

**Inputs to the  
Retreat on the preparation for the 2016 session of the High Level Political Forum  
on Sustainable Development New York, 23-24 February 2016**

***Children and Youth, NGO and Women's Major Groups***

**Background:** This document seeks to gather input and views from the representatives of the Children and Youth, NGO and Women's Major Groups in order to represent these constituencies at the retreat to prepare for the 2016 HLPF Retreat on Tuesday 23 February 2016 in New York.

**Instructions to provide input:** Eight questions have been provided below based on the Draft Programme for the Retreat. Please provide short and concise inputs to any or all of the questions. In providing your inputs, please state your name, organization and Major Group affiliation at the beginning of the paragraph. If possible, please utilize different color fonts to identify different inputs. For example:

[Name, Organization, Major Group Affiliation] believes that the HLPF should be a forum for...

For those of you wishing to comment on inputs already made, please do not change these inputs but use the 'Comments Box' function or CTRL+ALT+M.

**Please provide all inputs by 1:00pm EST, Monday 22 February 2016.**

The recommendations made below are EXCELLENT. After participating actively in UN and country level sustainable development processes for 20 some years I find almost nothing I disagree with. We ought to take these recommendations and draft a paper that is distributed either at the retreat or sent to the UN and its Member States afterwards. Rob Wheeler (GEN)

**Expectations for the 2016 HLPF reviews**

- 1. How can this year's reviews help us to gauge our baseline, identify upcoming challenges and assess our early steps in implementation?**

Given that the SDGs are based largely on earlier UN agreements, conventions and treaty processes, it is essential that these be included as a part of both the implementation and then addressed as well in the review processes. Given the centrality of the Rio Declaration and Principles in providing a basis for achieving sustainable development, implementation processes need to include the Rio Principles as a foundation or basis upon which the SDGs and 2030 agenda are carried out; and likewise the review processes need to look at the extent to which this is being done as well.

In particular we need to assess the extent to which the Precautionary Principle, Principle 10 on Access to Information, and the principles addressing the need for Participatory Approaches are being addressed.

In addition, given the integrated nature of the SDGs, targets and indicators, and the interconnections and interdependencies that exist, it is essential that we look at the extent to which they are being implemented in a horizontal and vertical manner - thus across all sectors of the economy, society and government AND from the local to the national, regional and global levels. [Lisinka Ulatowska and Rob Wheeler, Global Ecovillage Network & Commons Cluster, NGO & other MGps]

Soon-Young Yoon, UN representative of the International Alliance of Women and First Vice-President of the Conference of NGOs (CoNGO). *What **don't** we want?* The worst outcome of the HLPF would be to reinforce silos between the 17 goals.[1] This will happen if these are reviewed in clusters of 4 or 8 instead of all 17 at once. If we divide up the 17 goals into clusters during an annual review, the civil society constituencies that are not considered will be left waiting on the sidelines. Momentum will be lost. We don't want to be stuck with the 20<sup>th</sup> century mindset that shrinks from managing large amounts of data. We now have the technology to handle big data efficiently. As is sometimes said in the IT world, "Data is the new oil" [Margi Prideaux, OceanCare, NGO Major Group - I agree with this statement as it stands] [Nicole Cardinal, Save the Children, NGO Major Group - Strictly speaking, we don't agree with this statement as we are concerned that reviewing all 17 SDGs every year will allow for only a very superficial review of progress. We would be amenable to considering clusters of 4 (4 or 5 is enough) or 8 goals each year with interlinkages between all of the goals and targets highlighted every year, regardless of which goals are being reviewed in-depth. - Rob Wheeler/GEN agrees with Nicole's statement. Anjela Taneja< GCE, Agree as well.]

