In September 2015 at the Paris UN Sustainable Development Summit world leaders adopted 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) from UN General Assembly Resolution, A/Res/70/1, ‘Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development’. The SDGs, build on the success of and supercede the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and aim to go further to end all forms of poverty. The new Agenda calls on countries to begin efforts to achieve 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) over the next 15 years.

### The Goals

| No poverty | Good health and wellbeing |
| Quality education | Gender equality |
| Affordable and clean energy | Decent work and economic growth |
| Reduced inequalities | Life on land |
| Climate action | Life below water |
| Zero hunger | Partnerships for the goals |
| Peace justice and strong institutions | Responsible consumption and production |
| Clean water and sanitation | Industry, innovation and infrastructure |
| Sustainable cities and communities |

The 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda contains several references and mandates for engaging civil society, the major groups and other stakeholders in its implementation and follow-up.

Inclusion and participation are also reflected on the chapter on Follow up and Review, committed to be “robust, voluntary, effective, participatory, transparent and integrated”. There are other references in the Resolution.
The “intensive engagement” of civil society and other stakeholders in the implementation of the goals and targets is called for.

Paragraph 45 makes reference to "international institutions, academia, philanthropic organizations, volunteer groups and others". Para. 52 re-emphasises the opening words of the UN Charter. It is “We the Peoples” who are embarking on the road to 2030. The journey will involve Governments as well as Parliaments, the UN system and other international institutions, local authorities, civil society, business and the private sector, the scientific and academic community – and all people.

to being “people-centered, gender-sensitive, respect human rights and a particular focus on the poorest, most vulnerable and those furthers behind”.

The primary goal remains the eradication of poverty, but there is a much greater emphasis now upon linking social, economic and environmental development. All European countries are required to prepare plans for addressing the SDGs within their respective countries (this is not simply about their international development programmes). Much of this is familiar territory for those working in community development, but probably not in the joined-up way now called for - especially with regards to linking social, economic and environmental development work at the local level.

There are a number of questions which spring to mind immediately around the role might community development have. Raising awareness of the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030 and the SDGs, promoting and supporting good practice on the ground, particularly among the most vulnerable, the poorest the most disadvantaged, influencing the plans in each country to implement Agenda 2030 and more.

To explore the role which community development might take, EuCDN and IACD with Community Work Ireland and Community Development Alliance Scotland organised a conference in Glasgow.

Anastasia Crickley. IACD Vice President and European Director and Charlie McConnell (Immediate Past President of IACD), described the background to the SDGs and the work IACD has been doing around the world to raise awareness of the
importance of the SDGs for community development. The SDGs provide a real opportunity to profile and position the vital importance of effective community development support at local level. Without that support, vulnerable communities will be far less resilient, prepared and able to deal with challenges they face now and will face in the future.

Those working in community development will have more experience and be more familiar with the social development goals. There is a growing praxis on environmental and economic goals but we have less experience to build on in dealing with all three in an integrated way.

It is important to remember that the primary causes of poverty and the multiple challenges the poor face are caused by structural inequality. While it varies from country to country the majority of capital assets such as land, building, wealth are inequitably distributed and the majority of the damage caused by ‘man made’ industrial and consumption patterns is not caused by the poorest communities although they are the most vulnerable across all sustainability indicators. While the poor are victims in many situations, they can become active players in designing and developing solutions. Community development is about engaging the less powerful, more vulnerable people and building a more participative democracy.

The final SDG is about process, building partnerships and mechanisms to make this happen and community development is also about finding ways of building consensus and partnership at a local level. We know that more affluent communities can purchase professional technical assistance; poorer communities cannot and will need assistance as locally and as cheaply as possible. They will also need money and here is a role for the community development worker, identifying grants and other financial support. The SDGs present a huge opportunity to profile and position the vital importance of effective community development support.

A more in-depth discourse on this can be found in the IACD position Statement on the Sustainability Development Goals (see bibliography).

