The impacts of COVID-19 on Stakeholder Engagement with the SDGs

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Background:
Two surveys

• Surveys conducted October 2020
• 478 stakeholders
• Officials in 41 VNR 2020 or VNR2021 countries
68% of government respondents perceived that the need for stakeholder engagement in implementing the SDGs will increase during recovery from COVID-19.

What kinds of contributions have stakeholders made to implementing the SDGs since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic? (countries, n=69)
Challenges faced by stakeholders

- 57% of stakeholders reported that their ability to maintain or create partnerships would be significantly or severely affected.
- 65% of stakeholders reported that their ability to ensure the participation of vulnerable or marginalized groups would be significantly or severely affected.
- 75% of stakeholders reported that their ability to mobilize funds for SDG activities would be significantly or severely affected.

How to engage with stakeholders in the COVID-19 context?

- 94% of countries reported increasing their use of online conferencing.

- Innovative solutions:
  - Partnerships across civil society, state and private sector to increase digitalization and access to digital services, for instance Mexico and Finland.
  - Engaging at the regional and local level, translating local ideas and solutions to the national level, such as Uganda.
Who participates?
How is COVID-19 affecting participation of these groups?

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>No impact</th>
<th>Increased participation</th>
<th>Decreased participation</th>
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<td>NGOs</td>
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<td>Local and Regional Government</td>
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<td>Business and Industry</td>
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<td>Indigenous Peoples</td>
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<td>Homeless People and Slum Dwellers</td>
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<td>Older People</td>
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Looking ahead...

(1) General impacts of Covid-19 crisis:
Reported as falling heavily on mechanisms for inclusive and meaningful engagement:
- efforts to include left behind groups (77% of stakeholder respondents)
- mechanisms for partnership (75%)
- stakeholder involvement in decision making (75%)

(2) Impacts of moving to online engagement:
easier to reach certain stakeholders, to hold larger events, to share information, but:
- how to involve groups that find online engagement challenging
- challenges for dialogue, partnership- and network-building in online settings
Looking ahead...

(3) Impacts on the partnership 'ecosystem'

- Who partners, on what issues? COVID impacts (e.g. health, digital services, education) perceived as priorities for partnerships.
- What issues, which groups, are left behind by these changes?