


# CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE 2030 AGENDA

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*What can we learn from the multi-stakeholder initiatives that have been established at national level and how can we better support them?*

AN INITIAL STUDY | January 2020



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Authors:

***Bea Sanz Corella (Team Leader of the Roadmap Facility)***  
***Juan Enrique Adan Nicolas (Key Expert 2 of the Roadmap Facility)***  
***Tine Veldkamp (The Coalition Factory)***

Contributions from:

***Sonia Sanz Ventin***  
***Sara Simon***

Pictures by:

***Pam van de Bunt, (Roadmap Facility)***

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# List of acronyms and abbreviations

<b>CS</b>	Civil Society
<b>CAFs</b>	Community Accountability Facilitators
<b>CBOs</b>	Community Based Organisation(s)
<b>CSO(s)</b>	Civil Society Organisation(s)
<b>CSCSD</b>	Civil Society Coalition on Sustainable Development
<b>CSPPS</b>	Civil Society Platform for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding
<b>ECOSOC</b>	Economic and Social Council
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>FBO</b>	Faith-based organisation
<b>GRO</b>	Grassroots organisation
<b>HLPF</b>	High Level Political Forum
<b>ICT</b>	Information Communication Technologies
<b>IDPS</b>	International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding
<b>ISAF</b>	Implementation of Social Accountability Framework
<b>JAAPs</b>	Joint Accountability Action Plans
<b>MDG(s)</b>	Millennium Development Goal(s)
<b>MSI(s)</b>	Multi-stakeholder initiative(s)
<b>MSP(s)</b>	Multi-stakeholder partnerships or platform(s)
<b>NCCRG</b>	National CSO Core Reference Group
<b>NEAR</b>	Neighbourhood and Enlargement (as in EU Directorate-General for . . .)
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental organisation
<b>ODS</b>	Objetivos de Desenvolvimento Sustentável
<b>PFD</b>	Policy Forum on Development
<b>PPP</b>	Public-private partnerships
<b>PSC</b>	Partnership Steering Committee
<b>PSG</b>	Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goal
<b>RGC</b>	Royal Government of Cambodia
<b>RMF</b>	Roadmap Facility
<b>SNA</b>	Subnational Administration(s)
<b>SDG(s)</b>	Sustainable Development Goal(s)
<b>TA</b>	Technical Assistance
<b>TL</b>	Team Leader
<b>TWG(s)</b>	Technical Working Group(s)
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNDESA</b>	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>VNR</b>	Voluntary National Review

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# PREFACE

The main goal of the research was to gain a better, more subtle and nuanced understanding of the involvement of Civil Society in the different multi-stakeholder initiatives (MSIs) on Agenda 2030 that are being established worldwide at national level<sup>1</sup>. Is Civil Society involved in such initiatives? And, if so, how? To what extent is Civil Society involved and which roles does it play? Who is promoting these initiatives: governments, donors or Civil Society itself? Which are the Civil Society actors involved and which ones are being left behind?

Empirical in nature, and inevitably limited in scope, the research aimed at identifying and briefly assessing a number of relevant worldwide initiatives, in different environments and of different types. The objective was to draw some preliminary conclusions in an effort to provide guidance to the European Commission, particularly to EU delegations worldwide, on how to better understand and support such partnerships.

The research was conducted in three distinct phases:

- I. A screening phase aimed at identifying and briefly defining a first list of multi-stakeholder initiatives. This phase relied mostly on desk review of existing reports and materials (including VNR reports). The screening of experiences used information emerging from two surveys launched specifically for the study. They covered, on the one hand, EU delegations (39 responses) and, on the other, members and constituencies of the European Policy Forum on Development<sup>2</sup> (eight responses). The aim was to tap into their knowledge and experiences in such multi-stakeholder settings. Many in-depth interviews were also conducted with key resource individuals worldwide. In total 40 initiatives were identified in DEVCO countries across Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, in Asia and the Pacific, as well as in Europe and globally.
- II. An assessment phase, which started with a refinement of the initial selection of multi-stakeholder initiatives and aimed at broadening the knowledge of these initiatives on a set of criteria. These criteria included origins, mandates and links to the SDGs, composition and support, Civil Society involvement, accomplishments and lessons learnt. In total 14 initiatives were selected, providing an equitable geographic distribution and also taking into account the diversity of experiences. The assessment phase also included a series of in-depth interviews with people and institutions involved in the different initiatives.
- III. A comparative analysis and consolidation phase, aimed at identifying common trends and lessons learnt. This provided a number of primary recommendations for better support of these initiatives and, more particularly, Civil Society involvement in them.

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1 During the inception phase of the research, it was decided to focus the research on national levels only, excluding local and even more sectoral experiences.

2 The Policy Forum on Development (PFD) is the result of a Structured Dialogue, which brings together Civil Society Organisations and Local Authorities from around the world. It provides a platform for members of Civil Society, local authorities, the private sector and European institutions to discuss development policies. <https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/policy-forum-development/>

Amongst the limitations faced by the research team, the following particularly stand out:

- I. First and foremost, there is a huge number of MSIs being introduced worldwide, and they are in very different stages of development.
- II. Second, there is no agreed definition of MSIs. This diversity of understanding poses difficulties when applying comparative analysis based on ostensibly similar, but actually different, perspectives and purposes<sup>3</sup>.
- III. Third, global and country-specific research on MSIs is still at an early stage of development. Very few assessments have been conducted to date, particularly outside the Voluntary National Review (VNR) processes. What is more, very little evidence has been gathered of concrete results yielded by these initiatives. Most available information concerns the process, activities undertaken, and the outputs, rather than the outcomes.
- IV. Fourth, very few EU delegations have, to date, supported these initiatives, even though there is growing interest in and awareness of them.
- V. Finally, the RMF research was conducted using limited resources, in terms of both time and human resources. It relied mainly on desk review, with limited numbers of surveys and interviews with key stakeholders.

Consequently, the different initiatives that are highlighted have not been analysed in-depth and they should be taken as “relevant” rather than “good” practices, and even less “best practices”. There is therefore plenty of room to broaden the analysis which is offered in the study that follows, and to further detail and extend the recommendations offered to the EU delegations.

The report comprises two sections.

- I. Section I includes the main lessons emerging from comparative analysis of the different initiatives highlighted. It also contains a number of preliminary recommendations for the EU on how best to support CS involvement in such initiatives.
- II. Section II includes a set of fiches (18 in total, following an index agreed with DEVCO A.5) produced by the research team, organised by region. These cover the different aspects that were assessed: origins, mandate and links to the SDGs, composition and support, Civil Society involvement, accomplishments and lessons learnt. These fiches aim at providing a first preliminary view on some of the main initiatives identified, not intending to be exhaustive but rather descriptive of trends being followed by civil society, governments and development partners.

A list of the most relevant sources used in the desk review is also included at the end of the report.

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<sup>3</sup> As stressed by Fowler in one of the very few academic analyses that exists of 2030 MSIs, categorisation, analysis and interpretation are highly dependent on the point of departure identified. The initial perspective pre-determines criteria for MSI definition and inclusion in comparative work. (See Fowler and Biekart, 2017)



## **SECTION 1 — MAIN LESSONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**



# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. THE NEW GLOBAL AGENDA AND CIVIL SOCIETY INVOLVEMENT

### About localisation

Localisation in this context is defined as “the process of defining, implementing and monitoring strategies at the local level for achieving global, national and subnational sustainable development targets. It involves various concrete mechanisms, tools, innovations, platforms and processes to effectively translate the development agenda into results at the local level”. Localisation should be understood as an inclusive process, involving Civil Society, local government at the frontline of development, traditional leaders, religious organisations, the private sector, citizens and other parties.

In January 2016, **Sustainable Development Goals** (also known as **Agenda 2030**) replaced Millennium Development Goals as the new global development template. They comprise a set of economic, social and environmental goals and targets that United Nations (UN) member states are expected to achieve by 2030. Like their predecessors, SDGs are not legally binding for national governments. Rather, they are intended to provide a benchmark against which to weigh and measure national development efforts.

SDGs are more ambitious than the MDGs and acknowledge, for the first time, the paramount role played by participants other than

national governments, including Civil Society organisations, the private sector and the general public. **Multi-stakeholder partnerships** are also considered a goal in themselves (Goal 17). At the same time, in the context of “mean of implementation” they are effective and innovative instruments for realising the objectives of the 2030 Agenda.

The Agenda also calls on national authorities to promote **multi-stakeholder partnerships**, to facilitate the participation of all sectors of society in the process of “localising” the SDGs. The goal is twofold: (i) to tailor the ambitious global-development agenda to specific local circumstances and (ii) to permit productive discussion on required policies and measures to achieve and follow up the new agenda, ultimately ensuring that “**no one is left behind**”.

### About VNR

As part of its follow-up and review mechanisms, the 2030 Agenda encourages member states to “conduct regular and inclusive reviews of progress at the national and sub-national levels, which are country-led and country-driven” (paragraph 79). These national reviews are expected to serve as a basis for regular reviews by the high-level political forum (HLPF), meeting under the auspices of ECOSOC.

These reviews, known as Voluntary National Reviews, are to be discretionary, state-led, undertaken by both developed and developing countries, and should involve multiple stakeholders.

They seek to strengthen policies and institutions of governments and to mobilise multi-stakeholder support and partnerships for the implementation of the SDGs.

See: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/vnrs/>

All 193 UN member states committed to involving Civil Society in the 2030 Agenda. However, the reports that exist (including the Voluntary National Reviews) concur that, so far, **overall trends in the involvement of Civil Society and other parties are not very encouraging**. Even in countries where CSOs operate in a relatively conducive environment, they face numerous and multi-layered challenges. These range from lack of willingness of governments and/or lack of adapted mechanisms at legislative and policy level, to questions related to CSOs' own capacity to participate in political decision-making processes.

Furthermore, until now most of the debates on SDGs have mainly concerned the setting of goals and indicators. Much less attention has been paid to discussing, in more concrete terms, roles and responsibilities (as well as their implications), for the different stakeholders involved, to ensure that all efforts are directed towards achieving these ambitious goals<sup>4</sup>.

## 1.2. THE MEANING OF MULTI-STAKEHOLDER INITIATIVES (MSI)

Agenda 2030 refers to the notion of multi-stakeholder partnerships (MSPs), rather than multi-stakeholder initiatives (MSIs).

**“Multi-stakeholder partnership” is, however, a nebulous term.** During Agenda 2030 negotiations, many delegates were calling for partnerships but without clarifying what exactly that meant<sup>5</sup>. Reportedly, some delegates used the term “partnership” to refer to **bilateral and multilateral agreements with governments “as agreements between equals”**. Others mean public-private partnerships (PPPs), which may include privatising public services or assets. Business tends to welcome PPPs, whereas some CSOs are critical of such interpretation.

SDG 17 refers precisely to the notion of multi-stakeholder partnerships and their relation to the global partnership for sustainable development. SDG 17.16 states that MSPs shall “complement” the global partnership and shall “mobilise and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the achievement of the SDGs.” SDG 17.17 calls for efforts to “encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships”.

In other words, MSPs aim to tap into, mobilise and pool the **various resources that different stakeholders have**, from knowledge and funds to technological know-how or decision-making powers, etc.<sup>6</sup>, with the aim of discussing and ultimately providing common achievements.

For the purposes of the research, and **considering the broader notion of initiatives**, it was decided to use the term initiatives and therefore **Multi-stakeholder Initiatives (MSI)**. Partnerships can be understood as a specific form of engagement, as will be further explained when considering levels of engagement.

MSIs are very diverse in nature, ranging from intermittent dialogues to practical long-term collaborations. They can have different objectives and scope and can allow for varying levels of engagement of CSOs, as will be further analysed. They can also be established at different levels: national, sectoral, local, etc. and can have different names: fora, councils, alliances, coordination committees, platforms, etc. **The present research focuses mostly on national MSIs<sup>7</sup>.**

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4 One key principle underlying the SDGs is that of “common but differentiated responsibilities”.

5 Marianne Beisheim and Anne Ellersiek (2017)

6 idem

7 One global platform is however assessed (CSPPS) considering its success, as well as its national ramifications and current EU support. One MSI with a rather local outreach is also covered in Mongolia.

### 1.3 THE DEFINITION OF CIVIL SOCIETY AND CSOs

At the outset of the study it was agreed to adopt the EU terminology in relation to civil society and civil society organisations. According to the EU the term “Civil Society Organisations” (CSOs) includes all non-state, not-for-profit, non-violent and non-partisan structures, which people organise to pursue shared objectives and ideals, whether political, cultural, social or economic. It includes membership-based, cause-based and service-oriented organisations, from non-governmental organisations to community groups, trade unions, faith-based organisations, foundations, research institutions, cooperatives, professional and business associations, the not-for-profit media, etc.

The EU acknowledges that CSOs play multiple roles in society, ranging from advocacy, mobilisation and participation in policy processes and accountability systems to complementing the actions of the state in delivering services to populations. CSOs represent shared values, objectives and ideals (whether cultural, social, economic or political) and enable citizens to express opinions. They also voice the concerns of specific populations, (including marginalised groups), represent their interests at various levels and facilitate their direct engagement. Moreover, CSOs can create alternative solutions and services to those of the State and even contribute to raising awareness about local and global challenges and promote action to respond to these. Their distinct added value lies in their expertise, their proximity to citizens, and/or their knowledge derived from their different activities. An empowered civil society is thus a crucial component of any democratic system.

### 1.4 ROLES PLAYED BY CSOs IN THE 2020 AGENDA

Notwithstanding the risk of over-simplifying and drawing on the development effectiveness literature as well as on the different EU policy and reference documents which outline CS roles<sup>8</sup>, **the roles played by CSOs<sup>9</sup>** in the implementation and follow up of Agenda 2030 can be summarised as follows: (i) CSOs can give a voice to the poorest and most marginalised citizens to ensure their voices are heard ; (ii) they can advocate change; (iii) they can collect data and monitor progress; (iv) they can serve as watchdogs and agents of accountability and, (v) they can act as service delivery providers.



<sup>8</sup> European Commission (2012)

<sup>9</sup> These roles have been developed drawing on the existing literature about CS involvement in the 2030 Agenda. Some of the sources used include: Vinay Bhargava et al (2016), Livia Bizikova et al. (2017), Suzanne Nazal (2018). They also draw on the more general development effectiveness research on Civil Society roles, and the various EU policy and reference documents which outline such roles. It is also important to note that CS roles were thoroughly discussed during the Structured Dialogue process. In general CS roles in development are considered to be the following:

- Problem analysis and production of alternative information
- Civic education & sensitization
- Service delivery (sub-contracting / partnerships/ pioneering new services/ etc)
- Advocacy & Lobbying
- Activism (including protests/ demonstrations, etc)
- Social capital building / networking

**a. CSOs as the voice of the poorest: ‘Putting the last first’.** Underlying all the SDGs is the principle of “leave no one behind”. Its aim is to ensure that **development throughout the world has positive impacts on the poorest and most marginalised members of society**. CSOs can play a critical role by:

- Listening to people, being aware of what is happening in their respective areas of operation and gathering information.
- Being “a broker” and translating the concerns of the poorest and more marginalised citizens into rational or strong arguments which can be communicated to the authorities /decision makers.
- Engaging and networking with other CSOs that interact with the community.
- Identifying and occupying the available spaces for dialogue and developing relationships or partnerships with the authorities, particularly local government, as well as with other key actors.
- Being involved in advocacy when needed, to ensure that the voices of the most vulnerable are also heard with regard to more controversial issues where dialogue is not taking place.

**b. Civil Society communicating SDGs, raising awareness and acting as advocates for change:** CSOs also play an important role in communicating the SDGs to the public in a way that is understood by the public and in raising awareness of them. They can disseminate information on Agenda 2030 throughout the country, as well as at local or sectoral level, and can also inform the public on the progress (or lack of progress) being made by government, the private sector and other parties.

One of the objectives of raising public awareness is to empower citizens to make their own contributions to the SDGs. This also works the other way around. If the societal demand for sustainable development is increasing, it has a positive impact on the capacity of CSOs to put pressure on the government in their accountability role<sup>10</sup>

**c. Civil Society collecting data and monitoring<sup>11 12</sup> progress:** The lack of information/ data was one of the factors hampering the MDG process. CSOs can also play a vital role in developing or implementing adapted tools for data collection, monitoring and evaluation of progress. This can be done in different ways:

- Supporting data collection, encouraging people to use the new data collection platforms and mechanisms, providing additional data to track progress on SDG implementation and supporting data collection efforts.
- Providing supplementary, citizen-orientated data to complement national reports, tracking progress, sometimes aiming at compiling data from national statistics institutions, as is the case in Ecuador.
- Producing independent or alternative or “shadow” reports at national level, reacting to governments and/or providing a different perspective. Spotlight on Sustainable Development<sup>13</sup> reports on the profiling of CSO perspectives, drawing attention to plans proposed by governments and analysing their feasibility.

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10 IDDRI (2017): How do NGOs mobilize around the SDGs and what are the ways forward? A French-German comparison . Working Paper. Authors: Elisabeth Hege, Damien Demailly

11 <https://www.sum.uio.no/english/sdg/blog/dan-banik/civil-society-report.html>

12 [https://www.transparency.org/news/feature/civil\\_societys\\_crucial\\_role\\_in\\_achieving\\_the\\_sdgs](https://www.transparency.org/news/feature/civil_societys_crucial_role_in_achieving_the_sdgs)

13 <https://www.2030spotlight.org/en/book/605/national-civil-society-reports>



**d. Civil Society as agents of accountability:** Another critical role for CSOs is acting as “watchdogs” and holding governments and/or the private sector accountable for their commitments and promises. This role is particularly relevant where “check and balance” institutions are weak.

Accountability of the authorities is typically based on three elements: responsibility, answerability and enforceability<sup>14</sup>.

- Responsibility: as an agent of accountability, CSOs should be integrated into development and planning processes at national and local level. This means creation of institutional spaces where CSOs can participate from an early stage. CSOs should also seek to establish social contracts to implement priorities.
- Answerability: CSOs can contribute to extending the accountability efforts of the authorities on SDGs by disseminating to the community information relevant to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, in a form and language that is understood by citizens.
- Enforceability: this is the most difficult element of accountability given that SDGs are not legally binding<sup>15</sup>. Nevertheless, countries are expected to take ownership and establish a national framework for achieving the 17 Goals.
- CSOs can also hold the private sector to account with regard to their contribution to the SDGs, ensuring coherence and transparency. It is, however, a much less common role, as most CSOs continue to think that the main responsibility for SDG implementation lies with the public sector. Besides, as businesses have not signed Agenda 2030, NGOs find it difficult to hold them to account because their role is not clearly defined<sup>16</sup>.
- Finally, CSOs can also encourage the creation of new advocacy coalitions, thus increasing the legitimacy of accountability claims.

**e. Civil Society as service providers:** Depending on the level of decentralisation, authorities at national and local level, to a varying extent, have primary responsibility for the delivery of basic services in their territories/countries. However, CSOs, as well as the private sector, can also play a significant role, as co-producers of services<sup>17</sup>, particularly in situations:

- Where the government lacks capacity or will, particularly relevant in fragile environments and LICs and
- With regard to specific, specialised services, CSOs (and the private sector) can also play a major role in piloting new approaches/services/etc and bringing innovation.

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14 Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and Centre for Economic and Social Rights (OHCHR, CESR, 2013). “Who is accountable? Human Rights and the Post-2015 Development Agenda.”

15 Implementation and success will rely on countries’ own sustainable development policies, plans and programmes. Countries have the primary responsibility for follow-up and review, at the national, regional and global levels, with regard to the progress made in implementing the Goals and targets over the next 15 years (see <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/development-agenda/>)

16 IDDRI (2017)

17 The concept of “co-production” is a novel approach, where citizens participate in the production or improvement of existing services that they use themselves. Co-production engages citizens not as mere passive recipients, but as active participants in providing public services. Many scholars believe this is the driving force towards open and collaborative governance which ensures more inclusive public service delivery.

## 1.5 THE SPACES FOR ENGAGEMENT WITH CIVIL SOCIETY

With regard to the spaces for CS engagement (i.e. areas where interaction, information exchange and/or negotiation can happen), they adopt multiple forms, being invited or claimed, formal or informal, ad-hoc or long term/institutionalised.

In some cases, also referred to as invited spaces, civil society is invited by authorities as observers, for consultation or even active participation in decision-making. Such participation will often be institutionalised and in some cases have a legal basis. In other cases, they may be more temporary, involving ad hoc consultation fora. Examples include civil society consultations during the annual budget cycle at key strategic moments (e.g. planning, annual reviews and policy development) as well as citizen participation in statutory oversight bodies such as parliamentary standing committees. The purpose of such participation will often be publicised in advance and it is considered good practice to provide feedback to the public on the inputs collected. Claimed spaces, by contrast, are established on the initiative of civil society and are often informal, organic and based on common concerns and identification. Examples of claimed spaces are advocacy initiatives taken by civil society to claim influence on, for example, legislation, constitutional revision processes, land-grabbing conflicts or discontent concerning public services or political decisions.

Invited space is often described as controlled ‘from above’. Claimed space, on the other hand, refers to space that CS creates for itself (or ‘from below’), for example through lobbying, campaigning, education, public interest litigation, etc.

## 2. MAIN FINDINGS

### 2.1 A GREAT DIVERSITY OF PRACTICES

The first and most important conclusion that can be drawn from the assessment of the 18 MSIs selected is that **no two multi-stakeholder initiatives are identical**. Quite the opposite. There is a broad diversity of experiences and there is no blueprint for what a “2030 Agenda” initiative should encompass when it comes to multi-stakeholder settings and Civil Society involvement.

**The majority of the MSI assessed have been based specifically on Agenda 2030. However, multi-stakeholder initiatives were commonplace long before Agenda 2030 was adopted.** With various labels, MSIs have gained popularity over the past two decades, as mechanisms to address complex societal problems whose causes span diverse institutions and whose resolution requires the alignment and application of different competencies involving numerous participants and sectors<sup>18</sup>. Of the 18 MSIs assessed, five existed before the Agenda 2030 was adopted<sup>19</sup>, and 13 were specifically set up for the implementation and follow-up of Agenda 2030, often building on the “Beyond 2015” debates, in the case of CS-led initiatives.

