Meeting Decisions

22 March 2022

Present: Mr. Peter van Sluijs, CSPPS
Ms. Cheri-Leigh Erasmus, Accountability Lab
Ms. Arelys Bellorini, World Vision
Ms. Olabisi Mekwuye, Civil Society Coalition on Sustainable
Development
Mr. Tor Holdenfield, CIVICUS
Ms. Bridged Faida, Consolation East Africa
Mr. John Romano, TAP Secretariat
Ms. Claudia Villalona, TAP Secretariat
Ms. Ellery Wong, TAP Secretariat

DECISIONS TAKEN FROM CONFERENCE CALL IN GREEN; FOLLOW-UP ITEMS IN BLUE

Agenda Items:

1. Discussion on TAP overall vision and approach for 2022 (45 minutes)
2. Discussion on TAP Membership Engagement (45 minutes)
3. Discussion on role and approach of Steering Committee and Secretariat (30 minutes)
4. AOB

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1. **Discussion on TAP overall vision and approach for 2022**

Discussion:

The Steering Committee co-chairs gave a brief overview of the agenda for the first planning meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to have a macro-level discussion on the overall vision and approach of TAP's strategy, approach to SDG16 using all SC member's expertise, and to operationalize and synergize the relationship between the Steering Committee and the Secretariat. It would also be an exercise in taking stock and reimagining TAP's role and objectives. The following guiding questions were put forth by the Secretariat:

1. *What is the unique contribution of TAP?*
   <u>TAP Mission</u> Building and fostering a community of empowered civil society actors working to advance SDG16+ at all levels, and to hold governments accountable to the SDGs

2. *How TAP's Strategic Goals help us achieve the TAP Mission?*

Strategic goals

I. Empower national and local civil society to foster an active, vibrant and engaged global network to advance SDG16+ and SDG Accountability
II. Improve SDGs/SDG16+ Localization and Capacity Building
III. Strengthen Monitoring, Data and Accountability for SDG16+ and the 2030 Agenda

The chair of the meeting also put forth a few questions of importance to discuss.

1. **What are big gains towards achieving SDG16 that we are proud of? How do we build on these gains and amplify wins?**
   - the creation of and coordination between CSO and multi stakeholder platforms. Building a community of CSO SDG16 followers and champions
   - Increased youth participation within governance matters and international processes and the creation of youth resources and platforms for engagement, learning dissemination
   - mainstreaming SDGs into the government at the national level, specifically within Nigeria with greater coordination, increased CSO participation and public-private sector partnership
   - Successful mainstreaming or institutionalization of the importance of SDG16 in some national level contexts, mobilizing SDG language at the government level
   - Concerted action to bring attention to SDG16 at the global and national level
   - Global advocacy: amplifying local voices at the global level: showcasing of implementation efforts and experiences at the grassroots level through these engagement opportunities at the global level

2. **How can we build on these gains as a network?**
   - Continue to amplify traditionally marginalized and grassroot voices, bringing them to the decision making table
   - Mainstreaming SDG16 work, government and legislative actors at the national level

   2b) What role can TAP play in this work? How do we see TAP supporting these initiatives and building on these gains?
   - Continue to provide learning/capacity strengthening resources, building on the content of existing resources and providing learning opportunities through them; Support linkages between members and partners
   - Honing in on the added value of CSO Networks which at its core is the platform for amplifying voices and create space for collaboration and coordination within the network

3. **What are the major challenges/stumbling blocks?**
   - Lack of knowledge and partnership not just the capacity for key stakeholders such as lawmakers– champions isolated in other environments
   - From a CSO perspective, there are a lot of issues to compete with making it easy to be fatalistic and discouraged making it difficult to prioritize issues and determine energy. Must make greater effort to draw interlinkages to SDG16

- ○ Ensuring activities, resources and opportunities for engagement accurately reflect the needs and priorities of the membership
- ○ Combating "zoom fatigue" around virtual engagement

2. Discussion on TAP Membership Engagement (45 minutes)

Discussion:

The next item on the agenda for discussion was TAP's approach to Membership Engagement. **The moderator asked the following guiding question: What is working in terms of membership engagement and where are there gaps?** The SC came to the general consensus that TAP's strength lies in its global coalition and membership. Therefore, it is critical to improve membership engagement and amplify member's work to ensure that TAP's work is reflective of the needs of the membership.

The TAP Coordinator took a moment to provide an overview of the current state of membership engagement from the Secretariat's perspectiv**e.** The positives include TAP's greatest strength of top-down engagement from the Secretariat, in other words providing opportunities, resources and platforms in the form of webinars, storytelling and capacity building resources. Global Advocacy is another strength of TAP as one of its founding objectives as a global network. Over the years, TAP's activities have also shifted to include national level support in the form of workshops and other opportunities. Finally, TAP has shown its ability to pool together resources and internal/external partners for mobilization around initiatives such as the toolkit, Voices Campaign, Rome Declaration and the Decade of Accountability– all being entry points for mobilization.

