Hybrid Parliamentary Committees

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How can we have HLPF-like structures embedded in nation-state level policymaking?

- UN Conference on Environment and Development in 1992 (Earth Summit) recognized that **achieving sustainable development would require the active participation of all sectors of society** and all types of people.

- Agenda 21 formalized **nine sectors of society as the main channels** through which broad participation in UN activities related to sustainable development would be facilitated, called **"Major Groups":**
  - Women
  - Children and Youth
  - Indigenous Peoples
  - Non-Governmental Organizations
  - Local Authorities
  - Workers and Trade Unions
  - Business and Industry
  - Scientific and Technological Community
  - Farmers

- The **Rio+20 outcome "Future we Want" (2012)** emphasized the importance of MGoS **also invites other stakeholders** to contribute to UN processes related to sustainable development including:
  - Local communities
  - Volunteer groups and foundations
  - Migrants and families
  - Older persons
  - Persons with disabilities
- This is echoed in the resolution on the format and organizational aspects of the **HLPF** (A/RES/67/290) which **encourages the engagement of major groups identified in Agenda 21 and other stakeholders**, such as
  - Private philanthropic organizations,
  - Educational and academic entities,
  - Persons with disabilities,
  - Volunteer groups and
  - Other stakeholders active in areas related to sustainable development.
- The HLPF is one of the most inclusive intergovernmental entities. General Assembly resolution 67/290 decides that, while retaining the intergovernmental character of the forum, the representatives of the major groups and other relevant stakeholders shall be allowed:
  - To attend all official meetings of the forum;
  - To have access to all official information and documents;
  - To intervene in official meetings;
  - To submit documents and present written and oral contributions;
  - To make recommendations;
  - To organize side events and round tables, in cooperation with Member States and the Secretariat
- A self-organized **"Major Groups and Other Stakeholders"** (https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/majorgroups)

Learning from HLPF

Two-step governance architecture:

1. Dialogue between Ministers, UN system and MGoS
2. Ministers Agree Outcome document

- Allows MGoS to input directly to policymakers rather than through missions or capitals or UN System.

- Set agendas, take ownership inducing action and learning, via a follow up and review.

- Our idea is to migrate the HLPF structure to national policy making e.g. country-level HLPF with national major groups. Interoperable 360 24/7 process between the Global and National level.

National Policy Structures

- Multiple entry points for MGoS at national level
- Policy processes are embedded in national policy structures. Country specific. Can be envisaged as a chain of decisions. E.g. in Ireland,
    1. Committees (Bureaucratic side) –(Report)$\rightarrow$ Parliamentary Sub-committees (Legislative side) –(Legal Proposals)$\rightarrow$
    2. Parliament –(Bill)$\rightarrow$ Senate
- Policy makers take these structures as given, this process is vulnerable to capture at each step
- MGoS need to be involved in committee work to ensure better representation of citizens

Proposals for Inclusive Institutions

- Many proposals in VNRs for inclusive institutions

Crucially, incorporate citizens/stakeholders into the bureaucratic side of the policy process or MGoS participation in the legislative side of committee work to support legislators

1. National Councils for SD
2. Stakeholder Forums
3. Stakeholder Consultations
4. Learned Societies
5. Citizens Assembly
6. Parliamentary Committees, invited stockholder engagement
7. Whole of Government Committees- invited stockholder engagement

Hybrid Multi-stakeholder Committees

- Hybrid Multi- Stakeholder Committee would be Inter- Governmental, Inter–Political Party; Inter Major Groups and Other Stakeholders and use e-consultations with the general public.

- Does we need such a complex hybrid committee structure?
  - Needed to prevent Capture
  - Needed for Medium to Long term Planning
  - Needed to Integrate Economic, Social and Environmental Policies at home and abroad

- Where do we position HMSCs in nation-state level policymaking landscape?

- There are some examples of hybrid multi-stakeholder committees. They are not mainstream in intergovernmental committees on agenda setting, policy dialogue and making. Most are on the bureaucratic side of government.

Committee on the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (2015 – 2018)

Independent Chair

• Nora Owen

Statutory Representatives

• Kevin Kelly, Conflict Resolution Unit, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
• Niall Morris, Development Co-operation Division, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
• Sarah McGrath, Anglo-Irish Division, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
• Nicola Donnelly, Cosc (National Office for the Prevention of Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence),

Department of Justice and Equality

• Diane Nurse, Social Inclusion Unit, Health Services Executive
• Barry Lavin, Intl Security and Defence Policy Branch, Dept. of Defence
• Cmdt. Jayne Lawlor, Defence Forces
• Supt. Louise Synnott, An Garda Síochána
• Émer Deane, Permanent Representation of Ireland to the European Union

Civil Society, academic and independent experts

• Colm Byrne, Oxfam Ireland
• Anastasia Crickley, Dept. of Applied Social Studies, Maynooth University
• Jaqueline Healy, National Women's Council of Ireland
• Dr. Rob Kevlihan, Kimmage Development Studies Centre
• Réiseal Ní Chéilleachair, Trócaire
• Ruth Taillon, Centre for Cross Border Studies
• Dr. Catherine O'Rourke, Transitional Justice Institute, University of Ulster
• Michael Rowan, Independent Expert

Secretariat (Conflict Resolution Unit)

• Paula Molloy, Deputy Director
• James Kelly, Desk Officer
• Colin Davy, Clerical Officer

Journal of The Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland, 1847- 2018

http://www.ssisi.ie

Benefits

- Moves major groups to agenda setters inducing ownership and easier implementation of SDSs. Move away from watch dog roles.

- Greater society wide accountability in measuring, reporting, and verifying SDGs targets

- Strengthen democracy within nations with active civil society participation; creating powerful groups other then industry lobby groups; money replaced by vote of major group members; issue-based citizen lobbies increase citizen awareness of SDGs

- Policies are scientific; cost-benefit of policies analyzed in-depth; supports open-source government

Anticipated criticisms

- Expensive to run?
  - Innovations in E-Governance can increase efficiency and reduce cost
- Slow to respond to emerging challenges and produce legislation with a broad consensus?
  - How to adjust with the need for speed in policy-making process?
  - Better slow and right
- How do we mitigate power differences within Major Groups? Elite capture?
- Undermine Representative Democracy?

What are the Failures we are addressing?

- USA: Special interest groups with special policy agendas have always tried to influence legislative and executive branches; lobby with legislators, legislative staff, committee staff; example: teachers, labor unions, environmental groups.

- USA: Institutionalizing the interest groups in Major Groups. In line with Congressional Research Service (public policy research report to US Congress on a non-partisan basis), Congressional Budget Office (provides with budget related information), Government Accountability Office (monitors and reviews activities of govt); the

- Hybrid Multi-Stakeholder Committees will provide independent feedbacks, civil socity check and balances, on policies related to SDGs