With regard to long established MSIs (existing prior to the adoption of Agenda 2030), **there are many relevant and inspiring examples of multi-stakeholder settings at both national and global level**, where discussions (and even collaborations) about development priorities, policies and programmes take place. This is particularly evident in – but not only in – **fragile and crisis environments**. It is also worth noting that these often-long-standing efforts to ensure Civil Society involvement in peace and statebuilding efforts are now being progressively linked to Agenda 2030.

Of particular interest is the Civil Society Platform for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (CSPPS), a member-led global network of Civil Society, experts and academics from the South and the North who work together to support peacebuilding and statebuilding projects in fragile environments. First hosted and coordinated by Interpeace, and now by Cordaid, CSPPS has been acting since 2011 as a central platform where Civil Society ideas are generated, where progress with regard to the Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goals (PSG) is discussed, and where consensus is sought on the course of action to be taken with regard to the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (IDPS).

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<sup>18</sup> Fowler et al. (2017)

<sup>19</sup> Initiatives assessed existing before SDGs:

- Bolivia: Multi stakeholder dialogues organised by Red Unitas
- Mongolia: Local Multi-stakeholder Councils
- Cambodia: Partnership Steering Committee for the implementation of the social accountability framework
- Germany: State Secretaries' Committee for Sustainable Development and the German Council for Sustainable Development
- Global initiative: The Civil Society Platform for Peacebuilding and State building (CSPPS)

### CSPPS involvement in the SDGs

The core activity of the CSPPS is to ensure Civil Society coalition-building at country level and to provide capacity-building support to Civil Society members of those coalitions, with a particular focus on securing political space for Civil Society. Some examples of CSPPS involvement in the SDGs include:

- Striving to infuse the IDPS, Sustainable Development Goals and humanitarian processes with peacebuilding values in the context of implementing the 2030 Agenda. For example, in the framework of the 2019 **High-Level Political Forum (HLPF)**, SDG 16 on peaceful, just and inclusive societies will be reviewed. The CSPPS “Ready for Review” project aims to ensure the meaningful inclusion, participation and contribution of national and local CSOs during government-led SDG consultation and validation processes in some of the countries planning a Voluntary National Review (VNR) in 2019.
- Attending multiple forums, roundtable meetings and side event debates at International level and co-organising and/or facilitating key events related to SDG implementation and monitoring. The focus is on reaffirming Civil Society independence to play a meaningful role in implementing the 2030 Agenda. A key example is a call made to seek support for an amplified voice for Civil Society in the context of the UN High Level Political Forum (HLPF), organised to report on the progress made on the implementation of the SDGs in specific countries.
- Recording and documenting lessons learnt, and experiences gathered in supporting processes, while using this material to evaluate the Platform’s ability to respond to support requests and to assess its contribution to the process of SDG implementation.
- Advocating a greater role for Civil Society in the VNR process and in the way the country reports and individual SDGs are being reviewed and discussed during the HLPF. This highlights the fact that, where state-society relations are weak and where state institutions lack capacity, the meaningful involvement of Civil Society plays a pivotal role in ensuring whole-of-society ownership and implementation of SDGs.

Another interesting example of an established MSI is the Implementation of **Social Accountability Framework (ISAF) in Cambodia**, which aims to empower citizens, strengthen partnerships between sub-national administrations (SNAs) and citizens, and promote enhanced accountability of SNAs in improving local service delivery. The initiative is **clearly linked to the SDGs and is part of SDG implementation despite not being explicitly created for SDGs**. ISAF focuses on gender and social inclusion as part of “leaving no one behind”. In addition, the inclusive working dynamics of the initiative have the potential to be extended to a wider SDG-related framework, especially considering the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) commitment to applying this partnership in implementation in all districts and all sectors in the future.



### **The Social Accountability Framework in Cambodia: a wider social accountability scheme with the potential to be used for the promotion of multi-stakeholder engagement on SDGs**

ISAF was introduced as a platform for coordinated action by government and Civil Society to implement the Strategic Plan on Social Accountability for Sub-National Democratic Development adopted by the RGC and its four operational components: access to information and open budgets; citizen monitoring; capacity building and program management; learning and monitoring.

The **Partnership Steering Committee (PSC) is the element** within ISAF which provides a joint platform for the RGC and CSOs and, with participation of development partners as observers, to make decisions and ensure oversight of the joint implementation of the ISAF. This includes policy matters, programme design, implementation, financing arrangements, target areas, sector expansion and functionality of the framework.

The main accomplishments of the initiative are:

- Enhanced transparency in key public services through the public posting and dissemination of annually updated financial and performance data for all primary schools, health centres and community services in 827 target communes.
- Raised awareness of citizens' rights and service standards through the direct participation of more than 554,000 people in public outreach and awareness-raising events.
- Amplified citizens' voices through the active involvement of more than 270,000 citizens in community score-card assessments of community services, primary schools and health centres.
- Improved relations and trust between citizens and public officials and service providers.
- Strengthened capacity for local level social accountability through the recruitment, training and mentoring of approximately 3,700 volunteer Community Accountability Facilitators (CAFs).
- Concrete improvements in local public service delivery, as a result of the implementation of actions for improvement (as collectively agreed in Joint Accountability Action Plans - JAAPs).

**Diversity is also evident in the broad spectrum of processes that MSIs can engage in.** MSIs have been set up to foster dialogue and collaboration between different groups and to address sustainable development in national, regional and/or local contexts. However, their mandates and scope vary, from strengthening national awareness, commitment and solidarity around Agenda 2020, to developing a shared vision or even shaping agendas to target particular goals. MSIs can also promote certain values, standards, dialogue, exchange and learning. They can mobilise resources to conduct activities or look for innovation and combined efforts or co-operate in other ways to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

## 2.2 CLAIMED AND INVITED SPACES: TWO PARALLEL TRACKS

The research also confirms, in line **with the general trends observed in the involvement of CSOs in public policies outside the scope of Agenda 2030<sup>20</sup>, that MSIs can be proposed and facilitated by the authorities** (the so-called “invited spaces” for engagement). This is the case with initiatives such as the Technical Committee for Implementation of the SDGs (promoted by the government of Madagascar and supported by the UN), the SDGs National Coordination Commission (NCC) in Afghanistan, the National SDG Coordination Team in Indonesia (also supported by the UNDP) and the National Pact for the Advancement of the SDGs in Costa Rica, to mention a few. These initiatives are of particular importance when SDG localisation at national level takes place through alignment with the national development strategy in the country (as is the case with the Mongolia Sustainable Development Vision or the Bolivia National Development Plan).

### The National CSO Core Reference Group (NCCRG) for SDGs in Uganda

The implementation of SDGs in Uganda is coordinated through the National SDG Coordination Framework, which is steered by a multi-stakeholder SDG National Taskforce, of which the **National CSO Core Reference Group (NCCRG)** is a member. The NCCRG on SDGs is a consortium of CSOs that is monitoring the implementation of SDGs through five multi-stakeholder Technical Working Groups (TWGs) which are made up of Sector Working Groups (SWGs). The SWGs coordinate the implementation of development activities within their sector and are the umbrella bodies covering ministries, departments and agencies, local governments, development partners, the private sector and Civil Society. Each SWG has nominated SDG focal points to represent the SWG members in the TWGs.

Within the framework above, Civil Society is involved, through the NCCRG, in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda as follows:

- In Uganda, Civil Society under the auspices of the Agenda 2030 CSO Reference Group has made significant strides in establishing structures for improved coordination, public awareness creation and implementation of specific activities and projects towards realisation of the SDGs.
- The SDG National Taskforce developed a roadmap to create an enabling environment for delivering SDGs in Uganda. This was done with support from the UNDP, through a multi-level consultative and inclusive process, involving government agencies, the private sector, Civil Society and development partners,
- Civil Society Organisations were also the first stakeholders to work on a localisation process for SDGs in Uganda by initiating a local ‘leave no one behind’ campaign dubbed Tondeka Mabega. Civil Society Organisations continue to explore ways in which they can ensure that this campaign takes root across the country.
- Various individual and coalitions of CSOs, including the NCCRG, have been involved in the generation of the 2017 and 2018 Civil Society Report on SDG Implementation in Uganda. This builds on the experiences of CSOs in implementing and monitoring the selected goals and also makes an important contribution to the national review process.
- CSOs participate in the monitoring and evaluation process for the implementation of SDGs to ensure that concrete actions are taken and progress is made on the achievement of targets.

20 European Commission (2014)

Alternatively, MSIs can be initiated and led by platforms and coalitions of CSOs themselves (**the so-called “claimed spaces” for engagement**). This is the case with initiatives such as the Kenya SDG Philanthropy Platform, the Civil Society Coalition on Sustainable Development (CSCSD) in Nigeria (also known as Campaign2015+ International), the National CSO Core Reference Group (NCCRG) on SDGs which is hosted by the Ugandan National NGO Forum, and El Foro Politico Multiactor sobre Desarrollo Sostenible in Bolivia, promoted by UNITAS, to mention a few.

Furthermore, **invited and claimed spaces can be seen and can interact in a given country, fulfilling different mandates and/or involving different groups of actors**. This is the case in Brazil where there are both Civil Society-led and government-led MSIs related to SDGs and in Mongolia, where the Local Multi-Stakeholder Councils (initiated by the Asia Foundation) and the consultative body for the Voluntary National Review 2019 (initiated by the Government) co-exist.

Even what initially **existed as claimed spaces**, such as CS networks, platforms and alliances working on different development issues related to SDGs, **can evolve into invited MSIs**. This can be the result of CSOs gaining capacity and the ability to articulate, and/or by authorities being progressively brought into the debates organised by CSOs and the spaces of dialogue being progressively acknowledged and institutionalised.



Women in Arua, Uganda attending a business skills training workshop

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## 2.3 STRONG UN AND CIVIL SOCIETY LEADERSHIP AND DIVERSE MOTIVATIONS

With regards to the origins, two key trends emerge. Claimed spaces specifically set up for the 2030 Agenda are often promoted by **CSOs which were already involved in Post/Beyond 2015 discussions**. In other words, CSOs which are well acquainted (and even active) with these global processes. When it comes to invited spaces relating to the SDGs, they often **have been set up with the support and even the leadership of the UN** in the country, possibly in the framework of the **VNR processes**<sup>21</sup>. **In other words, it is often the UN which promotes the multi stakeholder agenda and acts as a broker between the authorities and CSOs.**

In the case of already existing MSIs, **the origin can be rather mixed**. In the case of the Partnership Steering Committee (PSC) of Cambodia, the government is officially credited with creation of the Committee, but Partnership Steering Committees seem to have originated as part of a World Bank capacity-building programme in 2009/2010, which was adapted after establishment of the SDGs in 2015.

<sup>21</sup> Initiatives assessed involved in VNRs:

- Mongolia: Consultative body on the VNR 2019
- Afghanistan: SDGs national coordination committee
- Indonesia: national SDG coordination team
- Malaysia: Malaysian CSO-SDGs alliance
- Madagascar: technical committee for implementation of the SDGs
- Nigeria: Civil Society Coalition on Sustainable Development (CSCSD)
- Sudan: Sudanese Civil Society Forum for SDGs (SCSF)
- Germany: State Secretaries' Committee for Sustainable Development and the German Council for Sustainable Development

As one would expect, **authorities are more inclined to promote MSIs in contexts which are generally favourable for civic action** – that is where there is, generally speaking, an enabling environment for CSOs. At the same time, as the research evidences (in Malaysia for example) **SDGs can present an opportunity for CSOs to engage with the authorities within a non-contested framework** and find entry points, particularly with regard to social sectors. Furthermore, Agenda 2030 can **enhance protection of spaces for CSOs**, by providing a further source of legitimacy for Civil Society work. This is particularly relevant in restrictive environments.

For CSOs, the research reveals how the new agenda is seen as **an opportunity to strengthen collaboration and forge new coalitions and partnerships among CSOs**<sup>22</sup>. In Uganda and Ecuador, for example, national core CSO Reference Groups on SDGs for the implementation and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda have been established. SDGs are forging broader collaborations between CSOs, beyond their specific activity sectors.

### **The Mongolia Consultative body on the VNR 2019: an inclusive experience promoted by a national government and supported by the UN**

The Mongolian Government was involved in the creation, in 2017, of the Consultative Body on the VNR process for 2019. Although it is an *ad hoc* initiative, there are voices in the country advocating the institutionalisation of the initiative beyond 2019. Although it is a national body, its geographical coverage includes the regional and sub-regional levels.

The initiative receives support from the UN (UN Resident coordinator's office and UN DESA) and members of the Consultative Committee are chosen from government members and CS individuals who are well known and outspoken. Members include the Mongolian Advisor to the Prime Minister of Mongolia, the National Statistical Office of Mongolia, the Sub-Committee for Sustainable Development, the Environmental Monitoring and Evaluation Department of the Internal Audit Department, the Mongolian National Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Institute for Sustainable Development (Mongolian University), the Centre for Human Rights and Development and the Development Policy and Planning Division of the National Development Agency. In addition, members of parliament, academia, the private sector and Civil Society are amongst the key members of the group. CSOs involved include those affiliated to the Mongolia CS network (which includes local CSOs plus World Vision), and the Civil Society representative on the national consultation body is the Head of the Centre for Human Rights and Development. Academia is heavily engaged and plays an important role.

Relevant outputs stemming from the initiative include the creation of a consultative body, which is regulated by a charter, and results from the establishment of continual dialogue between government and Civil Society. Civil Society and government have shared their draft VNR reports with one another. In addition, a mapping of the key CS actors involved in SDGs has been carried out. These elements have directly led to an increase in information sharing and openness regarding relevant information on SDGs. The national SDG agenda is therefore being influenced by this process and the Mongolia Sustainable Development Vision (SDV) is being opened up to Civil Society participants through this VNR consultative process. According to the Mongolian legal framework, development planning must comply with the Sustainable Development Vision (SDV) of the country, which currently includes about half of the SDGs. The goal is to include all SDGs in the SDV and to set up multi-stakeholder working groups in the eight relevant ministries in order to define national targets and indicators. The legal framework also requires reporting to parliament about such compliance every two years.

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22 <https://www.together2030.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/FINAL-Mapping-of-National-CSO-coalitions-on-SDGs-March-2018.pdf>



It is also worth noting that even though VNR processes underline the participatory principle and encourage the inclusion of participants other than the authorities, research shows how **participation by CSOs and other non-government stakeholders in the definition of the VNR and in the HLPF meetings is not standardised or formalised**. Several participants report that, in most cases, **VNRs appear to lack a critical perspective**. In other words, they tend to highlight success stories rather than taking a critical analysis approach. This is the case in Costa Rica, where the National Covenant for Fulfilment of SDGs, promoted by the UN, seems to have lost momentum in relation to the participation of Civil Society in the 2030 Agenda.

**Finally, when it comes to EU support to such MSIs**, it is still nascent. There are some promising experiences at country level, where the EUD is supporting various CSO-led initiatives, as in Brazil and Ecuador and at global level such as the CSPPS.

## 2.4 DIFFERENT DEGREES OF CIVIL SOCIETY INVOLVEMENT AND VARIETY OF ROLES PLAYED BY CSOs

A fourth remark, echoing the diversity outlined, is that **the extent of Civil Society involvement, as well as the roles that are given to (or claimed by) Civil Society are also very different from country to country**. True, as briefly mentioned in the introduction, Agenda 2030 makes multiple references to engagement with Civil Society in the implementation process. It proclaims the Agenda as “an Agenda of the people, by the people and for the people” and calls for the establishment of a global partnership “with the participation of all countries, all stakeholders and all people” to work on its implementation. However, at country level each process appears to be unique and specific to the national context.

**When it comes to the degree of engagement**, evidence shows that, in the **MSIs assessed, this is very diverse**. It ranges from institutionalised platforms to grant-improved access to information and raising awareness amongst CSOs, other relevant stakeholders and citizens, **to involving CSOs (and other stakeholders) more closely in some decisions regarding the SDGs, providing capacity development, or involving CSOs in the provision of certain services**.

When it comes to CS roles<sup>23</sup>, on most cases assessed, **CSOs are called on to play, or take the initiative in playing more than one of the afore-mentioned roles**.

- The multi-stakeholder dialogues promoted by UNITAS in Bolivia seek to widen public dialogue and political debate in order to foster active and inclusive participation in the implementation and monitoring of the different national strategic plans.
- In Brazil, the ODS focuses on extending the debate on the SDGs and on proposing and discussing means for effective implementation of the agenda.
- Also in Brazil, the Civil Society Working Group for the 2030 Agenda communicates and highlights the importance of the SDGs and the potential impact of their implementation on people and the territories. It also gathers, analyses and disseminates information related to its advocacy role, including the production, each year, of a shadow report.

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23 As briefly outlined in section 1.3.

Differences are also evident depending on whether MSIs are led by the authorities or by CSOs themselves. Often, when the initiatives are led by the authorities (the so-called invited spaces for engagement), CSOs are called on in a **consultative role as the voice of the poorest**. They are also considered **key agents for communication of the SDGs**, and for raising awareness amongst citizens. In some cases, they are also involved in different capacity development initiatives.

- In Costa Rica, Civil Society plays a rather consultative role. The same applies to the Sudanese Civil Society Forum for the SDGs.
- In Mongolia, the Local Multi-stakeholder Councils channel capacity development support to CSOs.
- In Afghanistan, Civil Society is not part of the technical working groups of the SDGs national coordination committee; its role is mainly that of raising awareness on the SDGs.
- In Malaysia, the CSO-SDG alliance has, amongst other activities, been providing support to social entrepreneurs to encourage them to select projects that support the SDGs.

**Watchdog and accountability roles are, however, less extended** in government-led initiatives and, in most cases, assumed by CSOs in initiatives which they are leading (the so-called claimed spaces). There are some exceptions to this trend.

- In Cambodia, for example, the Partnership Steering Committee which implements the Social Accountability Framework is composed of 50% government representatives and 50% Civil Society.
- In Malaysia, five members of the Alliance have a seat on the National Steering Committee and, more generally, CSOs are regularly invited to join cluster groups and taskforces, and even to give their inputs on targets and indicators related to the SDGs, on existing gaps and means to address them. In Uganda, the National CSO Core Reference Group (NCCRG) on SDGs is able to monitor implementation within the existing institutional structures.
- In Indonesia, CSOs are an integral part of the National Coordination Team<sup>24</sup>.

**There are also several MSIs where the roles of Civil Society have been rather marginal, even though the trend is changing.**

- This is the case in Madagascar where the majority of CSOs have for many years been playing only a subordinate role, acting as service providers for donors. Nevertheless, in recent years Civil Society has shown increasing dynamism in its engagement in advocacy and watchdog roles. In fact, over the past three years, several initiatives have seen CSOs come together to act and press for transparency in public financial management, in independent election monitoring, in public procurement, in the natural resources sectors, and many other areas.

Finally, it is also interesting to note that, **all too often, the roles played by CSOs** (and other participants, including the private sector) **are not clearly specified when the MSIs are set up, and roles are being granted or assumed on an *ad hoc* basis.**

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24 The 2017 Voluntary National Review was prepared with four national SDG areas in mind: government, Civil Society Organisations, philanthropy and business, and academia and experts. A series of meetings has been organised to develop a consensus and will be followed by a series of focus group discussions (FGDs) for each goal. In particular, the localisation process has been piloted in Riau province, with awareness-raising workshops involving local philanthropy, the private sector, associated interests, academia, Civil Society Organisations, and the media.

## Civil Society involvement and roles in the Technical Committee for Implementation of the SDGs in Madagascar

The Technical Committee for Implementation of the SDGs is, together with a Steering and Monitoring Committee, part of the SDG institutional framework of Madagascar. It was launched by the Prime Minister in July 2015 and includes some designated CSOs as members.

Reportedly, CSOs are considered important players to achieve sustainable development because of their proximity to the local context. They are also expected to play a role as facilitators, and in monitoring of implemented policies, advocacy and resource mobilisation. However, other than the presence of co-opted representatives on the Technical Committee, CSOs do not engage directly in dialogue with government on the SDGs.

In Madagascar, the majority of CSOs have for many years been playing only a subordinate role, acting as service providers for donors. Nevertheless, in recent years Civil Society has shown a certain increasing dynamism in its engagement in advocacy and watchdog roles. In fact, over the past three years, several initiatives have seen CSOs come together to act and advocate on transparency in public financial management, independent election monitoring, transparency in public procurement, and transparency in the natural resources sectors, to name a few areas.

An interesting initiative is the Mouvement Rohy, grouping approximately 120 CSOs and prioritising issues of advocacy on critical development challenges. Their anti-corruption initiative engaged 393 CSOs in the inclusive development of the three-year agenda. A quality barometer for seven public services was also established. The group led a national effort to independently monitor the presidential elections, which led to the establishment of a permanent election observatory, SALAFI.

There are other relevant instances of engagement of CSOs on national priorities like the national budget. The Ministry of Economy and Planning and the National Institute of Statistics have updated, in consultation with CSOs, the National Strategy for the Development of Statistics, seeking to provide a monitoring framework for SDG targets.

As far as mobilisation of the public is concerned, there are initiatives to raise awareness about critical issues, using the various *“journées mondiales”*. Recently, CSOs have been able to mobilise the public on national budget issues and on corruption among young people.

Finally, some CSOs in Madagascar have established good relations with the media. The media actually consider some CSOs, particularly leading members of the “Mouvement Rohy”, as sources of valid information.

All in all, **the level of engagement of CSOs appears to be contingent on a number of national factors.** These include:

- the overall provision of space for CSOs' inclusion in the national institutional framework
- the level of trust that exists between the state authorities and CSOs
- the participatory nature of the process embarked upon
- the level of maturity and policy-dialogue skills of CSOs and
- on a more practical note, the timeframe of the process, and more particularly in which the different parties can provide inputs.

## 2.5 A TREND TOWARDS FORMALISATION AND INSTITUTIONALISATION

It is also worth noting the trend **towards formalisation and institutionalisation of MSIs, rather than treating them as ad-hoc initiatives**. Indeed, all of the MSIs analysed are formalised and some of them have even developed Terms of Reference or charters describing their governance bodies, their structures, their coordination mechanisms and their modes of operation. The National SDG Coordination Team in Indonesia, for instance, includes the following: a Steering Committee and Implementation Team, Working Groups, an Experts Team and a SDG Secretariat operating under the Ministry of National Development Planning.

