

A Short Note on Side Event on “Building Effective Bottom up Partnership for Sustainable Development Goals”

A side event was organized on 2nd July, 2015 at the 3rd session of High Level Political Forum held at UN HQ in New York. The event was organized by VAAGDHARA in association with Welthungerhilfe, PRAXIS, and Freedom from Hunger. The side event aimed to achieve two objectives:

- Bringing critical perspectives and experiences from the grassroots to the high level forum
- Creating ground for effective partnerships across continents which will facilitate learning from each other

A third implicit objective was to commit VAAGDHARA to a long term process of tracking and reviewing progress made in SDGs at the micro and macro level.

The side event was moderated by Mr. Narender Kumar, Executive Director IPAC India, and the speakers included Mr. Jayesh Joshi, Chief Functionary of VAAGDHARA, Mr. Jeffery Huffines, UN Representative of CIVICUS, Ms. Debra Jones, UN Representative Save the Children, Ms. Marta Benavides, Co-chair GCAP, and Sai Jyothir Mai Program Manager ARROW. More than 25 participants, including civil society representatives and country delegates participated in the event.

After the initial remarks by the moderator, Mr. Jayesh Joshi made a presentation on the process and outcome of a consultative study undertaken by VAAGDHARA with indigenous communities in the western state of Rajasthan in India. The focus of the study was on developing indicators for SDGs at the local level with active participation and ownership of local communities. Using a set of six tools for generating data from youth and children, the study emphasized the point that there could be multiple responses to different issues. The whole exercise was about the SDGs as children and youth in local community see them.

In her intervention, Sai explained the work of ARROW at the national and regional level in Asia-Pacific, which included monitoring key international covenants and treaties, generating evidence based data for advocacy. In addition, she talked about means of implementation for SDGs. Marta was very critical of the development model which creates condition for perpetuation of poverty. She cautioned the “no one is left behind” should not remain a mere slogan, the world community will have to ensure that this is realized even at the very local level.

Debra Jones of Save the Children started her statement with information on E-consultations that her organization had undertaken in preparation of the SDGs. Based on this, she underlined a few points, such as success is about the delivery, not the intent. She also underscored that people should be the focus of the new agenda, which means that we as a collective should not be afraid of setting priorities as all the 17 goals cannot be pursued simultaneously with the same vigor. In her opinion decision makers should be engaged at all the stages of implementation process.

In his intervention, Mr. Jeffery Huffines made three important points; which included the need for building a domestic constituency around sustainable development goals, making linkages between local, regional and global processes, and the imperative of change in the way civil society positions itself and operates globally. In addition, like other speakers, he also emphasized on consulting with stakeholders about the indicators.

The statements of the designated speakers were followed by interventions from the audience. These were mainly around the issues of collective understanding and ownership of indicators, building effective multi-stakeholder partnerships, and need for systematic baseline.

In his concluding remarks, the moderator, Mr. Narender Kumar said that there was a need to recognize the importance of ensuring the effective and meaningful participation of civil society organizations as key partners in the follow up and review the new development framework at all levels. He underlined the importance of global partnerships in which the **local structures play a key role** in methodology and follow-up/review processes of the post-2015 development agenda.