UN·NGLS
Non-Governmental Liaison Service

Civil Society Consultation for the UN Development System Review Process
October – December 2017

By request of the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, the UN Non-Governmental Liaison Service (UN-NGLS) conducted a consultation process for the UN development system (UNDS) review process to enable civil society organizations to provide analysis to inform the repositioning of the UNDS to deliver on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The civil society perspectives also serve as inputs to the analysis underpinning the Secretary-General's December report on the UNDS repositioning. As part of the consultation process, UN-NGLS convened a regionally and gender balanced Civil Society Collaboration Committee through an open application process. The list of members of this Committee is provided in Annex I. 80 different civil society representatives from 42 countries responded to the consultation questions, resulting in 157 pages of input. The list of contributing organizations is provided in Annex II. A synthesis of key recommendations is provided below, adhering closely to phrasings submitted by contributors.

1) Ensuring system-wide accountability to results

Institutions should be defined around the outcomes they are mandated to achieve. The UNDS, as well as other entities such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and other specialized agencies, should be assessed on what it contributes - or fails to contribute - to policy coherence and upholding of international norms and standards. The UNDS has a vital role to play in ensuring that peoples (right holders) have the space to seek accountability from the states (duty-bearers).

At the country level, the UN Resident Coordinators (UNRC) should provide oversight on UN system contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in line with national priorities and international standards. The UNRC could be tasked with routinely surveying national sustainable development and UN support, identifying gaps and inconsistencies, and initiating dialogues with all stakeholders – particularly those who are marginalized or vulnerable – on strategies to redress these.

The UNRC reporting framework should be designed in consultation with each developing nation, and be accessible and transparent. Data and analysis produced by civil society and other stakeholders should be reflected in the national reporting. The reported information could feed into a global SDG-based data storage system under the auspices of an internationally representative data

team to both articulate and anticipate potential risks, and prepare for contingent plans if necessary based on the UNRC reporting framework.

Tools such as surveys can be used to gauge government and public perceptions on UN performance. The results should be actively and broadly shared, and used as a platform for dialogue on changes needed to achieve greater impact and responsiveness.

One of the most important dimensions of the work of the UNDS is enabling meaningful, full and effective participation of civil society in decision-making processes. By establishing accessible structures and regular processes, the UNDS would promote more accountability to people. National, regional and global for a could take place bi-annually to evaluate the collaboration between UN Country Team, governments, and civil society and the impact of it.

2) Participation and partnerships

Participation

Inclusive, participatory practices at the country level are essential to achieve comprehensive implementation of Agenda 2030. Stakeholder engagement in long-term sustainable development works best if it is organized as a continuous, structured process, rather than on an ad-hoc basis or through unrelated one off engagement exercises at different points of the policy cycle. A structured process enables stakeholders as well as governments to plan ahead, to assemble evidence, reports and other material to make well-researched contributions at the appropriate time in the policy cycle. This allows trusting relationships of support and cooperation to be built.

The fourth sentence of the preamble of Agenda 2030 states, "All countries and all stakeholders, acting in collaborative partnership, will implement this plan." Therefore, each UN Country Team (UNCT) should develop and maintain a symbiotic, mutually respectful relationship with non-state actors. UNCTs should champion collaborative planning, convene regular, transparent, safe, open, inclusive, and accessible space for dialogue, and support participation of the furthest behind and disenfranchised, using state of the art analytic tools and planning principles. Creation of regular channels for consultation and communication with civil society at the national and sub-national level should be part of the UNCT work plans and resources. Each UNCT must have gender expertise, reflect gender parity, and actively work with women's movements, particularly grassroots movements, engaging women's knowledge. To epitomize the spirit and vision of Agenda 2030, each UNCT must demonstrate and foster equal respect for all peoples, in alignment with human rights principles, throughout policy and programme design, development, monitoring and evaluation.

