

Major Groups and Other Stakeholders Involvement during the 2018 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development

Introduction

Thousands of representatives of Major Groups and Other Stakeholders (MGoS)¹ have attended the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) since its first session in 2013. The participation of MGoS in the HLPF is mandated by General Assembly resolution A/67/290 on the format and organizational aspects of the Forum.

Methods

A review of MGoS involvement during the HLPF may help to highlight both areas of success and challenges. Two main avenues of MGoS participation during the Forum are statements made during official sessions and side events hosted by MGoS organizations at the UN Headquarters. Though not an exhaustive representation of the diverse ways in which MGoS engage with the HLPF, these two avenues may serve as publicly visible signals of MGoS involvement, with the added benefit of being easily quantifiable.

In order to quantify MGoS statements made and side events hosted during the 2017 and 2018 HLPFs, UN Journal daily summaries were reviewed for interventions made during official HLPF sessions by all MGoS and non-MGoS representatives.² Further data was drawn from International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) daily summaries of the HLPF,³ review of the recordings of official HLPF sessions,⁴ and internal UN-DESA notes of official HLPF meetings. MGoS representatives include those making interventions on behalf of organizations with ECOSOC consultative status. Non-MGoS representatives include those from member states, the UN system, IGOs, and observers.

Results and Discussion

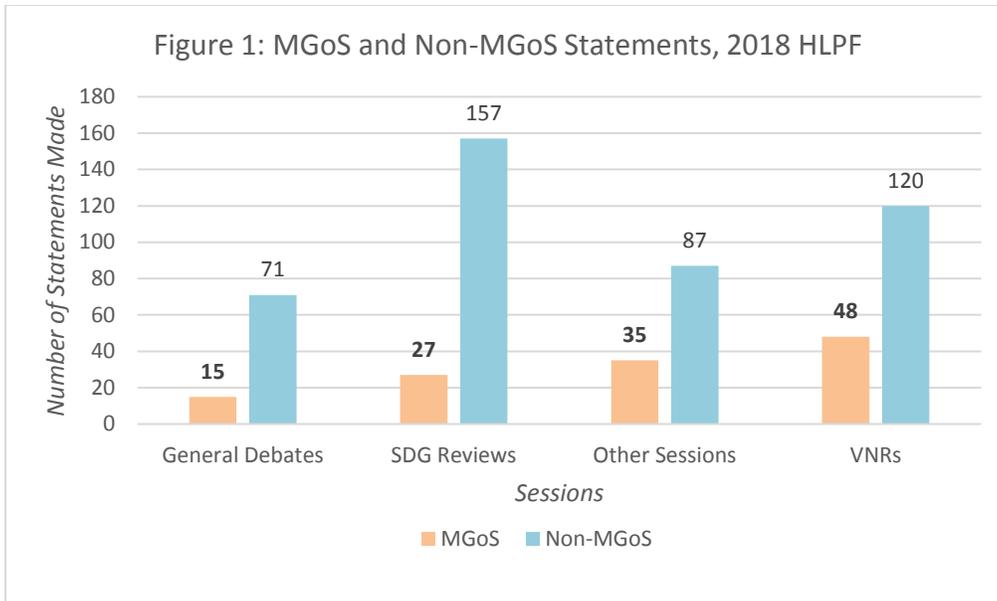
Major Groups and Other Stakeholders have provided consistent and vital support to the HLPF's discussions throughout its varied fora. In 2018 alone, MGoS contributed 125 statements during the reviews of SDGs 6, 7, 11, 12, 15, and 17, thematic reviews, voluntary national reviews, and general debates, or 22.3% of all statements made over the course of the above sessions. (Fig. 1) Sixty-one of these statements were made in the first week and 64 were made during the second week. Non-MGoS statements totaled 435 over above sessions, or 77.7%.

