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**Human Rights Council**

**Forty-first session**

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Agenda items 3

**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,**

**political, economic, social and cultural rights,**

**including the right to development**

Civil society participation in the implementation of Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development

Report to the Special Rapporteur on the Rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association[[1]](#footnote-2)\*, [[2]](#footnote-3)\*\*

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| *Summary*  As a follow up to his first report presented to the General Assembly on the linkages between the exercise of the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/73/279), the Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association presents to the Human Rights Council the following practical recommendations for the participation of civil society in the implementation of Agenda 2030. |
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Annex

I. Introduction

1. The exercise of the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association contributes to the strengthening of an inclusive and effective system of check and balances inherent to democracy and essential for societies in which power is ahead to account. The guaranteed enjoyment of these rights constitutes a precondition for the active participation of individuals and civil society actors in decision-making at all levels of government, which is particularly relevant to the ability of civil society to engage in implementing …the Sustainable Development Goals.[[3]](#footnote-4) Clément Voule, UN Special Rapporteur on the rights to peaceful assembly and of association.

2. The 2030 Agenda as a universal plan of action, seeks to ensure that all human beings can fulfil their potential in dignity, equality and in a healthy environment, that they can enjoy prosperous and fulfilling lives, that the planet is protected from degradation, that societies are peaceful, just and inclusive, and free from fear and violence.

3. The 2030 Agenda acknowledges the role civil society played as a key partner in the intensive public consultations and engagement in the two years prior to the agreement, as well as in the subsequent efforts to implement the Agenda. States also recognize in the 2030 Agenda, the need to build peaceful, just and inclusive societies, the importance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights together with other international human rights instruments and international law. The Agenda emphasizes State obligations to respect, promote and protect without discrimination, human rights and fundamental freedoms, among them being the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly, association and expression.

4. In his report to the General Assembly in 2018[[4]](#footnote-5), the Special Rapporteur affirmed that civil society is both a means to ensuring social participation in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda as well as a beneficiary of the promise of the Goals. In this Annexure, he presents a non-exhaustive list of practical recommendations emanating from that report, with the hope that all stakeholders involved in the implementation of the SDGs will find this tool useful as a guide to optimize civil society’s participation in achieving the 2030 Agenda. In particular, the recommendations aim to support States the implementation of their human rights obligations to ensure the enjoyment of the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and association in the context of the 2030 Agenda.

5. In May 2019, the Special Rapporteur held a consultation meeting in Johannesburg with civil society organizations from across the world to seek their views and input in preparation of these recommendations. The Special Rapporteur is grateful for their contribution.

II. Practical Recommendations

A. A safe and enabling environment is a prerequisite for civil society engagement in the Agenda 2030.

6. For civil society actors to effectively play their role in the implementation of the Agenda 2030 and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals an enabling environment needs to be in place. Such an environment should acknowledge and seek nurture civil society’s role in service delivery, humanitarian assistance, research, public participation in policy development, accountability and watchdog, monitoring, amplifying the voices of the vulnerable, among other roles. The legitimacy of the role of civil society, founded in law and practice, provides a solid basis for the active participation of groups in development processes on an equal footing with other sectors.

As such:

*Legal framework:*

7. The legal framework should establish provisions that protect, promote and facilitate the exercise of the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association in accordance with international law principles and standards.

8. Framework laws that define the existence and operation of civil society organisations, as well as issue-specific laws that incidentally affect civil society organisations (e.g. tax laws, counter-terrorism laws, etc.) should be consistent both in the intention to protect, promote and facilitate rights as well as in their implementation.

9. The laws affecting civil society should be clear and transparent in conveying expectations in order to guide civil society’s actions.

10. Any restrictions on human rights should be prescribed by law, necessary in a democratic society and proportionate to the aim pursued. States should repeal or amend any laws and regulations that impede or hinder the work of civil society to contribute to the implementation of the Agenda 2030.

*Practice:*

11. In practice, everyone, including women, men, youth, children, indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, persons belonging to minority groups or groups at risk, and human rights defenders, should be able to form, join and leave associations without undue hardship. Their ability to aggregate and raise their voices will facilitate their participation in processes aimed at achieving the SDGs.