NGO & Indigenous MGs HLPF 2015 paper: National and local review can only function within open societies with governments that protect and promote civil and political freedoms and participation. Goal 16 should be taken as a baseline for ambition in this respect. An equal right to participate in all domestic processes of accountability must be guaranteed and realized through concrete steps. These must include the development and implementation of participatory monitoring and accountability mechanisms and provision of financial support for the groups that defend the most marginalized and advocate for the protection of the environment to enable their meaningful participation in decision-making processes. (submitted by J Huffines) [Margi Prideaux, OceanCare, NGO Major Group - I agree with this statement as it stands]

Given the extent to which humanity depends upon nature and the impact that humans have on the natural environment it is thus essential that we develop a cooperative relationship with and learn from nature so as to be able to create a truly resilient, regenerative, and sustainable future. It is thus essential for us to look at the extent to which we are actually doing so - through these review processes. [Rob Wheeler, Global Ecovillage Network & Commons Cluster, NGO & other MGps]

[Nicole Cardinal, Save the Children, NGO Major Group] - In line with paragraph 74(e) of the 2030 Agenda, the HLPF reviews should be people-centred, gender-sensitive, respect human rights and focus on the situation of the social and economic groups that are the furthest behind to achieve the SDGs. To fulfil the pledge to *leave no one behind*, countries should highlight the concrete steps they will take to reach the furthest behind first at this year's HLPF, including efforts to ensure a minimum level of disaggregated data for all people-focused targets. One concrete step that all countries should take is to set national stepping stone equity targets to spur progress for the groups that are the furthest behind. These targets, set for interim dates between 2016 and 2030, aim to reduce gaps in progress between advantaged and disadvantaged groups by monitoring the progress of different social and economic groups to ensure that all groups are on track to meet 2030 targets. Such concrete mechanisms are one way to incentivize shifts in policy and practice, demonstrating a country's commitment to put the *leave no one behind* principle into practice.

[Ira Matuschke, Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS), NGO Major Group] We believe that this year's reviews should set an example for future reviewing and reporting processes. Reviews presented by countries should be based on inclusive and participatory dialogue processes in order to be able to identify upcoming challenges at national, regional as well as the global level. One of the main challenges will be on how to manage taking an integrated approach to the implementation of the SDGs, i.e. moving beyond single views on goals and targets in order to ensure that progress in one goal does not hinder progress in other goals. Agreed - Rob Wheeler

[Cassia Moraes, CIVICUS, NGO Major Group] Participation of civil society is fundamental to ensure that early assessments and implementation planning take into consideration the most pressing needs of citizens. In some cases, official data is not reliable, or present an incomplete picture of national and global context. Therefore, this year's review should also consult other stakeholders.

### **Thematic reviews**

#### **2. What does it mean to leave no one behind in the various country contexts?**

In addressing the need to leave no one behind we must recognize that 70-80% of those facing extreme poverty live in rural areas (drawing most of their income and resources from subsistence agriculture) and most of the rest in impoverished urban or slum areas. It is thus essential that a primary focus be given both to planning and implementation in smaller and rural communities and areas and in slum areas.

Given that most of the people living in such communities and areas face multiple problems - soil degradation and resulting hunger, poor quality of education, lack of access to clean water and sanitation, no electricity, extreme poverty, degradation of the natural environment, extreme vulnerability to drought and other "natural" disasters, etc it is thus essential that these challenges be addressed and overcome in a multi-sectoral, integrated manner as well. Some of the best

examples for such an approach are demonstrated by communities within the Global Ecovillage Network, Millennium Villages, Equator Initiative, Small Grants Program, etc.

The SDG review process should focus specifically on the extent to which such processes are being applied and integrated through the SDG processes, the extent to which funding and other support are provided both at a country level and by the international community, and the extent to which this approach and programs are effective and successful in helping to achieve the SDGs. It is also essential that funding and support for rural development in general and restorative/resilient agriculture and restoration of the natural environment in particular be provided and the review processes should look at the extent to which this is forthcoming and included in the implementation processes. [Rob Wheeler, Global Ecovillage Network & Commons Cluster, NGO & other MGps]

[Soon-Young Yoon, UN representative of the International Alliance of Women and First Vice-President of the Conference of NGOs (CoNGO). This is an excellent theme. However, we have to remember that women are diverse and that we must recognize differences by age, ethnicity, religious, economic, social and cultural status. Indigenous women and girls as well as women living with disabilities must not be left behind. It is not enough to just address “women’s needs”--the HLPF must must recognize intersecting discriminations.

