

Wezzie draft speaking remarks to the UN

Session 2: 12th July Vision of civil society: Systemic reforms to leave no one behind Tuesday, 12 July 2022, 9:00 to 11:00 a.m.

1. How can governments effectively dedicate more resources - fiscal and human - to quality and inclusive public services for education, health, social protection?

Governments can and should recognize the **power and potential that volunteers** can bring to both the implementation and accountability of the SDGs, as well as the role that volunteers and civil society can play in increasing inclusion. Let me here emphasize that Volunteers can and do **build bridges** between governments and communities, helping to extend the reach of services to marginalized communities. Embedded in communities they can help us to achieve that tough ambition in the SDGs to “leave no-one behind.

To share one example from Malawi, Karonga District, a rural area in northern Malawi, bordered by Lake Malawi on the east, the Songwe river on the north. An international volunteer is supporting ten primary schools in the use of digital education technology to support learning in numeracy and literacy for over 3,000 early grade learners. She provides training and mentoring to teachers at the schools, lobbies for the extension of access to digital education to learners with special educational needs and other learning difficulties as well as working with key education structures within the district to ensure sustainability. She works alongside national volunteers in other districts by providing systems to support the sharing of technical knowledge and for continued improvement to the design and implementation of the project. The volunteers within the project engage community members to encourage ownership and to ensure that more students can access the digital technology provided in the schools. **Volunteers, district education structures, schools, and community members are working together to promote inclusion for all pupils and ensure sustainability of their work.**

Central to understanding the right to development for us all is the need for promotion of social progress and better standards of life by tackling economic, social, cultural problems and recognizing the right to non-discrimination, the right to participate in public affairs and the right to equality.

We also cannot talk about right based approach to development without acknowledging the power of citizens. Case in point, Malawi is supporting youth champions to advocate for fair access and utilization of sexual and reproductive health and rights in their local communities and with local service providers added to youth led monitoring of SDGs. This has led to increased uptake in young people accessing sexual and reproductive health services, and a reduction in teenage pregnancies and people feeling empowered to access their rights.

Our governments should recognize the contribution that ordinary people can make towards their own development and communities, and the improvements that can be made to the delivery of public services through such engagements.

Second intervention:

Recommendations:

- The plea for government to recognise the power of volunteering and to integrate volunteering into national plans.
- Government Financing initiatives should allow for open evaluation and sharing of findings to research to ascertain value for money across public sectors to ensure transparency and accountability. Work towards Coherent monitoring systems and efficient data collection mechanisms purposely designed to understand best practice for the achievement of set development goals.
- The HLPF stands as a great platform for reinforcing dialogue and giving members states a challenge to do more and do better to achieve the 2030 agenda.