How can we ensure the summit and subsequent HLPFs fully engage major groups and other stakeholders including local and sub-national governments and what additional role or entitlement they should have?

A presentation to the Friends of Governance meeting, December 2018,

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Focus areas:

- Why and how has the UN moved away from NGOs to Major Groups and Other Stakeholders and what – if any – are the success factors of this approach?

- What examples are there of good practices on engagement of stakeholders from around the UN system that could be built into the next phase of the HLPF?

- What and how can stakeholders contribute to developing policy issues and how can they be an agent for implementation?

- What could local and subnational governments do to engage local stakeholders in helping to develop local strategy and policy to implement the SDGs?

- What can be done at the local and sub-national level to create partnerships to help deliver the SDGs and the New Urban Agenda?

- Could and should local and subnational government develop their own VNRs?

- What role would local and subnational indicators play?

A note on 'stakeholders'

- Article 71 of the UN Charter recognises Non Governmental Organisations as a proper and legal actor of the UN system under the Charter

- The 9 Major Groups as decided by Agenda 21, are a subset of the NGOs (Women, Children and Youth, Farmers, Indigenous Peoples, NGOs, Trade Unions, Local Authorities, Science and technology, Business and Industry)

- A stakeholder is a person, body, unit, organisation with a stake in something, it has no legal standing, and is context dependent

- A stakeholder in this presentation refers to the 9 major groups and relevant stakeholders as enumerated in the Rio+20 Outcome Document (§43) and in resolution 67/290 on the HLPF, and not only civil society

Also bear in mind the following issues:

- Is the HLPF currently engaging non-state actors effectively, in preparation? In the Forum proper? In negotiation of Declaration?

- Should non-state actors' role in HLPF be changed in any significant way and if so how?

- Should non-state actors be asked to report on contribution towards implementing the 2030 Agenda? If so, how can this be accommodated in time available?

- Should voluntary stakeholder and partnership commitments be featured in the HLPF? If so, what mechanism is needed for follow-up?

Quick answers to Focus areas - 1:

Q -Why and how has the UN moved away from NGOs to Major Groups and Other Stakeholders and what – if any – are the success factors of this approach

A - Because of Rio/UNCED and Agenda 21 – greater visibility and modus operandi for the global NGO community

Q - What examples are there of good practices on engagement of stakeholders from around the UN system that could be built into the next phase of the HLPF?

A - Inspiration fro World Food Programme, SAITES, UN AIDS and UN OCHA

Q - What and how can stakeholders contribute to developing policy issues and how can they be an agent for implementation?

A - By being better informed and aware of their roles and possible room to manoeuvre.

Quick answers to Focus areas – 2:

Q - What could local and subnational governments do to engage local stakeholders in helping to develop local strategy and policy to implement the SDGs?

A - By taking them seriously and keeping the up-dated and informed.

Q - What can be done at the local and sub-national level to create partnerships to help deliver the SDGs and the New Urban Agenda?

A - By developing regional strategies for sustainable development and involve stakeholders in policy and implementation

Q - Could and should local and subnational government develop their own VNRs?

A - Yes

Q - What role would local and subnational indicators play?

A - Getting a better understanding of what and how regions could perform

What are we dealing with?

Is HLPF currently engaging non-state actors effectively, in preparation? 8	YES	Room to improve		
In the Forum proper?		Room to improve		
In negotiation of Declaration?				Nope
1 - Should non-state actors' role in HLPF be changed significantly, 2 - if so how?		1 -Room to improve	2 - To be discussed	
Should non-state actors report on their implementation of the 2030 Agenda?	YES			
How can this be accommodated in time available?			To be discussed	
Should voluntary stakeholder and partnership commitments be featured in the HLPF?	YES			
If so, what mechanism is needed for follow-up?			To be discussed	

The spirit of 67/290 complies with §84 of the Rio+20 Outcome Document – what about practice in real life?

- The Rio Outcome Document begins and ends with reference to civil society.

- The document has many strong references to civil society, major groups and stakeholders

- This political understanding of civil society was guiding the preparatory process of Rio+20, the OWG and has been fully integrated in the 2030 Agenda Document

- Implementing these intentions will guarantee participation

In short,

- implement all paragraphs in 67/290, and we have a guaranteed and complete participation of stakeholders at all levels at any time of formal and non-formal settings within the UN system (except closed meetings)

Stakeholders should/must engage in the mandate of HLPF

Has the HLPF been successful in implementing its mandate?

