

Transparency, Accountability and Participation: Laying the Foundation for People-Centered Implementation

ORGANIZED BY THE TRANSPARENCY, ACCOUNTABILITY & PARTICIPATION (TAP) NETWORK AND UN NON-GOVERNMENTAL LIAISON SERVICE (UN-NGLS)

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INTRODUCTION

On Monday, 13 July 2015, the Transparency, Accountability and Participation (TAP) Network and the UN Non-Governmental Liaison Service (UN-NGLS) co-hosted a side-event entitled “**Transparency, Accountability and Participation: Laying the Foundation for People-Centered Implementation**” with participants and experts present from Member States, civil society and the UN system.

This side event provided an opportunity for a wide range of experts to take a deeper examination of the outcome of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD3) Conference through a TAP lens, and towards ensuring that the global community effectively implements the commitments made in Addis Ababa, as well as the Post-2015 agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals.

Panel of Speakers:

- **Mr. Paul Divakar**, *General Secretary*, [National Campaign for Dalit Human Rights \(NCDHR\)](#)
- **Mr. Danny Sriskandarajah**, *Secretary-General*, [CIVICUS](#)
- **Mr. Rupert Simons**, *CEO*, [Publish What You Fund](#)
- **Ms. Claire Schouten**, *Senior Program Officer*, [International Budget Partnership](#)
- **Ms. María José Romero**, *Policy and Advocacy Manager*, *Private Finance*, [Eurodad](#)

Moderator: Susan Alzner, *Officer in Charge – New York*, [UN-NGLS](#)

SUMMARY

Mr. Paul Divakar, General Secretary, *National Campaign for Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR)* opened the discussions by highlighting the work of the TAP Network in advocating for open, inclusive, accountable and effective governance that is at the heart of the post-2015 development agenda. Mr. Divakar underlined the TAP Network has focus its work on three main objectives:

- Providing a platform for Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to collaborate around issues of Transparency, Accountability and Participation.
- Trying to develop mechanisms for Transparency, Accountability and Participation that is embedded in post-2015 development framework.
- Strengthen meaningful engagement with the implementation and monitoring mechanisms of the post-2015 agenda, at all levels.

Mr. Divakar raised concerns about the weak language on issues of domestic mobilization, tax system, accountability and utilization of transparency and participation in the FfD3 outcome document. He underlined concern for communities that are facing routine forums of inter-generational discrimination.

Mr. Divakar provided five recommendations to address these issues:

1. Member States and CSOs need to visibilize the issue of discrimination against marginalized groups and design physical and development mechanisms to overcome the barriers they face.
2. Ensure transparency in revenue allocation, spending, and contracting, at all levels.
3. Design special mechanisms for financial inclusion.

4. Need targeted budget allocations, legislated in country.
5. Ensure active meaningful, inclusive participation, especially communities that are the most marginalized.

In his closing remarks, Mr. Divakar stated there is a great need for these policies to find a place in the FfD3 outcomes and ensure discussions is not from country to country but within countries to “leave no one behind”.

Mr. Danny Sriskandarajah, *Secretary-General, CIVICUS* opened his remarks by raising concerns about the lack of participation of CSOs in the negotiations of the FfD3 outcome document. Mr. Sriskandarajah addressed elements of Transparency, Accountability and Participation by stating:

“T” Element: transparency is critical because we have to make sure the SDGs is based on the principle of openness and transparency. He called for a data revolution because of the lack of data that impedes our ability to track whether we are making progress or not. In addition, he stated we need data to make sure we can talk about the issues.

“A” Element: if the post-2015 development agenda is to be implemented we need to create real and effective mechanisms of accountability. He called for CSOs to create mechanisms of accountability. Mr. Sriskandarajah stressed we already have the ability to create mechanisms of accountability through data such as citizen reporting.

Mr. Sriskandarajah mentioned the DataShift initiative, which is a multi-stakeholder, demand-driven initiative that builds the capacity and confidence of CSOs to generate and use citizen-generated data to monitor development progress, demand accountability and campaign for transformative change. You can find more information at <http://civicus.org/thedatashift/>.

Mr. Sriskandarajah highlighted four important ways the SDGs should be different from the MDGs:

- Beyond poverty,
- Beyond ODA,
- Beyond developing countries
- Beyond narrow development geeks

He emphasized a major failure of the MDGs was its inability to facilitate citizens engagement. He stated if we want to make the agenda really meaningful we need to make sure the SDGs is a people driven agenda.

