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Transparency, Accountability &
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2019 HLPF Workshop Report

Showcasing Best Practices: Civil Society Driving Progress on SDG16+

Organized by the Transparency, Accountability & Participation (TAP) Network, Saferworld, the Civil Society Platform for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (CSPPS), Namati, and the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC)

Wednesday, 10 July 2019



Background

On Wednesday, 10 July 2019, the Transparency, Accountability & Participation (TAP) Network, in partnership with Saferworld, the Civil Society Platform for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (CSPPS), Namati, and the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC), hosted a side-event at the United Nations' High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) entitled, **"Showcasing Best Practices: Civil Society Driving Progress on SDG16+"**, with participants from civil society, Member States, and the UN system.

With SDG16 under review for the first time since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda in 2015, the 2019 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) provided a critical milestone to examine the current state of progress towards SDG16. Additionally, the 2019 HLPF represents an important opportunity but also to take stock of the many positive and encouraging examples of mobilization and action on SDG16 – particularly at the national and local levels, and particularly efforts undertaken by civil society groups.

This side-event provided a platform for civil society working at the national and local levels to showcase their work to advance SDG16+ in their own contexts. Additionally, it featured an opportunity for participants to share reflections on where some of the gaps in implementation or capacities might be around SDG16, and where additional support may be needed. It also highlighted examples of how civil society has come together around SDG16 collectively, such as the "commitments" being mobilized by civil society towards SDG16+ by the TAP Network, as well as national SDG16 workshops hosted by a range of partners.

The side-event also showcased reflections from the [Rome Civil Society Declaration on SDG16+](#), which was drafted and adopted by the SDG16 civil society community at the [Rome SDG16 Conference](#), hosted from 27-29 May 2019. Civil Society Organizations were invited to "endorse" this Rome Civil Society Declaration on SDG16+ at www.tapnetwork2030.org/romedeclaration.

Participants engaged with a wide range of national-level civil society actors in a World Café format, which provided opportunities for an engaging and interactive dialogue amongst participants.

This event had the following objectives:

1. To provide a platform for sharing of best practices and learning around current SDG civil society efforts to take SDG16 ambition forward at the national level
2. To showcase opportunities for collective action, mobilization and advocacy at the global level
3. To help strengthen coordination amongst the SDG16 civil society community, both for the 2019 HLPF and SDGs Summit, but for 2020 and beyond

Summary

The meeting began with a welcome by John Romano, Coordination of the TAP Network Secretariat. John introduced the program and speakers and then outlined the objectives for the session.

After the welcome, Jordan Street, Saferworld, provided an overview presentation on the Civil Society Rome Declaration on SDG16+, which was drafted and presented at the Rome SDG16 Conference in May 2019. Next, Peter van Sluijs, Civil Society Platform for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (CSPPS), outlined TAP and CSPPS's collaborative efforts in the lead-up to the 2019 HLPF to host SDG16 National Workshops in countries scheduled to present VNRs this year. Finally, Elle Sweeney, Program Officer of the TAP Network Secretariat, presented on the TAP Network's campaign to encourage the mobilizations and scaling-up of civil society commitments to accelerated actions for SDG16+.

Following these brief presentations, the meeting turned to an introduction of the World Café portion of the meeting, where each speaker/representative pitched their work in 2-3 minutes, to allow participants to decide which discussions they would like to participate in during the World Café. These colleagues included:

- Albert Yelyang (Ghana) & Justine Kumche (Cameroon)
- Abdijalil Dahir Afqarshe & Ismail Farjar (Somaliland)
- Dalile Antune (Argentina)
- Musa Ansumana Soko (Sierra Leone) & Diakalia Ouattara (Cote d'Ivoire)

Finally, the meeting divided into the World Café discussion groups. Each speaker/representative hosted a group of participants for 10-12-minute sessions each, with 3 rotations where participants could move to another group after those 10 minutes.

The meeting wrapped-up with brief reports from rapporteurs/facilitators from World Café discussion groups on key messages from discussions. These wrap-ups were followed by a brief discussion on follow-up from the meeting, and how to engage going forward.

