

Concern Worldwide co-hosted a speaker and Q&A session with MBA students to help them understand the global context of the SDGs and how they are being applied in the corporate environment. This offered them an opportunity to explore the questions and concerns raised in the 2030 Agenda. They later shared their views and insights in a round table discussion. Participants expressed the view that:

- **Irish companies are playing catch-up** compared to companies they visited in Scandinavia and Germany

- **There are gaps in education around the SDGs** and how business leaders can have positive social impact. For instance, issues around sustainability and the SDGs were not covered in their MBA programme so the students established their own Global Impact Society where they invited expert speakers to present on sustainability actions and best practice

- **They are concerned about greenwashing** and sense that although sustainability features heavily in marketing and corporate reports, it can be difficult to identify where there are clear policies and actions in place

- **They have a desire to work in sustainability roles** but do not have an understanding of what such roles entail, the skillset required, or the needs of industry

- **They have a clear preference to work for sustainable companies;** or those taking verifiable sustainability action, and to avoid working for companies who have negative impacts or are laggards on sustainability

- **Systems need to change,** including how we build a more robust and circular economy, how we reconcile sustainability with accessibility and affordability, and how we manage the contradictions in the goals, such as the need to provide work and eradicate poverty while also promoting responsible consumption and production

- **Companies will need to be forced to change;** they will only adapt when it has a competitive advantage, if it saves them money, or if regulation forces them to do so

- **The situation is urgent.** Change has to happen now, and it needs to be radical. They voiced fears that the climate crisis is not being framed as such, that we are not seeing adequate leadership and pace, and that companies are struggling with transformative change.

'What this is going to take is radical transformation. We are talking about changes to core business, putting sustainability at the core of companies. We have learned that such a level of strategic transformation is very difficult to execute.'

'Get everyone on board, connect the right people, create opportunities for engagement, and build momentum.'

Employee Perspectives

We also co-hosted a session on Workplace Sustainability Leadership with Trinity Development & Alumni for young alumni working in the private sector. They heard from NGO and corporate speakers about how the SDGs can be used as a framework for local and global impact. Following these talks, the participants worked in breakout sessions to discuss sustainability action within their own workplaces and how they can get involved.

Some of the insights from this session include:

- **Things are going in the right direction.** Employees reported that more conversations and greater action on sustainability is happening, particularly around better workplace and office practices. Some positive developments have stemmed from the Covid-19 pandemic

- **More communication is needed and companies must harness momentum** as actions and plans are not always visible or well-communicated internally. Staff are more motivated to take action on sustainability in the wake of the global pandemic and this energy needs to be harnessed

- **Spaces should be created for sustainability action.** A key takeaway was that employers need to create opportunities for staff to engage with each other and with management to share ideas and create initiatives

- **Practical barriers** include time, resources and workload, and sustainability initiatives being volunteer-driven

- **Broader challenges** include a lack of leadership, lack of understanding and urgency, and the pursuit of economic growth and profit

- **More action and buy-in can be facilitated** by creating open dialogues with staff on targets; formal and informal opportunities for staff to input and action ideas; and creating internal networks for engaged staff members.

PROPOSALS & POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Business supports and bolder public policies will encourage greater action within the private sector.

Business leaders proposed a number of pathways which will facilitate greater action and ambition in the private sector, including:

Sector-Specific Toolkits

Toolkits, tailored to sectors, can help overcome the perceived inaccessibility of the goals and should provide roadmaps, relevant targets and actions for individual businesses. Small businesses in particular need a 'checklist' of actions they can begin with.

Universal and Consistent Frameworks

The credibility and consistency of the goals are challenged by the proliferation of frameworks and reporting methods. Existing frameworks should be assessed and universal frameworks, that can be adapted to sectors, should be considered. Any awards or certifications relating to sustainability should adhere to these accepted frameworks and deliver on measurable and ambitious targets.

Government Action and Policy Change

The participants called for:

- **A review and reform of the planning process for sustainable infrastructure;** full and timely implementation of the National Planning Framework, and a planning system that aligns with the National Planning Framework and is fit-for-purpose

- **Funding supports for knowledge, upskilling, implementation and action.** SMEs, in particular, will find it challenging to adapt without adequate funding supports

- **Taking a stick and carrot approach,** such as introducing a suite of tax policies and penalties that force companies to take action, along with incentives and rewards to bring about deeper change

- **Bold public policies** to support broader societal change

- **Greater investment in innovation, infrastructure and research** to support sustainable development and evidence- and impact-based policies.

All of these actions should be supported and facilitated through:

Partnership

Deeper partnership and collaboration between government and the private sector is necessary. This will require government support and facilitation of partnerships; across government, and between government and the private sector, as well as education, NGOs, and civil society.