12. Entry and dissolution processes should be voluntary, simple, non-burdensome and affordable.

13. Adverse decisions related to the establishment or dissolution of associations should be sufficiently motivated with clear basis for the decision and the right to appeal before an independent body. Impartial oversight of decisions would ensure any discretion afforded to authorities is appropriately used to maintain enabling spaces for civic action and participation.

*Freedom to operate:*

14. Associations in every form whether registered or unregistered, formal or informal, service delivery or advocacy or oversight should be able to freely conduct their activities as independent actors, in order to effectively represent the needs and aspirations of their constituents or beneficiaries.

15. This includes the ability to regulate their own governance without external interference, enjoyment of the freedom of expression and opinion as well as the right to access information, and the ability to exercise these rights online or offline. Associations that operate freely are better able to participate effectively and to articulate the needs of the communities they represent.

*Funding:*

16. The ability to seek, receive and use resources from domestic, foreign and international sources is a critical part of the right to freedom of association.

17. Civil Society organizations (CSOs) should be free to seek, receive and use financial resources from a range of sources locally and internationally, including local communities, businesses, government, philanthropic organisations and individuals among others. States must refrain from any arbitrary or unlawful acts that deprive CSOs from these resources. The criminalization or delegitimization of CSOs activities in SDGs processes on account of the origin of funding should be prohibited.

18. CSOs should be able to access these resources without prior authorization, without formal constraints to the process, without administrative burdens and with the possibility of tax-benefits. Access to resources, particularly financial resources is key to empowering civil society to effectively contribute to SDG processes in various ways.

19. States should facilitate CSOs efforts to seek and obtain public funding for the implementation of Agenda 2030 while preserving their independence. State funding schemes should be transparent, fair and accessible on an equal basis to all CSOs. Private donors should strengthen their financial support to CSOs work in the SDGs processes.

*Autonomy to operate:*

20. Financing arrangements should be sufficiently flexible to cover project expenses as well as long term support or core funding directed towards ensuring sustainability of CSOs.

21. A balance between funding CSO-defined objectives and donor-defined objectives is critical. Thus, CSOs should be respected as independent actors and should not be under pressure to adjust their objectives and activities to take advantage of the available funding.

22. In relation to funding for the SDGs, modalities should encompass not just funding activities directed towards achieving the goals, but also to activities carried out to support capacity building, awareness raising activities and monitoring of the achievement of the goals. Such funding is crucial to extend the reach of CSOs to the most marginalized and at risk and in vulnerable situations. It would also help CSOs to effectively contribute in the monitoring progress of the implementation of the SDGs. As such, funding should be accessible to informal groups as well as groups that play supportive roles to achieving the SDGs, such as research centers, libraries etc.

23. Funding should also be predictable to enable CSOs to plan activities early in advance.

24. Enhancing CSO autonomy more broadly would encourage CSOs ability to prioritize representation of community needs more effectively.

*Freedom of peaceful assembly:*

25. Members of civil society should be guaranteed the freedom to peacefully assemble, including in public spaces in order to engage in public debate or carry out oversight activities related to the SDGs. Civil society should be able to mobilize the population and channel grievances and aspirations in order to influence public policy in a variety of ways including peaceful protests and demonstrations.

26. States must not require – in law or practice – organizers to obtain prior authorization to hold an assembly. Where a system of prior notification is in place, there is a presumption in favor of assemblies. In line with this principle, States must ensure those participating in non-notified assemblies should not be arrested, detained or fined solely for their participation in such an assembly.

27. Criminalization of peaceful protest or other activities of civil society aimed at denouncing and reducing inequality, discrimination and corruption and at promoting good governance, accountability and human rights including for minority groups should be abolished.

*Reprisals:*

28. A tolerant political culture that acknowledges civil society as having intrinsic and instrumental value would be necessary to ensure that the sector is valued, appreciated and protected. Public authorities should aim to engage in civil society through a constructive approach through which they publicly recognize the positive contribution of the civil society sector in country development.

29. All acts of reprisal against those engaging or seeking to engage in SDG processes in whatever form should be prohibited and sanctioned. These include threats to life and physical safety, stigmatization, criminalization, denial of accreditation, visas, permits and restrictions on the freedom of movement among others. All allegations of such reprisals must be promptly, thoroughly and independently investigated. Access to effective remedies and reparation should be guaranteed to victims and their families.