### The five levels of authority of the CSCSD in Nigeria

The Civil Society Coalition on Sustainable Development (CSCSD) also known as Campaign2015+ International, is a coalition of approximately 2,000 registered Civil Society and non-governmental organisations committed to citizens' empowerment, human rights protection, development and peace in Nigeria. The Civil Society Coalition on Sustainable Development is, in fact, the successor of Campaign2015+ International, which was the only such coalition, not only in Nigeria but also in Africa. The main purpose of its campaign was to tackle challenges hindering the attainment of MDGs in Africa and other parts of the globe and to campaign beyond 2015 on democracy, good governance, human rights, justice, development and global security.

There are five levels of authority:

1. The **General Assembly** brings together representatives of the CSCSD, including all the officers and nominated members at zonal and state level. The GA is the highest decision-making body of the CSCSD. Unfortunately, due to lack of financial resources and the size of the country, it is not possible to bring all members together at once, so the General Assembly cannot be convened.
2. The Coalition has **11 boards of trustees (BoT)** who lead the coalition across the 6 geopolitical zones. The Board of Trustees holds office and holds the property of the Coalition in trust for the entire membership of CSCSD, although members hold office in perpetual succession. They give legal expression to the organisation as they can sue and be sued. The BoT comprises between 10 and 15 members and has a Chairperson with a Secretary and other officers.
3. The **National Steering Committee** is composed of members from different states (about 25 SC members across Nigeria) and is responsible for the implementation of activities. A youth coordinator is also a member of the NSC.
4. The members of the **National Executive Committee** are elected during a General Assembly. They are charged with the day-to-day running of the CSCSD in conjunction with staff at the Secretariat, which is headed by the National Coordinator.
5. The Advisory Council has a zonal structure with representatives from six zones and 36 states acting as coordinators. Advisory Council members are appointed both locally and nationally by the BoT and hold office at the pleasure of the BoT. Working together with the BoT, they are involved in giving advice to the BoT on achieving the goals and objectives of the CSCSD.

In Costa Rica, the National Pact (also known as Covenant) for the advancement of the SDGs in Costa Rica has the three branches of the state working in coordination and on an equal footing. Under the Covenant, the government and its ministries commit themselves to working with other arms of the state as well as with significant members of Costa Rican society, including non-governmental and non-state organisations, when decisions about the 2030 Agenda are taken. Specific coordination mechanisms have been developed. It is also worth noting that the Covenant transcends individual administrations, so that future governments, irrespective of political orientation, will still be bound to implement the 2030 Agenda. Another interesting example is the Civil Society Coalition on Sustainable Development (CSCSD) in Nigeria, and its five levels of authority as described in the box.

## 2.6 MULTIPLE CIVIL SOCIETY GROUPS INVOLVED AND THE CHALLENGE OF INCLUSIVENESS

Another key question when looking into CS involvement in MSIs, is: **which actors within Civil Society are involved?** That is: who has access to such spaces? Very much linked to this question, particularly with regard to the MSIs which are promoted by the authorities, is the matter of how they have been selected. When MSIs have been promoted by the authorities, have the authorities specified who is involved? Or, has there been a process of auto-selection led by Civil Society?

These questions are particularly relevant as, in any given context, Civil Society is not a homogenous group representing one set of interests. On the contrary, CSOs are multiple, pursuing distinct and sometimes opposing agendas and interests. Besides, they are not exempt from the political and power dynamics that shape the rest of the social, economic and political context. The level of organisation within Civil Society and the variety of umbrella organisations, networks, etc., is also very different from country to country. Equally, there is great variety in the mechanisms that exist to ensure that the voices of the minorities, vulnerable groups and communities on the “periphery” are heard and heeded.

Few of the government-led initiatives assessed include **detailed information about the selection criteria and mechanisms used to appoint Civil Society representatives**. In some cases, there is even a perception amongst CSOs that **CS representatives “have been hand-picked”** by the government, without transparent mechanisms in place, and that only those CSOs that are close to the authorities and do not have a critical stance are being selected.

Some of the CSOs interviewed also report how, even if they have access to such MSIs, their inputs are not necessarily accepted, and there is a general lack of mechanisms ensuring proper feedback. This view is particularly emphasised by human rights and governance-related CSOs and trade unions in specific contexts. Some of those interviewed even point to the risk of such government-led MSIs becoming purely formal “tick box” exercises by government, under pressure from the UN and other donors.

When it comes to Civil Society-led initiatives, **they are member-based and often open to all interested CSOs**. It is also interesting to note that most of the Civil Society-led initiatives **promote coordinating and networking as working principles rather than having hierarchical control**.

With regard to the types of participants, several of the CS-promoted experiences assessed **are led by coalitions which cut across sectors. These can include NGOs, CBOs, FBOs, trades unions, professional associations, think tanks, student organisations, community groups, disability groups, etc.** In Nigeria, for example, several of them build on the work of Campaign2015+. There are also a few emerging and interesting examples **of philanthropy-led initiatives**.

A particularly interesting case is the Kenya SDG Philanthropy Platform, described in the box below. It comprises international foundations, pan-African foundations, local organisations and organisations of the Kenyan diaspora. It is considered the country's first common "voice" for the philanthropy sector for discussing and advocating common interests on the enabling environment, data, thematic policies, sub-national government engagement and multi-stakeholder collaborations.

Another interesting example of philanthropic foundations' involvement can be found in Indonesia, specifically in the Indonesia Philanthropy Festival (FIFest), which is organised every two years. With the main theme of "From Innovation to Impact", FIFest 2018 was the second one of its kind. It aimed to highlight innovations in various philanthropic activities across Asia, as well as effective strategies in building the capacity of philanthropic institutions to achieve the SDGs. The Festival's programme included exhibitions, training sessions, marketplace forums and partnership luncheons as well as field trips to various philanthropic projects.

### **The Kenya SDG Philanthropy Platform: a multi-stakeholder, private sector-led initiative, supported by the UN**

The SDG Philanthropy Platform (SDGPP) is a global initiative, launched in 2014 as a multi-country *enabler* of collaboration between philanthropy, the United Nations, governments, the private sector and Civil Society. Its aim is to develop and implement innovations that can use national resources and attract private capital to close the funding gap to achieve SDGs. Kenya was the pilot country for the Platform. The SDG Philanthropy Platform in Kenya is housed in the Office of the UN Resident Coordinator and is supported by the UNDP, the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, the Ford Foundation, and the Mastercard Foundation.

The Platform acts as a catalyst and facilitator, connecting philanthropic organisations to each other and to key multi-stakeholder processes and policies driving SDG delivery within national development planning. The Platform hosts, facilitates and participates in high-level global meetings, where knowledge sharing will lead to philanthropists participating in, supporting and co-creating scalable innovations with multi-sectoral partners to drive SDG delivery in Kenya.

It has been instrumental in raising awareness on SDGs, forging partnerships between philanthropy and the private and public sectors and increasing philanthropy's engagement with the post-2015 development agenda. Moreover, the Platform has continued to provide advice and support to the United Nations Country Teams on engaging more effectively with philanthropy, the private sector and Civil Society, and on ways to facilitate collaboration. Areas include technology innovations, innovation grants for early childhood development training on mobile platforms for community health workers and caregivers, and creating value chains for local manufacture and distribution of fortified school feeding for ECD centres in rural areas.

Philanthropy's importance as an integral player in the global agenda has been gaining wider recognition and traction since the introduction of the SDGs. Philanthropic leaders around the world are joining the dialogue to help jointly formulate pathways for more proactive engagement with government, UN agencies, Civil Society and business. The importance of partnerships with philanthropy is the recognition that philanthropic organisations and social investors have different and complementary strengths and characteristics compared with other major stakeholders such as governments, global agencies and the private sector.

The SDG Philanthropy Platform has agreed to establish a collaboration with the SDG Kenya Forum. This was created in 2016 by Civil Society as a platform for collaboration between various stakeholders to cultivate political will on the SDGs, to track progress of their implementation, and to thereby collect and analyse data, strengthen national accountability structures and mobilise financial resources.



Finally, **inclusiveness remains a critical issue** in most of the MSIs assessed. It is essential to ensuring that the voices of youth and of women are heard and that the minorities and most marginalised communities are taken into consideration. Several of the CS-led MSIs assessed have taken positive steps to ensure this.

From 2016-2017 onwards CSPPS has underlined in membership meetings the importance of including youth-led peace organisations and women-focused organisations so that they are represented. Currently, 65% of the CSPPS country teams have ensured the required inclusion.

In Uganda, building on the 2016 “Leave No One Behind” community dialogues, the Uganda National NGO Forum was able to provide a platform for 60 marginalised people to mark the 2nd Anniversary of the SDGs. They were able to share their testimonies on the injustices that they continue to face and to demand action from their leaders to change the status quo in their town and district councils. This event was publicised through social media engagements, radio programmes and production and dissemination of popular versions of the SDGs in ten languages to 2,000 citizens.

## 2.7 INCREASING INVOLVEMENT OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR

The **private sector is also increasingly involved in several of the MSIs assessed**, in both those led by Civil Society and government-led initiatives.

There are several examples of private sector involvement in CS-led initiatives (the so-called claimed spaces). The Estrategia OPDS, developed by the Abrinq Foundation in Brazil, includes the private sector as a key player, together with local authorities and CSOs, in the coalition created to extend the debate on SDGs in Brazil. In particular, the identification of important players in the private sector and their enhanced involvement in the SDGs is a major objective of the initiative. Private sector representatives were also among the parties signing the National Covenant for the Fulfilment of SDGs in Costa Rica and they are also part of the SDG Technical Secretariat of the Covenant. In Ecuador, the private sector is also involved in the ODS Territorio Initiative, through its inclusion in the citizens observatories.

When it comes to private sector involvement in government-led initiatives, there are also some interesting examples: the Mongolia consultative body on the VNR 2019; the Afghanistan SDGs National Coordination Committee (which took into consideration private sector views during the drafting of their last VNR); the Malaysian CSO-SDG Alliance, where 17 taskforces related to specific SDGs are made up of ministries and members from the CSO-SDG Alliance, academia and the private sector.

These are promising trends, considering the key role that the private sector plays in development. The private sector is a major force in creating economic opportunities for people living in poverty, through investment, employment, innovation and revenue generation for social sectors. More than ever, this sector should be involved in the different MSIs, to ensure alignment with human rights-based principles. Ultimately, private sector involvement can ensure that the investments made and the public/private partnerships that are promoted also have a direct impact on poverty reduction, that they do not neglect basic services and social infrastructures and do not result in widening socio-economic inequalities.

## 2.8 LITTLE EVIDENCE OF RESULTS ACHIEVED SO FAR AND LIMITED KNOWLEDGE ON CHALLENGES FACED

Finally, as briefly outlined in the introduction to this report, when discussing the limitations faced by the research study, very little evidence has been gathered to date of concrete results achieved by MSI initiatives. **Most available information focuses on the process, the activities undertaken, and the deliverables produced.** There has been little discussion of specific outcomes, on the one hand and, on the other, the internal dynamics that make a MSI successful in a specific context. The challenges faced by CSOs to be better involved in MSIs also deserves more attention.

With regard to the **internal dynamics**, efforts to understand the MSI phenomenon and support it properly still remain at a very early stage. This, as several analyses point out, is despite increasing support to MSI configurations worldwide, some dating back to long before SDGs were introduced. **What makes coalitions effective, what makes them functional and last longer in order to really contribute to the achievement of the SDGs remain largely unanswered questions.** These are particularly relevant questions, considering that MSIs involve different participants, with different (and even sometimes competing) interests, priorities and agendas.

With regard to outcomes, it is true that, in some cases such as Afghanistan, **it is difficult to show results because implementation has only just started.** However, the research evidences a general trend towards **limited output which can be evaluated** (most of the MSIs assessed focus on the activities that have been undertaken) **coupled with the absence of a strong results-based culture.**



Inhabitants from Puyo, Ecuador at a meeting of the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador

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There are, however, a few promising examples of a stronger results-based culture, such as the Malaysian CSO-SDG Alliance.

### The Malaysian CSO-SDG Alliance outputs and outcomes

#### 2016

- 1 The CSO-SDG Alliance participated in the first National SDG Symposium hosted in Feb 2016 by the Malaysian government and UNDP. CSOs presented their SDG findings and recommendations to the Economic Planning Unit Minister. The CSO report, entitled “Sustainable Development Goals and Malaysian Society: Civil Society Perspectives” calls for space for active CSO engagement in the SDG process at all levels.
- 2 The CSO-SDG Alliance participated in the second National SDG Conference, presenting findings of their mapping exercise and sharing their aspirations for SDG implementation.
- 3 The Malaysian CSO representatives participated in the *United Nations* Economic and Social Commission for *Asia* and the *Pacific (ESCAP)* SDG roadmap gathering in April 2016 and in the High-Level Political Forum in July 2016 in New York.
- 4 The CSO-SDG Alliance has been active in the formulation process of the Voluntary National Review (VNR) and the SDG roadmap.
- 5 5 members of the CSO-SDG Alliance were invited to be members of the National Security Council (NSC). Other members were invited to join the cluster working groups and taskforces. The Alliance provided input on the progress, issues, challenges and recommendations for the implementation of SDGs.
- 6 The Alliance organised a series of lectures for law students and the public on the SDGs and how everyone can contribute towards achieving them.

#### 2017

- 1 The recommendations of the CSO-SDG Alliance were included in the Voluntary National Review (VNR) which was presented by the EPU Minister at the HLPF in New York in July 2017. The Alliance arranged for a Q&A session with the Minister on several issues.
- 2 A series of 6 forums was organised with The Asian Strategy and Leadership Institute (ASLI) on various aspects of the SDGs, such as crosscutting issues of governance, women and youth. Also covered were Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) issues for SDGs, such as water & energy, nuclear science for agriculture, etc. The EPU and UNCT attended these events.
- 3 The Alliance was invited to speak at forums on SDGs in Sabah, Penang, Selangor, local communities, and at national and international events. The Alliance was active in the 2017 High Level Political Forum, hosting a side event on the Malaysian VNR as well as posing three questions at the session when Malaysia presented the VNR.
- 4 The Alliance organised meetings with residents of low cost flats to share views on SDGs and obtain their feedback on how, in collaboration with the Department of Social Welfare, to improve their circumstances.
- 5 Datuk Dr Denison Jayasooria has been given a UN award for mobilising the CSO-SDG Alliance.

#### 2018

- 1 In February the Asian Strategy and Leadership Institute (ASLI), together with the Centre for Public Policy Studies (CPPS) and the CSO-SDG Alliance, hosted a discussion to review the Malaysian Universal Periodic Review (UPR) in the context of SDGs. Some 25 CSOs were present, together with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Human Rights Division), a United Nations University representative and the Office of the UN Resident Coordinator in Malaysia.
- 2 The Co-Chair of the Malaysian Civil Society Alliance for SDGs held dialogues with the Minister of Foreign Affairs. The meeting at Wisma Putra was also attended by 15 leaders of various think-tanks and Civil Society groups from Peninsular Malaysia and Sabah and Sarawak states.

A **clearer focus on results appears necessary** in the future, if MSIs are to become stable platforms for cross-sector dialogue and cooperation. This implies going beyond regarding them as goals in themselves. It means focusing on the results (at output and outcome level) that MSIs can bring and their contribution to the Agenda 2030.

Also, as it was aforementioned, **a better understanding is required of the actual challenges that CSOs face to be effectively involved in MSIs**. Some of the challenges that were identified by the research team are highlighted in the table below.

#### **key challenges that CSOs face in their involvement in MSIs**

- In countries **with low technical capacities**, CSOs have difficulty in establishing a meaningful role in relation to their government counterparts. This is of particular importance in processes leading to VNRs. However, in other instances, **public authorities need strong capacity support**, with links to local CSOs or NGOs that could lead on some of the technical analysis, development and rehabilitation plans and capacity development support.
- In some cases, such as Costa Rica, maintaining **Civil Society participation momentum in government-led initiatives has proved to be difficult**. This is often due to a proliferation of forums, spaces and platforms, resulting in the over-stretching of CS capacities.
- **The monitoring of progress towards the 2030 goals requires accessible and timely collection of quality data and regional follow-up and review**. This is often lacking (or very limited) in several of the countries assessed. In Indonesia, for instance, the collection and definition of disaggregated and aligned indicators has proved to be a challenge. This data was needed to understand SDG progress according to variations in geography, gender, urban/rural location, disabilities, and other criteria, to apply the principle of “no one left behind”. The problem has been tackled with involvement of the National Bureau of Statistics, complemented by data from the technical ministries and the contribution of CSOs.
- The **identification of participants** remains a key challenge in several government-led MSIs. Participants in dialogues need to be carefully chosen in order to ensure that they are representative, that their participation is legitimate, that messages genuinely come from their constituencies and are conveyed to the highest authority. In this respect, public outreach is key and should be improved. This has proved difficult in several cases, such as ODS Territorio Ecuador.
- **Financial sustainability and stability** continue to be chronic issues for CSOs worldwide, and even more so today in several middle-income countries, where donors are pulling out. While it is estimated that a significant part of the funding for CSOs in developing countries comes from membership and other fees, private contributions and project-specific grants continue to play an important role. These contributions may vary widely depending on financial swings and donor interest. This reality often leads to gaps in programming and stalls progress on innovative initiatives.
- Finally, effective **coordination and networking remain critical issues in amplifying the collective voice of Civil Society**, without compromising its diversity.

### 3. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE EU

Numerous challenges and obstacles are highlighted in this report, including limited knowledge regarding results and internal dynamics. Nonetheless, Civil Society can play a key role (or roles) in the implementation and follow-up of the Agenda 2030, at global, international and local level.

Stakeholder engagement needs to be facilitated in a balanced way in the decision-making processes (at global, national and local level) around the implementation and follow up of the 2030 Agenda.

There is room for the EU to show leadership in orchestrating an enhanced involvement of CSOs, in line with its high-level commitments to right based and participatory approaches to development

Based on the analysis conducted and the suggestions presented by the individuals interviewed, **a number of recommendations can already be made to the European Union.**

- I. Research confirms the need to support the two tracks: the so-called invited spaces, led by the authorities, and those promoted by CSOs, the so-called claimed spaces. The **former should not replace the latter**. While there is an absolute need to support national governments' initiatives in setting up dedicated lead bodies and structures within government, to provide strategic oversight of Agenda 2030 and based on the inclusion of CSOs and other stakeholders, all interviews confirm the **need to preserve and promote efforts led by Civil Society**. As several respondents stressed, **Civil Society needs its own space to discuss SDGs and agree on common positions**. In this respect, some areas in particular need of attention are:
  - Supporting coordination efforts by Civil Society at national level, led by strong local networks and supporting their information, awareness-raising and accountability efforts in their constituencies.
  - Supporting positive efforts to promote the inclusion of youth, women and minorities, in an effort to "leave no one behind", the principle which underpins the 2030 Agenda.
  - Supporting, monitoring and reviewing efforts led by Civil Society, including collection of alternative data and production of parallel and shadow reports, etc., as described in the box.
  - Supporting capacity development efforts in evidence research and advocacy and policy dialogue, to better equip CSOs in their constructive engagement with authorities. This means asking how CSOs can harness national resources through collaborative efforts with governments while at the same time retaining their independence. This balancing act can be difficult and requires a sober assessment of the compromises which may be needed<sup>25</sup>.

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25 Vinay Barghava et al (2016)



- Supporting capacity development efforts to strengthen systems to deal with the challenges of working with multiple stakeholders and managing accountability, transparency and effectiveness issues.
- Increased leadership and learning is also needed for CSOs to more effectively plan, monitor, and evaluate their development interventions in the context of the new 2030 Agenda framework.
- Supporting capacity development efforts for better engagement with the private sector and following up on the private sector's commitment to Agenda 2030.





### Civil Society response to SDG implementation: parallel reports

Parallel reports are a method for CSOs to **supplement and/or present alternative information** to the reports governments are required to submit under human rights treaties or other international commitments. When applied to the 2030 Agenda (and in particular in relation to the HLPF processes), parallel reports are one of the **monitoring/watchdog** tools CSOs can use in contributing to SDG implementation at national level, particularly when they believe that a country report is inadequate and does not highlight the plight of the poorest and most marginalised citizens. A CSO parallel report may be published or presented at the same time as the official government report. It could also be published shortly afterwards, allowing it to respond to and refute claims and serving as a counter-narrative to the official report.

A draft CSO parallel report could be discussed with the government in order to influence and improve the government report. CSO parallel reports can become a powerful **advocacy** tool by (i) critically assessing a government's progress in policy and practice; (ii) providing alternative findings and (qualitative) data compared to the claims made in the official report, and (iii) demanding attention to the goals and targets that are being neglected.

Civil Society organisations have produced parallel reports for the HLPF in a number of countries. The reports are in the form of submissions to respective governments as part of the VNR process (drafted in coordination with governments), shadow reports (reacting to country VNRs) and spotlight reports (profiling CSO perspectives on SDG implementation).

- In some cases, CSOs report as part of VNRs. In **Kenya**, for example, the Civil Society coalition worked with government to publish a CSO Voluntary Review Report that was integrated into the Voluntary National Review as well as being published separately. This report identified challenges for Civil Society, considered best practices and lessons learned, and also highlighted interventions by CSOs to implement the goals.
- CSO reporting can also be presented in a 'spotlight' report, In **Brazil**, a national Civil Society coalition produced a critical 'spotlight' report as a counterpart to the Voluntary National Review. This was followed up in subsequent dialogue with government.
- The Civil Society 'shadow' report of FECOFUN in **Nepal** records local Civil Society contributions to achieving the SDGs, measured against the goals.

In any of the three examples above, parallel reports are of particular importance within the HLPF processes. They provide **independent analyses of progress on 2030 Agenda implementation** and offer validity checks on the information presented in national VNR reports.

Evidence also suggests that **supporting spaces that exist and function should be preferred to creating new ones, in an effort to avoid the multiplication of spaces without clear links between them.** This is the case at both the level of the authorities, such as sectoral groups, and at the level of CSOs.



Women in Puyo, Ecuador attending a meeting on civil rights

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Notable examples of pre-existing initiatives that have been strengthened through EU support include (i) the EUD Ecuador support to ODS Territorio Ecuador (see box below) and the EUD Brazil support to Estrategia ODS. The latter was delivered through the ABRINQ Foundation and to the Civil Society Working Group for Agenda 2030 (GTSC-A2030), supported by

### **ODS Territorio Ecuador: how the EU supports entities with longstanding experience of multi-stakeholder initiatives regarding the 2030 Agenda**

ODS Territorio Ecuador, an EU-funded initiative, seeks to contribute to the improvement of living conditions in Ecuador through the integration of SDGs into both national and local public policies. It also aims to strengthen Civil Society capacities in the follow-up and implementation of the 2030 Agenda. This will contribute to the generation of participatory and multi-sector dialogue spaces, citizen observatories and capacity development activities focused on local participants. These embrace the public and private sectors and Civil Society, including NGOs and CBOs as well as organisations representing women and children, all of them having been previously involved with sustainable development issues.

