



Federal Ministry  
for Economic Cooperation  
and Development

Executive Summary

# The German Government's 17th Development Policy Report

Development policy in a changing, multipolar world





# Development policy in a changing, multipolar world

The 17th Development Policy Report describes Germany's development policy in times of fundamental economic, environmental and social change. The international community needs to manage the transition towards climate neutrality, adapt to advancing climate change and, simultaneously, reduce existing and widening inequalities. The world has also become more multipolar. Many countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America now play an assertive role in the economic and geopolitical spheres. They are demanding equal opportunities and rights and are organising in new alliances.

At the beginning of the current electoral term, it seemed unthinkable that the agenda of the new German government would be dominated by a war in Europe. Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine has been a watershed for Europe and a turning point for security policy. Many other parts of the world, too, have experienced crises and conflicts that have caused suffering among civilians and triggered new refugee movements.

In the present electoral term, the 2030 Agenda has been the guiding vision for Germany's development policy. The rules-based multilateral order, strong international organisations and the European Union all remain indispensable for effectively protecting and securing global public goods such as peace and security, the global climate, an intact environment, and health. In view of this, the German government has implemented the following development priorities in the electoral term that is now drawing to its end.

## Providing global health and bodily autonomy

For the entire world, the COVID-19 pandemic was a stark illustration of the fact that protection against infectious diseases, effective pandemic prevention and functioning health systems are vital to global health, because in addition to the direct consequences of the pandemic for millions of people, there were also enormous setbacks in the fight against other diseases, especially for the poorest of the poor. Through its latest global health strategy, the German government has affirmed its aspiration to achieve the health goals of the 2030 Agenda.

## Achievements

- Funding from Germany helped to enable the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria to give 25 million people access to HIV treatment in 2023. That same year, over 7 million people received treatment against tuberculosis and 171 million people, treatment against malaria. A total of 227 million mosquito nets were distributed.
- In order to achieve a more equitable distribution of COVID-19 vaccines across the globe, the German government supported COVAX, the international vaccine initiative.<sup>1</sup> Nearly 2 billion doses of vaccine were provided through that channel.

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1 COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access

- In 2022, access to health services was provided with German support for some 3.5 million people in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. A total of 186 health facilities were established and/or received capacity building support.
- Since early 2022, the German Development Ministry (BMZ), together with partners, has restored or expanded more than 110 health facilities in Ukraine and has provided medical support for about 3 million Ukrainians.

## Pushing back poverty, hunger and inequality

In 2023, nearly one in ten people suffered from hunger – some 733 million people in all. This is 152 million more than before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, too, has had a severe impact on global food security. Preserving livelihoods and stepping up efforts to address the interlinked problems of poverty, hunger and inequality remains a key task for Germany's development policy.

## Achievements

- The Sahel Alliance<sup>2</sup> and its partners built sewerage systems and sanitation facilities and expanded drinking water networks, giving 8 million people improved access to drinking water. Dual (school-based and industry-based) vocational training and ongoing training have enabled over 1.5 million people to improve their livelihoods and provide for their families. More than 2.3 million people have been given access to energy and are now able to light their homes, irrigate fields and run machinery.
- In 2022, multilateral education funds such as the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) supported 107 million learners affected by extreme poverty or conflict, in a total of 90 countries.
- The BMZ's Special Initiative "Decent Work for a Just Transition", in cooperation with over 5,100 African, European and German enterprises, has created jobs and carried out training activities, enabling over 147,000 people to improve their working conditions and incomes.
- In order to respond to the global food crisis in 2022, Germany made available nearly 2 billion euros in additional funding. That same year, the German government established the Global Alliance for Food Security (GAFS) as a joint response of the G7 to the food crisis. In 2024, the Alliance became part of the Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty launched by the Brazilian G20 Presidency.

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<sup>2</sup> The Sahel Alliance is a donor group that coordinates international development cooperation in the five Sahel countries: Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger and Chad.

## Forging ahead with the Just Transition

The German government's guiding vision is to enable all people to live a life of dignity and security in a healthy environment. Transitioning to a climate-compatible and circular economy while the demand for energy and resources continues to grow requires a massive effort on the part of all countries, especially those in the Global South. "Just Transition" refers to efforts to make this transition socially equitable and leave no one behind. The German government is assisting its partner countries in expanding renewable energy generation and giving direction to the energy transition, but also in adapting to climate change and securing coverage against climate-related losses and damages. It is also supporting countries' efforts to improve the policy environment for the extraction of (critical) raw materials and to make it socially and environmentally sound, and to develop local value chains. Green hydrogen plays a key role for a comprehensive energy transition. This involves producing the necessary electricity on a climate-neutral basis from renewable sources. Many countries in the Global South have very good conditions for this type of power generation.

## Achievements

- The German government has continuously delivered on its international climate finance pledge. In 2022 and 2023, Germany contributed its fair share to the global climate commitment to mobilise 100 billion US dollars a year to support developing countries and emerging economies in their efforts to implement climate change mitigation and adaptation measures. Germany's latest contribution, in 2023, was 9.9 billion euros in total.
- The German government has also lobbied for more ambitious international support for responding to loss and damage. It joined forces with the United Arab Emirates, with each country contributing 100 million US dollars to the newly established Fund for responding to Loss and Damage. The Fund is intended to enable people in particularly vulnerable regions to respond swiftly to imminent climate-related losses and damages, for instance from drought and floods.
- In the African Great Lakes region, the BMZ is working to reduce illegal resource extraction and trade while simultaneously fostering formal employment. The Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action is working together with several countries, including Brazil, in the field of sustainable resource extraction and processing. The Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection has supported six member countries of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) since 2024 in extracting and processing minerals needed for the energy transition through low-carbon mining and production methods.
- In the Joint Declaration of Intent for a Green and Sustainable Development Partnership signed by Chancellor Scholz and Prime Minister Modi in 2022, Germany and India committed themselves to working together more closely in the period up to 2030 in areas such as renewable energy, sustainable urban development and transport, and biodiversity and ecosystem conservation.