Below are the key take-aways from the World Café discussion groups:

Cameroon and Ghana

- Cameroon
 - Throughout the country, anglophones wanted independence due to feelings of discrimination since the beginning of the crisis in 2016 and prior.
 - Cameroon was under national review, specifically Goal 16, and the initiative sent out a survey to ten regions across the country to get feedback from various communities and to collect data. Key findings from these surveys found that the populations were not satisfied with progress to date of the 2030 Agenda in the country. For example, it was found by the survey that there are massive gender-bias laws.
 - It was found that though the government wants to collaborate on the implementation and monitoring of SDG16+, there is currently a lack of inclusion of many vulnerable and marginalized groups, including women and youth.
 - Cameroon has a 2035 Action Plan for national development. Feedback from the surveys, particularly in the Anglophone regions, were taken into account by the government. It was found that there is a desire for youth to create their own parallel action plan.
 - There were significant capacity issues found in the country. Capacity building needs to be prioritized as well as awareness raising.
- Ghana
 - Throughout the country, there were desires for community-level participation in the implementation of the SDGs.
 - Qualitative and quantitative research was undertaken in nine regions, including the use of historical data that spoke to past issues and culture.
 - It was found that there were significant gaps in the awareness of the SDGs, particularly of Goal 16+, Goal 4, and Goal 5.
 - The initiative sought to support women and peacebuilders specifically.
 - The initiative started by having inception meetings prior to data collection to find the areas where focuses needed to be prioritized.
 - UNDP supported the government processes in the country.
 - Capacity building needs to be prioritized as well as awareness raising.

Somaliland

- The SDG16+ Somaliland Coalition was created to work to create awareness of SDG16+ commitments across the country.
- The initiative also sought to support authorities to align their activities and plans for the SDGs and SDG16.
- The facilitators carried out consultations with CSOs across all regions in the country and used these consultations to develop short- and long-term priorities for the initiative.

- To improve accountability towards the SDGs, the initiative encouraged CSOs to produce progress reports and helped collect and disseminate the findings of these analyses.
- The initiative also helped to develop the Somaliland National Development Plan based on the SDGs.
- The initiative sought to identify key people in government to serve as champions of the SDGs.
- The initiative is already helping to make an impact throughout the country, including in the areas of spotlight/progress reporting by civil society, increasing access to information, involving vulnerable and marginalized groups including women and youth, and localizing implementation of the SDGs.

Argentina

- The initiative took a bottom-up approach and looked to relate to community issues (i.e. slum issues vs. access to justice issues).
- The initiative was as participatory as possible, including during the drafting process where the facilitators sought to have broad stakeholder buy-in and wide-spread dissemination of information.
- The facilitators used the report of the government as the framework to plan next steps for the future. They also involved the government and other non-traditional stakeholders as much as possible in the dialogue.
- Common challenges amongst the communities involved in the access to justice programs included lack of affordable legal counsel and resources and barriers to access to legal proceedings. There were also unique challenges for specific communities, such as the disabled and rural communities.
- The initiative used a broad definition of “access to justice”, which made the programming more inclusive but also more complex.
- The initiative focused on leaving no one behind by hosting consultations with vulnerable and marginalized groups. Despite these efforts, it was still particularly difficult to reach rural communities.
- The initiative focused on data and monitoring, but there were still challenges with lack of information, evidence, and measurable data around access to justice resources. The facilitators found that current data largely focuses on legal needs, but not on access to justice issues specifically.
- The initiative worked to build consensus from the start in order to have a foundation for discussion and proposals that needed to be prioritized going forward. This helped facilitators when there was a need to refine the order of what to prioritize first.
- The initiative used open government partnership processes, but also worked through parallel process.
- The initiative played the role of facilitator between the government and CSOs.
- The initiative worked to involve youth, but there were particular challenges around this due to institutionalization, barriers within homes due to resource scarcity, and low bars for children’s rights.

Sierra Leone and Cote d’Ivoire

- Cote d’Ivoire
 - The initiative worked to make SDG16 an issue for all, not just a topic in policy discussions.
 - Facilitators worked to ensure that the SDGs impacted national elections.
 - Consultations to stock take were undertaken. This helped the facilitators better understand the awareness gaps and progress to-date on implementations.
 - The initiative fed into formal government processes and established institutional bodies.
 - Broad, participatory consultations were carried out across all targets of SDG16.
 - The initiative found that there is a need for further technical, as well as better coordination amongst all stakeholders.
- Sierra Leone
 - There were efforts to encourage collaboration amongst civil society and UN agencies to strengthen the VNR.
 - The initiative sought to specifically address issues of shrinking civic space.
 - The facilitators established regular working groups around SDG16.

Key take-aways across the national case studies:

- There needs to be further oversight from CSOs on SDGs implementation.

- More partnerships and opportunities for collaboration are needed to cut down silos and to encourage discourse between governments and other stakeholders.
- There is a need to spread the language of the SDGs, including through awareness raising campaigns and through the use of local languages.
- We must not just local at peace, but at all targets of SDG16+.
- We need to focus on building capacities.
- Spotlight/progress/shadow reporting is critical for telling CSOs story of implementation.
- We must include local communities so that their interests are represented and addressed. We should take advantage of the media to help achieve this goal.
- There needs to be an institutionalization of the SDGs via progress reports, national forums, and other opportunities.
- We must work together so that we have a collective, stronger voice for civil society.

Contact Us

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