

**2017**

**VENRO Strategy 2017–2022**

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## THE VENRO STRATEGY 2017–2022: FROM IDEA TO IMPLEMENTATION

Meeting global challenges like poverty, hunger, growing inequality, climate change and threats to natural resources demands a profound transformation of the economy and society. This requires a reformulation of the concept of development. Civil society has a central role to play in shaping these processes of change. The Association of German Development and Humanitarian Aid Non-Governmental Organisations (VENRO) represents the civil society organisations in the field of development and humanitarian aid vis-à-vis policy makers, media and society.

VENRO's work can draw on a multitude of member organisations that are active in the association, in its board and in its working groups and make essential contributions to the association's success. In order to be able to face current and future challenges with a clear orientation in accordance with the wishes of its members, VENRO has adopted the present strategy for the years 2017 to 2022. It is the result of a yearlong work process in which the member organisations, the working groups, the board and the head office of the association actively participated. The strategy was adopted by the members' assembly on December 7, 2016.

The development of the strategy was preceded by a stakeholder analysis that describes the challenges that VENRO faces in the field of development policy and in its work as an association. Taking into account these challenges and the analysis of the previous strategic planning (2011–2016), the association defined strategic goals and set thematic priorities. This brought clarity about the future work priorities for all actors of the association.

The basis and starting point of the strategy paper are the VENRO statutes, which define both the mandate and the goals of the association's work. According to the statutes, the members have joined together in the association with the aim of strengthening their contribution to more justice in the One World. They regard it as their common mission to contribute to poverty reduction, the realisation of human rights, humanitarian aid and the conservation of natural resources.

The present strategy paper is divided into four sections: The vision, which describes which changes VENRO wants to contribute to, is followed by the overarching goals. Subsequently, strategic goals with respective subgoals are described for the coming years in the fields of action that are important for VENRO. Indicators will be specified at the implementation level.

With involvement of the working groups and in coordination with the board, the head office will develop operational implementation plans, including annual work programmes, for the implementation of the strategic goals. For this purpose, measures and activities for achieving the goals will be developed in accordance with the available resources. The board will annually inform the members about the current state of implementation in the members' assembly. Should the need arise, the board will propose any necessary adjustment of the strategic goals to the members' assembly.

## OUR VISION

In a world as we imagine it, policy makers and society in Germany shape national and international processes of change such that they are consistently oriented towards the guiding principles of global justice and sustainability as well as social and economic transformation. They thereby make essential contributions to overcoming poverty, inequality and exclusion and their structural causes, to the realisation of human rights, to gender equality, to the peaceful coexistence of all people and to the protection of natural resources.

In such a world, people who find themselves in an emergency or are threatened by one due to crises, violent conflicts or natural disasters receive humanitarian aid that allows them to live in dignity and security and makes them better prepared for future crises, shocks and the impacts of climate change.

All policy areas would be oriented towards the criteria of international responsibility, sustainable development and good governance and would thus allow the equal participation of all<sup>1</sup>.

In this world as we envisage it, the German government and the European Union work towards meeting the global challenges in solidarity. In particular, they implement the international goals and commitments agreed on in the framework of the 2030 Agenda, the Paris climate agreement and the World Humanitarian Summit consistently and successfully.

In such a world, we, the actors of civil society, have sufficient scope of action to be influential driving forces of the socio-ecological transformation of the economy and society.

In the framework of the strategy presented here, VENRO will make its contribution towards turning this vision into reality.

<sup>1</sup> Based on the preamble of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, this is understood to refer to all persons regardless of sex, age, disability, language, sexual orientation or gender identity, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic, indigenous or social origin, property, birth or other status.

## WHOM DO WE WANT TO REACH? – OUR OVERARCHING GOALS

VENRO has focused and successfully implemented its central concerns with respect to three strategic stakeholder groups – political decision makers, the (professional) public and member organisations:

- 1 | For German decision makers, VENRO is a high-profile partner for dialogue on topics in globally sustainable development with particular expertise in development policy and humanitarian aid.

German decision makers positively take up VENRO's concerns in their spheres of influence in Germany, in the EU and at the international level.

As a voice of its member organisations, VENRO is clearly perceived to take a stand in debates and acts to shape globally sustainable policies in Germany, as well as principled, need-based and effective humanitarian aid.

VENRO has promoted perspectives for socio-ecological and human rights-based development and a sustainable and just global economic order.

- 2 | The interested public and the professional public have a differentiated view of the subjects of globally sustainable development and principled, need-based and effective humanitarian aid. They take VENRO's view into account in forming their opinions and in their actions.

