



Goal 17:

PARTNER-SHIPS FOR THE GOALS

The future is wide open. No one can know what the world will look like in 2030. But one thing is for sure: everything made by humans can be changed by humans. Society is not defined by the laws of nature, it is shaped by the people who take part in it. World history has been created through the choices of the people who have come before us, and likewise the future will be shaped by the choices we make today.

Goal 17 is about how we can work together to achieve all the other goals. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are comprehensive and ambitious, and all sectors of society need to be involved in them. All countries must take responsibility. Civil society, you and I, religious communities and organisations must take responsibility. The private sector, both large and small companies, must take responsibility. The UN, the World Bank and other international organisations must take responsibility. Not least, countries, companies and organisations that manage extensive resources must take responsibility for achieving the goals everywhere, including in poor countries and societies. If we are to achieve major changes and achieve the SDGs, we must work together. It is possible to move mountains, but we must start by carrying stones. And no one can bear the burden alone.

Biblical reflection

The Bible gives clear directions for what characterises a good society: Above all justice and peace, inclusiveness that secures the rights and participation of the lowly, and respect and care for vulnerable people – widows, orphans and strangers (Deuteronomy 10:17–19).

The government has the prime responsibility for guaranteeing these goals. A good king promotes righteousness and sees to the well-being of the defenceless (Psalm 72:4). In addition, every citizen shares a corresponding responsibility for building the society. The biblical understandings of being human and of society are related, they affirm each other mutually in the sense that all of us are called to promote what is right and good for all. "He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" (Micah 6:8).

This is done by working together with all people of good will, also with individuals and groups that we traditionally have not considered as natural partners when engaged in social activities. It implies a willingness to cross social borders when working for the well-being of the community. This is how the prophet Jeremiah urged his countrymen exiled in Babylon to contribute to peace and well-being, and to pray for the city; "for in its welfare you will find your welfare" (Jeremiah 29:7).

Questions

- How is your country engaged in achieving the SDGs? What space is provided for churches and civil society?

Challenge

Which partners are relevant to you (such as your congregation, your church or an organisation) in the work to promote the SDGs, and what opportunities and challenges will that partnership provide? How can you maintain the uniquely Christian perspective in such partnerships with other social actors?

Prayer

*Lord, Father of all, you who created us for each other,
Let us understand that we are all sisters and brothers.
Forgive us when we forget this truth,
And reawaken our brotherly and sisterly love.
Let us walk side by side towards a better future.
Let your kingdom come!*

We commit everything and everyone, into your hands, Lord. Amen.