

HLPF 2016 – Concerns on Agenda 2030 first year

15 August, 2016

Regional governments were also among the participants at the 2016 meeting of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) which took place from 11-20 July 2016, at UN Headquarters in New York, under the auspices of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). The meeting focused on the theme of “Ensuring that no one is left behind”, and was attended by Member States, Major Groups and other stakeholders (MGoS), and intergovernmental and UN organizations. Among the members of nrg4SD, regions as Catalonia, Flanders, São Paulo, Gossas and Rio de Janeiro attended the Forum.

As the first Forum after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development last year, there were many expectations for the meeting of the main global process responsible for the follow-up and review of progress of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Despite efforts to propose several moderated discussions, general debates and sessions focused on the national voluntary reports, many were the concerns around the commitment of Member-States to the implementation of this agenda, particularly on beyond the short speeches and brief interventions during the 8-day meetings and in concrete transformation actions on the ground.

On the other hand, the Major Group and other Stakeholders had multiple opportunities for input at the HLPF, confirming the preparedness and engagement of different actors crucial for implementation and review.

Local Authorities Engagement – Major Groups and other Stakeholders Participation

As part of the Local Authorities Major Group, nrg4SD participated in several opportunities organized during the HLPF. Including with a dedicated discussion on the collaboration with local authorities, the voice and innovative efforts of local and regional governments were shared in different panels and meetings:

- Already on July 10, on the eve of the HLPF opening ceremony, Major Groups and other Stakeholders (MGoS) gathered for a preparatory and networking meeting. The meeting was organized by the HLPF MGoS Coordination Mechanism, with the support of Division for Sustainable Development (DSD) of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA). For the duration of the HLPF, this Mechanism met in morning coordination briefings to discuss relevant issues for MGoS, organize the statements during the moderated discussions and national voluntary reviews.
- The Local Authorities also took part in a dedicated session on July 13, **Vertical cooperation – local authorities and national governments working together for implementation of the 2030 Agenda**. Speakers as nrg4SD Vice-President for America, represented by Sao Paulo State Secretary for the Environment, Patricia Iglecias, and Mayor of Istanbul, President of UCLG, and facilitator of the Global Taskforce, Kadir Topbaş, called for greater support and the enabling environment for the full participation and efficient contribution of governments at the subnational level. Secretary Iglecias explained that actions as internal coordination and specific subnational SDG strategies will be required to achieve the agenda in territories.
- The participation of MGoS counted as well with a dedicated session in the official programme on **July 15 – From inspiration to action: Multi-stakeholder engagement for implementation**, when the varied constituencies could report on their own efforts for implementation and the insertion in

national processes. Mayor Berry Vrbanovic, on behalf of the Global Task Force of Local and Regional Governments highlighted their ongoing actions in cities and territories to achieve the SDGs.

- nrg4SD participated at the side-event “Localizing the SDGs: transforming global goals into local realities”, 15 July. During the opportunity it was launched the “Roadmap for the implementation and monitoring at subnational level of the SDGs”, a collaborative publication of the Global Taskforce, UNDP and UN Habitat. The document highlight main areas Local and Regional governments should consider in order to have a relevant participation in the SDGs implementation and review process. Building on that, nrg4SD is developing a dedicated guide with basic steps regions have and could consider in this complex process.
- The Roadmap, which is a first step towards a Toolbox for Localizing the SDGs, which aims to support actions and policies of local and regional governments and other local stakeholders, was officially launched during co-organized by UCLG, UNDP and UN-Habitat. The roadmap provides guidelines and practices to support awareness-raising; sub-national advocacy in national SDG processes, implementation and monitoring and evaluation.
- On **18 July nrg4SD presented the Regions Adapt at the Partnership Exchange** – “Supporting the Sustainable Development Goals through multi-stakeholder partnerships – ensuring that no one is left behind” (watch our presentation at [nrg4SD Youtube channel](#)). As a parallel forum, the Partnership Exchange will provide a platform to showcase the multi-stakeholder partnership experiences towards achieving the SDGs.

Documents of the HLPF, as well as statements and position papers by MGoS can be found [here](#).

National Voluntary Reviews and way forward

One of the most awaited moments of the HLPF was the National Voluntary Reviews during the High-level segment. 22 voluntary countries presented their reports of the efforts in this first year. On one hand, it was noticed that the participation commitment showed by countries needs to be reflected in the concrete efforts – as Women Major Group presented, only 10% of the national reports available before the HLPF mentioned consultation process to civil society and other stakeholders.

On the other hand, the initial steps of Member-States may provide interesting examples to be replicated by subnational governments. Also it was interesting to note that many countries, as Germany, France, Philippines and Mexico, recognized need and challenge of localizing the SDGs and the involvement of cities and regions administrations, especially considering the lack of capacity and technical knowledge or of appropriate and disaggregated data, and insufficient funding.

A [Ministerial Declaration](#) was adopted during the closing session, after some complaints from Member-States of its negotiation process and including Nicaragua put to vote a paragraph connecting the SDGs to the Paris Climate Agreement. The paragraph was kept with 141 votes in favor, 1 against and 3 abstentions, and shows an increased call for votes in UN plenaries – recall UNEA-2 May 2016. The HLPF declaration, however, is more a political message to try to keep the momentum, and Local Authorities regrets the shy references to the Habitat III process and the role of subnational governments, mentioned briefly on Para 15.

The HLPF indeed without a specific body and a mandated connected to both ECOSOC and UNGA might have limited capacities to define a strong institutional model for the continued review of the 2030 Agenda. Few weeks later, the GA approved the [Resolution on Follow up and Review](#) by Consensus, however concerns were voiced about the risk of clustering goals into different packages. Among other procedural

aspects, the resolution sets the themes for the upcoming HLPFs and the SDGs focused in each year until the end of this first review cycle in 2019: “Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world” in 2017 – Goals 1, 2, 3, 5, 9 and 14; “Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies” in 2018 – Goals 6, 7, 11, 12 and 15; and “Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality” in 2019 – Goals 4, 8, 10, 13 and 16.

In the context of the Local Authorities Major Group, especially in collaboration with UCLG and the [Global Task Force](#), nrg4SD continuously advocated for increased participation and contribution of Local and Regional Governments in the follow-up and review process of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including at the global level in the HLPF. In this regard, our networks are proposing to the UN the organization of an annual Conference focused on the follow-up and best-practices adopted by governments at the subnational level. The outcomes of a specialized review of the progress of local and regional governments, including the report of their interaction and inclusion in the national process, would become a valuable input for the HLPF.

In order to ensure the HLPF as the catalytic process for global follow-up and review, it will need strengthened capacities and modalities. For example, governments that already presented their reports, need to commit to continue this process in their countries. Besides, additional attention and support should be given for the implementation at the subnational level.

More info at <http://www.iisd.ca/hlpf/2016/>. At this point with reports available in both English and French.