

Voluntary National Review 2023 | Contribution civil society groups

Please make a one-page contribution based on these 8 questions.

1. Name of your organisation
Be-cause Health¹ (BCH)
2. Societal group (business, trade unions, NGOs, science and research, inclusive society, others)
Other: Belgian multi-stakeholder platform on global health
3. Which Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are you working on, which ones have you already committed to? → Give preference to actions related to different Ps of the 2030 Agenda, which are transformative and inspiring for other organisations at the international level. → Prefer a synthetic presentation and references to web pages or online documents for further information.
SDG 3, 6, 10: health and healthcare for all: www.be-causehealth.be/en/about-us/vision-mission/ & www.be-causehealth.be/en/bchgroups/access-to-quality-medicines/ & www.be-causehealth.be/en/bchgroups/determinants-of-international-health/ & www.be-causehealth.be/en/bchgroups/mental-health/ & www.be-causehealth.be/en/bchgroups/digitalisation/
SDG 5: gender equality, and particular targets on SRHR (5.6) & ending VAWG (5.2): www.be-causehealth.be/en/bchgroups/sexual-and-reproductive-health-and-rights-hiv/ & www.bodyandrights.be/ & https://www.be-causehealth.be/en/bchgroups/sexual-and-reproductive-health-and-rights-hiv/#links1
SDG 2, 4, 12 & 13: environmental-health nexus; climate justice and health equity: www.be-causehealth.be/en/bchgroups/planetary-health-2/ & bchmatters15.be-causehealth.be/
SDG 16: accountable and inclusive institutions: www.be-causehealth.be/en/about-us/what-do-we-do/
SDG 17: partnerships: www.be-causehealth.be/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Note-consensus-Sant%C3%A9-DGD-BCH_Fr.pdf
4. What are the themes/SDGs on which Belgium should focus its efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda? → Given your assessment of the situation, studies, indicators, etc., what are the most important points for Belgium?
<p>“To leave no one behind” Belgium should ensure “equitable access to good quality responsive health services for all, and in particular the most vulnerable people, embedded in strong, resilient and sustainable health systems, worldwide”.² The universal right to health and healthcare should be the fundamental starting point and Belgium should prioritize 1) health system strengthening and supporting its capability to evolve and adapt itself in face of the multiple crisis (climate crisis, NCD, migration, urbanization, pandemics, etc.); 2) sexual and reproductive health and rights, including effective implementation of comprehensive sexuality education (CSE); 3) an integrated approach towards HIV/AIDS³; and 4) peace (as a prerequisite to health) through conflict prevention, both inside Belgium and internationally.</p> <p>In doing so, Belgium should promote the WHO’s definition of health as “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.”⁴</p> <p>We hence welcome the commitment of Minister Kitir to realize the target of 0,7% of ODA/GNI, and to continue Belgium’s support to UN institutions (such as UNFPA, WHO, UNAIDS, UNEP, and UNCDF) and multilateral institutions as the Global Fund, Global Environment Facility, the Green Climate Fund and</p>

¹ This contribution in no way binds the members of Be-cause health.

² <https://www.be-causehealth.be/en/about-us/vision-mission/>

³ https://www.researchgate.net/publication/317417942_Belgium's_policy_on_global_health_institutions_priorities_and_challenges

⁴ <https://apps.who.int/gb/bd/PDF/bd47/EN/constitution-en.pdf?ua=1>

the Least Developed Countries Fund, as well as to continue to invest in SDG 3 & 5 targets through its bilateral cooperation.⁵

5. What issues require changes at the European/international level to implement the 2030 Agenda?
| → *In the light of your assessment of the situation, studies, indicators, etc.,*

Europe should immediately stop the accelerating health crisis induced by the climate emergency. “People around the world face increasing heat, food and water insecurity, and changing patterns of infectious and chronic diseases. Unless urgent action is taken, the health impact of the climate emergency will bring disruption, threaten lives and livelihoods and compromise the health systems we depend on”⁶. The European Green Deal should foresee in an immediate replacement of fossil fuels by clean renewable energy, instead of the goal of “net emission of Greenhouse Gasses towards 2050”⁷. “The negative effects of the covid-19 pandemic have cut across all of the SDGs and led to severe health and developmental challenges. These effects disproportionately affect poor and vulnerable people. They reinforce inequalities between and within countries, such as in the burden of covid-19, capacity to respond, and social determinants of health—for example, working conditions, housing, and access to healthcare including vaccines”⁸. “The COVID-19 pandemic and climate emergency represent converging crises and share common drivers”. Europe must address these emergencies in a “comprehensive manner, while acknowledging public health needs, inequalities and historic injustices”⁹. All European policies (trade, education, agriculture, climate, migration, etc.) should be coherent, and put health and people’s wellbeing at the centre.

6. What are the key messages you would like to see in the Voluntary National Review?

The SDGs are integrated and indivisible goals and balance the three dimensions of sustainable development. That is why Belgium’s and Europe’s strategy should adopt a “health in all policies” strategy to “include health considerations in policy making across different sectors that influence health”,¹⁰ as many SDGs, including those that relate to peace, migration, “environment, nutrition/ hunger, sustainable production and consumption, agriculture, and education, have huge effects on health”.¹¹

7. Other comment(s)/supplement(s)/suggestion(s):

8. Documents, sources, websites for reference on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda

⁵ https://diplomatie.belgium.be/sites/default/files/2022-03/2020_kitir-beleidsnota-note_de_politique_2021_kitir.pdf

⁶ <https://bchmatters15.be-causehealth.be/>

⁷ https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en

⁸ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8792762/>

⁹ <https://bchmatters15.be-causehealth.be/>

¹⁰ https://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/188809/Health-in-All-Policies-final.pdf

¹¹ <https://www.bmj.com/content/bmj/352/bmj.i409.full.pdf>