In his closing remarks, Mr. Sriskandarajah stressed citizen generated data can put the power of development back into the hands of the people. He underlined citizens are collecting more powerful data than National Statistics Offices (NSOs).

Mr. Rupert Simons, *CEO, Publish What You Fund* opened his remarks by stating that “information is power.” He highlighted an example where information was crucial towards a successful outcome in Liberia where the government faced low credibility with its citizens but regained trust and credibility by publishing information to the public on its action plans and public policies.

Mr. Simons highlighted an example where a lack of information resulted in a negative outcome in Sierra Leone with the Ebola outbreak. Because of the lack of information there was a lack of coordination in the response to the outbreak, which created a break in the chain of accountability because if the government is unable to account what is coming in, they are unable account to their own people to what is being done with the aid money.

Mr. Simons highlighted the work Publish What You Fund is doing to address this problem of a lack of information by donors by embedding the principles of transparency, accountability and participation in their work. They produce an annual [“Aid Transparency Index”](#), which is the only independent measure of transparency among the world’s leading aid organizations.

In his closing remarks, Mr. Simons stressed publishing open data from donors can assist governments to make better decisions and bring an element of accountability.

Ms. Claire Schouten, *Senior Program Officer, International Budget Partnership* opened her remarks by stating budget accountability can lead to better matching of people's priorities and resources available which can limit corruption and wasteful spending. In addition, budget accountability can build trust between governments and their citizens by enhancing the credibility of policy decisions and improve access to financial markets and debt credibility.

Ms. Schouten highlighted that fiscal transparency can help unlock trillions of dollars worth of economic value per year with a recent McKinsey report estimating \$5.4 trillion in development financing could be unlocked. Ms. Schouten highlighted the work IBP has done to promote fiscal transparency through [“The Open Budget Survey”](#) which is the only independent, comparative, and regular measure of budget transparency, participation, and oversight in the world.

Ms. Schouten provide a few recommendations for fiscal transparency which you can find in the [“TAP Network FfD3 Position Paper”](#):

- Governments should publish timely and accessible data.
- Include data and information on revenues, spending, contracting and results.
- Maintain an open data format.
- Ensure meaningful public participation at all stages of financing.
- Include collaboration with citizens and supreme audit institutions.
- Promote learning and common standards for tracking and reporting.

In her closing remarks, Ms. Schouten highlighted a missed opportunity with the MDGs to ensure “accountability”. In addition, IBP will be launching the Open Budget Survey 2015 in September 2015, which will provide recommendations for the national levels.

Ms. María José Romero, *Policy and Advocacy Manager, Private Finance, Eurodad* opened her remarks by stating it is critical to understand from the point of view of “transparency, accountability and participation” how private and public private partnerships (PPPs) financing mechanisms perform and are being used in developed and developing countries.

Ms. Romero underlined there are many critical challenges based on issues of transparency, accountability and public participation. She highlighted contracts ruled by commercial confidentiality

clauses are less transparent and undermines democratic accountability. In practice it is very difficult to hold any one to account and it is difficult to address grievances from communities that are impacted by PPPs.

Ms. Romero stated it is key to have public participation and civil society engagement at the early stages of the process in developing PPPs, which is key for democratic accountability. She stressed people need to have the necessary information to participate in these processes, stressing consultations and citizen engagement has to be as public as possible.

Ms. Romero called for pro-active disclosure of documents relating to public contracting, also feasibility studies, performance evaluation, information relating to results tracking, and renegotiation of PPPs contracts if needed. She stressed there is a need for appropriate financial information related to revenue and expenditure. What is the real cost of projects that are being negotiated?

In her closing remarks, Ms. Romero called for safeguards to ensure democratic accountability when we want to include the private sector to persevere the interest of the users and public sector.

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

[TAP Network FfD3 Position Paper](#): The paper stresses that Transparency, Accountability and Participation (TAP) must be at the heart of the Financing for Development (FfD) outcome document. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the FfD process have both set out ambitious agendas – those in which transparent and accountable institutions and citizen participation in governance serve as linchpins for sustainable development progress at all levels.

[TAP Network Review & Accountability Position Paper](#): This paper argues that participation and transparency are key principles for robust, effective, and inclusive accountability mechanisms for the Post-2015 framework at all levels – from the local through to the global. If we have meaningful participation and transparency in place, then the Post-2015 ‘follow-up and review’ mechanisms should be able to deliver real accountability for the SDGs.

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