ODS Territorio builds on the tradition in Ecuador of joint spaces for dialogue, also applied to the development of the National Development Plan, which is the main instrument for political and administrative planning in the country. FFLA and Grupo Faro, two of the most experienced entities in public policy and multi-stakeholder engagement in the country, are the main leaders of the initiative. FFLA was born as a response to the regional needs identified in the UN Conference on Environment and Development (Rio de Janeiro, 1992). Grupo Faro was created as a common space with the aim of supporting and promoting the participation of the public sector, Civil Society and the private sector in the proposal, implementation and monitoring of public policies at local, national and regional level.

Some of the key achievements of the initiative so far include:

- Annual reports on SDG achievements and challenges in Ecuador have been produced and an online platform on SDGs detailing progress on SDG Agenda implementation at local level has been launched. A National Strategic Group for the achievement of SDGs, aligned with the National Development Plan (which is also aligned with the SDG Agenda) and including high-level institutions and Civil Society representatives was created. This has proved to be a broad platform for multi-sectoral dialogue and for the promotion of public management relating to the SDG Agenda.
- The initiative was integrated into several international networks active on SDGs, such as the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN), the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data, and Southern Voice.
- In each of the targeted regions a selection of the four most relevant SDGs was made and a roadmap for advocacy and the creation of dialogue spaces on SDGs in each of those regions was drafted.
- The forging of alliances between CSOs regarding Agenda 2030 and improving awareness in the public sector at local level (municipalities).
- Relevant data has been collected by Civil Society, the aim being to complement the data being gathered by the National Institute of Statistics, and to integrate both sets of data into a single reporting mechanism.

the EU through GESTOS. However, additional efforts need to be made, in these cases, to ensure their sustainability beyond EU support. Enhanced institutionalisation of the initiatives, through the development of financial and institutional sustainability strategies, should be sought.

### Three interesting initiatives for raising awareness on SDGs

- In Indonesia, to raise awareness on SDGs among young people and children (25% of the population), the UN Resident Coordinator appeared in two 30-minute programmes on the biggest national TV channel, TVRI, to talk with young children about development in the country and the importance of achieving the SDGs. The UN in Indonesia also created an SDG partnership with Radio Elshinta, one of Indonesia's premier and largest radio networks, to date generating 25 interviews and articles about the SDGs. The content is also shared with other Elshinta channels, including Elshinta TV and Elshinta Magazine. Their postings on social media are shared with over 1.6 million followers on Twitter (hashtag #ElshintaSDGs). The UN has entered into a partnership for SDGs with the most influential daily newspaper, Kompas, and has named a renowned actor and a famous musician as 'SDG movers' to campaign for the SDGs.
- Ideas for Action, a joint programme of the World Bank and the Zicklin Center for Business Ethics Research at the Wharton School in Pennsylvania, is a youth competition centred on financing sustainable development. Every year, students and young professionals from around the world participate to design innovative methods for financing and implementing the Sustainable Development Goals. In 2019, the Tanoto Foundation and the Wharton School invited Indonesian students to develop and share their ideas for financing solutions to deliver the SDGs. Five competition-winning teams will receive mentoring and guidance from Wharton School students, one of the world's premier institutions for instruction in business management. The mentoring will help the winning teams to further improve their proposals for final submission in the Ideas for Action program.
- In Uganda, in the period leading up to the global launch of the SDGs in 2015, the UN, in collaboration with CSOs and the private sector, delivered media orientation training on the SDGs to 50 journalists from both electronic and print media. The Prime Minister held a press event with cabinet ministers and development partners for the global launch of the 2030 Agenda. This was followed by a national SDG launch event organised by the government in collaboration with the UN. The national launch included an exhibition of the 17 SDGs by stakeholders. Five eminent Ugandans were appointed as SDG Ambassadors to help raise awareness by taking part in this and other SDG events, as well as voicing radio messages.
- In Ecuador, the ODS Territorio initiative worked towards awareness-raising at two levels. First, awareness in the public sector at local level (municipalities) has been sought through forging alliances between CSOs regarding Agenda 2030. Second, the initial lack of trust between Civil Society and public actors, mainly at local level, has been overcome due largely to the awareness-raising and capacity-development activities of the initiative at Civil Society level.

With regard to the means, **support to claimed spaces (CSO-led) can be provided through the CSO & LA thematic programme** (and its successor, once defined) and/or through existing and future bilateral Civil Society support programmes. Support **to invited spaces (authorities-led)** can be provided through governance programmes and/or within the different dialogue and partnership facilities which are being established in different partner countries to support EU partnership relations.

- II. Second, support is **needed to promote awareness-raising on SDGs** and their real implications for citizens and communities. In particular there is a need for innovative information and communication tools to better inform the public, and raise their interest and involvement, with special attention to youth. The box that follows include an example of innovative and interesting awareness-raising initiatives.

To this end, EU-funded youth programmes could include an SDG component and/or CS-led initiatives to create awareness of the SDGs and their real implications for citizens.

- III. Third, and considering the paramount role played by VNRs in ensuring the inclusion of CSOs in MSIs for Agenda 2030, **more affirmative support is needed**, both at national and global level, with particular attention to conducting timely and meaningful consultations, and to the integration of CS views.

To achieve this, a number of pilot countries could be selected (perhaps two per region) where VNRs are scheduled in 2020 or in the following years. Support could be provided to CSOs to organise their consultations, take part in the VNR and also draft their “shadow” report to complement the VNR. For this, existing facilities, such as the Roadmap Facility, could be used, or the CSO & LA support measures.

- IV. **Finally, special attention needs to be paid to new technologies.** The research conducted shows how the use of ICT by Civil Society as a means of avoiding offline restrictions and repression by states appears to be losing momentum. Many governments are now using new technologies to repress CSOs online, including content blocking, spyware and Internet shut-downs. As a result, CSOs, particularly in very repressive environments, apply self-censorship and hesitate to exercise their rights to freedom of expression online. **As new technologies are seen as an essential tool for SDG implementation and monitoring, there is an urgent need to address these challenges.**

ICT-related initiatives could be included in the list of actions to prioritise in the forthcoming Calls for Proposals.



## SECTION 2 — MULTI STAKEHOLDER CASES





# 1. LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN

Land reform meeting in Alta Vera Paz, Guatemala © RMF

## 1.1 BOLIVIA: Forum on Sustainable Development organised by RED UNITAS

### OVERVIEW

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Created in 1976, the UNITAS network had, as its main goal, contributions to alternative proposals for the development of the country, targeting social movements and Civil Society Organisations. Since then, it has specialised in opening spaces for dialogue with the government on issues directly linked to sustainable development, with a particular focus on SDGs and in particular on human rights, democracy and poverty. It covers local, national and regional levels, has a permanent nature and is composed of 22 NGOs. UNITAS has a regulating charter, which defines the working and organisational principles shared by all members of the network. Within this framework, UNITAS has organised a series of Multi-Stakeholder Forums on Sustainable Development. The last of these took place in 2018 and included representatives of 200 CSOs, government actors and development partners as well as local and regional authorities. A similar forum is being organised in 2019, focusing specifically on sustainable development and the 2030 Agenda.

### THE MANDATE AND LINKS TO THE SDGS AGENDA

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Although it was not created solely to promote sustainable development issues, UNITAS seeks to widen public dialogue and political debate in order to foster active and inclusive participation in the implementation of the socio-economic Development Plan (2016 – 2020), the Patriotic Agenda 2025 and the Development Agenda 2030. It also focuses on the promotion of the enabling environment for CSOs and can be considered to be explicitly linked to the SDG Agenda.

For the Millennium Development Goals, the network focused on awareness-raising and data-gathering and dissemination. In preparation for the 2030 Agenda, UNITAS carried out several national consultation exercises to contribute to the “Beyond 2015” global platform with key information and messages relating to the 2030 Agenda. Since the 2030 Agenda was launched, it has focused on opening of joint dialogue spaces on sustainable development, with a wide range of actors, including (although not limited to) the public sector and Civil Society. Several studies were carried out by the network, including “The Ways of Poverty” in 2013, where particular emphasis was placed on the main obstacles to sustainable development rights at municipal level.

Once the 2030 Agenda was launched, UNITAS joined the initiative “Action for Sustainable Development”, organising national consultations with a wide range of Civil Society actors, including indigenous organisations,



farmers' organisations, producers, agriculture labour unions, NGOs, etc. This provided high outreach capacity and diversity which represents the main added value of the network. It has the capacity to promote dialogue on public policies related to the SDGs as an independent and critical entity, with high analytical and proactive capacity.

In spite of its critical position regarding the government process, UNITAS has throughout the years built a solid reputation in the country and has developed a fluent relationship with the public sector, which participates consistently in all consultations the network conducts on issues related to SDGs. This participation has on many occasions included highly influential political figures such as the Prime Minister or the government negotiator on the 2030 Agenda. The network's involvement in other international processes, such as the Busan Agenda, where the follow-up of indicator two was assigned to UNITAS, gives it excellent access to relevant public actors. This is also used to promote multi-stakeholder engagement on issues related to the 2030 Agenda and accountability issues.

The spaces of dialogue described above are the basis on which the annual Multi-Stakeholder Forums on Sustainable Development are organised and several thematic studies on sustainable development have been launched. Beyond the organisation of the forums described above, UNITAS takes a comprehensive approach with: sustainable development-related studies (mostly at local level); regional multi-stakeholder consultations; national-level studies; multi-stakeholder forums on sustainable development; sustainable development-related monitoring; sustainable development-related advocacy.

Another UNITAS multi-stakeholder activity worth mentioning is the initiative, in association with EPDE, regarding women workers. Some of the issues discussed related to the 2030 Agenda with health and social security being the issues highlighted as relevant. A multi-stakeholder process was launched, including public actors, CBOs and NGOs, in order to draft a roadmap that contributed to the formulation of a public health policy which evolved into the universal health insurance policy, approved by the Government and implemented in the country since March 2019.

## COMPOSITION AND SUPPORT

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UNITAS has been (and still is) supported mostly by the EU, several EU MS and UN agencies. The EU has funded the project "Adding Voices, Multiplying Actions". This focuses on the enabling environment and 2030 Agenda-related issues (with particular attention to monitoring of the former), as well as on the Istanbul principles. This triple focus has allowed UNITAS to make a great impact on public development policies, opening multi-stakeholder spaces for dialogues at local, national and international level. Moreover, UNITAS has participated actively in several EU-led consultations with Civil Society, including the ongoing process of drafting the EU Roadmap for Engagement with Civil Society. Finally, UNITAS has participated in the Policy Forum for Development (representing Latin America and the Caribbean), in particular in relation to the role Civil Society plays in the SDGs follow-up. For this, the network conducted a series of studies on CS capacity development for SDGs monitoring.

International development partners are highly involved in supporting UNITAS on SDG-related issues, including support and participation in the National Multi-Stakeholder Forum on Sustainable Development described above. In particular, the EU has a long tradition of clear positioning on social and political rights in the country, although the UN position is perceived by Civil Society actors as being less clear and more aligned with the Government agenda.

## CIVIL SOCIETY INVOLVEMENT

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As stated above, UNITAS is composed of 22 NGOs of a different nature, all of them focusing on human rights, democracy and development. These include research centres and NGOs of different size and capacity, among them some of the most historically relevant organisations. Requirements for membership of the network include internal accountability mechanisms: financial, organisational, institutional and related to activities and results. Moreover, UNITAS itself applies strict internal accountability standards, providing high levels of legitimacy in their constituencies

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND LESSONS LEARNT

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- Dialogue with government on Agenda 2030 has been enhanced. In this respect, the Government of Bolivia has participated at the highest level, providing an ambassador to the UN and other international organisations in relation to sustainable development. The Ministry of Development Planning, and a Rapporteur on Sustainable Development have been involved in several initiatives organised by UNITAS.
- In spite of the ambiguous position of the Government of Bolivia on Agenda 2030, the sustained advocacy activities carried out by the network have influenced that position and a certain level of openness on SDGs is being perceived.
- The Multi-Stakeholder Forum on Sustainable Development has provided precise and relevant data on areas related to SDGs.
- As a result of the multi-stakeholder initiative on women workers, a roadmap for the health development plans was presented and was, to a large extent, adopted by the Government of Bolivia.
- Multi-stakeholder dialogue has proved to be more productive at local level, where the agendas and priorities of Civil Society and local authorities are similar, mainly in relation to how to apply Agenda 2030 at local level.

## MISCELLANEOUS/FINAL COMMENTS

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In relation to the SDG Agenda, the Government of Bolivia has expressed reluctance to integrate what is perceived to be an internationally imposed process and has stated that the Patriotic Agenda 2025 is the framework within which Bolivia needs to tackle sustainable development issues. However, as stated above, some openness to adopting the Agenda is being perceived, partly due to the advocacy of UNITAS and other CS actors and networks.

## 1.2 BRAZIL: ESTRATEGIA ODS (PROMOTED BY ABRINQ FOUNDATION)

### OVERVIEW

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The ODS Strategy ([www.estrategiaods.org.br](http://www.estrategiaods.org.br)) is a coalition, created in 2015, that brings together Civil Society, the private sector, local government and academia organisations to extend the debate on the Sustainable Development Goals in Brazil and to propose and discuss means for effective implementation of this agenda. It is an initiative that arises from the need to engage with and raise awareness among key actors in society concerning their role and the efforts needed to ensure that the fulfilment of Agenda 2030 in the country is successful.

The ODS Strategy results from cooperation between organisations historically and actively involved with the sustainable development agenda in Brazil. These organisations have participated in the implementation and localisation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in the country and been intimately involved in the process of transition from the MDGs to the SDG. The origin of this coalition lies in learning from the MDGs. The advances related to this agenda could have been more significant in Brazil were it not for the restrained and late involvement of some actors, in particular local government, in the accomplishment of the objectives.

The ODS Strategy has a permanent nature and is regulated by a Charter<sup>26</sup>, which provides a vision on guidelines for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Objectives in Brazil. The initiative has national, regional and local scope.

### THE MANDATE AND LINKS TO THE SDG AGENDA

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The ODS Strategy seeks to strengthen the commitment of Brazilian society to Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals through three fundamental policies:

a. Communication & Training. The Strategy focuses on developing capacities of various social actors in order to expand, qualify and amplify thinking on sustainable development, making the whole of Agenda 2030 the subject of dialogue and collective and effective efforts. From this perspective, the Strategy seeks to contribute to public debate as well as encouraging meetings and debates among key actors.

b. Advocacy. The Strategy aims at inserting SDGs into the political agenda of the country, improving understanding of them within institutions and giving a concrete meaning to the changes that the Agenda 2030 requires. The ODS Strategy therefore aims at proposing institutional arrangements and spaces for the co-production of solutions, at approaching decision-makers in society and at identifying and creating channels for participation in Agenda 2030.

c. Implementation of major projects. The Strategy has promoted initiatives aimed at creating, discussing and disseminating solutions to key issues related to the means of implementing SDGs in Brazil. These projects are designed to propose joint opportunities for consideration and action among the different sectors of society.

Target groups of the Strategy are organisations of the ODS Strategy and other CSOs that form part of the

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26 <http://3.94.150.200/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/estrategia-ODS-carta-de-principios.pdf>

network as well as public managers at federal, state and municipal level and representatives of the private sector. Final beneficiaries are local authorities, Civil Society Organisations, the private sector, vulnerable groups and the Brazilian population in general.

The overall goals of the initiative include: the promotion of critical evaluations of the ODS implementation process; the mobilisation of opinion makers and key actors of organisations and social movements; the development of important players in the private sector to improve their performance and involvement in SDGs; building of proposals and promotion of public policies aimed at national and nationwide governments; adapting goals and indicators to the Brazilian context.

## COMPOSITION AND SUPPORT

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The entities promoting and leading the initiative comprise four main groups: CSOs, private sector, local government and Academia. Their actions and cooperation have proved essential in ensuring that ODS compliance is effective. They are Civil Society, the private sector and local government. The objective, in line with EU support, is that 200 entities (Civil Society Organisations, private sector and local government) are part of the initiative.

With the support of the European Union, the ODS Strategy will be strengthened, increasing its publication, mobilisation and advocacy capacities. It will be a reference network in multi-sectoral approaches to increasing the participation and impact of Civil Society in the implementation of ODS and Agenda 2030 in Brazil, focusing on the reduction of gender, generational and ethnic-racial inequalities.



House visits in Petén, Guatemala to vaccinate young children against influenza

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## CIVIL SOCIETY INVOLVEMENT

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CSOs involved include both national NGOs and CBOs. Specific mention needs to be made of the initiative's specific focus on training and subsidising representative organisations and representatives of vulnerable groups, with priority given to reducing gender, generational and ethnic-racial inequalities.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND LESSONS LEARNT<sup>27</sup>

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Regarding the outputs stemming from the initiative, the following can be highlighted:

- 200 organisations contribute to the ODS Strategy in the five regions and 26 states, acting in a multi-sectoral and qualified manner in monitoring and advocating the nationwide implementation of ODS, with a focus on reducing inequalities.
- Government, the private sector, Civil Society Organisations and Brazilian society have adopted the agenda and value the reduction of inequalities as essential for sustainable development.
- The Union, 26 states, the federal district and 150 municipalities in the five regions have incorporated and applied the ODS and Agenda 2030 in their instruments of governmental management and public policies, with a focus on reducing inequalities.
- 400 organisations and movements are being trained in the implementation and monitoring of ODS, with a focus on reducing gender, generational and ethnic-racial inequalities.

Regarding concrete outcomes, these include:

- Consolidation of the governance structure, flexibility and representativeness of the ODS strategy throughout the national territory, underlining its role as a multi-sectoral network.
- Expansion and clarification of the national debate on ODS and Agenda 2030 through communication actions, focus on important spaces and collaborative mechanisms to monitor national progress.
- Support for the nationwide implementation of ODS and Agenda 2030 by developing methodologies and tools for building local and innovative solutions and focusing on principal actors.
- Training and subsidising of representative organisations and representatives of vulnerable groups, with a priority focus on reducing gender, generational and ethnic-racial inequalities.

Considering the outputs and outcomes being used to drive the national SDG Agenda, it is important to mention that, at the end of the project, 150 municipalities will have adequate budgetary management instruments and/or public policies for the implementation of the ODS. They will have established good practices and incorporated lessons learned that can be shared with other municipalities that have not yet incorporated the ODS agenda into their management.

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<sup>27</sup> These are linked to the specific support of the EU granted that the broad spectrum of actions of the Estrategia ODS is too wide to assess outputs and outcomes of the entity as a whole.

### 1.3 BRAZIL: CIVIL SOCIETY WORKING GROUP FOR THE 2030 AGENDA 2030 (PROMOTED BY GESTOS)

#### OVERVIEW

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The GTSC-A2030 was created in 2014 specifically to promote and monitor the implementation of Agenda 2030. As a result of the synergy between post-2015 negotiation groups, some of which have been on the development agenda for decades, the working group is recognised as an important and model political actor for the SDGs in Brazil, Latin America and the UN. It has direct access to and dialogue with the state actors responsible for implementing Agenda 2030. Since its creation, it has been involved in the dissemination, promotion and monitoring of Agenda 2030 and seeks to publicise the ODS, to mobilise Civil Society and to focus politically on the Brazilian government and the United Nations System to achieve its implementation.

The Civil Society Working Group for Agenda 2030 was created based on the notion that definition and implementation of the Sustainable Development Objectives (ODS) should take into account the great number of Civil Society Organisations that have been directly involved in the defence of rights, in the fight against inequality and promoting respect for the environment.

Agenda 2030 WG communicates and highlights the importance of the Sustainable Development Goals and the potential impact of their implementation on people and territories. It also gathers, analyses and produces information related to its advocacy role, including production, each year, of the “Light Report” (Relatório Luz in Portuguese, the equivalent of a “shadow report”). Agenda 2030 WG also participates in the development finance agenda set out in the Addis Ababa Consensus.

The WG has a permanent nature and is regulated by a charter (<https://gtagenda2030.org.br/carta-de-principios/>). The initiative has national, regional and local scope, working at the federal level and in the states and municipalities.

#### THE MANDATE AND LINKS TO THE SDGS AGENDA

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The mandate of the WG is to foster participation of CSOs in the public debate on the elaboration, implementation and social control of local, regional or national public policies, with an emphasis on Agenda 2030 and SDGs. There is a particular focus on the following:

- Promoting the participation of Brazilian Civil Society Organisations in global, national and local spaces, strengthening their skills on advocacy and monitoring of international policies.
- Drawing general attention of the public to the importance of the content of global goals in formatting the internationally agreed development model of SDGs and its impact on and relationship with local agendas.
- Collecting and analysing information on Agenda 2030, focusing on the process of implementing the SDGs, particularly through planned and ongoing policy advocacy with the Brazilian government.
- Promoting sustainable development, combating inequalities and injustices and strengthening the defence of universal and indivisible rights, based on the full involvement of Civil Society in global decision-making spaces.



## COMPOSITION AND SUPPORT

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WG Agenda 2030 has a wide range of members from different sectors that together cover all areas of the 17 SDGs of the Agenda 2030. The group focuses on the Brazilian state and multilateral organisations, mainly the United Nations. In this respect, it has permanent channels of communication with the UN and is a member of several major development partner groups. It is composed of 40 organisations, is guided by democratic principles and the promotion of rights, and has a wide network of contacts made up of CSOs, social movements and media.

The support that will be provided by the EU through the project ("Strengthening the Civil Society Working Group for the Agenda 2030 and contributing to the Agenda 2030 implementation in Brazil") will focus on contributing to the implementation of public policies aligned to SDGs throughout the country. To this end, particular attention will be paid to the improvement of GTSC-A2030 skills in advocacy at international, national, regional and local level as well as advocacy in multilateral organisations, knowledge production, communication campaigns and support to NGOs and social movements through funding.