Margi Prideaux, OceanCare, NGO Major Group] Equally we must ensure that those who rely on resources have equitable access to those resources and that foreign interests don’t gain a monopoly simply because they have better ties to political elites than people in rural communities and may pay access fee to centralized bureaucracies. In these cases citizen-generated information about resource availability and community benefit should be treated with as much respect as data provided by multi-national companies.

NGO & Indigenous MGs HLPF 2015 paper: For the more technical data-collecting side of this process, the expertise of the National Statistical Offices should be complemented by citizen-generated data produced directly by individuals or the civil society organizations that represent them. This will provide the direct and timely representation of unique citizen perspectives which can both supplement and fill gaps in official data. In order to ensure that no target is considered met unless met for all income and social groups, it is important that the data collected must be reliable, transparent, accessible, and disaggregated to reflect the differences among various groupings, and must at a minimum include disaggregation by sex/gender, age, income and indigenous peoples. (submitted by J Huffines)

Must also include disaggregation by disability, as recognised in the recent IAEG-SDGs report [Polly Meeks, ADD International, Other Major Group]

[Nicole Cardinal, Save the Children, NGO Major Group] - Leaving no one behind in accountability processes (including at the HLPF) means addressing the financial, linguistic, logistical, technological or age barriers that prevent the participation of specific groups. It means engaging all people, especially marginalized groups, in regular and continuous interactive dialogue to assess progress or lack thereof. Marginalized groups must not be viewed as mere beneficiaries of the new agenda, but as active

participants who can contribute to implementation and accountability by providing their views as to whether government policies and actions are achieving their intended aims. In designing or revising processes for accountability at all levels, governments should seek the views of a diverse range of people, including children, through inclusive and open consultations. As noted above, *leaving no one behind* should be put into practice at the national level through prioritizing the disaggregation of data and setting national stepping stone equity targets.

Strongly agree re: participation. This should include adjustments to enable those most on the margins to participate (for example, providing information in accessible formats for persons with disabilities). [Polly Meeks, ADD International, Other Major Group].

[Cassia Moraes, CIVICUS, NGO Major Group]

- 1) Understand for action – To strengthen statistical capacity and use disaggregated data to establish who is being left behind, where and why. Collect evidence of successful initiatives and in which context do they work.
- 2) Empower for change – To engage in program design, shift harmful social norms and legislation, and support civil society to represent those left behind.
- 3) Include for opportunity – To promote economic inclusion, inclusive political institutions and ensure access to basic services and social protection.

### **3. How can the HLPF discussions on the theme and the SDGs be informed by reviews conducted in other intergovernmental bodies and what would be the most relevant inputs**

Integrate local, national and regional responses to, and implementation processes for, all of the other international conventions and agreements addressing sustainable development with the SDGs, beginning with the development of a matrix showing the interconnections between these various international agreements and particular SDGs and target areas. Show how local and national action and strategy plans (including those on ESD, SCP, the Aichi Biodiversity Accords, etc) are being integrated with the Targets, Indicators and Means of Implementation for the SDGs. [Rob Wheeler, Global Ecovillage Network & Commons Cluster, NGO & other MGps]

[Soon-Young Yoon, UN representative of the International Alliance of Women and First Vice-President of the Conference of NGOs (CoNGO) . All UN agencies and regional economic and social commissions have important policy frameworks and legal mandates on human rights and gender justice that need to be called upon to implement the SDGs. It is important to bring all these together so that a holistic framework is developed. Regional mandates are particularly important (e.g. the African Protocol) because that is where the financing and implementation will start.

[Nicole Cardinal, Save the Children, NGO Major Group] - HLPF discussions on the theme and the SDGs should take into account written and oral inputs from a wide range of processes – including ECOSOC's Functional and Regional Commissions and international human rights mechanisms – and stakeholders – including Member States, the UN System, sector-specific partnerships, civil society and the private sector

among others. All inputs should be made available in an online portal in a timely, open and user-friendly manner. Agreed - Rob Wheeler To accommodate the wide range of inputs that are likely to be received by the HLPF for thematic reviews, all state and non-state stakeholders should endeavour to provide the following information, based on their area of expertise in relation to the SDGs, in a short document:

- Progress, achievements and critical success factors to attain the SDGs including best practices;
- Challenges and gaps in implementation;
- Any new and emerging issues; and
- Recommendations to mobilize further actions to accelerate implementation and, where applicable, the steps or actions taken to follow-up previous recommendations.