¹ For more information, please check: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/majorgroups/about>

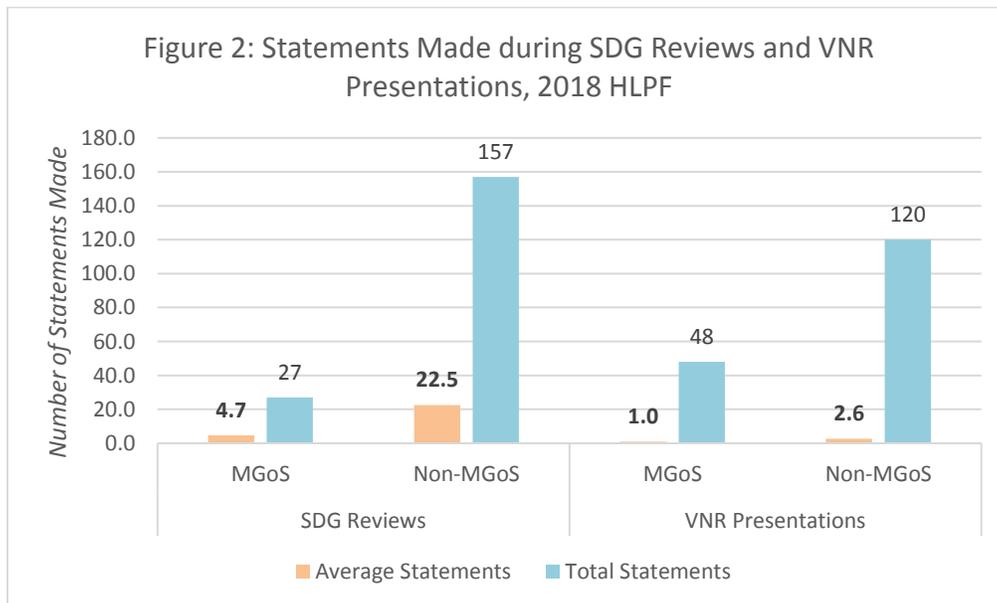
² <https://journal.un.org/>

³ <http://enb.iisd.org/hlpf/2018/>

⁴ <http://webtv.un.org/meetings-events/>

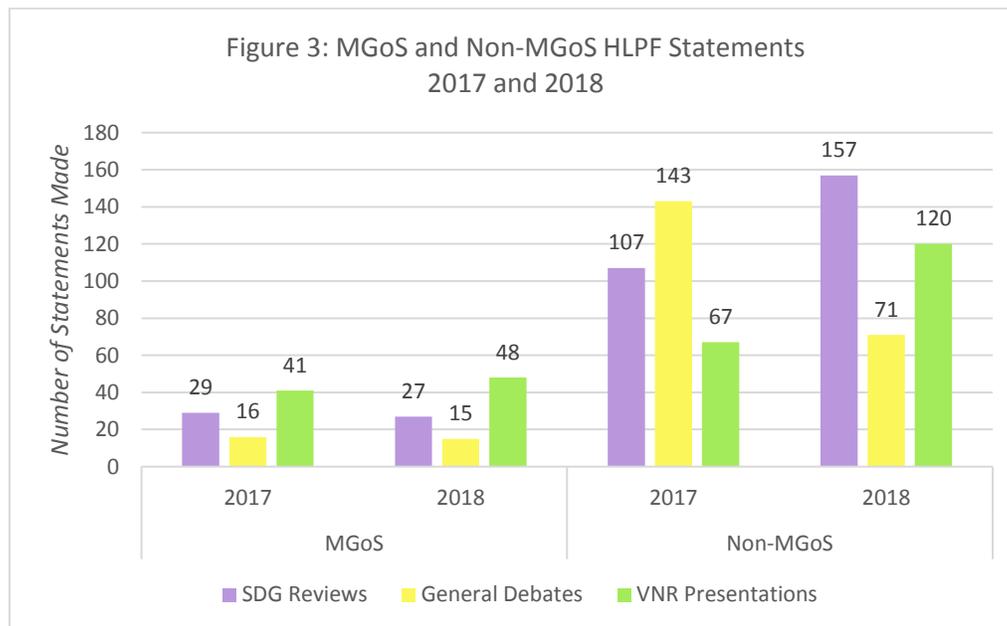


During VNR presentations, MGoS averaged 1.0 statements per presentation, with 2 or more statements made during 12 presentations. With 48 interventions during VNR presentations, MGoS statements constituted approximately 29% of statements made during the presentations. Non-MGoS averaged 2.6 statements per presentation and accounted for 71.4% of all VNR interventions. During SDG review sessions, MGoS statements totaled 27, an average of 4.7 per session. Non-MGoS statements totaled 157, or 22.5 per SDG review session. (Fig. 2)

