



HLPF 2016 HIGHLIGHTS: WEDNESDAY, 13 JULY 2016

On Wednesday morning, the 2016 meeting of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) started with panel discussions on “Creating ownership at the national level” and “Mainstreaming Sustainable Development Goals into national policies, plans and strategies and integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development.” In the afternoon, discussions took place on “Vertical cooperation – local authorities and national governments working together for implementation of the 2030 Agenda” and “Challenges in mobilizing means of implementation at the national level (financing, technology, capacity building).”

CREATING OWNERSHIP AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

Frederick Musiiwa Makamure Shava, Permanent Representative of Zimbabwe to the UN and Vice President, UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), chaired this session. It was moderated by Jessica Espey, Sustainable Development Solutions Network.

Panelist Lu Yonglong, Chinese Academy of Science, stressed the importance of formulating national strategies with strong national leadership, practical indicators to track progress, and verifiable and reliable data at all levels.

Panelist Louis Meuleman, University of Massachusetts, Boston, cautioned against using external blueprints for national implementation, noting that sometimes, silos must be connected rather than broken down.

Discussant Annika Lindblom, Ministry of Environment, Finland, emphasized that sustainable development is a long-term challenge requiring new models of governance and multi-actor partnerships.

Sharing his country’s experience in nationalizing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), discussant Ivane Shamugia, Administration of the Government, Georgia, highlighted: the desire not to create additional bureaucracy; balancing the universal nature of SDGs with the national context; use of participatory frameworks; and the challenge of data availability.

Discussant Adolfo Ayuso, Office of the President, Mexico, identified: building knowledge and understanding of the SDGs; willingness of stakeholders to participate; and strong mechanisms to achieve these objectives as key requirements for national-level SDG ownership.

Discussant Gomer Padong, Philippine Social Enterprise Network, said the “leaving no one behind” approach of the SDGs is a direct response to the focus of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) on “low-hanging fruit” while ignoring the hardest to reach, and identified participatory approaches as a key ingredient for ownership.

From the floor, ITALY, KENYA, BOTSWANA, PALAU and INDONESIA outlined efforts to increase national ownership of the SDGs. BENIN outlined the need to change mindsets, saying SDGs have already helped do so. MALAYSIA called for clarity on who should break down silos, and how. WOMEN said civil society was not consulted in the preparation of Voluntary National Reports (VNRs) or was informed very late, reducing the efficacy of the VNRs. INDIGENOUS PEOPLES argued for the creation of national engagement mechanisms. The INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION said the development process of VNRs should involve parliaments.

In response to questions, Meuleman cautioned that breaking silos could decrease the effectiveness of some organizations and obscure their purpose. Lu said the SDGs encourage governments to think longer term.

MAINSTREAMING SDGS INTO NATIONAL POLICIES, PLANS AND STRATEGIES AND INTEGRATING THE THREE DIMENSIONS OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Sven Jürgenson, Permanent Representative of Estonia and ECOSOC Vice President, chaired the session. It was moderated by Nick Ishmael Perkins, SciDev.net.

Koichi Aiboshi, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan, described the four pillars of his country’s efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda: an implementation framework, guiding principles, collaboration with stakeholders, and support for global implementation.

Joseph Enyimu, Ministry of Finance, Planning, and Economic Development, Uganda, stressed the importance of: creating policy space to mainstream SDGs into national plans; engaging citizens in a national dialogue, supported by local civil society and media; and national sustainable development financing strategies.

Wardarina, Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development, identified “warning signs” that may undermine the ambition of the SDGs, including: lack of institutional arrangements and policies to support the 2030 Agenda; failure to involve civil society in planning, implementation and review; and failure to address systemic and structural barriers.

Izzet Ari, Ministry of Development, Turkey, highlighted multi-sector and multi-stakeholder approaches, partnerships, political ownership and means of implementation (MOI) as factors essential for achieving the 2030 Agenda.

Eili Lepik, Government Office, Estonia, outlined practical examples to mainstream the SDGs, including integrated impact assessments and information and communications technology solutions like e-government.

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Discussant Olivier Brochenin, France, highlighted: working through existing structures and institutions; the importance of coherence; consulting with civil society; and the value of partnerships in finding solutions. Discussant Stine Lise Hattestad Bratsberg, PURE Consulting, said the SDGs represent a new framework for the private sector, and highlighted the importance of public awareness and national-level dialogue.

In the ensuing discussion, CHINA highlighted the country's 13th five-year plan, which contains binding and indicative targets related to all three pillars of sustainable development, and efforts to facilitate interagency processes to mainstream the 2030 Agenda. SRI LANKA noted ongoing efforts to translate the SDG targets to the national level that will entail setting higher benchmarks and introducing additional targets. The EU announced an upcoming initiative that will map how internal and external EU policies contribute to the SDGs. NIGERIA highlighted the importance of integrating the SDGs and targets into national policies.

In closing remarks, panelists highlighted, *inter alia*, the value of impact assessments; the 2030 Agenda as pursuit of enlightened self-interest; and the need to review national laws and policies as well as ensure a constructive international environment.