Stuart Hashagen, Chair of EuCDN described the work EuCDN has been doing to raise awareness among members and to campaign as a member of the European
SDG Watch, a coalition of civil society organisations, for effective policy and coordination of integrated European Union SDG implementation. As a first step the coalition called on the EU and each of its Member States to develop an overarching Sustainable Development Strategy and a concrete implementation plan which coordinates the achievement of the goals, targets and indicators. The EU subsequently released its communication on the next steps for a sustainable European future. The aim was to present how the European Union will contribute to the UN 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. While we would not dispute the contention; “a life of dignity for all within the planet’s limits that reconciles economic prosperity and efficiency, peaceful societies, social inclusion and environmental responsibility is at the essence of sustainable development” the link between this and the Commission’s approach to deliver this seems limited. The EU position is that current EU priorities until 2020 address all seventeen Goals, and it looks like there will be no overarching EU Sustainable Development Strategy. This leaves much to be desired if we, across Europe are going to make a significant contribution to saving our planet! SDG Watch Europe is also critical that despite the recognition in the communication that partnership with civil society should guide the whole process the input from civil society has not received the consideration it deserved.

The European Commission has not lived up to the Agenda 2030 commitment to work in an open, participatory and inclusive way with stakeholders. Disappointment deepened when in his State of the Union address, President Juncker made no mention of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, despite the fact that the EU has endorsed and is committed to implement this ambitious and overarching agenda. There is a feeling of disappointment among civic organisations at the EU’s failure to concretely engage in the effective coordination of Member States and the implementation of Agenda 2030. It seems there is a real lack of political will at EU level where this important sustainable

There is a strong synergy between the SDGs with community development and the role community development could / should play in contributing to achieving the SDGs. Reflecting on past and current community development work in member countries on sustainable development the picture is patchy. For example Norway, Scotland and Ireland have made progress in developing practice on sustainable development. This was covered in more depth by subsequent speakers. In Hungary, Romania, Poland it is has not been an important issue and we see tensions between the desire for economic development; jobs, wealth rather than sustainable development.
We should note that with the description of the UN SDGs, the first 5 form a key focus for CD and sustainable development is implicitly community development;

- No poverty
- No hunger
- Good health
- Quality education
- Gender equality

Conference moved from policy to the implications for practice on the ground. In smaller groups we discussed;

- What do CD organisations/networks/practitioners and researchers need to do to ensure that CD is highlighted in National and local SDG strategies?
- What do CD employers (public, private and non-governmental) and practitioners need to do to ensure that they are able to play a more central role in addressing the SDGs?
- What are the continuing professional development and initial training implications for CD practitioners if they are to play a more central role in addressing the SDGs?

We need to be able to communicate more effectively and directly to policy makers the contribution CD makes both in terms of the specific goals but also in involving and engaging vulnerable groups in solutions. In this respect we need to develop a common understanding between an environmental sector who get sustainable development in terms of waste, CO2 emissions, water quality, air purity, an economic development sector who get it in terms of consumables, raw materials, energy production, process and product; CD practitioners who deal in human rights, democracy, empowerment, capacity building; and policy makers with their language.

We also need to develop a deeper understanding of both the central role we each play, the contribution each makes and the interrelationship. We have become better at articulating the benefits of CD through a growing praxis on evaluation of CD and how it relates to poverty, health, inequality etc. We need to adapt this praxis to sustainable development with outcomes and indicators which clearly evidence progress against SDGs.
We heard then from Betsy King, Development Manager of Learning for Sustainability Scotland. Some progress on community development and sustainable development was made in Scotland through the UN Decade of Sustainable Development 2005-14. Since then in 2012 Scottish Government agreed a Learning for Sustainability report with the policy framework in place for all schools, with task groups looking at other sectors Colleges and Universities, Community Engagement, Community Learning. Key opportunities are;

- Reaching marginalised communities
- Capacity building to link local and global and social/economic/environmental
- Building effective partnerships third, public and private sectors
- Measuring what matters

Scotland has moved on from the position Betsy highlighted, with plans for implementation of the SDGs through the National Performance Framework (NPF) and the Scottish National Action Plan for Human Rights (SNAP Plan). A mapping exercise was carried out by the Scottish Government: mapping the Global Goals with the NPF and the SNAP Plan, to test how they currently align.

Scotland’s SDG Network has also been set up, a loose coalition of partners committed to advancing the Goals in Scotland, both domestically and internationally. The website globalgoals.scot has been developed to serve as the national platform for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Scotland.

