

HLPF 2016: Shaping the reporting by Major Groups and Other Stakeholders on their contribution to the implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda

“The high-level political forum on sustainable development will support participation in follow-up and review processes by the major groups and other relevant stakeholders in line with Resolution 67/290. We call on these actors to report on their contribution to the implementation of the Agenda.”

(para. 89 of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda)

DESA/DSD convened an Expert Group Meeting on 19 April 2016 on the topic “*HLPF 2016: Shaping the reporting by Major Groups and Other Stakeholders on their contribution to the implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda*”. The meeting, which was attended by approximately 80 MGoS representatives, included interventions by a number of high level participants, including H.E. Ambassador Oh Joon, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations and President of the Economic and Social Council; Mr. Wu Hongbo, Under-Secretary-General of Economic and Social Affairs; H.E. Ambassador Lois Young, Permanent Representative of Belize and H.E. Ambassador Peter Nielsen, Deputy Permanent Representative of Denmark.

The objective of the meeting was to provide an opportunity for MGoS to discuss and share views on strategies and approaches for operationalizing their participation in the HLPF reviews of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, as well as the reporting by the MGoS to the HLPF on *their contribution* to the implementation, as called for in paragraph 89 of the Agenda. In preparation of the meeting, draft elements for possible voluntary guidelines that could guide the MGoS in the preparation of reports on their implementation of the 2030 Agenda had been circulated by DSD as food for thought (<http://bit.ly/1Xts0Z3>).

In the morning two panel discussions were organised on “Mapping of existing tools and models for voluntary reporting by stakeholders” and “Mapping of modalities for MGoS participation in national and thematic reviews at the HLPF, in accordance with resolution 67/290”. In the afternoon three breakout sessions were held on: (a) MGoS participation in HLPF national and thematic reviews; (b) Recommendations for MGoS reporting on their implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda; and (c) How to engage the most vulnerable and marginalised.

The concept note for the event is available at: <http://bit.ly/2431woE>

Panel 1: Mapping of existing tools and models for voluntary reporting by stakeholders

Highlights

Ms. Norine Kennedy from the US Council for International Business/Business and Industry Major Group noted that while Business and Industry are already doing extensive reporting on many aspects relating to the 2030 Agenda, such reports do not necessarily mesh with the UN

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processes (see uscib.org, gbafor2030.org, businessfor2030.org). She stressed the need to tailor such existing reports in a way that would make them more accessible to governments and the UN. She also encouraged approaching reporting itself as a partnership opportunity, promoting collaborative reporting and facilitative assessment. She recognised that encouraging business to report is not a straightforward exercise and that an important effort is being undertaken to demystify the SDGs. The successful practices of the Open Working Group on SDGs could form a model for the engagement of MGoS in the HLPF. She also proposed the establishment of a HLPF Business Coordinating Group (HLPF/BCG) with the following operating principles: (a) Distinct business representation; (b) Autonomous governance; (c) Comprehensive and representative engagement; and (d) Full range of expertise.

Mr. Rodrigo Messias, from the nrg4SD/Local Authorities Major Group, highlighted the need to localise the SDGs and targets, prioritising the implementation on the ground and encouraging reporting at subnational level. He gave an overview of the methodology that is being developed by local authorities, which includes a roadmap/starter pack guide (developed in cooperation with UCLG/GTF, UNDP and UN Habitat) and assessment questionnaires to regional governments: current situation, barriers, challenges, gaps and best-practices. Besides feeding into national reviews and processes, subnational reports should be allowed at the HLPF for a global exchange of experiences and learning opportunities. Data and science-based evidence were underscored as key elements of this process. In this regard, it was emphasised that local and regional governments can support participatory data collection and disaggregation, especially by providing assistance and capacity-building to disseminate the use of geospatial tools and innovative technologies.

Ms. Alice Claeson, from IFMSA/Major Group for Children and Youth, recommended that MGoS use reporting on their own contributions and their impact as an opportunity to share best practices, create ownership over the agenda and contextualise what implementation of specific means when taking into account the needs and priorities of stakeholders they engage. She reiterated the importance of conducting implementation and reporting that are data driven and science-based. In the case of her organisation, specific deliverables are being specified to show how young scientists can contribute, creating platforms for communication and data sharing.