30. CSO denouncing corruption, lack of good governance and human rights violations by state and non-state actors should be protected and supported in their advocacy for positive change. In this way, they contribute to building peaceful, just and inclusive societies as required by the 2030 Agenda.

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| *Examples of promising practice:*  *The African Commission on Human Rights and Peoples’ Rights (ACHPR) adopted guidelines on the rights to peaceful assembly and association. The guidelines offer guidance to State on how to promote and protect these rights and adopt a legal framework that have as its primary purpose of enabling the exercise of the rights[[5]](#footnote-6)*  *Anti-SLAPP (Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation) in several states in the United States, such as California, Nevada, Oregon, Oklahoma and Texas[[6]](#footnote-7). These state-level laws provide procedural protections against baseless suits to silence and intimidate civil society actors for their work. The growth of anti-SLAPP statutes in the United States is largely attributable to a growing recognition of a worrying trend if suits filed by corporations against non-government individuals or organizations (NGOs) as an intimidating tactic to silence and draining their resources.[[7]](#footnote-8)* |
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B. Inclusion and participation of civil society is essential.

31. CSOs inclusion in the implementation processes serves to enrich debates, build global awareness of the 2030 Agenda as well as add to the knowledge and expertise needed to achieve the SDGs. This principle ensures that the 2030 Agenda’s overarching theme of leaving no one behind is fulfilled by civil society amplifying and aggregating the voices of the poorest and most marginalized, channeling them into conversations taking place at the local, national, regional and global levels. Certain conditions enhance the possibilities for full participation and inclusion in SDG processes:

*Full participation:*

32. Genuine consultation processes should ideally be embedded in local and national development and planning processes, thereby including civil society in the full range of activities leading to the achievement of the SDGs.

33. Civil society voices should be included in the determination of how they participate, defining the local needs, setting of priorities, development of strategies and policies, implementation of projects and programmes, monitoring of outcomes and impact as well as reviewing the lessons learned.

34. Civil society plays a critical role in data collection, research, awareness raising and sharing knowledge and expertise and should be engaged in these processes.

35. Institutionalized spaces for civil society participation that promote consistency and adhere to agreed-upon rules of engagement should be established as they serve to facilitate effective engagement of stakeholders around issues of concern.

36. Inclusive dialogues should take place regularly, be well communicated in advance, be well-guided with clear objectives, roles and responsibilities for all stakeholders[[8]](#footnote-9). These dialogues should take account of the unequal power relationships and different primary interests of stakeholders at the table.

37. Feedback to stakeholders on how their input was incorporated into policies, plans and programs is crucial for building trust and motivation.

38. Full participation is particularly important to provide spaces where the voices of those most at risk and marginalized can be raised and heard, thus fulfilling their right to take part in the conduct of public affairs. Digital divides should be taken into account when designing participation mechanisms.

39. Full participation depends on the ability of civil society actors to move freely, including leaving or entering a country and moving within their own country. Travel bans that prevent them from leaving the country and are imposed solely for reasons related to their work should be prohibited. Visa regimes and procedures should not impose undue obstacles for civil society actors to travel to another state for the purpose of engagement in the SDGs processes. States should consider practical measures to ease visa process to civil society actors when hosting international or regional meetings related to the Agenda 2030.

*Inclusion:*

40. Broad stakeholder engagement is necessary to ensure that all voices are heard. Positive measures are required to ensure that groups most at risk of marginalization are consulted and heard. States should strengthen their outreach to engage stakeholders outside the established circles, such as youth and children, migrant workers and refugees, grass-roots groups and spontaneous social movements.

41. Stronger partnerships should be formed, for example, with the media and to encourage greater involvement of national parliaments.

42. Financing to help facilitate the attendance and participation of smaller local civil society groups at key consultations, gatherings and meetings is crucial to ensuring inclusion. Further, capacity and skills building and training may be necessary to ensure that all stakeholders can participate meaningfully in the processes.

43. Government organized NGOs should not be used to stifle independent voices during SDG processes.

44. Applying legislation and measures towards the elimination of discrimination is necessary to fulfill the 2030 Agenda’s promise to “leave no one behind”.

