

The SDGs and HLPF – a new paradigm for civil society

A presentation for Vienna University of Economics and business
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The background



The 2015 UN Summit

- ▶ On September 25-27, 150 State leaders signed off on a momentous declaration:
- ▶ **Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda For Sustainable Development**
- ▶ **This gave us the 2030 Sustainable Development Portfolio**

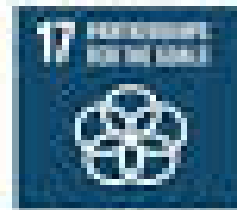
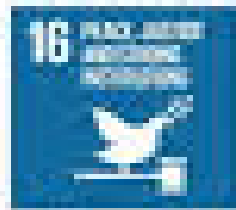
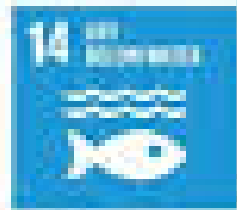
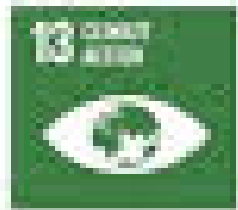
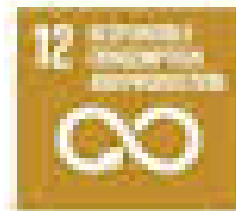
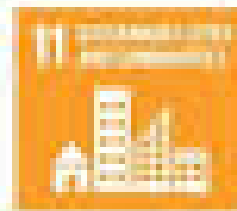
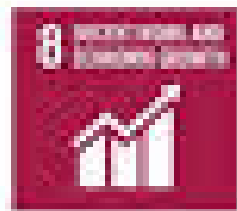
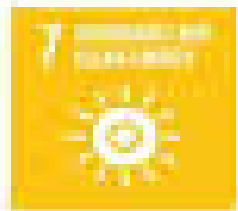
The 2030 SD portfolio

- ▶ The 17 SDGs with their 169 targets
- ▶ The Addis Ababa Action Agenda
- ▶ The Paris Climate Document (December 2015)
- ▶ **The review indicators (March 2016)**
- ▶ **The annual High Level Political Forum, HLPF**
- ▶ The Reviews, national, regional, global
- ▶ The Global Sustainable Development Report
- ▶ The UN Environment Assembly, every 2 years

WHAT ARE THE SDGS?



The 17 Sustainable Development Goals



What is civil society?



Civil society, NGOs, stakeholders

- ▶ All members of civil society are NGOs, but not all NGOs are civil society .
- ▶ The 9 Major Groups: Women, Children and Youth, Farmers, Indigenous peoples, NGOs, Trade Unions, Local Authorities, Science and Technology, Business and Industry (Agenda 21)
- ▶ Stakeholders – has no legal status
- ▶ Non Governmental Organisations have – ref UN Charter
- ▶ Civil society- The Authorities-the Market

A change is coming

- ▶ For civil society to be effective and have an impact, it needs to be organised, have and relate to institutions,
- ▶ Civil society has changed
- ▶ Is changing
- ▶ Has to change
- ▶ Some NGOs have larger memberships than recognised political parties have constituencies (Birdlife in UK)

Representative of ... what?

- ▶ Speaking for:
- ▶ Speaking on behalf of:
- ▶ Representing – experience over time
- ▶ Representing - knowledge of issues
- ▶ Representing - A bridge to grass-roots
- ▶ Representing ? Delegates at intergovernmental meetings are also not elected
- ▶ The issue of accountability

Key governance issues for civil society

- ▶ Access
- ▶ Participation
- ▶ Relevance
- ▶ Ownership

Two key challenges

- ▶ Understanding that the SDGs represent something entirely new – a break with the old North South Dichotomy
- ▶ Grasping, understanding and internalising the concept of universality, which is a ‘grundnorm’ in the SDG world

KEY ELEMENTS OF THE SDGs AND THEIR PLATFORMS



a **“We the Peoples” Agenda,**

- ▶ a “to-do” list for people and the planet,
- ▶ a road map to ending global poverty,
- ▶ building a life of dignity for all,
- ▶ leaving no one behind,
- ▶ It is a clarion call to intensify efforts to heal our planet for the benefit of this and future generations

SDG Characteristica

- ▶ They greatly expands upon the success of the Millennium Development Goals, but are vastly different;
- ▶ They are integrated, interlinked and indivisible;
- ▶ They are people-centred and planet-sensitive;
- ▶ They are universal — applying to all countries while recognizing different realities and capabilities.

The SDGs have a value basis:

- ▶ They call for building **peaceful, inclusive and well-governed** societies with **responsive institutions** as the basis for **shared prosperity**.
- ▶ They recognize that we cannot reach our development goals without addressing **human rights** and complex **humanitarian issues** at the same time.
- ▶ They commit all of us to **enhanced multilateral cooperation** through a **revitalized global partnership** among nations and all the world's citizens.