Leadership & Communication

Strong leadership and clear communication is imperative to create a positive conversation around the private sector's role and impact in the 2030 Agenda. Government must also provide clear and consistent messaging. Both government and the business sector have a role in using effective communication to support broad cultural and behavioural change in society.

Education

There should be a reform of education at all levels – from primary to third-level and including research agendas and vocational/skills training – to align with the SDGs. Getting people thinking, acting, and doing business as 'global citizens' will be a vital tool for change.

'The SDGs have increasingly become the basic building blocks of any organisation's sustainability strategy but companies need practical examples of how they can implement them. They need relevant frameworks to align every area of activity to the SDGs.'

CONCERN WORLDWIDE'S OBSERVATIONS

There is a desire for change but sustainability is not top of the agenda.

As we carried out these conversations with business groups around the country, we experienced sincere and deep engagement on the part of those around the table. These were senior business leaders and C-suite executives who, for the most part, seemed to genuinely want to see change and to be part of that change. Yet getting people to the table was a challenge and the level of interest within the business representative bodies we approached to partner with us was often low.

What became clear was that sustainability is not top of the agenda and, as some of the business leaders explained, other short-term crises will often derail plans related to the SDGs. There remains, therefore, a great challenge in getting the collective business community to recognise sustainability in its broadest sense as something we all need to work towards with urgency and as our top priority.

Local Action Versus Global Impact

Our conversations included discussions on the interconnectedness of the SDGs and business leaders recognised the importance of progressing all goals in tandem. However, when it comes to business action on the SDGs, we observed a tendency to cherry-pick goals to align with.

Of course, some goals and targets are more relevant to certain businesses than others but this approach can at times lead businesses to highlight the areas where they already perform well and ignore areas where they have negative impacts. Business leaders themselves also observed that the focus of action can be very local and we noticed a strong tendency for conversations to focus on sustainability issues that are specific to the locality of the businesses.

While local and community action is very welcome, given the globalised nature of business and Ireland's open economy, it is vital that Irish businesses honestly examine their impacts beyond our shores. Companies must challenge themselves, and be challenged, to examine environmental, social, and economic sustainability up and down their supply chains.

Fundamental Change is Needed

Bringing about the major changes that are needed to make progress towards the SDGs is undoubtedly hugely challenging. It will take immense courage and vision and a reimagined way of doing business.

A small but notable minority of business leaders spoke about the 'elephant in the room' of growth and consumption and the need for the private sector to stop promoting over-consumption. However, it is clear that many companies and sectors are still working in a 'business as usual' scenario where sustainability action is more about tinkering around the edges than about making fundamental changes to their core operations. If we are to have any success in progressing the 2030 Agenda then Irish businesses must make these essential changes and find new ways of doing business.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS TO GOVERNMENT

The Government can help to encourage and incentivise the business community to engage with and take action on the Sustainable Development Goals.

1. Deepen awareness of the SDGs within the business community

We found wide variations in levels of SDGs knowledge and engagement among businesses. Small and medium enterprises in particular need information and supports. The Government should promote projects that raise awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals within the private sector.

2. Bring new perspectives to the SDGs National Stakeholder Forums

Current and future Sustainable Development Goals National Stakeholder Forums should take a broad view of representation by the private sector, ensuring not only that senior representatives of private sector bodies and established companies are involved, but that those working specifically in sustainability roles, entrepreneurs who have put sustainability at the heart of their business, and young people from the business sector also participate.

Recent graduates entering companies and innovative new entrepreneurs can drive expectations and ambitions within the private sector. It is important that they are given the opportunity to take a lead and be heard by those in a position to take action. The forum must go beyond broad dialogue to focused action. For the private sector this should include establishing sectoral groups (or working with existing ones) to set targets and develop roadmaps for industry sectors.

3. Work with business networks to drive ambition, commitment, and accountability

Business and industry representative bodies can do much more. While these conversations took place in a very challenging period in the aftermath of Brexit and in the midst of a global pandemic, it is nonetheless clear that engagement with the 2030 Agenda is low amongst some business/sectoral organisations.

The Government should seek updates from business networks and representative bodies on (1) the actions they are undertaking to raise awareness of the SDGs and (2) how they are supporting members

to implement changes that align with the goals. The business sector will require government support for these activities.

The Government should also challenge representative/sectoral bodies to show that their own policies, and any policies they lobby for, align with the UN SDGs.

4. Develop sectoral toolkits and frameworks for action

The development of sectoral toolkits and frameworks for action and evaluation are clear recommendations emerging from our conversations with business leaders. The Government should work with the private sector to develop targets that are sufficiently ambitious but also to ensure that these ambitions encompass all aspects of business operations and all SDGs.