It is vital for UNCT interaction to be established beyond capitals, reaching out to sub-national and community levels, with a focus on engaging directly with vulnerable and marginalized peoples. There must be a clearly defined process that connects to those who feel left out, to those who need role models, to those who have lost hope. The UN should establish - or whenever they exist, strengthen - broad UN civil society and stakeholders advisory committees.

Successful implementation of the Agenda 2030 will also require solution-based innovation labs where co-design, prototyping, and collective action create innovative (public) goods and services. A global system of Innovation Fellows and a digital platform that allows all solution providers to share best practices and expertise should be created. Any non-state actor interested in working on any SDG should be able to plug in digitally to find enough information about, and connection prospects to, any other entity working in those areas to allow them to accelerate their work.

Given the importance of effective cooperation among State and non-State actors for achieving Agenda 2030, the UN should begin to conduct national, regional and global convenings dedicated to the evaluation and improvement of collaboration between the UN system, national and sub-national governments, and a diverse, inclusive array of stakeholders.

Partnerships

Prior to starting a new partnership, it is imperative to have an understanding of the existing landscape of partnership structures and systems, particularly in-country. Partnerships must be reviewed for their value, and clear guiding principles put in place for seeking private sector finance.

Partnerships should be carefully selected as warranted by development requirements. These should: define standards for acceptable partners / partnership arrangements; cover selection / management / monitoring, including conflicts of interest; improve information disclosure on extrabudgetary resources; enable regular surveillance by Member States; establish criteria to end or prevent partnerships; and provide scope for regular public feedback on existing partnerships.

A database could rate how well different partners meet UN principles / guidelines, including across subsidiary bodies / entities. A current problem is that UN entities both pursue and oversee their partnerships. A central oversight function, possibly within UN Secretariat, should be established to monitor / track all partnerships with non-State actors.

Inclusive Partnerships: Central to partnerships at all levels and, most importantly, at national level is that all efforts be made to ensure partnerships do not miss the most vulnerable and furthest behind groups. Building on a human rights based approach, this means having the inclusion and/or engagement of specific sectors or citizen groups directly as a key component of the partnership approach, including children, youth, women, persons with disabilities, indigenous people, aging, among others.

3) Financing and funding

Funding remains a critical challenge for UNCTs and UN agencies operating at the national level. More incentives for coordinated work between UN agencies at the national level, and more innovation in terms of partnerships and resource mobilization are needed. The pooling of resources in response to national priorities is an important next step to eliminate unnecessary competition in

resource mobilization. It is important to move away from single donor project funds, and focus on core funding. To best harness the limited resources available to UN organizations, efforts should be made to ensure UNRCs are aware of the services and expertise that non-resident agencies offer.

Funding needs to be provided, along with support from UN agencies and the development system, for all communities to develop and implement holistic and integrated planning processes. It is vital for the UN to provide funding to support civil society to engage in national policy formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, to equalize opportunity for participation of all stakeholders, particularly those without sufficient resources. Funding for gender equality programming should be increased, and multi-sector partnerships – particularly with civil society organizations – should be enabled to ensure gender equality cuts across the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. An assessment of financing for gender equality must be extended to Official Development Assistance, macroeconomic policy and resource mobilization.

Coordinated multilateral support to the financing of the SDGs targeted to priority projects with high development potential, such as access to energy for all, could be a critical factor of change as it would give the private sector the necessary trust to lower its return requirements, therefore making the projects "bankable."

4) Interlinkages with the human rights agenda

The UNDS needs to ensure that policies, including economic policies, are aligned to human rights, and must create a proper space and mechanism to assess this. All structures including Regional Commissions and each UNCT must prioritize human rights, and look to human rights experts or UN agencies with human rights expertise when developing policy if the capacity does not otherwise exist. While impartial, the UNCTs should be on the side of human rights and the standards the UN has developed so meticulously over decades. The UNCTs should provide constant reminders to uphold human rights in all development related processes. All of the UN system should work together to ensure that governments respect, protect and fulfill human rights for all people - especially the vulnerable and marginalized - and abide to human rights treaties and guiding principles.