VENRO has taken a formative role in the wider discourse in society on the formulation of new guiding principles and implementation strategies of sustainable development and has initiated transformative learning processes with contributions of its own.

VENRO has made major contributions to the renewal and sustainability of development policy and humanitarian aid.

- 3 | By joining forces in VENRO, the member organisations gain stronger political and societal influence for the benefit of the concerns of disadvantaged population groups and of those affected by humanitarian crises.

The member organisations competently perform their role as change agents for globally sustainable development and for principled, need-based and effective humanitarian aid.

The member organisations gain in impact and quality through VENRO.

## WHAT TO WE WANT TO ACHIEVE? – OUR STRATEGIC GOALS

### The strategic goals at a glance

#### Political goals

- 1 | The 2030 Agenda is coherently implemented in and by Germany, with VENRO's positions taken into account.
- 2 | German policies and both official and civil society development cooperation make an effective contribution to reducing social inequality.
- 3 | Approaches to mitigating humanitarian crises and increasing the effectiveness of humanitarian aid are coherently implemented by Germany, with VENRO's positions taken into account.
- 4 | Policy makers and society orient their actions in dealing with displacement and migration towards human rights and international humanitarian law and push for sustainable migration and asylum policies.
- 5 | Policy makers, development cooperation and humanitarian aid increasingly contribute to gender equality, inclusion and overcoming discrimination.
- 6 | Civil society organisations have gained more influence, both nationally and internationally.

#### Institutional goals

- 7 | The sustainability of VENRO and its member organisations is strengthened.
- 8 | Gender equality, inclusion and diversity are implemented in the association.
- 9 | The work of VENRO and its member organisations is effective.

## POLITICAL GOALS

### 1 | The 2030 Agenda is coherently implemented in and by Germany, taking account of VENRO's positions.

Decision makers in Germany adopt positions from VENRO in implementing the 2030 Agenda. VENRO's positions enter into Germany's contributions to globally sustainable development and are recognisable. VENRO has a high profile as an opinion leader of the development and humanitarian aid organisations.

VENRO has successfully contributed to the German government accountably establishing the coherence across departments required for implementing the SDGs.

The cooperation with other civil society networks and associations is intensified and has led to a consolidation of new formats of cooperation between the different spectra of civil society.

VENRO is an influential actor of transformative educational and learning processes and significantly contributes to orienting educational practice towards the guiding principle of globally sustainable development.

VENRO has successfully worked towards Germany providing its fair and internationally agreed share of financing for the global implementation of the SDGs. The German government pushes for reducing tax flight and avoidance, for stopping illicit financial flows, for a fair and sustainable debt relief mechanism for states with unsustainable debts and for the introduction of a financial transaction tax.

VENRO has successfully used the debate on the 2030 Agenda for anchoring more far-reaching perspectives for a socio-ecological transformation of policies, society and the economy in the public discourse in Germany. Topics such as a post-growth society and the finite nature of resources play a particular role in this.

### 2 | German policies and both official and civil society development cooperation make an effective contribution to reducing social inequality.

Decision makers push for reducing social inequality and creating equal opportunities, referring to VENRO's positions in the process.

On issues of the global reduction of social inequalities, VENRO has a formative influence on the public discourse.

Through the professional exchange and the coordination within the VENRO framework, the member organisations contribute to the development of strategies for reducing social inequality and for ensuring more social justice.

### 3 | Approaches to mitigating humanitarian crises and increasing the effectiveness of humanitarian aid are coherently implemented by Germany, with VENRO's positions taken into account.

Policy makers organise humanitarian aid in accordance with the humanitarian principles, taking VENRO's positions into account. The link between humanitarian aid and development cooperation is strengthened.

VENRO makes visible contributions to the specification and implementation of the decisions of the World Humanitarian Summit, in particular on the role of local actors and on strengthening disaster preparedness as a central field of action of humanitarian aid. The critical exchange with new humanitarian actors is expanded.

The interested and the professional public are informed about the challenges and the reform processes in the field of humanitarian aid. With support from VENRO, the member organisations further develop their approaches with a view to the new challenges.

When strategies of German foreign policy in the areas of civil crisis prevention and promotion of peace are formulated, VENRO's positions are taken up and the expertise of the member organisations is used for planning and implementation. This also includes the demand for the German government to refrain from actions that exacerbate crises, in particular to stop all arms exports.