By the way - what actually is the mandate? And do all stakeholders realise its complexity?

- The mandate is primarily defined in three documents:

- The 'original resolution': A/Res/**67/290**

- Further expanded with assignments from **"Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development"** –

- And further strengthened and expanded by a third: **70/299**

Mandates pertaining to HLPF:

▶**From 67/290**: Found in paras: 1,6,7,11, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23, 29

▶**From the 2030 Agenda document**: found in paragraphs: 74, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90

▶**Further strengthened in 70/299**: paragraphs: 4,6,10,11,12,13,15,16,17,18, 19,20

And a mandate which is further expanded by a growing 2030 portfolio

- with intention or by habit?

The Global 2030 SD Portfolio

Agreed and operationalised

- The 17 SDGs with their 169 targets/2030 agenda
- The 230+ review indicators
- Resolution 67/290 - HLPF
- The Addis Ababa Action Agenda
- The Paris Climate Agreement (December 2015)
- The Sendai Outcome document, Disaster reduction
- The Samoa Pathway (SIDS agreement)
- Relevant work by UNDP, CBD and other UN institutions

To be followed

- World Data Forum, 2019/21/23/25/27
- Annual HLPF reviews 2019/2020
- The Reviews, national, regional, global
- SDG High Level meeting, 2019/23/27
- 2027 – a kick off process to replace the SDGs (?)
- Annual FfD forums
- UNEP Geo 2019
- The UN Environment Assembly, every 2 years, UNEA 2019/21/23
- The Global Sustainable Development Report 2019
- UNGA resolutions on Sustainable Investment
- ECOSOC deliberations

Successful engagement is understanding the challenges. Why is the 2030 Agenda so difficult to handle and implement?

Let us take a brief look at history –

As a historian, we have come a long way in a short period of time,

As an environmentalist we have not come far enough, and used too much time to get where we are

IS OUR MIND-SET ….. 1945 17	FIT FOR PURPOSE? 1970 1987 1992 2000	Our SD mind-set has a short past and a long future (I hope) 2012 2016 …
Peace, Conflict, Cold War	The Development Paradigm A North South Dichotomy	Sustainable Development on its own, resulting in …
Environment is weak Sustainable development at zero	1987- Our Common Future SD on the political agenda 1992 - UNCED Millennium Declaration – MDGs 2000 and 2001	the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs
	1972 – UNEP The Global Ministerial Forums of UNEP - 2000	2014 – UN Environment Assembly
Universal approach in the world at the time	North South development paradigms dominate	With Sustainable Development comes universality
INSTITUTIONS …	REFLECT …	OUR MIND-SETS

How do different stakeholders approach the 2030 agenda?

Stakeholder positions vis-a-vis SDGs – I (source JG Strandenaes)

INFLUENCE	LOCAL	NATIONAL	REGIONAL	GLOBAL
Government	High	High	High	High
Business	High	High	High	High
People (academia)	High	High/ Lessening	Less	Little (?) (context dependent)
INTEREST				
Government	High to inconsistent	High to inconsistent	Inconsistent to High	Varies to High
Business	Less	High	Growing	Growing
People (Academia)	Varies to High	Varies to High	Less (Context dependent)	Even less (Context dependent)

Stakeholder positions vis-a-vis SDGs – II (source JG Strander

ABILITY to implement	LOCAL	NATIONAL	REGIONAL	GLOBAL
Government	High	High	High	High
Business	High	High	High	High
People (Academia)	H/Varies	H/Varies	Less	Even less
PREPAREDNESS				
Government	Lacking	Varies to High	Growing	Varies
Business	Lacking	Growing	Growing	Varies
People (Academia)	Growing	Growing	Lacking	Not really

Level	Systems/stakeholders active at different levels	Opportunity, engaging in implementing SDGs	Impact of using SDGs in planning and actions
Local 21	Municipalities, business, civil society, sub-national governments	High	High
National	Government, private sector, civil society, academia & research	Varies, some good examples, too many poor examples	Varies, some good examples, hardly enough
Regional	Larger institutions, private sector, UN system; regional organisations, the Nordic council, EU, OAU other regional intergovernmental systems and NGOs	Varies, the 2030 agenda has created a momentum, there are opportunities, the fear is that they might decrease, it depends upon governance	Varies, and it reflects the available opportunities.
Global	OECD, the UN system, large corporations, academia & research INGOs	Symbolic to real participation of all stakeholders, could be decreasing over time due to fragmented governance and understanding of the 2030 agenda and the SDGs	Uneven picture, impact possible and growing in certain areas, though impact reflect opportunities and understanding

CSD – HLPF, which is better – and is this a relevant comparison?