The 4 points above are essential - Rob Wheeler

Intergovernmental bodies such as the ECOSOC Functional Commissions, UN Human Rights Council and human rights treaty bodies, should also be able to provide conclusions and negotiated outcomes, to inform national and/or thematic reviews of progress at the HLPF.

[Ira Matuschke, Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS), NGO Major Group]. We think that the HLPF should consider inputs by the specialized and intergovernmental bodies in order to facilitate mutual learning between countries. Specialised agencies should be delivering direct inputs to the Global Sustainable Development Report presented at the HLPF. Most relevant inputs could be relating to data collection and capacity building in countries and the lessons learned. Agreed - Rob Wheeler

Draw on evidence from the human rights treaty bodies - and ensure that they draw on evidence from the HLPF. For example, Uganda is up for Universal Periodic Review later this year, and will shortly receive Concluding Observations from the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. [Polly Meeks, ADD International, Other Major Group].

[Cassia Moraes, CIVICUS, NGO Major Group] The GA should continue to authorize the work of the IAEG to finalize the indicators for as long as necessary and ensure commitment from across the UN system so that there is a robust approach to monitoring and review.

#### **4. What will make the thematic review useful to countries and how can the HLPF recommendations be elaborated?**

Establish a clear set of guidelines, with input from the Major Groups, for developing, implementing, assessing and reviewing the SDG strategy plans. Base this in part on the Rio Principles and on integrating the SDGs both horizontally and vertically - thus across all sectors of the economy, society and government AND from the local to the national, regional and global levels. [Rob Wheeler, Global Ecovillage Network & Commons Cluster, NGO & other MGps]

[Soon-Young Yoon, UN representative of the International Alliance of Women and First Vice-President of the Conference of NGOs (CoNGO) ]. *What should be the purpose of the HLPF?* It should NOT be a place for humdrum review reports. Rather, the purpose of the HLPF should be an intense search for solutions and a constant reinvention of its methods of work. The HLPF should be the premiere place where those who will implement the SDGs can look for creative cost-effective,

high impact solutions. Donors and funders will look for these and the HLPF must be a place for good investment ideas. We might start with quality education for girls that raises the age of marriage, provides entry into good jobs, and enlarges girls' decision-making power. This is good for the society as a whole. Agreed - Rob Wheeler

[Margi Prideaux, OceanCare, NGO Major Group] Again, in agreement with Soon-Young Yoon above, I would add:

Similarly, the HLPF might direct investment to sustainable community schemes where environmental protections is designed and managed by communities while bringing sustainable income and resources to all levels of the community. Agreed, this is essential - Rob Wheeler

[Nicole Cardinal, Save the Children, NGO Major Group] - Thematic reviews should be informed by the annual SDG Progress Report, the Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR), and written and/or oral inputs from a wide range of processes and stakeholders, which are synthesized in a summary brief for discussion at the thematic review. The summary brief should highlight the interlinkages between goals and targets and support the pledge to leave no one behind by focusing on the groups that are the furthest behind in achieving goals and targets. Agreed - Rob Wheeler

Given the limited time allocated to the HLPF and the need for focused reviews, thematic reviews should seek to address four or eight SDGs each year, with Goal 17 reviewed every year. Allowing different groups of goals to be reviewed annually would help to identify interlinkages between goals that may not otherwise be apparent. If eight goals plus Goal 17 were selected for review, consideration should be given to reviewing all of the SDGs every three years, in order to avoid reviewing the same goal two years in a row. All goals should be reviewed at least three times over the duration of the agenda, with the interlinkages between goals and targets highlighted every year, regardless which goals are being reviewed in-depth.

Recommendations for thematic reviews that are provided by Member States or other stakeholders in advance of the HLPF should be considered for inclusion in the negotiated Ministerial Declaration and included in a summary outcome document following the thematic review.