During the ensuing Q&A session participants highlighted several important issues, including the possibility of having MGoS use a common template/guidelines to report on their implementation of the 2030 Agenda. While there was a general agreement that a common template would promote comparability and set common minimum standards, some colleagues were concerned that a detailed reporting template could leave marginalised stakeholders outside the process, or could strive for excessive uniformity of a very diverse group of actors.

Recommendations

- The Global Business Alliance for 2030 recommends setting up a Business Coordination Group for the HLPF, similar to the one that exists in the FFD Forum;

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- DESA/DSD and MGoS HLPF CM to organise an MGoS preparatory meeting ahead of the HLPF, when stakeholders will have the opportunity for coordination as well as come out with concrete recommendations and agreed interventions during the Forum;
- One template should be made available for reporting by all stakeholders. It should contain general guidelines and minimum reporting standards, so as to allow flexibility of reporting by different stakeholders;
- Stakeholders should focus on impact reporting, rather than only activity reporting, using a scientific approach.

Panel 2 on mapping of modalities for MGoS participation in national and thematic reviews at the HLPF, in accordance with resolution 67/290

Highlights

The panel's moderator, Mr. **Jan Gustav Strandnaes** from the Stakeholder Forum, opened the conversation by emphasising the need for ownership, access and relevance. He noted that while A/RES/67/290 is one of the most progressive resolutions to be adopted at the UN regarding stakeholder engagement modalities, there is a risk of backtracking, and MGoS should be vigilant.

Ms. Nurgul Dzhanayeva provided a presentation based on her experience with the Asia Pacific Regional CSO Engagement Mechanism (RCEM). According to her, the RCEM modalities are designed to reach the broadest number of CSOs in the region.

Ms. Maria Veronica Reina addressed the topic of modalities on behalf of persons with disabilities. She stressed that exclusion can only be mitigated and prevented by using the CRPD as a guiding framework for SDGs implementation. Regarding modalities, she recommended that accessibility standards including sign language and captioning are upheld in preparation and during the HLPF, in order to include persons with disabilities. National reports should be available well in advance and MGoS should be able to make recommendations based on them. In addition multi stakeholder dialogues to exchange views should be encouraged.

Ms. Moa Herrgard shared information on the modalities of stakeholder engagement in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Global Environmental Outlook Report and the Global Sustainable Development Report. She shared a series of lessons learned, which can be found in the recommendations section below.

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The Q&A session addressed the challenges to engage in the follow-up and review at the national level and how to open up more space for stakeholder engagement in relevant intergovernmental processes, building on the progressive nature of A/RES/67/290.

Recommendations

- MGoS need to remain vigilant to ensure that MGoS can participate in the HLPF in accordance with the modalities of resolution 67/290, in particular persons with disabilities. This should include access to the meeting rooms during the national voluntary reviews as well as being able to intervene during the presentations;
- The Secretariat should ensure timely access by stakeholders to reports and other relevant information to ensure that their inputs and contributions are effective and relevant. MGoS should also be able to provide inputs to reports, as appropriate;
- During HLPF, Member States and MGoS could host side events to discuss different aspects of national implementation;
- HLPF volunteering countries should ensure multi-stakeholder participation and input throughout the national review process;
- MGoS engagement in the peer review, drafting, analysis and reporting.. MGoS could nominate experts to peer review;
- National reviews at the High Level Political Forum are the litmus test of the 2030 Agenda. Participation of all Stakeholders should be encouraged. Online interface dialogues are a good way forward for communicating written inputs, this opportunity should be given to those in both developed and developing countries and in particular for those who are currently furthest behind. However, this alone is not enough. Prior to the national reviews, opportunity should be given for multi-stakeholder dialogues, at all levels: national, regional and global. But it must be kept in mind that these dialogues should not limit the interaction between Member States and Stakeholders at the official meetings of the High Level Political Forum.

