



Permanent Mission of Colombia
to the United Nations

HLPF 2016 side event on



PERMANENT MISSION OF FINLAND
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

Developing institutional mechanisms to deliver action and engage stakeholders - Sharing good practices between Finland and Colombia on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda

On Thursday, 14 July 2016 at 1:15 – 2:45
UNHQ, Conference Room 7, New York

CONCEPT NOTE

Finland and Colombia are among the first voluntary countries to report at the HLPF 2016 on their plans, mechanisms and measures to implement the 2030 Agenda. Both countries have some institutional mechanisms already in place for its effective implementation, yet the universal and transformative agenda sets new challenges for capacity building, ensuring coherence and coordination and inclusive participation leading to effective delivery of action at all levels.

Finland and Colombia have been cooperating at the political and expert levels since 2015 in order to share good practices and facilitate mutual learning on the national implementation of 2030 Agenda. The cooperation led to a joint workshop which was organized in June 2016 in Bogotá, Colombia, with a focus on building institutional capacity, creating mechanisms to engage the private sector and the civil society, and integration of the SDGs into the national plans and public policies.

Key findings of the peer learning workshop

The joint peer learning workshop in Bogotá demonstrated that Finland and Colombia share many commonalities in their institutional and political efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda.

- Both countries have internalized the integrated approach to SDGs and 2030 Agenda as a whole. No goal can be fully understood if implemented in silos. The 2030 Agenda must be addressed by a policy framework that acknowledges the underlying complexity of realization of sustainable development.
- Both countries have also developed a systematic approach to make the public policy, stakeholder engagement and measurement fit-for-2030 Agenda. These approaches build on existing processes, policies and mechanisms in Finland and in Colombia, but strive to take determined steps to raise ambition level and strengthen policy coherence for sustainable development in all post-2015 action.
- Both countries have integrated the SDGs into their national strategic documents; Colombia already in parallel with the Inter-governmental negotiations of the post-2015 development agenda and Finland more recently in early 2016.
- Both countries consider broad and inclusive stakeholder participation as key to a successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The multi-stakeholder approach is one of the cornerstones of the governance mechanisms both in Finland and in Colombia, ranging from civil society organizations, private sector actors, labor unions, academia, municipalities and media, with somewhat different emphasis in respective countries.
- Both countries emphasize the special role of the private sector in implementing many of the SDGs. It was recognized that while philanthropy and Corporate Social Responsibility are important, sustainability action should increasingly be embedded within companies' daily activities, strategies and business policies. Both recognize that the SDGs will also open new market and investment opportunities for the private sector.

- Interestingly, Finland and Colombia seem to share a high political interest in safeguarding and making decisive progress in two specific SDGs, which are particularly relevant for their own national contexts and consequently important for both countries' national implementation of the 2030 Agenda as a whole, Goal 4 on Quality education and Goal 16 on Peace, justice and strong institutions. Even though the relevance originates from different backgrounds, this coincidence facilitates continued collaboration and sharing of practices among two countries facing very different realities and challenges for sustainable development.

Some differences were also identified, mainly based on countries' different national circumstances, political priorities and decisions on necessary steps forward.

- For Colombia, it is important to accelerate and finish the unfinished business of the MDGs. Therefore, many SDGs are considered as important tools in speeding up implementation of some of the lagging MDG targets. The challenge for Finland is rather to be able to bring together and enhance coherence between the previously separated tracks of development cooperation and domestic sustainability policies. In both countries, however the scope and the level of ambition of the new agenda requires increased reflection of the emerging challenges and better understanding of the complexity and concepts related to sustainable development.
- Finland will outline and formally adopt by the end of year 2016 a National Plan to implement the 2030 Agenda which will offer a roadmap for the appropriate scheduling of activities and allocation of resources in Finland, both in domestic and in external action. Colombia will draw up a National Economic and Social Policy Planning Council (CONPES) document, a government-wide policy document which will include general long-term interinstitutional policy and regulation guidelines, define the national indicators for monitoring, follow-up and review, and set the national targets for 2030.
- Both countries, Finland and Colombia, have conducted a mapping exercise to identify existing policies and measures to implement the 2030 Agenda. Finland has thereafter, on the basis of the mapping, undertaken a gap analysis to identify Finland's strengths and challenges in the implementation of 2030 Agenda. The results of the gap-analysis will give guidance to Finland on which issues to focus on and on how to phase the implementation during the upcoming years. In Colombia, for its part, the mapping will lead to identification of issues requiring more attention by public institutions effective allocation of resources and responsibilities, and finally to definition of national targets and further actions at the interinstitutional level.
- Due to former MDG procedures, Colombia has an existing reporting and accountability mechanism in place with yearly reports to be prepared, made accessible to the general public and submitted to the national Parliament. This mechanism is feasible also for the 2030 Agenda follow-up and review modalities nationally. For Finland, there have been separate follow-up processes for Rio-process on sustainable development on one hand, and for Finnish development cooperation on the other hand. There is therefore a need in Finland to define a comprehensive follow-up and review framework that takes into consideration both the internal and external reporting requirements. This will be done as part of the National Plan to implement the 2030 Agenda.
- Finland has proceeded with the engagement of the private sector in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. It has been possible with a new participatory tool, Society's Commitment to Sustainable Development, which enables concrete action with measurable results. Over 60 companies have already joint the Commitment by their own operational commitments. As for Colombia, the outreach to municipalities and regions has been successful. All the 33 first-level subnational governments, as well as the capital cities have incorporated the SDG in their development plans, with technical support from the national Government.

The Finnish-Colombian joint side event in the HLPF 2016 will present the findings of the joint workshop and elaborate good practices and biggest barriers for successful implementation at the national level. It will also present a model of bilateral cooperation and mutual learning between a developed and developing country, both facing the implementation challenge of the global agenda.