[Ira Matuschke, Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS), NGO Major Group]. Thematic reviews should enable countries to learn from national experiences. Thematic reviews offer the opportunity to unveil the interlinkages & trade-offs between the different SDGs. An analysis of interlinkages between the SDGs should address not only positive, but also potential negative correlations, which have been shown to exist (e.g. in the area of natural resources, like land and soils). This should allow for an integrated approach to implementing and reviewing the SDGs. Agreed - Rob Wheeler

[Cassia Moraes, CIVICUS, NGO Major Group] Inputs on specific topics should be gathered from across the UN system on a regular cycle. These should be compiled in the form of regular reports by March preceding the HLPF.

### **Voluntary national reviews**



**5. What would be standard features in preparing HLPF voluntary national reviews this year within the countries, what could ambitious approaches be and how can countries support each other in preparing these reviews at national level?**

Means must be specifically developed in each country by which all stakeholders are included in all coordination, planning, implementation, and review processes. Thus the reports and review processes must consider to what extent all stakeholders groups are included and represented on country and community SDG and Agenda 21 planning and coordinating councils, task forces and working groups, etc.

Present the most outstanding features of the Means of, Best Practices and Actual Implementation processes and methods being used in each country for at least one or more of the relevant goals in a concise multi-modal (video, powerpoint, photo journal article and multiple stakeholder presenters) format and presentation (like is done with TED Talks) which can then be used to inform and educate the general public and to encourage other countries and communities to do things that are equally as ambitious, effective and transformative. [Rob Wheeler, Global Ecovillage Network & Commons Cluster, NGO & other MGps]

NGO & Indigenous MGs HLPF 2015 paper: We recommend that every country adopt a National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS) through a participatory process that is inclusive such as the Major Groups/Stakeholder structure. This strategy should make meaningful, measurable commitments on the progressive realization of all the SDGs (and on associated means of implementation). It should address each country's equitable contribution to global achievement of the goals within a human rights framework. Member States should agree to a public, inclusive and participatory national review mechanism, led by a National Council for Sustainable Development, as already agreed in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. (Submitted by J Huffines) [Margi Prideaux, OceanCare, NGO Major Group - I agree with this statement as it stands] [Ira Matuschke, Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS), NGO Major Group - We fully agree with this statement] **This is the most important statement made so far - Rob Wheeler**

[Nicole Cardinal, Save the Children, NGO Major Group] - In preparing for national reviews at the HLPF, countries should ensure there are formal and informal opportunities for all people, including children and marginalized groups, to provide their input and views at a national level. In particular, countries should:

- **Raise initial awareness of the 2030 Agenda** so that citizens, including children, are aware of the commitments that have been made, their rights, and how they can engage meaningfully in national consultations. Children, in particular, need access to child-friendly and age-appropriate information and safe mechanisms to provide input into accountability processes.
- **Conduct open and inclusive consultations to assess the baseline for future SDG progress** by seeking the views of the social and economic groups that are the furthest behind and providing modalities for their meaningful input and participation. For example, governments should address the financial, linguistic, logistical, or age barriers that might prevent marginalized groups from participating in local or national consultations such as ensuring disability or child-friendly facilities and materials for reviews, conducting reviews in rural or remote areas, conducting reviews in multiple languages etc.



- **Provide an enabling environment for citizens to participate in accountability processes, ensuring rights to freedom of expression, association, peaceful assembly and access to information are guaranteed in law and practice.** Agree to all of above - Rob Wheeler

[Naiara Costa, Together 2030]: To properly include broad participation of all stakeholders at national review processes, governments and the UN System must:

- Dedicate sufficient time, capacity and resources to meaningful engagement with these stakeholders – particularly to reach the poorest, most vulnerable and those furthest behind, as agreed in Agenda 2030.
- To this end, governments were encouraged to contribute resources to the HLPF trust fund which was carried over from the the CSD, to help support engagement of stakeholders in the HLPF.
- Governments should not merely see the engagement of civil society as an “accountability” mechanism – and instead see it as a platform for meaningful and constructive dialogue between all stakeholders, particularly since all are aligned in the ambition of fully implementing this Agenda in partnership
- 2016 HLPF will provide an opportunity for stakeholders to look at plans for implementation from national governments, and that discussions should be held on the kind of data the HLPF review processes will be using for future successful reviews – embracing an “all hands on deck” approach by harnessing data and reports from a wide range of stakeholders and multilateral institutions.
- Countries engaging on national reviews should include representatives of different stakeholders sectors into their official delegations to the HLPF, bringing those voices to the global level.

