

**Expert Group Meeting: Enhancing Major Groups and Other Stakeholders
(MGoS) Engagement in National Level Reviews
25 - 26 March 2017
Bogota, Colombia**

Main Discussions and Recommendations

UN DESA/DSD organized an Expert Group Meeting (EGM) to provide an opportunity for MGoS¹ and other non-governmental actors, along with invited experts and member states, to discuss how to ensure their effective participation and contribution to the process of national level reviews of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. The EGM provided an opportunity to formulate plans for cooperation around national review processes, and to discuss strategies and approaches for operationalizing meaningful participation at national SDG implementation committees, partnering up with governments and providing expertise, among other topics.

Foundational Principles for Engagement

I. Human Rights, Gender Equality and Sustainability Criteria

All actions under the sustainable development framework should guarantee the progressiveness, interconnection and equal enjoyment of human rights for all and promote the well-being of all persons, women and men, of all ages and bearing in mind the entire diversity of human conditions in a healthy planet. Gender equality and the eradication of all forms of discrimination and violence should be at the core of every effort when implementing this Agenda.

II. Transparency

Governments should make explicit their implementation and accountability strategies at all levels (national, sub-national, local, community) and the role of the different institutions in the planning, implementation, monitoring, review and reporting on the 2030 Agenda. Governments should facilitate transparent access to information, space for active participation and connection to government staff in charge of SDG implementation and review processes through accessible and public information, data, timelines, and responsive communication with government focal points, including through technology.

¹ When referring to MGoS, this document is aligned to the United Nations General Assembly Resolution that established the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) (A/RES/67/290, para 16): major groups, as identified in Agenda 21 (Business and Industry, Children and Youth, Farmers, Indigenous Peoples, Local Authorities, NGOs, Scientific & Technological Community, Women, Workers and Trade Unions), and other stakeholders, such as private philanthropic organizations, educational and academic entities, persons with disabilities, volunteer groups and other stakeholders active in areas related to sustainable development.

We recognize diversity and plurality within society and that several forms of organization for citizens participation and that those should be promoted at the different levels of engagement.

III. Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility²

All civil society and stakeholders, including local and sub-national government structures and MGoS should be able to engage in the monitoring and review process at all levels. This process should be inclusive, transparent, diverse and accessible, and aim to engage experts and representatives on each of the 17 SDGs and on the different aspects and interlinkages of the sustainable development frameworks. Inclusion should pay special attention, but not be limited to, diversity in age, sex, gender, ethnicity, race, local communities, indigenous peoples, religion, disability, immigration status, geographic location, and other relevant characteristics, and to the participation of grassroots organizations and those not based in capitals, in order to leave no one behind.

IV. Continuous Meaningful Engagement

Meaningful engagement, not simply attendance or ad hoc consultations, must go far beyond the HLPF segments at the global level or the still limited participatory mechanisms in some regions. It requires profound and ongoing engagement between governments, stakeholders, civil society in its different modalities of collaboration and coordination and MGoS throughout the process of design, implementation, monitoring and review of the 2030 Agenda. National governments must invest in building and adapt the institutional capacities required for VNRs systematically, not just during the years they will be reporting.

Engagement in the National Level Reviews

Member States' Action points

- I. Institutionalize multi-ministerial, multi-sectoral platforms and ongoing mechanisms for the national and subnational meaningful engagement between civil society, in its different modalities of collaboration and coordination, and stakeholders on the planning, implementation, follow up and review of the Sustainable Development Frameworks, especially the 2030 Agenda.
- II. Facilitate the inclusion and participation of civil society in its different modalities of collaboration and coordination, emphasizing the diverse constituencies that have been left behind (including, but not limited to, women, children, persons with disabilities, youth, indigenous peoples, older persons, grassroots organizations) and stakeholders on national delegations to the HLPF.
- III. Promote the inclusion and legitimate participation of diverse segments of the MGoS during VNR presentations at the HLPF.
- IV. Ensure that the VNRs address emerging challenges.
- V. Make the national level reviews, including VNR processes and national consultations, accessible to persons with disabilities by providing closed-

² To enable persons with disabilities to fully participate and to identify and eliminate all obstacles and barriers to accessibility, we recommend to uphold and follow the recommendations outlined in Article 9 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

captioning and international sign interpretation, in order to ensure an inclusive participation.

- VI. Promote the design, development, production and distribution of accessible information and communications technologies and systems at an early stage to increase opportunities of participation.

MGoS Coordination at the Global Level

- I. Coordination among MGoS should be timely to ensure the most inclusive and representative positions shared in response to a country's VNR presentation.
- II. Ensure rich and successful discussions at the MGoS Roundtable Session at the HLPF, including the promotion of Member State attendance and feedback from MGoS representations on VNRs.
- III. Continue to advocate for formal acceptance of civil society and MGoS' alternative, parallel reports in addition to Member States reports during the HLPF.
- IV. Engage in advocacy, partnerships and participation at all levels and improve and increase training sessions and knowledge sharing for MGoS and civil society to raise awareness and strengthen an enabling environment for participation.
- V. Create an information-sharing platform for MGoS and civil society to share best practices, parallel reports and other relevant information.

MGoS Reporting on Agenda 2030 Implementation (Paragraph 89) & Internal Coordination

Member States Action Points

- I. Urge Member States and the President of ECOSOC to identify clear mechanisms within the HLPF where MGoS reports can be presented and shared with Member States to enable meaningful contribution to the debate.
- II. Urge Member States that recommendations from MGoS reports be taken into account when discussing and negotiating the HLPF Ministerial Declaration

MGoS Action Points

- I. Recognize that Paragraph 89 provides an additional opportunity for MGoS to highlight their contribution, share thoughtful analysis on SDGs progress and flag emerging trends.
- II. Recommend that the HLPF Coordination Mechanism leads a year-long discussion on enhancing the impact of the MGoS diverse types of reporting mechanisms, and to develop creative, effective strategies for the use of these reports.
- III. Include and promote the formulation and communication of specific strategies from MGoS sectoral experts in order to optimize direct implementation strategies for the SDGs and to facilitate the achievement of other goals.