The challenges that TAP faces are ensuring that aforementioned activities are relevant and provide added value to the membership. This is what helps distinguish TAP as a network rather than an NGO. Thus, a major bottleneck for sustainable and relevant bottom up or organic engagement and ownership. This calls into question the topic of incentives for members to engage or, How do we stimulate buy-in and authentic ownership for our members and partners? One way is providing leadership opportunities for those that are interested. However, voluntary positions, such as the Steering Committee, these opportunities need to ensure return on investment for time.

The funding opportunities, in particular, is a successful example of active engagement and mobilization. These opportunities resulted in enormous enthusiasm, mobilization and engagement. However, funding does prove to be a perverse rather than authentic mode of engagement. Overall, the bottom line is: how do we provide relevant added value to our membership?

Opening the floor to comments and discussion, SC members agreed that an important added value for a network is the potential for organic lateral engagement, or the ability and ease to connect with other members facilitating joint coordination towards a common goal. In other words, the Secretariat by itself shouldn't be the only one providing incentive, but it should also lie within the members themselves.

There was a discussion on funding opportunities as an incentive driver. While some SC members agreed it could be a perverse incentive in that its not coming from member/partners individual incentive to connect and collaborate with other orgs in the network. However, others noted the complexity given that many of these grassroots organizations are in critical need of funding. Along these lines, the idea behind these funding opportunities should be to support certain elements and work of local CSOs working towards SDG16 but it should not be the main objective for TAP.

It was also agreed that TAP should continue to focus on ensuring participation in global UN spaces and allow grassroots organizations to gain insight into how other CSOs work across regions. It should also draw on the strength and cross-cutting nature of SDG16 to unite CSOs across issues.

The Secretariat called attention to the facilitation of organic incentive as a bottleneck. This discussion highlighted the need for a consultation with the membership to ask them these questions, with the last consultation being in late 2020. The consultation would feed into the independent evaluation and strategic planning later this year. The survey should be carefully structured so that it is simple, concise, easy to complete, and translated in different languages.

Other challenges that SC Members brought up included: the language barrier, the under-representation of organizations in Latin America and MENA region, the need for mobilization and recruitment in these regions.

The goals from these discussions included the following
- Hearing from members in a more actionable and consistent way and more productive one on one consultations with partners
- To divide the labor away from the Secretariat to clear up the aforementioned bottlenecks

3. Discussion on role and approach of Steering Committee and Secretariat (30 minutes)
Discussion:
 Steering Committee Terms of Reference

a) *Breakdown and synthesis of current Steering Committee and Secretariat roles/Terms of Reference from TAP Secretariat*
b) *Determining roles of Steering Committee and Secretariat on membership engagement and mobilization and next steps*
The core functions of the Steering Committee are to:
- *Lead the network on behalf of the membership and provide strategic guidance for the network's work*
- *Be accountable to the membership, and transparent in its leadership and oversight of the network's affairs*
- *Consult and represent the membership to ensure that the TAP Network*

- ***Oversee and liaise with TAP's Fiscal Sponsor***
- ***Oversee the work of the TAP Secretariat***

The final topic for discussion was institutionalizing the role and relationship between the Steering Committee and the Secretariat. Every Steering Committee is different and their role should be clarified. The co-chairs noted that the focus and role of the SC should be to provide strategic guidance for the Secretariat's work based on belief in the Secretariat's competency in their work. The general consensus was that the SC should not "micromanage" the Secretariat as another bottleneck in their work streams and should take on a more passive role rather than hands-on role on the day to day administration of the network.

However, one member noted that SC members shouldn't be the only ones deciding on the role of the SC. They suggested bringing the membership into the conversation within the membership consultation. It was suggested continuing this discussion and including these questions in the membership consultation to explicitly outline hierarchy of what needs input and approval from the SC. This could also take into account the differing personalities and expertise of SC members and use that accordingly.

Next Steps
- **Draft and publish membership consultation survey on membership engagement, member and partners needs and priorities and the role Steering Committee**
    - **Use the feedback collected to shape TAP priorities going forward, to shape the independent evaluation, and eventually, feed into the strategic planning**
- **Begin the Independent Evaluation Process**
    - **Draft Terms of Reference and Hire consultant**
- **Identify and establish focal points for SC members to contribute to specific workstreams**
- **Establishing and outlining the hierarchy of decision making/ what workstreams and activities need input and approval from the SC.**