*Access to information:*

45. States should adopt and implement constitutional, statutory and/or policy guarantees for public access to information and ensure their effective implementation. Laws and policies should guarantee the right to request and receive information from competent authorities without mentioning any special interest or explaining the reasons for the request.

46. States in particular should generate, collect and disseminate high quality information and data relevant to the implementation of the Agenda 2030 and achievement of the SDGs in a proactive, timely, accessible and disaggregated manner, and periodically update this information.

47. Access to environmental information in the possession of business corporations, in particular information on their operations and their possible adverse impact on human health and the environment should be made accessible.

48. Information should be disseminated at the national, subnational and local levels, in accessible language and formats for all stakeholders and participants, with minimal expense or other obstacle to access. This is of particular importance in order to facilitate participation of individuals and communities at risk, including indigenous peoples and minority groups, in the SDGs processes.

49. Individuals who expose wrongdoing, human rights law violations or other threats to the overall public interest, such as risks to public health or the environment, should be protected against legal, administrative or employment related sanction.

50. Information about the formal mechanisms that exist for CSOs to participate nationally and internationally should be made widely available.

51. All available communications platforms and forums should be utilized to raise awareness and conduct consultations, including physical spaces and online spaces. The use of information technology such as video conferencing and online tools would encourage greater and more diverse civil society participation in SDG processes.

*Power and influence:*

52. All stakeholders should have equal chance to be heard at governmental and inter-governmental fora at the national and international levels. Such opportunities include access to meetings, processes and bodies, speaking rights with the same opportunities for civil society as for governments and private sector entities to express views and opinions and have those views taken into account; the right to submit documents such as shadow reports, memoranda, etc

53 All stakeholders should have timely and easy access to all relevant information and documentation - guided by comprehensive and fair access to information policies - to enable them participate effectively.

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| *Examples of promising practice:*  Civil society played an active role in shaping the 2030 Agenda, contributing expertise, knowledge, amplifying voices of the marginalized and those at the grassroots, and engaging at all levels of the process. This was one of the most comprehensive engagement of civil society in developing a global plan of action and it succeeded in addressing many of the shortcomings of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The energy, openness, consultative nature of these processes should be the foundation upon which, going forward, implementation, monitoring and accountability activities should be grounded.  *Finland’s Commission for Sustainable Development maintains a portal through which individuals, CSOs and companies can register their commitments on contributions to “the Finland we want by 2050”: Sitoumus2050.fi. At the time of writing these recommendations, the site has collected 1830 operational agreements.*  *The Government of Canada has recognized that “the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development cannot be achieved without collective action that includes the diverse voices and participation of First Nations, Inuit and Métis. There is significant alignment between the SDGs and the work of reconciliation— centred on closing socio- 35 economic gaps between Indigenous people and non-Indigenous Canadians, advancing self-determination and improving relationships with Indigenous peoples. Canada is taking important steps in the work of reconciliation through historic investments. Canada is building on programs for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities to deliver clean water, housing, child and family services, training and health care, as well as establishing new funding relationships with First Nations intended to secure a better quality of life for Indigenous peoples by moving toward predictable and sustained funding for First Nations communities. Most recently the 2018 federal budget announced $5 billion over five years to support Indigenous communities and peoples by taking further steps to improve the quality of life for Indigenous peoples and to support the recognition and implementation of Indigenous rights.”*  *In Georgia, the Supreme Audit Office launched a Budget Monitor, an online platform for budget information, including public debt, major infrastructure projects, municipal budgets, and audits - all accessible formats. The platform allows public participation. It invites users to identify shortcomings in public service delivery, report cases of corruption, and prioritize government agencies for the SAO to audit. The platform now includes a feature related to the implementation of the SDGS, including SDG related audits, issues and recommendations for budget spending.*  *Sri Lanka’s Right to Information Act, approved by Parliament in June 2016, following over 20 years of advocacy by civil society organizations, provides a robust and progressive legal framework to ensure the effective exercise of the right to freedom on the Centre for Law and Democracy’s Global RTI index. Since its adoption, the law has empowered communities and civil society actors to scrutinize Government decisions and participate in public life. CSO’s use of the law has led to disclosure of information related to corruption and human rights violations. For example, “information relating to bilateral agreements between the government and middle-eastern states pertaining to migrant workers, was disclosed pursuant to a decision of the [Right to Information Commission] RTIC”.*  *Another good example of how Governments can empower people and promote civil society participation in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda is the Escazú Agreement on access to information, public participation and justice in environmental matters, adopted in March 2018. The Agreement develops Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, which stated that the best way to deal with environmental matters was though the effective participation of all people. The Agreement is also the first binding instrument to offer a specific regimen of protection for environmental human rights defenders and their organizations. While the Agreement promotes citizen participation, the negotiating process also saw the public participate directly by way of electing representatives from the public to have a seat at the negotiating table and present proposals to delegates.* |
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C. Accountability of the 2030 Agenda and its processes is crucial to ensuring the achievement of the SDGs and civil society’s role as watchdog is critical in that respect.