Kirsten Paaby, of the Nordic Education Project, described the programme, Green Growth the Nordic Way. It was developed and managed by a Nordic Cross Sectorial Working group focused on learning for sustainability built around;

- Cross disciplinary and holistic learning
- Values based learning
- Critical thinking instead of "by heart"
- Different methods for learning
- Broad public participation
- Local relevant information

The programme bridges formal and non-formal education institutions, local administrations and civil society organisations. Participants gain knowledge about and competence in the concept of sustainability – the ecological, social and economic perspective, awareness about the local and global societal challenges and acquire educational methods and skills transferable to their own practice. Each participant had to as a condition of
participating, present and work on a concrete project and gather a local network.

Councillor Martha Wardrop, of Glasgow City Council argued that local government needs to make a stronger commitment with partners the third sector, community councils and within Community Planning Partnerships to lead activities based on the principles of:

- **Empowerment** – increasing the ability of individuals and groups to influence issues that affect them and their communities
- **Participation** – supporting people to take part in decision making
- **Inclusion**, equality of opportunity and antidiscrimination – recognising that some people may need additional support to overcome barriers they face
- **Self-determination** – supporting the right of people to make their own choices
- **Partnership** – recognising that many agencies can contribute to community development.

It would add value and openness by strengthening local democracy and increasing participation in local government elections which is extremely low.

Councillor Wardrop maintained to ensure implementation of measures to address the Sustainable Development Goals at the local level, it is important to secure support from Scottish Government and communities to establish a proper legal framework for local government. Clarity is needed further needed to clearly set out the responsibilities and powers of central and local government authorities in relation to one another in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Using the newly revised National Standards for Community Engagement by both national government and local government to support community engagement and user involvement in Scotland is crucial. The standards are intended to complement and support community empowerment in Scotland.

The focus more squarely returned to practice when participants again in workshops:

a) **Described work they are involved in (or are aware of) that directly or indirectly addresses each of the selected SDGs.**

b) **Considered how awareness of the SDGs might inform or influence their future practice**

c) **Reflected on the importance and role of community development in governments (and local authorities) writing their SDG implementation plans and in making them a reality.**

Perhaps not surprisingly the range of practice experience crossed sectors, themes and geographies was wide and could be linked to 11 of the 17 SDGs. The SDGs therefore provide a framework for practice exchange not just within community development but with environmentalists and policy makers.

The potential to begin to better integrate our work with other professions and to demonstrate community development has a significant and critical role to play in delivering the SDGs, a role in terms of engaging the most disadvantaged and vulnerable we are best placed to undertake.
A Short Bibliography

European Commission (2016), Next steps for a sustainable European future European action for sustainability
https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/commission-communication-next-steps-sustainable-european-future_en


European Environmental Bureau (2016), reforming Europe Towards Sustainability

IACD (2016), An IACD Position Statement: Community Development and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

NVL (2016) The New Nordic Education for Sustainability
https://issuu.com/nvlnordvux/docs/nordic_education_for_sustainability

Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (2016), Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development “Transforming Our World”

Sustainable Development Solution Network (2015) Getting Started with the sustainable Development Goals A guide for Stakeholders

United Nations Development Programme Sustainable Development Goals
http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/corporate/brochure/SDGs_Booklet_Web_En.pdf

United nations Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
The Sustainable Development Goals

The SDGs are unique. They recognize that ending poverty must go hand-in-hand with strategies that build economic growth and addresses a range of social needs including education, health, social protection, and job opportunities as well as tackling climate change and environmental protection.

**Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere**
Extreme poverty rates have been cut by more than half since 1990. While this is a remarkable achievement, one in five people in developing regions still live on less than $1.90 a day, and there are millions more who make little more than this daily amount, plus many people risk slipping back into poverty. Poverty is more than the lack of income and resources to ensure a sustainable livelihood. Its manifestations include hunger and malnutrition, limited access to education and other basic services, social discrimination and exclusion as well as the lack of participation in decision-making. Economic growth must be inclusive to provide sustainable jobs and promote equality.

**Goal 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture**
It is time to rethink how we grow, share and consume our food. If done right, agriculture, forestry and fisheries can provide nutritious food for all and generate decent incomes, while supporting people-centred rural development and protecting the environment. Right now, our soils, freshwater, oceans, forests and biodiversity are being rapidly degraded. Climate change is putting even more pressure on the resources we depend on, increasing risks associated with disasters such as droughts and floods. Many rural women and men can no longer make ends meet on their land, forcing them to migrate to cities in search of opportunities. A profound change of the global food and agriculture system is needed if we are to nourish today’s 795 million hungry and the additional 2 billion people expected by 2050. The food and agriculture sector offers key solutions for development, and is central for hunger and poverty eradication.

**Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages**
Ensuring healthy lives and promoting the well-being for all at all ages is essential to sustainable development. Significant strides have been made in increasing life expectancy and reducing some of the common killers associated with child and maternal mortality. Major progress has been made on increasing access to clean water and sanitation, reducing malaria, tuberculosis, polio and the spread of HIV/AIDS. However, many more efforts are needed to fully eradicate a wide range of diseases and address many different persistent and emerging health issues.

**Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning**
Obtaining a quality education is the foundation to improving people’s lives and sustainable development. Major progress has been made towards increasing access to education at all levels and increasing enrolment rates in schools particularly for women and girls. Basic literacy skills have improved tremendously, yet bolder efforts are needed to make even greater strides for achieving universal education goals. For example, the world has achieved equality in primary education between girls and boys, but few countries have achieved that target at all levels of education.

**Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls**
While the world has achieved progress towards gender equality and women’s...
empowerment under the Millennium Development Goals (including equal access to primary education between girls and boys), women and girls continue to suffer discrimination and violence in every part of the world. Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world. Providing women and girls with equal access to education, health care, decent work, and representation in political and economic decision-making processes will fuel sustainable economies and benefit societies and humanity at large.

Goal 6: Ensure access to water and sanitation for all
Clean, accessible water for all is an essential part of the world we want to live in. There is sufficient fresh water on the planet to achieve this. But due to bad economics or poor infrastructure, every year millions of people, most of them children, die from diseases associated with inadequate water supply, sanitation and hygiene. Water scarcity, poor water quality and inadequate sanitation negatively impact food security, livelihood choices and educational opportunities for poor families across the world. Drought afflicts some of the world’s poorest countries, worsening hunger and malnutrition. By 2050, at least one in four people is likely to live in a country affected by chronic or recurring shortages of fresh water.

Goal 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
Energy is central to nearly every major challenge and opportunity the world faces today. Be it for jobs, security, climate change, food production or increasing incomes, access to energy for all is essential. Sustainable energy is opportunity – it transforms lives, economies and the planet. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon is leading a Sustainable Energy for All initiative to ensure universal access to modern energy services, improve efficiency and increase use of renewable sources.

Goal 8: Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all
Roughly half the world’s population still lives on the equivalent of about US$2 a day. And in too many places, having a job doesn’t guarantee the ability to escape from poverty. This slow and uneven progress requires us to rethink and retool our economic and social policies aimed at eradicating poverty. A continued lack of decent work opportunities, insufficient investments and under-consumption lead to an erosion of the basic social contract underlying democratic societies: that all must share in progress. The creation of quality jobs will remain a major challenge for almost all economies well beyond 2015. Sustainable economic growth will require societies to create the conditions that allow people to have quality jobs that stimulate the economy while not harming the environment. Job opportunities and decent working conditions are also required for the whole working age population.

Goal 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote sustainable industrialization and foster innovation
Investments in infrastructure – transport, irrigation, energy and information and communication technology – are crucial to achieving sustainable development and empowering communities in many countries. It has long been recognized that growth in productivity and incomes, and improvements in health and education outcomes require investment in infrastructure. Inclusive and sustainable industrial development is the primary source of income generation, allows for rapid and sustained increases in living standards for all people, and provides the technological solutions to environmentally sound industrialization. Technological progress is the foundation of efforts to achieve environmental objectives, such as increased resource and energy-efficiency. Without technology and innovation, industrialization will not happen, and without industrialization, development will not happen.
Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries
The international community has made significant strides towards lifting people out of poverty. The most vulnerable nations – the least developed countries, the landlocked developing countries and the small island developing states – continue to make inroads into poverty reduction. However, inequality still persists and large disparities remain in access to health and education services and other assets. Additionally, while income inequality between countries may have been reduced, inequality within countries has risen. There is growing consensus that economic growth is not sufficient to reduce poverty if it is not inclusive and if it does not involve the three dimensions of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental. To reduce inequality, policies should be universal in principle paying attention to the needs of disadvantaged and marginalized populations.

