



Earth Negotiations Bulletin

HLPF 2016
#6

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A Reporting Service for Environment and Development Negotiations

Online at <http://www.iisd.ca/hlpf/2016/>

Vol. 33 No. 24

Published by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)

Monday, 18 July 2016

HLPF 2016 HIGHLIGHTS: FRIDAY, 15 JULY 2016

Sessions on Friday focused on the theme of “From inspiration to action: Multi-stakeholder engagement for implementation” at the 2016 meeting of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF). In the morning, discussions took place on “Ensuring that no one is left behind – the implementation of the 2030 Agenda by Major Groups and other stakeholders,” and “Multi-stakeholder approaches at the national level – the opportunity to enhance follow-up and review by engaging Major Groups and other stakeholders.” In the afternoon, a discussion on “Regional experiences” was followed by a wrap-up session, concluding the discussions of the first week.

FROM INSPIRATION TO ACTION: MULTI-STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Chair Jürg Lauber, Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the UN and Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Vice President, opened the day’s proceedings by extending his condolences to the people of France for the attack that took place in Nice the previous day. Barbara Adams, Global Policy Forum, moderated the two morning discussions.

Ensuring that no one is left behind – the implementation of the 2030 Agenda by Major Groups and other stakeholders:

Discussant Macharia Kamau, Permanent Representative of Kenya to the UN, outlined the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation’s preparations for its second High-Level Meeting (HLM 2) in November 2016, and its linkages with the work of the HLPF. He said the Partnership is calling for a new deal to improve the efficiency and efficacy of development cooperation.

Berry Vrbancovic, Mayor of Kitchener, Canada, said local and regional authorities have a powerful mandate in driving the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and called for the HLPF 2016 Ministerial Declaration to emphasize their role.

Respondent Norma Munguía Aldaraca, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mexico, highlighted the challenges of mainstreaming and integrating crosscutting themes in her country, to avoid fragmentation.

Respondent Joan Carling, Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact, proposed a list of actions to ensure the inclusion of indigenous peoples, including representation in national sustainable development bodies, and participatory data collection.

Respondent Yvonne Harz-Pitre, International Fertilizer Industry Association, representing BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY, highlighted the role of the private sector in building transformative partnerships by contributing resources and expertise.

Sarah Mendelson, US Representative to ECOSOC, stressed the need to raise awareness in her country of the SDGs as a transformational opportunity to address inequalities.

Marco Marzano de Marinis, World Farmers’ Organisation, stressed the role of farmers in achieving a range of SDGs and called on governments to support the engagement of stakeholders in SDG implementation.

Noting that the world of volunteering has moved beyond the North-South axis, Alok Rath, Voluntary Service Overseas International, called for local capacity building to support volunteer engagement and harness the power of the world’s one billion volunteers.

Frances Zainoeddin, Gray Panthers, argued that ageism is as rampant as sexism and racism and said changing mindsets is about strengthening capabilities and addressing vulnerabilities.

Peter Thomson, Permanent Representative of Fiji to the UN and incoming UN General Assembly (UNGA) President, announced that his UNGA Presidency will include a team of eight experts working on SDG implementation, and he will hold himself accountable to demonstrate significant progress in each SDG by the end of his term.

BENIN expressed hope that HLM 2 would address the fact that only 25% of aid to underdeveloped countries is delivered to the people in need. SRI LANKA highlighted efforts to engage stakeholders in his country. Speaking for the NETHERLANDS, Max van Deursen, a youth representative, highlighted his opportunity to be a member of the Dutch delegation as a concrete step to include stakeholders and enhance accountability.

Multistakeholder approaches at the national level – the opportunity to enhance follow-up and review by engaging Major Groups and other stakeholders: Discussant Mabel Bianco, Fundación para Estudio e Investigación de la Mujer, highlighted a review by the Women’s Major Group, which found that less than 10% of the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) involved civil society from the beginning.

Discussant Yetebersh Nigussie, Light for the World, said the SDGs are a new opportunity for persons with disabilities to be included as contributors to sustainable development.

