

Inclusivity at the HLPF

The 2030 Agenda highlights that the HLPF will support participation in the follow-up and review processes by the major groups and other relevant stakeholders (OP 89). Some of the questions, that would be fruitful to have stakeholders' input on, would be how stakeholders could be included in the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda? In what ways can stakeholders inform and enrich the work of the HLPF? What innovative practices could be set in place to engage stakeholders?

First I would like to say thank you to the co-facilitators for the opportunity to exchange views on the follow-up and Review of the 2030 Agenda. We all very much value your time and effort to ensure that this process has just as much integrity as the underlying Goals they represent.

My name is Punji Leagnavar and I represent GRI, the world's most widely used corporate sustainability reporting standards. Thousands of companies in over 80 countries use GRI to report on environmental, social and governance issues. And GRI Standards are referenced in policy and regulations in 39 countries, including developing countries.

I just wanted to start my statement with a little reflection. Yesterday, I was sitting in a room full of 100 companies who were discussing the SDGs – and their enthusiasm for the goals was extremely palpable. They were at different stages of integrating the SDGs into their core business strategies, and many of them told me that they will be using existing sustainability frameworks and KPIs to not only measure their SDG contribution, but also monitor annually this contribution. And this just illustrative of trends that we are seeing - PWC surveyed that 71% of business say they are already planning how they will respond to the SDGs; and 34% of business say they are already implementing them. So the message is quite clear, the business case for the SDGs has been made.

If we are serious about this role of private sector, it is in our view that the business impacts and contributions to the 2030 Agenda should be included in the follow up and review process and be given a platform for which to report their contributions and share their learning.

But the private sector will be more encouraged to do so if they can use the tools that they already know to report on their SDG progress – these are tools such as the GRI Standards and SDG Compass which was launched by GRI, UNGC and WBCSD, under the auspices of the Secretary General.

Creating a new set of parameters or templates within the follow up and review process, for business to share their contributions has the potential to lessen their participation, when we need to encourage more partnership and communication across silos. Using existing sustainability reporting frameworks also allows us to aggregate data across companies, sectors and regions, so that business contribution moves from anecdotal narratives to empirical data sources. The HLPF could benefit from this approach and be able to see trends and gaps in business contribution and engagement.

I wanted to end my statement with a quote I heard yesterday – that change moves at the speed of trust. And I think that is emblematic of how, in order to work towards transformational change, we need to work collaboratively, to close this trust gap with business and invite them to be active participants in follow up and review of the 2030 Agenda. Developing an architecture for them to report their contributions using existing frameworks and indicators will encourage that participation. It moves us towards a deeper global partnership in order make substantial progress towards the Global Goals. Thank you.