



Contribution to the Consultation for the High-Level Debate of the President of the General Assembly on achieving the SDGS

14 April 2016

What steps are being taken to create an enabling environment, including adapting institutional arrangements and legislation and who must be engaged to promote ownership, accountability and inclusiveness?

Participation of various stakeholders, including civil society, in the implementation as well as follow-up and review of the SDGs is a critical condition for ownership, accountability, and inclusiveness. The Task Team on CSO Development Effectiveness and Enabling Environment believes the important role that civil society has to play in this regard merits particular attention. Indeed, civil society has the capacity to reach, empower and increase the voice of poor and marginalized populations that may experience systematic exclusion and discrimination in development process. It has a key role in helping to ensure the inclusion of different stakeholder perspectives, raising awareness of national-level plans, and holding governments and development partners to account for their commitments. Yet, as also seems to be implied by this question, for civil society organizations (CSOs) and other non-state actors to be able to contribute to the 2030 Agenda they need an enabling environment that is conducive to their engagement. The Task Team thus strongly recommends the establishment of legal and regulatory frameworks that support the engagement of various stakeholders, including civil society. At the time of this consultation however, it does not appear that steps are being taken to establish such an enabling environment for civil society. To the contrary, in various countries the space for civil society to operate in is shrinking.

Background

On Thursday, 21 April 2016, the President of the General Assembly H.E. Mogens Lykkesøft will convene a High-level Thematic Debate on Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to support prompt and inclusive implementation of the 2030 Agenda. This event will serve to significantly increase international awareness and political momentum around the implementation of the SDGs. It will bring together global political, business and civil society leaders in New York to focus on kick-starting SDG implementation. A unique opportunity to address the synergy between the COP21 outcome and the 2030 Agenda, the meeting will serve as a platform to catalyse action, discuss concrete steps forward and mobilize potential implementation partners. For more information on the event, please see: <http://www.un.org/pga/70/events/sdgs/>

In preparation of this important event, all relevant stakeholders are hereby invited to contribute to the discussions through this dedicated google page. Contributions will be made available publicly to promote engagement and inform the Debate, in particular contributions from actors not able to be present. Feedback submitted via this form can be viewed here: <http://bit.ly/23Ox4Mm>

What steps need to be taken to ensure stakeholders work together to meaningfully implement the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda; and what specific contributions do participants foresee making in this regard?

The 2030 Agenda calls for collaborative partnerships. Governments can meaningfully and effectively engage with other stakeholders by establishing institutionalized and inclusive multi-stakeholder spaces for dialogue and engagement.

For civil society organizations (CSOs) and other stakeholders to fulfil their varied roles in the SDGs they need an environment conducive to their engagement. For CSOs such an enabling environment to be created in law, policy and practice must be in line with internationally agreed rights. This is significant in light of major challenges CSOs face in many countries where the space in which they can operate is shrinking.

Shared responsibility calls for shared accountability. For CSOs, the Task Team recommends promotion and implementation of CSO-managed accountability and transparency frameworks. For mutual accountability, it recommends looking at the monitoring framework of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC) given its emphasis on multi-stakeholder engagement and mutual accountability across stakeholders in reviewing progress at country-level.

Going forward, the Task Team will continue calling for an enabling environment and institutionalized multi-stakeholder dialogue as key ingredients for the meaningful engagement of CSOs in the SDGs, and continue promoting CSO accountability and mutual accountability across different stakeholders. It will do so through its work with the GPEDC and beyond.