[Cassia Moraes, CIVICUS, NGO Major Group] The HLPF discussions should enable countries carrying out the progress review to present their findings and to highlight key areas of progress and also key challenges. It would be helpful to have a common template for review against the agreed indicators. There should also be time allocated for dialogue and reflection from stakeholders to share perspectives, formal expert submissions and shadow reports on the countries in each review. Shadow reports conducted by non-state actors on the different SDGs should be available online, compiled, synthesized and made available handed to the HLPF representatives in advance of the HLPF. In addition, CSO representatives who have produced shadow reports relevant to the annual theme should be invited to present their findings to the HLPF. Potential discrepancies between the findings of civil society and the official data presented by UN Member States in their reviews should be discussed and analyzed. Global partnerships, initiatives and platforms that are relevant to specific themes being discussed by the HLPF.

- 6. How can the HLPF examination of the reviews be best prepared, organized and followed-up so as to be most useful to all countries in the context of the principles established in the 2030 Agenda? How can national reviews lead to possible support and new partnerships to assist the reviewed countries?**

From NGO & Indigenous MGs HLPF 2015 paper: It would be best to build also on existing review and accountability processes, and improve where possible and desirable. The Economic and Social Council Annual Ministerial Review (AMR) process offers several points of departure for the HLPF review process, yet its concrete implementation reveals a significant need for improvement. The main critique of the AMR is its lack of incentives and absence of follow-up on the review and recommendations. Also the participation of NGOs is relatively restricted due to the Economic and Social Council rules of procedure. More promising is the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) under the Human Rights Council, which is, according to some experts, the best model for the HLPF review. It is also mentioned in the Secretary-General's synthesis report. The UPR has achieved broad acceptance despite its obligatory elements and intense stakeholder participation. It is designed to be highly transparent and participatory, yet it is also clearly State-led. Whatever accountability mechanism is eventually implemented by governmental structures — from the local and regional levels, to the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) — must be supported by political will and adequate resources (human and financial). (Submitted by J Huffines) [Margi Prideaux, OceanCare, NGO Major Group - I agree with this statement as it stands Agreed - Rob Wheeler]

[Nicole Cardinal, Save the Children, NGO Major Group] - National reviews should be prepared based on the following:

1. A government report with information provided by the country under review, including information on consultations conducted with non-state actors to develop its report;
2. A UN report summarizing information submitted by non-state actors including civil society; and
3. A UN report summarizing information and data from across the UN system, including UN treaty bodies and international human rights mechanisms, and from other intergovernmental bodies. (The inclusion of recommendations from UN international human rights mechanisms such as the Committee on the Rights of the Child is particularly relevant given that many SDG commitments overlap with existing international legal obligations.)

In order to make the best use of the time allocated to the HLPF, countries should participate in national reviews during the morning sessions of the five-day technical segment of the HLPF. In keeping with the universal nature of the 2030 Agenda and to encourage shared learning and review across regions and income groups, countries should consider participating in national reviews in groups of four, ideally representing a geographic balance and a balance of high, middle and low-income countries. Each group could have 3-4 hours in which to conduct reviews of national progress in each country. Providing a space where countries of different income levels share progress and challenges, especially in relation to transnational issues which directly or indirectly impact the means of implementation, is critical to deliver on the SDGs.

To attract high-level participants and facilitate a dynamic platform for partnerships, national reviews should provide for multi-stakeholder participation and interactive dialogue between Member States and other stakeholders including the UN System, the private sector and civil society. For example, countries could provide a short presentation of approximately 20 minutes, immediately followed by 40 minutes of interactive dialogue. Alternatively, all countries could provide their presentations sequentially, followed by 2-3 hours of interactive dialogue on the shared successes, challenges and recommendations to further implementation. Providing the space for meaningful multi-stakeholder participation is essential

to attract high-level participants to the HLPF, encourage reporting by non-state actors, and help facilitate interaction, matchmaking and networking among different stakeholders for potential future partnerships to further the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

The outcome of national reviews should be a summary document that includes or synthesizes recommendations provided by state and non-state actors in advance of the HLPF, any recommendations arising from discussions at the review, as well as a short summary of the review itself. A careful balance will need to be struck that allows for adequate preparatory inputs into national reviews, without predetermining or preemptively limiting the substance of discussions at the actual reviews.