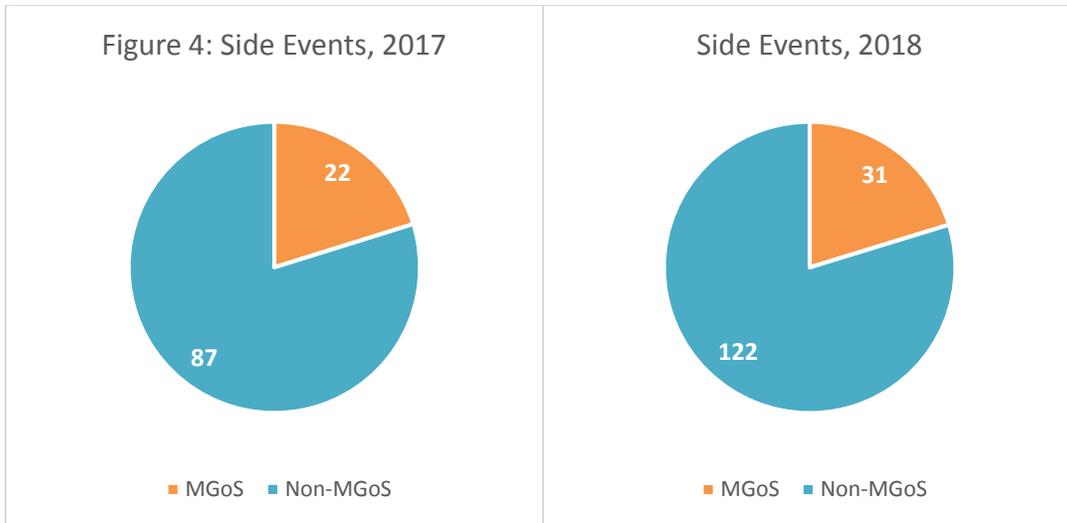


A total of 86 statements were made during the general debate sessions in week two of the 2018 HLPF. Fifteen of those statements were made by MGoS representatives and 71 were made by non-MGoS representatives. A total of 153 side events were held over the course of the HLPF within the UN premises: 31 of those side events, or 20%, were organized by MGoS, while 122, or 80%, were organized by non-MGoS groups.

The number of statements made at the HLPF by Major Groups and Other Stakeholders did not vary greatly from 2017 to 2018. (Fig. 3) Involvement in SDG review sessions declined slightly from 29 to 27 statements from 2017 to 2018, though average statements per SDG review session rose slightly from 4.1 to 4.7 over the same period. This is likely due to the number of SDGs under review falling from seven in 2017 to six in 2018. General debate statements were near-identical, with 16 in 2017 and 15 in 2018. VNR presentation statements rose from 41 in 2017 to 48 in 2018, though this may be explained by a corresponding increase in the number of VNR presentations from 43 in 2017 to 46 in 2018; average number of MGoS statements per VNR presentation remained approximately 1 during 2017 and 2018 (0.95 and 1.04, respectively).



The number of side events hosted by MGoS rose by 9 from 2017 to 2018, though this rise was almost identical in proportion to the proportional increase in the total number of side events. (Fig. 4) The total number of side events rose from 109 in 2017 to 153 in 2018, an approximately 40% increase. The number of side events hosted by MGoS and non-MGoS likewise rose by approximately 40% each, from 22 to 31 for MGoS—a 40.9% increase—and from 87 to 122 for non-MGoS—a 40.2% increase. Though the total number of hosted events rose, MGoS hosted 20.3% of side events in 2018 and 20.2% of side events in 2017, an almost identical portion of the total number of side events at each HLPF.



In 2016, MGoS statements given during the ECOSOC general debate totaled 7; the number of MGoS statements given during the VNRs totaled 9; and the number of side events hosted by MGoS at the 2016 HLPF totaled 37.

Conclusion

Though non-MGoS made up a majority of the interventions and hosted side events at the 2018 HLPF, MGoS involvement at the 2018 HLPF did not vary greatly from involvement in the 2017 HLPF. MGoS interventions throughout VNR presentations, SDG reviews, and general debates remained relatively stable. Likewise, MGoS-hosted side events remained roughly 20% of all hosted side events through the 2017 and 2018 HLPFs.