

Workshop
Governance, Transparency and Accountability: Major Groups and Other Stakeholders
Collaboration toward the High Level Political Forum

Concept Note
18-19 June 2015

Background

The outcome of Rio+20, *The Future We Want*, resulted in the creation of a universal, intergovernmental High-Level Political Forum (HLPF), as a successor to the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) that builds on the strengths, experiences, resources and inclusive participation modalities of the CSD. The format and organizational aspects of the HLPF, including how it will engage with Major Groups and other Stakeholders (MGoS), have been further spelled out by the General Assembly in its resolution 67/290. The resolution encourages the Major Groups identified in Agenda 21 (women, children & youth, indigenous peoples, non-governmental organizations, local authorities, workers & trade unions, business & industry, the scientific & technological community and farmers) and other stakeholders, such as private philanthropic organizations, educational and academic entities, persons with disabilities, volunteer groups and others active in areas related to sustainable development to autonomously establish and maintain effective coordination mechanisms for participation in the HLPF and coordinate actions derived from that participation at the global, regional and national levels, in a way that ensures effective, broad and balanced participation by region and by type of organization.

The same resolution also allows the representatives of the nine MGoS the following, while retaining the intergovernmental character of the forum:

- (a) To attend all official meetings of the forum;
- (b) To have access to all official information and documents;
- (c) To intervene in official meetings;
- (d) To submit documents and present written and oral contributions;
- (e) To make recommendations;
- (f) To organize side events and round tables, in cooperation with Member States and the Secretariat.

There is broad agreement among Member States that the HLPF will play a key role in the monitoring and review of the Post-2015 Development Agenda. Resolution 67/290 decides that the HLPF, under the auspices of ECOSOC, shall conduct regular reviews, starting in 2016, on the follow-up and implementation of sustainable development commitments and objectives, including those related to means of implementation, within the context of the Post-2015 Development Agenda. The resolution further states that such reviews shall be voluntary, State-led, provide a platform for partnerships, including through the participation of MGoS, and shall replace the national voluntary reviews held in the context of the ECOSOC high-level segment.

Objective of workshop

The objective of the workshop will be to discuss ways in which the mechanism of MGoS could be adapted to best function in the context of the review architecture to be put in place for the sustainable development agenda at the national, regional and global levels, including the HLPF as well as the other platforms where the review of post-2015 is expected to occur. The focus will be to look at ways to strengthen the internal governance structures of the nine Major Groups and of other Stakeholders in order to ensure broad and balanced participation by region and by type of sector and promote openness, transparency and accountability. Secondly, it will look at how to ensure that the voices of MGoS as identified in resolution 67/290, can be effectively brought into the HLPF at all levels and preparatory processes, including in the monitoring and review mechanisms and in the development of partnerships that would accompany the follow-up and review process, and how these other stakeholder groups can coordinate their inputs while maintaining the same guiding principles of openness, transparency and accountability.

The workshop is an opportunity for the representatives of the nine MGoS to share lessons learned in terms of the governance structures within their respective sectors, including election/selection processes, regional outreach and working with other partners towards enhanced levels of engagement. Secondly, it will provide a space for other stakeholders to spell out their particular governance structures and provide background on the constituency and the work they have been doing. Together, it will provide the participants a space to brainstorm how future engagement of MGoS in the HLPF can be structured in such a manner that the provisions on 67/290 are realized to the fullest extent possible. Moreover, the workshop will seek to discuss how to set up an inclusive, transparent, autonomous and flexible coordination mechanism that will allow for MGoS to take full advantage of the political space created at the HLPF. A stream of the conversation should focus on capacity building for MGoS by identifying the idiosyncratic nature and challenges of each. In this context, it will also look at the role of relevant bodies in the UN System.

Background Documents

All MGoS will be invited to provide a concise review of their respective governance processes, work at the different levels of their respective constituencies, strategies employed, accountability mechanisms, identifying areas of strength and achievement, limitations in the current arrangement and lessons learned. Guiding questions will be shared in advance. The MGoS papers submitted to the HLPF will also be discussed and reviewed.

Additional background documents also include:

- ❖ [Participatory Democracy- HLPF laying the basis for sustainable development governance in the 21st Century, Jan-Gustav Strandenaes](#)

- ❖ [The Role and Place of the High-Level Political Forum in Strengthening the Global Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development, Steven Bernstein](#)
- ❖ [Reviewing the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals and Partnerships: A Proposal for a Multi-level Review at the High-level Political Forum, Marianne Beishem](#)
- ❖ [Strengthening Public Participation at the United Nations for Sustainable Development: Dialogue, Debate, Dissent, Deliberation, Barbara Adams and Lou Pingeot](#)
- ❖ [Multi-stakeholder partnerships: Making them work for the Post-2015 Development Agenda, Felix Dodds](#)
- ❖ [Making Commitments Matter: A Toolkit for Young People to Evaluate National Youth Policy, UNDESA](#)

Scenario

Day 1: (A.M.) Architecture for Review and Monitoring of the Implementation of Post-2015

The first session of this Workshop will look at the architecture surrounding the review and monitoring of the implementation of the post-2015 agenda in general and how MGoS can effectively participate in this review. Drawing from the zero draft of the post-2015 framework, this session will address the following crucial issues:

- ❖ References from SG's synthesis report;;
- ❖ A national component (from SG synthesis report)
- ❖ A regional component for peer reviewing, tailored to regional and subregional needs, undertaken by existing mechanisms in a participatory, multistakeholder process, to consider national reports, identify regional trends, obstacles, commonalities, best practices and lessons learned and to generate solutions and mutual support;
- ❖ A global component for knowledge-sharing, as a forum for participatory, multi-stakeholder and, importantly, universal review, starting at the launch of the new agenda;
- ❖ A thematic component to chart global progress at regular intervals on the sustainable development framework to help to identify challenges and bottlenecks and to mobilize action to address them;
- ❖ A component to review the global partnership for sustainable development.