The project has three specific objectives. The first is to increase the institutional capacity of CSOs affiliated to GTSC-A2030, in order to strengthen GTSC-A2030, including its networking in the North and Central-West regions, through increased management capacity, advocacy, communication and finance (with an innovative component in sustainable management to align Brazilian CSOs with SDGs). The second is to ensure social control and public debate on Agenda 2030, seeking to expand the CSO social audit on Agenda implementation mechanisms. Progress in SDGs requires a permanent public debate and a greater role for CSOs, including the promotion of innovative solutions, through face-to-face meetings, data production, analytical reports, campaigns and the construction of a policy-monitoring platform. The third is to focus on public policies aimed at implementing social, economic and environmental SDGs, defining specific spaces for dialogue with the three branches of the State - legislature, executive and judiciary - at national, regional and local level. Particular attention will be paid to monitoring the National Commission on SDGs and its related bills, conducting public hearings and meetings with state actors, presenting studies and analyses that promote equity, with special attention to the black, quilombola (Afro-Brazilian) and indigenous communities.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND LESSONS LEARNT

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The main accomplishments of the WG so far have been the two shadow reports (2017 and 2018) that were prepared and submitted to the UN. In these two reports, 121 of the 169 goals of the 2030 Agenda were analysed and specific recommendations to reverse the current situation and reach the goal by 2030 were proposed.

## 1.4 COSTA RICA: NATIONAL COVENANT FOR THE FULFILLMENT OF SDGs

### OVERVIEW – THE MANDATE AND LINK TO THE SDG AGENDA

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Created on September 9<sup>th</sup> 2016, the National Covenant for the Fulfilment of SDGs was the first of its kind in the world. It was promoted by the UN, and was signed by members of the public sector – the President of the Republic, the President of the Parliament, the justice sector and local government representatives – and by universities, private sector entities, and CSO platforms. It was endorsed by the National Ombudsman and by the UN Resident Coordinator. On the CSO side, three platforms signed the Covenant: The Federation of Social Organisations (FOS); the National Platform of Faith-based Organisations for the implementation of the SDG Agenda, and the CSO Initiative for Political Advocacy for the Implementation of the SDGs.

In order to build the National Covenant in Costa Rica, a thorough consultative methodology was put in place and four working groups (*mesas de trabajo*) were created, with participation of Civil Society representatives. Consultations with CSOs were launched in February 2016, resulting in the creation of a monitoring and evaluation body for the Covenant. Also in 2016, with a view to recognising the importance of CSOs' involvement in the national debate, the UN facilitated exchanges between CSOs active in the fields of gender, youth, childhood, disabled people, indigenous populations, LGTBIQ, and elderly people, among others. The goal was the creation of an advocacy agenda for the advancement of SDGs, as a wider sectoral and national social pact.

With an inter-institutional character, the Covenant has the three branches of the state working in coordination and on an equal footing. Under the Covenant, the government and its ministries commit themselves, when decisions about the 2030 Agenda are taken, to working with other arms of the state as well as with significant actors in Costa Rican society, including non-governmental and non-state actors. Moreover, the Covenant extends beyond individual administrations, so that future governments, irrespective of political orientation, will still be bound to implement the 2030 Agenda. The Executive Decree N° 40203-PLAN-RE-MINAE (which can be considered the charter of the Covenant), is a permanent institutional framework which defines the structure necessary to organise, articulate, plan, implement, finance and follow up the SDGs and the Agenda 2030 in Costa Rica.

### COMPOSITION AND SUPPORT

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The National Covenant is a Government-led initiative, technically and financially supported by the UN system in the country. Technical support is aimed at opening spaces for dialogue as well as at conducting among citizens information and awareness-raising initiatives relating to the 2030 Agenda. In particular, the United Nations System promotes the application of the central principles of the 2030 Agenda at national level, mainly the “Do not leave anyone behind” principle. During the period 2015 -2017, the UN system in Costa Rica has collaborated closely with government institutions, the private sector, Civil Society organisations, academia, the Ombudsman's Office and excluded/vulnerable populations. Support mechanisms include technical advice and facilitation of dialogue spaces and information processes for the population, relative to the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (2013-2017).

## CIVIL SOCIETY INVOLVEMENT

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During 2016, acknowledging the importance of the involvement of CSOs in the national debate, the United Nations System facilitated meetings between organisations with experience in many areas. These included gender, children, youth, people with disabilities, indigenous peoples, Afro-descendants, the LGBTBIQ population, elderly people, cooperatives, environmental issues, migration, agriculture, fishermen and others. The objective was the construction of an agenda of commitment and concerted political advocacy for the advancement of the SDGs, as an integral part of a sectoral and national social covenant. Under the “Initiative for the construction of a concerted political commitment and advocacy agenda for advancing the implementation of the SDGs”, CSOs established several priorities for dialogues. These included providing an appropriate follow-up to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, strengthening the work of CSOs and enhancing joint advocacy actions between the state, the UN, the private sector, the academic sector and local governments.

Through nine working sessions, the “CSO platform for compliance with the SDGs” was created, with the participation of approximately 30 organisations. During the 2016-2017 period, they were active in: incorporation of the SDGs into their strategic plans from each area of action (and populations with which they work); communication campaigns on the 2030 Agenda; presentations on the importance of the implementation of the SDGs in different communities and organisations in the country, in order to begin processes of appropriation; participation in advocacy spaces, such as the High Level Consultative Council of the SDGs. Likewise, during 2017, with the support of the UN, the platform has been implementing an Annual Training Plan to strengthen the technical capacities of CSOs in their process of appropriating the 2030 Agenda. The resultant steps suggested by CSOs include: generation of alliances with representatives of the private companies of the Consultative Council in order to achieve agreements on financial support for CSOs through their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programmes; achieving alliances with the academic sector to exchange knowledge and technology transfers; forging alliances with local governments for the execution of joint projects; continuing training processes in conjunction with the UN System, especially in rural, coastal and border areas; opening spaces for exchange of good practices and lessons learned from CSOs in other countries of the region and the world in the implementation of the SDGs; generating advocacy and proposals on specific issues with a view to supporting the formulation of public policies at national and local level.

In addition, faith-based organisations are linked to the SDG process in Costa Rica. They consist of a network made up of faith communities, foundations and associations with a social focus, which promote human dignity, quality of life and a sustainable use of human resources. This network constitutes a space for proposals, collective effort and dialogue for the promotion of actions that contribute to the achievement of the SDGs. During 2016 and 2017 the network has made significant efforts to incorporate the 2030 Agenda and the National Development Plan into its principal approach to solidarity, economic policy, environmental sustainability and political and social advocacy for equity and exclusivity. In 2016, the network held the “National Seminar of Faith Communities and Social Programmes”, in order to align development programmes with strategic plans and also to implement communication mechanisms to raise awareness of SDGs among the population.

Participation by the private sector includes the Global Compact which is “a voluntary initiative of corporate citizenship, in which companies commit themselves through a framework of action to align their strategies and operations in four thematic areas: human rights, labour standards, environment and anti-corruption”. Within the business sector, the local Global Compact network has led the process of dissemination and implementation of the SDGs

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND LESSONS LEARNT

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It is clear that, within the institutional set-up described above, CSOs do have a voice and are in a position to suggest approaches to the main developmental challenges in the country, as they showed during the definition of the SDG Agenda in Costa Rica. With the participation of 30 CSOs, a specific CSO platform for implementation of the SDGs<sup>28</sup> was created and linked to the implementation of the National Covenant for the SDGs in Costa Rica. It is a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural, open and inclusive platform, formed by CSOs for the creation of advocacy spaces in the promotion of the 2030 Agenda. It has also developed mechanisms for the inclusion of individual citizens' input towards the same goal, and they participate in the specific dialogue spaces created by the UN System as well as within the dialogue mechanisms created by the SDG Technical Secretariat referred to above. Moreover, under the "initiative for the creation of a joint advocacy and engagement agenda for the implementation of the SDGs", CSOs defined priorities to stimulate dialogue, to provide adequate follow-up and implementation of the 2030 Agenda, to strengthen CSO work and to foster joint advocacy between the state, the private sector, academia and local authorities

In spite of the achievement above, several Civil Society voices highlight the fact that the SDG Agenda in general (and the National Covenant in particular) has lost momentum, especially in relation to Civil Society involvement in the country. Concrete follow-up measures are therefore needed to assess the extent to which the National Covenant brings significant results.

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28 <http://www.oscplataformacr.ga/>

## 1.5 ECUADOR: ODS TERRITORIO

### OVERVIEW

Created in March 2017, ODS Territorio Ecuador is a EU-funded initiative, jointly implemented by FFLA and Grupo Faro, having as a main objective the creation of multi-stakeholder spaces relating to the SDG Agenda, at both national and local level. It is an *ad hoc* initiative although its aim is the creation of permanent multi-stakeholder spaces and mechanisms.



Men in Panzos, Guatemala awaiting the results of mediation in a land conflict issue

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### THE MANDATE AND LINKS TO THE SDGS AGENDA

ODS Territorio Ecuador seeks to contribute to the improvement of living conditions in Ecuador through the integration of SDGs into both national and local public policies, and strengthening Civil Society capacities in the follow-up and implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The initiative contributes to the implementation of the SDGs through the creation of participatory and multi-sector dialogue spaces, citizen observatories and a capacity-building programme focused on local actors (public, private sector and Civil Society). Moreover, the initiative is fully aligned with the EU Roadmap for Engagement with Civil Society, mainly in its capacity development and Civil Society participation components, where the initiative promotes the mainstreaming of the 2030 Agenda in the EU strategy to support and engage with Civil Society.

- Dialogue working groups (*mesas de diálogo*): these seek to bring together a variety of stakeholders in order to discuss SDG implementation in Ecuador.
- Citizens' observatories seek to monitor work on SDGs at national and local level.
- The local capacity development programme seeks to strengthen capacities, of both public actors and CSOs, on issues related to dialogue, governance and SDG monitoring and implementation.

### COMPOSITION AND SUPPORT

While the initiative is supported financially by the EU and by the GIZ, it is FFLA and Grupo Faro (two of the most experienced entities in public policy and multi-stakeholder engagement in the country) which are the main leaders of the initiative. This is of particular relevance for the 2030 Agenda, given that:

- FFLA was created as a response to the regional needs identified in the UN Conference on Environment and Development (Rio de Janeiro, 1992). This pointed to the need to develop leadership focusing on sustainable development in the long term as well as integrating dialogue on development and cooperation in negotiations in the region. FFLA's mission is, therefore, to promote constructive dialogue and develop the capacities of citizens and political and institutional actors with regard to sustainable development.
- Grupo Faro was established as a consultancy with the aim of supporting and promoting the participation of the public sector, Civil Society and the private sector in the design, implementation and monitoring of public policies in order to foster local, national and regional development.

## CIVIL SOCIETY INVOLVEMENT

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In order to involve the widest range of contributors possible, a Civil Society mapping was launched to identify the most relevant actors. Following this, the dialogue working groups were established, including groups for the public sector at national and local level, academia, the private sector, and individuals particularly involved in the SDG Agenda. The basic requirement was that participants were actively involved with sustainable development issues. CSOs involved included NGOs and CBOs as well as organisations representing women and children.

As an example, the first national working group included:

- Public sector: the Association of Ecuador Municipalities, the Ministry of Environment, the National Parliament, the Planning and Development Secretariat, the National Institute of Statistics.
- Private Sector: Pacto Global Ecuador, Ecuador Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Ecuador Consortium for Corporate Social Responsibility.
- Civil Society: Ecuador Confederation of CSOs, several NGOs and universities.
- Development Partners: EU Delegation and UNDP

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND LESSONS LEARNT

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Outputs stemming from the initiative include an annual report, an online platform on SDGs and the Creation of a National Strategic Group for the achievement of SDGs, aligned with the National Development Plan (which is also aligned with the SDG Agenda).

Outcomes and results so far include:

- The identification of a group of “SDGs allies” at local, national and international level who are promoting multi-stakeholder engagement.
- Integration of the initiative in international networks working on SDGs, such as Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN), Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data, Southern Voice, etc.
- With a particular focus on the local level, each of the targeted provinces has selected the four most relevant SDGs and mainstreamed a gender approach. Each province has a Roadmap for the creation of advocacy and dialogue spaces on SDGs
- Alliances have been forged among CSOs regarding Agenda 2030, improving awareness in the public sector at local level (municipalities).
- Relevant data has been collected by Civil Society, the aim being to complement the data being gathered by the National Institute of Statistics, and to integrate both sets of data into a single reporting mechanism.
- The initial lack of trust among Civil Society and public actors, mainly at local level, has been overcome, due largely to awareness-raising and capacity development activities.



Lessons that have been learnt, challenges met and areas to be improved include:

- Participants in dialogues need to be carefully chosen, in order to ensure that they are representative, that their participation is legitimate, that messages genuinely come from their constituencies and are conveyed to the highest authority. In this respect, public outreach needs to be improved.
- Some of the limitations of the initiative include having been focused on the capital cities of provinces, the high turnover of participants in the initiative a challenging engagement with private sector at local level, as well as participation of indigenous communities
- The sustainability of the initiative is an issue of concern, both politically and financially. Politically, there will be a change in local authorities. ODS Territorio Ecuador is well aware of the need to engage with new authorities and has made approaches to potential candidates. Financially and operationally, the initiative faces the challenge of being externally supported (mostly by the EU) and is not mature enough to ensure its own sustainability. In this respect, within the regional spaces, there will be a process of identification of provincial leaders in order to anchor the process at regional level.

## MISCELLANEOUS/FINAL COMMENTS

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There is a tradition in Ecuador of joint spaces for dialogue. These have also been created for the development of the National Development Plan. This is the main instrument for political and administrative planning in the country, into which SDGs are integrated. In this area, particular attention needs to be given to the National Statistics Plan, which is the instrument on which the National Development Plan is built. A joint participatory approach therefore seems paramount in order to ensure comprehensive integration of the SDG Agenda in national priorities.



Agricultural skills project for women in Ostuncalco, Guatemala

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## 2. ASIA AND PACIFIC

Local leader in Tinh Bac Kan, Vietnam being interviewed about women participation in public policies © RMF

### 2.1 MONGOLIA: LOCAL MULTISTAKEHOLDER COUNCILS

#### OVERVIEW

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The Local Multi-Stakeholder Councils (LMCs) were launched in 2013. The original phase was from 2010-2013, followed by another phase from 2013 to 2016. Although it was officially finalised in 2016, the relevance for the SDG study is the local dimension as well as the analysis of the extent to which the dynamics initiated under this initiative still apply. Launched by the Asia Foundation, it was an initiative included in the Engaging Stakeholders in Environmental Conservation Programme (ESEC II).

LMCs are local bodies consisting of local CSOs, local government, local community members and artisanal miners. They were designed to be a permanent part of the *soum* (local) governments' efforts to manage their environment. They had consultations and discussions, and helped the development of Environmental Management Plans at the *soum* level. They also helped drive implementation of those plans in partnership with CSOs, government and other actors.

#### THE MANDATE AND LINKS TO THE SDGS AGENDA

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Although this initiative was not linked explicitly to the SDG Agenda, its potential as a local initiative supporting environmental agendas at local level is of high relevance and has potential for replication. ESEC II aimed at enhancing the contribution Mongolia's artisanal mining sector makes to sustainable local development, including establishing the right to a healthy environment and the right to work. In this respect, the initiative increased capacity in environmental advocacy and conservation by building a knowledge base of responsible resource use. It also facilitated collaboration between local officials and NGOs to establish a mechanism to ensure multi-stakeholder engagement and cooperation.

#### COMPOSITION AND SUPPORT

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Led by the Asia Foundation, this initiative complemented the Sustainable Artisanal Mining Project of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. It introduced responsible and sustainable rehabilitation approaches that were economically affordable, socially acceptable, and ecologically viable for ASM communities and affected stakeholders. It involved a wide range of government and local Civil Society actors. In the framework of this initiative, 31 LMCs were developed.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND LESSONS LEARNT

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In terms of the outcomes of this initiative, the following are worth highlighting:

- Some areas reported a reduction in illegal mining activity generally, or reduced illegal mining by the local community specifically
- Almost all areas reported better cooperation with the local NGOs/CSOs working on the issue
- Better relations and dialogue with ASM actors were widely reported
- Production of Environmental Management Plans that helped manage resources – positive feedback from local government
- Funding for rehabilitation projects is more frequently being requested through state budgets and mechanisms like the local development fund, although no data is available regarding the percentage of requests being met.

Some of the lessons learnt from this initiative are as follow:

- If an established LMC is to be effective then it needs to be inclusive, and to represent stakeholder rights and duties equitably. It needs to include Human Rights Based Approach awareness, and be informed regarding the issues that influence or underpin stakeholder conflicts as well as environmental sustainability or degradation within the soum. If an LMC is to be a durable and successful mechanism, it needs to be a platform to which stakeholders can bring their respective issues for discussion.
- LMCs need strong capacity support, with links to local CSOs or NGOs that could lead on some of the technical analysis, development and rehabilitation plans and demonstration projects as well as providing ongoing capacity building support.
- Government engagement was a critical factor. The local soum government, including both the executive and citizen councils, was engaged and played an important role in convening and legitimising the LMCs. Good soum governors often led to good LMCs.
- Capacity building was provided to stakeholders before the LMC was convened and not only after. (There were workshops on “Multi-stakeholder Engagement Training” and on “Human Rights-based Approaches”. This advance training helped actors such as government to better understand the rationale behind the LMC and the process, before it was launched. It also helped identify and select the right membership.
- Membership guidance was available, in terms of the broad types of stakeholders to be involved. This was not a strict rule and local variation was required to take into account the specific make-up of the community and the types of ASM activities that were prevalent.
- Having a required output (an Environment Management Plan) helped focus discussions and drove conversations to a conclusion. It was felt that having this expected output helped the LMC come together and become more resilient.



## MISCELLANEOUS/FINAL COMMENTS

To what extent are the Local Multi-Stakeholder Councils established through ESEC II still functioning? At the end of the project most *soums* indicated that LMCs were still operational. Some indicated a lack of activity due to changed administrations following the national and *soum* elections in 2016 which resulted in discontinuity. There was some recognition that LMCs need to be encouraged to mobilise and understand that they are multi-stakeholder representatives. However, the fact that local CSOs and local government were both engaged extensively (the CSOs received a lot of capacity-building help and support) meant the initiative could be sustained. Assessment studies also showed that LMCs were still functioning and focusing on issues relating to ASM, despite the break in governance continuity mentioned above. According to these studies, the governance model established by ESEC II is still functioning and effective with regard to LMCs, particularly in the ASM sector.



Community meeting in Cho Moi, Vietnam

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## 2.2 MONGOLIA: CONSULTATIVE BODY ON THE VNR 2019

### OVERVIEW

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The initiative was established in 2017, in order to support the VNR process for 2019, and government was involved at the start. This was an *ad hoc* initiative, although there are voices in the country calling for the initiative to be institutionalised beyond the VNR process for 2019. The initiative has a charter regulating it and, although it is a national body, its geographical coverage extends to regional and sub-regional levels. Mongolian Civil Society is part of the national level consultation group relating to the VNR 2019 and, so far, the process is very active and open. The group has met at least twice a month since October 2018, and has had several national consultations.

### THE MANDATE AND LINKS TO THE SDGS AGENDA

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The objectives and scope of the initiative focus on support to the development of the VNR, so it is closely and explicitly linked to the SDG Agenda.

### COMPOSITION AND SUPPORT

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The Mongolian government is at the forefront of promotion of the initiative, which also receives support from the UN, especially the UN Resident Coordinator's office and UNDESA, in particular for the national consultation. The EU is not directly involved in support of the initiative. The government entity in charge of the initiative is the National Development Agency. Members of the Consultative Committee are chosen from government members and CS actors who are well known and outspoken. Members include the Mongolian SDG Advisor to the Prime Minister of Mongolia, the National Statistics Office of Mongolia, the Sub-Committee for Sustainable Development, the Environmental Monitoring and Evaluation Department of the Internal Audit Department, the Mongolian National Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Institute for Sustainable Development (Mongolian University), the Centre for Human Rights and Development and the Development Policy and Planning Division of the National Development Agency. In addition, individuals from parliament, academia, the private sector and Civil Society are amongst the key members of the group.

### CIVIL SOCIETY INVOLVEMENT

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The CSOs involved include those from the Mongolia CS network (which includes local CSOs and World Vision). The Civil Society representative on the national consultation body is the head of the Centre for Human Rights and Development. Academia is heavily engaged and plays an important role.

There are specific mechanisms to ensure inclusiveness and reaching out to women and special groups. These involve the CS network and capacity development/inclusion fostering activities, and are aimed at reaching the sub-regional levels. Civil Society inputs to the VNR seem to have been accepted; different views have been expressed and exchanges with Civil Society actors have been open. The general perception from CS is that there is progress, openness and willingness to maintain multi-stakeholder consultation on SDGs.

Consultation processes and initiatives that have been conducted so far include: a) two national consultations on sustainable development in Mongolia, with several working groups including public sector and CS actors; b) 16 focus group discussions on vulnerable groups (including internal migration, inequality, etc.); c) bilateral consultations between CSOs and government, with presentation of the CS shadow report and the Government report on SDGs aiming to enhance the integration of both reports; d) capacity development of CSOs by the government on policy development and SDGs, selecting targets and indicators.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND LESSONS LEARNT

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The main outputs stemming from the initiative include the creation of a consultative body regulated by a charter. Within this framework, continual dialogue between government and Civil Society has been fostered; Civil Society and government have shared their draft VNR reports. In addition, a mapping of the key CS actors involved in SDGs has been carried out, national consultations have taken place and capacity development initiatives for Civil Society have been introduced. The mapping has proved very helpful in making work between government and Civil Society more complementary.

These factors have led directly to an increase in information sharing and visibility of relevant information on SDGs. The national SDG agenda is therefore being influenced by this process and the Mongolia Sustainable Development Vision (SDV)<sup>29</sup> is being extended to Civil Society actors through the VNR consultative process. (The SDV looks at environmental issues, with the aim of extending the vision to all SDGs in the future). As a result of the consultation process described above, CSOs are now more aware of the meaning and importance of SDGs, although understanding of SDGs among the general public seems to need improvement.

Challenges the process encountered were: a) clearly identifying Civil Society representatives empowered to represent Civil Society interests as a whole, beyond those of each individual agenda; b) creation of a long-term platform on SDGs; c) apparently limited capacity of CSOs; d) the need for financial and human resources to permit multi-stakeholder engagement, which creates a heavy burden on the Government.

## MISCELLANEOUS/FINAL COMMENTS

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According to the Mongolian legal framework, development planning must comply with the Sustainable Development Vision (SDV) of the country, which currently includes about half of the SDGs. The goal is to include all SDGs in the SDV and to set up multi-stakeholder working groups in the eight relevant ministries in order to define national targets and indicators. The legal framework also requires reporting to parliament on such compliance every two years, and the Mongolian CS network sees the need for a multi-stakeholder consultative body to enforce compliance.