As part of fulfilling human rights, each UNCT should promote engagement with disenfranchised populations, including but not limited to: Indigenous Peoples, rural populations, castes, and the LGBTQI2 community. A UN system-wide task force should be formed to provide policy guidance, including at the country level, toward efforts to enhance the implementation and integration of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities as a key for achieving the SDGs for persons with disabilities. To ensure progress on gender equality / mainstreaming and the empowerment of women, a "feminist accountability framework" for the SDGs should be adopted, linking Goals to key conventions such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Declaration.

The UN System and agencies, funds and programmes should be reoriented to focus on reducing inequalities, and to achieve this, should increase consultation with civil society and regard communities as partners in development rather than recipients, and decentralize their activities, including by conducting more of the decision-making processes in the global south.

5) Capacity building

Paragraph 4 of Agenda 2030 includes a commitment by Member States to "endeavour to reach the furthest behind first." Many persons and institutions currently lack the skills and capacities to achieve Agenda 2030 on their own. Training through participatory conferences and seminars and bringing all stakeholders on board would greatly help. The capacity within civil society is highly variable and recent attacks on the role of civil society have weakened many organizations' ability to speak out; there is therefore a need for specific support in the form of workshops and webinars to build the skills of civil society organizations and other stakeholders to access relevant UN information platforms and engage with formal government reporting.

The potential of UNCTs for training and education should be fully realized, including for providing human rights learning opportunities for claim holders and duty bearers, and ensuring all levels have the relevant training and skill sets to create and sustain enduring partnerships. UNCTs must also help Member States design and leverage investments for projects pertaining to the SDGs. Capacity building is also needed for data collection and management, including disaggregation.

In the 1990's the UN carried out a Capacity 21 programme which supported countries in developing national strategy plans. Efforts were made to upgrade it to Capacity 2015 and focus on implementation during World Summit on Sustainable Development. A program and other efforts must now be created to fill this gap and ensure that the UN system supports all countries in fully achieving the SDGs, with all country plans being based on the Rio Principles and on achieving all of the global agreements and commitments made to date. These strategies must include funding and other support for civil society to participate fully in the implementation processes.

6) Data

The data revolution needs to be an inclusive and transparent process that includes statistical experts, data scientists, civil society organizations, national human rights institutions, service providers and marginalized populations. Low-cost, adaptable, and reliable data collection systems must be developed that ensure the data is accurate, timely, and immediately available to UNCTs, policymakers, the public and civil society. The UNDS is well placed to support governments in collecting, disaggregating and analyzing data, including from non-governmental sources, and to help national statistical systems to develop capacities.

Data should be disaggregated, should focus on the local level, and be crowd-based to capture statistics about the most poor, vulnerable and marginalized citizens of society. Data that does not include personal or sensitive information should be open by default. Innovative methods such as

supporting open data Application Programming Interfaces should be used to enable independent software development teams to build and share valuable applications, data dashboards, tools, and more. Recent improvements in information technology, such as the use of mobile technology in collecting and sharing data, create an opportunity to enhance statistics for decision-making purposes, solution-making, accountability, and to create new forms of participatory monitoring. As part of the country level engagement, the UN should support citizen-generated data to supplement and strengthen the official reporting process. Accessible databases and platforms should be established on national, regional and global levels. Countries can engage youth to become active participants in data generation, engagement, and solution-making, as part of their educational experience and curriculum.

7) Communications

The UNRCs should be tasked with being aggressive marketers of the SDGs themselves as there is work to do to ensure that framework becomes common parlance - particularly for, e.g., urban planners and leaders at the city level.