Respondent Harriet Ludwig, Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, Germany, noted that her country’s efforts to involve citizens in the 2030 Agenda and VNRs have been “worth it” but not always easy.

Discussant Annisa Triyanti, CHILDREN AND YOUTH, said young people are already taking leadership roles in their communities.

Discussant Antonia Wulff, Education International, for WORKERS AND TRADE UNIONS, proposed “courageously and coherently” broadening the scope of social dialogue as a way to overcome tensions between the economic and social pillars of sustainable development. She also expressed concern that SDG 10 (reducing inequalities) did not have a “mother agency” or ministry to ensure its implementation.

This issue of the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* © <enb@iisd.org> is written and edited by Anju Sharma, Rishikesh Ram Bhandary, Dina Hestad and Cleo Verkuijl. The Digital Editor is Kiara Worth. The Editor is Pamela Chasek, Ph.D. <pam@iisd.org>. The Director of IISD Reporting Services is Langston James “Kimo” Goree VI <kimo@iisd.org>. The Sustaining Donors of the *Bulletin* are the European Union, the Government of Switzerland (the Swiss Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN)), the Italian Ministry for the Environment, Land and Sea, and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. General Support for the *Bulletin* during 2016 is provided by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety (BMUB), the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, SWAN International, the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Japanese Ministry of Environment (through the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies - IGES), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC). Specific funding for coverage of HLPF 2016 has been provided by the European Commission and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). Funding for translation of the *Bulletin* into French has been provided by the Government of France, the Wallonia, Québec, and the International Organization of La Francophonie/Institute for Sustainable Development of La Francophonie (IOF/IFDD). The opinions expressed in the *Bulletin* are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of IISD or other donors. Excerpts from the *Bulletin* may be used in non-commercial publications with appropriate academic citation. For information on the *Bulletin*, including requests to provide reporting services, contact the Director of IISD Reporting Services at <kimo@iisd.org>, +1-646-536-7556 or 300 East 56th St., 11D, New York, NY 10022 USA. The ENB team at HLPF 2016 can be contacted by e-mail at <anju@iisd.org>.



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Respondent Carlos Sérgio Sobral Duarte, Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN, Brazil, said multi-stakeholder dialogue in his country is part of an ongoing process that is constantly being improved.

Discussant Guéladio Cissé, Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute, called for a focus on education and capacity building, and on mobilizing adequate resources for science, technology and innovation related to SDG implementation.

Respondent Inge Herman Rydland, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway, said the 2030 Agenda is based on mutual needs rather than asymmetric donor-recipient relationships and stressed 2030 Agenda implementation hinges on active stakeholder participation.

Kepa, an umbrella organization of NGOs, speaking on behalf of FINLAND, said being part of the country's official delegation was an opportunity to share their views, and stressed the role of civil society as watchdogs. Together 2030, a civil society initiative, highlighted an interfaith platform initiative in Ghana to promote harmony in line with SDG 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions).

REGIONAL EXPERIENCES

Oh Joon, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the UN and ECOSOC President, chaired and moderated the session.

Gamini Jayawickrama Perera, Minister of Sustainable Development and Wildlife, Sri Lanka, presented the outcomes of the Asia Pacific Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, which agreed on a regional roadmap for implementing the 2030 Agenda.

Ghada Waly, Minister of Social Solidarity, Egypt, described the outcome of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, calling for integrated implementation of the 2030 and 2063 Agendas.

Janis Karklins, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Latvia to the UN in Geneva, said countries in the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) are updating and adopting policy frameworks and targets to implement the 2030 Agenda.

Juan José Gómez Camacho, Permanent Representative of Mexico to the UN, said the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean will provide a political and technical forum for countries in the region to exchange experiences and cooperate in the process of developing indicators and baselines.

Amjad Mohammad Saleh Al-Moumani, Deputy Permanent Representative of Jordan to the UN, presented the outcome of the 2016 Arab Forum for Sustainable Development organized by the Economic and Social Commission for West Asia, highlighting, *inter alia*, human and civil rights, social services, social protection and gender equality.