Rather than indicating specific SDGs that they have aligned to, businesses should be asked to report on their actions and targets under all 17 SDGs (or to indicate why a specific SDG may not be relevant).

The Government should also promote a global and holistic outlook, challenging businesses to examine their impacts both internally and externally, locally and globally, up and down their supply chain. We note that businesses, especially SMEs, will require appropriate supports in taking and reporting on action.

5. Help business leaders understand global impact

Business leaders noted that global impacts feel out of reach and there is a tendency to focus on local sustainability issues. It is vital that business leaders in Ireland understand their impact globally; how they may be having negative impacts, or the potential positive impact they could have. The Government could provide opportunities for corporate leaders to gain insights into climate impacts and sustainability challenges in the most affected regions through partnerships with INGOs, Irish Aid-funded projects and organisations, and verified ethical and sustainable certifying bodies.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Global Goals Business Conversations comprised:

8
Workshops

130
Participants

60
Companies/
Organisations

20
Sectors

Concern Worldwide would like to thank all the organisations who facilitated these discussions: Bord Bia, Cork Chamber, Dublin Chamber, Galway Chamber, the Irish Foodservice Suppliers Alliance (IFSA), Trinity College Dublin, and UCD Michael Smurfit Graduate Business School.

We would also like to think the many speakers who shared their time and expertise with our participants throughout the course of this programme. They include:

- Rachel Stredwick, Lead – People Pillar, Primark Cares, Primark
- Michelle Finlay, Planning & Strategy Director, EY
- Tom Tynan, Head of Davy Horizons, Davy
- Padraig Mallon, Sustainability Director, Kerry Group
- Martin Hofler, Sustainability Manager, Origin Green, Bord Bia
- Sarah Hegarty, Director of Communications, Concern Worldwide
- Michael Doorly, Head of Active Citizenship, Concern Worldwide
- Amina Abdulla, Regional Director – Horn of Africa, Concern Worldwide
- Olive Towey, Senior Policy Advisor – Hunger, Concern Worldwide

PARTICIPANTS

Thank you to the 130 business leaders, future leaders, and employees who gave their time and shared their opinions with us throughout the course of this project.

Participating Sectors

Advertising/Marketing/PR	Hospitality
Agri-Food	Industry Representation
Business Strategy/Consultancy	Legal Services
Construction	Medical
Development	NGO
Education	Pharma
Energy/Utilities	Retail
Finance/Financial Services	State/Semi-State
Food & Beverage	Tech
Foodservice	Telecommunications

Participating Companies & Organisations

ABP Food Group	H+A Marketing + PR
Accenture	HEINEKEN Ireland
AIB	Hewlett Packard Enterprises (HPE)
AMX - Asset Management Exchange	IDA Ireland
Anois	Irish Foodservice Suppliers Alliance (IFSA)
Arup	Kerrigans Mushrooms
Bank of Ireland	Kerry Group
Bax & Max	KPMG
Bord Bia	Kush Seafarms Ltd
Bunzl McLaughlin	Marco Beverage Systems Ltd
Burren Smokehouse	Matheson
Concern Worldwide	Medtronic
Coole Swan	O'Brien Fine Foods
Cork Chamber	Pfizer Ireland Pharmaceuticals
Dairygold	Primark
Davy	River Lee Hotel/The Doyle Collection
Davy Horizons	Salesforce
Deloitte	Slaney Foods International
Dublin Chamber	Sodexo Ireland Limited
Ervia (Irish Water & Gas Networks Ireland)	Staunton Foods Ltd
EY	Trinity College Dublin (TCD)
Galway Chamber	TU Dublin
Gather & Gather	UCD Michael Smurfit Graduate Business School
Glandore	University College Cork (UCC)
Grant Thornton	Vodafone
Green Hospitality	Wyeth Nutritionals Ireland Ltd

FURTHER INFORMATION

The 2030 Agenda
Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development can be found at sdgs.un.org/2030agenda.

The UN Global Compact
The UN Global Compact is the world's largest corporate sustainability initiative. It is based on CEO commitments to implement universal sustainability principles and actions that support the Sustainable Development Goals. Businesses can learn more and join the Compact at unglobalcompact.org.

Concern Worldwide
In addition to facilitating conversations with the private sector, Concern Worldwide also engages with communities and citizens on action towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Find out about Project Us on concern.net/volunteer/project-us.

You can learn more about Concern Worldwide's global development work and opportunities to support or work on concern.net or by contacting corporate@concern.net.

Irish Aid
The Global Goals Business Conversations engagement project was funded by Irish Aid, the government programme for overseas development. The programme is managed by the Development Co-operation Division of the Department of Foreign Affairs. Its work fighting global poverty and hunger is integral to Ireland's foreign policy. For more information, please visit irishaid.ie.

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