

CSO coalitions' role in the Decade of Action after Covid-19

HLPF side event

8 July 2020 from 2 - 3:30 pm CEST

1. Agenda

2:00 - 2:05 Opening the call, technical brief, mention social media action

Moderator: Patrizia Heidegger, SDG Watch Europe / European Environmental Bureau

Highlight that for this event, all co-sponsors have nominated female speakers - governments + CSOs.

SDG 5 has seen very limited progress. The last SDG report highlights that the effects of [the COVID-19 pandemic can reverse the limited progress](#) that has been made on gender equality and women's rights. The coronavirus outbreak [exacerbates existing inequalities](#) for women and girls across every sphere – from health and the economy, to security and social protection.

(Mention of the social Media Action: during the side event, we illustrate the “decade of action” and the citizens' commitment by an animation: "My Handprint, My Commitment": Every participant can post a picture of a fingerprint or Handprint on social media with a concrete action on SDGs. #StrongerTogether)

2:05 - 2:10 Welcome words and introduction to side events objectives and structure (5 min)

Speaker: Karoline Edtstadler, Federal Minister for the EU and Constitution at the Federal Chancellery, Austria

2:10 - 2:20 Setting the scene: highlights from *Progressing national SDG implementation* focusing on trends regarding CSOs participation globally and what CSOs coalitions bring in (7 min)

Speaker: Shannon Kindorney, Forus / Canadian Council for International Cooperation

2:20 - 2:50 Experience sharing in break-out groups (30 min)

Short inputs from 2 speakers (5 minutes each) and 20 minutes of discussion

Break-out Group 1

VNRs - best-practices and lessons learned for meaningful CSO engagement

Guiding questions:

- *What are best practices for civil society engagement around VNRs?*
- *How do VNR processes make sure all voices are heard - women, young people and marginalised groups?*
- *What are the outcomes of multi-stakeholder processes during VNRs and beyond (implementation plan and follow-up)?*
- *How did COVID-19 affect the VNRs and what does this mean for civil society participation?*
- *What should civil society ask their governments for?*



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Agreement on 1 - 2 questions regarding VNR practices to bring to discussion round with governments.

Input from: Lisa Weinberger, SDG Watch Austria; Lubna Sayed Qadri, Wada Na Todo Abhiyaan

Facilitator: Nadège Lharaig, European Environmental Bureau

Sharing questions during discussion:

Break-out Group 2

SDGs as the compass for COVID-19 measures - how to ensure civil society is not sidelined

Guiding questions:

- *How do CSOs coalition highlight the need for a “whole of society” approach to the SDGs during the COVID-19 emergency and recovery measures?*
- *How do CSOs advocate for transformative change during a crisis vis-a-vis their governments?*
- *How can CSOs be better involved in COVID-19 measures, especially in economic stimulus packages, strengthening of social policies and safeguarding of civil rights?*
- *How do CSOs make sure that all voices can be heard in the crisis - women, young people and the most marginalised groups?*

Agreement on 1 - 2 questions regarding COVID-19 measures and civil society involvement

Input: Marta Iglesias, Futuro en Común, Prof. Comfort Onifade, Civil Society Coalition for Sustainable Development

Reaction: Cillian Lohan, EESC

Facilitator: Marie-Luise Abshagen, German NGO Forum on Environment and Development

Sharing questions during discussion: Marie-Luise

Break-out Group 3

Cross-sectoral coalitions as amplifiers to have all voices heard

Guiding questions:

- *How do cross-sectoral coalitions help in delivering on the SDGs (by self-implementation, by monitoring political action) and ultimately bring real political change?*
- *What kind of collaboration has emerged between CSOs and other actors of society in the COVID-19-crisis?*
- *What is needed in terms of global solidarity?*
- *How do cross-sectoral coalitions make sure all voices can be heard?*

Input from: Florence Syevuo Kenya SDGs Forum, Marie-Laure Vercambre, French Water Partnership

Facilitator: Sylvie Bénard, Association 4D

Sharing questions during discussion:



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Agreement on 1 - 2 questions regarding civil society coalitions for the SDGs.