VERTICAL COOPERATION—LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS WORKING TOGETHER FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2030 AGENDA

This session was chaired by Shava. It started with a keynote address by Kadir Topbaş, the Mayor of Istanbul, Turkey, who emphasized that the implementation of the SDGs will mainly take place at the sub-national level, and that by “listening to cities you listen to the real needs of citizens.” He called for sub-national inputs to be included in the VNRs.

A panel discussion followed, moderated by Peter Wollaert, UN Institute for Training and Research.

Hyuk-Sang Sohn, Kyung Hee University, described the Local Sustainability Alliance of Korea, saying 180 out of 283 local authorities in the Republic of Korea have their own Agenda 21 plans, but a new national focus on green growth posed challenges for implementing all three pillars of sustainable development.

Panelist Patrícia Iglecias, State Secretary for Environment, São Paulo, Brazil, highlighted the need for specific targets, and capacity building, for local and sub-national levels.

Stressing that populations that are left behind often live in areas with the least resources, discussant Rosemarie Edillon, National Economic and Development Authority, Philippines, called on national governments to complement local budgets.

Discussant Paddy Torsney, Inter-Parliamentary Union, highlighted the need for local thought leaders to make components of national plans relevant to local contexts.

Discussant Stephan Contius, Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety, Germany, highlighted the importance of inter-ministerial committees to implement the SDGs.

During the discussion, Topbaş highlighted a proximity to citizens, and the ability to move relatively quickly, as key assets of local governance in general; and listening to citizens; approachability; transparency; and choosing the right partners, including non-political NGOs, as important strengths of the city of Istanbul. Iglecias highlighted a lack of technical knowledge at the local level, and varying economic circumstances of municipalities in Brazil as key challenges. Sohn stressed the importance of high-level commitment to the SDGs for local-level action.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA described moving from policy to collective action; continued dialogue; and trust-building and obtaining buy-in at all levels as important challenges. Highlighting the strong level

of autonomy afforded to municipalities and councils in her country, SWEDEN said a bottom-up approach builds local-level commitment.

SENEGAL stressed the value of cooperation between local governments and NGOs. The stakeholder group for older persons highlighted Singapore's recently revised plan for its aging population as a best practice example. The stakeholder group for persons with disabilities, assisted by a voice-over, said many disability-inclusive SDG commitments fall within the remit of local authorities, but noted the risk that this level of governance would receive insufficient funding.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES stressed the need to invest in local capacity building. CHILDREN AND YOUTH noted the importance of appropriate data for localizing and territorializing the 2030 Agenda. The European Environmental Bureau highlighted several sustainability initiatives by grassroots organizations, saying these should be supported.

CHALLENGES IN MOBILIZING MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL (FINANCING, TECHNOLOGY, CAPACITY BUILDING)

Héctor Alejandro Palma Cerna, Deputy Permanent Representative of Honduras to the UN and Vice President, ECOSOC, chaired the session.

Macharia Kamau, Co-Chair of the Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) Forum, presented a statement on the outcome of the 2016 STI Forum, listing priority areas and objectives, including: upfront investment in technology; awareness of social context; and participatory STI actions.

Manuel Montes, South Centre, then moderated a panel discussion.

Panelist Paulo Gadelha, Fundação Oswaldo Cruz, underlined the importance of using the Technology Facilitation Mechanism's online platform to share experiences. Panelist Felipe Castro, Colombia, argued for the sharing of non-financial resources such as science, knowledge and technology, especially through South-South cooperation.

Discussant Mawussi Djossou Semonji, Togo, called for linkages between science and MOI. Discussant Paul Gulleik Larsen, Norway, described official development assistance as an investment in national interest, and a catalyst for better and broader partnerships.

Discussant Chengyong Sun, China, highlighted national efforts such as: 2030 Agenda showcase zones; a green technology bank; and STI training of close to 10,000 individuals in 120 countries since 2000. Discussant David O'Conner, IUCN, stressed the need to ensure that technology is a leveler rather than divider.

ESTONIA praised supporting smart specialization. SOUTH AFRICA underlined the fundamental challenge of redirecting investment flows. The REPUBLIC OF KOREA highlighted the country's STI development cooperation initiative. WORKERS AND TRADE UNIONS regretted the 2030 Agenda does not recognize the importance of social dialogue.

The DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO said international lending conditionalities increase the number of people left behind. WOMEN warned the proposed Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership would worsen unequal trade. CHILDREN AND YOUTH called for an overhaul of the global intellectual property regime. The stakeholder group for persons with disabilities questioned how the HLPF process could hold governments to account on MOI.

IN THE CORRIDORS

Mainstreaming, integration, local action and MOI were the buzzwords of the day at HLPF 2016 on Wednesday. Experts said mental and physical silos will either have to be dismantled, or taught to “dance together.” It was apparent, however, that the silos are not only sectoral and vertical, but also horizontal. Local government leaders lamented that they are often not included in the processes of national planning, or of developing the VNRs. They find it hard to access national and global MOI, even though the actual implementation of the 2030 Agenda will have to take place locally. To break down these horizontal silos, the question then is: how well can the global community and national governments limbo?