54. The 2030 Agenda provides for the follow up and review process to be “open, inclusive, participatory and transparent for all people”, and to be “people-centered, gender sensitive, respect human rights and have a particular focus on the poorest and most vulnerable and those furthest behind”.8 Goal 16 aims to ‘build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels’. Civil society’s role can be strengthened in the following ways:

*Monitoring:*

55. At the national and sub-national level, civil society should have a stake and a role in tracking progress towards achieving the SDGs, by developing appropriate indicators for their particular country contexts, and the means to assess and follow-up on the implementation of improvements needed.

56. Availability of data and the development of progress assessment methodologies is crucial to the success of review and follow-up mechanisms. Civil society’s capacity to collect, disaggregate and analyze relevant data should be strengthened.

57. Develop collaborative, creative, innovative, efficient, cost-effective approaches to monitoring and data collection, taking advantage of existing civil society capacity, reach and expertise in this area.

58. Develop national-level technical trainings and sessions on how to monitor SDG implementation, collect and produce data, and provide awareness raising.

59. Integrate recommendations from the Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review (UPR), the Human Rights Treaty Bodies, and Special Procedures into the follow-up and review process through the use of tools such as the Universal Human Rights Index (UHRI), designed to facilitate access to human rights recommendations.

*Review and Accountability*

60. Mechanisms should be put in place to ensure civil society active and meaningful participation in the Voluntary National Review (VNR). To this end, States should implement multisectoral and ongoing mechanisms and platforms to ensure civil society can contribute to the VNR, including through consultations; online platforms, and written submissions and reporting. Models where civil society has ownership of a section of the voluntary national review should be promoted.

61. National review reports are an opportunity to evaluate progress and extract lessons that will support further implementation of the Goals. They should be a solutions-based tool rather than just an opportunity to showcase good practices.[[9]](#footnote-10) These reports should be drafted in an accessible manner and disseminated through appropriate means to give relevant stakeholders, including CSOs, opportunity to make observations to these reports before their presentation to the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF). Civil society comments and contributions to the VNR should be reflected in the final report.

62. Civil society should also be part of the SDGs review process at the global level. States and HLPF coordinating mechanism should promote the inclusion and participation of a wide range of civil society actors and major groups at the HLPF. In particular, civil society shadow or alternative reporting on national efforts on implementing the 2030 Agenda should be supported, incentivized and formally accepted during the HLPF, as they are effective tools to identify and address shortcomings where States responsibilities are not met. UNDESA should consider providing guidance to CSOS via toolkits and promoting best practices, and by encouraging funders to support shadow reporting efforts. Access to CSOs reporting should not be limited to NGOs in consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

63. HLPF coordination mechanisms should identify spaces where civil society shadow reports can be presented or shared with States to enable dialogue and further partnerships during the forum.

64. States and the HLPF coordination mechanism should ensure the recommendations from civil society reports are taken into account when discussing and negotiating the HLPF Ministerial Declaration.

65. The outcomes of the VNR and its presentation at the HLPF should be widely disseminated among civil society actors at the national and sub-national level.

66. Civil society should develop collaborative endeavors at the local level to identify people’s priority concerns and develop their capacities to hold government institutions accountable. This includes by raising levels of awareness and understanding of the 2030 Agenda across all civil society actors including by breaking silos and building solidarities.

