

Task Force for the Formation of the Steering Group
MGoS HLPF Coordination Mechanism
REPORT
4 May 2016

Introduction

The Task Force for the Formation of the Steering Group (TF) consisted of the following members:

1. **Christopher Dekki, Communitas Coalition/IMCS**
2. **Debra Jones, Save the Children**
3. **Orsolya Bartha, International Disability Alliance**
4. **Justine Jacob, World Vision International**
5. **Javier Surasky, CEPEI**

The TF worked together to screen the numerous applicants for the Steering Group (SG) of the MGoS HLPF Coordination Mechanism (CM). After several meetings, the TF has made its decision. The information contained below is a result of the deliberations of the TF and constitutes its **recommendations** on a way forward for finalizing the SG.

Stakeholder Groups Specifically Mentioned in Resolutions

All stakeholder groups mentioned specifically in UN resolutions are understood to have an inviolable place on the SG. The only request is that all stakeholder groups submit themselves to the same rigorous accountability and governance reporting DSD requires of the nine major groups. To date, the only major group that has yet to submit updated governance reports is the Farmers. Nevertheless, this does not disqualify the Farmers from membership on the SG. Still, it is urgent that the Farmers fulfill this crucial requirement for the sake of fairness and accountability.

Justification

The reason for the above information is simple. These groups are “**rightsholders.**” The MGoS mechanism is primarily about the recognition of rightsholder groups as critical segments/sectors of society with a central role to play in sustainable development. **Older persons, persons with disabilities, education and academia**, and others, who were recognized as relevant later on in the intergovernmental process, understood they needed to create governance structures that would allow them to participate on an equal basis with the nine major groups. Once all of these reporting requirements are fulfilled, the TF recommends that these groups be welcomed into the SG.

Other Relevant Stakeholders Active in Sustainable Development

Although not all applicants fell within the category of “rightsholder groups,” they certainly qualified for the SG because of their strong and focused participation in the work of the HLPF and in sustainable development processes in general. The group that the TF recommends be welcomed to join the SG for this reason is **Together 2030**.

Justification

Together 2030 **was established for the very purpose of participating, reviewing, and monitoring the implementation of the 2030 Agenda** and related processes. As a result, based on the work of its predecessor, Beyond2015, as well as its member organizations who have taken part in the sustainable development process, it is easy to see why this network qualifies as a constituency that should be recognized as a participant in the SG.

Other CSO Networks Not Accepted by the TF

While the CM is open to all participants interested in the HLPF, it does not mean that the SG should be open to organizations or networks that do not have a coordination mechanism directly linked to the mandate of the HLPF. As a result, the TF suggests that the following applicants are not invited to join the SG: **CoNGO** and **CPDE**.

Justification

CoNGO’s application is specific to functional commissions of ECOSOC, such as the CSW and the CSocD. However, it fails to establish a coordination mechanism around the sustainable development processes and the HLPF. In addition, it does not include any information on the particular CoNGO committee on sustainable development, which should logically be the leading body in this process. ECOSOC functional commissions are mandated to feed into the HLPF on an annual basis and all NGOs carrying out their mandate within these functional commissions have the right and opportunity to influence the HLPF through their respective commissions. If CoNGO representatives feel they cannot influence the HLPF through the functional commissions, the TF recommends that they carry out their work through the **NGO Major Group**. The TF does not see a rationale for them to be accepted in the SG for these reasons.

Based on the above reasons, the TF also feels that the CPDE does not qualify for the SG because its application lacks a specific mandate to work on sustainable development processes and the HLPF. CPDE has not demonstrated a clear governance structure linked to HLPF participation.

Working Groups of Existing MGoS

A number of working groups of the UN Major Group for Children and Youth (UN MGCY), which are in fact the mandated spaces for children and youth participation in other formal engagement mechanisms of respective intergovernmental and policy processes, applied to join the SG under §V.4.e of the ToR (stakeholder mechanisms for frameworks/processes with a mandate formally linked to the HLPF). These

UN MGCY working groups submitted a number of documents showing their accountability and governance, as well their formal linkage to the HLPF through their respective UN process resolutions. Ultimately, they have proven that within their specific processes (**Habitat III, the World Humanitarian Summit, the 10 Year Framework Programme for Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, and the Science Policy Interface**), they are highly accountable to their members and effective in their governance and advocacy. Therefore, the TF suggests that these UN MGCY working groups are accepted as members of the SG as to include their expertise and knowledge, with the caveat that in terms of decision-making and voting, the UN MGCY as a constituency **will speak with one voice when decisions are being made**. Each UN MGCY working group will thus not have separate decision-making power or a vote when the time comes.

In light of these applications and the above suggestion of the TF, as well as in the interest of preventing situations where there is a palpable conflict of interest in terms of overrepresentation by a single constituency or organization, the **TF recommends that an amendment be made to the CM ToR to take into account individual non-HLPF process working groups of MGoS as potential non-voting members of the SG**. This amendment should also deal with other issues of potential conflicts of interests and overrepresentation where a single organization may hold a leadership role in more than one constituency.

Conclusion

For the above reasons, the TF recommends that the formation of the SG occur immediately and preparations for the 2016 HLPF begin in earnest. As already mentioned, the CM is a totally open and transparent body. But for the sake of coherence and respect for rightsholder constituencies and groups that have dedicated their existence to the HLPF and sustainable development processes, the SG must ensure some level of rigidity when dealing with new applicants to the SG. Ultimately, all future applications to the SG will be dealt with by the SG itself and the subcommittee that is formed to handle SG membership.

ADDENDUM

The **FfD CSO Group**, which is specifically mentioned in §V.4.e of the ToR, has submitted the required documents to take its place on the SG. The TF thus recommends that the FfD CSO Group is allowed to join to SG.