[Ira Matuschke, Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS), NGO Major Group] Mutual learning partnership should establish best practices in national reviews. These best practices could range from capacity building for national reviews, data collection to participation and inclusion. These type of partnerships could support other countries to be reviewed.

[Naiara Costa, Together 2030] : Important elements to facilitate the participation of stakeholders at national level consultations:

- **Transparency** on access to information about the national reporting process. Also there is a need to set aside appropriate time for stakeholders consultations. Access should be provided to a broader range of groups and constituencies, including from the local level.
- **Inclusion** – Member States engaging on national level consultation must create appropriate mechanisms for engagement, including new and accessible technologies and platforms;
- **Predictability** – MS must set up a clear calendar and mechanisms to collect inputs from broader constituencies at the national level as well as to report back internally prior and after the HLPF.
- **Innovation** - MS should facilitate open platforms for reporting by all stakeholders;
- **Funding** –MS must allocate resources to facilitate stakeholder engagement at national level reviews and also to bring representatives to the HLPF Session in NY.
- **Outcome** - National reviews should include a focus on national implementation plans, how Agenda 2030 is being mainstreamed and how stakeholders are being engaged at implementation and follow up

[Cassia Moraes, CIVICUS, NGO Major Group] Each UN Regional Commission should establish mechanisms for peer review, drawing on existing structures. These reviews should be comprehensive in their coverage of the sustainable development agenda - encompassing all SDGs, as well as their accompanying targets and means of implementation. The regional level would also be the appropriate forum for the discussion of particular regional challenges, policies and strategies and the development of regional cooperation. The full and effective participation of Major Groups and other Stakeholders must be guaranteed with modalities in line with standards mandated by Resolution 67/290 that established the HLPF.

### **Global reviews**

7. **How can the SDG Progress report and global sustainable development report be most useful to the HLPF in conducting its global and thematic reviews? Will other inputs be needed?**

Create a database where those countries, communities, and regional bodies that would like to work with others on each of the relevant targets and goals can be listed; and include in the listing a place to indicate the other types of countries, communities or focuses that each country or community would like to work with. For example, they might want to partner with SIDS, LLDS, or with others focusing on smaller or rural communities or with countries wishing to integrate particular goals and target or goal areas or that would like to focus particularly on one specific or a group of specific target areas under one of the goals. [Rob Wheeler, Global Ecovillage Network & Commons Cluster, NGO & other MGps]

Soon-Young Yoon, UN representative of the International Alliance of Women and First Vice-President of the Conference of NGOs (CoNGO). The key to making the HLPF important is to make sure that civil society's support stays strong. In democracies, civil society can generate the political will to help generate political and financial resources for implementation. [Margi Prideaux, OceanCare, NGO Major Group - I agree with this statement]

NGO & Indigenous MGs HLPF 2015 paper: We recommend that national and regional stakeholders are permitted to submit evidence within the global review process and present written and oral contributions, and that all official information and documents are easily accessible to all. (submitted by J Huffines) [Margi Prideaux, OceanCare, NGO Major Group - I agree with this statement] [Ira Matuschke, Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS), NGO Major Group - We agree with this statement] Agreed - Rob Wheeler

[Nicole Cardinal, Save the Children, NGO Major Group] - As noted above, thematic reviews should be informed by the annual SDG Progress Report, the Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR), and written and/or oral inputs from a wide range of processes and stakeholders, which are synthesized in a summary brief for discussion at the thematic review. The summary brief should highlight the interlinkages between goals and targets and support the pledge to leave no one behind by focusing on the groups that are the furthest behind in achieving goals and targets.

[Cassia Moraes, CIVICUS, NGO Major Group] The various UN agencies should be included in the global thematic reviews, they should and be requested to provide their own data and case studies. They should also produce their own separate progress reports on a four-yearly basis to coincide with the GA-hosted HLPF sessions, highlighting their contribution towards progress in the SDG framework. Inputs from civil society should also be considered in the SDG Progress report and global sustainable development report.