The SDGs are challenging: Throughout the document these elements are repeatedly expressed

- ▶ Ethics, setting new standards, regulatory issues – common responsibility to people and planet
- ▶ The plans are aspirational, creative and innovative –
- ▶ The integration of the three dimensions, social, environment and economic permeates the agenda
- ▶ Integration of the SDGs and their targets into all prospecting, planning and implementation
- ▶ Reviewing the process of implementation of all SDGs and their targets annually
- ▶ Politically brave – local, national, regional and global level, for all countries

SDGs – a paradigmatic change

- ▶ **The SDGs represent a paradigmatic change,**
- ▶ **not only for the UN and global politics,**
- ▶ **but in thinking about development in general terms**
- ▶ **The three dimensions of sustainable development are at the core of this thinking:**
- ▶ **No development can be had without integrating social, environmental and economical/financial matters –**

The five Ps (from the Preamble to the Summit Declaration)

- ▶ People
- ▶ Planet
- ▶ Prosperity (not profit)
- ▶ Peace
- ▶ Partnership

The High Level Political Forum, HLPF



HLPF strengths

- ▶ **It is innovative**
- ▶ **Its governance structure will allow integration of all stakeholders, in all contexts at all levels**
- ▶ **It is transparent**
- ▶ **It is flexible and dynamic**
- ▶ **It is the home of the SDGs**

HLPF has the potential to modernise the UN

- ▶ **Points in the right direction**
- ▶ **Is politically high level**
- ▶ **Is universal and inclusive**
- ▶ **Conducts reviews and builds accountability**
- ▶ **Focuses on science and evidence based decisions**
- ▶ **Will be responsible for “the Global Sustainable Development Report”**
- ▶ **Sets new governance standards, identifies emerging issues**

HLPF Challenges

- ▶ **It has a broad and undefined mandate**
- ▶ **It has a weak and untried structure - meaning what in a political reality?**
- ▶ **It lacks a steering mechanism, bureau or advisory board**
- ▶ **It does not own a secretariat**
- ▶ **It is not well resourced**
- ▶ **It integrates major groups and NGOs in a way never done before at the UN, how does this challenge existing procedures?**

Which privileges are given to MGs and civil society?

- ▶ **Major groups and relevant stakeholders are referred to in 7 paragraphs: Paragraphs 8c; 13; 14; 15; 16; 22 and 24.**
- ▶ **Paragraph 16 is about the right to self-organise and includes other groups in addition to the 9 – paragraph 15 gives all out access, paragraph 22 invites to agenda setting**

The High Level Political Forum

- ▶ **HLPF will be responsible for the coordination of the SDGs and the 2030 sustainable development plan**
- ▶ **HLPF will be central to the reviews and the indicators**
- ▶ **The Global Sustainable Development Report, the GSDR, will publish reviews, and**
- ▶ **countries, business, organisations that are engaged in the SDGs are encouraged to contribute to the GSDR**

Implementing the SDGs

- ▶ **It is costly – 3 – 5 trillions of dollars per year**
- ▶ **ODA will continue to play a role for the poorest, but a dramatic overhaul of the aid/development thinking is underway – or is it?**
- ▶ **The cost is in many countries integrated in existing plans – the SDGs are not the responsibility of one ministry but all ministries**
- ▶ **A key element will be partnerships**

Reviews and indicators

- ▶ **Each goal and target will be furnished with indicators which will be used to estimate progress or lack thereof;**
- ▶ **Innovation is needed to fuel progress**
- ▶ **Capacity building and tech-transfer will be needed**
- ▶ **Environmentally friendly technology will be needed**
- ▶ **Science and research have been given important roles**
- ▶ **Reviews of progress will take place on a national, regional and global level, and presented to the UN annually**

Necessary meetings that decide

- ▶ **HLPF – home of the SDGs, annually, June-July, 5+3 days, all participatory**
- ▶ **The finance meeting, financing the process, annually, May, June, 5 days, all participatory**
- ▶ **The Technology Facilitation Mechanism, annually, 2 days, all participatory**
- ▶ **Regional Review and monitoring meetings, 2 – 5 days, annually, all participatory**
- ▶ **UNEA, prep meeting in February, Assembly in May, 5 + 5 days, every other year, all participatory**

What does a global SD agenda mean?

- ▶ **It is not about upgrading aid to the global south**
- ▶ **It is about changing our approach to development**
- ▶ **It means that our local, national and regional priorities must reflect the global priorities**
- ▶ **It calls for the understanding, integration, realisation and implementation on equal footing of the three dimensions of sustainable development**

What can NGOs/civil society do?

- ▶ **Participate at all levels**
- ▶ **Participate in the reviews**
- ▶ **Create their own reviews – shadow reports**
- ▶ **Participate in implementation – through partnerships, and**
- ▶ **Define partnerships**
- ▶ **Work with business**
- ▶ **Challenge and encourage parliaments to participate**

Some of our challenges

- ▶ **Real governance, at all times**
- ▶ **Implementation and governance**
- ▶ **Partnerships, by whom and for whom**
- ▶ **Realise and accept the new paradigm, the North South dichotomy is gone**
- ▶ **Integrating the three dimensions – is finance untouched, social issues overwhelming and environment window dressing?**
- ▶ **Working for a systemic change**

A word of caution (from Linus)

- ▶ ...I love humanity, it is people I cannot stand



▶ **“Optimism is the fuel of heroes, the enemy of despair and the creator of the future.”**

Thank you for your attention

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