German decision makers contribute to eliminating the causes of anthropogenic climate change. The reduction of emissions that cause the atmosphere to warm has top priority. They address the already palpable impacts such as flooding, droughts, extreme weather events through adaptation measures, taking up recommendations and demands from VENRO.

### 4 | Policy makers and society orient their actions in dealing with displacement and migration towards human rights and international humanitarian law and push for sustainable migration and asylum policies.

Political and societal decision makers perceive VENRO as an important partner for dialogue on development-policy and humanitarian aspects of displacement and migration.

VENRO has made visible contributions to rendering the conditions of migration conducive to development. The member organisations are supported by VENRO in competently participating in the political and societal debate on sustainably shaping migration.

VENRO has developed concepts and potentials for counteracting racism, xenophobia, religiously motivated discrimination and nationalist tendencies.

VENRO has effectively advocated for the respect, protection and safeguarding of the rights of refugees and migrants. The experiences of the member organisations in intercultural educational work, in the civil peace service, in humanitarian aid and in development cooperation are respected and applied in their integration in Germany. VENRO has established an exchange with migrant organisations.

VENRO has triggered a broad public debate on the connections between German/European policies and the causes of displacement and migration and has opposed the tendency of co-opting development cooperation for the purpose of repelling migrants.

## 5 | Policy makers, development cooperation and humanitarian aid increasingly contribute to gender equality, inclusion and overcoming discrimination.

The central importance of gender equality, children's rights and inclusion for globally sustainable development and effective humanitarian aid is recognised. German development cooperation orients its policies such that it contributes to overcoming all forms of structural discrimination and disadvantages and to promoting equal participation.

VENRO is an active force in the debate on the participation of all. There is a special focus on the rights and the situation of women and children, in particular girls.

With VENRO's support, the member organisations contribute to realising gender equality, inclusion and overcoming structural discrimination in Germany and in the partner countries. Vulnerable groups are particularly taken into account and involved in this process.

## 6 | Civil society organisations have gained more influence, both nationally and internationally.

At the German, European and international level, the influence of civil society organisations on shaping globally sustainable development and principled, need-based and effective humanitarian aid grows.

The German government increasingly advocates for the participation of civil society actors in international policy processes.

In intergovernmental negotiations, the German government works towards recognition of civil society rights in the partner countries and opposes the restriction of the scope of action of human rights defenders and of civil society movements.

By introducing adequate review procedures, the German government ensures that political decisions and measures at the German and European levels have no negative impact on the scope of action of civil society in other countries.

VENRO contributes to raising broad national and international public awareness in cases of restriction of civil society's scope of action, violations of the rights to freedom of assembly and freedom of expression and criminalisation of human rights defenders. VENRO is perceived in Germany as an important voice for the rights of global civil society.

The member organisations expand their international civil society networks and have effective counterstrategies at their disposal in case of violations of the scope of action of their partner organisations.

## INSTITUTIONAL GOALS

### 7 | The sustainability of VENRO and its member organisations is strengthened.

VENRO has contributed to a renewed and sustainable self-conception of the policy area of “development cooperation”. VENRO can explain to the public and to policy makers where the future core tasks of development policy and the key competences of civil society for contributing to meeting the global challenges lie.

VENRO is able to weigh in on central development policy topics at any time.

VENRO supports its members in expanding their professional competence and their ability to innovate in a context of rapidly changing circumstances.

The member organisations live the standards with respect to the VENRO codes.

VENRO’S structures and workflows correspond to the current and future challenges. VENRO has developed a concept for itself for dealing with the growing need for further internationalisation of civil society organisations.

VENRO is financially independent and has diversified its third-party funding at the governmental and non-governmental level. VENRO has improved access to public donors for its member organisations.

### 8 | Gender equality, inclusion and diversity are implemented in the association.

Decision makers, the interested and the professional public perceive VENRO as a credible and exemplary association.

In the association and in the member organisations, the awareness for gender equality, diversity and inclusion is

enhanced and the corresponding structures and practices are further developed. The association and the member organisations implement inclusion and gender equality in their work and take up different cultural and social viewpoints.

### 9 | The work of VENRO and its member organisations is effective.

Decision makers perceive VENRO as a competent partner for dialogue on the subject of effectiveness in development cooperation, in humanitarian aid and in domestic work and take its positions into account in their decisions.

The professional public takes up VENRO positions on quality and effectiveness of development cooperation, humanitarian aid and domestic work.

VENRO and the member organisations work in an impact-oriented manner, fulfil quality standards and transparently report on their impacts.