Information about what the UN does in a country is sometimes not available to non-state actors on the ground and in a language that would be understood by the majority. Country teams need to strengthen their information channels to disseminate up-to-speed information to non-state actors. In this way, non-state actors would better understand how the UN works and would also know how to contribute meaningfully to the mission and vision of the UN as well as the SDGs. UNCTs should be supported to share and collaborate on best practices.

8) Policy Coherence

UNCTs should focus on policy coherence. There is a clear need for greater emphasis on the links between the three pillars of sustainable development. The UNCTs should support research and roundtables at the country level with different ministries to ensure a joined-up approach, and encourage holistic approaches that build bridges between silos, and translate the collective commitment to leave no one behind into positive national action in implementing the SDGs.

The key issue of policy coherence between the SDGs, human rights and trade policies can be addressed through 'human rights and sustainability assessment' and SDGs Compatibility Impact Assessment of all trade and investment agreements.

In short, the UN should be for the people and it should stand with the people: it should make an extra effort to cover and include those that will be affected by policies but currently have no say. This is essential in order for UN actions to be coherent with Article 1.2 of the United Nations Charter: "To develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and to take other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace."

ANNEX I: Civil Society Collaboration Committee Members

First Name	Last Name	Organization Name	Gender	Country of Residence	Nationality
Kirthi	Jayakumar	The Red Elephant Foundation	Female	India	India
Anaru	Fraser	Hui E! Community Aotearoa	Male	New Zealand	New Zealand
Omoyemen Lucia	Odigie-Emmanuel	Centre for Human Rights and Climate Change Research	Female	Nigeria	Nigeria
Uwem Robert	Otu	African Youth Movement (AYM)	Male	Nigeria	Nigeria
Neeshad	Viydanagar Shafi	CAN Arab World	Male	Qatar	India
Bonian	Golmohammadi	WFUNA	Male	Switzerland	Sweden
Sanam	Amin	Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development	Female	Thailand	Bangladesh
Patricia	Fernandes Da Silva	IPPF/WHR	Female	USA	Angola
Orsolya	Bartha	International Disability Alliance	Female	USA	Hungary
James	Holston	University of Denver	Male	USA	USA
Roberto	Borrero	International Indian Treaty Councill	Male	USA	USA
Cristiana	Carletti	University Roma Tre	Female	Italy	Italy
Severin	Sindizera	Association pour l'Integration et le Developpement Durable au Burundi	Male	Burundi	Burundi
Grujic	Gordana	OASIS	Female	Serbia	Serbia
Naiara	Costa	Together 2030	Female	USA	Brazil

Gia	Gaspard Taylor	Network Of Rural Women Producers Trinidad And Tobago	Female	Trinidad and Tobago	Trinidad and Tobago
Shirley Mo Ching	Yeung	Gratia Christian College (GCC, HK) / UNESCO, HK Association	Female	China	Canada
Martini	Mireille	Finance Watch	Female	Belgium	France
Nfinn	Tcharbuahbokengo	Federation of Environmental and Ecological Diversity for Agricultural Revampment and Human Rights (FEEDAR & HR)	Male	Cameroon	Cameroon
Denison	Jayasooria	Proham Society for the promotion of human rights	Male	Malaysia	Malaysia
Ruchi	Soni	wPOWER	Female	USA	India
Hugh	Dugan	School of Diplomacy, Seton Hall University	Male	USA	USA
Omair	Paul	Muslims For Progressive Values	Male	USA	USA

