

National Civil Society Coalitions on the Sustainable Development Goals - A Mapping

Findings and Recommendations

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In partnership with:



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3.7 Connections between National Coalitions

Respondents were asked if they were interested in connecting with national coalitions from other countries via Together 2030. Twenty-nine (91%) respondents indicated they were interested in connecting with any country, and one said only with countries in the same region. One said that s/he was only interested in connecting with other countries that are industrialized, and one could not say at the time of the survey.

4. Key Challenges and Gaps

Respondents added some information on national CSO coalitions on the SDGs in their countries. The information provided was very useful in the identification of key challenges and gaps. Those are summarized below.

- Although many CSOs coalitions indicated that they are interconnected and also connected with the government, many are seeking ways to collaborate with the private sector in achieving the SDGs.
- The need to promote the full and effective participation of persons with disabilities in decision-making processes was highlighted.
- The importance of media as a tool in carrying out the SDGs was considered important.
- There is a need to develop reliable monitoring and data in non-traditional ways to raise the representation and points of view of people living in poverty as well as CSOs.
- It is critically important to track SDG implementation nationally, and currently some countries are working on many initiatives, although this process is limited to online tools, so does not reach community-based organizations.
- While some civil society networks engage with the government and international organizations, there is also a need to expand the networks to ensure connections with local governments.
- Some CSOs highlighted that language can be a barrier in two ways: (1) internationally-produced documents are not available in national languages and (2) nationally-produced documents are not available in English.
- In some cases, there is a lack of awareness of the government structure and the role of each government branch with regards to SDG implementation and accountability.
- There is a challenge in knowing how to engage with the right partners in national dialogues.
- The different UN mechanisms that track the implementation of the SDGs can be overwhelming for CSOs.
- Some respondents indicated that the SDGs do not reach people at the grassroots level, which prevents their participation in SDG implementation. Consequently, the SDGs need to be connected to sub-national and local-level communities and at the same time national aspirations and advocacy need to be linked to regional and global levels.
- Public space needs to be open so national plans can be debated in a participatory manner.

5. Recommendations for Together 2030

The following section provides a summary of the recommendations from survey respondents on how Together 2030, as an international initiative, could support the work of national CSO coalitions working on the SDGs.

The responses reflect the perspectives from respondents but some may not necessarily be in alignment with the focus, priorities and capacities of the Together 2030 Initiative.

Respondents considered that Together 2030 could:

- Put an emphasis on sharing information and knowledge and providing capacity building.
- Connect with national CSO coalitions and organize relevant programs together at the country level.
- Provide financial support to implement programs and advocacy at the national level.
- Support the work of CSO coalitions by facilitating linkages with other similar platforms for learning and best-practice sharing to foster collaboration with like-minded entities to achieve goals and objectives.
- Provide information and support on how to manage such a large platform to carry out adequate advocacy work on all 17 SDGs.
- Provide guidance for engaging with the VNR processes and information on the HLPF, as well as share examples among countries.
- Provide capacity building for members especially on a monitoring strategy of the implementation of SDGs including the data revolution, particularly supporting those in the Global South.
- Organize national-level technical trainings and sessions on how to monitor SDG implementation, produce shadow reports, and provide awareness raising.
- Work to give more visibility to national initiatives and to help rolling them out.
- Help support national NGO platforms gauge the level of open space created by governments in monitoring tools to implement the SDGs.
- Support coalitions in promoting SDG implementation at the local level by encouraging universities to establish SDG centers.
- Promote CSO initiatives from the country level to the global level to understand the achievements and challenges in SDGs implementation.
- Provide case studies on SDG implementation, especially on institutional engagement to help national CSOs establish a new participatory governance system nationally.
- Coordinate and compile different CSO reports to UN mechanisms into one report to have a more significant impact.
- Help lobby and influence national governments to persuade them to have open dialogues with CSOs in a participatory manner in respect to development plans and issues.
- Provide support in establishing parliamentary groups on SDGs, which could strengthen resource allocation, provide oversight on implementation, and engage in follow up and review the implementation of national sustainable development projects and programs.

The recommendations listed above showcase important action identified by actors operating at the national level that could support their work and participation at the follow up and implementation of the SDGs. The findings from this mapping exercise could provide important insights and perspectives on how Together 2030 and other international networks and development partners could most effectively facilitate the creation and strengthening of linkages among national CSO coalitions on the SDGs through peer learning, information exchange, and capacity building. In turn, this could increase national-level capacities to hold governments accountable for the commitments made in the 2030 Agenda to achieve the SDGs.

6. Reflections on the Information Gathered

Drawing on the survey, some reflections on the information gathered follows below.

The majority of the national CSO coalitions on SDGs have grown out of the post-2015 process or are connected with broader national coalitions. **CSO coalitions have a critical need to engage in SDG implementation and a strong interest in doing so.** They would also like to **learn from and engage with each other**, exchange information, and produce and share good practices and lessons learned. Many expressed the **need for financial support** to train staff and to implement the SDGs effectively. They are interested in **establishing better and more effective linkages within regions**, as well as **connecting with global-level mechanisms** to reinforce advocacy messages and to strengthen collaboration. There is a need for more effective leadership within CSO coalitions to achieve the SDGs. Finally, the respondents prominently highlight Together 2030 as the convener and interlocutor which fosters dialogues to improve CSO coalition effectiveness.

There is a clear **need for broader surveys**, potentially in partnership with national CSO coalitions on SDGs, to properly capture the perspectives of particular groups and their level of engagement with national coalitions. Importantly, Together 2030 could consider developing a survey that focuses on the groups most left behind, and analyze if those groups are (or are not) managing to engage in national CSO coalitions. Such a survey would identify the reasons for non-participation and recommendations on how to overcome them.

Together 2030 and other international partners could consider establishing strategies to **support capacity building** of national coalitions, including on how they could become more inclusive.

The need for **financial support** was a strong call for international partners and networks to support. Together 2030 could discuss ways of supporting national CSO coalitions in this regard. Together 2030 could, for instance, support in gathering and disseminating evidence on this financial challenge to help advocate for support.

Together 2030 is in an excellent, unique position to analyze the different structures and operational mechanisms of existing national CSO Coalitions on the SDGs, **gather evidence and technical expertise**, and from this develop guidance to help foster and create and strengthen those coalitions.

There is a clear need for CSO coalitions to have **space to communicate**, exchange ideas, and share good practices. Together 2030 could provide an online platform through its website and invite CSO coalitions to participate in online discussions, perhaps on particular themes, which could ultimately produce thematic reports. Together 2030 could also set up and manage a **CSO coalition listserv** to create a safe space for the exchange of information and learning in which CSO coalitions could interact, amplify their voices, and support national and global campaigns.