67. It is critical to strengthen NHRIs capacity to monitor and hold governments accountable for the lack of progress or adequate progress in the implementation of the SDG commitments. Further, to identify patterns of discrimination and inequality that impede the promise to ‘leave no one behind’, and to utilize NHRIs’ quasi-judicial mandates to receive and redress complaints of human rights violation related to development.[[10]](#footnote-11)

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| *Examples of promising practice:*  *Monitoring and accountability functions are at the heart of NHRIs’ mandates in many countries [[11]](#footnote-12) In Argentina, the Defensor del Pueblo de la Nacion developed in January 2016 a comprehensive SDG monitoring and evaluation programme. As part of this programme, the Defensoria has initiated 57 investigations which are explicitly linked to the SDGs, whose results will be sent annually to the relevant national authorities and to the UN system[[12]](#footnote-13) The Danish Institute for Human Rights developed a “Human Rights Guide to the SDGs and SDG-Human Rights Data Explorer which connect each SDG target to international human rights instrument and country recommendation, providing an integrated approach to SDGs implementation[[13]](#footnote-14). Similarly, Paraguay linked its follow up mechanisms of international human rights recommendations to the SDGs – the SIMORE Plus platform. The SIMORE Plus platform strengthens State capacity to monitor compliance with human rights recommendations and their connection to the SDGs[[14]](#footnote-15).*  *In 2019 UNESCO launched a pilot global data collection on the implementation of access-to-information (ATI) laws in 43 countries[[15]](#footnote-16). UNESCO is the custodian agency for indicator 16.10.2 on access to information and is mandated to monitor and report on the “number of countries that adopt and implement constitutional, statutory and/or policy guarantees for public access to information”. The data collected through the pilot project will help UNESCO in mapping global progress towards realization of access to information rights and feed into Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs).*  *The NGO International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs launched in 2017 the Indigenous Navigator -a platform for and by indigenous peoples to systematically produces data and monitors the level of recognition and implementation of their rights. The Indigenous Navigator monitors the implementation of: relevant International Human Rights conventions, including ILO Convention No. 169; and essential aspects of the SDGs. The project has run in countries such as Tanzania, Kenya, Nepal, Surinam, Bolivia, Peru, Colombia and Bangladesh[[16]](#footnote-17).*  *Together 2030 is a global civil society initiative aiming to generate and share knowledge on the implementation and accountability of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals. The initiative helps civil society organizations to promote national implementation and track progress of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development[[17]](#footnote-18)*  *Since 2016, Civil Society Reflection Group on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in partnership with several civil society organizations and trade unions from around the world publishes a report “Spotlight on Sustainable Development” which provides on independent and comprehensive assessment of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and it SDG[[18]](#footnote-19)n In Nepal, Federation of Community Forestry Users Nepal (FECOFUN) presented a shadow report to the country’s VNR ahead of the HLPF. The shadow report mapped local civil society contribution to realizing the SDGs, identified gaps in the country report and provided suggestions to improve the VNR and the process in Nepal[[19]](#footnote-20)Similarly, in 2017 the SDGs Kenya Forum, a civil society platform that advocates and promotes engagement with the government in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development, submitted a comprehensive report to the government towards voluntary national report and ahead of the HLPF[[20]](#footnote-21)* |
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D. Partnerships: Goal 17 affirms the necessity of partnerships between governments, civil society and the private sector for the 2030 Agenda to be successful.

68. Partnerships for sustainable development are defined as multi-stakeholder initiatives voluntarily undertaken by governments, intergovernmental organisations, major groups and other stakeholders, which efforts are contributing to the implementation of inter-governmentally, agreed development goals and commitments. Partnerships are recognized as effective instruments for mobilizing human and financial resources, expertise, technology and knowledge.[[21]](#footnote-22)

69. In order for civil society to mobilize and collaborate effectively, certain elements need to be in place:

70. Maximize partnerships that offer opportunities for formal engagement between civil society, Government and other key stakeholders keeping in mind the principles for full and effective participation outlined above. As such, fora such as the Open Government Partnership need to be strengthened and leveraged, particularly in their efforts to encourage the meaningful engagement of citizens and civil society in open government reforms.

71. Stakeholders engaged in development co-operation, including civil society, should be considered equal partners who seek a common objective and therefore pool their resources and competencies to achieve it. Stakeholders should share ownership and jointly develop the process, including developing the agenda, decision-making process etc.