Are there lessons learned from the CSD that could be used to improve the HLPF?

CSD

- An elected Bureau with a Chair

- 53 members, on a rotating basis

- Had a decision-making power with a mandate to vote

- Had a dedicated secretariat with a proper mandate, staff and resources

- Time: two week preparation, two week negotiations

- A proper preparatory process through a conference

- Thematic reviews

- A Chairs summary, and a negotiated outcome based on the summary

- Multistakeholder dialogues

HLPF

- Directed by the President of ECOSOC/UNGA

- Universal membership

- Has no decision-making powers, but has proceeded to vote

- Works with a general reference to UNDESA to support HLPF (§ 23) in a secretarial manner

- 5 days for reviews, 3 days for the High Level Segment

- A preparatory process through internet, no easy access to all documents

- VNRs from countries, on certain goals

- A drafted report and a Ministerial Declaration negotiated outside of HLPF in advance of HLPF

- Selected inputs by stakeholders from the floor

A key principle in these paragraphs and in 67/290 is "ACCESS" and "PARTICIPATION" – what privileges for non-state actors?

CSD

- Access to all general info
- Access to all policy-statements
- Access and participation to all negotiations
- Access to all rooms and participation in all meetings
- Access to all delegates on the floor
- Multistakeholder dialogues
- 53 members, ca 700 NGOs, total 11-1200 participants
- CSD negotiated in accessible rooms

HLPF

- Access to all general info
- Access to all policy-statements
- ~~Access and participation to all negotiations~~
- ~~Access to all rooms and participation in all meetings~~
- ~~Access to all delegates on the floor~~
- ~~Multistakeholder dialogues~~
- Universal membership, 1500 participants in 2017
- HLPF reports and debates, but the Ministerial Declaration is negotiated, where?

No other resolution taken by the UN GA is more progressive and integrative towards non-state actors than A/Res/67/290 on the organisation and modalities of the HLPF

But what does it actually state?

The difficult birth and history of HLPF and the SDGs

- HLPF was established in 2013 before anybody knew what it was going to work on and to be working with;

- The new 'construct', HLPF, "under the auspices of" – was (and is) not well understood;

- There were obvious shortcomings in HLPF (at least to some);

- **The way HLPF was handled between 2013 and 2016 weakened HLPF**

- The 2030 Agenda was agreed to in September 2015

- **The 'size' of the SDGs with their targets motivated the clustering for the VNR, and this became the agenda – by default?**

What does 67/290 actually direct us to do?

➡ HLPF was established in 2012 and in June 2013 the GA agreed to a resolution on organisation, mandates and methodology of HLPF, all long before anybody knew what it was going to be working with:

➡ **Second preambular paragraph of 67/290:** "*Emphasizing* the need for an improved and more effective institutional framework for sustainable development, which should be guided by the specific functions required and mandates involved; address the shortcomings of the current system; take into account all relevant implications; promote synergies and coherence; seek to avoid duplication and eliminate unnecessary overlaps within the United Nations system and reduce administrative burdens and build on existing arrangements,"

Which privileges are given to MGs and non-state stakeholders by 67/290?