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29 [http://www.un-page.org/files/public/20160205\\_mongolia\\_sdv\\_2030.pdf](http://www.un-page.org/files/public/20160205_mongolia_sdv_2030.pdf)



## 2.3 CAMBODIA: PARTNERSHIP STEERING COMMITTEE FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK

### OVERVIEW

**The Implementation of the Social Accountability Framework (ISAF) in Cambodia** aims to empower citizens, strengthen partnerships between citizens and sub-national administrations (SNAs) and generate enhanced accountability of SNAs to improve local service delivery. ISAF was introduced as a platform for coordinated action by government and Civil Society to put into practice the Strategic Plan on Social Accountability for Sub-National Democratic Development adopted by the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) on July 11, 2013. The Strategic Plan and ISAF are important elements of the RGC's broader democratic development agenda, as set out in the second (2015-2017) and third (2018-2020) 3-Year Implementation Plans (IP3). This agenda, in turn, is implemented in the context of the RGC's national development vision, as outlined in the recently approved fourth Rectangular Strategy (2018 – 2023). This calls for the development of social accountability mechanisms in pursuing the broad national goals of growth, employment, equity and efficiency.

Within this initiative, the **Partnership steering committee (PSC)** handles implementation and comprises 50% government and 50% Civil Society, with donors as observers. The PSC – ISAF's model for collaboration and coordinated action among supply-side and demand-side actors – is one of its defining features and most important achievements. With participation of development partners as observers the PSC provides a joint platform for the RGC and CSOs to make decisions and ensure oversight of the joint delivery of the ISAF. This includes policy matters, programme design, financing arrangements, target areas, sector expansion and functionality of the framework. Under Phase II, the role of the Partnership Steering Committee will continue to be critically important in this regard. During Phase II (2019 – 2023) the Committee should meet on a regular basis and be actively engaged in decisions and efforts to adopt a sustainable and permanent model of ISAF implementation. Beyond 2023, the Committee (perhaps in a revised form) will continue to be necessary to guide the programme and ensure effective communication and collaboration between supply-side and demand-side actors, and to provide guidance and oversight for all aspects of ISAF.



School children in Kampot, Cambodia

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The Government is officially credited with creation of the Committee, but Partnership Steering Committees seem to have originated as part of a World Bank capacity-building programme in 2009/2010 which was adapted after establishment of the 2015 SDGs and is now owned by the government.

The Committee is permanent, and functions at national level, but multi-stakeholder involvement is part of the ISAF programme at sub-national and local levels. It is part of the implementation plan and also subject to monitoring by the ISAF.

## THE MANDATE AND LINKS TO THE SDGS AGENDA

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In terms of the objectives and scope of the initiative, ISAF's four operational components are: (1) access to information and open budgets; (2) citizen monitoring; (3) capacity building and facilitation and (4) programme management, learning and monitoring.

The initiative is clearly linked to the SDGs and is part of SDG implementation, although it was not created specifically for SDGs. ISAF focuses on gender and social inclusion, ensuring no one is ignored. In addition, the inclusive working dynamics of the initiative can be extended to a wider SDG-related framework. This applies particularly to the RGC commitment to use this partnership for implementation in all districts and in all sectors in the future.

## COMPOSITION AND SUPPORT

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Promoted and supported by the Government, it is also supported by the EU, the World Bank, and JICA.

The RGC and CSOs are involved in driving the initiative, with participation of development partners as observers. Independently and through the multi-donor trust fund, several development partners provide financial and technical support to ISAF Phase II activities. The multi-donor trust fund oversees financial management and reporting, providing operational and technical support as required to both demand-side and supply-side actors. It conducts studies, analyses data, coordinates demand-side M&E and reporting, and organises regular tri-party coordination/technical meetings.

The steering of the initiative involves 12 parties, half government and half CSOs.

## CIVIL SOCIETY INVOLVEMENT

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International and national CSOs are involved in different aspects of ISAF implementation throughout, both at official national level (Partnership Steering Committee) and local level. However, it was noted that SDG implementation in the 19 technical working groups was not always active or inclusive.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND LESSONS LEARNT

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In terms of outputs stemming from the initiative, regular and active meetings of the Partnership Steering Committee have been successful, supporting information campaigns and involving the community in implementation assessments. Moreover, partnerships with and between supply-side (state) and demand-side (Civil Society) actors were established. ISAF activities were successfully rolled out to 75% (18 out of 24) of provinces, 62% (98 out of 159) of districts, and 59 (827 out of 1410) of communes across the country.

Considering the most relevant outcomes so far noted, preliminary findings from ongoing monitoring and evaluation indicate that some principal benefits of ISAF Phase I include:

- Enhanced transparency in key public services through the public posting and dissemination of annually updated financial and performance data for all primary schools, health centres and commune services in 827 target communes.
- Raised awareness of citizens' rights and service standards through the direct participation of more than 554,000 people in public outreach and awareness-raising events.
- Strengthening of citizens' voices through the active involvement of more than 270,000 citizens in community scorecard assessments of communes, primary schools and health centres.
- Improved relations and trust between citizens and public officials and service providers.
- Increased capacity for local level social accountability through the recruitment, training and mentoring of approximately 3,700 volunteer Community Accountability Facilitators (CAFs).
- Concrete improvements in local public service delivery as a result of the implementation of actions for improvement (as collectively agreed in Joint Accountability Action Plans - JAAPs).
- An apparent and clear improvement in trust, and in understanding by both government and the community of health care needs and support. This is evident in the greater sensitivity of health professionals and an increase in their numbers and availability. ISAF also provides information for citizens - I4C - which are information packs for citizens, detailing, for example, health fees.

## 2.4 AFGHANISTAN: SDGs NATIONAL COORDINATION COMMITTEE

### OVERVIEW

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An initiative of the Ministry of Economy, the NCC is part of the Afghan Institutional Framework to achieve the SDGs. The National Coordination Committee, in some documents referred to as the 'National Coordination Commission', was established to finalise the nationwide process of SDGs in Afghanistan. The Committee is designed as a high-level platform focusing on provision of political support and policy advice and the adoption of oversight and cooperation mechanisms to ensure the implementation of SDGs and stronger cooperation with the private sector, Civil Society and community organisations.

### THE MANDATE AND LINKS TO THE SDG AGENDA

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The main function of the coordination committee is to focus on the finalisation of national targets and indicators of SDGs. However, the national coordination committee also meets at technical level to discuss nationalised data in detail and to identify the areas which are not applicable in the context of Afghanistan.

For the effectiveness and transparency of the SDGs, the A-SDG programme is incorporated into the budget process as well as development planning at national and sub-national levels. As the government's national planning and budgeting is based on eight sectors (security, education, health, social protection, infrastructure, agriculture, governance, and the economy), the A-SDG and targets are also categorised under these eight sectors to avoid duplication and creation of parallel systems. The 17 goals have further been divided into 17 sub-sectors to clarify the SDG agenda for the respective line ministries. The global targets and indicators have been **re-shaped into national targets and national indicators**. Each of the ministries has been tasked to coordinate with other ministries involved in the various targets under each goal.

### COMPOSITION AND SUPPORT

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With the Council of Ministers' decision of 7th October 2015, the MoEc has been designated as the lead ministry and focal point for SDGs and assigned to take the lead in coordinating, planning, monitoring and reporting on SDGs for the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GOIRA). The SDGs NCC is chaired by H.E. Minister of Economy or H.E. Deputy Minister.

At the heart of the institutional structure for Afghanistan's SDGs is the Government of Afghanistan. Under the broader eight national socio-economic sectors, there are 28 budgetary units responsible for ensuring interventions and programmes achieve SDGs. Each unit is expected to submit an SDG account in their budget proposals for the necessary activities to achieve the assigned SDG targets and indicators. Each budgetary unit is also responsible for reporting annually to the MoEc on progress related to SDGs. Every two years the MoEc consolidates annual reports into a combined report to be presented to the UN. Each unit covering one or more SDGs and several targets has a number of supporting government and international organisations.

The initiative is articulated around the National Coordination Committee, the Executive Committee on Sustainable Development Goals and the four technical/sectoral Working Groups.

## CIVIL SOCIETY INVOLVEMENT

Specific mechanisms to ensure inclusiveness and reaching out to women and special groups: the number of men and women participants in all activities has been almost equal; both men and women have actively joined the discussion panels, and seminars. As well as engaging women in all activities and goals, a specific consultation with women activists has been conducted to discuss their role in SDG implementation and monitoring. Gender mainstreaming has also been taken account in the photo competition programme, in all radio announcements, and in videos. Male and female voices were also used in announcements, and women were specifically encouraged to participate in the competition.

Roles played by CSOs: although consultations have taken place during the national coverage phase, explicit roles and tasks for NGOs, Civil Society Organisations, policy and research institutions, and academic organisations have not been identified in the Afghanistan-SDG. Outside the Afghanistan-SDG process, activities of non-government institutions related to SDGs focused on raising awareness. It is unclear to what extent Civil Society is and will be involved in monitoring and reporting on the implementation of A-SDG targets and indicators.

In 2017 Afghanistan submitted its first Voluntary National Review (VNR), signalling its strong commitment to achieving the SDGs at country level. The VNR described the national consultation process. The government engaged all national and international stakeholders in an attempt to align the A-SDGs with national planning processes, policies and strategies, conducting around 50 workshops, seminars, symposiums and conferences with CSOs, private sector actors, academia, media, youth, students and women's groups. On May 1, 2017, more than 50 representatives of Civil Society were invited to the Ministry of Economy to discuss the Afghanistan SDGs and Civil Society's role in their implementation and monitoring. It was agreed at the meeting that there should be more collaboration between CSOs and the GoIRA and that CSOs' comments on the process of nationwide application of SDGs were very important. It was decided at the meeting that the MoEC would share the Afghanistan VNR with Civil Society and invite comments. In this way, global targets and indicators have been reviewed by different stakeholders in the country taking into account the national context and circumstances. No information has been found regarding 2018 and 2019.



Health and hygiene education on a school wall in Cambodia

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## ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND LESSONS LEARNT

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- In the health sector some of the challenges for SDG implementation have been (1) a lack of capacity and resources; (2) poor baseline data; (3) a focus on data management rather than programmatic change and transformative governance, and (4) a failure to recognise the role of the private sector.
- According to various policy and research institutions, state ownership may marginalise non-state and private sector stakeholders, including policy and research institutions, Civil Society, non-governmental organisations, academia, the media and the public. That marginalisation may further suppress democratic accountability processes. The National Voluntary Report led by the Afghan government did not present any explicit advisory or solution-oriented role for policy and research institutions – roles such as helping implementing organisations design better interventions to achieve SDGs, communicating best practices to policy actors, and advocating the integration of independent evaluation into Afghanistan-SDG. These were included in the national discussions on Afghanistan-SDG. A gap has been observed between policy research institutions and policy governance actors. The poor capacity of policy and research institutions to establish their own salience and credibility may be one of the multiple factors contributing to the gap. On the other hand, a lack of understanding, and a lack of value for evidence-based decision-making among policy actors may also contribute to the gap.
- According to CSOs, SDG implementation in Afghanistan appeared to have a good start but lacks in-depth engagement of non-state actors. The involvement of non-state institutions and actors, Civil Society, policy and research organisations, academia, and the public appears to be symbolic. Consultative workshops and seminars with NGOs aimed at engaging them in the process of national coverage have little effect other than raising awareness. Afghan policy and research institutions have shown little engagement in the national phase of Afghanistan-SDG partly due to their lack of in-depth understanding of the new global goals. There is little on SDGs in the Afghan media. It appears that limited knowledge of SDGs and symbolic engagement go hand in hand.
- The development and achievement of the A-SDGs requires a clear approach to data gathering and use. However, an overarching issue is the absence of systematic data gathering during the past forty years of insecurity in Afghanistan. This resulted in development actors independently developing data sets. To combat this, the GoIRA, with technical and financial support from UNDP, conducted a Rapid Integrated Assessment (RIA) of A-SDGs and produced a report that provides insights into how the GoIRA could increase its emphasis on the achievement of SDGs, as well as improving data collection, monitoring and financing assessments.
- The alignment framework for SDGs in Afghanistan (A-SDG alignment tables) provides comprehensive information about SDG targets, indicators, the lead entity, baseline, programmes concerned, existing budgets, priority areas, existing strategic policies, proposed actions and proposed budgets.



## 2.5 INDONESIA: NATIONAL SDG COORDINATION TEAM

### OVERVIEW

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The Indonesian government established a National SDG Coordination Team under the Indonesian Ministry of National Development Planning (BAPPENAS). Its role is to coordinate the SDG implementation process among the relevant government ministries and stakeholders.

Indonesia has been involved with SDGs since their early conception in 2012. The government has shown strong commitment and taken early actions, including linking most of the SDG targets and indicators to the National Medium Term Development Plan (RPJMN). The signing by President Jokowi in July 2017 of Presidential Decree no 59/2017 on SDG implementation was a major milestone, establishing the national SDG governance structure and mechanisms for planning and budgeting, financing, monitoring and reporting. The Indonesian government has incorporated the SDGs into the current Long Term Development Plan (RPJPN) 2005-2025, and the National Medium Term Development Plan (RPJMN) 2015-2019. SDG objectives will also be mainstreamed into the 2025-2045 development plan.

Indonesia applies a whole of government approach, which includes a decentralised approach with separate roles for national and sub-national government. As the coordinator of the Implementation Team, the Minister of National Development Planning/head of BAPPENAS formulates and establishes the SDG roadmap and National Action Plan. However, it seems localising of SDGs needs to be accelerated at provincial and district levels. By July 2018, local governments should have adopted an SDGs Local Action Plan as mandated by the Presidential Decree. The experiences of provinces that have taken the lead in SDGs, such as Riau, where government, Civil Society and private sector are working together on prioritisation and planning actions with the help of a data analysis tool, will be most valuable for nation-wide acceleration. There is an urgent need to build local government capacity on SDGs, perhaps through the establishment of an SDG Academy for local officials.

### THE MANDATE AND LINKS TO THE SDG AGENDA

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The objective of the initiative is to put an inclusive national structure in place to achieve the SDGs. Multi-stakeholder partnerships at national level are based on mutual trust between government, philanthropy and business, academics, and community organisations. These partnerships enable all stakeholders to be actively involved in the process of determining the direction of SDG implementation. This includes the formulation of Indonesian SDG metadata and technical guidelines for formulating SDG action plans.

### COMPOSITION AND SUPPORT

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While the Ministry of National Development Planning (BAPPENAS) leads government efforts in applying the new agenda at both the national and sub-national level, the decree also gives a clear role to non-government parties. This is particularly important because Indonesia is one of the world's best examples of Civil Society, the private sector, philanthropy and academic institutions actively embracing the SDGs.

As the implementation of the SDG objectives has been incorporated in different stages of national development plans, financing will be allocated through the state annual budget. In middle-income countries like Indonesia, official development assistance plays a decreasing role and the national budget will not normally be sufficient to attain the SDGs. The key for a truly effective movement towards SDG attainment lies in diversifying financial flows and unlocking investments. Initiatives have been taken at both national and local level in Indonesia. These include the issuing of a sovereign “Green Sukuk” investment bond<sup>30</sup> by the Ministry of Finance, establishment of Indonesia’s first sovereign wealth fund at municipal level and new interest in impact investment and crowdfunding. Indonesia is also taking steps to harness the significant potential of Islamic finance for the SDGs<sup>31</sup>. In October 2018 the Finance Ministry launched SDG **Indonesia One**, a platform for infrastructure development financing with an orientation to supporting the achievement of the SDG agenda.

As one of the countries that promotes the partnership principle at global level, Indonesia applies the principle of multi-stakeholder partnership at country level. This principle is enshrined in all stages of SDGs implementation, including the 2017 VNR formulation process and the National Coordination Team’s work. The implementation of innovative mechanisms through partnership enables an inclusive response to Indonesia’s diversity. Examples of multi-stakeholder partnerships are found in poverty alleviation programmes. The non-cash distribution mechanisms in social services, that has been used during the past three years, require partnerships between national and sub-national governments with the support of the private sector and the banking system. The relevant non-cash distribution mechanisms are implemented through the Healthy Indonesia Card (Kartu Indonesia Sehat or KIS), the Smart Indonesia Card (Kartu Indonesia Pintar or KIP), the Family Welfare Card (Kartu Keluarga Sejahtera or KKS) and the Family Hope Program (Program Keluarga Harapan or PKH).

Members of the NCT include but are not limited to representatives of government (see SC above), philanthropic organisations, the private sector, Civil Society and academia. They have different roles and approaches. The roles of government are to formulate policies and programmes, determine indicators, prepare data and information, disseminate information, communicate and propose, and allocate budgets, as well as monitoring evaluating and reporting. The roles of Civil Society Organisations and the media are to disseminate and propose, facilitate and implement programmes, to build public understanding, and to publish and monitor. The roles of philanthropy and business are to propose their involvement, to facilitate programmes, build capacity and provide resources. The roles of academics and experts are to help build capacity, monitor and evaluate, and prepare policy papers for policy formulation.

As the Implementation Coordinator, the Ministry of National Development Planning (BAPPENAS) consults all stakeholders to obtain agreement on the representation of non-state actors in the National Coordination Team. Representation of a community organisation platform is based on the mission and area of concern, while representation of the academic platform is based on the expertise and competence of the academic institutions. Representation of the platform for philanthropists and business actors is based on the field of work and the focus of the activities to be supported.

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30 Climate actions provide unprecedented opportunities to unlock massive financial flows. The Green Sukuk in Indonesia is a successful example of green bonds as a rapidly growing source of finance, with investment coming from financial institutions, governments and municipalities.

31 Zakat is a form of philanthropy found around the world. All Muslims eligible to pay it must donate at least 2.5 percent of their accumulated wealth. As such, it is one of the largest forms of wealth transfer to the poor and needy in existence.

## CIVIL SOCIETY INVOLVEMENT

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BAPPENAS has conducted intensive communications and consultations with representatives of several community organisations, including religious organisations, to ensure their representation in the SDG Implementation Team and Working Groups. Following President Widodo's commitment to CSOs in December 2015, the SDGs Transition Secretariat held dialogues with Civil Society networks such as INFID, and with the private sector, to translate that commitment to inclusive SDG governance into a policy framework. Moreover, trade unions have been consulted on SDG implementation and invited to present their priorities to the government and specific mechanisms to ensure inclusiveness and outreach to women and special groups have also been adopted.

Channels through which participation of Civil Society takes place include: non-state actors are an integral part of the National Coordination Team; the 2017 Voluntary National Review was prepared with four national SDG areas in mind: government, Civil Society Organisations, philanthropy and business, and academia and experts.

## LESSONS LEARNT

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A well-designed plan/structure for SDG implementation and M&E, including national/local action plans carefully developed and based on MDGs M&E experiences including reporting and feedback through the E-Monev System; good networking between BAPPENAS and the relevant ministries/institutes is also to be highlighted. Moreover, localisation of targets/indicators and completion of metadata has been carried out.

## 2.6 MALAYSIA: MALAYSIAN CSO-SDGs ALLIANCE

### OVERVIEW

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The Malaysian CSO-SDG Alliance is a loose network of CSOs, committed to contributing to the implementation of the SDG framework. The Alliance serves as a consultative body, is a member of the National SDG Steering committee and agreed to be a member of the five cluster groups that report to the National Steering Committee.

The CSO-SDG Alliance was created in 2015 as the first informal grouping of all major CS actors. The members of the Alliance came together for networking, joint cooperation and liaison with the government to effectively implement the SDGs in Malaysia. CSOs recognised that SDGs provide a good platform to work together with an all-embracing development agenda.

On 27 October 2015, a month after the UN General Assembly agreed the SDGs, PROHAM (Society for the Promotion of Human Rights) hosted the first CSO-SDG discussion with the Global Movement of Moderates Foundation (GMMF) in Kuala Lumpur. It resulted in the formation of the Alliance.

The initiative has a permanent nature. Malaysia will implement the SDGs in three phases coinciding with the five-year Malaysia development plans, thus incorporating the SDGs into the national development framework.

The incorporation of the CSOs into the formal mechanism of government for SDG implementation in the National Steering Committee, with cluster working groups and specific taskforce working groups has long-term implications in terms of providing input and recommendations in the different phases of SDG implementation.

The CSO-SDG Alliance called on the government for it to be included in formal mechanisms in national, state and district implementation committees and in all sectors. Since the National CSO Alliance needed representation from East Malaysia, CSOs in Sarawak formed a Sarawak chapter to strengthen Sarawak's voice and to enable local needs and effective remedial interventions to be incorporated in national plans.

### THE MANDATE AND LINKS TO THE SDGS AGENDA

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Regarding the objectives and scope of the initiative, the CSO-SDG Alliance recognises that the SDG agenda is a critical and timely opportunity to initiate a goals-based partnership that can drive a concerted effort towards achieving Malaysia's development goals as a shared responsibility among the various stakeholders.

The initiative is totally linked to the SDG Agenda, since it contributes to integration of SDG targets into the 11th Malaysia Plan and participates in cluster working groups and task forces that relate to SDGs

Each cluster working group is led by the EPU. The 17 taskforces, related to specific SDGs, are made up of ministries and members from the CSO-SDG Alliance, academia and the private sector. Since 2016, the Alliance has had good communication with the Economic Planning Unit (EPU) at federal government level.

Through a mapping exercise, the Alliance has been able to highlight the tremendous diversity of services and programmes undertaken by CSOs which are already in line with the SDGs; to identify some of the challenges and hurdles faced by CSOs which require intervention and support to ensure better outcomes and impact; to set up a mechanism of engagement and involvement related to the SDGs. However, it is not clear what this mechanism implies.

## COMPOSITION AND SUPPORT

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Entities promoting, leading and steering the initiative: CSOs themselves. The Alliance provides active participation, collaboration and partnership between CSOs in the implementation of the SDGs. CSOs have organised themselves as a loose alliance, which has a flat governance structure.