Goal 11: Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
Cities are hubs for ideas, commerce, culture, science, productivity, social development and much more. At their best, cities have enabled people to advance socially and economically. However, many challenges exist to maintaining cities in a way that continues to create jobs and prosperity while not straining land and resources. Common urban challenges include congestion, lack of funds to provide basic services, a shortage of adequate housing and declining infrastructure. The challenges cities face can be overcome in ways that allow them to continue to thrive and grow, while improving resource use and reducing pollution and poverty. The future we want includes cities of opportunities for all, with access to basic services, energy, housing, transportation and more.

Goal 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
Sustainable consumption and production is about promoting resource and energy efficiency, sustainable infrastructure, and providing access to basic services, green and decent jobs and a better quality of life for all. Its implementation helps to achieve overall development plans, reduce future economic, environmental and social costs, strengthen economic competitiveness and reduce poverty. Sustainable consumption and production aims at “doing more and better with less,” increasing net welfare gains from economic activities by reducing resource use, degradation and pollution along the whole lifecycle, while increasing quality of life. It involves different stakeholders, including business, consumers, policy makers, researchers, scientists, retailers, media, and development cooperation agencies, among others. It also requires a systemic approach and cooperation among actors operating in the supply chain, from producer to final consumer. It involves engaging consumers through awareness-raising and education on sustainable consumption and lifestyles, providing consumers with adequate information through standards and labels and engaging in sustainable public procurement, among others.

Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
Climate change is now affecting every country on every continent. It is disrupting national economies and affecting lives, costing people, communities and countries dearly today and even more tomorrow. People are experiencing the significant impacts of climate change, which include changing weather patterns, rising sea level, and more extreme weather events. The greenhouse gas emissions from human activities are driving climate change and continue to rise. They are now at their highest levels in history. Without action, the world’s average surface temperature is projected to rise over the 21st century and is
likely to surpass 3 degrees Celsius this century—with some areas of the world expected to warm even more. The poorest and most vulnerable people are being affected the most. Affordable, scalable solutions are now available to enable countries to leapfrog to cleaner, more resilient economies. The pace of change is quickening as more people are turning to renewable energy and a range of other measures that will reduce emissions and increase adaptation efforts. But climate change is a global challenge that does not respect national borders. Emissions anywhere affect people everywhere. It is an issue that requires solutions that need to be coordinated at the international level and it requires international cooperation to help developing countries move toward a low-carbon economy. To address climate change, countries adopted the Paris Agreement at the COP21 in Paris on 12 December 2015. The Agreement entered into force shortly thereafter, on 4 November 2016. In the agreement, all countries agreed to work to limit global temperature rise to well below 2 degrees Celsius, and given the grave risks, to strive for 1.5 degrees Celsius.

Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources
The world's oceans – their temperature, chemistry, currents and life – drive global systems that make the Earth habitable for humankind. Our rainwater, drinking water, weather, climate, coastlines, much of our food, and even the oxygen in the air we breathe, are all ultimately provided and regulated by the sea. Throughout history, oceans and seas have been vital conduits for trade and transportation. Careful management of this essential global resource is a key feature of a sustainable future.

Goal 15: Sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, halt biodiversity loss
Forests cover 30 per cent of the Earth’s surface and in addition to providing food security and shelter, forests are key to combating climate change, protecting biodiversity and the homes of the indigenous population. Thirteen million hectares of forests are being lost every year while the persistent degradation of drylands has led to the desertification of 3.6 billion hectares. Deforestation and desertification – caused by human activities and climate change – pose major challenges to sustainable development and have affected the lives and livelihoods of millions of people in the fight against poverty. Efforts are being made to manage forests and combat desertification.

Goal 16: Promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies
Goal 16 of the Sustainable Development Goals is dedicated to the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, the provision of access to justice for all, and building effective, accountable institutions at all levels.

Goal 17: Revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development
A successful sustainable development agenda requires partnerships between governments, the private sector and civil society. These inclusive partnerships built upon principles and values, a shared vision, and shared goals that place people and the planet at the centre, are needed at the global, regional, national and local level. Urgent action is needed to mobilize, redirect and unlock the transformative power of trillions of dollars of private resources to deliver on sustainable development objectives. Long-term investments, including foreign direct investment, are needed in critical sectors, especially in developing countries. These include sustainable energy, infrastructure and transport, as well as information and communications.
technologies. The public sector will need to set a clear direction. Review and monitoring frameworks, regulations and incentive structures that enable such investments must be retooled to attract investments and reinforce sustainable development. National oversight mechanisms such as supreme audit institutions and oversight functions by legislatures should be strengthened.