Breakout session 1 on MGoS participation in HLPF national and thematic reviews

Recommendations

- The HLPF should adopt an inclusive approach regarding the understanding of “and other relevant stakeholders”. Relevant stakeholders can vary according to region, country and context;
- Stakeholders’ participation should be a requirement for national and thematic reviews;
- Governments and stakeholders should collaborate to ensure an enabling environment for MGoS participation, putting in place institutionalised spaces and mechanism for such participation, in a predictable and formal manner;

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- Stakeholders should be involved from the beginning of the review process;
- MGoS expertise in data collection and analysis should be recognised as a contribution that can be offered;
- National reports should be made available for stakeholders beforehand, and time should be given for comments and suggestions to be submitted;
- MGoS should be able to take part in the sessions where reports are presented and given space to engage and respond to the reports;
- Shadow reporting should be acknowledged as a legitimate instrument of MGoS engagement in the review process;
- The content of the report should be analytical, pointing to problems encountered, impacts reached and ways forward. A spirit of learning must prevail, in order to ensure the review processes can in fact enhance SDG implementation;
- Dimensions that reports must cover include: (i) The process carried forward in producing the report, including the ways in which MGoS participated; (ii) progress made; (iii) challenges encountered; (iv) emerging issues; (v) recommendations in moving forward; (vi) steps taken to address recommendations made during previous HLPF sessions; (vii) other perspectives coming from Human Rights mechanisms and experts;
- MGoS capacity building processes must take place;
- UN Regional Commissions must be engaged, and there must be MGoS participation and dialogue with them as well. Regional Commissions have a role to play in promoting learning and advancing policy analysis and learning, involving other regional platforms and initiatives, so as to ensure synergy.

Breakout session 2 on recommendations for MGoS reporting on their implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda

Recommendations

- MGoS reporting as part of the HLPF should be voluntary. Stakeholder participation should not be put at risk in case an organisation or constituency decides not to report;
- A number of stakeholders emphasised that they do not wish to have one consolidated report of all MGoS input. Having one document would undermine the diversity of contributions that can be provided;
- Any template or guidelines must be flexible enough to accommodate the different roles of stakeholders as implementers, watchdogs, etc;
- National reviews in the HLPF need to be inclusive enough to ensure that MGoS can feed into the process in a meaningful way. MGoS should be part of national reviews in addition to their own reporting;
- MGoS should have a clear role/seat at the table, and be able to feed into both national and thematic reviews;
- Ample time should be given to MGoS to plan and do their reporting to the HLPF.

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- MGoS reports should be evidence based and focused on achieved outcomes and not on completed activities;
- Capacity building and technical support to MGoS will be key in order for them to participate in reporting in a meaningful way;
- MGoS reports should be reviewed under a specific item on the HLPF agenda. Inclusivity of smaller organisations should be promoted in HLPF deliberations;
- It was recommended that a working groups should be established, which would look at the draft template provided by UNDESA, and revise it according to the input by civil society;
- A webinar could be set up to discuss this, and the working group could ensure that all input from civil society made online is taken into account.

Breakout session 3 on how to engage the most vulnerable and marginalized

Recommendations

- MGoS should internalise the “leaving no one behind” in their own processes and focus on excluded groups, including their intersectionalities (e.g. orphaned and refugee child);
- The HLPF should have a specific session on the reporting on marginalised groups to ensure that no one is left behind;
- The HLPF should provide for reasonable accommodation of persons with disabilities;
- Technology should be used more often to include stakeholders in remote areas, or who could not otherwise participate;
- Governments should make information available in a meaningful way, far in advance, in more languages, including child-friendly language;
- Enough resources should be allocated to ensure diversity in HLPF participation;
- Keep in mind that 2016 is a pilot year for the HLPF and that there should be room for lessons learned and reform in 2019.

Final Takeaways and action points

- Formal communication to be shared with Denmark and Belize regarding the modalities for MGoS participation during the HLPF;
- DESA will look to organise a pre-HLPF meeting with MGoS;
- A task force will be convened by MGOS to review the proposed reporting guidelines for MGOS and come up with a revised version, bearing in mind the need for flexibility for adaptation.