## Embracing a feminist development policy

In view of the continuing discrimination of women and girls worldwide, the German government began actively pursuing a new policy approach when it started its term in office. Through its feminist development policy and feminist foreign policy, the German government is working at the global level to advance the “three Rs” for women – rights, resources and representation.

### Achievements

- The BMZ has focused development cooperation more on fostering gender equality and is well on track towards achieving its goal of making sure that, by 2025, 93 per cent of all new projects under the BMZ's responsibility will have gender equality at least as a significant objective. (In 2022, that rate was only 66.1 per cent in terms of project funding.)
- In order to reach its feminist development policy objectives, the BMZ has intensified its cooperation in multilateral organisations and international institutions and made use of its role on multilateral organisations' boards. For example, the BMZ supports the United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women. The European Union, too, is an important partner for advancing gender equality and feminist approaches.
- In many countries, the BMZ has launched projects that are in line with the strategy. In Nepal, it supports the integration of women's and girls' rights in the national health strategy. In Pakistan, support is being provided with a view to fostering women's rights in the textile sector. In Indonesia, targeted measures are under way in the energy sector to increase the share of women employees in the industry. In Colombia, advice is being provided to the government as it setting up its new Ministry of Equality and Equity. In Peru, the BMZ has provided support to strengthen the specialised justice system for violence against women. It assists women and girls through both legal and psychosocial support and protection, for instance by putting them in touch with women's shelters.

## New approaches in displacement and migration policies

At the end of 2023, the number of displaced people worldwide had reached 117 million. Over the last ten years, this number has more than doubled. Three in four internationally or internally displaced persons are hosted by countries in the Global South. These countries receive support from Germany to help them deal with this challenge, not least with a view to ensuring that refugees can live in sustainable and decent conditions. The German government's development policy is also geared towards tapping the potential of regular skilled and labour migration for fostering development in the BMZ's partner countries.

### Achievements

- The German government is encouraging countries to open their social protection systems and labour markets for refugees, thus meeting their obligation to protect them. Examples include Chad and Mauritania. The BMZ has also supported schooling for children in contexts of displacement via the Education Cannot Wait (ECW) fund.
- Since 2021, a total of 4.2 million people in the MENA region – of whom more than half were women and some 1.8 million were children – benefited from transitional development assistance from the BMZ. They now have better access to safe drinking water, sanitation, health services, and education.

- In order to address the skills shortage in Germany, the German government is using its development policy to tap the potential of regular skilled and labour migration. For example, support is being provided to projects that put skilled workers from Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt in touch with companies in Germany so they can train and work there.
- The BMZ has established nine centres for migration and development – in Ghana, Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt, Iraq, Pakistan, Indonesia, Nigeria and Jordan. Through the centres, it assists people in partner countries with regard to regular migration – especially for the purposes of working and training – to Germany, Europe or within their region. The centres also provide support for returnees to facilitate their sustainable reintegration, and they offer information on the risks of irregular migration, for instance regarding exploitation by traffickers and the often extremely dangerous migration routes.

## Strengthening European and multilateral development policy

During the current electoral term, the German government has launched and implemented various development policy initiatives to make multilateral formats fit for the future. The purpose of the reforms of multilateral organisations is to position them for the future and enable them to respond to crises, making them more effective.

### Achievements

- During Germany's G7 Presidency in 2022, the BMZ joined forces with the International Labour Organization (ILO), the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). They all agreed to work together more closely on advancing social protection and decent work. Under Germany's Presidency, the G7 nations adopted an interim target on the development of social protection systems and coverage of the poor and vulnerable (SDG 1.3), namely to provide social protection for an additional one billion people by 2025.
- The World Bank Group has operations around the world and is the world's biggest development finance institution. This means that it is particularly well positioned to play a central role in tackling cross-border challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss and pandemics. This is why German Development Minister Svenja Schulze, in her capacity as German Governor for the World Bank Group, joined forces with other shareholders to launch a fundamental reform of the World Bank Group so it would further increase its contribution to a socially just and environmentally ambitious transformation. Thanks to the reform, the World Bank will increase its lending capacity by about 150 billion US dollars over a period of ten years.
- The Hamburg Sustainability Conference (HSC), an initiative of the BMZ in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Michael Otto Foundation and the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg, was held on 7 and 8 October 2024. It brought together some 1,600 decision-makers from politics, multilateral institutions, the private sector, civil society and academia. Its purpose was to achieve further progress on reaching the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Building on the outcomes of the UN Summit of the Future, the Conference provided significant input for international processes and brought progress on practical solutions. For instance, it mobilised half a billion euros in private investment in large-scale green hydrogen projects. Another focus was on leveraging private investment and intensifying cooperation for sustainable shipping and aviation.

## Methodology and broad range of instruments – Germany's comparative advantage in the international arena

The German government has a mix of effective instruments and procedures for its development policy. It works together with experienced implementing organisations that have operations across the globe, and with non-governmental organisations and civil society. Depending on the local context and specific needs, they complement each other in different ways, thus increasing the impact of the activities. Development policy is implemented across the federal ministries. Nearly all of them have development cooperation activities. Moreover, Germany's 16 federal states (*Länder*) have their own funding programmes and partnerships. They, and also Germany's municipalities, are important players in Germany's development policy.



For further information on  
Germany's development policy, visit  
[www.bmz.de/development-policy-report](http://www.bmz.de/development-policy-report)





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