



Workshop Report on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development- Civil Society and Other Stakeholders Workshop

**George Price Centre for Peace and Development, Belmopan
8th April 2016**

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General

On 8th April, 2016, the Reporting Officers - in collaboration with UNDP Belize and with the Government - conducted a half-day briefing and consultation with representatives of Civil Society and other stakeholders. The main objectives were to:

- Sensitize key Civil Society Organizations and other stakeholders on:
 - the history, preparatory process and content of the 2030 Agenda;
 - the national implementation mechanism, aligned to the Belize Growth and Sustainable Development Strategy (GSDS).
- Identify potential avenues for the structured participation Civil Society Organizations and other stakeholders in the implementation, monitoring and review of the 2030 Agenda in Belize.

The training workshop was attended by 25 participants coming from various NGOs, academia and research and private sector organizations. The Director of Sustainable Development at MAFFESD (Belize's Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Forests, the Environment and Sustainable Development), Mr Weizsman Pat and acting UNDP Representative, Ms Diane Wade, provided opening remarks, and presentations and facilitation of the sessions were made by UNDESA staffs. See Annex for participants list

Presentations

An overview presentation on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was provided by Dr. Seleshi B Awulachew. The presentation covered global drivers of change and roles of sustainable development, concepts and processes of sustainable development agenda development, the transitioning from MDGs to SDGs, contents of the SDGs, thematic issues covering universality and integration, the means of implementation, monitoring, reporting and reviews as well as how the SDGs can be integrated at national level.

The Director of Sustainable Development (within MAFFESD) presented the Growth and Sustainable Development Strategy. The strategy formulation process and how it has engaged the CSO and OG, and the cardinal points of the strategy were highlighted. the GSDS integrates the 2030 Agenda within the five years strategy spanning 2016-2019. It guides overall development

efforts and uses an integrated systemic approach. Its long term vision is a better quality of life for all Belizeans living now and in future. It has 4 pillars known as Critical Success Factors:

1. Optimal national income and investment;
2. Social cohesion and resilience;
3. Natural environmental, historical, and cultural assets;
4. Governance and citizen security.

The strategy also establishes 36 necessary conditions in achieving the strategy under these pillars, and details specific action areas.

Based on the presentation, the following issues are raised and discussed:

1. National development focal point for planning and implementation is centralized although issues are localized. Therefore, local participation such as in infrastructure development is needed
2. Disaggregated data at the local level especially to address inequality at the base level is lacking
3. Country mechanisms such as in drainage design, and reducing collateral damage are needed
4. Civil society partners feel that they are often an afterthought. Their role is only discussed when there are glitches in implementation. If they are present at the planning table, then varied perceptions of the people who they represent would be taken into consideration and would be truly integrated in to the planning process
5. Often the major constraint of CSOs is that of limited funding
6. The view of key populations on what is considered 'sustainable development' to them needs to be taken into account. This is how we will ensure that 'no one is left behind'
7. There is the recognition that social cohesion, one of the key pillars of the GSDS is a reflection of the fact that inclusion is key
8. There is a need to consolidate in a database, the key human resources that are in Belize and the diaspora in order to identify core capacities needed for sustainable development, but also to identify the existing human resources that the country has.
9. The transition from the MDGs to the SDGs requires a paradigm shift in governance one that looks at governance systems that is efficient and effective, interdisciplinary, align to the monitoring of the SDGs
10. The recommendation to have the Economic Development Council renamed to the Economic and Sustainable Development Council is still indicative of the higher importance the Government places on the Economic dimension of SD. The council should be named the SD council.
11. There is also the perception that the EDC is too top heavy and also does not include CSOs

12. National budget should be consultative and incorporated into national development planning
13. CSO Involvement in the planning stage is key. In this way, there can be practical guidance on what is implementable
14. There needs to be greater knowledge on redress mechanisms, socio-economic, civil and political rights application

Facilitated Discussions

Facilitated by Mr Nicolas Tremblay, UN Inter-regional Advisor, the plenary discussions during the workshop provided relevant information and recommendations on:

- Capacities and comparative advantages of civil society partners (why)
- Points of entry for stakeholder participation (when)
- Institutional mechanisms and tools for enhanced collaboration between government and non-government stakeholders (how, what)

Capacities and Comparative advantage of partners in attendance (Why)

1. CSO's need to be engaged at planning stage as they provide guidance on implementation, with inclusion of economic and social rights
2. Provide research and innovation, development of bankable research projects for better planning
3. Sustainable managing of natural resources
4. Participation itself, bring focus to certain communities that are marginalized or indigenous
5. Empower Belizeans with inclusive financing which contributed to improvement in the lives of the poor
6. Provide economic opportunities in the tourism sector which comes along with a vested interest in managing and maintaining natural resources
7. Protection of the labour force. A watchdog to ensure that the rights of workers are protected
8. Belize works through credit unions, and possible to reach broad cross-section and a number of goal by creating inclusive society
9. Perspective of the rural communities in the planning processes and a means to communicate to communities
10. Land use and land management and influencing policies at a national and international level through education, advocacy, networks. Champions and bridges the gap between the government and communities
11. Help to build climate resilience in various communities through informed process and science based, by supporting livelihoods
12. Majority of feedback focus on greater inclusion of their target populations in the decision making process

Points of Entry (When, What)

1. There needs to be research on economic cost of discrimination. That links between the SIB and CSOs is missing
2. One can consult the IDBs Survey report on NGOs in country as a means of determining the NGOs that are present in country and their role

How can the interaction become more systematic (How)

1. Mechanisms need to be localized
2. Mechanisms also have to be incorporated into the formal sector
3. There needs to be community strengthening system
4. There needs to be a mapping of CSO activities and roles
5. Build capacity within the Ministry of planning to determine where resources can be leveraged
6. Organize a national statistical system to map data collection, specifically administrative data. Data collection and indicators do not reflect the needs of the community
7. There needs to be a greater emphasis on evidence based decision making and therefore a focus on promoting local level research
8. Consideration should be given to a local urban observatory with links to local level data collection for the SDGs
9. The dialogue needs to continue amongst the CSOs after this session. Social prejudice impede progress
10. There needs to an apolitical organization like the University of Belize can facilitate and coordinate CSO actors
11. There needs to be a resocialization of the Belize Archives and Research to support consolidation of local research
12. Therefore a consolidation of research, communication, the government vision and CSO expectations should be achieved
13. Need to remember that CSOs are legitimized in Senate

Other, but related Business

1. One member of the team (Association of Professional Engineers of Belize) committed to writing a memoire, and promised to send the hyperlinks
2. Final request was made to use environmentally friendly products when catering for forums

The workshop was concluded with votes of thanks by the UNDP representative, and inviting participants for the two days national workshop on 11-12 April, 2016 in Belize city.

Annex:

List of participants (see separate file)