Financial and/or technical support

- Government. Allocating the necessary resources is a key challenge for the National SDG Council. Malaysia is one of the countries that noted in the Voluntary National Review 2017 the importance of strategic partnerships as a way of mobilising resources. The government committed to budgetary allocations specifically to support the SDGs. However, the extent to which the SDGs are specified within budgets is not clear.
- The UN:
  - The Malaysia-United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Framework (UNSDGF) 2018-2020 is titled “Prosperous, Inclusive and Resilient Futures”. It describes the joint work of participating United Nations agencies, funds and programmes through the UN Country Team (UNCT) in support of Malaysia’s implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and achievement of the related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
  - In 2018 the UN Global Compact Network Malaysia (GCMY) hosted a workshop to assist the CSO-SDG Alliance in the achievement of SDGs in Malaysia. The training event focused on highlighting the tools and key factors needed for CSOs to improve the delivery of SDGs. In order to ensure a successful, transformative, and universal outcome on SDGs, integrated communications were necessary to inspire and mobilise national action within the group. Participants were informed about the importance of effective public relations when reporting on their sustainability agenda.

## CIVIL SOCIETY INVOLVEMENT

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In relation to the specific mechanisms to ensure inclusiveness and reaching out to women and special groups, several women’s and youth organisations with a strong membership base are members of the Alliance. These include the National Council of Women’s Organisation with more than 120 affiliates and the Malaysian Youth Council with more than 200 affiliates. With the inclusive and participatory approach adopted by the government, which focuses on a major shift towards including citizens as partners in service design and delivery, greater engagement of CSOs is envisaged.

Roles of CSOs in the initiative:

- The 2030 Agenda document makes 12 direct references to CSOs – a very strong statement on the role of CSOs and partnerships with the public and private sectors in the SDG agenda.
- The CSO mapping exercise identified ten major roles for CSOs: (1) advocacy; (2) awareness-raising; (3) business development and income generation; (4) capacity building and training; (5) coordination and networking; (6) community development and sustainability projects; (7) financial literacy; (8) social welfare services; (9) social enterprise/entrepreneurship initiatives; (10) research and monitoring including data collection and impact assessment.

## LESSONS LEARNT

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CSOs are facing a number of challenges in this partnership and engagement.

- A COSTLY AND TIME-CONSUMING PROCESS.
- INCLUSIVENESS. While CSOs are part of the five cluster working groups and 17 taskforces, many CSOs with a focus on human rights have not received invitations to participate, although their names have been submitted. Furthermore, engagements and partnerships between government and CSOs are often ad hoc and selective. Malaysia may like to consider adopting the UN guidelines for CSO engagement.
- SHORT-TERM FOCUS. Many CSOs have a keen interest in long-term policy and development concerns but the focus among the agencies is often on short-term solutions.
- PUBLIC DISCUSSION. According to the Alliance there seems to be very little national public discussion of the SDGs in Malaysia.

## 3. AFRICA



Youngsters in the capital of Guinea Bissau listening to a sexual education session © RMF

### 3.1 KENYA: THE KENYA SDG PHILANTHROPY PLATFORM

#### OVERVIEW

The SDG Philanthropy Platform (SDGPP) is a global initiative that connects foundations and philanthropists with knowledge and networks that can improve collaboration, leverage resources and sustain impact. The SDG Philanthropy Platform in Kenya is housed in the Office of the UN Resident Coordinator, and is the first country launch in a series of global platforms, pioneered by UNDP, the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, the Ford Foundation, and the MasterCard Foundation. The Platform supports coordination in Kenya's philanthropy sector and helps create common pathways for philanthropy to engage with mainstream development through the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF).

The Platform was launched in 2014 as a multi-country *enabler* of collaboration between philanthropy, the United Nations, government, the private sector and Civil Society to develop and implement innovations that can attract national resources and private capital to close the funding gap to achieve SDGs. It was created because the funders recognised the need to lobby and engage foundations worldwide in the implementation of SDGs. Kenya was the first pilot country for the Platform. It is a welcome innovation for the UN in Kenya since it acts as a forum for positioning and engaging the UN and government more effectively with philanthropic organisations, the private sector and Civil Society

In relation to its geographical coverage, the SDG Philanthropy Platform has established pathways to engage philanthropy in national SDG planning and implementation in 8 pilot countries: Brazil, Colombia, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Kenya, the USA and Zambia. It is currently seeking to expand to many others.

#### THE MANDATE AND LINKS TO THE SDGS AGENDA

The Platform acts as a catalyst and facilitator, connecting philanthropic organisations to each other and to key multi stakeholders' processes and policies which drive SDG delivery within national development planning. The Platform hosts, facilitates and participates in high-level global meetings and conventions, where knowledge sharing will lead to philanthropists participating in supporting and co-creating scalable innovations with multi-sectoral partners to drive SDG impacts in Kenya.



The SDG Philanthropy Platform works to define concrete ways for philanthropy to contribute to the achievement of the SDGs. The Platform has been instrumental in raising awareness of SDGs, forging partnerships between philanthropy and the private and public sectors, and increasing philanthropy's engagement with the post-2015 development agenda.

The Platform expands awareness and knowledge of the SDGs and how to leverage them. It provides learning opportunities on SDGs, and maps out SDG ecosystems to show who is doing what and where, and how they are collaborating; moreover, the Platform increases engagement between stakeholders to help them increase their impact and advance the SDGs. It helps to create local philanthropic networks and multi-stakeholder partnerships and enables a legal environment for philanthropic investments.

The Platform facilitates new types of collaboration and investment in promising transformative solutions involving philanthropy, business, investors, the UN, government and broader Civil Society. It identifies SDG accelerators and supports innovative solutions.

## CIVIL SOCIETY INVOLVEMENT

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In relation to the types of CSOs being involved, these include Kenyan SDG Philanthropy Platform comprises international foundations, Pan-African foundations, local organisations and organisations of the Kenyan diaspora. While the presence of international philanthropy remains significant in Kenya, local foundations now make up the bulk of operating philanthropy. Corporate philanthropy has also grown significantly in recent years. Philanthropy in Kenya generally remains somewhat informal despite efforts to organise and promote the sector as a principal contributor to strategic development. However, it has been said that the growth of formal philanthropy organisations, and their increasing adoption of focused approaches, is encouraging.

Channels for Civil Society participation: The SDG Philanthropy Platform in Kenya has agreed to establish collaboration with the SDG Kenya Forum. This was created in 2016 by Civil Society as a platform for collaboration between various stakeholders to cultivate political will on SDGs, to track progress of their implementation, and to this end to collect and analyse data, strengthen national accountability structures and mobilise financial resources. The Kenya Philanthropy Forum is the country's first common "voice" for the philanthropy sector for discussion and advocacy of common interests regarding the enabling environment, data, thematic policies, sub-national government engagement and multi-stakeholder collaboration. 40 foundations came together to endorse the establishment of the KPF which is rapidly being recognised by Government and other stakeholders as an important grouping in the common effort to localize SDGs.

The SDG Kenya Forum organised community dialogues on SDGs and has been reaching out to private sector and donors to engage on SDGs. The Forum is sensitive to the country's enabling environment and is aware of cross-sectoral issues and opportunities. Special sub-groups focus on data and the education sector. The Forum can provide networking opportunities through their events and membership. The Forum is, with support from the SDGPP, in the process of expanding its institutional formation and linkages with other sectors.

The SDG Philanthropy Platform has agreed to support the needs of the SDG Kenya Forum on engaging multi-sectoral partners, especially key UN and government officials at national and county level and philanthropy and private sector partners.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND LESSONS LEARNT

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Some relevant outcomes so far:

- (1) Collaboration on SDGs to reduce duplication, create synergies and leverage resources among partners.*
- (2) Increased voice of philanthropy and grantees in the national plans for SDG implementation.*
- (3) Innovation and scaling methods are applied and exchanged between philanthropic and government.*
- (4) Platform communications give SDGPP the ability to educate, empower, connect to and activate philanthropy sector actors and SDG drivers in other sectors.*

Ways through which those outputs and outcomes are being used to feed the national SDG Agenda

- The Platform is now helping to drive cross-sectoral opportunities on Early Childhood Development (ECD) and nutrition security across the UHC and the food security goals of Kenya's "Big-4 Agenda." This is being done in partnership with the global ECD Action Network (ECDAN).

Lessons learnt so far

- In Kenya there are several areas of coordination: at national and local level, between public and private sectors, between philanthropy, the private sector, government donors and UN agencies. To align philanthropic work with the needs and agenda of the SDGs, it is important to be acquainted with relevant stakeholders in government, at the UN and within the private sector. Selected institutions provide entry points through membership structures, organised events, dialogues and forums.

Areas for improvement

- Civil Society in Kenya has been much criticised lately. There is a growing perception that the sector lacks transparency and accountability, suffers from poor compliance standards, does not properly account for sources of donations and does not accurately monitor and measure the social impact of donations received. Furthermore, Civil Society has failed to mobilise quickly to take advantage of reforms. Indeed, philanthropy as a sub-set of the Civil Society sector is making great efforts to distinguish itself from the broader sector in order to increase its credibility and visibility and separate it from these criticisms. However, the government has in the past raised concerns about the proliferation of CSOs and their effectiveness and, at times, has a strained relationship with them. Some fear government may easily take advantage of such negative perceptions of CSOs to strengthen legislative and regulatory control over these organisations in the name of protection of public interests.

## 3.2 MADAGASCAR: TECHNICAL COMMITTEE FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SDGS

### OVERVIEW

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The Technical Committee for Implementation of the SDGs is, together with a Steering and Monitoring Committee, part of the SDG institutional framework of Madagascar. It was launched by the Prime Minister in July 2015. Madagascar, like many other countries, adopted the new 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The notion of Sustainable Development came along with the MDGs. The government took the lessons learnt from the implementation of the MDGs and the new 2030 agenda as an opportunity to address the challenges and opportunities for sustainable development. Madagascar, through its National Development Plan, applies a so-called ‘whole of government approach’, in order to enable integrated planning across the policy spectrum. The Government of Madagascar was at the origin of its creation; it has a permanent nature and a national coverage.

### THE MANDATE AND LINKS TO THE SDGS AGENDA

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The mandate of the Technical Committee is to ensure coherence of activities and scientific validity of national consultations on the SDGs, to provide technical support, to disseminate results and reports, to carry out actions of advocacy and to prepare proposals for decision-making. It has been referred to as a ‘discussion space with a view to designing policies.’ Therefore, it is explicitly linked to the SDG Agenda.

### COMPOSITION AND SUPPORT

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Regarding the steering of the initiative, the Technical Committee (TC) is chaired by the Minister of Economy and Planning. The Steering and Monitoring Committee is chaired by the Prime Minister. In addition, members include various stakeholders. They include the Prime Minister’s office, ministries, the private sector, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), universities and research centres, technical and financial partners, and representatives of the UN System, including the UN Development Programme (UNDP).

To date, the EU is the biggest donor in Madagascar and always reaffirms its leadership on Sustainable Development Goals. However, it is not clear if or how the EU or the EU Delegation provide support on SDGs in Madagascar (financially, operationally or politically). Apart from support from The European Commission’s Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (DG ECHO), Madagascar benefits from EU general budget **thematic programmes** supporting local authorities and non-state actors, food security, the Sugar Protocol, gender, democracy and human rights, and the environment. A project on climate change adaptation - the GCCA+ (Global Climate Change Alliance) initiative - was adopted in 2015 and an EU Country Roadmap for Engagement with Civil Society in Madagascar (2014-2017) was prepared in July 2014. Madagascar is also a beneficiary of **regional projects** aiming at the implementation of fisheries strategy and maritime security

(the Smart Fish programme, Maritime Security – MASE I) and at regional integration (the Regional Integration Support Programme – RISP). It also benefits from various African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) multi-country cooperation programmes such as the EU Water Facility and the EU Energy Facility. Madagascar is a member of several **regional organisations**: SADC (the Southern Africa Development Community), COMESA (the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa), IOC (the Indian Ocean Commission), AU (the African Union) and OIF (Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie). The current protocol to the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the EU and Madagascar (2015-2018) was signed on 19 December 2014 and focuses on tuna species. The European Investment Bank is financing infrastructure projects in Madagascar.

## CIVIL SOCIETY INVOLVEMENT

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In relation to the roles CSOs play:

- CSOs are, in theory, considered as important players in achieving sustainable development because they are most likely to know the specifics of the local context. They are, in theory, expected to play a role as facilitators, monitoring implemented policies, advocacy and resource mobilisation.
- In fact, the majority of CSOs have for many years been playing only a subordinate role, acting as service providers for donors. Nevertheless, in recent years Civil Society has shown a certain increasing dynamism in its engagement in advocacy and watchdog roles. In fact, over the past three years, several initiatives have seen CSOs come together to act and advocate transparency in public financial management, independent election monitoring, transparency in public procurement and transparency in the natural resources sectors, to name a few areas.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND LESSONS LEARNT

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- The launch of the process has already strengthened national ownership and the integration of all dimensions of sustainable development in policy and development programmes at national, sectoral and regional level. It has also seen coordination between actors (ministries, the private sector, CSOs and technical and financial partners) and the M&E framework.
- Madagascar was among 22 UN member states which presented their Voluntary National Reviews (VNR) at the 2016 session of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF).
- In May 2018 the government launched the national prioritisation report on SDGs. Madagascar has chosen to have 64 targets related to the 17 SDGs. The priorities are (1) to end extreme poverty; (2) to fight against inequality and injustice and (3) to adapt to climate change.

The key lesson of the past is that Madagascar, like most African countries, failed to achieve the MDGs in their entirety. This needs to be considered where SDGs are concerned. It is necessary that, among other things, SDG issues are integrated into national planning frameworks. It is important to start with the internal resources available to achieve the agenda. A framework for follow-up of interventions is necessary to mobilise public, private, national and international resources to fund implementation of the agenda.

- The participation of Madagascar in high level policy and expert meetings about indicators and M&E helped prepare for the launch of the SDG process in the country. This was particularly true in terms of awareness of officials and technical staff of the SDGs, of sharing experiences from the MDGs, affirming the return of Madagascar to the international scene, and in the strengthening of institutional capacities for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- The international, national, regional and local consultations that were organised by the government and representatives of the UN System included government, the private sector, CSOs and donors. These led to a strong and broad commitment to the SDGs and to a roadmap for the sustainable development process in Madagascar. They also enabled the experts of different sectoral ministries and representatives of other government institutions to evaluate the extent to which SDGs are included in the National Development Plan, and to prioritise goals.
- The government participated in high level meetings in Addis Ababa regarding financing of development. These led to further discussions and, with the help of the International Monetary Fund and other partners, to reform of the management of public finances.

#### MISCELLANEOUS/FINAL COMMENTS

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- There are very few formal spaces for dialogue where there is a real process of engagement with Civil Society, and then only on certain sectoral issues. The space that was created by government a few years back is not representative of CS. According to CS leaders, representatives were hand-picked and the whole process does not work. CSOs are only consulted informally and on very petty issues such as travel.
- What is needed is a focus on two issues: a formal process of participation and dialogue to discuss policy and monitor progress; partnerships with donors and other actors with a long-term vision of change that values the contribution of local CSOs, not simply as recipients of aid, but as a transformative force.

### 3.3 NIGERIA: CIVIL SOCIETY COALITION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (CSCSD)

#### OVERVIEW

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The Civil Society Coalition on Sustainable Development (CSCSD) also known as Campaign2015+ International is a coalition of approximately 2,000 registered Civil Society and non-governmental organisations committed to citizens' empowerment, human rights protection, development, and peace in Nigeria. The Civil Society Coalition on Sustainable Development is, in fact, the successor of Campaign2015+ International, which was the only coalition of its kind, not only in Nigeria but also in Africa. The main purpose of its campaign was to tackle challenges hindering the attainment of MDGs in Africa and other parts of the globe and to work, beyond 2015, on democracy, good governance, human rights, justice, development and global security.

The organisation has a permanent nature and is a legal entity duly registered with the Corporate Affairs Commission. It has a constitution which describes among other things the structure of the coalition. It also has a Code of Ethics, a separate document, which outlines the way in which members relate to one another, granted that it includes people from different parts of the country, from different backgrounds and from different ethnic groups and that the coalition needs guiding principles to avoid conflict.

The Coalition functions at national, zonal and state level. Nigeria is divided into six geopolitical zones and each zone has an average of six states. The Coalition's members are spread across these zones.

#### THE MANDATE AND LINKS TO THE SDGS AGENDA

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CSCSD, in partnership with other CSOs, beneficiaries, development partners, and the international community, aims at pressuring governments and other stakeholders to respect SDGs and give the lives of people meaning through upholding justice, human rights and development. Its objectives include:

- To serve as an engagement platform at the national, regional and international level, ensuring that governments achieve and exceed the SDGs by 2030 and account to the people.
- To build an alliance with and facilitate the participation of other CSOs both in Africa and other regions, to ensure that citizens lead the process of determining good governance and service delivery within the framework of Agenda 2030.
- To work with vulnerable groups, including the marginalised, PLWD, the less privileged, women, children and youth, to bring to the forefront of discourse their development prioritisation.
- To produce shadow reports on, monitor and evaluate the implementation of SDGs, locally and across Africa, to generate policy tools for accountability.

Operational elements include: campaigning/mobilisation, research, documentation and Information dissemination, south-south and triangular cooperation, legislative/social policy Intervention, capacity building, monitoring and evaluation. Campaign themes focus on the following issues: fulfilment of all economic, social and human rights aims; aid and financing for development effectiveness; global and national security; development issues; public accountability; debt cancellation; just governance; gender equality, and trade justice.



It is the only registered national coalition of organisations specifically created to work on the monitoring of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals across the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria. CSCSD is a member of the recently inaugurated, UN-led Nigerian Civil Society Strategy Group on SDGs. The coalition believes that achieving SDGs is not the responsibility of a single organisation; neither is it that of government alone. It is a collective responsibility.

## CIVIL SOCIETY INVOLVEMENT

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Specific roles of Civil Society in the initiative include:

- Engagement with other stakeholders (private sector, donors, governments).
- Complementary role in government project implementation and service delivery.
- Public policy influencing/lobbying: constitutional and electoral reform, health (C&MH, HIV/AIDS), agriculture, education, children's rights, gender equality, etc.
- Citizens' empowerment and direct capacity-building (voice-giving, information, training, livelihoods).
- Ombudsman roles (advocacy) and whistle-blowing roles in collaboration with anti-corruption agencies like EFCC & ICPC.
- Holding stakeholders accountable on SDGs (pushing for horizontal accountability).
- Conducting action research and policy-informed research on SDG implementation.
- Periodic assessments and shadow reports to maintain progress in achieving SDGs.
- Establishing community-based budget monitoring mechanisms at the local level.
- Campaigning and mobilisation on critical SDGs and the enabling environment (anti-NGO bill); formulating policies through coalition/networking such as CPDE/AWG/Together 2030/TAPN.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND LESSONS LEARNT

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In relation to partnerships:

- **GOVERNMENT AGENCIES:** Since the adoption by the United Nations of the 17 SDGs, the CSCSD has sought partnerships with relevant government agencies at both the federal and state level and with international development partners working in the country. There has been collaboration with Kano State government to present the state as a perfect example of SDG implementation in Nigeria, as has been done in the Westphalia Region of Germany.
- **DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS:** the CSCSD has submitted letters of introduction and proposed collaboration to the UNDP, USAID, DFID, PACT Nigeria, Oxfam, PLAN and the World Bank.
- **CSOs:** the CSCSD collaborates with other like-minded CSOs around the world to promote public debates and discussions on economic and social issues including HR.
- **MEDIA:** In 2017, a media-capacity building seminar on commitment to professional reportage on SDGs took place in Ibadan, Oyo State, in collaboration with strategic partner Sustainable Development Solution Network (SDSN).

Related to policy dialogue:

- The SDG Annual Policy Dialogue is a project of the CSCSD and a direct response to the importance of connecting stakeholders to address a particular need of the region. Until now it has served as the first hub of its kind bringing together all strategic partners to address a specific SDG. The Dialogue includes a series of round-table meetings, with facilitators and guest speakers, and a plenary session. Representatives of affected communities and stakeholders from all the states of the zone and beyond come together to share their challenges and success stories regarding innovative strategies for addressing SDGs. In 2018 the subject was “Clear Air” and included proposals for specific action to deal with the causes of fatal air pollution. Every stakeholder left with an action plan to implement and a commitment to M&E.

In relation to relevant outcomes to mention from the initiative, these include:

- The successful registration of the CSCSD by the Corporate Affairs Commission as representing Civil Society on Sustainable Development Goals. This strengthens the coalition’s position, with legal backing to fully engage the Nigerian government on SDG implementation, monitoring and accountability.
- The CSCSD has been appointed as the African Regional Focal Organisation for SDGs for the Transparency Accountability and Participatory (TAP) Network.
- The CSCSD produced a position paper on the National Water Resource Bill which came before the Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, on 25 September 2018.

### 3.4 SUDAN: SUDANESE CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM FOR SDGs (SCSF)

#### OVERVIEW

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The Sudanese CSOs' Forum for SDGs consists of around 300 Sudanese CSOs, NGOs and CBOs working in the fields of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through awareness-raising, advocacy and partial implementation efforts in all parts of the country. It was created in 2016 by a network of about 30 CSOs who wanted to work for the same cause: the implementation of the SDGs. The Forum was created in collaboration with the government focal point, The National Council for Population and Development (NCPD). With a permanent nature, the Forum has a charter that regulates its membership, activities, role, relations with government institutions, expected level of coordination between members and rules for governing bodies.

Sudan adopted the Sustainable Development Agenda (SDA) and SDGs as an overarching development framework. Sudan was part of the 2018 Voluntary National Review of the HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT. However, most of the aims of government institutions are in the planning stage, full orientation for the SDGs has NOT been achieved and is heavily dependent on expected external funding, and outputs are generally weak. According to the Sudanese Civil Society Forum the VNR is more a political statement and does not reflect reality on the ground. Most activities are not being carried out because of the current social/political problems in the country. Difficulties with transparency and accountability are still the main obstacles to monitoring and evaluation against indicators.

#### THE MANDATE AND LINKS TO THE SDGS AGENDA

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##### *The general objectives of the SCSF:*

- To contribute actively to boosting the national response to achieve SDG goals.
- To strengthen the role of Sudanese CSOs in achieving SDG goals.

##### *Other objectives:*

- To contribute to the shaping of national strategic plans and policies related to development.
- To coordinate the activities of Sudanese CSOs.
- Provision of data and information related to the different fields of development goals.
- To build and strengthen local, regional and international coalitions to achieve SDGs.
- Identification of the available frameworks for international cooperation to secure funding of the projects related to the SDGs.