Virachai Plasai, Association of Southeast Asian Nations, described the organization's role in forging stronger multilateral and regional partnerships in the region, and encouraging countries to mainstream the SDGs into regional and national plans.

Badre Eddine Allali, League of Arab States, noted the need to build data capacity in the Arab region.

Angela Missouri Sherman-Peter, Caribbean Community, noted the high level of public debt in her region, and the need to build civil society and private sector capacity to aid domestic resource mobilization.

The Committee on World Food Security highlighted its work to promote political convergence among countries and other stakeholders towards achieving food security.

SOUTH AFRICA noted the value of regional consultative meetings for peer learning, and said it was up to each region to define the terms of reference for regional reviews. The MALDIVES, for the Alliance of Small Island States, asked how regional commissions were integrating the SAMOA Pathway, and promoting inter- and intra-regional cooperation. GHANA highlighted SDG 16 as a priority for many countries.

Christian Friis Bach, ECE, said regional forums could be a "docking station" for national and regional reviews, statistical recommendations and capacity building.

Shamshad Akhtar, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, called for a systems approach to foster interactions and design effective solutions for sustainable development.

Rima Khalaf, Economic and Social Commission for West Asia, said conflict, occupation and environmental challenges are threatening already meager development gains in the region.

Alicia Bárcena, Economic and Social Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, called for a "new Keynesianism" to boost collective investment policies, tackle environmental challenges and protect jobs.

Giovanie Biha, Economic Commission for Africa, outlined a mapping exercise that shows the complexity of and opportunities for aligning the SDGs and Agenda 2063 targets, which will form the basis of the integrated results and monitoring framework for both Agendas. BENIN urged other regions and countries to undertake similar alignment exercises.

IRAN expressed the expectation of the East Asian region that the UN would assist them in implementing the SDGs. FRANCE described national efforts to incorporate sustainable development into public policy. FINLAND highlighted the beneficial role of peer learning within and among regions. CUBA asked how true partnerships could be achieved to help developing countries implement the SDGs. CHAD noted that a UN decision related to providing technical and financial assistance to countries for developing national indicators is still pending.

Together 2030 said regional forums occupy "no man's land," and lessons need to trickle down to the national and local levels.

NGOs called for the adoption of regional-level accountability mechanisms. CHILDREN AND YOUTH called for adequate civil society representation in regional processes. The stakeholder group of persons with disabilities urged for sign language interpretation and Braille availability at meetings of regional forums.

WOMEN asked what mechanisms and procedures are in place in regional commissions to ensure effective participation of women. The Asia Pacific Regional CSO Engagement Mechanism said the region's 2030 Agenda roadmap would be transformative if implemented with stakeholders.

In closing statements, Friis Bach said regional conventions are an important platform for peer review. Bárcena highlighted the need to mobilize resources by tackling corporate tax evasion. Akhtar noted a range of initiatives on disability in the region and work to address the SAMOA Pathway. Biha stressed the need for domestic resource mobilization.

WRAP-UP SESSION

ECOSOC President Oh listed key messages from the week's discussions: social inclusion; attention to the most vulnerable; policies and institutions to support inclusion; involvement of multiple stakeholders; and the role of regional forums in linking the national and global processes. He said they would be conveyed to heads of State and ministers during the Ministerial Segment.

IN THE CORRIDORS

"Nothing about us, without us," Major Groups and other stakeholders said in various ways on Friday, as HLPF 2016 debated multi-stakeholder participation. Some stakeholders felt the range of civil society representatives taking the floor was a tribute to the participatory opportunities the HLPF affords. But as many underlined, the bigger picture is considerably less rosy. The Women's Major Group quoted their review, showing that less than 10% of the VNRs prepared so far consulted stakeholders from the beginning of the process. Others pointed to the shrinking space for civil society around the world, despite the rhetoric of partnerships. However, the success of the 2030 Agenda hinges on stakeholder participation, as one delegate astutely noted. Another spoke of the need to do it effectively. "It isn't easy, but it's worth it," she said.