

Speaking notes: Paul Divakar, MGoS panel

Friday 12 July

10:00-11:30

Conference Room 4

Question 2: How are stakeholders playing a critical role in the implementation of the 2030. What are some good examples and case studies of stakeholder implementation?

Experience of community delivery of the SDGs (Paul Divakar)

FIRST INTERVENTION (4 Minutes):

- **Let me be clear:** The responsibility for implementing the 2030 Agenda starts and ends with Governments.
- *However*, Stakeholders in varying 'social locations' from different sectors have a critical role in ensuring no one is left behind in the achievement of the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda.
- We amplify grassroots voices and bring technical and local knowledge to the development dialogue. We articulate demands and voice concerns at local, national, regional and international levels.
- We ensure developmental gains reach those who are socially excluded and marginalised.

*Let me highlight some successes for community delivery in the SDGs.*

- The inclusion of marginalised groups in the National Census is helping to overcome the invisibility of historically marginalised groups. Due to the untiring efforts of CSOs such as CONAQ, for the first time in its history, Brazil has taken this step in 2022. More than 1.3 million Brazilians who identify as descendants of Africans who escaped slavery have finally gained recognition in official statistics, marking a victory for this historically excluded population.
- Commendably, through the activism of civil society, Nepal too has taken steps to recognise (through its Constitution and legislative reforms) discriminated groups based on work and descent such as Dalits.
- Being counted of course is the first critical step. How we ensure SDG reforms are centred on the needs of these communities and how these accrue to them is the next big challenge.

- Regrettably, there are many marginalised groups that are **not even** counted in the official statistics. These include communities discriminated on work and descent such as the Haratin and other communities in West Africa, Quilombola in Latin America, Roma in Europe, Burakumin and Dalits in Asia and the diaspora of these communities spread across the globe.
- CSOs are also playing an active role in monitoring the implementation of budget allocations and quotas that are marked exclusively for the most marginalised; and tracking expenditure towards achievements of the SDG such as education, political representation, gender equity, healthcare, and housing
- CSOs are leveraging the SDG platforms including the Voluntary National Review Processes, not only to hold governments accountable but to build on best practice, identify gaps and opportunities and strengthen the efficacy of national reform by highlighting SDG linkages and the need for intersectional approaches to policy development.
- Indigenous community leaders have shown us the way in how their knowledge, traditions and lifestyles are integral to all SDGs. They have offered us a pathway in how we can and should protect our planet.

*Unfortunately these somewhat success stories have been tempered by challenges.*

### **A shrinking space for CSOs**

- What we are seeing, even in democratic societies, is the deliberate curtailment by certain States of the spaces and voices for CSOs in Agenda 2030.
- But we cannot ignore cultural and societal values which are factors that have a bearing on how well policy and reforms are implemented on the ground.
- For example, in post-colonial societies, institutional racism, social exclusion and marginalisation still continue to be barriers to development leading to poor outcomes for indigenous communities across all developmental dimensions from health, education, gender equity or access to justice.
- In other societies, pre-colonial forms of social exclusion and discrimination still exist - again proving to be antithetical to development. These forms of discrimination have taken on new shapes and modes (such as traditional slavery giving way to modern forms of slavery)
- Furthermore sustainable human centred development, human rights due diligence or environmental impact assessments are seen as unnecessary bureaucratic hurdles, all in the service of the mantra: '*ease of doing business*' - which often translates to extractive industries getting the green light from the government without having to meet the regulatory requirements that exist to mitigate the ill effects of business activity.

In closing I would like to remind us all that the SDGs require a whole of society approach, we are surrounded in this room by diverse stakeholders who represent the full cross-section of our societies. All that we ask is that you open the door so that we may bring our knowledge and insights for the wider benefit of humanity.

SECOND INPUT: *recommendations (1 min)*

- We must strengthen the participation of civil society at every level - from the development of national policies to monitoring and implementation right up to the political structures at the global level.

Good practice in stakeholder engagement means:

- **Visibility:** To bring to light issues that are often hidden (such as hidden forms of discrimination and exclusion) to ensure no one is left behind.
- **Inclusion:** State parties must identify diverse groups and actors left behind, based on regular disaggregated data and an in-depth stakeholder mapping and allocate sufficient resources for those furthest left behind in the design process.
- **Access to information:** Data and information should be publicly available through official channels such as media, websites, etc. with sufficient time and clear opportunity for stakeholders to consult with constituencies they represent.
- **Bridging the digital divide:** As more and more public services are being offered through technology, the importance of bridging the digital divide and ensuring digital literacy for marginalized community groups is critical
- **Influence and decision making:** Make efforts to activate SDG 16 for stakeholders through influence in decision-making. This means openness to allow stakeholders to provide input, actively participate and have their perspectives considered in decision-making processes. This must be done not only at the national level but also across all regional and global platforms.
- **Access to funding:** State parties must make available funding and resources to communities to bring to light the issues and concerns of those communities that are most marginalised - this includes mapping, collection of disaggregated data, digital literacy and access to technology.
- **Protect human rights defenders:** Recognize the key role of human rights defenders and civil society organisations in the realisation of the SDGs and ensure they are protected by ensuring States uphold the Declaration on the Rights of Human Rights Defenders.
- **Promote multilateralism and protect the institutions that facilitate it:** Solutions to complex global challenges need peaceful, innovative, equitable and participatory approaches. Within this process, Civil society is extremely important and this space seems to be at a threat. We must make all efforts to commit to transforming the SDGs into a tangible reality if we are to deliver the 2030 agenda; and save humanity from peril.

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