The Forum is closely/explicitly linked to the SDG Agenda. In particular, its Implementation methodologies are explicitly linked to the SDGs through:

- Capacity-building of CSOs that work on SDGs.
- Building of networks and coalitions locally and abroad.
- Exchange of expertise.

## COMPOSITION AND SUPPORT

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The Sudanese Civil Society Forum is promoted by its Executive Committee, although it does not receive any institutional support. The forum functions through the contributions of its members. In addition to its Executive Committee (7 members plus a coordinator), its General Assembly (GA) which elects the members of the Executive Committee is the backbone of the initiative. Members include Sudanese CSOs, NGOs and CBOs working in the fields of SDGs.

In relation to its membership, everyone can become a member if they fulfil the necessary criteria:

- They must work in the area of development in general, and specifically SDGs.
- They must be willing to work together on the SDGs.
- They must be willing to provide information about their work.

## CIVIL SOCIETY INVOLVEMENT

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All types of CSOs are involved. However, the Forum doesn't want to have a political standpoint. As a result, some NGOs left the Forum because they are supported financially by the government and don't want to criticise the government. Other organisations which left are directly controlled by the government itself or affiliated to key persons in the government. Some organisations asking for transparency and accountability are accused by the government of being part of the opposition.

Four out of seven members of the Executive Committee are women. Most member organisations are steered by women and youth. The Morocco Sub-Regional Meeting on SDG Implementation in North Africa was held on 26-27 June 2018 in Rabat and was sponsored and administered by the UN Economic Commission for Africa. The Coordinator of the Sudanese Civil Society Forum for SDGs remarked that young people are crucial Civil Society actors, and most of them live in developing countries. They will be the generation that will experience the impact of the success or failure on SDGs. This means that SDG implementation should be inclusive and responsive to the needs of youth; they should be empowered to make a greater contribution to a better society.

Several CSOs have been included in consultations and dialogue regarding the VNR. These include Envl, SECS, Sudan SDG Platform, Sudanese Consumer & Protection Society, Practical Action, Friends of Peace & Development Organisation (FPDO), International Charity Organisation for Water and Sudan Workers Trade Union Federation (SWTUF). However, the Sudanese Civil Society Forum perceives a lack of clarity: CS doesn't participate in the process as it should. The Forum is of the opinion that the government thinks that SDGs is a matter for the government only and it doesn't make use of the knowledge and expertise of Civil Society. The Forum doesn't want to take a political stance; it wants to address the situation of marginalised people.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND LESSONS LEARNT

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### *Some of the achievements of the Sudanese Forum for SDGs include:*

- Building a database of CSOs, NGOs and CBOs which identifies the different areas covered by the organisations and their concerns with SDGs.
- Coordinating with the government authorised body responsible for SDGs.
- Seeking and encouraging the participation of the private sector. CSOs reach out to the private sector and try to convince them to play their part for the benefit of the different communities.
- Advocacy and awareness-raising are ongoing practices in most CSO activities.
- Conducting local surveys to pinpoint priorities in each area. In 2017, SCSF conducted a survey on children who face problems enrolling in the basic elementary schools in Deleng, South Kordofan.
- The Forum developed a training guide for organisations working on SDGs and provides training to CSOs, NGOs and CBOs on the SDGs.
- Working on collaborative implementation with some INGOs who ask for a consortium to implement a project.

### *Lessons that have been learnt:*

- Coordination is very important in achieving results with regard to the SDGs.
- The government must be made aware that Civil Society should be part of all stages of the SDG process and government should be more transparent and accountable.
- It is sometimes difficult to form a coalition with other CSOs because some of them have political aspirations and others have not.
- Addressing the problem of financial resources is important in order to be able to extend work to people at the grassroots level.

### 3.5 UGANDA: NATIONAL CSO CORE REFERENCE GROUP (NCCRG) on SDGs

#### OVERVIEW

The National CSO Core Reference Group (NCCRG) on SDGs is a consortium of CSOs that is monitoring the implementation of SDGs within the existing institutional structures. The National Coordination Framework for SDGs provides strategic guidance on the roles and responsibilities of key institutions. It is steered by a multi-stakeholder National SDG Taskforce, of which the NCCRG is a member. The Core Reference Group meets quarterly and is informed by Technical Working Groups (TWG). Each has representatives from government ministries and agencies as well as the UN, development partners, CSOs and the private sector. Government-led Sector Working Groups provide input into the Technical Working Groups to ensure a link between Uganda's SDG coordination framework and implementing ministries, agencies and partners. Cross-cutting issues, such as human rights, environment and gender, etc. are discussed and prioritised in the TWGs. The NCCRG is hosted by the Uganda National NGO Forum.

The preparation of Uganda NDP II coincided with inter-governmental negotiations on the SDGs in 2015. While the SDGs were yet to be fully adopted at the time of preparing NDP II, the Government of Uganda (GOU) used this opportunity to integrate the then SDGs framework into the development plan and to set up and operationalise structures, including the NCCRG, for effective coordination in the implementation of the SDGs.

With a permanent nature, the Uganda National NGO Forum has a Code of Conduct to which members subscribe and a Code of Conduct Committee, elected by the National Council, which monitors compliance.

Geographical coverage: efforts have been made to integrate the SDGs into national, sectoral and local government plans. The progress towards achievement of the SDGs is tracked through the national M&E system.



Workshop for marginalized women in Arua, Uganda

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## THE MANDATE AND LINKS TO THE SDG AGENDA

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The establishment of the NCCRG was supposed to lead to better-coordinated CSO efforts in domesticating the SDG agenda, monitoring compliance, and engaging the state to deliver its mandate as part of its global commitment. Civil Society, under the auspices of the NCCRG has made significant strides in establishing structures for improved coordination, public awareness creation, implementation of specific activities and projects towards realisation of the SDGs and monitoring. The NCCRG on SDGs meets often both physically and online to update on progress in their engagements on the implementation of the SDGs. Therefore, it is closely/explicitly linked to the SDG Agenda.

## COMPOSITION AND SUPPORT

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Generally, the policy environment is conducive for the implementation of SDGs, including political commitment to sustainable and inclusive development.<sup>32</sup> In Uganda, the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development is leading the way<sup>33</sup>. It has been said that the impact of coordination arrangements is likely to be greatest where the lead agency wields political clout and influence, instead of remaining in the realm of administration/public servants. The establishment of the necessary coordination and integration mechanisms will help to prevent the implementation of the SDGs from being isolated.

**Financial and/or technical support:** financing and resource mobilisation for the SDG agenda in Uganda is enshrined in the NDP II fiscal strategy, partnerships and stronger institutions. Planning, budgeting and resource allocation are guided by the NSI. The NSI indicators derive from existing development plans in the sectors, ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) and local governments (LGs). Uganda uses Programme Based Budgeting (PBB), and resources are allocated to Key Performance Indicators (KPI) for the various sectors, MDAs and LGs which have been selected from the NSI framework. The UNDP provides broad support, among others for multi-level consultation and development of the roadmap. Uganda is working to define baselines and monitor and evaluate progress towards the achievement of targets. It is one of three countries in the region that has been selected to implement the UN Statistics Division project on monitoring and reporting SDG indicators through a strengthened national statistics system. A number of UN entities are supporting this work, including UNICEF, which is supporting efforts to set baselines for Target 1.2.10 by analysing child poverty. The UN Country Team has supported the government in integrating the SDGs into sub-national development plans, in line with the national plan. Parliament and members of parliament play a significant role in mobilising and allocating resources.

**Steering of the initiative:** to support implementation of the 2030 agenda the SDG Coordination Framework is led by four key government entities: the Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry of Finance, the National Planning Authority, and the Uganda Bureau of Statistics. It has been said that Uganda appears to have a most coherent approach, whereby the Prime Minister's office is taking a direct role in designing the implementation plans and engaging with Civil Society through a Communication & Advocacy Task Group.

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<sup>32</sup> Greening Uganda's economy as the sustainable pathway to Middle Income status.

<sup>33</sup> Policy Brief. UN DESA. 2016.

## CIVIL SOCIETY INVOLVEMENT

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Agenda 2030 points to the need to engage various Civil Society actors in reviewing SDG progress as well as in tracking initiatives and progress beyond government involvement. In Uganda, CS is well organised at national level and has been effective in facilitating engagement with the government and many other stakeholders. This has increased public awareness on the SDGs and has made SDG implementation a national priority.

Types of CSOs involved: on April 25, UNNGOF organised a preparatory meeting for CSOs to consider and harmonise their positions on key issues within global and in-country SDG processes, in order to inform future opportunities such as the HLPF where Uganda will be represented. The meeting was attended by over 50 CSO representatives at sub-national and national level and provided a space for CSOs to track efforts on domestication of the SDGs and refine actions to support the process through the SDG Technical Working Groups.

Input of Civil Society (roles played by Civil Society): CS is a non-state actor group, that implements SDGs through its day-to-day activities, projects and programmes and is represented at all levels of the National SDG Coordination Framework. Civil Society's work is seen as complementary to government initiatives and CSOs are expected to align their activities to national development priorities. CSOs are actively involved in the delivery of SDGs through their outreach to people in the communities, as change-makers driving behavioural change, and as watchdogs holding authorities to account.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND LESSONS LEARNT

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Relevant outcomes to mention:

- The roadmap created an enabling environment for all government entities to implement SDG policies in a coordinated manner. They used the roadmap to plan, cost and promote the SDGs as well as to report on progress, to permit tracking of Uganda's efforts to achieve sustainable development.
- The involvement of CSOs in these processes and consultations has contributed to mobilising and sensitising citizens on the 2030 Agenda, creating a common understanding and developing synergies among CSOs. They have further campaigned for efficient use of resources and localisation of the 2030 Agenda in planning processes.

Areas for improvement:

- Share best practices between government, the private sector and CSOs.
- Develop a robust coordination framework to integrate alignment of the SDGs and Agenda 2063.
- Harmonise reporting formats and cycles to avoid report-writing fatigue.
- Establish high level forums in the region similar to the UN High Level Panel in New York, to share experiences at that level.
- Improve government production of gender-related statistics to ensure gender-responsive planning, implementation and reporting.

## 4. EU MEMBER STATES AND GLOBAL PRACTICES

### 4.1 GERMANY: STATE SECRETARIES' COMMITTEE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND THE GERMAN COUNCIL FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

#### OVERVIEW

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The **State Secretaries' Committee for Sustainable Development**, which is chaired by the Head of the Federal Chancellery, is the central and highest-ranking government body for sustainable development and steers the National Sustainable Development Strategy. The task of the State Secretaries' Committee on Sustainable Development is to ensure that sustainable development is a significant consideration in all policy areas. The Committee updates the National Sustainable Development Strategy and regularly monitors the development of sustainability indicators. All ministries are represented on this Committee. The Committee is also the contact point for the Parliamentary Advisory Council on Sustainable Development, for the federal states (Länder) and for the associations of local authorities, as well as the German Council for Sustainable Development. The Committee works with these bodies on topical aspects of sustainability.

The **German Council for Sustainable Development** was established in 2001 by Chancellor Gerhard Schröder and given a new mandate in June 2013 by Chancellor Angela Merkel. It is an advisory body to the German Government. It advises the government on its sustainable development policy and, by presenting proposals for targets and indicators, seeks to advance the sustainability strategy as well as proposing projects for its realisation. A further task is to foster social dialogue on the issue of sustainability. The objective is to increase the level of awareness among all concerned and among the population as to what sustainable development actually means. It demonstrates the consequences of social action and discusses possible solutions.

#### THE MANDATE AND LINKS TO THE SDGS AGENDA

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The **State Secretaries' Committee on Sustainable Development** serves as the central coordinator for the Sustainable Development Strategy. The Committee is tasked with ensuring that the strategy is a central theme which applies in all policy areas and creating standing inter-departmental structures at working level. The Committee provides strategic input for the work of the German government and acts as a forum for the different government departments to share information on their sustainability activities at a high level. The Committee invites external experts from the private sector and the scientific and research community, and representatives of Civil Society and the federal states and local authorities to attend its meetings. It selects a so-called "beacon project" every year in recognition of especially exemplary innovative activities in the various ministries.

The **Council for Sustainable Development**: the 2030 Agenda, its Sustainable Development Goals and the German Sustainable Development Strategy provide the central framework for the activities of the German Council for Sustainable Development. They also serve as - and are required by the Council to be - a key point of reference for many non-governmental activities. The Council comments regularly on drafts and updates of the strategy and proposes projects accordingly. The Council emphasises the triangle of environmental, social and economic aspects of sustainable development in its projects. It has three main tasks:

- Advising the federal government on sustainability issues and on national sustainability strategy.
- Fostering dialogue on sustainability within society to increase the level of awareness among all concerned and the population generally as to what sustainable development actually means by demonstrating the consequences of social action and discussing possible solutions.
- Specifying concrete areas of action and supporting sustainability projects.

## CIVIL SOCIETY INVOLVEMENT

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*Types of CSOs involved:* a wide variety of organisations participated in the dialogue forum on the 2030 Agenda. These included representatives of NGOs, religious groups, local authorities, the scientific and academic community, the business community and trades unions.

*Specific mechanisms to ensure inclusiveness and reaching out to women and special groups:* involvement of non-governmental stakeholders is a key concern of the German Government, and it is promoting this through a variety of dialogue formats.

*How is the input of Civil Society taken into account and what roles does Civil Society play:* Germany has a long tradition of involving Civil Society. Throughout the process of updating the National Sustainable Development Strategy, citizens have been and will continue to be involved both via the Internet and through forums which allow various interest groups to present their points of view. Since 2018, representatives of CS have been systematically included in the preparatory work for meetings of the State Secretaries' Committee for Sustainable Development. A representative of Civil Society in Germany spoke during the presentation of the Voluntary National Review at the HLPF in New York in 2016. The German government is looking for ways to take the interests and concerns of Civil Society into account to an even greater extent.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND LESSONS LEARNT

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- “Sustainable city” dialogue: “Mayors for Sustainable Development in Municipalities” Initiative was established in 2010 by the Sustainability Council and there is dialogue with and between mayors of 30 German cities through annual meetings, publications and policy papers. The main aim is to maintain dialogue on strategic issues, offering platforms for mayors to exchange information and to influence at federal level. The principal areas of commitment and recommendation include public participation, sustainability in municipal finances, sustainability as a cross-cutting municipal task and coordination of sustainability activities at all levels.
- The sustainability code: The German Council for Sustainable Development has developed and tested the Sustainability Code through dialogue with companies and has adjusted it to current developments. The code is an internationally applicable reporting standard for topics relating to sustainability. With its 20 criteria, the Code offers companies guidance on their strategic orientation. As it incorporates existing voluntary international reporting standards, it is also applicable to companies with global operations or companies in other countries. Furthermore, thanks to the greater transparency and comparability it allows with regard to companies’ products and services, the Code can be used by clients and lenders as an important aid to decision-making.
- The open SDGclub.berlin: The German Council for Sustainable Development created the Open SDGclub. Berlin as an international conference at which participants can share their initial experience with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its global Sustainable Development Goals. The Open SDGclub.Berlin added a specific focus on non-state action. It looked into how the 2030 Agenda can be integrated into the DNA of a society, into tools, procedures and role models that advocate sustainable development. It had a specific focus on leadership engagement, codes of conduct, best practice operations, setting standards and “walk-the-talk” options. With the Open SDGclub.Berlin, the German Council for Sustainable Development (RNE) offers an inclusive and collaborative platform for mutual encouragement of all those who embrace the transformative character of Agenda 2030.
- The German almanac of sustainability: In 2018 the **German Council for Sustainable Development (RNE)** published its second German Almanac of Sustainability which presents ideas and proposed actions aimed at achieving a future-oriented, equitable and open society by the year 2030. With it, the RNE endeavours to make societal engagement related to implementing the 2030 Agenda more visible and to spread its reach. The German Almanac of Sustainability demonstrates, via concrete projects and initiatives at municipal level, in the policy area and in the business sector, exactly where transformation towards a more ecologically and socially compatible society is really in progress. Designed to address the public at large, the Almanac fosters and cultivates societal dialogue both at home and abroad. The Foreword of the Almanac is written by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Almanac is distributed to all German embassies around the world.
- Sustainability culture fund: The RNE’s Sustainability Culture Fund is aimed at a variety of societal stakeholders and strives to promote approaches that make sustainability the centre of cultural norms and lifestyle models. For a society to be sustainable, it needs cultural norms that translate the idea of a sustainable future into guiding principles, inspirational vision, long-term thinking and technological progress. The Fund will support numerous transformative projects relating to sustainability culture.

## 4.2 GLOBAL: THE CIVIL SOCIETY PLATFORM FOR PEACEBUILDING AND STATEBUILDING (CSPPS).

### OVERVIEW

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The Civil Society Platform for Peacebuilding and State building (CSPPS) is the official forum for coordinated Civil Society participation in the International Dialogue for Peacebuilding and State building (IDPS), a forum that brings countries affected by conflict and fragility into contact with development partners and Civil Society for political dialogue.

The CSPPS was formed in 2011 to coordinate participation of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) from the North and South in international policy processes relating to Peacebuilding and State Building Goals (PSG), in order to contribute in a coherent way to the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and State building (IDPS).

Although CSPPS is a permanent structure, the platform is not a legal entity. It unites diverse representatives of Civil Society globally, from both g7+ and non-g7+ countries and from international Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) working on issues of peacebuilding, state building, conflict, fragility, and development at regional and global levels.

### THE MANDATE AND LINKS TO THE SDGS AGENDA

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The fundamental goal of the CSPPS is to contribute in a coherent way to the IDPS, which aims to facilitate successful transitions from conflict and fragility, both short and long-term. The mandate of CSPPS is to strengthen the voice and capacity of society at national and global level to effectively engage in and influence peacebuilding and state building as a critical contribution to crisis prevention and sustainable peace and development for all. This includes agenda-setting, policy negotiation, and the introduction and implementation of the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States.

The core activity of the CSPPS is to promote Civil Society coalition-building at country level and to provide capacity-building support to Civil Society members of those coalitions. Securing political space for Civil Society and providing support to ensure that the New Deal principle of inclusive and legitimate politics becomes a reality are key concerns and priorities. These, in turn, ensure that there is a serious and continuous dialogue process.

Links of the initiative to the SDG Agenda:

- The CSPPS strives to infuse the IDPS, Sustainable Development Goals and humanitarian processes with peacebuilding values, globally.
- In 2017 the Platform provided follow-up on the renewal of the IDPS as agreed in the Stockholm Conference. At the same time, it initiated and promoted efforts for use of New Deal principles in the context of implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- The CSPPS “Ready for Review” project aims to ensure the substantial inclusion, participation and contribution of national and local CSOs in government-led SDG consultation and validation processes in five selected countries. These are Ivory Coast, the Central African Republic, Chad, Sierra Leone and East Timor, which is intending to present a Voluntary National Review (VNR) in 2019.



- Country-level support is a CSPPS priority, combining support to country teams for their engagement in the SDG implementation processes, and alignment to sustaining the IDPS programme to achieve results on the ground. This demonstrates the relevance of a 'New Deal' approach in implementing SDG processes at country level.

## COMPOSITION AND SUPPORT

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CSPPS is a member-led global network. Individual member organisations are therefore the ambassadors who promote it. Apart from finance, promotion is facilitated by recognition from the EU, France and Switzerland, who see the platform as a relevant forum able to prominently present the 'southern' view and approach in conflicted countries.

The platform has, since its creation, been supported by a range of entities. Current financial support comes from: France (2019) which has a new policy on fragile settings; the EU (2019-2020) and the Netherlands (2016-2020) through its Strategic Partnership programme, which aims to support CSOs in low and middle-income countries as advocates and lobbyists. The platform is largely self-supporting on the technical front and also receives technical support from Cordaid.

Key CSPPS membership as of January 2018 comprise: 19 g7+ countries: four non-g7+ countries and 20 INGO members).

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND LESSONS LEARNT

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In relation to concrete results, these include:

- CSPPS is shaping and infusing the IDPS process with peacebuilding value. With success on this front, and growing demand for guidance by country offices and CSPPS country teams, the CSPPS championed efforts within the dialogue to formally reflect upon, and articulate, how the adoption and prioritisation of the new Agenda would affect strategic thinking and action in the International Dialogue, and on the New Deal implementation. With the co-chair of the CSPPS and the g7+, an ad hoc working group was set up, and a dialogue document 'Realisation of the SDGs in Countries Affected by Conflict and Fragility and the role of the New Deal' was developed and agreed among constituencies.
- The CSPPS makes Civil Society's participation count at country and global level. Inclusive country-led CSPPS Civil Society coalitions coordinated by national Focal Points provide legitimacy and transparency to the work of CSOs in g7+ contexts. Linking CSPPS country team coalitions to planned New Deal implementation support projects is the basis for strengthening Civil Society's engagement in the process. Civil Society Organisations have been able to bring to the agenda important issues concerning constructive relations between state and society and the monitoring of progress made in the implementation of the New Deal.
- At international level, the active participation of the CSPPS in IDPS meetings has been welcomed and proved effective in terms of being heard by IDPS colleagues and other stakeholders. The CSPPS role in continuing advocacy at global level for CS inclusion in various peacebuilding and state building discussions and initiatives is greatly appreciated.

Lessons learnt include:

- The Platform is an asset as a formalised entry point and in having a role in international peacebuilding and dialogue. The CSPPS is an example of a multi-stakeholder initiative that, through its composition, presence and relevance, has been able to claim space and is now provided space. At the same time, the Platform is essential for the preservation and protection of Civil Society space.
- Peer-to-peer support provided by an experienced CSPPS organisation has proved to be one of the most effective strategies for training new CSPPS members and for ensuring that inexperienced CSOs can usefully engage in fragility assessments from the outset of the process. This in turn has created a wealth of knowledge that can be shared across the platform.
- Tension arises when country-owned and country-led processes used to identify and decide on peacebuilding strategies are not inclusive or transparent. This leaves some communities or segments of the population feeling that their interests are not being taken into consideration. There is strong evidence that locally-owned peacebuilding processes in Fragile and Conflict Affected States (FCAS) have the best chance succeeding.
- Preventing conflict, sustaining peace and – most important – building lasting peace requires inclusivity and partnership. The principle of inclusivity is vital to delivering Agenda 2030 in societies affected by conflict and fragility.
- A number of countries have been confronted with severe crises which led to serious backsliding or at least a diminishing effect on the results of the process.
- There is need for adaptive management in the form of responsiveness to changing circumstances, to complexity, uncertainty and opportunities.

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