2:50 - 3:20 Interaction with government representatives (30 Min)

The participants return from the break-out groups with two questions for each group expressing a key issue or finding to ask the governmental representatives.

Moderation: Patrizia Heidegger, SDG Watch Europe

Discussants:

- Ione Belarra, State Secretary for the 2030 Agenda, Spain
- Rose Keff, Office of the Special Adviser to the President on SDGs, Nigeria
- Antonella Mei-Pochtler, Head of Strategy Unit Think Austria, Special Advisor to the Federal Chancellor, Austria
- Diane Simiu, Deputy General Commissioner for Sustainable Development, Ministry for Fair and Ecological Transition, France
- CSOs representatives of the break-out groups

3:20 - 3:30 Summary and closure of the side event

Speaker to be confirmed

2. Context

The Covid-19 has brought the interlinkages between all the SDGs to the forefront. This global health crisis is turning into a global economic and social crisis which is hitting the most marginalised hardest. While our democracies and economies are put to the greatest test in a century, risks of roll-back on sustainable development policies arise. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) cannot be sidetracked: they are the pathway to ensure a sustainable recovery post Covid-19 and to mitigate the risk of future pandemic.

After the adoption of the Agenda 2030 in 2015, civil-society cross-sectoral coalitions have been formed all over the world to ensure the meaningful participation of civil society in SDG implementation and the monitoring and review processes. Civil society has since then highlighted the interlinkages between social, environmental and economic dimensions of sustainable development and calling government to their responsibilities. However, policy coherence for sustainable development and a “whole of society” are still



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work-in-progress. These are not just means but means that should lead to real political and societal change towards a sustainable future.

Another fundamental principle of Agenda 2030 is to leave no one behind. With the global SDG process being technical, CSOs play a crucial role in bridging the gap between people and communities on the ground and high-level processes. They are playing a crucial role in ensuring all voices can be heard, in particular, women and young people as well as most vulnerable groups. Broad CSO coalitions then play an amplifying role in transporting the voice for those most marginalized.

Without civil society participation we will not be able to achieve the decade of action ahead of us. And without civil society coalitions, we would not have overcome the silos and proposed solutions integrating an overarching dimension for sustainable development.

This side event will provide you with an opportunity to exchange about civil society's role in working towards policy coherence for sustainable development and bringing transformative change during the Decade of Action.

3. Objectives

To showcase the benefits of civil society coalitions for an impactful implementation of the 2030 Agenda

Specific objectives:

- Prove the importance of CSOs coalition in implementing the SDGs and in monitoring political action
- Highlight how multi-stakeholder processes contribute to the better understanding of interconnectedness of SDGs and implementing policy coherence for sustainable development
- Discuss how civil society ensures that all voices can be heard, for instance, the voices of women and young people as well as most vulnerable groups
- Show in a participatory way that coalitions enable people's commitment on the SDGs and actions, key to succeed the Agenda 2030
- Highlight the role of CSOs and coalitions as an important actor in the COVID-19 crisis, especially in terms of finding a sustainable way out of the crisis
- Create a space for sharing experiences and lessons-learned with government representatives

4. Target groups

- National policymakers: official governmental delegations, MPs
- EU representatives: MEPs delegation to HLPF, EU officials attending the HLPF
- UN representatives
- Civil society organizations globally working on the SDGs



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5. Organizers

Lead: Government of Austria

Co-organizer(s):

- **Governments:** France, Spain, Nigeria
- **Civil society organizations:** SDG Watch Europe, European Environmental Bureau, Global Call to Action Against Poverty, Action4SD, Forus, Association 4D, Futuro En Comun, SDG Watch Austria, SGerman NGO Forum on Environment and Development, Wada Na Todo Abhiyaan, Civil Society Coalition for Sustainable Development, Canadian Council for International Cooperation, French Water Partnership

6. Tools

For this virtual side event we need a video conference tool that allows break-out groups (e.g. zoom) and is accessible to governments. Possibly this will be provided by the UN. Furthermore, to ensure good time keeping, a virtual time clock will be included in the side event. A moderation will ensure good time keeping. For social media action, a sharepic generator can be shared.



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