Moderator:

- 1) **Marianne Beishem (maybe funding needed); OR**
- 2) **Angelina Fisher, NYU**

Remarks: Mr. Thomas Gass, Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs, UN DESA

Respondents: Stephanie Beecroft (MGCY), representative of the CSO group on FfD, Rodrigo Messias (LAMG)

Rapporteurs: TBD

Outcome

The outcome will be **proposals** for the monitoring, follow-up and review architecture for the Post-2015 Development Agenda at various levels, including the HLPF. In addition, it will develop recommendations for the effective and genuine participation of MGoS in these processes.

Day 1: (P.M.) Strengthening Participation of Major Groups and other Stakeholders within the HLPF

On 9 July 2013, during its 91st Plenary Meeting, the UNGA formally adopted by consensus in resolution 67/290 the format and organisational aspects of the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF). The HLPF has replaced the Commission on Sustainable Development as the apex body at the UN to coordinate sustainable development, and it will become the future home of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and a platform for partnerships. No UNGA resolution has ever given MGoS such wide-ranging access and participation rights at the UN as this resolution.

- Paragraph 8(c) of the HLPF resolution, 'Shall provide a platform for partnerships, through the participation of major groups and other relevant stakeholders.'
- Paragraph 15 of the HLPF resolution states that 'major groups and other relevant stakeholders' will have access to all HLPF meetings, the ability to intervene in proceedings and make oral and written statements.
- Paragraph 16, 'Encourages the major groups identified in Agenda 21 and other stakeholders, such as private philanthropic organizations, educational and academic entities, persons with disabilities, volunteer groups and other stakeholders active in areas related to sustainable development, to autonomously establish and maintain effective coordination mechanisms for participation in the high-level political forum...'

Moderator: Jan-Gustav Strandanaes

Presentation:

- 1) Jorge Laguna-Celis (via videoconference); **OR**
- 2) Rico Zampetti

Respondents: Asia Pacific (RCEM) and WMG, Rosa Lizarde, Roberto Borrero (IPMG), representative from the Committee on World Food Security

Rapporteurs: TBD

Outcome

The outcome of this discussion will be to **identify in concrete terms the enhanced modalities** of the MGoS to be incorporated into the HLPF and other relevant bodies at the global, regional and national levels that will ensure the full participation rights of all stakeholders in the implementation, review and monitoring of the SDGs. The **role of the HLPF as the platform for partnerships**, including criteria for their formation, monitoring and review, will be addressed.

Day 2 (A.M.) Strengthening Major Groups and other Stakeholders

In 2013, a paper was commissioned by DSD, looking to evaluate the Major Groups structure and identify areas that needed to be further strengthened. The author, Barbara Adams, noted 19 recommendations on how to enhance the structure to be more meaningful. The following focus areas would be particularly relevant for the Workshop:

- ❖ Strengthen structures in Major Group/Stakeholder governance;
- ❖ Strengthening and supporting the NGO Major Group;
- ❖ Putting emphasis on the regional and local level;
- ❖ Clear mandate/terms of reference;
- ❖ Accountability and transparency;
- ❖ Inclusiveness, including outreach;
- ❖ Recognition of diversity;
- ❖ Gender and regional balance.

Discussions will also consider definitions of the term “stakeholders,” guiding principles and criteria for the participation of organized civil society constituencies and groups, and mechanisms for accountability.

MGoS are strongly encouraged to come prepared to share their internal structures and governance, challenges and best practices, and any additional reflections, in this session. Guiding questions and suggested timing (approximately 5 minutes or less) would be shared with participants in advance to support preparation.

Moderator: Barbara Adams as both presenter and moderator

Presentation: Barbara Adams

Respondents: All MGoS present who wish to share, with a couple of specific suggestions to kick the discussion off

Rapporteurs: TBD

Outcome

The outcome of these discussions will result in a list of **suggestions on how to enhance the governance structures of each MGoS** sectors and next steps on these recommendations with definitive timelines for expected outputs. MGoS will be given a chance to talk about what they have worked on in light of this report. Specific recommendations on principles and criteria for the participation of other stakeholders and accountability mechanisms for MGoS will be developed.

Day 2: (P.M.) Coordination among Major Groups and other Stakeholders

The last session will provide an opportunity for Major Groups Organizing Partners (OPs) and representatives of other stakeholders to discuss how to establish and maintain autonomous coordination mechanisms at all levels.

Moderator: Maruxa Cardama (Communitas Coalition)

Presentation: RCEM (Intro Remarks), CSM of Committee on Food Security

Report back from rapporteurs of previous sessions.

Respondents: Oli Henman (CIVICUS), Maria Isabel Rivera (Stakeholder Group on Ageing); James O'Brien (volunteer groups)

Rapporteurs: TBD

Outcome

Building on the governance discussions from the previous sessions, **recommendations on how the future engagement of MGoS in the HLPF may be best structured** to fulfill the provisions of 67/290 to the fullest extent possible will be considered. **Recommendations for the establishment of autonomous coordination mechanisms among MGoS engagement at the HLPF** will also be considered.