

High Level Political Forum: **Shadowing SDG implementation – Civil Society Action for meaningful participation and accountability**

„Leave no one behind“ was the core message of this year’s High Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development of the United Nations (UN). Shadow or spotlight reporting is a well-established tool of civil society when it comes to holding governments accountable regarding this objective. Social Watch and VENRO, together with civil society organizations from Egypt, Germany, Finland, Mexico, the Philippines and Switzerland, hosted the side event to present CSO-reports on national efforts on implementing the 2030 agenda and to provide a space for mutual exchange and peer learning regarding national challenges and methods of CSO reporting.

About 60 participants took the opportunity to discuss how civil society can follow-up on national implementation processes of the 2030 Agenda’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) in a critical and constructive manner. As part of the event, five NGOs presented their shadow and spotlight reports on their countries initial efforts to implement the new agenda. All five presented reports identified significant gaps – both substantive and strategic – in the approaches taken by the governments. Often these just draw on or uncritically continue already existing political instruments. The reports also found that both, in developed and developing countries, specific core problems are being disregarded. Developed countries should focus on reducing profit shifting from and tax evasion in the global south, stopping arms exports to regions in crisis, decisively acting on the poverty and social inequality aggravating effects of export oriented, low tax and austerity policies. Developing countries should design policies to overcome systemic poverty, decisively act against discrimination of women and girls, improve access to public and judicial services and critically review infrastructure oriented foreign investment policy. Steps not taken in these areas together with under-capacitated institutions and insufficient finance at various ministerial and sub-national levels will stifle any effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda and will undermine its transformative and integrated approach.

Despite at times quite extensive multi-stakeholder dialogues, civil society so far had only limited influence on the actual shaping of strategies and measures to plan and perform the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. An effective participation of civil society would require more systematic and empowered consultations and solid accountability mechanisms.