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Concept Note High Level Side Event on

Engaging People for Sustainable Development: Accountability, Transparency and Participation

New York, UN Headquarters
Conference Room 8, General Assembly Building
26th September 2015
1:15pm - 3:00pm

Objective

Following a two-year long process of complex intergovernmental negotiations, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development will be adopted at the UN Summit on 25-27 September 2015. This ambitious and far-reaching agenda will have a significant impact on global sustainable development in the next decades. Turning it into reality will require the involvement and engagement of people, who are at the centre of the agenda.

The High-Level Event will engage representatives of countries from different regions in an exchange on national experiences of promoting accountability, transparency and participation that could contribute to the implementation and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The High-Level Event will also attempt to identify a set of key guiding principles in this regard.

Rationale

The elaboration of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has been a highly **participatory process** that has drawn on the views of millions of people world-wide. This unprecedented level of engagement in the definition of a global and universal agenda has raised high expectations for the implementation, monitoring and follow-up of the agenda. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development entails a transformative shift that will, *de facto*, reflect the importance of **inclusive and accountable institutions**. It also stresses the need for **follow up and review mechanisms** that ensure accountability to the people for the implementation of the agenda as a whole. This will require addressing crucial enablers such as capacity development for all actors, including the civil society, and the strengthening of existing institutions and accountability mechanisms at all levels, so as to strengthen participation in monitoring implementation. For this purpose, it will be useful to share the experiences gained by Member States in this regard, including throughout the period of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).



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Issues

The High-Level Event will address the following issues as critical aspects for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development:

- What aspects of existing **mechanisms** at the national and sub-national levels will be critical for ensuring progress for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development? Where are the main challenges in terms of transparent and direct accountability to the people and which improvements are necessary? Existing mechanisms range, inter alia, from parliamentary oversight to independent oversight institutions, including supreme audit institutions, government inspectorates, ombudsman offices, as well as mechanisms developed within the MDG framework.
- What different roles can **actors** like legislatures on all levels, local authorities, civil society organizations, academia, the private sector and other stakeholders, play to effectively engage in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development? What experience can be shared on widening and deepening spaces for participation of and engagement with such actors in order to create transparent, inclusive, efficient and inter-linked accountability mechanisms?
- What are the key institutional and capacity development **enablers** that could contribute to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development? Factors that could contribute to supporting models of accountability, transparency and participation include: the promotion of representative and participatory monitoring and accountability initiatives at the national and sub-national levels, partnerships and initiatives between state institutions and the wide range of other stakeholders, and participatory monitoring of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- What guiding **principles** can be identified to enable and encourage people to participate in accountability mechanisms?

Format, location and timing

Botswana, Mongolia and Switzerland will co-host the High-Level Event. The format will consist in a high-level panel with the two (or three) co-hosts, in addition to the Secretary-General of IDEA, a high level representative of the UN and a representative of a local authority. The High-Level Event will be held at the UN General Assembly Building in New York. The High-Level Event will last maximum two hours and it should allow for an interactive exchange of the panel with the audience. The High-Level Event will be live webcast.