▶**Major groups and relevant stakeholders are referred to in 7 paragraphs:**

▶**Paragraphs 8c; 13; 14; 15; 16; 22 and 24.**

- §8c "HLPF …. shall conduct regular reviews …. Which shall provide a platform for partnerships, including through the participation of major groups and other relevant stakeholders;"

- § 14. "*Stresses* the need for the forum to <u>promote transparency and implementation by further enhancing the consultative role and participation of the major groups and other relevant stakeholders at the international level</u> in order to make better use of their expertise, while retaining the intergovernmental nature of discussions, <u>and in this regard decides that the forum shall be open to the major groups, other relevant stakeholders and entities having received a standing invitation to participate as *observers*</u> in the General Assembly, building on arrangements and practices observed by the Commission on Sustainable Development, including Economic and Social Council decision 1993/215 of 12 February 1993 and Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996, which shall be applicable to the forum;"

§15 of 67/290, the most radical paragraph to give non-state actors rights and privileges

➡ *Decides*, in this regard, that, while retaining the intergovernmental character of the forum, the representatives of the major groups and other relevant stakeholders shall be allowed:

➡ (*a*) To attend all official meetings of the forum;

➡ (*b*) To have access to all official information and documents;

➡ (*c*) To intervene in official meetings; **(!!)**

➡ (*d*) To submit documents and present written and oral contributions**;(!!)**

➡ (*e*) To make recommendations; **(!!)**

➡ (*f*) To organize side events and round tables, in cooperation with Member States and the Secretariat;

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- Recognises the existence of major groups and stakeholders, encourages them to establish a system whereby they can ensure all out participation of all stakeholders. Thus the UN with member states implicitly admit that they will accept decisions taken by the non-state actors in their engagement with the HLPF

Towards Strong and Active Stakeholder Engagement at the Global Level

Prerequisites for involving non-state stakeholders

- **Relevance**
- **Participation**
- **Access**
- **Information**
- **Knowledge**
- **Understanding**
- **Being listened to and taken seriously**
- **Promises followed up**

It is all there – but implemented?

Non-state actors - invaluable to partnerships - Partnerships invaluable to implementation

- "All countries and all stakeholders, acting in collaborative partnership, will implement this plan. We are resolved to free the human race from the tyranny of poverty and want and to heal and secure our planet. We are determined to take the bold and transformative steps which are urgently needed to shift the world on to a sustainable and resilient path. As we embark on this collective journey, we pledge that no one will be left behind" (From the preambular text of the 2030 agenda, 70/1)

The changing roles for non-sate actors

➡ **Watch dogs – holding everybody, including themselves, accountable**

➡ **Research bodies, identifying emerging issues and help setting agendas**

➡ **Implementers – partnerships, Ref the SDGs that its implementation is based on partnerships in ALL countries**

➡ **Private sector engaging with the 2030 agenda**

➡ **Stakeholder engagement should be institutionalised**

A final challenge

Governance and relevance – stakeholders will ask difficult questions, they can be a valuable liaison to people on the ground

DOES GOVERNANCE DIRECT REALITY?

- Monitoring development through indicators: (SDGs are point in case)
- Are the 230+ indicators relevant?
- Whose interests do they reflect?
  - The government/authorities?
  - Private sector?
  - The people?
- Who developed the indicators?
  - Governments?
  - Experts?
  - The people?

A CHANGING PERCEPTION OF GOVERNANCE

- On which values are the indicators based?
- Collective goods?
- The collective interest of all society?
- Monetary values such as profitability and the market?
- Environmental and social concerns?
- A rights based system?
- Do the governance systems today reflect the politics of our times, or should some governance principles be set in stone

Successful – absolutely and perhaps - not that much? HLP –F for Forum, Future or Failure? 2 paras as test:

- §18. "*Emphasizes* that the forum shall provide a dynamic platform for regular dialogue and for stocktaking and agenda-setting to advance sustainable development and that the agenda of all meetings of the high-level political forum shall be focused, while allowing flexibility to address new and emerging issues;"

- § 22. "*Requests* the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Economic and Social Council to coordinate with the Bureau of the Council and with the bureaux of the relevant committees of the Assembly to organize the activities of the forum so as to benefit from the inputs and advice of the United Nations system, the **major groups** and other relevant stakeholders, as appropriate;"

- This is about agenda setting, and has this really taken place?

- The clustering of SDGs have decided the agenda

A final thought

- **Everybody seems to agree on the principle of 'Leaving no one behind'**
- **Then, does it make sense to shrink and close space for stakeholders, in particular civil society?**

- We have changed the world in a wrong direction by mistake

- We can save it and make it better by intent

- **These are the themes for 2019 and they are connected:**

- **UNEA**: "Innovative solutions for environmental challenges and sustainable consumption and production"

- **UN HLPF**: "Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness"

Thank you for giving me your attention

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