72. The establishment of partnerships with a wide range of cross-section of civil society and other actors who would not typically engage in development or human rights or are not given sufficient prominence or capacities, (such as local governments and municipal authorities) enriches development processes and promotes the inclusiveness that is so crucial to fulfilling the SDGs.

73. Autonomy of operation is important for all stakeholders to fulfill their role in achieving the SDGs. For civil society, this means independence in determining priorities, programs, funding, internal governance and staffing etc in implementing the SDGs. Further, civil society members of multi-stakeholder initiatives should determine their own selection process which should be transparent and fair. Civil society actors should not be treated as extensions of government departments or agencies and thus bound by government priorities.

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| *Examples of promising practice:*  *Workers in coal fired power stations in Port Augusta (Australia), anticipating closure of the stations, developed a plan for jobs and solar thermal power and took their plan to state and federal government and to global energy giants in France and the United States. In this case study, collective bargaining supported an inclusive just transitional approach that brought together workers, communities, employers and governments in social dialogue to drive the concrete plans, policies and investments needed for a fast and fair transformation towards a low carbon economy (Goals 7, 12, 13).[[22]](#footnote-23)*  *An initiative spearheaded by the Center for Civic Collaboration (CCC) in Mexico, has resulted in the creation of a semi-formal coalition of 40 Civil Society Organisations working on different issues into a network for the implementation of Goal 16. CCC specializes in enabling effective multistakeholder dialogue and consensus building processes, mediating conflicts between parties and strengthening civil society networks and coalitions to address common problems affecting the public sphere. The initiative has also established open and dynamic communication channels between Civil Society Organisations participating in the coalition and government institutions working on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda[[23]](#footnote-24).*  *In Mongolia, the government “partnered with local non-profits to train citizens, educators, health workers, businesses and public officials, teaching them how to enlist citizens to report on public services. They also learned how to collaborate to improve services by identifying needs and incorporating them into budgets and local development plans. As a result, rural Mongolians were empowered to shape how public services ought to be delivered to meet the needs of the community”[[24]](#footnote-25)* |
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1. \* The present report was submitted late to reflect the most recent developments. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. \*\* The summary of the report is being circulated in all official languages. The report itself, which is annexed to the summary, is being circulated in the language of submission only. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. A/73/279 para 14. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. A/73/279. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights. Guidelines on Freedom of Association and Assembly in Africa. 2017. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. <https://anti-slapp.org/your-states-free-speech-protection>. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. Section425.16(a) of the California Code of Civil Procedure, notes, for example, that “there has been a disturbing increase in lawsuits brought primarily to chill the valid excercise of the constitutional rights of freedom of speech and petition for the redress of grievances”. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. https://taskteamcso.com/wp-content/upload/2019/04/TSKTM-01C-Guidance.pdf.p.17. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. <Https://tapnetwork2030.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/TAP-HLPF-Position-Paper_FINAL.pdf>. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. Canada’s Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Voluntary Review 2018, pg. 11. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. https://nhri.ohchr.org/EN/Themes/SusDevGoals/Documents/GANHRI\_NHRIs%20engaging%  
     20with%20the%20SDGs\_UpdatedVersion.pdf. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
12. Www.dpn.gob.ar. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
13. <https://www.humanrights.dk/what-we-do/sustainabledevelopment-goals>. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
14. <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/memberstates/paraguay>. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
15. <https://en.unesco.org/news/unesco-pilots-global-data-collection-access-information>. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
16. <http://nav.indigenousnavigator.com/index.php/en/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
17. <https://www.together2030.org/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
18. https://www.2030spotlight.org/en. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
19. <http://action4sd.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/NepalShadowReport.FECOFUN.pdf>. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
20. SDGs Kenya Forum. Submissions by civil society organizations to the Government of Kenya towards Voluntary National Review. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
21. Addis Ababa Action Agenda. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
22. ITUC submission. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
23. <https://community-democracies.org/app/uploads/2018/06/Study-Enabling-Environment-and-SDGs-1-1-1.pdf>, p. 61-63. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
24. <http://live-ogp.pantheonsite.io/sites/default/files/OGP_Star-Reforms_2018.pdf>. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)