ANNEX II: Contributing Civil Society Organizations

Organization Name	Country of Residence	Nationality
4EPR Enterprise	Canada	Canada
Action-Santé-Education	Cameroon	Cameroon
Africa Centre For Energy Policy	Ghana	Ghana
Africa Development Interchange Network (ADIN)	Cameroon	Cameroon
Africa Platform	Kenya	Kenya
African Network of Young Leaders for Peace and Sustainable Development	Cameroon	Cameroon
African Youth Movement	Nigeria	Nigeria
Art Act	Morocco	Morocco
Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development	Thailand	Bangladesh
Asia Pacific Regional CSO Engagement Mechanism (APRCEM)	Thailand	Indonesia
Association pour l'Integration et le Developpement Durable au Burundi	Burundi	Burundi
Aube Nouvelle pour la Femme et le Développement (ANFD, nonprofit NGO)	Democratic Republic of the Congo	Democratic Republic of the Congo
Brain Sluice Africa Child's	South Africa	Democratic Republic of the Congo
Caritas Kenya - Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops (KCCB)	Kenya	Kenya
Centre for Policy Research and Development Solutions (CPRDS)	Nigeria	Nigeria
CIVICUS	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
Earth Info Services	Nigeria	Nigeria
Environmental Initiative Organization for Sustainable Development (EnvI)	Sudan	Sudan
Federation of Environmental & Ecological Diversity for Agricultural Revampment & Human Rights (FEEDAR & HR)	Cameroon	Cameroon
Finance Watch	Belgium	France
Fundacion Indigena Kollas y Lupacas	Peru	Peru

GICAR-CAM	Cameroon	Cameroon
Global Ecovillage Network	USA	USA
Global Peace and Development Organization	Liberia	Liberia
Global Policy Watch	USA	Canada
Global Survival For Grassroots Development And Empowerment Initiative	Nigeria	Nigeria
Global Systems Analysis and Simulation Association in the U.S.A. (GLASAS/USA)	USA	Japan
Grace Religious Books & Publishing Inc. New York, NY	USA	USA
GRIKOB Foundation Ghana	Ghana	Ghana
GTG International Organisation Limited	Uganda	Uganda
Health of Mother Earth Foundation	Nigeria	Nigeria
Hetavad Skills Initiative & Networks International	Nigeria	Nigeria
Homeplanet Virtual "Uni"versity	Canada	Canada
India Water Foundation	India	India
International Assembly of Human Rights	India	India
International Center for Research on Women (ICRW)	USA	USA
International Disability Alliance	USA	Serbia
International Movement for Advancement of Education Culture Social & Economic Development (IMAECSED)	India	India
ioi strategic design	USA	Lebanon
iuventum	Germany	Germany
JEVEV (Jeunesse et Emplois Verts pour une Economie Verte)	Benin	Benin
Kadesh International	South Africa	South Africa
League of Women Voters of the United States	USA	USA
Livingstream Pharmacy	Nigeria	Nigeria
Marchlewicz Marketing Management Agency	Poland	Poland
Muslims For Progressive Values	USA	USA
National Council for Climate Change Sustainable Development and Public Leadership (NCCSD)	India	India

Network of Rural Women Producers Trinidad and Tobago	Trinidad and Tobago	Trinidad and Tobago
NGO "Terra-1530"	Republic of Moldova	Romania
OASIS	Serbia	Serbia
ONG ACTC	Mauritania	Mauritania
ONG PADJENA	Benin	Benin
People's Health Movement	Viet Nam	Chile
RAAH Foundation	Pakistan	Pakistan
Redes De Apoyo Inteligente y Sostenido AC	Mexico	Mexico
Resilience	Bahamas	Bahamas
Rosi Foundation	India	India
SKYIANS	Pakistan	Pakistan
solarpure	USA	USA
SOS Education	Côte D'Ivoire	Côte D'Ivoire
The PsySIP Project	USA	USA
The Red Elephant Foundation	India	India
Together 2030	USA	Brazil
UNESCO, HK Association / Gratia Christian College	China	Canada
United Young Farmers Forum	Nigeria	Nigeria
University of Denver	USA	USA
Ururka Dhalinyarada Gobolada Waqooyi Ee Midnimo	Somalia	Somalia
WE 2C	France	Switzerland
Wikinetix	Belgium	Belgium
Women for Women's Human Rights - New Ways	Turkey	Turkey
Women Thrive Worldwide	USA	Portugal
Women's Health and Education Center (WHEC)	USA	USA