## **8. What would be useful political guidance from the HLPF and how could it be developed?**

[Margi Prideaux, OceanCare, NGO Major Group] Many NGOs and civil society organisations are already active at the national and regional level, yet their activity is broadly opaque to the current system. There is a significant opportunity in inviting NGOs closer to HLPF discussions, including access to technical expertise, greater connection to on-ground activities and a broader public understanding of positions to participate more actively in the development of reports to the UN and in the review process. Constructive participation is best served by an active and ongoing dialogue and NGOs would welcome a structured process that facilitated such a dialogue, including allowing NGOs to directly submit

information and by meeting and exchanging ideas and views with the HLPF well in advance of positions being finalised. Agreed - Rob Wheeler

[Nicole Cardinal, Save the Children, NGO Major Group] - The HLPF should produce a summary document following each national and thematic review that includes or synthesizes recommendations provided by stakeholders in advance of the HLPF, recommendations arising from reviews at the HLPF, as well as a short summary of the review itself. These documents should be made available in an online portal in a timely manner to facilitate follow-up at all levels by all stakeholders, especially Governments. Ultimately, if the HLPF is to be a success, the process leading up to and discussions resulting from national reviews at the HLPF must produce concrete recommendations that all stakeholders – Ministers and grassroots organizations alike – are compelled to take action on to further the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. This above is also an essentially important statement and must be made at the retreat - Rob Wheeler

[Ira Matuschke, Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS), NGO Major Group]. As stated in the SG report, reporting guidelines should not hinder the ambition and innovativeness of individual countries. They should be based on existing mechanisms and should be practical. They should also facilitate and support the collaboration between UN specialised agencies, countries and civils society.

[Cassia Moraes, CIVICUS, NGO Major Group] In order to ensure the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda, alignment of policy priorities with the SDGs will be key at all levels. The streamlining of the work of the GA Committees and ECOSOC and their respective agendas with the agenda of the HLPF will maximize the impact of the HLPF as the apex body designed to “provide political leadership, guidance and recommendations for sustainable development.” The rationalization of the agendas of ECOSOC and the General Assembly, especially its Second and Third Committees, presupposes that the agendas of the General Assembly and ECOSOC should build upon one another in an annual cycle that culminates in the annual meeting of the HLPF. This cycle should form a coherent annual process, which allows for complementary and mutually reinforcing roles of the GA and ECOSOC.

### **Any other comments**

[Lanre Rotimi, International Society for Poverty Elimination / Economic Alliance Group, NGO MG] believes that the Retreat should be a forum to find correct answer to SG Follow Up and Review Report How questions. This is because this important SG Report set out to answer AAAA, SDG, COP21, Agenda 21 Aligned and Harmonized to National Development Plans, NDPs’ How questions but ended up answering What questions. Of the 8 questions in this consultation, 4 are What questions and 4 are How questions. Yet the How questions did not include the two most important questions the Retreat seek to answer 1. How can the voluntary national review at the HLPF be most useful and how can it be best prepared and organized? 2. How can national reviews lead to possible support and new partnerships to assist the reviewed countries?

What questions have been over-answered. Answers to How questions have been avoided or evaded even in UN Events including UN Security Council Events specifically organized to help find correct answer to How questions. We believe the Retreat Participants should recognize that answer to What questions is

about SAYING which is easy and answer to How questions is about DOING which is especially DIFFICULT because it DEMANDS KNOW HOW based on minimum certain levels of Competences: Hard Competences - Learning and Skills and Soft Competences - Character, Courage and Mindset.

Should above points be well received by Retreat Organizers and other Contributors to this Consultation, we are glad to make further contribution before the Monday Deadline Date.

[Lanre Rotimi, International Society for Poverty Elimination / Economic Alliance Group, NGO MG]  
additional comments

<http://developmentchangechampions.blogspot.com.ng/2016/02/global-push-to-achieve-sdgs-vision-and.html>

[http://developmentchangechampions.blogspot.com.ng/2016/02/global-push-to-achieve-sdgs-vision-and\\_22.html](http://developmentchangechampions.blogspot.com.ng/2016/02/global-push-to-achieve-sdgs-vision-and_22.html)